

# Provincial Life and the Military in Imperial Japan

The phantom samurai

Stewart Lone



Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia

# Provincial Life and the Military in Imperial Japan

In contrast to the enduring stereotype of a ‘nation of samurai’, this book uses provincial newspapers and local records to hear the voices of ordinary people living in imperial Japan through several decades of war and peace. These voices reveal the authentic experiences, opinions and emotions of men, women and children. They show that the impression of a uniquely disciplined, regimented, militaristic society, which took root in the Western imagination from the 1890s and which helped bring about the Pacific war of 1941–45, is a gross illusion.

Stewart Lone challenges the long-standing view of prewar Japan as a ‘militaristic’ society. Instead of relying on the usual accounts about senior commanders and politics at the heart of government, he shows the realities of provincial society’s relations with the military in Japan at ground level. Working from the perspective of civil society and both rural and urban life in the provinces, Lone investigates broader civil contacts with the military including schools, local businesses, leisure and entertainment, civic ceremonies and monuments, as well as public attitudes towards the military and its values.

This book will be of interest to upper undergraduates, postgraduates and academics interested in military history and Japanese history.

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The book is written with the intention of reducing ignorance and the causes of bigotry. The usual caveats apply to the text. Whatever is in it, good or bad, is down to me.



Map of Gifu Prefecture

# Introduction

In this work, I take up the thread of an enquiry I began long ago in *Japan's First Modern War: Army and Society in the Conflict with China, 1894–95* (London/NY 1994). In that early foray into Japanese civil-military relations, my intention was simply to add detail and personality, in other words the shades of humanity, to what I believed then, and what I believe now, is a deeply dull and monochrome corner of Japanese historiography.

That intention remains in the present study but, with the benefit of more than another decade of researching and teaching on the social history of modern Japan, I have a more deliberate purpose; it is to engage in an act of creative destruction. The intent is, if not to exorcise, then at least to draw blood from a malevolent phantom which continues to haunt the popular understanding of Japanese society, and which leads either to a mystical fascination with, or demonization of, the Japanese people. As Harold Bolitho wrote some years ago<sup>1</sup>:

In the popular imagination, Japan and the samurai are often synonymous ... [but] the notion that the Japanese are constantly and eternally motivated by instincts, training and ethics of the kind popularly ascribed to the samurai is hilariously inaccurate at best, and at worst racist and defamatory.

Despite the indisputable wisdom of this comment, the specter of a 'nation of samurai' is extraordinarily tenacious, and not just in the popular imagination. What purports to be an academic study from 2003 offers the following description of nineteenth-century Japan<sup>2</sup>:

The overarching value was honor. Each person must defend to the death his emperor's, his family's, and his own honor, for a life without respect was not worth living ... The meticulous adherence to elaborate rules of etiquette minimized the need to clear one's name, a very trying and potentially life-threatening process. Often the only way to clear one's name was through suicide

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In this kind of overheated fantasy view of imperial Japan, the assumption is that the ordinary people were the inheritors of an idealized system of samurai values, giving them an almost inhuman ‘will-to-sacrifice’. This meant that, once in military uniform, the Japanese male was utterly indifferent to his personal comfort or physical survival, making him either a terrifying enemy or an awesome model of military discipline. It also made men and women in civilian life, outside of the labour and tenant disputes brought about only by extremes of economic hardship, routinely docile and deferential in the face of authority, whether military or civilian. The result of such a militarized society was an incomparably efficient national machine for use in peace or war.

It is my contention that the stereotypes of the Japanese people as uniquely regimented (I use the word deliberately) and predisposed to this will-to-sacrifice were formulated in the early wars of the 1890s and 1900s. They were taken up and inflated both by Western observers and sections of the Japanese government and intelligentsia; the former took them at face value, the latter recited them like some Buddhist mantra in the hope that their own people might actually be numbed into believing them. Among Japanese propagandists of a culture suffused with warrior values, the most famous is Nitobe Inazō (note that in Japan the family name comes first), at least in the title if not always in the confused content of his book, *Bushidō – The Soul of Japan*, published in 1900 and republished many times up to the present day. In the West, a prominent example is the popular memoir of General Sir Ian Hamilton, later a senior British commander in World War I and, in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05, an observer with the Japanese forces. Writing in 1907, he declared<sup>3</sup>:

The Japanese have behind them the moral character produced by mothers and fathers, who again are the product of generations of mothers and fathers nurtured in ideas of self-sacrifice and loyalty. But they do not on this account trust entirely to heredity to produce them an army. If they wish to have every man in the nation a potential fighter they know they must begin at the beginning, and put the right ideas into the babies as soon as they begin to toddle. The parade march of the 5th German Army Corps impressed me far less than the little Japanese boys and girls I saw marching down in their companies to say good-bye to the soldiers. ‘There,’ I said to myself, ‘go the world-renowned, invincible armies of 1920!’

One consequence of this militaristic myth-making at home and overseas was that Japan’s national security was actually placed in greater jeopardy with each of its early wars. Following its victory over imperial China in 1895, a new wave of ‘Asian invasion’ literature quickly emerged in America, Australasia and Europe. Novelists, newspapermen and even statesmen warned that all Japanese, military or civilian, were in reality warriors for the emperor, and what appeared to be migrant workers in Hawaii, North America or Australia were, in fact, fifth columnists just waiting for the command to rise

up and take revenge against the Western colonial powers. This kind of alarmist reasoning was used to defend the American annexation of Hawaii in 1898, and to justify a ban on Japanese immigration to Australia from 1901.<sup>4</sup> With the defeat of Russia in 1905, Western alarmism about Japan soared to a new level with pundits in the USA almost immediately predicting a coming war for supremacy in the Pacific. Once established, the stereotype of the militaristic Japanese took on a life of its own, with dreadful consequences for Japanese civilians in 1944–45.

Studies of militarism as a concept have usually concentrated on the relationship between the soldier and the state. The Achilles heel of this approach is that it focuses with such determination on the political centre, and excludes so much of the population and so many of the institutions of any community. A broader, more inclusive approach is offered by the historical sociologist Michael Mann in his *States, War and Capitalism*. In this, he defines militarism as, ‘a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity’.<sup>5</sup> The key phrase here is ‘social activity’. In other words, militarism is not just a way of thinking or acting in the political system (that is, government at the centre and regions plus lobbyists and others connected to political decision-making). It is, instead, a way of thinking and acting rooted in the community which includes the political system but expands far beyond that to encompass such areas as small business, the school curriculum, women’s and youth groups, plus the vast, amorphous entity which covers public opinion and popular culture.

My own interest is in society and the soldier; the intimate relationships of local services and supplies, the human contact between troops and citizens, and the impact the army has on the community around its camps. I take the view that militarism as a theoretical concept is of minimal use in explaining a society unless it at least incorporates, and, for preference, concentrates on, the attitudes and actions of civil society. What is necessary, therefore, is to consider the idea of ‘popular militarism’. This means searching local society for the presence, or absence, of attitudes, values, forms of organization and behaviour commonly associated with the military. In particular, a society characterized by popular militarism is likely to demonstrate a fetishization of the military, its images and symbols, plus a high degree of public regimentation, respect for all forms of authority, and a willingness to sacrifice the individual good for the group, especially where that group is the military.

The main thrust of my argument in this work is that it is entirely misleading to describe Japanese society between the 1890s to 1920s as militaristic or even militarized. There were, undoubtedly, many attempts by the central authorities to spread the values of the military among civilians, for example, through the school system, the law on military service, and various civic associations. However, what will become clear is that these attempts repeatedly fell far short of their original goals. Moreover, one of the prevailing trends in public discourse over these decades was always to challenge the power and status of civilian or even military authorities. Further, there is



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constant evidence among civilians of disunity and discontent rather than regimentation and compliance. As for the military, outside of national crises such as wartime, the underlying public attitude was seen by local observers at the time as generally one of ambivalence verging, if anything, on hostility. Instead of popular militarism, I see provincial society engaging in a kind of civil-military contract, in which public support for the armed forces was calibrated according to the economic benefit of that support accruing to the locality. The military recognized this contractual relationship and regularly entered into hard and unsympathetic bargaining with local communities over access to land and facilities. I also argue that this contract remained in place throughout the 1890s to 1920s and, for that reason, I reject the usual categorization of historians dividing ‘Meiji absolutism’ or ‘Meiji militarism’ from ‘Taishō democracy’. Rather than any sudden break from about the end of World War I, Japanese society from mid-Meiji to beyond the end of Taishō remained consistent in its attitudes towards, and its relations with, the military.

The state of current knowledge concerning civil society and the military in pre-1930s imperial Japan may be said to rest on very uncertain foundations. In the English language, the strongest pillar is Richard Smethurst, *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: The Army and the Rural Community* (Berkeley 1974). As the subtitle indicates, however, Smethurst’s concern was with rural Japan and his analysis centres on military-support organizations for reservists, youth and women, created, directly or indirectly, by senior army commanders in Tokyo. The result is a pioneering and invaluable work but one which was never intended to take a broad overview of the military in provincial life.

In the Japanese language, civil society’s relations with the military, particularly at the provincial level, have long been neglected. This is in stark contrast to the flood of works since the 1950s on the military as an institution, the military in central politics, and the strategy and tactics of wars. Briefly, in the early 2000s, there was a flurry of activity with the publication of Arakawa Shōji, *Guntai to Chiiki* (The Military and Local Society), Ueyama Kazuo, ed., *Teito to Guntai: Chiiki to Minshū no Shiten kara* (The Imperial Capital and the Military: From the Perspective of the Locality and the People), and Gunshi Jun, *Gunji Engo no Sekai: Guntai to Chiiki Shakai* (The World of Aid to the Military: the Military and Local Society).

Of these, Arakawa’s is by far the most useful and, in taking one prefecture – Shizuoka – as a case study, the closest in approach to my own work. However, as he admits, there are major periods for which the newspapers of Shizuoka either have not, or have only barely, survived and, perhaps for this reason, his tendency is to rely more on official records. This limits his perspective on occasion to the military or local government rather than to society in general. In his brief section on the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–95, for example, he writes mainly about the numbers of local men who were mobilized for war and the number of casualties; on civil society, his comments are largely restricted to the various mechanisms of providing aid to the

families of men on active service. The result is a picture of local society in its dealing with the military which moves sometimes frustratingly in and out of focus. Despite this, however, it remains the single best overall assessment of provincial civil-military relations from the late 1880s to the 1940s.

The books by Ueyama and Gunshi are much narrower in scope. Ueyama brings together a variety of authors writing on very precise topics such as an army factory in Tokyo or a military sanitarium in Hakone. Of the contributors, Ueyama himself is the only one to give an overview of the military in local life but, far more than Arakawa's extended analysis, the result is lacking in detail, substance or even conviction. Thus, he writes less than half a page on either the Sino-Japanese or Russo-Japanese wars and, in a section devoted to the military in civilian life, he offers just three pages which deal almost exclusively with two unrelated topics; German prisoners of war in Japan during World War I, and the Japanese public's observation of regimental flag days and manoeuvres. With such random and limited fragments, there is no sense from this work of life being lived, either by civilians or soldiers. Better is the chapter by Takamura Satoshi which, in concentrating on Shizuoka prefecture, overlaps in time and place with the work of Arakawa. Takamura, however, comments on the single town of Hamamatsu and deals with just two moments in time; first, when Hamamatsu became the site of an infantry regiment and, second, when it saw the regiment abolished. The result is like being given two strips of film culled from a lengthy documentary. As for the monograph by Gunshi, his concern is wholly with the laws, regulations and associations for aiding impoverished or disabled servicemen, their families, or the relatives of the war dead. While this is an interesting and revealing topic, it is a relatively small aspect of civil-military relations.

In combat with phantoms in the ether, one strategy may be to dig deeply. My own approach is to engage in what Walter Benjamin might call an archaeology of the contemporary street and, by entering the lives of ordinary people across a single prefecture, unearth a more detailed and vivid picture of the relationship between local society and the military. I have chosen Gifu prefecture as the site for this archaeological dig because it is literally the centre of Japan; it is a prefecture which sprawls across very disparate regions from the lower terrain of the Minō counties to the higher mountains of Hida; it also stretches far across the torso of Japan's main island, reaching towards both the east and west coasts. Thus, if any one prefecture has a geographical claim to represent Japan, Gifu is undoubtedly a serious contender.

In attempting to enter the lives of ordinary people, I have consulted the newspapers of Gifu prefecture, unpublished materials held at the Gifu Prefecture Historical Archives, a wide array of prefectural, city, town and village histories, as well as published histories of schools, local railways, business associations, women's and other groups. The day-to-day detail naturally is richest in the newspapers. Until the twentieth century, there were two local newspapers in Gifu, both in the prefectural capital, Gifu city. The earliest was the *Gifu Nichi Nichi Shimbum* (hereafter GNN) which began publishing in

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1881. This was followed by the *Nōbi Nippō* in 1888. In the wake of the Russo-Japanese war, the press expanded to Gifu's more mountainous north, first with the creation of the *Takayama Shimpō* in 1906, and later the *Hida Nippō* which appeared in October 1917 (and which later changed its name to *Hida Mainichi Shimbun*).<sup>6</sup>

One criticism of relying on newspapers is that it may lead to some bias favouring the views of the literate urban class. Also, it is a truism of Meiji history, at least up to the late 1890s and a far greater commercialization of the media, that each newspaper was usually committed to a particular political viewpoint. While this was true of the *Nōbi Nippō*, which was an ally of the Liberal Party, the GNN, which is used most extensively here, set great store by its neutrality, declaring itself to favour no group or opinion over another and, instead, to speak equally to all sectors of society. As for any bias towards the urban and literate caused by using the press, two points in mitigation should be noted. First, the history of Japan before the 1920s spread of recorded visual and oral sources rests on what remains of the printed contemporary word after earthquakes, fires, and the deliberate or accidental destruction of records in wartime have consumed their fill: the quantity and frequency of newspapers means that, notwithstanding major gaps on occasion, they have generally survived better than other printed sources such as journals, pamphlets, or government and private papers. Second, each newspaper's position on issues is obviously clearest in its editorials but, in two other sections, it either presents facts without annotation or allows people from around the prefecture to state their own views; these sections are the daily round-up of events in local counties, towns and villages, and the column for readers' letters. The letters from readers were at their height in the 1900s–1910s and are as close as one can get to hearing the echoes of contemporary voices. In the kind of excavation of provincial life I am attempting, words are all-important. Alfred Vagts in his classic study, refers to the 'militarism of moods and opinions' and, in pursuing evidence either for or against Japanese popular militarism, we need to observe the moods and opinions of people in towns and villages across provincial society.<sup>7</sup> Some of the words used to express these moods and opinions may have been mistaken, ill-considered, intended to deceive, intended to flatter, or exaggerated by rhetoric, but they are all part of a living community. One thing that quickly becomes obvious from reading these letters is that the provincial public discourse on government, power holders, and the military was dominated by voices of discontent; by contrast, there is a remarkable level of relative silence about the virtue of the emperor, the excellence of military commanders, or the heroism of troops. One qualification to add, however, is that readers' letters to the press were printed only with a kind of *nom de plume* such as 'an old soldier', 'a concerned citizen' and so forth. Extraordinarily revealing though they may be, they are often less helpful in addressing questions of gender or urban-rural differences.

My departure point for this study is 1890. The reason for this date is that it follows immediately on a major reform of Japan's law on military

conscription. As Arakawa explains in starting his own study from this period, the reform was designed to create ‘local units’ (*kyōdo butai*), with conscripts being employed on military service as far as possible in their native regions. This was intended by the army authorities to strengthen civilian identification with the military.<sup>8</sup> As will be seen, the army was still chasing that goal into the 1920s. Unlike Arakawa, I have chosen to end my study before 1930. In my view, the Great Depression from 1929, and the increasing diplomatic isolation of Japan following the Manchurian incident of 1931, led to a far greater intervention in civil society by the central government. This was justified by the state, and tolerated by the public, on the grounds that Japan had never before faced such a national crisis. The attempt in the 1930s to control civil society involved tighter policing and censorship, and more concerted moves to regiment local communities through new or reconstructed mass organizations, especially for women and youth. Civilian fears about the future of Japan’s economy, the possibility of wealth being swept away by seemingly inexplicable forces, and also the threat of international isolation, led to a quietening of the public discourse at this time. However, the period known in Japan as the ‘dark valley’ from 1931–45 is clearly anomalous. By contrast, the decades from the 1890s to 1920s include several wars and many years of peace and these are sufficient for us to observe significant change and continuity in the civil-military relationship. In dealing with this period, I would like to think that I have laid another pillar beside that of Smethurst but perhaps also inspired some younger scholar to take up the later years of provincial life and the military in Gifu or, indeed, in some other prefecture.

It is often helpful at the outset to provide a synopsis of a book. Chapter 1 commences with a broad assessment of major social trends and concerns in Gifu prefecture in 1890, and situates the military within this wider social context. The theme of this chapter is the marginal and insecure location of the military in provincial society. In Chapter 2, the intention is to explain the ascent of the military in the public’s affections during Japan’s first modern overseas war but also to suggest that, despite the wartime popular celebrations of inexpensive victories over China and effusive support for the war effort, this ascent was not maintained in the immediate postwar period. Chapter 3 contrasts the human and material cost of Japan’s second major war, against Russia in 1904–05, with the easy triumph over China, and argues that the economic and human strain of fighting Russia reinforced the dominant tendency of provincial society to offer only conditional support for the military. Chapter 4 deals with various civic projects after 1905 to commemorate the Russo-Japanese war, enhance military-style values in civilian society (especially amongst youth), and also, most importantly, to establish the first standing army presence in Gifu. The main point of this chapter is to reinforce the argument that, on both sides, whether civil or military, relations between the armed forces and local society were contractual. Chapter 5 investigates more closely the actual men of Gifu who served in the army in the late Meiji era. It considers how they appeared to, and interacted with,

local people, especially in terms of personal discipline and morality; in other words, it looks at the soldier from the viewpoint of civil society, not as he appeared in the idealized forms of military propaganda or of civilian ideologues. Chapter 6 deals with the years just before and during World War I, a time when the Japanese army was largely inactive in terms of combat. Two of the themes of this chapter are that victory in war brought no sense of peace or security to civilian Japanese, and that the creation of militaristic associations in civil communities brought no great increase in public support for the military. The final chapter considers the early to mid-1920s, the high point of what is called ‘Taishō democracy’. In this chapter, the major topics are: the attempt of the military to reinvent aspects of its activities and to narrow what some saw as a gulf (which had always been there) between itself and civilian life; and the urgency in 1925 of local communities to retain an existing military presence during a major downsizing of the army and, thereby, to protect their own fragile economies.

A word about the style of writing. One of the most disappointing things about teaching at a university is the frequency with which undergraduates dismiss as ‘dry’ an article or chapter which, to my eyes, is a model of eloquence and intelligence. In a possibly vain attempt to avoid this accusation, I have written the text in a way which should be accessible to a wide audience. Another reason to do this is that the ‘field’ of English-language Japanese studies is, in relative terms, very small and the sub-field of Japanese military studies positively tiny. So I have taken the advice of a former teacher, the late W. G. Beasley, and attempted to engage even the reader who possesses no prior knowledge of the subject. Consequently, I have tried to make points as clearly as possible and to explain things which to specialist colleagues may seem obvious and unnecessary.

Before introducing the military to Gifu society, let us start with a few points about the region in question. As the geographical centre of Japan, it is, almost by definition, an area which, in the centuries of war up to 1600, endured repeated invasions by competing armies. In fact, the decisive battle in the early modern history of Japan took place in 1600 at Sekigahara in what is now west Gifu. During the long Tokugawa peace (1600–1867), its location was also the cause of its prosperity as great flows of trade and communication passed along the Nakasendō, one of Tokugawa Japan’s five major highways. In comparison to the more famous Tōkaidō route, the Nakasendō passed through high country but it had the benefit of avoiding river or ocean crossings. During these years, and into the modern period, Gifu became known as a major producer of textiles, timber, pottery, fine quality paper goods (including lanterns and umbrellas), and *saké*. The three largest towns in the region were Gifu and Ōgaki, both in the Minō district, and Takayama in Hida.

The administrative unit which is Gifu prefecture dates from 1871, while its present borders took shape in 1876 when the three high counties of Hida were added to what ultimately were the 15 counties of Minō. As with other modern prefectures, the glue on this particular assembly did not take well.

According to a history of modern Gifu from the 1980s, ‘along with early modern development, the links continued to deepen between Minō and Hida in terms of communications, the economy and many areas, yet there is still no sense of prefectural identity’.<sup>9</sup> The fundamental difference is that much of the population of Minō resides on the alluvial delta formed by the rivers Kiso and Nagara (the prefectural capital, Gifu city, sits between the two rivers). By contrast, the more precipitous terrain of Hida makes it difficult to reach. This meant that populations were generally smaller and more scattered, and that the local economy was poorer than that of Minō. Residents of Hida would have to wait until the late 1910s before modern land communications really began to improve. However, for lower Gifu, a new era of modern transport and rapid mobility commenced with the opening of the Tōkaidō main railway line in 1887. In 1888, no doubt in response to the expectation of greater prosperity coming with the railway, construction began in Gifu city on the Kanazu ‘pleasure quarter’ of bordellos and places to drink and eat.<sup>10</sup> However, there was a poor national harvest that year and in the following. The result was that Gifu ended the 1880s with a mix of economic optimism and foreboding.

# 1 On the periphery

## Provincial life and the military 1890

The early hours of New Year's Day 1890 in Gifu city, administrative capital and largest urban centre of Gifu prefecture, were described by a local journalist<sup>1</sup>:

All the streets were silent. There was no trace of anyone. The only visible movement was that of the national flag fluttering from the eaves. But as the sun rose, one could hear the *clap clap* of hands as people prayed to the Shintō gods. Soon, the streets resounded to the clacking of wooden clogs as people went on their round of New Year's visits, leaving their name cards as they called, and then of the heads of households who, on learning of the visit, quickly drew on their new Western clothes or old traditional jackets as they hurried to return the compliment.

Later in the day, he continued, officials and citizens flocked to the Inaba Shintō shrine in the city's northeast, offering the usual prayers for health and prosperity for themselves and their families. Once the rites had been observed, people flooded into the shops and restaurants which, along with the city's sex industry, always enjoyed their best profits at the New Year.

Festival days often highlight the values and practices which matter most to any community. The composition of the scene above reveals many things about the workings of Japanese provincial life in the 1890s, for example, the role of ritual and the value of courtesy. For our purposes, the most important point is that this is overwhelmingly a civil society: the military, its men and its symbols are entirely absent (later evidence suggests that even the national flag, a recent creation and obviously not the monopoly of the military, was far from universal at this time). This was the case across most of Japan's cities, towns and villages. Only in those locations where troops of the relatively new and comparatively small imperial army were garrisoned was there any difference with Gifu but, even there, the military was represented generally by the presence of just a few uniformed servicemen among the crowds. This contrasts with the earlier Tokugawa period when, for example at the castle town of Ōgaki in what is now west Gifu, the streets would be filled from first light on New Year's Day and for the next two days as all the local warriors proceeded to the castle to pay their respects to the lord of the domain.<sup>2</sup> Thus, to

understand civil-military relations in provincial Japan, we must begin by acknowledging how peripheral the military had become as a physical or symbolic entity by the start of the 1890s.

The question for this chapter is to identify more precisely the moments over the course of the year when the military made a significant appearance in provincial life. To put this appearance in context, it is useful first to summarize the various issues which relegated military affairs to the remote margins of public discourse and which, both in 1890 and later, were to influence relations between local people and the army. Judging from local press reports between January and December, the two most important concerns for the people of Gifu were the potential redistribution of political power, and what they saw as a network of major fault-lines in society.

In 1890 a revolution took place in the formal relationship between the government and the governed. This centred on the introduction of general elections and the opening of the first Diet or national parliament. These developments were the culmination of a process begun early in the 1880s with the creation of representative political parties and, later, the drafting of a constitution. The magnitude of these changes, and the prospect of some degree of real power devolving to the people, meant that the pages of Japan's national and local newspapers were awash with political debate. Indeed, the 1880s–1890s may be the only period in Japanese history when the press acted primarily (that is, far more than as a simple record of events or as a vehicle for retailing) as the engine driving the creation and development of what is usually termed the 'public sphere'. In an era before mass electronic communication or a genuinely nationwide railway network to facilitate travel, it was from the local press that ordinary people gained an understanding of issues and personalities, and in which, if only through the columns for readers' letters, they expressed their own opinions about the present circumstances and future possibilities both of the nation and of their region. Certainly throughout 1890, it was domestic politics which dominated the public media and the private discussions of provincial Japan.

The general election and the first Diet sitting quickly led the public to realize that a democratic system of politics encompasses deeply undemocratic practices and widely unsatisfactory compromises. The first prime minister to confront the new Diet (and 'confront' is precisely how he viewed it) was the founder of the modern army, General Yamagata Aritomo. Also, the topic at the centre of parliamentary debate was the level of the proposed defence budget, far exceeding all other budget items, and over which the parliamentarians swiftly discovered they had no real control. One of the nation-building slogans of the Meiji government was 'rich country, strong military' but some of the army's critics attacked what they saw as a policy of 'poor country, strong military'. In other words, while the leaders of the armed forces believed that their interests and those of the nation were indivisible, there were many in civil society who felt that the interests of the people, not least in lower taxes and greater infrastructure, were being unfairly sacrificed



to those of the military. This sense of grievance could only be magnified in those regions of Japan which had no military presence and, therefore, could see no immediate or direct benefit of vast expenditure on the military. The lesson of the first national Diet of 1890, however, was that in any civil-military contest over money, it was almost guaranteed that civil society would be forced to make the greatest compromise.<sup>3</sup> The impression that the self-appointed role of the military was to 'protect' (i.e. regulate) democracy but not to practice it was to persist for decades. To that extent, therefore, the political 'revolution' of 1890 fell far short of popular expectations.

The disappointment of the first and later Diets resulted in widespread public derision of national politicians and, by the end of the 1890s, they were often regarded with contempt. Even in 1890, however, a fad for calling members of the Lower House 'MPs' (member of parliament) after the British example was immediately corrupted, either by accident or by design, to 'PMs' with the understanding, or misunderstanding, that the elected representatives of the people worked only in the afternoons (the unelected members of the House of Peers were presumed to take the morning shift). The weakness of the Diet in the face of the military, and the loss of public trust in parliamentarians, led the Japanese press within a few years to cool its earlier enthusiasm for political debate and, instead, move towards a simpler reporting of events while also giving greater space to retailing through more and larger advertisements.<sup>4</sup>

Public dissatisfaction with national politics in 1890 was echoed at the local level. Since its first sitting in 1879, the Gifu prefectural assembly had been riven by factional disputes. In particular, there was a recurring standoff between the so-called Mountain Group, which represented the newly incorporated regions of Hida, and the Water Group which represented the low-lying areas of Minō. In the absence of any standing military presence, assembly conflicts revolved around the budget for infrastructure: the Mountain Group wanted money for roads and bridges to improve communications with the high counties; the Water Group demanded funds to prevent the regular flood damage to Minō from Gifu's three major rivers.<sup>5</sup>

In 1890, however, the assembly was split in a new and inexplicable direction. Initially, there had been cause for public optimism of a productive sitting when, in March, a new assembly head, deputy head and standing committee was elected. Yet, as soon as the assembly opened in late November there was, for no reason that anyone could identify, a rift between the new office holders and their earlier supporters. A vote of no-confidence was pressed on the new team and passed by a similar majority to that which previously had elected them. Despite this, they resisted calls for their resignation. As a result, the session was characterized by accusation and counter-accusation, in which members of the public gallery, shouting out their opinions, were very active participants. One observer described the assembly as 'a scene of carnage' (*shūrajō* – the same term was used in the Gifu press to describe the national Diet) and, when the session closed on 9 December, nothing had been

achieved and the local media concluded that the entire incident had been 'deeply regrettable'. The public response is typified by the letter of one citizen to a representative lamenting that, in the assembly, 'morality and law are perverted, virtue defiled, and confusion promoted'.<sup>6</sup> From this, one may suggest that both the prefectural assembly and the infant Diet left the citizens of 1890 with no greater sense of security or control over their own affairs. Instead, they merely reinforced a deep-seated anxiety about disunity and instability in Japanese society.

Other factors contributing to a popular sense of insecurity included the central government's disruption of local identities. In 1871, the Meiji leaders had erased the traditional military domains and created new place names and borders in a novel structure of prefectures. The administrative landscape of Japan continued to be redrawn in 1889 with a revised system of cities, towns and villages. As a result of these changes, the shape of counties was frequently in flux, while towns and villages found themselves renamed or merged. The result was a major redistribution of status at every level of urban and rural society. In Kakami county in lower eastern Gifu, for example, 14 villages in its north and six in its south were lost in 1890 to adjoining counties.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the year, local committees across Gifu lobbied the governor either for or against the changes depending on whether they stood to win or lose ground. The rivalries, and even hostility, between neighbouring regions in a single prefecture never really abated in the following decades and, on occasion, they were to obstruct popular support for the army's concept of 'local units', introduced also in 1889.

The most immediate threat to many civilians across Japan in the first months of 1890, and no doubt a major reason why the defence budget was so controversial later that year, was poverty leading to starvation. In the summer of 1889, flooding had devastated the Japanese harvest for a second year running, sending the price of rice spiralling. By May 1890, the streets of Gifu city were filled with beggars; in the former castle town of Kasamatsu, 425 people were reported to be on the edge of starvation; and, in Anpachi county in Gifu's lower west, 20,000 out of the total population of 76,000 needed help to survive. The problem extended beyond Gifu: also in May, a crowd of poor and hungry residents of Tottori city, for example, attacked local rice dealers (it was also said that a group of former Tottori samurai had dusted off their swords and gone to warn the rice dealers to show greater charity to the starving). The central government's response was urgently to import cheap rice from China; in Gifu, this imported rice began entering the shops in late May. An unusually rich harvest later in the year also calmed the situation. However, this did not hide the fact that many Japanese remained dependent on a food supply regularly interrupted by natural catastrophe. As the local history of Itō and Niwa shows, in the period 1886–96 alone, there were four years of extreme flood damage across Gifu; this is excluding 1891 when the lower west was hit by a massive earthquake which destroyed 50,000 homes and killed nearly 5,000 people.<sup>8</sup>

The fear generated by poverty was reinforced, and extended to the wealthier members of society, by the virulence of disease. Meiji Japan, like most other societies at this time, was poorly informed and inadequately defended against air-borne and water-borne epidemics. One of the gravest and most persistent was cholera. Figures for January to early October 1890 showed that, nationwide, 33,863 Japanese exhibited symptoms of cholera and, of these, 22,568 had died. This meant that people had to be constantly on the alert for signs of a fresh epidemic, especially over the hot and humid summer months. In Gifu, a Cholera Prevention Office was established at Gifu city with a branch at Ōgaki, and an inspection unit at the Ōgaki rail station. Across the prefecture, local officials and police forces patrolled the streets in search of garbage or anything which they believed might foster the disease. This caution proved to be effective in 1890. At least until the 1930s, however, the fear of contagious diseases was to be a constant feature of life in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

A more amorphous threat to society, but one which also attracted the language of disease, was gambling. Throughout 1890 (and for decades thereafter), there were alarming reports of gambling addicts all over Gifu. Farmers were said to be laying aside their work even at the busiest time of the year in order to gamble; among local officials, there were apparently cases of men who, as soon as the clock struck the last second of the working day, began to gamble at their desks. Within the time it took to smoke a cigarette, the press reported, an entire month's wages were being lost. The additional concern was that, with so many adults ignoring the heavy legal punishments for gambling, this 'fever' would infect children.<sup>10</sup>

A broader reason for anxiety over the future of society was the recurring criticism of Japanese moral and physical weakness compared to Westerners. Physical weakness was a problem which time and diet might help to address but the basic fault lay in attitudes to life and work. A typical example of this vein of self-criticism is an editorial from the GNN on 28 February 1890 titled 'Idlers everywhere'. The contention of the editor was that 'Japan has the most wastrels of any country in the world' and, he argued, they were responsible for Japan's national strength and economic output remaining so weak. In contrast (and rather amusingly in view of Japanese popular attitudes a century later), he praised Western peoples as 'workaholics' with a genuine 'love of work'. In a related editorial nine days earlier, the GNN had challenged the Japanese people to reinvent themselves, especially in regard to the modern capitalist concept of time discipline. Japan's tradition, it argued, was one of indifference to money and time whereas, quoting with approval and in the original English, the motto of the West was 'time is money'.<sup>11</sup> The GNN did not go this far but the logic of its argument was that, for local people, the nearest model to hand of time- and work discipline might well be the army.

However bleak it may appear, the composite picture of provincial life in 1890 given above is generally an accurate sketch of the public mood as it appeared in the daily press. While there were occasional shades of optimism and reports of success, the overwhelming tone was one of pessimism, anxiety

and self-doubt. From this, one might expect local communities to welcome the military as a force which, on the surface at least, exuded order, discipline, unity, and physical and moral health. Yet, as we shall see, provincial society had a much more ambivalent and complex view of the armed forces, both then and later. For the moment, however, having explained something of the major public concerns in 1890, it is now time to introduce the military to the stage and explain when and how it came to Gifu.

Up to the civil war of 1868 (the first war in, or involving, Japan for over 250 years), the samurai or *bushi* had been the uncontested and incontestable political elite. The de facto governor of Japan was the Tokugawa military *shōgun* and, in each domain, political power was in the hands of a military clan. In what later became Gifu prefecture, there were four major centres of warrior rule: Ōgaki, Kanō, Kasamatsu and Takayama. The authority of the samurai was protected by laws which forbade commoners to carry weapons in public. The structure of society was also geared towards stability and the avoidance of conflict (even if this proved inadequate in times of food shortages and peasant uprisings). The result was that the military had status and authority but the overall success of the system meant that there was no war in which to practice lawful violence or win a reputation for heroism. In time, this left the warrior elite no more than a sword-bearing bureaucracy and, for demonstrations of ideal military values, especially concerning the nobility of self-sacrifice, one had to turn to the popular theatre or fiction.

The Tokugawa system collapsed under the weight of foreign encroachment in the mid-nineteenth century. In the brief and largely bloodless civil war of 1868, the region later to become Gifu prefecture was taken by the anti-Tokugawa forces of the Emperor Meiji. They established their administration at two of the existing warrior towns; Kasamatsu in the Minō region and Takayama in the Hida region. However, nothing in the early years of Meiji was fixed. Once in power, the new government introduced two related policies concerning the military. The first, evolving between 1871–76, was to abolish the samurai class. The second, from 1873, was to create a modern mass military based on conscription, with young men from all social strata being liable to three years' service in the army.

The abolition of the samurai class from the 1870s raises a point of direct relevance to this study: for the first time in nearly three centuries, many Japanese towns and cities which had formerly been the seat of warrior government were denuded of a tangible, official military presence as the samurai elite was stripped of its arms, its uniforms, symbols and political power. The limited pensions offered by the central government also denied many former samurai the chance to retain any kind of socioeconomic status. At the same time, there was a broader dismissal of the entire culture of the traditional Japanese warrior. As the imperial mandate introducing the law on conscription declared in November 1872, they were men who 'led an easy life, and were arrogant and shameless, and murdered innocent people with impunity'.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the historical soldier of Japan was officially rejected as essentially

idle, corrupt and homicidal. The defeat of several samurai uprisings against the new government in the 1870s also meant that former warriors were open to accusations not only as actual or potential traitors but also as failures in real-life combat. This suggests they were even more likely to retreat from the public gaze.

In Gifu, a further blow to the status of former samurai came with the administrative restructuring of the 1870s–80s. In the selection of a prefectural capital, all of the earlier centres of military power lost out and became subordinate to the commercial hub that was Gifu city. It is even suggested that one reason for overlooking Ōgaki is that the government believed the town's warriors would either be an obstacle to reform or would expect to have too great a voice in local affairs. Gifu, by contrast, was attractive precisely because it was a city of businessmen.<sup>13</sup>

While the samurai were being eradicated from the streets and sites of influence in Gifu, there was one spot in the countryside where the new imperial army established a formal and enduring presence. This was in the region of several villages around what is now the town of Kakamigahara in southeast Gifu. The lie of the land was particularly well suited to artillery practice and, as early as 1870, warriors of the soon-to-be defunct Kanō domain had used the area to test their cannon. The intimate link between Kakamigahara and the new army, however, began late in 1876 when a group of officers approached local villagers with a view to buying land for a firing range. Negotiations about the size and location of the land, its value, and the responsibilities of local people to tend the site, continued until an agreement was reached with a group of seven villages in February 1879. Under the terms of this agreement, the army purchased 30 hectares of land but also promised to sell the land back to the villagers if it ever became superfluous to military purposes. The local impact of the imperial army's early venture into Gifu is described in the official history of Kakamigahara: 'where there had been only the sound of birds, insects and other creatures, now the area shook to the thunder of artillery as if the heavens were being torn asunder ... villagers walking along the way would crouch in fear at the noise of the cannon and hurry their steps'.<sup>14</sup> Late in the 1880s, with the increasing role of heavy artillery in modern war, the army bought additional land at the site. In this respect, a part of Gifu was increasingly important to the army but the soldiers came and went and there remained no fixed or tangible presence of the army itself. As for the villagers, their contact with the military was a mixed bag; they obtained benefit from the sale of their land but also suffered considerable disruption to their lives.

The introduction of conscription was the single greatest vehicle for change in civil-military relations. However, in its first two decades, it was hindered by a lack of finance which limited both the number of men who could be drafted and also the geographical spread of army bases. From 1874, conscripts from Gifu were officially attached to the garrison at Nagoya just south of the prefectural border but the garrison was actually divided into two units; one at

Nagoya, the other at Kanazawa on Japan's west coast. Many soldiers from Gifu, especially those from the mountain counties, were sent to Kanazawa. This was largely unchanged in the army reorganization of 1888 whereby garrisons were replaced by divisions and Nagoya was retitled the 3rd Division with regiments at Nagoya and Kanazawa. Thus, throughout this time, Gifu conscripts performed their army service outside of the prefecture and in two diametrically opposed directions.

As a result of these various changes, the closest and most regular form of contact between the military and much of civil society was through the system of testing potential conscripts. This contact revolved around the annual health and literacy examinations of twenty-year-old males. Monitoring and maintaining the system were officials at all levels down to the village, while local government offices or often Buddhist temples acted as inspection sites. The wider public was involved through detailed press reports of the draft exam results. In 1890, some counties in Gifu showed what the GNN described as 'an extreme number of failures'.<sup>15</sup> As the tests were conducted in April and May, it is probable that the food crisis had affected the health of many young men.

Draft avoidance, however, was also commonplace and apparently accepted in the civilian community. According to the official history of Kakamigahara, books on how to avoid the draft were best-sellers at least in the 1870s and, among villages of that region, the preferred method was adoption into a childless family (eldest sons were originally exempted from military service). Other methods for young men to evade military service included moving to an area, perhaps of a large city, where doctors were known to grant easy medical exemptions, or even further afield to the, as yet undeveloped, northern island of Hokkaidō. Alternatively, there was a practice whereby young men facing the draft medical would organize a non-stop party lasting over several days at which the potential draftee would be the constant host while his friends took turns in being his guests. After several days of this, the exhausted youth stood an excellent chance of being rejected as unfit for army service.<sup>16</sup>

Once the results of the draft lottery were known, the most intense and emotional moment in civil-military relations came late in November and early in December. This was the time of exchange when, across Japan, men who had completed their tour of duty returned home and the new conscripts headed to their allotted base. In Gifu in 1890, all the new troops from Ōgaki departed together on 30 November and were farewelled at the local rail station by a crowd of well-wishers and schoolchildren. Some town or village heads in the south of the prefecture accompanied conscripts to the station at Gifu city or even went all the way to Nagoya. In more remote counties, officials and well-wishers generally remained closer to home. A common practice at this time of the year was for local officials, volunteers and perhaps staff of the local school to arrange a party both for those returning and for those leaving. These parties in rural communities were normally held either at a temple or, more commonly, at the primary school and could involve anything from 50 to

100 guests. Where the party was held at a school, the pupils were sometimes invited, usually to sing songs of praise and inspiration (schoolchildren functioned as the civil chorus for the military in peace and war throughout the 1890s–1920s). At these parties, a returnee who had finished his service with distinction could expect a reward from the community of perhaps 1–3 yen depending on his rank.<sup>17</sup>

If the actual military was at best a marginal presence across much of provincial Gifu, that changed dramatically, if only briefly, during the spring of 1890. The reason was that Nagoya and its region, including lower Gifu, had been chosen as the stage for the annual grand manoeuvres. On this occasion, the two competing teams were made up of 30,000 men from the Imperial Guards, 3rd Division (Nagoya) and 4th Division (Osaka), plus about 20 naval vessels. Watching the manoeuvres in his capacity as supreme commander of the armed forces was the emperor, accompanied by a large retinue of foreign dignitaries and military observers, as well as a flock of journalists from all over Japan and thousands of ordinary sightseers.

The local response to news of the forthcoming manoeuvres reinforces the idea that provincial society was ambivalent towards the military. The first comment of the GNN was to remind its readers that, historically, Gifu had often suffered from competing armies, most famously at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, inflicting destruction on its land and property and forcing its people to flee for their lives. The GNN also noted local resistance to conscription since the 1870s with those youth who could not avoid the draft leaving for the army as if heading for ‘the field of death’. However, it argued, the manoeuvres offered the people of Gifu a chance to see the military up close for the first time in many years and, in response, to exhibit a new spirit of welcome and encouragement, especially to soldiers from distant parts of Japan.<sup>18</sup>

For the good of the nation, we should embrace a situation where the military and civilians know and understand each other well. We hope that the relationship between our troops and the common people will become like that in the West. Local people should observe these grand manoeuvres, see this force of many thousands, watch the action and drama as they fight each other in the fields, and come genuinely to respect the warriors, thereby improving the character of our nation, building a firmer martial spirit, and strengthening the bond between civilians and the military.

The manoeuvres were conducted between 30 March to 2 April 1890. The scenario was that the Western Force (4th Division, Osaka) had assembled a great fleet, taken control of the seas around Japan and, having landed troops at various strategic points, had occupied Nagoya. The goal of the defending Eastern Force (3rd Division, Nagoya) was to regroup and prevent the enemy from operating beyond the area of its initial gains, the assumption being that it could then retake lost territory and expel the invader.<sup>19</sup> The headquarters of

the Western Force were in Gifu city; the Eastern Force remained in its native Aichi prefecture but relocated to the town of Toyohashi. The emperor, foreign guests and journalists, as well as many of the thousands of curious civilians, stayed in Nagoya.

Precise details of every action in the manoeuvres were reported in the press, including the GNN which had two correspondents covering the event. In fact, the level of information made it seem almost indistinguishable from a real war. If this had been the case, civilians had cause for alarm as the Eastern Force defending Japan was outwitted by a surprise attack from the invading Western Force (this led to suggestions that the 3rd Division commander, Lt-General Kurokawa, should resign to atone for his failure).

In terms of civil-military relations, however, the reality of the manoeuvres was that they were always a form of entertainment, a theatrical display intended to impress the public and foreigners rather than prepare the troops for actual combat. It was, one might say, the biggest show in town and, in 1890, local railway stations were besieged by sightseers with extra police having to be dispatched to maintain order (but also to watch out for what were described as ‘troublemakers’). By the early 1920s and with a nationwide rail system in place, the size of audience was to expand to new heights. In 1924, there were more than 50,000 applicants in Gifu to watch the autumn manoeuvres from school, youth and women’s groups alone (all such applications were approved by the army). In 1890, the impact of war-as-theatre was limited by the choice of terrain; narrow roads and paddy fields made it difficult to engage in large-scale movement of troops or cavalry. In later years, the rise of cinema newsreels meant that the manoeuvres could be staged away from major cities and still reach a mass audience. The idea that spectacle remained more important than combat efficiency is clear from a report by a British officer observing the final day of the 1936 manoeuvres in Hokkaido<sup>20</sup>:

bodies of infantry were charging each other from all sides; tanks, both medium and light, were driving through and through them, in spite of anti-tank weapons firing at point-blank range ... Artillery batteries were also in the thick of it and machine guns and light automatics were firing at thirty yards range in all directions ... At the same time, all the aircraft available from both sides were flying in a confined space a few hundred feet above the ground.

Despite the limitations of terrain, the manoeuvres of 1890 were obviously successful in impressing the audience. A German army observer, for example, told the readers of a German military journal that the Japanese forces were comparable to those of a European power (he could not resist mentioning that the Japanese army had benefited from German advisers over the previous five years).<sup>21</sup> The people of Japan, therefore, had good reason to feel a sense of pride in their military.



During the manoeuvres, the most intimate contact between soldiers and civilians came in accommodation. Gifu city provided billets to more than 8,000 soldiers: some 2,300 men of the 4th Division entered the city between the hours of 10 pm on 28 March and 3 am on the 29th, with another 6,000 arriving after daybreak the same day. They were spread among the private houses of the city while their commander, Lt.-General Takashima, stayed at the city's finest inn, the Tamaiya. Another 5,000 troops were billeted elsewhere in the prefecture, mostly at the town of Kasamatsu. Relative to the local population, the troops at Kasamatsu outnumbered even those at Gifu city and their arrival brought the place to a halt as people gathered in the streets to witness the unfamiliar scene. Despite their lack of experience at this level, the officials at Kasamatsu won acclaim for the efficiency with which they handled all the arrangements, briefing the townspeople in advance on how to deal with the soldiers, and then meeting the army on the edge of town so as to guide the men quickly to their billets.<sup>22</sup>

One problem for local people was that everything to do with the manoeuvres was technically a military secret and so, while officials of necessity had to be privy to certain details, householders were not given adequate warning about the number of men they were to accommodate. This led to considerable frustration in terms of preparing food and supplies for an undisclosed number of guests.<sup>23</sup> Further, one of the major complaints in Gifu city, in contrast to Kasamatsu, was that the distribution of billets for the thousands of soldiers was badly handled. In particular, there was resentment that some small houses had been told to provide space for up to six troops while houses twice or even three times larger had been exempt from lodging even a single man. The sense of injustice lingered after the manoeuvres when some residents of at least one city ward threatened legal action against the prefectural government if they were not fully and fairly recompensed for all of the expenses they incurred by housing the military.<sup>24</sup>

The arrival of more than two army divisions in or around Gifu imposed a range of burdens on local people. For the public as a whole, one major consequence of the army presence was inflation in the price of various goods and services at the very moment when they were struggling with the food crisis. Fortunately, the two sharpest rises were in avoidable expenses. First, there was the entirely predictable rise in transport costs. Local rickshaw-pullers, knowing that the increase in custom would be very brief and depended largely on transient civilians rather than the military (officers had horses, other ranks marched), no doubt felt justified in raising fares to meet the sudden demand. Second, there was the less predictable increase in the cost of straw sandals (*waraji*). This was probably down to two regiments of the 4th Division. While most troops appear to have arrived at Gifu by train, these were said to have marched all the way from Osaka and some even further from Himeji. By the time they reached Gifu, about half of them had feet so badly swollen, they were incapable of wearing boots and so, on their first evening in the city, a team was sent out to make an emergency purchase of 1,000 pairs of *waraji*.

The story of their plight was only made public after the manoeuvres had finished but it was surely common knowledge on the city street. Apart from frustration at the increased price of *waraji*, the scene of 1,000 limping soldiers may have elicited public sympathy (and possibly amusement) but it was not a fine advertisement for the army. Having said that, the 4th Division was the ultimate victor in the manoeuvres so perhaps the footsore among them were tough enough to fight in full battle kit or, alternatively, they were smart enough to camouflage themselves among the larger force and keep their sandals out of sight.<sup>25</sup>

A further cost to some local people was the infrastructure built by the army for the manoeuvres. An example here is a bridge constructed by the engineers of the 4th Division over the River Kiso at a place called Funabashi. The bridge was clearly valuable to the triumphant West Force but the bill was to be covered by Gifu taxpayers. Originally, it was expected to cost more than 800 yen but, as the GNN reported, the skill of the army engineers resulted in a bargain price at just over 600 yen.<sup>26</sup> No doubt the people of Funabashi and the surrounding area were genuinely indebted to the military but there may have been others in the prefecture, especially in the Hida mountain region, who felt the money should have been better spent.

The manoeuvres and the movement of so many men and horses could not help but cause some damage to property. In May 1890, just when the food crisis was at its height, the 4th Division sent what seemed to be a considerable sum – over 900 yen (the cost, we now may say, of one and a half river bridges) – for any damage to fields and to recompense those who had provided packhorses and drivers during the manoeuvres. Whether or not this was accepted by local people as adequate is unclear but the sum probably fell short of expectations. Damage to farmland when rice was in short supply was no doubt impossible to estimate fairly. Moreover, of the horses requisitioned for the manoeuvres, about 60 had died or been so exhausted by military use that they were deemed to be in no fit state to be returned to their owners.<sup>27</sup> This meant that farmers had to spend time and effort in competition with each other to obtain fresh livestock.

Commanders were often nervous about the reception the army would receive in ‘foreign’ locations in Japan, even if this involved merely crossing a prefectural border. In 1890, however, relations between the ordinary soldiers of the Osaka Division and civilians in Gifu were generally cordial; there is nothing in the surviving records to indicate any friction. It may be that wherever local people were dissatisfied with the billeting arrangements or the costs of goods and services, their dissatisfaction was with officials and traders, not the troops. This was not always the case. In the 1892 manoeuvres in Ibaragi prefecture, there were so many complaints from military personnel about ‘coldness’ from the local community that there was an official investigation which resulted in the governor and his subordinates being publicly censured.<sup>28</sup> In Gifu in 1890, the evidence of cordiality lies in the stream of letters from commanders and individual soldiers in the days following the

manoeuvres, all expressing their thanks to local people for the warmth of their treatment both during the manoeuvres and along their route home. Towns and villages in the mountain region of Hida were especially noted for their generosity; at one village in Yoshigi county, a Kanazawa-based regiment of the defeated 3rd Division was given 10 casks of *saké* to help literally raise their spirits while, elsewhere in the county, passing troops were offered tea and cakes as well as a rousing send-off from village heads and local schoolchildren waving flags.<sup>29</sup>

From start to finish, the grand manoeuvres had lasted just a few days. The impact on provincial society may be likened to that of a steam train. Momentarily, there was a rush of sound and motion, troops milling in their thousands, foreign VIPs and Japanese visitors with strange dialects, the thundering of hooves and cannon, and then the crowds moved on. Thereafter, local people returned to their concerns about the national and provincial assemblies, the problems of the education system, ways to boost the local economy, the price of perishable commodities, and, for gossip, the comings and goings of the local bordellos. The unprecedented scale of the encounter with the military had resulted in a mix of experiences for the people of Gifu but it did not lead, as the GNN had hoped, to the seeding of a new and enduring spirit of popular militarism.

One practical benefit of the manoeuvres was that they did enhance the familiarity of local people with the military and this allowed them to learn from recent mistakes. Thus, when about 300 men of the 3rd Division returned to Gifu city for five days of swimming and boating practice on the River Nagara in July 1890, the public was told well in advance the precise rates of subsidy for civilian billets: householders providing lodging to an officer would receive 18 *sen* a day for food and three and a half *sen* a day for bedding; those providing room to the other ranks would receive 3 *sen* per man per day for cutlery and bedding (the other ranks cooked their own food).<sup>30</sup>

What is apparent from reports such as these is that ordinary people wanted a clear understanding of the costs and benefits of supporting the military. That is, they took a pragmatic, not romanticized or idealistic, approach to the civil-military relationship. Yet, different people created their own definition of pragmatism; this meant that some greeted the army with extraordinary goodwill while others reacted with cold indifference. The range of local responses was evident in November 1890 when the 3rd Division returned to Gifu for large-scale exercises.

On this occasion, there were 7,000 men training in the southwest of the prefecture. For the most part, however, public attention was fixed on the divisional commander, Lt-General Kurokawa. He was still resisting suggestions that he should resign to atone for his defeat in the spring manoeuvres when, in the middle of field training, his teenage daughter suddenly died. The site of any army exercise was technically a battlefield and so, despite his personal tragedy, he was forbidden by army regulations from leaving Ōgaki and returning to his family.<sup>31</sup> Kurokawa was the most senior officer in the region

of Gifu and, for that reason, the face of the army for local people. In 1890, he showed that the modern army officer could be highly disciplined, even in the most testing circumstances, but also that a career officer did not indulge in grand gestures when confronted with a professional failure.

Some of Kurokawa's men spent several days on exercises in Motosu county, north of Ōgaki. Immediately after their return, one soldier wrote a letter to the GNN to publicise the kindness of a village head called Sekiya. Sekiya had admitted to the billeting sergeant that, every time the army appeared, householders showed their hostility (*en'aku*) to the troops by offering all kinds of pretexts for refusing them accommodation, such as one of the family was sick, the wife was pregnant, or there were not enough bowls for guests. Sekiya, however, had showered the troops with courtesy, buying food for them and their horses, lodging some of them in his own house, and guiding others to the more hospitable residents. For men who had just marched through mud and driving rain, this was the perfect welcome. That the soldier was moved to write an open letter to the press, however, implies that it was rare. Indeed, while one might assume that the position of village head compelled Sekiya to treat the military with such courtesy, regardless of the views of others in the village, the soldier's letter publicly contrasted his conduct with the arrogance and indifference towards the army of the head of an unidentified town elsewhere in Gifu.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, officials also had their own views of the army and made no attempt to hide them.

Towards the end of 1890, the GNN carried an editorial on 'The Future of Gifu City'. The prediction included busy Western-style hotels clustered around the railway station, flourishing local businesses, bustling restaurants, the greater spread of newspapers, post and telegraph offices, clean streets and rivers, a fine public park with a zoo and a museum, more schools and hospitals, and a respected justice system of courts, police and prison.<sup>33</sup> This was a dream of order and progress, peace, wealth and health, education, culture and leisure. It was, in other words, the realization of the Meiji slogan of 'civilization and enlightenment'. Yet, within this idealized image of the civil community of the future, the military remained, as at the start of the year, very much on the periphery of provincial life.

## 2 The profits of war

### The conflict with China 1894–95 and beyond

Between August 1894 and April 1895, Japan was at war with Qing China. The goal was to replace China as the dominant power in Korea. To this end, Japan mobilized a force of 240,000 men (5,000 of these from Gifu); Beijing put about four times that number into the field but the majority was untrained, poorly armed, and bereft of support such as medical care. The fighting was mainly in Korea and Manchuria in China's northeast. The Japanese forces won every engagement on land and sea, although not without a far greater struggle on occasion than is usually credited in the history books. At the war's end, Japan obtained a substantial profit in terms of money and land; the money came from the huge indemnity paid by the Chinese government and the land came with the cession of Taiwan which elevated Japan to the status of a colonial power. The principal setback of the war came late in the peace negotiations when, in the so-called Triple Intervention, France, Germany and Russia combined to pressure Japan into relinquishing any claim for territory on the Chinese mainland.

This was the first overseas conflict fought by Japan in 300 years. To go so long without a foreign war is a remarkable achievement for any society but especially one governed by a military elite. This immediately raises questions about the link between a military-dominated polity and national aggression. The point of greatest relevance for our needs, however, is that there was never any sign of a popular desire for war during these three centuries. Nor was there such a demand in 1894. It was, instead, Japan's political and military leaders who were now convinced that a war to replace China as hegemon of Korea was essential. The fundamental principle of foreign relations in the late nineteenth century was that the 'living' nations of the modern age expanded, the 'dying' contracted, and that war was the ultimate test of a nation's health and strength. For Japan in 1894, it was fortunate that its first experience of modern war was with a pre-industrial opponent whose government never desired war, was unprepared for war, and whose population was almost entirely disengaged from hostilities. This ensured that Japan's military success was relatively easily obtained, incurred few battlefield casualties (most died from disease), and stopped well short of impoverishing the Japanese economy. This meant that it was easy for the Japanese public, after the initial weeks of

uncertainty, to enjoy the repeated victory festivals and feel they were sacrificing neither their men nor their own financial security. A question to which we shall return, however, is whether the ease and profit of these victories in 1894–95 encouraged any growth of militarism in provincial Japan.

I have already stated that the Japanese people were not seeking war in 1894. I reiterate this point because it challenges one of the common assumptions in Japanese historiography. Thus, in one of the few academic works in Japanese even to consider social aspects of the 1894 conflict, the title of the first chapter is ‘The fever of the Japanese public for war’ (*Nihon kokumin no sansen-netsu*).<sup>1</sup> A detailed inspection of the local press over the days and weeks preceding the war, however, shows nothing of this fever in Gifu. In May 1894, there were reports about political instability in Korea but almost nothing on military affairs outside of the annual routine of draft examinations. Earlier that year, virtually the only mention of anything to do with the military had been the Army Surgeon-General’s endorsement of a medicine which actually was to reduce fever in adults and children. The most frequent image of the warrior was the single illustration which accompanied the serial fiction in the daily press. Throughout the 1890s, these were usually stories of samurai swordsmen and the line drawings normally rotated between scenes of sword fighting, including grisly depictions of murder and decapitation, and quietude (one striking image from the *Nōbi Nippō* in January 1894 showed a two-sworded female warrior drinking from a gargantuan *saké* dish while the innkeeper looked on in horror).<sup>2</sup> In terms of hard news, the major papers in Gifu prefecture, the *Gifu Nichi Nichi Shimbun* (GNN) and *Nōbi Nippō*, continued to focus on local and national politics, business and education. A sidelight on the public view of foreign relations and ideas of self-sacrifice, however, may be gleaned from two reports in the GNN of 3 May 1894. One concerned a new organization in Kyoto, the Society for Eternal Protection of the Nation (*Aikoku Eiho-kai*), which was dedicated to opposing the residence of foreigners in Japan, ‘even at the cost of their own lives’. This belligerent nationalism seemed to be a throwback to the pre-Meiji years of political unrest and the GNN comment was that the group ‘brought together only the slightly unusual sort of person’ (*chotto futsū igai no jimbutsu nomi*). By contrast with these passionate, self-sacrificing men of Kyoto, a report on Tsumaki village, a pottery-making centre in Toki county in Gifu’s southeast, noted that no one wanted to serve as the new village head because, rather than get a low wage for sitting in an office all day and dealing with other people’s problems, they all preferred to make good money at home from making or painting pots.<sup>3</sup> Thus, if the value of self-sacrifice for the communal good is central both to the military and militarism, this contrast of Gifu villagers and unusual urbanites from Kyoto suggests that, on the eve of Japan’s first modern war, any kind of ‘militarist’ in provincial society was very much in the minority.

The first real sense at the provincial level that war was imminent appears in June 1894. The head of the Gifu police issued an order early that month for

all branches in the prefecture to prevent alarmist rumours or gossip. At this same time, people were also aware that some newspapers in Tokyo had been banned for their reports on the rising tensions in Korea.<sup>4</sup> On 26 June, the GNN warned local people that China was heavily involved in preparations for war and refused categorically to negotiate with Japan over Korea; it also reported that Chinese women and children were said to be fleeing the Korean peninsula; moreover, army reservists in Japan were soon to be called up. It was only now that the Japanese public confronted the reality of a modern overseas war in which the active support of all sectors of civil society might be decisive.

The response of any public to war depends partly on the sense that the resort to arms is legitimate. In 1894, this was never in doubt among ordinary Japanese. Interestingly, however, there was a discussion on the eve of hostilities as to whether a formal declaration of war was necessary. The issue, as reported in the Gifu press, was that, while traditions based on ancient Roman law required a formal announcement, more recent practice around the world had rendered such niceties superfluous. The press accepted, however, that this remained a topic of contention.<sup>5</sup> In the event, Japanese and Chinese warships clashed on 25 July, while Japanese troops in Korea attacked Chinese forces on 29 July, and only on 1 August did the Emperor Meiji officially declare Japan to be at war (Japan was to repeat this practice of striking first against Russia in 1904 and at Pearl Harbor in 1941, thereby remaining consistent throughout the existence of the imperial armed forces). Aside from the legal questions, it became standard practice among Japanese civilians to describe this as 'a righteous war' (*gisen*), that is, a conflict between progress and regress or civilization and barbarism. Thus, there was never any real public criticism of the war on moral grounds.

In a country so long at peace with its neighbours, the natural early response to the prospect and then the reality of war was ambivalence. Broadly speaking, there were three emotional responses: the heroic, the pragmatic, and the perturbed. In the minority were those individuals and some groups who welcomed the war and who offered their services to the army ministry. On 3 July 1894, the GNN published in full the letter of Honda Masanao, a local villager of samurai origins from the western county of Yamagata. In this, Honda claimed to have formed a squad of 160 men ready to fight and die for the nation. Explaining his intention, Honda wrote, 'Ah, you men who shed tears for your beloved nation, you righteous men who have the traditional Yamato spirit of Japan, now rise, rise, rise, and add your name to the patriotic squad (*giyūtai*) I have established'. In the town of Kanayama in Mugi county, central Gifu, a group calling itself the *Giyū Hōkoku-gumi* also collected nearly 60 members by the first week of August 1894 with many of them sharpening their skills through daily sword practice. Unfortunately for groups such as these, the government made it very clear from the outset that, in modern war, the official institutions of army and navy would do all of the fighting while civilian militia would stay at home and work. Still in the heroic

mould but slightly lower down the scale, the GNN also described Gifu city on the day that war was declared as being in a very positive mood, with everyone, young and old, discussing the war and exhibiting what it termed a 'fine Yamato spirit'. Probably the most common public response, however, was pragmatism. Thus, around the prefecture, officials, the press and established associations, most notably the prefectural branch of the Japan Red Cross, quickly began to organize donations of money and non-perishable goods for the military. Other locals gathered at the Shintō shrine in their town or village to pray for victory and, where appropriate, to drink to the health and safety of local reservists awaiting their call-up. In Gifu city, the Inaba Shrine began the war with 10 days of prayers for victory and the safety of Japanese forces; in one village in Mugi county, everyone stopped work for four days to pray at the local shrine.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, one might say that, along with the newspapers, Shintō shrines were the most important sites of 'contact' with the war for many people: from the newspapers, they obtained knowledge of the war, at the shrines, they expressed their feelings about it.

Any perturbation about the prospect of war was due to the fact that China had always been the hegemonic power in East Asia and it took an enormous leap of faith in mid-1894 to assume that Japan could triumph without suffering heavily. There were also concerns about the efficiency of Japan's largely untested mass military. With no standing army in Gifu, local people could not see the men for themselves and gauge their confidence. They did, however, have access to some disquieting reports from army bases in other regions. Late in June, the GNN carried the news of several soldiers of the 5th Division at Hiroshima who, it was stated, had been so terrified at the threat of war that they had fled their barracks. The report claimed that four of them had been caught immediately and, with equal speed, shot as deserters. The day after the declaration of war, the GNN also reported on a soldier at an infantry regiment at Toyohashi in neighbouring Aichi prefecture. At 3 am on 1 August, he attempted to shoot his sergeant who was then sleeping. The bullet ricocheted off the intended victim's arm and pierced the chest of another sergeant. The soldier then shot and killed himself.<sup>7</sup> Anyone reading these reports – and the fact that they were printed and not censored is worth noting – would have reason to worry about discipline within the army's ranks. A further source of anxiety at the start of the war was the belief, which did not evaporate with the war's end, that China was not the real enemy and that, whatever the outcome of this war, it was only the prelude to another, far more challenging conflict in the future. Thus, as one soldier en route to the battlefield wrote to provincial schoolchildren, 'Our duty is to fight the Qing but what will yours be? The Russians? The British? The French?'.<sup>8</sup>

In generating, organizing, and maintaining public support for Japan's first modern war, the newspapers at every level of society, but especially at the provincial level, were critical. A history of Japanese journalism states that the domestic press collectively dispatched 114 war correspondents, 11 war artists and 4 photographers to cover events in Korea and China.<sup>9</sup> Together with the



expansion of telegraph facilities, and in Tokyo and Osaka of metropolitan telephone systems from the 1890s, this meant that news from the battlefield possessed a previously unimagined volume, depth and immediacy. For example, the *Nōbi Nippō* on 20 November 1894 could report that the key attack of the war – on Port Arthur – was expected to start within hours (its assessment was premature by only one day). Moreover, after the first weeks of hostilities, military censorship of the press seemed almost invisible. The extent of public demand for the most up-to-date news is reflected in the sales of ‘extras’. The highly respected historian of Japan’s military, Matsushita Yoshio, himself a child during the war, states that so many people stayed at home in the evenings to read the ‘extras’ that retailers who remained open at night were praying for victory as soon as possible so that their businesses might survive the war.<sup>10</sup> Both at the metropolitan and provincial level this flood of war news included intricate details of engagements often supported by maps and line drawings, statements from senior officers, and the publication in full of frequent letters from local men at the front. It was perhaps these letters which did as much as anything to encourage provincial support for the war effort: they established a personal link between the imperial army and the locality which was lacking in the national press. In these and other ways, the newspapers kept the civilian community not only informed about the war, they made it a part of daily life.

The wartime increase both in information and those wishing to be informed heralded a new era in the Japanese media. In Tokyo, the leading *Yūbin Hōchi Shimbun*, which had four war correspondents in Korea even before the start of hostilities, underwent a major restructuring late in 1894, shortening its name to *Hōchi Shimbun*, changing its format, adding more illustrations, and adopting a style of writing more accessible to all social classes. In Gifu, the GNN announced its own wartime reforms in October 1894. Essentially, these involved many more reports than hitherto (though with no increase in the price of 1 *sen* per copy) and also various special services. For GNN subscribers in the remote mountain town of Takayama, for example, telegrams about the war or other major events were to be forwarded instantly to the local GNN representative who would then rush the news to their homes. The point was emphasized, however, that this was a service only for loyal readers: in other words, it was a matter of commerce, not patriotism. Also, in mid-December, the GNN declared that, having already made so much profit from the war, it would reward its readers by giving them a free photograph of the emperor in its New Year’s Day issue as well as a free supplement (the details of which it teasingly kept secret). At the same time, it warned advertisers to hurry if they wished to be included in what was certain to be an enormously popular issue. Following on from this, the GNN set up a competition in January 1895 to mark its 4,000th edition. The prize (a grandfather clock) was to be decided by popular vote for the best advertisement for, as the GNN explained on 25 January, ‘the basis of commercial prosperity is advertising’.<sup>11</sup>

From this, we can see that the war had a direct impact on the quantity, nature, and appearance of information in Meiji Japan. News from the front was also extremely profitable for the modern media, and newspaper editors felt no compulsion, either personally or from public opinion, to sacrifice or even minimize their profits. Of course, what the press was selling in this war was an ongoing narrative of success and so any criticism of its profits might have seemed merely churlish. We should, however, not exaggerate the reach of the press at this time. There remained many Japanese who were illiterate or who had only the most basic reading skills (though they could still benefit from having the news read to them) and distribution of newspapers outside of the towns was strongest along the rail lines. Even then there might be blank spots: according to one regional history, a village in Yōrō county in Gifu's lower southwest, not in the remote mountain country, fell so far between the cracks in the communications network that it was blissfully unaware that war had started for the first five months of hostilities, that is, until the fighting on the mainland was largely ended.<sup>12</sup>

The way that a society supports its military in war depends on how it views both its own forces and the forces or society of the enemy. Obviously, the media plays a major role in both constructions. During the war with China, Japanese soldiers were able to speak directly to people at home through letters to institutions, family or friends, which were then reprinted in local newspapers. From these, civilians were able to gain a remarkably accurate understanding of a soldier's life in war. There were occasional expressions of military bravado: a sergeant of the 3rd Division writing from Manchuria at the height of winter boldly insisted that every man would sacrifice his life for the nation and the emperor; an army doctor working at a field hospital in the same region declared that, with an unbroken string of victories, war was great fun (*yukai*) for the troops, and that the only hardship was in chasing an enemy which fled at the slightest excuse (he also expressed his personal delight at gaining so much experience with bullet wounds which suggests that the enemy did not always flee so readily). More often, letters from the front explained that life in war was as much, if not more, about finding food, shelter and warmth; one after another, soldiers wrote about the freezing temperatures of Manchuria, in which a cup of water taken from a well would be frozen before it could be rushed inside. People at home were also told of military incompetence. At the start of December 1894, it was said that Japanese forces in Korea had yet to receive winter clothes and were surviving on one blanket for three men. A few days later, there was a report from Manchuria of three soldiers and 16 army labourers freezing to death.<sup>13</sup> Knowing the truth of war probably made local people more sympathetic to the soldiers already at the front and those yet to be sent. It is unlikely, however, to have made them more willing to volunteer for military service or want to see others drafted.

As for popular attitudes towards the enemy in 1894–95, the common wisdom of historians is that the Japanese converted their traditional respect for China and its citizens into contempt. Arakawa's study from 2001, for

example, cites a public victory celebration in Nagoya following the fall of Port Arthur in November 1894 which included a float bearing a mock Chinese head on a bamboo pole. From this alone, he concludes that provincial citizens had already adopted feelings of superiority, contempt and even hatred for the Chinese people.<sup>14</sup> This would seem to be a hasty judgement. In the Gifu press, comments vary from criticism at the abstract level of ‘the Chinese’, to often positive views of individuals. At the abstract level, a typical comparison appears in the *Nōbi Nippō* of 8 August 1894 in which it is argued that ‘the Japanese value virtue and do not seek profit, the Chinese place profit first and virtue second’. Along the same lines, the GNN reported what it described as a representative example of Chinese patriotism; a Chinese merchant in Tianjin was said to be buying up all the local rice supply so that he could sell this at great profit to the Japanese forces when they invaded his city.<sup>15</sup> Chinese soldiers were also usually dismissed as an undisciplined rabble who treated their own people as brutally as they did any Japanese they captured. Yet, there were also reports of military excellence. A soldier from the 3rd Division in Manchuria wrote that he was so impressed by the organization and determination of one small-scale Chinese attack in mid-November that it seemed as if it had been commanded by a German officer. As for Chinese civilians, there was more general respect. In February 1895, a Japanese officer went to great lengths to describe local society in Manchuria for the readers of Gifu. Among the many things which impressed him were the houses of stone, much bigger and grander than those in Japan, yet prices in the market were as much as five times cheaper than those at home. In another report from Manchuria, readers were told of the hard-working Chinese farmers who rose at 4 am in order to till their lands and returned only after dusk, all the while subsisting on a remarkably small amount of food.<sup>16</sup> Given that most Japanese citizens in 1895 were villagers, the hardiness of the Chinese farmer probably left more of an impression than the weakness of the Chinese soldier.

Overall, therefore, while there is evidence of derision and even of contempt, it is going too far to say that ordinary Japanese exhibited race hatred towards the Chinese people. This is worth emphasizing. In terms of popular militarism, civilians en masse are unlikely to abandon their individual interests and opinions, and embrace the regimentation and values of the military, unless they are motivated by fear. In the modern era of competing nationalisms, one of the greatest fears is of being invaded by a race which is regarded either as ‘superior’, or as ‘inferior’ but numerically overwhelming. Where such race fears or hatreds are absent, civilians are more likely to maintain a contractual relationship with the armed forces. Further to this point, the evidence from Japan’s later wars, against Russia in 1904–05 and against Germany in 1914, continues to show a remarkable lack of race hatred, suggesting that the civil-military contract persisted in those years.<sup>17</sup>

If the war of 1894–95 was the first in which the public was engaged on a daily basis through the press, and from which they received a detailed and often balanced view of modern war, it was also the first in which they were

able to 'see' the conflict through a range of images. According to art historians Tan'ō and Kawada, this was the first case in Japan of the wartime 'mobilization of the image'.<sup>18</sup> The photograph had become familiar since its development in the 1840s but was still expensive to reproduce in the newspapers; it tended to appear in expensive multi-volume instant histories. During the war, the traditional form of wood-block prints of warriors and battle scenes (but also, just as often, of soldiers resting in camp or marching through the snow) was also very popular albeit with new colours and new, slightly more realistic, styles of expression. The most powerful (even enchanting) visualization of the war for ordinary people, however, was the suspended image of the magic lantern. These were scenes impressed onto glass plates through which a light was passed and the image projected onto a screen. Advertisements show that the lanterns retailed at about 6 to 25 yen, depending on how far they could project a clear image (usually 2–3 meters) while slides cost roughly 6 yen for 20 large plates or 3 yen for smaller versions. The magic lantern could reach deep into communities. At a village in the high mountains of Ōno county in October 1894, the local primary school arranged a magic lantern show and lecture on the war which attracted several hundred people. At another village in Mugi county in central Gifu, a magic lantern show was added to the harvest festival celebrations. In Ena county in the southeast, a man bought a batch of slides and toured the region at his own expense to give local villagers an unprecedented visual sense of the war. In the town of Nakatsugawa, also in Ena county, local people got together to buy several hundred slides which were shown over successive days, with admission fees going to the families of men on active service.<sup>19</sup>

One feature of the magic lantern was that it could be seen communally – most accounts tell of an audience of several hundred people – with everyone cramming into village schools, other public buildings, or even the village temple. Also, in contrast to the traditional or modern theatre troupes, which also were popular but which were obviously actors in disguise, the people could see images direct from the war and, as the advertising for the Benridō magic lantern company stated, 'feel they were right there, witnessing reality'. The appeal of the magic lantern is evident in a report from Gifu in September 1894. At a spinning factory, the manager threatened a fine of 10 *sen*, or about a day's wage, to any woman who left the workplace except on agreed rest days. Despite this, 13 of the spinners were so determined to see the magic lantern that they clubbed together to get the money, paid the fine in advance, and went off to enjoy the show. The power of this modern technology in war is further suggested by the rather tragic case of a Japanese seaman who was said to have suffered a mental affliction caused, according to the navy's official medical history, 'by undue excitement on seeing a magic lantern'.<sup>20</sup>

The press and the magic lantern informed and entertained a wide audience receptive to news of success. Beyond the localities of army and navy bases, however, the two most emotive sites for the dramatization of civil-military unity were the major railway stations along the eastern seaboard, and at

funeral ceremonies for the war dead. Both were ideal locations to display and strengthen relations between the people and the forces but, of the two, it was probably the railway station which succeeded in raising emotions the highest.

At Gifu city station, and other large stations along the line, there were usually groups of officials, Red Cross nurses, schoolchildren and ordinary people all prepared in accordance with the railway timetable and readying themselves for the arrival of troop trains. They knew that military efficiency required them to be equally efficient in getting tea or clean, boiled water to the troops, along with small gifts such as hand towels or biscuits. This all had to be done generally within no more than a few minutes (the emperor himself paused at Gifu for just three minutes en route to Hiroshima in mid-September 1894). The task of the school groups was to provide the soundtrack to this brief encounter, belting out a rousing chorus of army-sponsored martial songs as the train departed. The combination of the pressure of time, the symbols of nationalism (the uniforms and flags), the mutual kindness of strangers (soldiers might leave a small gift with the children), and the music, all made for a powerful sensation of civil-military unity. The two qualifications to be made here are that the encounter was very fleeting, and that it was limited to certain stations along only one section of Japan.<sup>21</sup> Rapid postwar expansion of Japan's railway network would make this a far more common experience in future conflicts.

Funerals for the war dead offered a geographically broader contact between local society and those who sacrificed their lives on its behalf. As the representative of the community and of the state, it was important for local authorities to ensure a high profile on such occasions, especially bearing in mind how relatively few funerals there were. At Ena county in October 1894, for example, it was resolved that all local war dead would be given a county funeral and that all county officials would be present. Similarly, in November 1894, the head of the Gifu police instructed all of his branches to attend military funerals wherever possible. In this way, the heads of counties plus other county, town or village officials were prominent among the mourners, as were Red Cross members, plus the staff and pupils of schools in the area. In reports of village funerals for individual war dead, such as those at the counties of Ena, Fuwa, and Kakami, all in December 1894 (and all for victims of illness), the figure for attendance in each case exceeded 1,000 people. For the funeral in February 1895 of a sergeant from a village in Toki county who was killed in battle, the number rose to more than 3,000. Even in the more remote mountainous areas, however, the gathering was usually in the hundreds.<sup>22</sup>

As a direct encounter with the military (even though the physical body had already been reduced to a few earthly remains), funerals reached more people than the rail station. However, they were less effective in promoting popular support for the military. First, of the 5,000 men mobilized for war in Gifu, the death toll was 253 but, as indicated above, many of these were the victims of disease; this was a preventable and, rather than heroic, sadly mundane

form of death in Meiji Japan.<sup>23</sup> Also, the funeral ceremonies, in contrast to the shared civil-military sense of movement, dynamism and purpose at the rail stations, were characterized by rigidity; in their lengthy formalities, they sapped the drama of war and replaced it, less with solemnity, and more with the prosaic and the dull. This was the view of one correspondent who complained bluntly that the funerals for war dead he attended were excruciatingly boring because there were so many volunteers offering prayers and each of the prayers was so long. This, he implied, was the reason that Buddhist sects other than those conducting the ritual generally chose not to attend even though, as in the popular saying, ‘born Shintō, die Buddhist’, temples were seen as the natural home of death. Perhaps the sects absented themselves where possible because they saw less advantage in being associated with the military, at least in this form. Instead, they attempted to identify themselves more with life, conducting prayers for victory, sometimes, as in the town of Takayama, in association with shrines, and sometimes using magic lantern shows to attract a crowd (in the immediate postwar years many sects were also highly active in setting up life insurance companies for their believers). In the years following the war, some localities erected stone memorials to the war dead but, once again, the relatively light toll of war meant that, while these were longlasting, they were thinly spread. A similarly enduring but more far-reaching attempt to use heroic death to promote a public culture of sacrifice came in the central government’s textbooks for schools; these immortalized an individual soldier, a bugler in the first major battle at Pyongyang, who was said to have continued sounding the attack even with his final breath.<sup>24</sup>

One point often overlooked about the human cost of the war is that the statistics for military dead alone are misleading. An official medical history of the war notes that cholera was brought back from China by returning troops in May 1895 (a similar problem was to occur worldwide with the Spanish influenza epidemic at the end of World War I). In fact, the army and navy surgeons were in agreement that the germs first appeared in transport vessels chartered in Japan, were then carried to the Japanese forces on the Asian mainland, and subsequently repatriated and disseminated at the war’s conclusion. Despite every effort by the Japanese government towards containment, troops spread the disease across Japan’s provinces, leading to more than 55,000 reported cases of whom more than 40,000 proved fatal (of these, 6,000 were in the army).<sup>25</sup> Thus, large-scale civilian death was one of the final acts of the war.

The local institution most associated with life and which gained most from the war was the Shintō shrine. In towns and villages, these were the first places to which people turned to celebrate victory. This meant that the shrines were identified with success and happiness, a sentiment reinforced by the simplicity of Shintō in which prayers or formalities were brief, to the point, and generally followed by cups of *saké* (following Japan’s victory at Weihaiwei in February 1895, it was said that all the villagers of Musubuwachū, Anpachi

county, stopped work for three days to celebrate and drink *saké* at the local shrine). The wartime shrine exuded a spirit of warmth, light and pleasure. It is even possible that hosting victory celebrations led them to shift partly from being a place to worship agrarian fertility and become more of a shrine to martial virility. This shift in the balance of male–female was encouraged by the popular wartime displays of swordsmanship, usually held in the shrine precincts by members of traditional martial arts clubs (*shōbukai*) which also flourished during the war. A prominent example is the major contest of swordsmanship at Gifu city’s Inaba Shrine on 21 September 1894 which involved competitors from all over the locality; this was followed by a national contest at the same venue exactly a month later. Similarly, a grand competition of sword skills was held on the emperor’s birthday, 3 November, at the town shrine of Kasamatsu. Still, let us not push this point too far. Especially in rural communities, the harvest was literally the source of life and hope and, while virility and victory celebrations were very welcome, the fertility of the soil could never be rivalled in importance. One wartime change in the identity of the village shrine, however, was that it became the predominant site of the national flag. In urban areas such as Gifu and Kasamatsu, officials tried to convince all residents to begin flying the flag at home, especially upon news of victory but, in villages, a single large flag was often to be seen only at the shrine. Yet, the effect could work in differing directions. As the diary of one well-to-do villager noted in February 1895, the national flag had been flying over the village shrine since the previous autumn and had suffered from the elements; it also seemed to be of cheap and flimsy material, perhaps made by the villagers themselves, so that now the colour had faded and it was, he admitted, ‘hard to look at’.<sup>26</sup>

One of the most prominent and active social groups at rail stations and funeral ceremonies was local women. At the time of the Sino-Japanese war, there was no mass nationalist organization for women; that was to come in 1901 with the formation of the Aikoku Fujinkai or Patriotic Women’s Society. In Gifu late in November 1894, however, a group of about 60 women at Unuma village in Kakami county, east of Gifu city, set up a Women’s Association to encourage membership of the Japan Red Cross.<sup>27</sup> Despite their small numbers, they serve as an indication that women were encouraged by the war to organize themselves and expand their activity.

The Japan Red Cross was also a relatively small body at the local level. In mid-September 1894, the Gifu prefectural branch had a total of 1,200 members, a tiny minority of whom were female. From the start of the war, the Red Cross was heavily involved in arranging and transporting donations for the armed forces but the role for which Red Cross women became famous was nursing. Numbers were limited: a recruiting advert in the Gifu press in December specified single or married women between the ages of 20 and 30 years with enough schooling and training to pass an exam at Osaka Medical School. Moreover the army was frightened of romantic entanglements between soldiers and nurses and the husbands of married women may well

have felt the same. A letter from Army Surgeon-General Ishiguro in January 1895 showed that the Red Cross had a medical staff of 130 doctors and nurses in the battlefield (to assist the 1,730 army medical personnel) and another 153 nurses at the Army Hospital in Hiroshima. The public perception of wartime nurses, however, was far more important than their numbers. The new respect for women is obvious in an illustration to a wartime short story in the GNN which shows a Red Cross nurse radiating strength and self-confidence as she tends to a soldier. The adoration of military nurses is also evident in the lyric of a wartime song, *Fujin Jūgun no Uta*, 'so gently nursing, her heart the color of the Red Cross'. Along with such lyricism, however, there was also room for public satire and a popular nickname for brothel waitresses was 'Red Cross Girl' (dancing girls were sometimes described as 'the army band'). The eroticization of military nurses was also apparent in a grand victory celebration at Ōgaki town in December 1894 where one of the highlights, among the thousands of lanterns and bustling crowds, was the sight of the local Yanagimachi geisha dancing in Red Cross uniforms.<sup>28</sup> This satire and 'play' with the image of the military nurse was clearly not malicious and probably did no harm to her reputation. Another question which remains, however, is whether provincial women, or at least women's groups, continued in later years to pursue greater links with the military as a vehicle to enhance their social status.

Perhaps the most important group for the long-term future of civil-military relations was the schoolchildren. For them, the war quickly came to dominate the daily routine of lessons, featuring in classes on history, geography and ethics. In these lessons, as one prefectural education board declared, the aim was to emphasise the virtue of the emperor, demonstrate to the pupils that this was a 'just war' (*gisen*), familiarize them with the history and geography of China and Korea, explain the system and strength of the Japanese armed forces, and also show that, in addition to modern weapons, a 'faithful and courageous warrior spirit is superior to an iron warship'. With principles such as these coming more forcefully into the classroom, and children being taken to meet troop trains, attend military funerals and victory celebrations as well as view exhibitions of trophies of war, it is unsurprising that a historian of schooling in Gifu prefecture, Tobe Hōbun, concludes that the Sino-Japanese war was a turning point in strengthening what he terms 'a militaristic trend' in education.<sup>29</sup>

For the children themselves, the war was most vivid in song and games. The songs were mostly written to the demands of the central government which gathered them in songbooks such as the army ministry's 'Martial songs for conquering the Qing' and made them easily available to schools. Writing nearly 70 years later, Matsushita Yoshio recalled the impact of these songs on boys such as himself. Part of their appeal, however, was that they were the accompaniment to a generally popular war and, in singing them at encounters with a victorious military, the children had a special role to play.<sup>30</sup>

The transformation of war into a game for schoolchildren took place through mock battles. In their way, these were more tightly scripted, children's



versions of the army grand manoeuvres. Thus, when about 140 local primary school pupils staged a mock battle at a village in the central county of Mugi in February 1895, they attracted many spectators. Two months earlier in the town of Ōgaki, however, 1,600 pupils from six local primary schools had been organized by their teachers to put on an even bigger performance. The first act saw all participants gather at the local shintō shrine. There, they were divided into two armies; the Red under the flag of the Morning Sun (Japan) and the White under the banner of the Yellow Dragon (China). Teachers assumed the roles of central, divisional and brigade commanders while female pupils became nurses of a Red Cross field hospital. The ensuing hostilities saw one triumph after another for the Red Army with casualties of only 68 (very) young men who were instantly carried off to the waiting nurses. In the face of such youthful determination, the White Army retreated to Ōgaki Castle (here standing in for Beijing) but, in the concluding act, the Red Army stormed the castle from all directions (with one pupil acting out the part of the fallen bugler) and overwhelmed the enemy. Following the surrender, there was a rendition of the national anthem and a bow to the west (the emperor then being in Hiroshima in western Japan). Observing this dramatic and highly satisfying version of war was an audience of over 3,000 drawn from the town and surrounding areas.<sup>31</sup>

If battle was re-enacted as a game, then one long-term impact of the war on schooling was far more emphasis on the teaching of physical education. This was in response to an education ministry directive from September 1894. As a result, the uniform of boys was altered, eliminating baggy sleeves in favour of a tighter-fitting style which would move more in concert with the arm during exercise. Martial songs were also used more frequently as an accompaniment to exercises. Further, retailers of goods for primary schools began advertising wooden copies of the Japanese-made Murata rifle for use in the new military-style drills. School trips also became more common, often with a military-related site such as an army base or a historical battlefield as part of the itinerary. However, as we shall see, complaints about the physical weakness of young men continued in Gifu, and elsewhere, throughout the following decades. Moreover, according to an official census for 1896, only 63 per cent of school-age children in Gifu were actually in the classroom. Even among those in attendance, there were inevitably some who forgot their lessons (including literacy) within just a few years of finishing primary school. There was undoubtedly greater emphasis on the military, its values and practices in the classroom but, rather than meekly accepting the militarization of children after 1894, we need to reserve judgement and consider them in later years, especially from around the time of the war against Russia when many of the children of 1894–95 were in their late teens.<sup>32</sup>

War is obviously a catalyst for nationalism (though nationalism can adopt many forms): in the case of Japan during the China war, more people were reading the newspapers and sharing the same understanding of events beyond their region, and they were coming together in larger numbers to see magic

lantern shows, schools engaged in mock battles, and to attend military funerals. Bucking this trend, however, at least in Gifu, were local politicians. Indeed, for much of the period of actual hostilities, the prefectural assembly was engaged in its own conflict. The battle for power was between Governor Sogabe and his rivals who accused him of corruption. Following a vote of no-confidence against him, Sogabe dissolved the assembly. This led to a bitter fight in the new elections in which the candidates were irreconcilably split along factional and regional lines: in the words of Itō and Niwa, 'The fact that this was wartime was hardly in anyone's mind'. Instead, the real war was appropriated for local use, with the GNN declaring that the electoral contest was very much like Japan's conflict with China, a struggle between the forces of darkness and light.<sup>33</sup>

While military victory led to public celebration (with the possible exception of assembly members), there was still a price to pay for this easy war. The costs were felt less in the number of men killed and wounded and more in the local economy. They included the purchase of war bonds, donations of money and goods to the war effort, financial support for the families of servicemen, and a downturn in jobs and spending.

The purchase of war bonds was energetically promoted by local officials (and, in some cases, in sermons by Buddhist priests). The Japanese government believed it was vital to retain autonomy and avoid borrowing from overseas. It was also a matter of national prestige to demonstrate the public's financial support for the war effort. However, the bonds were expensive; in the first issue, the price started at 50 yen, although this dropped to 20 yen in the second issue. Consequently, local officials targeted businessmen and the wealthy. A combination of patriotism, official pressure, and the investment nature of the bonds, meant that early targets were easily surpassed. In Gifu city, the original estimate for the first issue was that it would raise about 40,000 yen. In practice, this quickly soared to about 200,000 yen with the 16th National Bank applying for bonds worth 80,000 yen and Watanabe Jinkichi, its president, head of the Gifu Chamber of Commerce, and the prefecture's richest man, applying for another 20,000 (by contrast, the entire county of Ena was said to have applied for about 38,000 yen's worth). Elsewhere, the former ruling family of Ōgaki domain also bought heavily. If this was a case of *noblesse oblige*, it was still inadequate to fund a modern war and, according to historian Ōhama, about 40 per cent of all war bonds in Japan were purchased by villagers. Here, as in the towns and cities, there was direct and insistent pressure from local officials; for example, the diary of a villager in Kutsui, just north of Ōgaki, records that his village office basically ordered men with money to buy bonds. Some, however, purchased them in order to protect their reputation among fellow villagers, while the few who publicly refused to buy any were ostracized by their community. In this way, people often policed themselves rather than merely follow orders from above. Figures in the GNN on 25 December 1894 showed that the prefecture had applied for over one million yen's worth of bonds in the first issue, that is about three

times the figure originally expected, and 1.37 million yen's worth in the second issue. Compared to other prefectures, these were probably appropriate sums and suggest that the citizens of Gifu had met their responsibilities to the nation.<sup>34</sup>

While war bonds promised a return on one's investment, donations to the armed forces were a more straightforward sacrifice. At the beginning of the war, the army ministry set up a body called the Juppeibu to collect donations and issued a list of items it needed. Tellingly, this started with food, continued with clothing, and finished with medical supplies. With less of the official coercion attached to the bond issues, the Juppeibu seems to have received genuine support from many people. One common trend in villages was to postpone the harvest celebrations and, instead, donate the money to the Juppeibu. Villagers of all ages and backgrounds were active in gathering money and goods; at Hira in southwest Gifu, for example, the village youth amassed 200 yen in cash, 1,200 pairs of straw sandals (*waraji*), and 2 barrels of the popular delicacy, dried plums (*umeboshi*). Donations from the towns benefited from the greater wealth and variety of urban life: in Ōgaki, a single patriotic association claimed at the war's end to have collected 7,291 yen for the army and 945 yen for the navy, plus 25 barrels of dried plums, 50,000 cigarettes, 1,000 pairs of socks, 130 handtowels, and nearly 100 litres of biscuit.<sup>35</sup> Overall, sandals and plums were among the most common donations from villagers, while tobacco and *saké* were popular choices (and certainly popular at the front) among townspeople.

The civil group which bore the heaviest cost of the war was the families of local servicemen. The threat to their livelihoods was acknowledged at the very start of hostilities but, according to historian Gunshi Jun, it was not until November 1894 that the central government began to address the problem and, even then, remained effectively uninvolved until the last weeks of fighting. Instead, it left matters in the hands of local officials and volunteers. Its refusal to see poverty as a national responsibility is clear in its response to the natural catastrophes of northern Japan late in 1894. These resulted in 1,000 deaths and 20,000 homes destroyed or damaged but Tokyo announced to the victims that there was no money left over from fighting the war and that they should fend for themselves.<sup>36</sup> What is notable about the military families, however, is just how quickly, and deeply, their finances collapsed. Ōhama claims that, during the war, nearly one-third of all military families in the Hiroshima region depended on community aid. Hiroshima was one of Japan's poorer rural areas where the popular saying was that there were only two ways to escape poverty; join the army or emigrate. In Gifu, there were towns and villages with equally bad, or worse, ratios of war-related poverty: at the town of Takegahana in southeast Gifu, 13 men were on military service and, in November 1894, 10 of their families were deemed to be in need of aid; in the village of Mino in Ena county, six of the 10 families of servicemen were unable to survive without help. Among the most desperate cases reported in the local press was an elderly widower in Ōnō county with a sick daughter.

With her son on active service, the two were said to be so poor that, in the middle of winter in February 1895, they could no longer afford to light a fire.<sup>37</sup>

Across the prefecture, it was county, town and village officials plus local volunteers who arranged varying forms of relief. In the town of Kasamatsu in September 1894, every household was asked to donate at least 5 *sen* so that each military family could receive an average of 3 yen. Around the same time, the town of Gōdo in southwest Gifu decided to use municipal funds to give between 70 *sen* and 1.5 yen each month to military families. Also in September, a village in Mugi county drafted a list of subsidies for military families in the event of death or disablement of their men; 8 yen in case of death, 5 yen where two limbs were lost or incapacitated, 4 yen for the loss or incapacitation of one limb, and 5 yen for the loss of sanity. Never were the costs of war so precisely evaluated.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the good intentions of local organizers, monies across the prefecture were not always distributed efficiently and some families remained in distress for an extended period. However, the varied and often ad hoc methods of organizing financial aid were successful to the extent that an official report for Gifu late in the war could claim, with some relief, that ‘at present there is no one verging on starvation’ (a similar report for Kanagawa prefecture in March 1895 could not make the same claim). Military families received other forms of aid, such as free medical treatment, or exemption from land tax or school fees.<sup>39</sup> Yet, this did not change the fact that having a serviceman in the family was to run a high risk of falling into dire poverty and depending for one’s survival on the charity of others. This was the case even in the short and successful war against China. It suggests that few ordinary Japanese would welcome a far larger war against a genuinely modern opponent.

For the public at large, one cost of the war was inflation, especially of goods needed by the forces, accompanied by a slowdown in general sales and wages. Among the businesses most affected was leisure: victory celebrations brought excellent profits for sellers of food, drink, and sex but, after paying for bonds or making donations, many consumers either had no money for luxuries or felt socially constrained about spending. One way for retailers to stimulate consumption was by tying their product to the war. Thus, one could buy Medal Tobacco, Great Victory Soaps, or women’s hair-clips in the form of a tiny sabre. For many other products, however, such as Beauty Water (*Kirei Mizu*), providing a healthy complexion for men and women at just 10 *sen* for a fortnight’s supply, even the most fertile business mind was at a loss to find a patriotic link. In his authoritative analysis of Toyama prefecture, Michael Lewis finds that commercial advertisers used brutal images of war to attract consumers; as he puts it, ‘selling patriotism and soap with images of decapitated heads swinging from a Japanese soldier’s rifle’. He continues, ‘such illustrations, and others equally jingoistic if less gruesome, became so common that, rather than a mere advertising gimmick, they suggest a diffuse militarization of local life’. In response, one can only say that such advertisements

were not common in Gifu either at this time or in later years. Consequently, one has to treat this particular assertion with some caution.<sup>40</sup>

All of Gifu's leading industries, including textiles, were hit by falling wartime consumption. For female textile workers, there was so little work that they could become easy targets for conmen. In the fall of 1894, two well-dressed men appeared in the town of Seki, posing as representatives of a company in Osaka. They claimed to be recruiting women for a factory supplying textiles to the military and, with the offer of free rail tickets to Hiroshima, managed to sign up more than 50 local workers. Upon arriving at the city, however, the women were apparently sold into prostitution (the press did not explain their fate from that point). Others were saved by the arrival of winter when suddenly there was a great demand from the army for warmer garments such as socks and what were described as 'paper clothes'. The idea was that the strong, thick Japanese paper was effective in keeping out the cold when used in door and window frames and could be used also to help insulate the body. The pay for making these paper shirts was between 6 and 10 *sen* per day and the seamstresses of Gifu city fought among themselves as contractors went from door to door.<sup>41</sup>

One of the jobs hit hardest by the slowdown was haulage. This meant that men whose lives depended either on pulling goods or pulling passengers were tempted by the high wages offered to army labourers. By the war's end, up to 100,000 civilian Japanese are said to have been employed in army transport, including about 650 men from Gifu. In the first half of hostilities, however, the army struggled to recruit men in Gifu city. The reluctance of rickshaw-pullers and others to sign on may have been due to the fact that working in the battlefield meant not only pulling carts but also burying the dead. Local press reports of labourers freezing to death in Manchuria no doubt were also in their minds. Another factor may have been the military's treatment of labourers simply as wage earners; as the letter of the army surgeon-general explained, having received 50 *sen* a day, or 10 times the pay of a soldier, they deserved no extra consideration from the army in terms of food or comfort. Of course, haulage was essential to army mobility and, in practice, labourers at the front were supplied with extra clothing in winter. A curious sidelight on the relationship between the army and its hired hands is that, two or three years after the war, special government payments were made to the families of Gifu labourers killed at the front. In three cases from 1897, these payments were 180 yen, or only about 20 yen less than payments made at the same time to some families of dead soldiers.<sup>42</sup> It may be that, in life, they were valued by the military only for their labour; in death, they could later be revalued as patriotic martyrs.

At the close of the war, Japan obtained an indemnity from China estimated at about one-third the entire annual revenue of the Chinese government. This was used mainly to pay for Japanese industrial development and the expansion of the national rail system. The resulting postwar boom might support the view that the Japanese public regarded the China war as an excellent

investment. However, along with the boom in spending, there was also a rapid rise in commodity prices. Ono Giichi, who experienced these years, calculates from a basis of 100 in 1873, that the cost of living had risen by 1893 to 126 but, by 1900, it had leaped to 195. Wages also rose, of course, although in the case of Gifu city, various occupations including women textile workers, roof tilers and stonemasons, seemed only to be recovering their prewar levels. Also, any wage gains were quickly eroded by an even greater rise in taxes.<sup>43</sup> This meant that any sense of real prosperity resulting from the war was often ephemeral.

After 1895, the imperial army was expanded from six to 12 divisions. This was an early lesson that victory in war bred no lasting security. Any idea that a successful war could transform civil society into a regimented unit offering selfless support was also quickly dispelled on at least two levels; established men of wealth, and young men arriving at draft age. In the first case, the army was the victim of its own naivety. Once it had chosen a site for its new bases, it made the location public even before it had purchased the land. As a result, there were repeated instances across Japan of local men buying up the desired land and offering to sell it to the army at an exorbitant price. The army was to learn from its mistakes and take measures for its own defence in the next major expansion of 1907.

The postwar trend among young men remained for those with intelligence or money to stay in school rather than face conscription. For others, as in prewar years, there was a sizeable number who chose to hide or flee. Thus, in 1898, of the 718 men inspected in Kamo county, 60 either fled or failed to show up, while, in Anpachi county, 715 men were tested at Ōgaki but 82 were described as having already taken flight. From these and similar figures, it appears that something like 10 per cent of draft-age young men were willing to break the law rather than join the army. One of the underlying problems, only reinforced by the wartime experience of military families, was the economic impact on relatives of losing a young man's labour for three years. This is implied in a press report from mid-1898 about a villager in Echigo prefecture who was so distraught that his son had passed the draft examination that he refused sleep and food for several days and then hanged himself.<sup>44</sup>

This is not to ignore the fact that several hundred young men of Gifu volunteered every year for the military, often for the army's schools for non-commissioned officers or, even more commonly, for the navy (the appeal of the navy in a landlocked prefecture like Gifu may have been the belief that seamen were better treated than soldiers). In addition, there were some who volunteered under the special category of one year's active service. The army used this category to entice those with education or money to become reservist officers. However, according to one postwar soldier interviewed in the GNN, 'the real motive of many volunteers is not to become a soldier but to serve themselves by reducing the three year requirement to one. In other words, many volunteer for one year in the very spirit of evading conscription'. He added that, in his view, such men had 'not the slightest trace of the military spirit'.<sup>45</sup>

The doubling of army divisions had a significant impact on Gifu conscripts. With the creation in December 1897 of the 9th Division at Kanazawa, practically all soldiers from Gifu were now sent to the west coast, a much colder part of Japan than Nagoya. This was to cause problems with health and troop morale in subsequent years. Within Gifu, the only military site remained the firing range near Kakamigahara but local relations with the army deteriorated in the wake of the Sino-Japanese war. Previously, villagers had tolerated the noise and the fear of stray shells. The success of artillery against China, however, quickly led to the development of even larger cannon. By 1899, the people of at least one village in the area were so afraid of collateral damage from the massive new guns that the army was forced to stop using live ammunition. This led the firing range to fall into virtual disuse.<sup>46</sup>

An article from *The Japan Times* in mid-1897 further illustrates the conflicting views of the postwar military. The purpose of the article was to celebrate the first anniversary of a journal called *Military Affairs* (*Heiji Zasshi*). The article claimed that the success of this journal is ‘an unmistakable indication of the interest which martial topics are awakening among the rising generation’. At the same time, however, it quoted the editor of *Military Affairs* to the effect that ‘whereas the nation prides itself on being one of the most warlike peoples in the world, the public maintains an attitude of indifference on matters relating to the army and navy’.<sup>47</sup> This reinforces a major theme of the present study: that the gap between state and society regarding military affairs might narrow on occasion, for example, during a popular or difficult war, but it never disappeared and its existence was frequently acknowledged by Japanese commentators from the 1890s to the 1920s.

The civic groups which tried hardest to promote military values in provincial society were mostly small and widely dispersed. A very rare example of a new patriotic society was the brainchild of the ex-samurai villager from Yamagata county, Honda Masanao, whom we saw at the war’s outset attempting to recruit militiamen. Late in 1897, he announced that he was founding a new group to ensure the safety of the nation and the strength of the national spirit. While his ambition was grand, he was seemingly marginalized by a much larger organization with a similar aim, the Butokukai or Military Virtue Society. This was an import from Kyoto where it was established by the mayor in August 1895. Its aim was to build a national association to cultivate warrior values through training in the traditional art of Japanese swordsmanship. A branch was opened in Gifu in October 1895 and attracted several hundred members, mainly among the better-off. The official history of the prefecture, however, explains that recruitment for the Butokukai was conducted by the Gifu police and they were sometimes heavy-handed in convincing men to join. Separate to the Butokukai, *shōbukai* or sword-practice clubs enjoyed a more genuine popularity and were dotted in towns and villages across the prefecture (they appear to have been most active in the former castle town of Kasamatsu).<sup>48</sup>

The status of women had been elevated through their role in wartime nursing. However, the enthusiasms of war were not maintained in peace. When the

Gifu branch of the Red Cross began to recruit nurses early in 1897, its advertising emphasized all the social and monetary benefits of a medical education, of gaining a solid career, and, indeed, of improving one's status. Despite this, and in contrast to the ongoing explosion locally in general membership of the Japan Red Cross (15,000 in Gifu by mid-1899 although only 267 were female), the initial response was tepid. At the original closing date for recruitment, there had been only two volunteers in the whole of the prefecture. The branch tried again, lowering the age limit from 20 to 18 years, extending the deadline, and making it clear that anyone who applied would almost certainly be accepted. After these concessions, it finally got 20 applicants but only 11 of these either pursued their application or were actually ready for training.<sup>49</sup>

With the army based outside the prefecture, the local armed representative of the state and defender of the public was the Gifu police. However, the public seem never to have trusted or respected the police force. This was especially true concerning the ever-increasing dissatisfaction over gambling. In 1897, gamblers were said to be running riot (as were burglars), particularly in the town of Seki, east of Gifu city, and across the counties of Toki and Anpachi. In one letter to the press, a man complained that, while lodging in Ōgaki, he had been kept awake all night by the constant shouts of local gamblers. What particularly offended him was that his inn was directly opposite the Ōgaki police station. At a village in west Gifu, residents took matters into their own hands and established a citizens evening patrol to drive the gamblers out. The lack of public faith in the police is evident in the frequent adverts for handguns before, during, and after the war; a recurring slogan was, personal weapons are the best means to defend one's own life and property.<sup>50</sup>

General histories of Japan often claim that the Japanese people after the 1895 peace negotiations were burning with desire for a war of revenge against Russia for its part in the humiliating Triple Intervention. However, just as there is no evidence in Gifu of a pro-war fever early in 1894, so there is no evidence of a similarly belligerent passion after 1895. The local press gave just as much attention, for example, to Greco-Turkish hostilities in 1897 as it did to Russian activities; popular journals touched on all manner of topics but rarely on Russia; while youth and educational societies met to discuss mostly questions of morality rather than international affairs. After the war, the attention of local people returned to their immediate concerns, especially the state of the prefecture's agriculture and industry, and the widespread devastation of the annual autumn floods. This changed only to a degree late in 1897 when the geopolitics of northeast Asia were radically altered by the German navy's seizure of Chinese territory. This set off a feeding frenzy among the powers for concessions of their own from Beijing. Most significant for Japan was that Russia obtained a lease on the Liaodong peninsula in south Manchuria. Only from this point, not the Triple Intervention, did the press in Gifu report frequently and at length on Russia's ambitions and the heightened probability of a Russo-Japanese conflict over Korea.<sup>51</sup> In general, however, the position was stated without emotion and certainly without enthusiasm for war.



### 3 The costs of war

#### The conflict with Russia 1904–05

The war with Czarist Russia between February 1904 and September 1905 was a direct consequence of Japan's earlier defeat of China. In this sense, one war simply led to another. The concessions which a weakened China had granted to the imperial powers after 1895 meant that, by 1903, Russia was economically and militarily entrenched in Manchuria. The long-standing belief among Japanese statesmen and military commanders was that no Western power would ever fully trust or respect a strong Asian state and would, instead, seek its destruction. Consequently, the proximity of Russian forces to Korea and, by extension, to Japan created fear in Tokyo. However, Japan's leaders were not confident in their nation's ability to wage a successful war against Russia and they attempted to negotiate a compromise. This was unsuccessful and, at the end of 1903, the government of Prime Minister Katsura Tarō, himself an army general, decided on a pre-emptive attack on Russian forces in northeast Asia. The hope was to win early victories and force the Russians to sue for peace before they could concentrate their full force on Asia. Few in Tokyo believed this was really possible and, once battle commenced, senior statesmen and officials made it painfully clear to the Japanese public that this was to be a long, hard war, demanding extreme sacrifices. Indeed, it proved to be a 'total war' in that, throughout its course, it remained the dominant political, economic and even social fact of everyday existence for Japanese civilians.

The battlefields, similar to those of 1894–95, were Korea and northeast China, with the war at sea dominated by a single engagement in the Tsushima Straits between Japan and Korea. Where the two wars differed most obviously was in their scale. In 1894–95, the Japanese forces numbered just over 240,000 with total losses from battle and wounds around 4,500 and another 10,750 dying of illness. In 1904–05, the Japanese military was about 1.1 million men and, of these, over 80,000 were killed and more than 380,000 hospitalized with injury or disease. The cost of the war with China was just over 200 million yen; the cost of fighting Russia was over 1.5 billion yen. As in 1894, however, the justification for war was generally accepted by the public, political parties, media and civilian intelligentsia. The principal exception was a small group of socialists who protested and published against

the Russian war but their activities were heavily constrained by police surveillance and arrest.

Gifu, with a population of roughly one million, sent over 32,000 men to war in 1904–05 (more than six times the figure for 1894–95). Allowing for those males who were either too young or too old, this is about 15 per cent of the able-bodied male population. The removal of so many of the fittest and most productive males impacted most heavily on the villages. The impact, of course, varied from location to location. Kasahara was one of the larger villages in lowland Gifu at over 3,000 residents; it sent 77 men to war (of whom 12 were killed). Kurono, a village of just over 1,000 residents in Inaba county near Gifu city, had 80 of its men in the field in May 1905 (of these, nine had already been killed). An extreme case is Kokufu village in the high country of Hida which, from a population of about 2–3,000, provided 240 men to the forces (of whom, 46 were killed).<sup>1</sup> From these and other figures, it would be fair to assume an average of something like 50–60 men per village went to war in 1904–05. As a result, in the first half-year or more of hostilities, one of the most common jobs of a village head was to farewell local men drafted for military service. At villages close to the existing rail lines, this could, as shown by the diary of the village head of Kita Nagamori just east of Gifu city, involve him in considerable travel to and from major transit points.<sup>2</sup>

The immediate consequence of this loss of manpower was the impoverishment of the families left behind. However, the authorities knew that Japan could not hope to cover all of its war expenses this time and would have to borrow overseas at punitive rates of interest so, at home, it was even more insistent than in 1894–95 in warning civilians to care for themselves rather than rely on the state. This meant that any government handouts were intended to be one-off or short-term payments solely to assist service families to become self-reliant. As the war progressed and the death toll mounted, officials were also given the task of advising the families of war dead on how to stretch out the money they received as compensation (and how to avoid the lure of those who deliberately targeted war widows by trying to get them to spend this money). They were also warned to check up on widows who remarried after receiving compensation or on parents-in-law who took the money and then threw the widow out of the family. In some cases, official scrutiny of war wives or widows clearly was closer than necessary; as one letter to the local press stated, any attractive female collecting financial aid from the Gifu city office had to run the gauntlet of male bureaucrats who, as the writer put it, came to ‘stare and salivate’. There were some attempts by big companies such as Mitsui and Kanebuchi to employ relatives of the war dead in the textile business but the reality of the wartime consumer economy was that many businesses were losing customers rather than seeking workers. Thus, military families were largely dependent on aid schemes organized by local officials and volunteer groups.<sup>3</sup>

Contemporary reports suggest that one of the best places for military families was Ōno county. The county head worked tirelessly on their behalf

and, with his encouragement, local officials at the town and village levels oversaw the various groups providing aid. This led to a more coherent and effective system of identifying those in need, and ensuring they received the right help. According to figures released after the war, the groups in Ōno county alone supported 463 families of servicemen and provided them in total with 7,322 yen in direct aid (in addition, the same groups had spent 7,183 yen on ceremonies to farewell local soldiers and sailors, 2,975 yen on ceremonies for victory and to welcome the forces home, plus another 3,625 yen on funerals and memorial services for the war dead). In various parts of the prefecture, however, there were numerous examples of delay, confusion or inaction concerning some of the aid schemes. Overall, it is probably fair to say that wartime rural life for the family of a soldier or sailor meant descending into poverty and distress.<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate responsibility for the well-being of the village fell on the village headman. However, despite a very good harvest late in 1904, villages were continually battered by the demands of war. Apart from the labour shortage, which left some tenants unable to farm their land, there was the wartime rise in the land tax and the outflow of monies for the war effort. The village head was expected by senior prefectural and county officials to explain the central government's demands to the villagers and, by the villagers, to explain their needs to the upper officials. This left the headman in the most exposed position in wartime civilian society, even if the bullets in this case were no more than verbal. According to a letter written by one village head to the GNN in April 1905, the traditional theatre had mocked all authority figures such as priests, doctors and village heads but, in recent theatre, all mockery was focused on the village head, and the term 'village head' (*sonchō*) was now being used as a synonym for 'idiot' (*baka*).<sup>5</sup>

The greatest single impact of war on the civilian population, both in the villages and the towns, was in its inexhaustible demand for money and goods. This came either in the form of purchase of war bonds or straightforward donations of money and useful items such as blankets for troops at the front. In the case of bonds and cash donations, targets were arranged by prefectural bureaucrats and then passed down the line to county, town and village officials where often quotas were allotted among the local community. Other figures of prominence, including policemen and Buddhist priests, also encouraged or harried local people to buy bonds and make donations to the forces.<sup>6</sup> From reports at the local level and from cartoons in the new satirical magazine *Tokyo Punch*, it clearly was an open secret that some cash donations were being misappropriated. In Gifu city, suspicion fell on the official Military Affairs Committee, renamed Giyūkai during the war (the latter term had a less bureaucratic and more valiant ring to it). This was headed by Mayor Horiguchi who had a reputation for making unintelligible speeches while apparently drunk. Late in 1904, it was revealed that the Giyūkai kept no account book of its receipts. Once this became known, there was talk among some city wards about demanding the return of monies already

donated through the Giyūkai. For the most part, ordinary citizens generally gave what and when they could: the enormity and expense of the war was never in doubt. By April 1905, however, the editor of the GNN was arguing that local people had been completely drained by all the various patriotic causes and groups demanding donations and that, regardless of their wish to contribute, they simply had nothing left to give.<sup>7</sup>

Donations of blankets were popular, in part because there was a less obvious risk of the goods being misused before they were shipped, and also because they were of immediate benefit to the troops. They also helped the ailing textile industry which, in Gifu and across provincial Japan, was crucial to the local economy. 10 October 1904 was the deadline nationwide for all blankets to be collected if they were to reach the frontline troops before the real onset of winter. The goal was to have at least one blanket for each local man on active service. The campaign, however, fell victim on occasion to long-running rivalries and resentments. One letter contrasted the 10 blankets donated by Watanabe Jinkichi of Gifu city (bank president, member of the House of Peers, and still the prefecture's richest man) with the 26 given by a maidservant in Ōgaki. Others took the opportunity to attack officialdom: noting the virtual absence of any officials from the city's list of donors, one resident used the press to enquire, 'have they no sense of patriotism in their breasts? I'd like to hear the views of a vivisectionist!'<sup>8</sup> While the brutality of the comment was unusual, public abuse of senior officials was not. The evidence from wartime (or postwar) Gifu offers no support for the stereotype of *kanson minpi* or public awe and unquestioning obedience towards bureaucrats.

Economic pressure on the wider community also came from an ever-escalating list of wartime taxes. At the outset of war, these were directed mainly at luxury goods such as alcohol and tobacco. Early in 1904, there was an official campaign of austerity urging civilians to demonstrate their patriotism by avoiding all indulgence such as drinking and smoking, and even to postpone weddings or avoid birthday celebrations. Late in 1904, however, the government was forced by the mounting war bill to raise taxes further on things such as train travel, textiles, salt, sugar, *saké* and tobacco. One Gifu journalist satirized this sudden u-turn in government thinking<sup>9</sup>:

Half a year ago, we were told, 'Think of the national emergency! Don't drink! Don't smoke!' Now, tobacco is a state monopoly and *saké* taxes go to the war effort. Now we are told, 'Think of the emergency! Drink and smoke your fill!' It seems that smokers and drinkers are turning into patriots!

Wartime taxes and the constant need for bond purchases or donations to the armed forces eliminated the public's spending power and, with this, many civilian businesses crumbled. The prefecture's textile industry went into rapid decline, losing perhaps two-thirds of existing companies in the first six months of war. At this time, local manufacturers doubted they could salvage

themselves through supplying the army as the military had begun making its own uniforms and footwear between 1902 and 1904. However, the demands of this total war exceeded the capacity of military factories and provincial suppliers across Japan obtained a lifeline as the army passed on some winter orders. These do not seem to have benefited towns such as Ōgaki which saw a run of bankruptcies to the point where, in mid-1905, it was said that its economic fate now rested on a single entrepreneur. Rickshaw pullers at Kani county in the prefecture's southeast saw their passenger numbers collapse, while those in Gifu city – numbering 2,000 at the war's end – survived by over-charging women tourists (whom they no doubt saw as soft targets). Some stagecoach drivers in Kani, meanwhile, were said to be folding their operations and selling off their horses. Reports in late 1904 showed that, at Takada, a small town of about 3,000 residents in the southwest of Gifu, every small business was in severe difficulty; Kanō, a town on the Nagara River, had seen its famous umbrella manufacturing almost disappear; and, at a traditional pottery centre like Tajimi, a town of 5,000 in the southeast, many craftsmen had already gone out of business or were on the verge of going under.<sup>10</sup>

Wartime austerity also cast a shadow on local festivals. One writer described the annual Gifu city spring festival in 1904 as unimaginably desolate and wondered whether the spirits of Gifu's war dead would even recognize their hometown. Businesses such as restaurants and the Kanazu pleasure quarters depended on festival custom but, on this occasion, visitor numbers fell below 700 or less than half those of a normal year. Similarly, at the annual Shintō shrine festival at the lowland village of Yanaizu near Kasamatsu, all the usual sideshows or other entertainments were cancelled, as they were at Kasamatsu itself in 1905. Perhaps in defiance of the downturn in local fortunes, Tajimi in October 1904 went ahead with the traditional performances of sumo, sword and archery competitions accompanying its shrine festival but these at least could be justified as in keeping with the officially approved martial spirit of wartime. The same freedom to celebrate and indulge was granted by the emperor's birthday on 3 November. At the highland town of Takayama late in 1904, however, one desperate proposal to improve the local economy was to approach the government to build a prisoner-of-war camp; the assumption was that any kind of construction could only bring in jobs and money for an industry which had ground to a halt. Some locals criticized the suggestion as, at best, eccentric but the idea of using a military presence to help revive a battered economy was to recur in Gifu at the war's end.<sup>11</sup>

In the straitened market of 1904–05, there had to be greater discounting by retailers. Those selling commemorative pocket watches offered cuts of up to half-price to servicemen and students (although the lack of clear-cut victories slowed even discounted sales); dealers in funeral goods, for whom business was suddenly very good, offered discounts to the families of dead soldiers and sailors; even tickets for the popular comedy theatre and vaudeville were cut by half. As in 1894–95, retailers linked their products to the military where

possible; this was common among local pharmacies selling pills to reduce headaches, stomach aches or other inflammations, as well as Elephant Brand toothpaste, all of which were sold with the tag 'as used by the imperial forces'. The Kiyomizu Western Clothes Store in Gifu city used the onset of winter to urge local people to buy gloves and ear muffs as presents for the troops in Manchuria. Retailers also employed more patriotic images in their advertising. Yet, as in so many areas of wartime activity, there was a variety of approaches. Some used typically heroic images of fine-looking soldiers and sailors posing grandly or gesturing nobly into the distance. Others went in different directions. Kao Soaps declared that, in contrast to austerity and sacrifice, 'during war, the urgent things are health and the economy'; the sub-text here would seem to be 'for the war's sake, keep buying our healthy products'. Others tried to overcome the misery and poverty of war by using humour; one example is that of a bicycle dealer whose advert pictured a Japanese army cyclist speeding in slapstick fashion over the head of an understandably surprised and discomforted Russian soldier. One of the recurring adverts for Ebisu Beer opted to distance itself entirely from the war: it showed an elegant, rather portly man of middle age reclining in great comfort beside a huge beer barrel. In this, there was not a hint of flags or bugles and certainly no suggestion of sacrifice.<sup>12</sup>

The paper and printing industry was a major part of the Gifu economy and perhaps the major beneficiary of the war through a boom in the sale of postcards. In this conflict, they became the most important means of communication between local residents and their men at the front. Also, as Hiraki Dealers of Gifu city put it, 'postcards are the most suitable present for troops off to war'. For one thing, they were light and easily carried. The best of them, however, were not inexpensive; the series '100 Views of Nōbi' printed at Ōgaki in 1905, cost 25 *sen* for a pack of 50. These local scenes were designed to help servicemen overcome homesickness but there were many others showing pretty women, landscapes, flowers and birds. One of their selling points was the burst of creativity among postcard designers, especially with technological improvements in photography which allowed them to include actual photographs from the front carefully inset into a decorated border. About 4,500 different images were published during the war and their aesthetic appeal as much as anything led to a fad for postcard collecting; at the time, schoolchildren in Gifu were accused of spending all their money on postcards, collecting them with the same fascination as later generations would collect cigarette cards. It was also reported that demand from the Japanese public was so great that women with no training, simply by colouring postcards, could earn up to 10 yen a month in Tokyo (when the salary of a primary school teacher was about 12 yen). Photographers and those selling photographic paper also did very good business, especially from soldiers and sailors buying a commemorative picture of themselves for their families. According to one of Gifu city's photographers, when finally uncovered and questioned by the police, there was also a market for illicit nude portraits of Gifu's brothel workers among soldiers at the front.<sup>13</sup>

To boost consumption, victory celebrations of any form were greatly welcomed, especially by those retailing food, drink and sex. Outside of these, the urban 'pleasure quarters' did their best business when local government assemblies were in session. Equally fruitful for the sex and entertainment industries were the 48 hours after official salaries were paid; mocking the civil servants who left the fighting to others, this was said to be the time when brothels experienced 'the invasion of the petty bureaucrats'. The major sex industries in Gifu were at the capital and the largest towns, Ōgaki and Takayama. The biggest of all was the Kanazu of Gifu city with about 600 women. Reports from across the prefecture, however, showed that, until the great celebrations marking the war's end and the return of the troops, houses of prostitution were either closing or struggling to survive; this meant that the women were less able to pay their bills, more likely to fall further into debt, and even end up working the backstreets despite the increased threat to their health and safety. Yet, one of the great strengths of these women was their resilience and their inventiveness, able to find amusement even among the gloom. For example, they adapted the vocabulary of the military to their own sphere of action: the shout of 'resupply' was their way of calling for more bottles of *saké* (now itself a patriotic act, of course), while a customer who succumbed to too much alcohol was said to have 'fallen gloriously in battle'.<sup>14</sup>

The hardship of war probably led to greater petty crime but the statistics are open to doubt. At the height of battle in August and September 1904, there were about 470 cases of theft reported each month for the whole of Gifu. However, there was a belief that the home ministry had quietly asked the police to go soft on minor criminals in order to reduce wartime prison expenses. Local people had no difficulty in believing that the Gifu police not only respected any such order, they eagerly anticipated it. In fact, there is a kind of relish with which citizens offered stories of police incompetence to the press. For example, some letters described the chief of police as someone who wanted an easy life at any cost, and, if drafted, would be unable to summon enough energy even to give marching orders. Others mocked the ordinary constable: in one case, a group of policemen travelling by train from Ōgaki to Gifu city were unable to work out how to open the carriage window and had to ask other passengers for help. With this, it may be that con-artists felt relatively safe in the prefecture. One example of a successful scam involved a man claiming to be a bicycle dealer from Nagoya who toured the counties offering a fine Bismarck bicycle at 46 yen instead of the retail price of 55. Once the deposit had been taken, he and the bicycle disappeared.<sup>15</sup>

Civilian encounters with the military in 1904–05 took place at many of the same sites as in the China war. Among these, the rail station rose to an extraordinary new level of emotional power following the expansion of the network after 1895, and with over a million men now being mobilized and moved along its tracks. If nationalism, as the early sociologists contend, is really a modern form of religion in which the community worships itself, then

one of the new churches for people to gather and celebrate their collective strength in war is the rail station. This was particularly true for the soldiers who passed down the line and received one welcome after another from local citizens. Indeed, Naoko Shimazu uses the diaries of conscripts to argue that these repeated greetings, including the almost hypnotic mantra of a collective 'banzai' at every stop, were like an epiphany, a decisive moment in transforming the consciousness of soldiers into nationalists.<sup>16</sup> The argument may be slightly less persuasive when applied to local people who returned always to the same station and did not experience that same sense of national unity repeated across diverse regions. Also, face-to-face contact with soldiers was limited to those towns where troop trains actually halted; for others, it was a case of posting someone to offer a salute as the train sped by. At some stations, moreover, any halt could be very short. The history of Tarui station, west of Gifu city, records the train of General Ōyama, commander of the Japanese army, stopping on 7 July 1904 between 8.16 am and 8.17 am but, as instructed by local officials, many people from the surrounding region were there to greet him (on his victorious return in December 1905, the general stayed at Tarui for three minutes).<sup>17</sup> Far more than in 1894–95, there was a realization that many soldiers would not return alive and so this very pressure of time undoubtedly created a more intensely emotional encounter for military and civilians alike. Also, with so many trains on the move, people at and around the station had to develop an acute awareness, perhaps for the first time, of the kind of precise time discipline which the GNN had claimed in 1890 was alien to local society. Thus, a village timetable for July 1904 listed in minute detail all the troop trains passing through nearby Sekigahara station, including whether or not they carried officers, and it divided villagers into six groups so as always to have someone at the station from early morning until mid-evening.<sup>18</sup>

In order to understand more fully what was really happening at the wartime rail station, one must go beyond photographs or even silent newsreel showing images only of nationalism and popular support for the military. One way to do this is by excavating the voices of the community from the letters pages of the local press. These are filled with comments about the three broad social groups which, more than any other, used the station to exhibit their particular contribution to the war effort. In a sense, they appropriated the wartime rail station and dominated the platform. The three are: school groups; civic associations, especially of women; and medical teams.

The prominence of doctors and nurses, both from the prefectural branch of the Japan Red Cross and from local hospitals, indicates one of the major differences between the wars against China and Russia; that is, the number of trains returning from Hiroshima carrying the sick and wounded. Much of the burden of training nurses for duty in Japan, on army hospital ships, and at the front was shouldered by the Japan Red Cross and, even more than in 1894–95, the Red Cross nurse was celebrated as a heroic or, rather, angelic, figure; it was said that soldiers repatriated to Hiroshima wrote first to the



nurses at the front rather than to their families. At domestic rail stations, however, it was often left to local doctors and nurses to change bandages and offer short-term relief for troops either heading home or to one of the army hospitals. Yet, the patriotic idealization of nursing had to contend with various publicly acknowledged realities. One was the common understanding that some of the troops were being sent home because they had sexually transmitted diseases. The army could censor the actual figures. Thus, in an article by a doctor in the journal *Taiyō* in August 1904, two digits were blanked out from a sentence on the percentage of Japanese soldiers currently at an army hospital in Korea suffering from venereal disease (from this, people could at least conclude that the percentage was in double figures). However, there was no attempt to silence public comment on the issue. A GNN report, also from August 1904, stated that venereal disease was among the most common ailments of the 180 men at the Kanazawa army hospital. Similarly, an ex-soldier writing to the press in June 1905 claimed to know that, in his words, 'most of the troops' then being sent home as unfit for service were suffering from the same disease.<sup>19</sup>

For all of the contributions of doctors and nurses in tending the military, there was still a powerful undercurrent of popular resentment towards the medical profession. Much of this was directed at arrogance and ineffectiveness. For example, it was said of the Gifu branch of the Red Cross that its poor performance in helping the army's sick, wounded or merely tired was only natural given that its officials were all 'ancient and half-blind'. Red Cross nurses at the station were accused of having no bandages and of leaving the actual treatment of wounded troops to a doctor and two nurses from a private hospital.<sup>20</sup> To understand this criticism, one needs also to understand the generally poor reputation of the hospital system. One letter-writer insisted that the doctors of the Gifu prefectural hospital were so unkind that he would tolerate any pain rather than ask them for treatment, while another who was hospitalized there during the war warned that newly arrived patients were told that they had two options; pay all the nurses and receive good treatment, or pay nothing and be treated with indifference.<sup>21</sup> The practice of nurses demanding tips was not limited to Gifu.

The role of women's patriotic groups at the station was largely to offer tea and small refreshments to the passing troops and, more generally, to show that the women of Japan were actively supporting the war effort. At Gifu city station, there were two very separate groups: the Gifu Prefectural Aikoku Fujinkai or Patriotic Women's Association, and the Chū-Ai Fujinkai or Loyal Women's Association. There was a marked socioeconomic difference between the two which was obvious in their structure. The Gifu Aikoku Fujinkai, set up only in October 1904, was as a branch of the national association which, established three years earlier, enjoyed the patronage of the imperial family and, early in 1905, claimed a total membership of 360,000. Within Gifu, its president was the governor's wife, Kawaji Mizuoko (though her contribution was limited by the fact that she was then expecting her twelfth child) and it

had several thousand members, mostly among the middle and upper class. The Chū-Ai Fujinkai was also founded in 1904 but was local to Gifu city and had only 300 members. It had no president and, instead, was run along egalitarian lines by a committee. To join the Aikoku Fujinkai, one paid a fee. The Chū-Ai Fujinkai charged no fees and was open to all classes: indeed, much of the press and public comment during the war (both favourable and unfavourable) was about those of its members drawn from the city's brothels.<sup>22</sup>

The Aikoku Fujinkai had sub-branches across the prefecture and so it had a wider array of activities, such as campaigning for donations to the military, visiting the families of servicemen and sewing small gifts to tide them by, attending military funerals, and giving clothes to the old, widows, and orphans. Yet, both of the women's groups in Gifu city focused their attention on the rail station. Young women of the Chū-Ai Fujinkai, for example, went to the station daily and, in winter, even at 3 am despite the lack of heating in the waiting room. Some of its members from the Kanazu brothels became famous for the number of times they went to comfort passing troops (although this also elicited some adverse comment, it being said that young men of the city went to greet troop trains only to get a free glimpse of their faces).<sup>23</sup> However, the presence of two groups in the same small space, engaged in the same activity but with very different class backgrounds, resulted in a disturbing rivalry and the persistence of this rivalry led to public criticism of both parties. Most of this was directed at the Aikoku Fujinkai, no doubt because its higher social status made it an easier target. Some said that, despite its rhetoric, it often failed to visit servicemen repatriated through injury or illness and that, outside of railway attendance, its only patriotic achievement was in sending postcards to the front; one writer mockingly claimed that a bouquet recently sent by the group to an American guest was probably enough to rate a special mention in its official history. The discord between the two groups led one independent observer in July 1905 to call for the Chū-Ai Fujinkai, as the smaller body, to be disbanded and merged with the Aikoku Fujinkai.<sup>24</sup> The suggestion was resisted and the two would continue to compete with each other in the immediate postwar years.

The third major group at the rail station was the parties of schoolchildren. As noted in the introduction, it was these which so impressed General Hamilton and led to his prediction of an invincible Japanese army in the 1920s. At the station, children were given the tasks of handing out small gifts and refreshments to the troops, sometimes receiving tokens or sweets in return, and of singing songs to cheer them on their way. However, as the war intensified and the frequency of troop trains increased, the number of children at rail stations and crossings reached the point where roster systems had to be introduced so that they spent enough time in class. In school, the pupils collected personal information about local troops, they wrote letters to the front (as did local adults), history and geography lessons explained the background and the place names of the war, and the Education Ministry provided fresh songs with lyrics about the readiness of soldiers and sailors to sacrifice their

lives for victory. For the pupils, however, the language of patriotic songs, then and later, could sound difficult or dull. According to one resident, 'A victory ceremony with a parade of children singing military songs is all very fine but I feel a special joy when I see a handful of lazy, tongue-tied little kids walking along singing, "Japan won, Russia lost!"' Outside of civic occasions, therefore, the children probably preferred to shed the war of its ideological trimmings. Moreover, a separate comment on popular songs for adults during the war was that they were all 'lewd and vulgar'. It seems equally plausible that, hearing these songs, children would have been influenced by their lyrics or harmonies just as much as those taught in school. In short, one needs to treat with caution the arguments of anthropologist Ohnuki-Tierney who seems to assume that children in wartime were blank pages onto which the authorities could easily inscribe militarism through song.<sup>25</sup>

Behind its doors, the wartime school was a deeply troubled place. School attendance rose (especially for girls) as more people saw the benefit of literacy in order to read newspapers or letters from the troops but, at the same time, school budgets were being slashed, in some places by as much as a third or more. Plans for new facilities or buildings were abandoned; monies for prizes at school sports days were abolished; and, in winter, there was less fuel for heating. Across Japan, savings were made by firing teachers or forcing some to retire while adding hours and subjects to the workload of those who remained. According to one source, about 150 teachers were fired in Gifu and more than 10 primary schools forced to close.<sup>26</sup> For those whose jobs remained, there were cuts in wages – 30 *sen* a month for teachers at some of the ordinary primary schools, 92 *sen* at some higher primary schools. Male teachers also lived in constant anxiety, never sure when they might be drafted. Meanwhile, both teachers and pupils were pressured by the authorities to display their patriotism by making monthly donations to the war effort; in the case of teachers, this could be a tenth of their salary. Yet, despite their hardships, there was no public sympathy for teachers and one of the most frequent comments in provincial society was that they were lazy or incompetent or both. Indeed, it was said that one of the educational benefits of the war was the opportunity to fire some of the worst and to make the rest take their duties more seriously.<sup>27</sup>

For the children, the war was once again recreated in mock battles. The far greater public suffering around them, however, led to a more adult attitude to play. As one teacher of a regional school later wrote, in order to make the game 'real', he convinced his pupils, aged about nine years, that the Russians had seized a port on the Japanese mainland and were even now advancing into the heartland. He instructed his boys to assemble before daybreak on the coming Sunday and march off with their bamboo rifles to do whatever possible to reinforce the Japanese troops. He later heard that at least one child left home telling his parents he did not expect to return. Children also had more trouble in their war games of 1904–05 because the enemy was less distinct. As the same teacher explained of infants at a pre-school, they had never

seen a Russian and had difficulty imagining them; they were certain only that Russians were tall and so, unconsciously challenging the meaning of the game as a way to reinforce the authority of superiors, the children innocently begged their teachers to play the role of the enemy.<sup>28</sup>

Many of the primary schoolchildren for whom war had been play in 1894–95 were now the teenagers of 1904–05. Yet, despite their years of education in what is assumed to have been a highly militarized system, teenage Japanese during the Russian war were subjected to a bombardment of public criticism. One of the most common terms was ‘degenerate students’ (*daraku gakusei*), while young people, then and in the postwar years, were routinely dismissed as weak and unreliable. This was a criticism directed squarely at males. They were accused of lacking purpose or motivation, of ‘decadence’, a term which implied an unhealthy concern with sex, and of being concerned more with vanity than patriotism. Viewing a group of young men who actually volunteered to become officer cadets, an infantry captain in April 1905 was taken aback by what he described as ‘their pretty silk garments, hair combed in the latest fashion, smelling of perfume and pomade’. Public alarm about the moral universe of youth and, with it, the future of Japan, was obvious in one writer’s description of the seemingly topsy-turvy world at the war’s end in September 1905<sup>29</sup>:

Recently, male students have taken to wearing perfume and cosmetics and acting in a listless manner. Female students, by contrast, swagger about the city in tight-sleeved dresses, radiating energy. In a world where the loser (Russia) defeats the victor (Japan) in peace talks, one almost expects leaves to sink and rocks to float!

Perhaps a wartime education, especially one in which victory is so easily obtained as against China, has little long-term impact. Indeed, it may be that turning war into a game in 1894–95 only undermined the seriousness with which children viewed it in their later years. In contrast, the very seriousness and misery of the Russo-Japanese war may have left children of that generation looking more for material ambitions. At the end of the war, a survey was conducted of a group of over 70 girls aged between eight and nine years. When asked what they most desired in the world, the top answers were: fine clothes, shoes, a jacket (*hakama*) and then, far behind, school things, a hair pin, and a ribbon.<sup>30</sup> One child seemed not to have grasped the government’s message on wartime austerity by insisting that she would rather have a horse-drawn carriage: unknowingly, she was adhering to an even earlier ideal of modern Japanese education – be ambitious! When asked what they hoped to become, the most popular answer was ‘an important person’ (*erai hito*) followed by a nurse, then a teacher. In this survey and in the attitudes of other wartime youth, children had their own interests, interpretations and ambitions quite separate from those of the school curriculum. While General Hamilton had imagined these children as the all-powerful army of the 1920s, they were

actually to be the young adults of the age known as Taishō liberalism, and they would continue to show a far greater concern with their personal well-being than with serving the military.

Apart from the rail station, another local site at which civilians could view the military was at the new moving picture theatres. From this time, film overtook the magic lantern shows (which still remained popular in villages and at schools) and novelties such as the Japan-Russia War Diorama, which opened in Gifu city in August 1904. The first moving pictures shown in Gifu, and elsewhere in Japan, were from the Spanish-American war of the late 1890s but, by 1904, the technology had become remarkably modern. During the Russian war, the Asahi-za theatre in Gifu city shifted from a gas-driven film projector to one powered by electricity; there was a gramophone to accompany the silent images; and, according to one advert, there was even some coloured film (*tenzenshoku katsudō daishashin*). The reels were usually about two to three minutes long and included scenes from within Japan, some of the battlefield, and at least one 45-minute work shot by a French cameraman with the Russian forces.<sup>31</sup>

On occasion, film was used specifically for patriotic ends. An example here is a playbill of nine reels which was shown in Gifu city over three nights in October 1904. The first two nights involved a screening at the Hiyoshi-za theatre in order to raise funds for the Giyūkai, the city's official military affairs association; the third night was a screening at the Midono-za theatre to benefit the women's group Chū-Ai Fujinkai. The programme included footage of General Ōyama leaving Tokyo Station, a night attack by Japanese forces in Manchuria, medical units collecting Japanese wounded, the sinking of a Russian warship, and a victory celebration in Tokyo. There appears to have been no film of the Japanese emperor. The playbill was then taken to the town of Kasamatsu where part of the proceeds from its showing was donated to families of local servicemen.<sup>32</sup>

Among the newsreels which most interested Japanese audiences were those showing the day-to-day activities of ordinary soldiers; the enemy rarely made an appearance except when dead or wounded. To their credit, it is said that Japanese audiences were saddened by images of enemy corpses and were both proud and pleased to see film of wounded Russians being treated by Japanese medical teams. In contrast to later wars, for example, American forces in World War II, images were also shown of Japanese war dead; this seemed to meet the public's demand for truth, not propaganda. Some overseas film-makers tried to pass off recreations of the war as genuine footage (these might involve a few extras standing in for the Russian army and a few fires to emulate the smoke of battle). Yet, what is notable is the sharp and prickly critical awareness of local audiences. As one Gifu viewer wrote in August 1904 after seeing a movie falsely advertised as showing the real battlefield, 'no matter how rural you may think it here, don't make fools of us!' This demand for the truth of war is also apparent in a quote from the Kobe press in June 1905<sup>33</sup>:

Unlike the false 'real footage' of the battle which has been coming into the country, this was definitely shot on the actual battlefield ... The fact that it is not organized into any clear sequence, like the phony footage, makes it all the more profound. A real battlefield is all confusion and without any apparent logic.

There is at least one example of a Japanese-made war drama from 1905. In Gifu city, this was exhibited at the Asahi-za theatre in June. It depicted the life and death of a second Lieutenant called Wakamiya. The film began with him receiving his call-up at home, showed him fighting in the battle of Liaoyang late in 1904, followed his progress as an army scout in Manchuria, and ended with his death in a final grand attack. The last scene was of his body being recovered by friendly Chinese. The reaction of the city press was that the plot was like that of a novel and highly interesting but, at the same time, it doubted there was a core audience for melodrama on film.<sup>34</sup> This is not to say that local audiences always demanded reality from the moving image; a historical serial on Napoleon held audiences at the Midono-za literally spellbound in the intense heat of summer in 1904. Instead, the problem with the Japanese war drama may have been that this generation of viewers wanted film to show only the truth about a conflict which was current and impacting so heavily on their lives. A final point about the role of film in shaping popular images of the nation and the military is that not everyone either had a chance or made the choice to see the moving pictures. Matsuo Kunimatsu was a young official in the prefectural office during the war, and later became the long-serving mayor of Gifu city. In his memoirs, he states that his first ever experience of cinema was viewing the newsreel of a Japanese expedition to the South Pole in 1910.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast to the railway station or film theatre, the military was present but intangible at funerals for the war dead. Soldiers from Gifu fought in the bloodiest battles of the war, including the siege of Russian forces at Port Arthur from August 1904 to January 1905. According to a volume published just after the war, of the more than 32,000 Gifu servicemen, 3,668 were killed; this was more than any other prefecture in Japan (second place fell to Gifu's neighbour, Aichi).<sup>36</sup> Consequently, one of the most common wartime encounters between civil society and the military was at local funerals for the war dead.

In 1904–05, Japanese military funerals were conducted according to Buddhist or Shintō practice. This was stipulated by army regulations issued during the war and so the ceremony and language were circumscribed by established ritual (although there is one example from Yanaitsu village of a shrine priest creatively mixing Shintō and Buddhist elements). At the national level, the Yasukuni Shrine was the venue in May 1905 for a mass memorial attended by the imperial family plus tens of thousands of invited families of the war dead (this was unusual in that it took place during wartime, not after the war's end). At the local level, however, a Buddhist temple was the normal

choice and so Buddhist sects were more heavily engaged in the provincial experience of this war than in 1894–95 (by contrast, with fewer reasons to celebrate, Shintō shrines were less associated with joy and virility). At the funeral, there were eulogies from leading civic figures including one or more of the prefectural governor, mayor, heads of counties, towns, or villages, chiefs of police, and representatives of the various patriotic societies including *Giyūkai* and women's groups. The few eulogies recorded, however, are brief and straightforward, tending less to the kind of grand rhetoric used historically at military funerals in Europe and varying among themselves more in the level of detail in which they narrate the death of the serviceman.<sup>37</sup>

The authorities hoped to promote a sense of wartime unity through the mass gathering of mourners. To achieve this (but also to reduce costs), army regulations late in the war stressed the desirability of holding joint military funerals. Thus, on occasion, groups such as the local *Giyūkai* arranged ceremonies for between 10 and 20 soldiers and sailors. Such joint funerals also made it easier for a host of official figures to attend and better guaranteed a good crowd of mourners. Some funerals for individuals as well as groups, and in villages as well as in cities and towns, claimed attendances in the thousands. For example, at a funeral for 21 servicemen at the Higashi Betsu-in temple, Ōgaki, on 21 April 1905, there were about 2,000 mourners; the same figure was given for mourners of the 15 war dead at the Nishi Betsu-in temple, Gifu city, on 23 July 1905; while the earlier funeral of a single infantry corporal at the village of Hozumi in Motosu county in October 1904 had also drawn 2,000.<sup>38</sup> With so many funerals, however, crowds tended to be in the hundreds.

As with the railway station or the war cinema, there is evidence to challenge the depiction of the military funeral as solely an illustration of popular support for the war. The army regulations from 1905 also called for funerals to be simplified and for excesses to be eliminated; they included a ban on using too many priests, distributing gifts to those who came as mourners, or providing refreshments for those who deliberately arrived before or after the funeral. Instead, the regulations stipulated that, while the manner of the funeral should reflect the status of the bereaved, it must also preserve 'the simplicity of the warrior'.<sup>39</sup> The implication is that what the military would regard as the appropriate dignity of the moment was being abandoned at the local level. Indeed, one letter by a self-described patriot from Kamo county in eastern Gifu complained that military funerals in towns and villages, originally austere and solemn, had degenerated into extravagance, with a tray of food from the town or village head hosting the funeral rising in cost from 15 to 30 *sen* per person, and the whole ceremony turning into a kind of festival. Towns and villages in Ōno county were also said to be engaged in a kind of rivalry about who could stage the grandest funeral. Elsewhere, a clerk from the prefectural office complained that, 'regional military funerals are unspeakable; competition over speeches and words of condolence means you have to stand listening for two hours!' There were also complaints about class discrimination. For example, members of the patriotic *Giyūkai* at the highland town of

Takayama were said to attend the funerals of servicemen from wealthy families but rarely made an appearance at those of the poor. There is also a suggestion that, as one letter put it, the memory of the funeral quickly faded, with military graves around the prefecture swiftly becoming desolate places.<sup>40</sup>

One topic which has been postponed to this point is the celebration of victory. This was a deliberate choice because it reflects another truth of provincial life during the war. That is, after the initial successes of early 1904, victories were slow in coming and, on land, when they did arrive, they carried an enormous price and never were decisive. This meant that any victory celebrations were usually tempered by anger, fear, or sadness.

The sometimes hollow sense of victory is most obvious in the battle of Port Arthur. Japanese forces under General Nogi Maresuke began the siege of this Russian fortress in Manchuria at the start of August 1904. In the earlier war with China, Port Arthur (or, in Japanese, Ryojun-kō) had been taken in a single day. In expectation of a similar triumph, Giyūkai and men of affairs around Gifu began forming committees and confidently planning grand victory celebrations almost as soon as the attack commenced. In Takayama, a meeting at the town office on 10 August split into two camps: one group proposed a mass party across the town with each ward taking responsibility for its own entertainment; another advocated a parade through the town in which all wards would participate. In a manner common to other local wartime disputes, neither group would compromise. Of concern to people around the prefecture, however, was the scale and expense of all the plans being considered. In response, the letters column of the local press was filled with pleas for circumspection. Ultimately, all of this discussion was unnecessary: the siege was to drag on for five months as General Nogi, in a macabre preview of World War I trench warfare, appeared to have no other strategy than to send waves of Japanese infantry up against the Russian guns. Thus, when the besieged capitulated in January 1905, local communities in Japan could feel only relief rather than euphoria. In the meantime, the original confidence in victory had been replaced by cynicism (a popular saying which emerged at this time translates loosely as ‘the cheque is in the mail and Port Arthur will fall in days’).<sup>41</sup>

The only unqualified victory of the latter half of the war came at sea in the battle of Tsushima in May 1905. In this, the Japanese fleet of Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō destroyed Russia’s dilapidated Baltic fleet with comparatively little cost to itself. As one letter to the GNN put it, anyone who failed to celebrate this unprecedented victory could not be called a Japanese.<sup>42</sup> However, it was this victory which led to the most blatant example of wartime disunity in the prefecture.

The origin of the problem resided in the Gifu city council. There, a conflict arose over the budget for local education and construction. The dispute was so heated that several council members, all resident in the city’s central district, quit in protest. Shortly after, they used the public’s ongoing criticism of the Giyūkai, whose head was Mayor Horiguchi, to establish their own



patriotic group, which they called Chūyūkai. As its leader, they elected the enormously wealthy Watanabe Jinkichi. The standoff between these two rival groups in Gifu city resulted in entirely separate celebrations for the victory at Tsushima. The Chūyūkai organized a small ceremony at the city's Inaba Shrine on 1 June. The Giyūkai and the city authorities then hosted a three-day celebration from 3–5 June, very similar in length and content to that of other towns in the prefecture. This involved a gathering at the major local shrine, followed by a flag parade through the city, and concluding in a grand civic party. In the case of Gifu city, there was also a mock sinking of the Russian fleet (here represented by three local boats) on the Nagara River and a fireworks display. To the outrage of the public, however, the Chūyūkai members not only boycotted these celebrations, they also called on residents of their neighbourhood to support them by refusing to fly the national flag or light victory lanterns during these three days. Thus, while the majority of the city was adorned with the national flag and the signs of victory, the houses of Watanabe Jinkichi and others in the city centre seemed to belong to a different country.<sup>43</sup>

The moment when people across Japan felt the least sense of victory came with the publication of the peace treaty in September 1905. Under its terms, Japan won territorial concessions in Manchuria (subject to Chinese approval) and Russia's acceptance of Japanese hegemony in Korea. However, these semi-colonial profits were of little interest to most Japanese. What concerned and infuriated them was that the Japanese foreign minister, Komura, had agreed that Russia would pay not a single coin to defray Japan's war expenses. This led to riots in some of the major cities, including Tokyo, Kyoto and Kobe, and the stoning or burning of symbols of authority, especially police boxes.<sup>44</sup>

Historians of Japan usually interpret these riots as a demonstration of Japanese ultra-nationalism. They take the statements of some of the protest organizers and conclude that civilian Japanese were ready to continue the war at any price in order to salvage the honour of the emperor and the nation. In reality, however, the protesters in the city streets were a tiny minority of the population and, even among their number, it is probable that the real grievance of many was economic rather than ideological. In Gifu prefecture, there were civilian protests against the terms of the peace treaty at several major locations. All followed the same general pattern. They were organized by leading figures in local politics. They took place at public halls or public spaces such as a local theatre and, in the larger towns, attracted crowds of up to 2,000. They involved impassioned speeches by a variety of men on the sacrifices to date and the security of the nation henceforth, and they concluded with a written resolution which was to be sent to the cabinet in Tokyo. In this resolution, the groups expressed their opposition to the peace treaty on the grounds that its terms conflicted with the expressed purpose of the war at its outset, that they contradicted the will of the people, that they were an unprecedented insult to the nation, and that they placed the future security of

the nation in jeopardy. The resolutions called on the cabinet to take responsibility for its failures but stopped short of calling for a renewal of war. As one letter to the press explained<sup>45</sup>:

Even though we oppose the peace, we don't want the war to continue. It's natural that we want the war to end as soon as possible but we firmly reject a makeshift peace with humiliating terms.

Once the formal protests were recorded, the response of other citizens divided broadly into two streams. One was stoicism the other was comedy. Many people accepted the reality of the war, which was that Japan was neither rich enough nor strong enough to be called one of the world's great powers and had obtained only what it deserved. In this connection, some observed that Japan had been humiliated in the Triple Intervention of 1895 and so the humiliation of 1905 was nothing new. These pragmatists were quick to swallow their disappointment and tended to look forward rather than hunt for scapegoats. Others resorted to humour. Yokohama businessmen created a new saying to describe anyone blundering in what seemed like a certain deal – 'He did a Komura!' Another writer took a more darkly satirical view when he wrote that Japan's war dead beneath the earth were now saying to the cabinet, 'hurry and join us!'. As was so often the case, the women of the brothel quarters employed some of the blackest humour; within days of the riots, they had a new phrase to call all the women to gather round a new customer – 'burn the police box!'<sup>46</sup>

It is this rich vein of humour, often anarchic, which so often is the missing chapter in histories of wartime Japan. It served as armour against adversity, a tool to undermine all forms of authority, and a barrier against jingoism. An example which demands to be included because of its charm (it involves hurt to no one) comes from late in the war. In this, a man wrote to the local press to describe how he had sent a letter of support to frontline troops from Gifu and, in line with the governor's general advice on how to make the men feel happiest, had signed it with a woman's name. Now, his dilemma was that the soldier to whom the letter had been given had written back asking for a photograph. As he explained, 'I thought to myself, now I've gone and done it! But I sent off a photo of myself, beard and all, and I guess right now the poor soldier is just shaking his head and wondering, "What the ...". If this was civilian self-mockery in wartime, a final example shows that the military was also fair game for satire once it began returning in force to Japan. The troops were not blamed for the peace treaty and, having endured so much, they returned to a hero's welcome. After the welcome party in Gifu city, one junior officer made his way to the Toyomoto brothel in Kanazu. When the women found he was unable to pay his bill, they locked him in a storage room and demoted him to the rank of 'undistinguished POW'.<sup>47</sup>

From everything that has been discussed, it should now be clear how inaccurate and misleading were the Western commentaries on Japanese society from this

time. Instead of a 'warrior people', the sense of wartime unity among provincial citizens was often fragile and fleeting. In fact, the very strains of war exposed just how deeply divided civilian society was by locality and status. Indeed, it may even be suggested that the only level at which people from different regions and classes occasionally felt a common identity was precisely as Japanese. However, this was because, on a day-to-day basis, this was the least relevant of their various identities (as members of an occupational group, a village or town, a county, and a wider region).<sup>48</sup>

Further, local people were entirely willing and able during the war to express their suspicions, frustrations and resentments. Their criticism was directed overwhelmingly at all forms of authority short of the emperor. Their favoured targets were officials, from the governor to the mayor, the police chief, and village heads, plus anyone in a position of power, including doctors, priests, teachers, and elitist women's groups. This is in stark contrast to the stereotypes of ordinary Japanese either in awe of officialdom or silently bearing any burden for the war effort. In expressing their criticisms, however, there was also a steady stream of humour; sometimes cruel, sometimes gentle. This was obviously an important social tool in making the war more bearable. Together, these various expressions of public opinion suggest an energetic civil society which would not, and could not, be muted even in wartime. It may be that the most effective barrier to the spread of militarist regimentation among a civil community is precisely this discord of many voices.

## 4 The business of bases in late Meiji

For provincial communities in Japan, the war against Russia had been extremely unprofitable. Although they contributed the bodies of their men, their money and possessions, and had accepted the wartime taxes and austerity measures, they received no benefit to the local economy and, most disappointing of all in any balance sheet of a war, no greater sense of personal security. Instead, Japan's international environment seemed far more hostile and threatening after 1905. Although it was recognized that Russia, for the moment at least, was more concerned with its internal problems, people still expected it to seek revenge on Japan; there was increasing internal opposition to Japanese hegemony in Korea (now a very unwilling Japanese protectorate); the growth of a revolutionary movement in China threatening to bring about the collapse of the Qing dynasty; and increasingly abrasive disputes between Japan and the USA over Japanese migrants to the point whereby, in January 1907, the Gifu press stated that the British and German navies were already planning for a USA–Japan war within anything from the next five to 25 years. Moreover, the transfer to Japan of Russia's lease of territory in Manchuria meant only additional costs in terms of guarding and policing the region plus all the bills to repair the damaged rail lines and rolling stock. It would seem that neither war nor empire was the answer to the needs of ordinary people and few among them were ardent advocates of either in the years after 1905.<sup>1</sup>

The bill for the Russian war continued to weigh heavily on the Japanese economy for nearly a decade. The special wartime taxes, for example, remained in place after their intended expiration date of December 1906 and the average annual tax burden between 1905 and 1907 was over twice that of 1900–02; this continued to increase sharply up until World War I but, at that point, Japan as a nation remained in debt to the tune of approximately 1.1 billion yen.<sup>2</sup> During the Russian conflict, one description of Gifu commerce had been that it was as if a light had been extinguished. In the immediate postwar years, Gifu city was literally in semi-darkness as some stores which stayed open late attempted to cut expenses by reducing their evening lighting to a single oil lamp. The national debt, however, acted as a fire blanket to prevent any renewed spark of life in local consumption. One consequence in Gifu was a dramatic rise in the number of people looking to emigrate, mainly

to the open spaces of Hokkaido (in 1904, 176 men and women of Gifu moved to Hokkaido, in 1905 this rose to 1,150 and, in 1906, soared to over 4,400). Those consumer industries which could adapt to adversity tended to look for markets away from war. The Gifu postcard business, which had done so well in 1904–05, was stagnant after 1906 and managed to subsist only on the old reliables of landscapes and pretty women; the wartime fad for postcards of the military had evaporated to the level where they were described as virtually obsolescent.<sup>3</sup> The movie theatres were able to maintain good audiences but generally by emphasizing novelty more than the military. A typical programme for the Asahi-za Theatre from May 1907 begins with ‘The great railway journey’ and ‘World travel of the twentieth century’, followed by scenes of Shimbashi geisha, ‘Bicycle laughter’, ‘Love marriage among the smart set’, and then onto ‘Military vehicles of the Russo-Japanese war’ and ‘General Ōyama’s landing at Ujina’.<sup>4</sup>

By 1907–08, the local and national economy could no longer support the weight of debt and there were reports across Japan of banks either suspending or ceasing operations. In 1908, the incoming cabinet of General Katsura Tarō declared its primary task was to pay off the nation’s war borrowing and, as part of this, the government cancelled its invitation to foreign states for the planned 1912 International Exposition in Japan.<sup>5</sup> This, in present-day terms, is roughly equivalent to handing back the right to hold the Olympics and indicates just how damaging the cost of the Russo-Japanese war had been to Japan’s economic health.

While there had been enormous public support for the troops in wartime, this did not translate into a greater general popularity for the army in peacetime. One of the measures by which the Japanese media from the 1890s to 1920s charted public attitudes towards the military was through surveys on the marital preferences of young women. The common wisdom among historians is that, after the first Sino-Japanese war, prospective brides in Japan were obsessed with the idea of marrying a serviceman but this passion disappeared in the ‘Taishō democracy’ years of the 1920s. However, a survey conducted by a women’s journal early in 1907 shows that Japanese female students were looking only for luxury provided by a husband with a university degree and a well-paid, high-status job. At the top of the list came doctors, second were lawyers. They were willing to consider a graduate of a higher commercial school but even graduates in agriculture or science were described as ‘very unpopular’. Soldiers and sailors did not even seem to figure in their calculations. This ideal may have been less evident among rural women. There is one example from a village in Mugi county in which a 26-year-old reservist who returned from the war with a medal chose to abandon his fiancé, who was also mother to his illegitimate child, and agreed to marry the daughter of a wealthy villager.<sup>6</sup> Part of the attraction for the family of the bride was, no doubt, the distinction of a medal and the monetary reward that accompanied it.

In contrast to the army, as Charles Schencking has argued, it was the navy alone which, at the battle of Tsushima, could claim a resounding victory from

1904 to 1905 and which, then and later, could display tangible power through its great warships, far more impressive than rows of infantrymen or even cannon.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, within international relations, national strength increasingly was defined as naval power: the British empire depended on its navy; Germany was investing in the construction of great warships; and, after 1905, the USA also engaged in massive naval building and sent the so-called Great White Fleet around the world to show the might of America. An annual reminder of the contrasting fortunes of the army and navy in Japan came with the creation in 1906 of two new public holidays: Navy Day commemorated the triumph at Tsushima; Army Day commemorated the battle of Mukden in March 1905 when the Japanese failed to circle and capture the enemy.

Across Japanese society, the army undeniably had a vastly greater physical and symbolic presence after 1905. A major aspect of this physical expansion was the army's demand, apparently with no concern for national finances, of six new divisions. Four of these were justified by the defence of Japan's new colonial burdens in Korea and Manchuria. This meant that, within the next few years, a far larger number of men were in uniform at any given time (this trend was reinforced by changes to the conscription system from 1906, drafting many more men but for shorter periods of service). It also meant that army expenses jumped from 52 million yen in 1906 to nearly 112 million in 1907.<sup>8</sup>

The army's greater symbolic presence was felt heavily in the schools. Early in 1906, the army ministry arranged for touring exhibitions of weapons and trophies of war. Thereafter, having in a sense previewed its wares, it decided to sell off many of its obsolete arms, offering special prices to schools and ex-servicemen's groups; the offer included a Murata repeating rifle for just over 2 yen excluding delivery, and a hundred bullets for 70 *sen* (a Murata infantry rifle was even cheaper at 2 yen plus 50 *sen* for the bullets). This was not solely an exercise in military propaganda; informed observers understood it was also a way for the army to cut its expenses on storage. Partly for this reason, no doubt, the army ministry subsequently donated thousands of weapons, mainly guns, swords and bullets, to schools, shrines and temples across Japan. In April 1907, a list was announced for Gifu prefectural schools which included 3,056 separate items (but only 191 to local temples and shrines) and these began arriving the following month.<sup>9</sup>

After 1905, schools across provincial Japan also created one or both of two forms of war memorial. One method was to plant trees as a commemorative forest. This was a continuation of the plan begun during the war in part as a means to find work, without too much expense, for men in the depressed construction industry. Some of these woods or forests, such as at the town of Mitake in the southeast of Gifu, covered five hectares and had as many as 50,000 trees. The other common method was to build or set aside a room in a local primary school for use as a war memorial library. One of the larger examples was in Inaba county where a reading room was built onto the local primary school and filled with several hundred volumes available both to the children and the general public.<sup>10</sup>

One aim of the authorities at both the central and local levels in these commemorative actions was to foster in young people the values of the military. After 1905, provincial children had not only symbolic but also physical reminders all around them of men who had just served and sacrificed. Yet, one of the authorities' most pressing fears was about how these men would fare in postwar society. In October 1905, it was reported that government experts in Tokyo predicted there could be 200–250,000 ex-servicemen unable to find a job after the war.<sup>11</sup>

The impression from the local press, however, was that, rather than struggle for work (which, no doubt, many of them did in the postwar depression), ex-servicemen were generally better off than many civilians because of their rewards for military service. As readers were regularly informed, an ongoing function of regional government offices in the years immediately after the war was to hand over medals plus lifetime or one-off special payments (including small monetary gifts made to disabled ex-servicemen in the name of the empress). The size of some of these rewards caused nervousness in the army ministry; it did not trust its former soldiers and collaborated with the finance and communications ministries on means to prevent them squandering their money (one measure was to urge ex-servicemen to invest in real estate, another was to tighten the regulations on withdrawing campaign rewards from post office accounts). In general, however, the fear of demobilized troops about jobs and the economy were probably the surest means to guarantee financial probity. In Gifu, the report of an ex-sergeant from a village in Yamagata county, who spent about 100 yen of his service reward of 250 yen in restaurants and the Kanazu bordello quarter of Gifu city was newsworthy precisely because it was unusual.<sup>12</sup> In passing, what may seem an obvious point still bears a mention; the soldiers were rewarded with money. If there had been any substance to the rhetoric of Western observers about the samurai ethic and will-to-sacrifice of all Japanese, such rewards would have been not only unnecessary, they would have been an affront to the dignity of the recipient in so far as the traditional samurai was expected (at least in theory) to show a complete disdain for money.

One way in which ex-servicemen came to play a more visible role in provincial life was through the creation of local reservist associations or *zaigō gunjindan*. Very few of these had been created after the China war, perhaps because so few men had actually been in battle. After 1905, however, there was a natural incentive for the much larger communities of ex-servicemen in towns and villages to establish a body for themselves. This was a way to keep alive shared memories, to provide comradeship and support, and to maintain some kind of distinct status within the community. Indeed, as Ute Frevert has suggested for veterans associations in imperial Germany, the desire for social capital, even more than any form of patriotism, may have been the primary motivation for men to join such groups.<sup>13</sup>

With the enormous expansion of reservist associations after 1905, the army ministry attempted to impose on them certain standards and requirements.

Thus, the army officer with responsibility for military affairs over many of Gifu's counties sent out a memorandum to all county heads in August 1906; this was then passed down to the heads of towns and villages. The memorandum went into specific detail about the formation and the activities of reservist groups. It allowed for variation in some matters according to regional circumstances but it demanded conformity in many others. For a start, all such groups were to share the same designation, that is, *zaigō gunjindan*. Moreover, it stated that all ex-servicemen in the prefecture should view membership as a duty (*gimu*). The principal tasks of each group were to include: preserving the dignity of its members as reservists and ensuring that none engaged in any act or business unbecoming of the military; maintaining their own physical fitness and military skills; working to preserve the memory of their fallen comrades through various forms of commemoration; and providing aid to the families of servicemen who had died or been disabled. In addition, they were to assist the army whenever it conducted exercises in the locality. They were also to perform a wider community role by working with local schools and youth groups to spread military-style values; to prepare young draftees by advising them on life in the army; and to support those families whose finances suffered because a son had been drafted. The memorandum further stated that reservist groups should cooperate closely with local officials, that the group's own headquarters could be based in the town or village office, and that it would be appropriate to appoint local civilian officials as honorary members.<sup>14</sup>

In general, the goals envisaged for the new reservist associations were no different to those of the earlier ones (although one ex-soldier, describing himself as 'the devil of hill 203', insisted that the first action of any new group should be 'to mount a stern watch over the conduct of comrades' widows'). For our purposes, however, one of the major changes from earlier times is the statement that membership should be viewed as a duty. This is also in contrast with the voluntary membership of the later nationwide reservist association, created by the army ministry in 1910. As Richard Smethurst explains in his pioneering study, senior commanders deliberately made the national association a voluntary body in order to show the Japanese public that the army was confident that ordinary people, especially those in the villages, would join without pressure from above.<sup>15</sup> It would seem that the army was not so confident of rural, or provincial, support immediately after 1905 when the link between war and suffering was still so keenly felt.

Smethurst states that between 1906 and 1910, the number of local martial and reservist organizations in Japan leaped from over 4,000 to more than 11,000. In Gifu, the peak for the establishment of reservist groups was about late 1906 to mid-1907. At least 12 new associations were founded across seven counties in January 1907 alone; by mid-March that year, 10 towns and villages in Anpachi county already had a reservist association up and running, and others were on the drawing board. The average size for an individual group in Gifu at this time was roughly 130 members. Local officials were often instrumental in their formation and, at their foundation meetings, a county,



town or village head was a frequent guest; the local police chief might also appear to offer his congratulations.<sup>16</sup> Foundation meetings were generally held in the town or village office, or, just as frequently, in the local primary school.

A typical agenda for a provincial reservist association at this time may be provided by the Asobu village meeting, held at the village office on Army Day, 10 March 1907. This included discussion of upcoming memorial services, celebration of that day's national holiday, the purchase from the army of old weapons as war trophies, measures to help ex-servicemen preserve their rewards for war service, and 'spiritual education' (*seishin kyōiku*), denoting activities to be undertaken with the local school or youth group.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from arranging periodic memorial services at Buddhist temples, many reservist associations between 1906 and 1907 were also active in erecting stone memorials to the local war dead. These stones were usually in the shape of an upright bullet or cannon shell rather than, as in some societies, modelled on the human figure (that they seemingly commemorated the object of death rather than the subject may have had something to do with the shape of the traditional Buddhist funeral stone). Often, the stones also commemorated the fallen of the Sino-Japanese war or earlier conflicts. In Minō town in lower Gifu, for example, a memorial stone was erected in the municipal park in 1907 to remember the 105 local men killed in all wars since 1868. Inside the Zenkōji, a Buddhist temple sited within the park, volunteers also placed remarkably detailed and life-like wooden replicas of a soldier, each 60 centimetres tall, for every one of the men killed from the county.<sup>18</sup>

Commemorating the war dead after 1905 could be an expensive business. A war memorial stone to the 21 local dead at the forestry town of Tsukechi in Ena county cost 400 yen; the one at Minō was priced at 1,500 yen. Early in 1907, there was also a prefectural campaign for donations of 2–3,000 yen towards a national memorial stone to be placed at the site of greatest carnage, Port Arthur. This campaign overlapped with plans in Gifu city to build a local war memorial which exposed tensions between civilians and former servicemen. The problem started with the scale of the venture; a large and imposing bullet-shaped memorial topped by the figure of a golden kite was to be located at the city's Inaba Shrine but at an estimated cost of 15,000 yen (we may recall that, during the war, several hundred military families in Ōno county had been saved from destitution for less than half this amount). The argument among residents was over who was to foot the bill. The letters column of the GNN confirms that local people did not oppose the memorial as such; indeed some of them attacked the seemingly endless delays over its construction. They did, however, oppose the idea that civilians should pay for a military memorial. In one estimate, the city's ex-soldiers collectively had received at least 200,000 yen in rewards for their service. It was suggested to them by one citizen, supported by at least one old soldier, that<sup>19</sup>:

The many ex-servicemen on the committee to build this memorial should not bank on other people's pockets but pay an appropriate sum from the

monetary rewards they and ordinary servicemen got from the war and, so doing, they will quickly amass 20–30,000 yen. Warriors should show no love of money and give freely so that this memorial can be built quickly.

Another anonymous resident argued, ‘the ex-military officers on the campaign for memorial donations shouldn’t be so stingy and should push matters forward just as if they were pressing for the fall of Port Arthur!’ Local business such as Watanabe Jinkichi’s 16th Bank and the Takei Paper Company donated several hundred yen but, in the face of this public backlash, the campaign was slowed and, several months after the initial plans were announced, the total of monies collected was still only about half of what was needed.<sup>20</sup>

If there was public resistance to paying for grandiose war memorials, there was outright hostility towards paying for the private instruments of a militaristic ideology. This was most obvious in reactions to the Gifu branch of the Butokukai (Military Virtue Society). As we saw, the Butokukai was set up after the China war to promote the culture of the samurai or *bushi* class through the teaching of traditional military skills such as swordsmanship and archery. With support from the prefectural elites, the Butokukai by 1907 was far and away the largest single group dedicated to the values of the military (a report early in 1907 gave its total membership in Gifu at more than 26,000). The branch headquarters was located in Gifu city and run by prefectural bureaucrats, senior police officers, principals of the institutions of higher education, and local tycoons including Watanabe Jinkichi. Its recruitment was conducted entirely through the police stations around the prefecture and its preferred targets for membership, apart from ex-servicemen, were the pupils of the elite Middle Schools. One outcome of the Russo-Japanese war was a new fascination at home and overseas with the ideas of bushidō and, emboldened by this, the Gifu branch early in 1907 announced plans for construction of a Butoku-den or Military Virtue Hall. This was to be built in Gifu Park at a cost of 16,600 yen for the hall plus an administrative office.<sup>21</sup>

The budget for the Butoku-den suggests either that it was a modest project or that the simultaneous plan for the Gifu city war memorial at 15,000 yen was an extremely immodest project. This, however, was not the issue for residents of the city. They were adamantly opposed to the idea that the Hall should be built by public donations. In particular, they were outraged at the use of saber-bearing police to get contributions (the police in Osaka were also said to use intimidation to collect money, ostensibly for civic purposes, and to keep 20–30 per cent for what they called ‘administrative expenses’). One anonymous writer expressed his contempt for the Butokukai and advised it, instead of using police, to send out children with good quality *saké* if it wanted charity. A farmer from west Gifu, meanwhile, wrote to explain how he had used the power of the press to defend himself: when the local police came looking for money for the Hall, he showed them a GNN article criticizing the use of force to extract donations and they withdrew empty-handed (ultimately, the home minister intervened and placed a nationwide ban on

collecting donations by the police). Even with this intimidation, however, the Gifu Butokukai was unable to reach its target. In the end, construction of the Military Virtue Hall was delayed by about a year and, during this time, inflation ate into the budget; this forced the plans to be redrawn and scaled down. The outcry over the Butokukai, however, led to a reaction against the entire culture of patriotic donations, with groups such as the Japan Red Cross and Aikoku Fujinkai also being accused of wasting money squeezed out of well-intentioned but uninformed local people.<sup>22</sup>

Aside from public reservations about war memorials and the Military Virtue Hall, there is a problem in accurately assessing civilian attitudes towards the military at this time. Even in 1906 there was no standing military presence anywhere in Gifu prefecture and so the military as an institution simply did not feature in the daily lives of ordinary people. The only regular and direct contact between civilians and the armed forces remained the annual examination of young men coming of draft age, and these normally took place in towns central to a particular district.

Other forms of contact tended, as in wartime, to be brief and occur mainly along the railways. Early in 1907, for example, two army divisions were repatriated from Korea and passed through Gifu en route to their new base. The prefectural and Gifu city offices tried to ensure a reception for these soldiers as warm and welcoming as those given to men in wartime, and precise details of the scheduled arrival and departure of the 10 troop trains were printed in the local newspaper. On the day itself, the local government despatched officials to greet each of the trains, even the three which arrived in Gifu station around 2 am, and they were joined by women of the various patriotic associations. However, comments from city residents to the local press ranged from amusement to anger; one writer questioned in advance whether the 'old war women' of the patriotic groups still had the energy for the job, while a former soldier, speaking after the event, noted that the troops had been greeted in such a lukewarm manner that they could only interpret the attitude of the Gifu community as 'move on!' In fact, the entire encounter was unsatisfactory on both sides as, prior to arriving at Gifu city, one of the army officers had engaged in an acrimonious dispute with Ōgaki railway officials concerning the propriety of a civilian carriage being joined to a military train. During the war, ordinary people had routinely attacked all forms of arrogance but the military had been protected by its absence at the front. Now, confronted with this display of army arrogance, a local journalist was quick to warn what he called the 'swaggering military' how easily it could lose any respect gained from the war.<sup>23</sup> This was an example of civilians reaffirming their expectations of the military and restating the limits of their tolerance.

Yet, even as these troop trains made their way through the prefecture, the possibility was emerging of an entirely new and much more intimate relationship between the military and at least some members of the Gifu community. This was tied to the postwar expansion of army divisions, each of

which would need a home for itself and its regiments somewhere in Japan. An infantry division was normally about 10,000 men, a regiment in excess of 1,000. For local communities seeking to escape the postwar recession, there were two obvious incentives to attract one of these new bases: one was to add a large body of young male consumers for local services; the other was to raise the status of the locality in the central government's eyes and, thus, increase the chances of attracting greater investment, especially in such military-related areas as railway construction.

The manner in which the provinces viewed the central government is beautifully encapsulated in a GNN editorial from April 1905. This explained that when an official of the Agriculture and Commerce Ministry came to visit the prefecture, there would be a large welcome party of important and powerful men at the station to greet his train, he would be feted at the Banshōkan, Gifu city's finest restaurant, and when he retired for the night, there might well be a pretty maid to warm his pillow (to put this into its proper context, a few years after the article was written, Prince Itō Hirobumi, Japan's most respected statesman and author of the national constitution, visited Gifu city and was given exactly this treatment). However, when an official of the education ministry visited the prefecture, he would arrive to a deserted platform, dine alone, sleep in isolation, and, after conducting his business, leave for the capital in the same solitary fashion.<sup>24</sup> The juxtaposition was clear: the education ministry tended to tell local people what to teach and how to run their schools, often with less money; officials dealing with enterprise brought with them the lure of government funding and were always welcome.

With its location in the centre of Japan and its proximity to major transport routes, Gifu prefecture had reason to believe it was an excellent site for a new army division or regiment. When the first hint of the army expansion filtered down late in 1905, there had been a flurry of activity and optimism. In December 1905, the prefectural assembly was united in agreement that an army base for Gifu was highly desirable (that it took no action to bring this about came as no surprise to locals who described earlier assembly sittings in 1903 and 1904, respectively, as 'useless' and 'motionless'). The political and economic elites of Gifu city and Ōgaki town, however, immediately began to organize and compete with each other to win the army's favour. According to local gossip, this involved spending money in what, it may be reasonable to assume, were 'sweeteners' to senior army figures. One local banker was so confident that Gifu city would be chosen that, already by late November 1905, he was buying up the land which he calculated would be the army's preferred site.<sup>25</sup> In the event, all of these moves were premature by about a year. From early 1906, a new cabinet took power and the army had to spend time and effort in making its case to the incoming prime minister for such a costly expansion of its forces. Thus, it was only from early 1907 that the real competition between localities began.

When it did so, Gifu found itself competing on two fronts. First, there was the inter-prefectural level in which the opposition included neighbouring

Aichi; here, the contender was the old castle town of Toyohashi which had just been elevated to city status. Second, there was the inner-prefectural level in which there were three contenders: Gifu city in alliance with Inaba county to its immediate east, offering a base at the Inaba county village of Kita Nagamori (an administrative amalgam of seven hamlets); Ōgaki, the former castle town with a population of about 25,000 in Anpachi county to the west of Gifu city; and Sekigahara, a village further west of Ōgaki which was famous primarily as the site of an epoch-making battle between regional warrior armies in 1600. Among these three, Sekigahara was the outside chance. Although the imperial army generally preferred to keep its bases away from cities, in part because of the disruption caused by its movements to civilian life but also to keep its men away from urban temptations, a village without a major town nearby was going too far in the opposite direction; it caused delays and increased costs in obtaining supplies, and also threatened to undermine the troops' morale if they had to travel too far for entertainment on rest days. Ōgaki believed it had three advantages: its history as a castle town; its former ruling warrior family which still had close links to the most powerful generals of the imperial army; and its experience since the late 1890s when it had first begun petitioning for a military base as a way to improve local fortunes after several years of earthquake and flood disasters.<sup>26</sup> Of the three, the least confidence was shown by residents of Gifu city. In January 1907, the GNN predicted that any new army divisions would be placed at roughly equal points between those already in existence. The likely choice closest to Gifu, therefore, was at Ise between the 3rd Division at Nagoya and the 4th at Osaka. This would leave the Gifu city region to continue as an occasional practice area for soldiers from Nagoya. Consequently, while some city residents called for more effort to outbid Ōgaki, even if only for a regiment, others dismissed any attempt as a waste of time and money.<sup>27</sup>

Besieged by lobby groups from all over Japan, the army ministry attempted to thin the crowds at its gate by announcing the criteria on which it would situate its new bases. These were: the location's importance to military strategy; the ease for the army in obtaining commodities and resources; the existence of good communications such as rail links; the proximity of a port; what it called 'consideration of the prosperity of the region'; and the size of the local conscript pool. From this, it was obvious that the army placed its own needs above those of the local community.<sup>28</sup>

Learning from experience, the army refused to give any hint about the sites under consideration. This was to prevent any recurrence of the civilian profiteering following the Sino-Japanese war. By maintaining silence about its preferences in 1907, the army was even able to reverse the situation and, by exploiting the desperation of local communities for any kind of economic stimulus, force them into a bidding war. The deciding factor as far as the army was concerned was how much land each community was prepared to donate. In other words, the army used its upper hand in negotiations with the provinces to devolve a significant part of its costs onto civilian society.<sup>29</sup>

Just as the army kept secret its intentions, so the rival lobbyists guarded from each other the details of their bids. In Gifu, all that was generally known in February to early March was that the Ōgaki or 'Western' team included Count Toda of the former ruling warrior family plus the most powerful local businessman, Kanamori Kichijirō, while the 'Eastern' team of Gifu city and Inaba county was led by Mayor Horiguchi. Both of these teams paid repeated visits to the army ministry in Tokyo but Horiguchi, in particular, was unwilling to reveal just what terms he was offering the military. By early March, however, there were indications that the army had reached a decision. At the end of one meeting, an army general had given the 'Eastern' delegates a piece of calligraphy as a souvenir. This bore the four-character phrase: 'west withdraws, east rises'. Proving that the negotiations were not exclusively men's business, a key role in the success of the Gifu city-Inaba lobby is credited to Shimoda Utako, a villager from Ena county in east Gifu who also had risen, in her case to become head of the girls' section of the elite Peers School in Tokyo, and who had close contacts among some of Tokyo's power brokers.<sup>30</sup>

As soon as news of the unofficial verdict reached the prefecture, some in Gifu city instantly jumped to the conclusion that they had been selected as the home of a new division, not just a regiment. There was also some talk that the prefecture would get both a division near the city and a regiment near Ōgaki. Even though no formal statement had been made by the army ministry (and none could be made until the emperor had given his approval), there were reports that village landowners in Kita Nagamori were already raising the price of their land several fold. This caused a wave of anxiety among locals who warned that the army could still change its mind and also that Ōgaki, whose team remained in Tokyo, would seize any opportunity to sabotage the 'Eastern' bid.<sup>31</sup>

The army ministry was never going to tolerate such blatant profiteering by village landowners. In mid-March, it called a senior prefectural official named Ide to Tokyo and instructed him, upon his return to Gifu, to clarify its terms through the local press. Thus, on 21 March, Ide was quoted in the GNN as saying<sup>32</sup>:

If this [profiteering] is true, the army ministry will not waste money buying over-priced land but, as far as military needs allow, move its choice to where there are people willing to donate land ... Put simply, the choice will depend on how much land is donated. As yet, no firm decision has been made.

This was a kind of public scolding, not a real threat because, the next day, the location of the new army divisions was officially announced. The disappointment for people in Gifu (or, at least, those in eastern Gifu) was that Toyohashi city, already home to an infantry regiment since the 1880s, had beaten them in getting the new 15th Division. This had been achieved after it had met two conditions; one to expand the road system, the other to relocate the brothel

quarters (though it was not clear whether this was to move the quarters closer to, or further away from, the divisional base). The new 16th Division was to be based at Kyoto. This is worth noting as it was reported at the time that, in the 1890s, the army had abandoned a plan to establish a division at Kyoto due to local opposition. Clearly, local sentiment had changed. The Gifu city-Inaba county alliance took what must be counted as second prize in becoming home to the new 68th infantry regiment, part of the 3rd Division at Nagoya. Further evidence that the army had made its decision was the fact that, at that very moment, Ide and county and village officials from Inaba and Kita Nagamori were cordoning off the intended site, while a doctor from the army ministry was testing the local water.<sup>33</sup>

The announcement of a new regiment for eastern Gifu was the signal for a second round of bargaining. The total area for the intended base was 123,500 *tsubo* (one *tsubo* being approximately 3.3 square metres). Of this, 90,000 was for buildings, 12,000 for a firing range, and 1,000 for a cemetery. It was now revealed, however, that the city-county envoys had cemented the deal with the army only by offering to donate the entire site free of charge. Moreover, only one landowner from the various hamlets of Kita Nagamori had actually signed the offer. Much of the required land was in the hands of about 350 men and, having just been denied the chance to profit from the military, they now insisted on charging the city and county between three and four times its estimated market value. According to contemporary reports, this meant that the bill for the Gifu regimental site would exceed 200,000 yen (elsewhere in Japan the bill for 400,000 *tsubo* of land for an entire army division at the town of Utsunomiya was said to be just 160,000 yen).<sup>34</sup>

In defending their claim, the villagers of Kita Nagamori emphasized the emotional tie of their families over many generations to these particular plots of land and, among the local public, there was evidence of sympathy for their position. There was certainly no broad community suggestion that the landowners should place patriotism or even provincial interests before their own. However, this left Gifu city and Inaba county with only two choices: they could haggle over the price but still end up paying a huge amount, or they could use the law to appropriate the land at a much lower cost. Threats of legal action were hinted at but they were never more than a negotiating tactic. The fear, openly admitted, was that if the land was seized from the owners, this would create a hostile environment for the incoming regiment and this, in turn, would damage the entire venture. The only real option was to bargain with the landowners to lower their prices and, in the face of widespread public resistance to any kind of civic levy to pay for the land, to persuade local men of wealth to donate the necessary funds.<sup>35</sup>

From March to May 1907, these negotiations in and between Gifu city, Inaba county and Kita Nagamori village were so intense and consumed so much of the time and energy of Mayor Horiguchi that it was said he was never to be found in his office and the running of city affairs was entirely in the hands of a deputy. The public was also engaged in the negotiations

through its letters to the local press. Some of these exposed the lingering worry that the army base might yet be taken from Gifu city, with rumours that the leaders of Ōgaki were seizing on the impasse at Kita Nagamori to send yet another delegation to Tokyo. One youth summed up the general exasperation with local power brokers when he urged the city's elite to act first and count the cost later. As he put it, 'everywhere there is a great fuss over the location of these camps and we hear that Okayama city has already decided to donate lands and lots of money so, hey, you old guys of Gifu (*Gifu oji-sama-tachi*), get your act together!' Another citizen, perhaps noting the example of Toyohashi, suggested a way to increase donations for the land purchase from residents of the city's north<sup>36</sup>:

Some say that when the army camp is built at Kita Nagamori, the busy southern part of Gifu city will profit considerably but not the northern part and so they are cool to this scheme. If the Kanazu brothel area is moved north, then north and south will benefit equally and the entire city will rise to support the land donation.

Another technique to increase donations, as in the war years, was less about patriotism and more about communal shame. Thus, in an article of 2 April, a Gifu journalist explained the situation at Kōfu city in Yamanashi prefecture. There, in what was obviously an exceptional case, a single resident had donated the entire 120,000 *tsubo* of land needed for the new regiment. The Yamanashi prefectural governor had then told local men of influence that, while they too might wish to donate land, this was no longer necessary and that, alternatively, they could offer money for construction of the regimental buildings. Apparently, they immediately agreed and pledged 50,000 yen for this purpose. The journalist then compared this example with the situation in Gifu and, with the kind of brutality we have seen elsewhere in public comment on local power holders, concluded that the wealthy elite of his city should be forced to 'swallow the grime from the nails of the gentlemen of Kōfu'.<sup>37</sup>

Contrary to what may have been expected in Japan's supposed 'shame culture', the limitations of this tactic were exposed when the city authorities went looking for a donation from bank president and head of the chamber of commerce, Watanabe Jinkichi (who, it is worth reminding ourselves, was also the prefecture's richest man). By early May 1907, negotiations with the land-owners had progressed to the point where the total cost was agreed at 150,000 yen with Gifu city paying two-thirds. Watanabe, however, dismissed the city's representatives and was quoted in the press as telling them, 'I hear Ōgaki wants the camp: let them have it'. When further pressed, he actually began moves to transfer his residence out of the prefecture.<sup>38</sup> This suggests that, as the talks had moved from Tokyo to Gifu, Watanabe had in a sense taken over the position of the army ministry in that he had enormous power over any deal and he, like the army, intended to defend his interests even if it meant taking his business elsewhere. Moreover, the fact that the city-county alliance



had committed itself to the army without first guaranteeing local funding probably suggested to him that he was dealing with poor businessmen. He may also have been offended by the idea of paying the landowners so much over the market price for what was, after all, a highly speculative investment. Watanabe and other city businessmen who followed his lead were excoriated by the public but their wealth and position allowed them to be impervious to shame.

Watanabe's threat to quit Gifu was also a negotiating tactic. Later in May 1907, the committee to raise donations for the land purchase set out a quota for city residents, with those of the first tax bracket being asked to contribute 18,000 yen, down to those at the twenty-sixth level being asked for half a yen. Watanabe accepted this system but still managed to reduce his contribution by nearly half, paying just 10,000 yen instead of 18,000. With such qualified support from the elite, the city was unable to approach its target solely through donations and, according to local journalist and popular historian Michishita Jun, the cost of making up the shortfall crippled the city's finances for years thereafter.<sup>39</sup>

By February 1908, construction of the new Gifu regimental base at Kita Nagamori was under way. The barracks and other buildings within the camp site were being erected, a cemetery was being laid out, and a military police box had been stationed in Gifu city. After all the battles of 1907 over money and land, however, many locals still questioned the social impact of bringing the army to the region. One example of civil society's ambivalence towards the military is a letter to the GNN signed, 'a welcoming citizen'<sup>40</sup>:

We people of Gifu city will make every effort to give a warm welcome to the 68th Regiment but we hope the troops will also recognize our goodwill and work to maintain discipline in their own conduct.

The inference was that, where the army went, so did immorality. One writer went even further when she suggested that immorality not only accompanied but even preceded the army, describing the unfinished camp site as a magnet for 'adultery by construction workers, contractors keeping concubines, the prostituting of daughters, and the spread of venereal disease'. This linking of the army with sexual decline was also evident in a less strident letter from a woman who, while ready to welcome the troops, could not repress her distaste at examples of other places with army camps where the soldiers were often to be seen wandering the brothel quarters. These qualms were unlikely to be assuaged when a committee of about 50 members was formed to prepare a civic welcome for the incoming regiment and decided that, along with fireworks and a performance of sumō wrestling, there would be a dance by the city's geisha (who, no doubt, saw their participation as legitimate advertising). The decision did at least extract a different viewpoint on the army, with one resident asking, perhaps with some naivety, 'Is it right to put before soldiers who value simplicity and frugality the wanton and indolent geisha?'<sup>41</sup>

The final expense in bringing the army to Gifu came with this civic reception for the 68th Regiment planned for March 1908. The estimated bill was 7,500 yen. This time, the proposal was for Gifu city residents to pay 2,750 yen, Inaba county 1,000 yen, and the remaining half to come from other areas of the prefecture which had any kind of involvement with the regiment. This was one way to spread the cost but, as before, there was criticism that the profits from the new base would not be shared equally even within the same small locality. In Gifu city, the mayor's office was quick to warn residents that the city was already over-burdened with expenses, not least the purchase of the campsite, and so it had to rely on donations. It further explained that half of the amount – 1,375 yen – would be sought from local banks, businesses, and the Kanazu brothels. The rest would have to come from the city's wards. The mayor urged people of the city to give generously because 'we will be particularly close to the new regiment and it will impact directly and indirectly on our commerce and industry so we should try to raise as much money as we can'. Rewards were offered to those giving a donation of 10 or 5 yen; the former would be invited to the officers' reception on the day of the welcome, the latter would be invited each year to the regiment's flag-raising ceremony.<sup>42</sup>

The great welcome party for the 68th Regiment finally took place in Gifu city on 14 March 1908. The streets were decorated with small national flags and lanterns, while shops around the city shared the spirit of celebration by offering special discounts on their merchandise. With deliberate economic symbolism, the main stage for the party was in the gardens of the Prefectural Manufacturing Hall. In total, there were about 1,800 guests. Among the VIPs was the commander of the 3rd Division from Nagoya. A notable absentee, however, was Mayor Horiguchi who had died two months earlier at the age of 52; some said that his health had been destroyed by the stress of all the negotiations since 1907 to bring the army to Gifu. At the reception site, various pavilions were erected and decorated with flowers and banners of welcome for the 1,100 officers and men of the 68th. All the guests received special commemorative postcards while the soldiers were also given small gifts such as a souvenir notebook.<sup>43</sup>

Knowing what we now know of provincial society, it should come as no surprise that the arrival of the military had no obvious impact in lessening civilian discord. Even on the day of the great welcome, there were numerous forms of discontent. One was the unfortunate citizens who fell prey to the pickpockets, working the crowd as farmers work the harvest; at Kita Nagamori alone, which marked the day with evening fireworks, eight men were arrested. Another was officers of the local reservist association who were described as deeply upset that not every one of them had been invited to the party. A third was local journalists who were seated at the evening reception so far away from the VIPs that they felt they were being deliberately insulted and walked out. Also offended were the city officials who watched as their prefectural counterparts took complete control of the welcome even though

the prefectural government had contributed nothing to its expenses. Finally, there were the patriotic women of the Chū-Ai Fujinkai. They were angered on two counts. First, the organizing committee had given them no more than 30 invitations even though they had about 300 members. Second, it had warned them that any woman with bobbed hair (implying to conservatives a radical modernist attitude which threatened existing gender roles) would be refused entry. The Chū-Ai Fujinkai took their revenge by handing the soldiers at the party a booklet on Gifu's wartime support of the military which focused exclusively on their own activities. Later, in a local business journal, they also hit back at the organizing committee, and took a swipe at their rival, by stating that, unlike women of the Aikoku Fujinkai, none of their members would ever be seen in the provocative hairstyle.<sup>44</sup>

That the motive for bringing a regiment to Gifu was essentially economic is clear from a GNN article of 21 September 1908, just over half a year after the troops' arrival, titled simply 'The purchasing power of the Gifu regiment'. The article began by evaluating the wages and spending habits of the soldiers in camp. It stated that, among the 815 men of the lower ranks, the general wage for a private first or second class was from 4 to 6 *sen* per day (up from 3–4 *sen* per day a decade earlier). This gave the majority of men at the base a monthly income of no more than 1 yen 20 *sen*. Yet, almost all of this went on cigarettes, either the popular and cheap Shikishima brand or, among the big-spenders, the more expensive Fuji brand. However, adding in the sergeants and other non-commissioned officers, this meant that the camp PX could take in about 3,000 yen a month. Thus, the article declared, the regiment as a whole had considerable disposable income.

Moving onto the soldiers' spending habits on rest days, the article began positively by noting the experience of Ōtsu, where part of the regiment had been put together prior to its official entry into Gifu. There, on every Sunday, there had been great profits for local rice cake dealers (*mochi-ya*). Apparently, the sweet-toothed among the off-duty soldiers had even outspent those who were serious drinkers and the rice cake dealers could take over 80 yen in a single day. This positive outlook, however, disappeared quickly. The article listed every detail of the troopers' weekly menu in order to show how well they were fed and, therefore, outside of rice cakes, unlikely to want or need anything special from the city's food shops or restaurants.

The article moved onto the sex industry. A year earlier, the common assumption in Gifu had been that the real profits of military consumption would go to the brothels of Kanazu. In anticipation of a surge in business, several new brothels had been opened in mid-1907 and around 60–70 extra women brought to the city; this raised the total number of licensed prostitutes at that point to around 350 (up from about 290 in mid-1906).<sup>45</sup> Most of these new women were housed in the cheaper brothels, suggesting that their intended market was the ordinary soldier. However, the article cited workers from the Kanazu houses to the effect that, while soldiers might wander the quarter, they only occasionally went inside a house and, to the further disappointment of the management, stayed only a short time.

The article concluded in a kind of desperation by insisting that, however poor the soldiers might be after buying cigarettes or however frugal they might choose to be, they could not simply hang about all Sunday, and they would have to go somewhere in the city or in the area around the camp for a meal or take a room at an inn to pass time with friends.<sup>46</sup>

Reading this assessment, the people of east Gifu could only conclude that there would be no speedy return on their heavy investment in the business of bases. Instead of the Kanazu houses, as many had assumed, the principal local beneficiaries of the soldiers' presence appeared to be confectioners and the several hundred tobacco dealers in Gifu city and around the camp. However, tobacco was a state monopoly so purchases by the regiment were more likely to help in securing local jobs than in greatly increasing local wealth. One business which apparently did very well out of the new regiment was a breeder of pigs and poultry who was able to buy up all the leftover rice of the regiment and, using this as feed for his livestock, make excellent profits.<sup>47</sup>

The wider benefits of the army's presence were in raising the status of Gifu on the national map. Local people had always believed that this would lead to better funding from the central government, especially in the development of communications which would boost local productivity and trade. There is some evidence that they were correct. In 1909, the Department of Railways in Tokyo began to upgrade the station at Gifu city. Two years later, a tram system began running from the city centre to the suburbs. In the 1910s, there was construction work aplenty with the new line to Takayama; this began in 1918 with a section linking Gifu city to Kakamigahara (just east of Kita Nagamori), the site from 1916 of a new army air force base.<sup>48</sup>

To some degree, therefore, the long-term benefit of having a regimental base would seem to have justified all the local money invested in 1907–08. Moreover, it may have been to Gifu's advantage that it obtained only a regiment in 1907 and not an army division. In the military retrenchment programme of the mid-1920s, the 15th Division at Toyohashi was to be scrapped with dire consequences for its region. In Gifu, both the profits and the losses of providing a home to the army were on a smaller scale. One question which remained, however, was, having spent so much and worked so hard to bring the army to Gifu, how did the people now view 'their' regiment

## 5 'Good soldiers, good citizens'

### The local military in the public gaze

With the creation of an army regiment inside the borders of Gifu, the relationship between local people and the military, at least in the lowland areas nearest the base, was obviously closer and more visible than at any time since the Tokugawa era. In the years after the Russo-Japanese war, moreover, the military worked to improve its public image and to spread the ideal of 'good soldiers, good civilians' (*ryōhei ryōmin*). Even more than in the past, the army's intention was to use its soldiers, both during and after their service, to maintain and strengthen conservative attitudes in civil society. This was part of the wider Boshin moral reform movement of postwar Japan, designed to hold back the tides of materialism and individualism by reminding Japanese of their pre-Meiji values and practices. As the changes to the conscription law mentioned earlier, plus the increased number of army divisions, meant an unprecedented number of men were being drafted into the army after 1906, this is the time now to peer inside the barracks and see how the Gifu regiment and, more especially, how the ordinary soldiers, appeared to their host society. First, however, it may be helpful to comment on the conscription system and some of its problems in the immediate aftermath of a war which officially, and certainly in the military, was being presented not just as a triumph of strategy and tactics but as a triumph of the national spirit.

A sense of local attitudes towards conscription after 1905 may be gained from reports of two celebrations. Both took place in the high country town of Takayama which, being so remote from the centres of rapid sociocultural change and rising materialism, one might expect to be a bastion of conservatism. In the first case, a party was given in mid-1907 in the municipal park by the town authorities and reservist association for all of the local young men who had just passed the draft examination; this was a relatively lavish affair and the entertainment included dancing by local geisha and a performance of traditional music. In contrast, a young man in mid-1908 failed the draft examination and hosted his own party to celebrate what, to him, was a great success. To this party, he invited his friends and family. According to the notice in the Gifu press, his parents were also delighted at the result and there was no indication of any family embarrassment or any criticism, either from the reporter or from other townspeople, that the

revellers might lack a sense of duty or patriotism.<sup>1</sup> From this, one can only conclude that Japanese provincial society was able to accommodate a diversity of views about military service less than three years after the war against Russia. In view of the evidence from earlier years, it is probably fair to say that this accommodation was the norm throughout the Meiji era, well before the age of 'Taishō democracy'.

While the young man of Takayama had at least presented himself for examination in 1908, one of the problems for the imperial army throughout much of its history was draft evasion. In these postwar years, there was an inconclusive public debate on the contemporary situation. On the one hand, it was asserted that the malpractices of former times, when young men had been willing even to injure themselves to avoid conscription, had been transformed by the victory of 1905, and the trend now, if anything, was for more men to offer themselves as one year volunteers and, more generally, to welcome the draft (in this view, the only group singled out for criticism was the sons of the well-off who employed their wealth, for example by embarking on trips to the West, to escape military service). On the other hand, it was reported that the education ministry believed the long-standing trend among students to evade conscription was actually on the increase after the war. The military and educational authorities frequently worked together (although not always in harmony) on ways to combat draft evasion but, as the GNN warned in January 1907, 'if this vice [of draft dodging] spreads yet further it will end with the military police having to carry out a mass round up'.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this warning, a report 18 months later demonstrated the limits of state power in late Meiji Japan. Higher education remained a legitimate means whereby to defer the draft and some universities, including the private Nihon University in central Tokyo, used this to increase their student recruitment, printing the exemption in bold, unmissable type in their advertising.<sup>3</sup> The army, however, was convinced that students after 1905 were staying on even after graduation, taking extra study merely as a device further to postpone conscription. As a meeting of county and town heads in Gifu heard in May 1908, the army minister considered this practice, while not technically illegal, was nonetheless in the spirit of draft evasion. The army was also convinced that private universities were abetting the students by treating this rising demand for additional study simply as a business opportunity for themselves. Yet, when the army arranged with the education ministry to write to provincial officials across Japan and, through them, to warn students of a clampdown on this legally dubious practice, the numbers of young men enrolling in postgraduate study only increased (in 1910, army ministry figures show that of 552,000 men of conscript age, as many as 83,600 used higher education as a reason for deferring military service).<sup>4</sup>

For those teenagers in Gifu on the cusp of university or military service, the highest level of education was the four middle schools of Gifu city, Ōgaki, Takayama, and Mitake. Of these, the Gifu Middle School in the prefectural capital was the oldest and the most prestigious (the language of instruction

for the best of its 500 or so students from the 1880s was English). Both during and after the Russian war, however, its pupils were subjected to relentless public criticism. A typical comment was that Middle School boys were among the most frequent visitors to the Kanazu bordellos. There was also public frustration with the school's baseball team which seemed to possess neither talent nor energy. More generally, young men of the city were accused of a kind of Aubrey Beardsley-style decadence and narcissism, with reports in 1907 that the new male fashion was to wear a woman's shawl and, on occasion, even elegant women's gloves as a deliberate posturing against traditional gender norms.<sup>5</sup> In these various ways, such urban, affluent and often well-educated young men constituted a challenge to the values and practices of the military. Their high profile in civil society only reinforced the army's attempt to promote the image of 'good soldier, good civilian' and to increase the number of young men going into the barracks.

The dramatic reform of the conscription law late in 1906 reduced the period of active service for infantrymen from three years to two. Initially, the army intended to attach a condition to this reform and insist that any soldier who performed badly would have to stay on and serve a third year. However, it was decided that this would create so much unrest in the barracks, and exert such a negative influence on new recruits, that the condition was dropped.<sup>6</sup> It would seem that the army recognized, and accepted, the limits of its capacity for social engineering.

With an additional four army divisions after 1905 (and another two in planning), the absolute number of young men being drafted for military service was set to rise by about 40–50,000. The change to the conscription law lifted this figure even higher as men moved more rapidly through the system. Indeed, a survey by an army group early in 1907 estimated an additional 25,000 infantrymen would result each year from the introduction of the two-year system alone. Together, these changes were said to mean that as many as 20 per cent of all men taking the conscript examination might now be drafted for military service.<sup>7</sup>

The details of the annual draft examinations continued to be printed at great length in the local press over the spring and early summer months. This allowed local people to observe the system unfolding each year. The process normally took about 10 weeks. Taking 1907 as an example, examinations of 20-year old males were held across Gifu prefecture between 16 April and 28 June, almost entirely at Buddhist temples, local primary schools or, on occasion, at the county office. The temple or school was the most common, and largest, public space in any town or village but the choice of site also tacitly emphasized either, in the case of the temple, the solemn and spiritual nature of the pact between potential conscript and state institution (the one to serve, the other to protect) or, in the case of the school, the modernity of Japan's nationwide schooling and military institutions (both created in 1872). On average, the examination in any given locality lasted two to three days. At the more densely populated, relatively lowland, counties of Ena, Inaba and Mugi,

nearly 3,000 men were inspected in 1907 and, for the prefecture as a whole, the figure was about 11,000.<sup>8</sup>

The common view of Japan late in the Meiji era, supported by the claim of official statistics, is that primary school attendance among boys and girls was virtually universal by the start of the twentieth century. This would suggest that illiteracy had largely been consigned to the past and, naturally, this would have a major impact on the quality and efficiency of the Japanese armed forces. In 1907, however, the counties of Gifu conducted a survey of the educational levels of all those being examined for conscription. The results show considerable diversity even among neighbouring territories. Thus, in Anpachi county, 608 men were questioned and, of these, only 32 had a minimal sense of reading or numbers and a mere five were completely illiterate (the highest educational achievers were five university graduates). By contrast, at Yamagata county northeast of Anpachi, 252 men were examined and, of these, 144 either had no schooling or had dropped out of primary school (no university graduate was listed). In Ibi county to the northwest of Anpachi, the figures were 862 men tested of whom 182 were either illiterate or had failed to complete primary schooling (the top scholars in the county had the equivalent of middle school certificates). Elsewhere in the prefecture, at Yoshigi county in the high north, of the 374 men examined, 106 had dropped out or never attended primary school (the most senior man was a graduate of an engineering college). Similar figures from other counties suggest that, overall, about one-quarter or more of all 20-year-old males in Gifu in 1907 lacked a full primary school education.<sup>9</sup>

Illiteracy was no barrier to being conscripted in the imperial army of 1907. This is clear from the opinions of two officers of the Inspectorate of Military Education which appeared within days of each other in the Gifu press. In the first report, one army officer congratulated schools, in alliance with the good influence of returned ex-servicemen, in overcoming what he described as the dire situation of 1903 when, in his recollection, a survey of new troops showed about two-thirds as completely illiterate and without any learning (half of these also being unable to differentiate between left and right). By 1906, he believed that hardly a single new soldier was unable to recognize his own name. He also confidently asserted that the proposed reduction of military service to two years would only enhance the social and educational benefits of these more highly trained ex-servicemen returning to their villages. Yet, directly contradicting this positive interpretation, the officer in the second report insisted that the educational level of new troops grew worse every year and, were it to continue, he predicted the army would end up with cavalymen ignorant even of how to mount a horse! For him, the problem was particularly acute in poor households where sons with the barest schooling had long since forgotten how to write a single word by the time they entered camp. The army had always considered itself to be an adjunct to the schools in terms of conveying life skills and moral precepts to young Japanese but, as this officer argued, even the most fundamental military training was impeded by the



inability to read or write. The army ministry tended to favour the second of these opinions but, by 1914, it claimed to be overcoming what it admitted was a continuing problem of illiteracy among new recruits. However, it seems that the reality of this extra effort by the authorities to prepare provincial youth for life in the barracks aimed no higher than giving them an understanding of the simplest words and the ability to write their own names.<sup>10</sup>

With the creation of the 68th regiment, the men selected for service in the draft exams in 1907 knew they were likely to be based not too far from their homes (although, perpetuating the historical divisions within the prefecture, men from the three mountain counties of Hida generally went across the border to the new 69th regiment at Toyama). This meant that there were greater opportunities for soldiers and relatives to see each other during the period of conscription and, indeed, for the regiment to enhance the ideal of itself as a 'local unit'. The moment in peacetime when a regiment was at its most popular was on ceremonial occasions. This was particularly the case on its annual flag day when, beginning from 10 May 1908 in the case of the 68th, it opened its gates to the public to share in the anniversary of its founding. In its first years alone, the regiment issued several thousand tickets for relatives and friends of the troops along with parties of school children, local dignitaries and ordinary citizens. At the camp, they were treated to demonstrations of swordsmanship and marksmanship and, in its emphasis on military spectacle and joint civil-military celebration, the regimental flag day was a fixed and regular compliment to the annual grand manoeuvres which, of course, moved to a different region of Japan every year. Coming as it did among years of economic gloom and tales of rising public misery, the flag day, at least in the period up to World War I, was something to which people in and around Gifu city looked forward with pleasure and anticipation.<sup>11</sup>

Outside of ceremonial occasions, the 68th and its soldiers enjoyed a more ambiguous reputation. One of the early local reactions to the arrival of the army was a sense that the status of some civilians in positions of authority might be threatened. Thus, a letter to the press in mid-1907 warned that, as the children of the incoming officers would go to the village school at Kita Nagamori, it would be better to replace the bumbling principal (the phrase used was *guzu guzu* meaning slow-witted) with someone more able. In a similar vein, another letter argued that senior officers of the Gifu city police would be more likely to retire early as their activities (or as the letter put it, 'their room to swagger') were now curtailed by the presence of a military police post in the heart of the commercial district. With the enhanced military traffic, another official potentially in the firing line was the recently appointed Gifu city rail stationmaster of whom one exasperated critic publicly demanded in 1907, 'pick up the 'phone and do everything in the twentieth century manner!'<sup>12</sup> In this way, while citizens continued their practice of mocking and harrying local men of power, they also acknowledged the authority of the army as an institution and expressed their belief that army officers would demand high standards of performance. However, in contrast to these feelings

of respect and even insecurity towards the army and its commanders, the public view of the common soldier was characterized mainly by ideas of physical and moral weakness.

One of the more surprising public impressions of Gifu soldiers around this time is how fragile their health was perceived to be. One argument used by local officials in 1907 in requesting a regiment for Gifu was that men of the prefecture earlier posted to the 9th Division on Japan's west coast were said to suffer terribly from the difference in climate. In support of the Gifu city bid, Mayor Horiguchi even cited an officer with the 9th Division to the effect that several hundred men of Gifu fell ill each year simply due to being away from their native environment.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the creation of a local regiment was presented both to the army authorities and to the people of the prefecture as vital in protecting the health of Gifu's young men (or at least those from the lowland Minō region). This placed the army in an awkward position: while the concept of 'local units' was meant to strengthen ties between the military and provincial communities, it was also a threat to public trust and overall military efficiency if it were used as an excuse to cosset men and avoid posting them away from their native place. Put simply, if soldiers from Gifu fell ill when posted to Kanazawa, how would they withstand the challenges of policing or combat duties in Korea or China?

The nervousness surrounding movement of the army even within Japan appears in a report of the 68th regimental doctor in mid-1912. At that time, about half of the men were dispatched from Gifu by way of steamship from Osaka to north China; their mission was to protect Japanese interests and citizens in the wake of China's recent republican revolution. As the report explains, one of the most important tasks was for the soldiers to prepare boiled water before leaving Kita Nagamori, to have refills arranged at a railway station along the route, and, while staying overnight at Osaka, to ensure that all their places of accommodation provided clean water from the city's water supply. As the report notes, it was merely the good fortune of the regiment to be billeted in a region where no contagious disease was presently recorded.<sup>14</sup>

As part of its public image, the army was naturally concerned to maintain and emphasize an impression of physical strength and fitness. One way to assist this was through the retailing of medicines created by army doctors. The notable example here is *Seiro* (which also could be read as *sei-Ro*, i.e. 'conquer Russia'), the concoction of the army surgeon-general and a team of more than 30 army doctors and pharmacists. In its press adverts, *Seiro* claimed to be a panacea, working to reduce problems in the stomach, lungs, head and teeth, cure sea sickness and, crucially, protect against contagious diseases. Similar claims with reference to contagious diseases were made by civilian manufactures of soap such as Kao (there was also a company selling a brand of soap named after General Nogi, commander of Japanese forces at the siege of Port Arthur in 1904, but, despite the military connection, this made no medicinal claim beyond smelling pleasantly of musk). The experience

of two wars was invaluable in helping the armed forces learn how to reduce the impact of disease and so medicines such as *Seiro* may well have been attractive to consumers. However, the pharmaceutical industry was one of the biggest advertisers across Japan in the 1900s and beyond, and products backed by the military were just a small sample in a bustling marketplace.<sup>15</sup>

While the army reassured the public in late Meiji that its management of contagious diseases was improving, the one malady which seemed entirely beyond its control, and which led to a public debate so intense it bordered on hysteria, was syphilis. In a letter received by prefectural officials in Gifu and elsewhere across Japan in mid-1908, the army minister stated that 'tests of conscripts newly arrived at their bases show that sufferers of venereal disease are extremely numerous (*sukoburu tadai*)'. Speaking to the press, an army doctor named Hasegawa confirmed that the results of draft examinations showed an annual increase in cases of syphilis and, with a melodramatic warning to 'syphilitic empire! syphilitic citizens!', he pleaded with local people to act before Japan was swamped by the disease. In particular, he called for civic groups to police the behaviour of young men, especially in spring when, it was popularly believed, sexual promiscuity was at its height.<sup>16</sup>

A similarly apocalyptic note had been sounded in the previous year by a GNN editorial. This summarized the so-called 'debate on VD leading to national collapse' (*karyūbyō bōkoku-ron*) and concluded that it was difficult to refute based on the evidence from Gifu. The essence of the problem as far as the GNN was concerned was that, between leaving primary school and taking the draft exam, most teenage males were under no one's supervision (the editorial dismissed community youth groups or *seinendan* as ineffective). Whether in town or countryside, this led young men to pass their time in drinking and carousing. At the root of the problem, however, according to a Captain Sakane in Gifu, was the flood of unlicensed prostitutes created by the postwar recession. The result, in his view, was that young men, especially those in uniform, found themselves surrounded by women selling sex. For Sakane, the licensed women of places such as the Kanazu were no danger to the health of soldiers. Instead, he argued that up to 90 per cent of all soldiers suffering from venereal diseases had been infected by unlicensed sex workers whom he denounced as the army's 'powerful enemy' and one which was virtually impossible to regulate. The problem remained intractable into the 1920s when a survey by a senior army doctor showed that, despite all the attempts by the army at regulation (partially successful during the boom economy of World War I), sexually transmitted diseases among soldiers continued to rise as, once again, another economic downturn contributed to a surge in unofficial prostitutes, especially among waitresses in the newly popular 'cafes'.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the warnings about the impending collapse of Japan, the actual figures for sexually transmitted disease among men of draft age in Gifu seem, from the comfort of a century's distance, to be less than alarming. Although they are incomplete (part of the prefecture was not recorded in 1905), they still show that the levels for 1906 and 1907 at 207 and 212 men, respectively,

are less than the total of 250 for 1902 and far less than the wartime highs of around 400.<sup>18</sup> As we saw earlier, it was an open secret during the Russian war that many troops were being repatriated because of venereal diseases contracted mainly around the jumping-off point of Hiroshima. The problem, however, obviously was not confined to the military or even to young men. An official survey of 1904 for Gifu as a whole counted 19,400 cases treated by local doctors (this excludes those which were not treated by a professional). If we remind ourselves that the entire population of the prefecture was about one million men, women and children, it is clear, even allowing for repeat cases, that local people had good reason to view this as a major social and health issue. It also helps to explain the regularity of advertisements in the press for various cures (although none that I have seen for the first Japanese-made condom, Heart Beauty, introduced in 1909).<sup>19</sup>

While the problem was spread across civil society, public opinion particularly identified the military with promiscuity and disease. As noted earlier, even the construction of the army camp at Kita Nagamori seemed to some local observers to result in greater levels of adultery, prostitution, and venereal disease. The general assumption was also that the local sex industry would thrive on military custom. Early in 1907, the GNN had described the Kanazu houses greeting news of the regiment's formation 'as if they were welcoming the god of good fortune' and, once the troops arrived in Gifu, they began opening during daylight hours on Sundays to cater for off-duty servicemen. The Kanazu quarter was an area roughly five blocks along and four deep, containing just over 50 shops of entertainment, food and drink, and with its own hospital. The site was modelled on the famous Yoshiwara pleasure quarters of old Tokyo and had two gates so that human traffic could be controlled (the first military police post in Gifu city was just outside Kanazu). When it first opened in the late 1880s, an hour with one of the licensed women was calculated as two sticks of incense, each costing over 12 *sen* (it is said that, in the darkened rooms, some women surreptitiously used a fan to make the incense burn quicker).<sup>20</sup>

Despite the popular connection of soldiers and sex, however, figures for the number of women working in the licensed sex industry of Gifu city show a long-term drop after 1905. During the war with Russia, the total population of the Kanazu houses exceeded 600 but, by 1912, it had declined to 433; it fell further in 1919 to 410 and then, in the post-World War I economic downturn, rose slightly in 1923 to 460.<sup>21</sup> What this suggests is that the presence of an army regiment was not enough to guarantee the fortunes of the sex industry whose preferred and most regular clients were businessmen, bureaucrats and politicians (along with, perhaps, the students of the middle school).

This is not to say that the public linking of soldiers and sex was entirely undeserved. However, as a letter from 1908 states, a saying which had become popular was that, 'Troubles for the commander of the regiment come from his captains; troubles for the captains come from their whores'. Indeed, a GNN article on discipline in the new regiment from mid-1908 focuses mainly on the

number of officers taking mistresses from among the Kanazu women. In contrast, it praises the ordinary soldiers whom, it states, were performing their military duties to a much higher standard than many other regiments. However, it did acknowledge that a core of troops, for no obvious reason, had recently gone bad and begun frequenting the cheaper prostitutes. In response, the regiment had banned all men from entering a certain house just outside the camp gates and also certain 'shady' (*aimai*) establishments in Gifu city.<sup>22</sup>

The principal reason why ordinary infantrymen resorted to unlicensed prostitutes, despite the greater risk of disease and consequent punishment by the army authorities, was that their pay barely covered even the most basic needs. This placed anything but the briefest and most infrequent visit to the licensed women of Kanazu mostly beyond their reach. Using a variety of printed guides to life in the army from about 1906 to 1910, a leading historian of the conscription system, Ichinose Toshiya, calculates that an ordinary private in 1910 would spend about three-quarters of his pay on daily necessities and tobacco. This would leave him only 50 *sen* per month for, as Ichinose puts it, 'sake and sweets' at a time when a single postcard could cost well over 1 *sen* or a ticket to Gifu city's first purpose-built cinema theatre, the Electric Hall (opened in 1910), was as much as 10 *sen*.<sup>23</sup> It was common knowledge that relatives of men on active service helped to supplement their income by sending them money. In fact, Hirota Teruyuki writes that the majority of troops sought financial help from their families. However, there were enough examples of such monies being lost in the post for prefectural officials early in 1908 to issue a warning to relatives to take extra care when arranging money orders, and to be reminded that sending cash through the post was against the law.<sup>24</sup> Yet, even with this financial help, Japanese soldiers in the city each Sunday probably had to select no more than one or two pleasures from the list of alcohol, sweets, the movies, and a brief encounter (perhaps unnaturally and disappointingly brief in a draughty room) with a Kanazu woman.

The poverty of the general conscript was acknowledged in provincial society but a very different impression appears in an English-language study by a senior Japanese researcher working in the 1910s. In *The Conscription System in Japan*, published in New York in 1921 but using data from several years earlier, a scholar named Ogawa from the elite Kyoto University repeatedly accuses Japanese soldiers of becoming soft and materialistic because of their proximity to urban centres. In his view<sup>25</sup>:

Soldiers in cities and towns are under the influence of a vain and extravagant life. They are after fashions. When they return home, they are looked up to among the rustics. The new desires and wants that such soldiers carry with them spread among the provincials by the psychological process of 'superiority imitation'.

Ogawa's statement is interesting in two senses. First, it flies so defiantly in the face of the evidence from the local level. Second, it implies that ex-servicemen

did influence provincial society, especially in the villages, but in entirely the opposite direction envisaged by the army in its ideal of 'good soldiers, good civilians'. Logically, however, if soldiers lacked the money to satisfy whatever desires they might have for city fashions, then their impact in spreading materialism and indulgence in their home villages was also slight. What the Ogawa book suggests instead is that some commentators among the Japanese intelligentsia probably had a poorer understanding of the ordinary conscript than many provincial citizens.

Less immediately obvious to the local community, one of the problems for the troops in handling army life (and one reason for seeking any kind of release on Sundays) was the confines of their built environment. As constructed by the Shōrin Group of Osaka, the standard regimental base of the 68th consisted, outside of training areas, of six two-storey barracks, an officers mess, a uniform store, cookhouse, camp hospital and graveyard. In a privately published work from 1924, a Gifu conscript named Endō Shōji described what it was like to live inside the base. The greatest defect, he stated, was that there was no place for the ordinary soldiers to find a moment's rest or relaxation. Unlike the officers, there was no room where the troops could sit quietly, read, or play board games such as *go*. At best, there was the PX and a tiny garden, but neither of these offered the space or privacy to relieve the tensions of a six-day week during which their minds and bodies were drilled relentlessly in military methods and ideals (the army manual of the 1890s had actually forbidden troops from any form of rest, including taking a seat, between waking and evening). Thus, it was inevitable, he argued, that men would look forward to Sunday when, between 8 am and 5 pm, they might be allowed off base (depending on the whim of the officer on duty) and, once outside the camp, might succumb to whatever indulgence they could afford. Endō was no opponent of the army and his book offered concrete suggestions on ways to improve the morale of conscripts. In particular, he called for the construction of a multi-storey complex at each base with one floor dedicated to a larger PX, one devoted to food and drink, one to games, and one to a reading room.<sup>26</sup>

Among the initial frustrations of the Gifu troops was the poor quality of the eating and drinking places at Kita Nagamori. They did not hide their dissatisfaction and one soldier wrote to the GNN as early as March 1908 to complain that most places were noisy and cramped and simply unsuited to servicemen desperate to relax. Soldiers were also aware that they were often less welcome than their money: as one letter from the same period explains, many officers were looking for a one-room lodging in Kita Nagamori but all were being charged exorbitant rents. This kind of profiteering over rents and prices occurred across Japan where new regiments were formed and the army minister was forced to urge local officials to intervene to avoid further enmity between civilians and soldiers. In addition, however, there were few businesses actively seeking the custom of ordinary soldiers through discounts; the rare exceptions in Gifu city were the Tamada Photographer's Studio, which

offered 'big discounts to those in the military and students', and the Gifu-ya retailers of fine meat and Western cuisine which restricted its discount exclusively to the armed forces.<sup>27</sup>

One reason for the change after 1906 to a two-year system of conscription was what Ogawa describes mysteriously as 'the post-bellum movement'.<sup>28</sup> This is probably an oblique reference to the rise of socialism. As the public was told, a meeting of divisional army commanders in April 1908 agreed that the two major problems inside the barracks were gambling by troops on horse races, and socialism. Letters from across Gifu after 1906 show that the 'epidemic' of gambling from the 1890s had never abated and, in 1908, there were reports that gambling was now on the increase among members of reservist associations, especially in Anpachi county.<sup>29</sup> The limited opportunities for soldiers on active service to place bets, however, and the lack of money in their pockets, may well have meant that gambling was far less common in the army than in civil society (though, perhaps provocatively in view of the concerns of army commanders, a horse race had featured as part of the village welcome for the 68th upon arriving at Kita Nagamori).

As for socialism, the Russo-Japanese war proved to be a turning point in popularizing left-wing ideals among civil society. This gathered pace in the postwar years with inflation, especially of food prices, running at about 30 per cent and an increasing number of urban beggars living off the street; as one socialist speaker reminded a public meeting at Gifu city in January 1908, existing values were hard to sustain when one stomach was empty. The belief in the army, however, was that the police and big business had largely succeeded in driving the radical agitators out of the civilian arena and, in the kind of subversion of the enemy from within encouraged by Marx and Engels, towards the barracks where they were now targeting newly drafted conscripts with leaflets urging them to desert.<sup>30</sup>

Early in 1908, one unidentified army officer admitted to the press that there had been a recent spate of political associations being formed in army regiments and also of men fleeing their barracks. His response was that the army would deal with this problem by handing out stern and relentless punishment in accordance with military law. In contrast to this limited and potentially counter-productive approach, others in the army remained confident that military training and education would ultimately win over those conscripts whose allegiance to the existing socio-political system was wavering and that, once they came to understand the army properly, they would turn into good and loyal soldiers. From December 1908, however, the army ministry took a more cautious, and less self-confident approach, when it issued a completely revised *guntai naimusho*, the handbook which defined the regulations for life in the barracks. According to Leonard Humphreys, the major English-language historian of the 1920s Japanese army, one of the purposes of this revision was to separate soldiers from the people – mainly those in the cities – by restricting leave and rigidly censoring reading material. At the same time, the revised handbook also gave unprecedented weight to the concept of the army as a

family in which the officers would act as parents to the enlisted men and shape their moral character.<sup>31</sup> As part of this character building, an ever-greater emphasis in military training was placed on the value of spirit. Humphreys' interpretation of these changes to army thinking is worth quoting at length<sup>32</sup>:

The confidence born of victory over Russia, inflated by self-congratulatory and foreign flattery, encouraged the army to revive irrational elements from Japan's military past at the expense of rational and technological features borrowed from the West. With the foreknowledge that any renewed warfare with Russia would strain Japan's material and spiritual resources to their limit, the army prepared its soldiers by clothing them in heavy psychological armour.

However, as this partly suggests, and as the evidence from army commanders and on the ground in Gifu confirms, the greater emphasis on spiritual training was not the offshoot of military self-confidence. Rather, it was born out of a recognition, as Humphreys accepts, of Japan's relative material poverty and the fear that the commitment of young men to the military, while never absolute in the decades up to the Russo-Japanese war, was seriously in decline after 1905. To put this another way, the army authorities exaggerated the value of spiritual training from the end of the Meiji era to try and shore up the deficiencies in their own system and in civilian society; they also pressed home the idea of militarism as a Japanese (not merely samurai) tradition in the hope of trying to regiment their own people and steer them away from what they regarded as the dangerous counter-currents of socialism or materialism and egoism.

In Gifu, as with the debate on disease within the military, the question of army discipline was a matter of regular public comment. After the arrival of the 68th, there were frequent reports of goings on within the base and of the misdemeanours, or simply mishaps, of ordinary troops outside the base. Even before its arrival, however, local people were offered a snapshot of the Gifu soldier's discipline in comparison with troops of neighbouring regions. In a press synopsis of a 1907 military police report from the 9th Division at Kanazawa (to which most troops from Gifu prefecture continued to be sent until the creation of the 68th), the most common form of indiscipline was identified as theft, followed by desertion, and then fraud or forgery. Troops of the 9th Division were drawn mainly from four prefectures: Fukui, Toyama, Ishikawa, and Gifu. According to the report, men of Fukui committed the fewest crimes, while men of Gifu, despite their relatively small numbers, were involved in more theft than soldiers of Toyama and escaped more often than men from Ishikawa. A curious feature of the summary in the Gifu press, however, is a kind of perverse pride in the native wit of local troops when breaking army rules. They were said to be smarter in their crimes and able to answer eloquently when interrogated; Ishikawa men, by contrast, were quite



the opposite and, whenever they escaped, were likely to hide for several days in a village hut until hunger drove them out and into the hands of the military police.<sup>33</sup>

The mid-1908 GNN assessment of the new 68th had largely praised the ordinary conscripts, not only for performing so well in their military duties but also for their discipline. As it noted, there had 'only been three cases of desertion' and, it claimed, these were caused by family problems rather than by political dissent.<sup>34</sup> Over 1907 and 1908, however, there were numerous, highly detailed press reports of Gifu troops involved in various crimes. While accepting that the media is always interested in the exceptional rather than the mundane, and that the majority of soldiers performed their service without breaking the law, it is still useful to look more closely at some of these crimes. They help us to understand something of life in the Japanese army and, equally importantly, something of how the army appeared to local people. In fact, in so far as the obedient and disciplined trooper was almost entirely absent from the press and public gaze, these frequent reports of indiscipline and crime actually constituted the dominant local image of the ordinary soldier.

An example from early 1907 raises questions even about those men who seemed cut out for the military. It involved a man from Neo village, Motosu county, in the west of Gifu. In 1905, aged about 18 years, he had volunteered for the army and been assigned to the cavalry. In November 1905, he was posted to Kanazawa and, possessing good health, talent and ambition, he was promoted to the rank of superior private (*jōtōhei*) after less than a year. Despite this reward for military achievement, he was subsequently found guilty of stealing from a fellow cavalryman and sentenced to four months' hard labour.<sup>35</sup>

Around the same time, another report showed that men with distinguished military service did not always meekly accept punishment when caught. In this case, two ex-soldiers from Inaba county, just east of Gifu city, cut through the mud wall of a fellow villager's house in order to steal four sacks of rice. One of the thieves was consumed by guilt and returned the rice to its owner. Despite this act of contrition, the police had already been notified and so the matter could not be hushed up. One of the thieves had been a private first class and lost an eye in the Russo-Japanese war resulting in a medal and an annual payment of 80 yen; his accomplice had also served with distinction at the front as a reservist. When sentenced by a Gifu court to three months' hard labour and six months' probation, however, they rejected the punishment as unjust and immediately launched an appeal.<sup>36</sup>

A far more brutal example of a serviceman rejecting responsibility for, in this case, an alleged crime was reported from a village in Yōrō county, west of Ōgaki, in March 1907. A naval seaman on leave from his ship returned to his village to visit his family and friends. Following a village celebration, he was accused of forcing a 15-year-old girl into an unoccupied house and raping her. The seaman flatly denied the accusation and, when confronted by the

girl's father, he is said to have boasted, 'I am a member of the imperial navy and will not be charged whether I commit rape or robbery with violence so do as you please!' What is notable here is that the GNN report gave no indication that either it or its readers would find this boast impossible to believe. It did, however, print a retraction of the story several days later at the seaman's insistence but this retraction was relegated to a tiny notice on one of the back pages.<sup>37</sup>

While the army feared a link between increasing desertion and socialism, the reality of several cases involving men of Gifu presents a generally less political, and far more tragi-comical, explanation. One instance involved a 23-year-old conscript from Kita Nagamori. Receiving seven days' leave at the end of March 1907, he went back to his family. At the end of his leave, he intended to return to barracks but, before doing so, spent so much time in the Kanazu quarter that he missed his deadline. Deciding somewhat precipitously that he had nothing left to lose, he chose to wander around various counties in Gifu, stealing civilian clothes and sneaking out of lodgings without paying. This trail of petty crime brought him to the attention of the police in Ena county, east Gifu, and, after about 10 days on the run (or more accurately walk), he was arrested and transferred to the military police for punishment.<sup>38</sup>

A slightly different case involved a 23-year-old villager from Ibi county in west Gifu. He was posted to the 68th regiment but, in March 1908, after only the first three months of training, he fled eastwards to a village in Kamo county where he took a room at an inn using a false name. He discarded his uniform and borrowed civilian clothes from the innkeeper. The next day, despite the innkeeper's earlier kindness, he ran off without paying his 80 *sen* food bill. He was later caught at a restaurant in his home county. When questioned, he explained that he had been persuaded to desert by a fellow soldier and so this may be a rare example indicating some level of 'socialism' in the ranks.<sup>39</sup>

In general, the decision to desert, as in the case of the Kita Nagamori villager above, appears to have been almost spontaneous. In mid-1908, there was a 22-year-old second-class private from a village in Toki county. As the eldest son in his family, he carried additional social responsibilities but, while on guard duty at his cavalry regiment of the 3rd Division in Nagoya, he simply walked off the base and went to a village in Toki where he took a room at an inn. The next day, he too left without paying his bill (in this case, over 4 yen), fled to a neighbouring village, stayed at another inn and, the following day, was arrested there while drinking. In total, his period of freedom was just two days and he clearly had given no thought about how to avoid capture.<sup>40</sup>

An even more unplanned and precipitous decision to flee appears in the case of a private from Ibuki village in Kamo county, east Gifu. In August 1908, he was on field practice with the 68th. After the exercises had finished, he went to a local tea house to rest and inadvertently fell asleep. When he woke, he was so afraid of being punished for returning to camp after hours that he fled to the mountains near Ibuki even though he had neither food nor

drink. A party of soldiers and local police went searching for him and two soldiers also went to question his mother. Although the soldiers abandoned their pursuit within a day, the villagers of Ibuki viewed the incident as a slur on their reputation. Continuing to search all of the surrounding area, it was they who unearthed the exhausted infantryman who, it was reported, was 'verging on starvation' after just two days in hiding.<sup>41</sup>

Less than a fortnight earlier, the 68th had witnessed a more tragic case of a first-year conscript falling victim to ill luck. The man in question was a 22-year-old villager named Murai from Mugi county, not far from Ibuki. One Sunday in mid-July 1908, he cycled home to visit his parents. In the afternoon, he set off back to camp but something went wrong with his bicycle (a damaged tyre or a broken chain) and he could no longer travel at the speed necessary to arrive before his leave expired. Such was his fear of being punished for this infraction that he immediately chose to hang himself. His body was discovered the following day. What makes the case of Murai so tragic is that a senior private from the 68th had earlier written to the GNN stating that many men from the regiment returned late on Sunday after visiting their parents. The purpose of the letter was to warn parents that this would lead to punishment and a black mark on the military records of their sons but it was also an admission that the problem was commonplace.<sup>42</sup>

Shortly after, there was a case involving another 22-year-old villager from Mugi. This soldier was given a week's leave to nurse his father. At the end of his leave, he was returning to camp after having borrowed 10 yen from his mother to repay a loan from a fellow trooper. En route, he suddenly changed his mind and continued beyond Gifu city to Nagoya where he stayed with a female friend (and managed to spend most of the borrowed money). It was his relatives who discovered him there after the army had notified them of his disappearance. His punishment, however, was just 15 days in the cells for returning late and the suggestion in the press was that the regiment was being unusually lenient in order to avoid a recurrence of the Murai suicide.<sup>43</sup>

Sometimes, as may have been the case above, desertion was linked to sex. In March 1908, another first-year conscript of 22 years absconded from the base at Kita Nagamori. During his three months in the army, his 19-year-old mistress, the wife of another man in Ena county, east Gifu, had failed to answer any of his letters. Taking his army knife, he travelled to her home intending to kill her but, failing in this, he took his own life. In a separate incident the following month, a man of 24 years posted to a regiment outside of Gifu committed suicide by jumping in front of the express train from Gifu to Kobe. This was following a period of leave which he spent entirely with two Kanazu prostitutes. Just four months after this, a 22-year-old soldier from neighbouring Aichi prefecture was arrested in another Kanazu brothel. Already facing a second charge of returning late to camp, he had taken the train from Nagoya to Gifu with the intention of committing suicide by poison after spending the night with a prostitute. It was the woman who spotted his odd behaviour and the brothel which called the military police.<sup>44</sup>

That soldiers from Gifu were not exceptional in deserting or committing suicide is suggested by figures from nearby Shizuoka prefecture cited by Arakawa Shōji.<sup>45</sup> In his 2001 study, Arakawa notes that in the newly established 67th Regiment at Hamamatsu between 1908 and 1913 there were 13 cases of desertion and six cases of suicide. He provides no details of any of these cases and so it is difficult to extract much from the bare figures. In our examples from Gifu, by contrast, several points may be made with reasonable confidence.

First, they were all public knowledge: they were reported at length in the Gifu press within a week or so of their occurrence. Second, they mainly involved villagers rather than urban recruits. Obviously, village conscripts far outnumbered those from the towns and cities but the frequency of their appearance in reports of army crime challenges the official image of the always solid and dependable rural soldier. A further point is that, despite the army's fear of 'socialists', most of the men who deserted were not motivated by politics: this was also the case with the nearly 40 infantrymen in Tokyo in March 1907 who 'deserted' en masse for one evening, which they devoted entirely to drinking, as a protest against low wages and unfair criticism from a junior officer.<sup>46</sup> An additional point is that the men of Gifu who deserted seemed to compound their crimes, and thus make capture almost inevitable, by failing to pay their bills or by stealing civilian clothes. Few, except the hapless refugee in the mountains, made any real attempt to hide. Others, perhaps especially those whose will to live had ebbed, chose to spend their last days or hours in the company of prostitutes as a last gesture of defiance against the physical and mental confinement of army life.

One aspect of military service which entered the public gaze from these press reports was the soldier's fear, even terror, of punishment. This fear, greater than any sense of shame at having embarrassed the army or one's comrades, reached its zenith in the suicide of Private Murai. What is noticeable about the press report on Murai is that, in the absence of a suicide note, the journalist naturally assumed this was the reason for his drastic action. In other words, the press and the reading public understood the severity of punishment in the army for even minor infractions. This punishment was not simply dispensed by the army authorities in accordance with military law. Even more terrifying was the additional beatings, abuse and petty torture handed out in the evenings by senior soldiers in what was known as 'the time of the devils'. According to Ōhama Tetsuya, this unofficial self-policing by seniors over first-year conscripts reached new extremes in the years after 1905. One reason for this may actually have been the change to a two-year system of military service; with less time in uniform, the older soldiers perhaps felt, and were supported in this by their commanders, that they had to be even more aggressive in literally beating the first-years into shape. Another possible reason why this trend increased in the years just after 1905 is that the army repeatedly announced that it had far too many officers on its books, even allowing for the expansion of divisions, and that many men's careers would

have to be terminated. This process was drawn out and undermined the morale of officers across Japan. It may have contributed either to a determination to improve discipline rapidly or to a deepening indifference about the abuse of first-year conscripts.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to the official line on the Japanese military spirit which appeared, for example, in the school textbooks, and the impressionistic accounts of Western observers concerning the warrior values of the Japanese as a people, the public debate on the army after 1905 focused overwhelmingly on the weaknesses of the military system and the ordinary soldier. Provincial society and army commanders had evidence to doubt the educational level of conscripts, to be critical of the more highly educated youth who apparently exploited the law to avoid conscription, to wonder about the ability of soldiers to endure even minor changes in climate, to fear that, where the military went, so did prostitution and sexual disease, and to worry about discipline in the barracks in an era of rising poverty and political unrest. Against this, there was the joint civil-military celebration of regimental flag days and the stories at the end of the year of men being feted by their communities as they completed their service. Overall, however, the image of the 'good soldier' was constantly on the defensive against a barrage of negative public reports and comments.

To posterity, the Gifu regiment is known by its nickname as the *botan* force (*botan butai*). In the Japanese language, 'botan' can mean one of two things. First, it is the tree peony; this definition would suggest a blending of the martial and the poetic so commonly associated in the popular imagination with the traditional samurai. An alternative meaning, however, and the sense in which it was originally applied to the 68th, is 'button' (the Japanese language having imported the word from English). The nickname dates from 1928 when the regiment was dispatched to China during a period of civil war on the Asian mainland. Concerned about the threat of indiscipline among his troops, the regimental commander ordered them to identify themselves more clearly by sewing white buttons on their tunics; one button for the 1st battalion, two for the 2nd and three for the 3rd.<sup>48</sup> It may be that, in later years, people interpreted the nickname in its more romantic variation but the reality supports the impression that civilians and officers alike generally and consistently viewed the military with an expectation of trouble.

## 6 The discontents of Taishō

### Wars and peace in the 1910s

1913 was the first full year of the new Taishō era in Japan. Emperor Meiji had died in 1912 after occupying the throne since the 1868 civil war which started Japan on the path to ‘civilization and enlightenment’. During his reign, there had been extraordinary relocations and reinventions of identity: the administrative map of Japan had been redrawn, the new central government had engaged extensively in building a nation-state, there had been the introduction of a nationwide school system, a system of mass military service, of industrialization and greater urbanization, and the rise of mass media including newspapers and film. There had also been two full-scale wars: the profitable victory over imperial China, and the enormously expensive pyrrhic victory over imperial Russia. Throughout it all, the leaders of Japan had worked to present the monarchy and the military as the pillars of stability. With the advent of a new emperor, an even greater responsibility to represent moral certainty and national strength fell to the military. The army began the era badly, however, damaging its reputation in the Taishō incident of 1912 in which the army minister engaged in a showdown with the cabinet over funds for the ongoing divisional expansion.<sup>1</sup> This reinforced the public image of the army as an opponent of the democratic process. In the years after 1913, the army was to be buffeted by rapid social, economic, political and technological challenges. It would end the decade having battled with its own people across provincial Japan, and in a confused and unpopular conflict in Siberia. There is no single easy term to describe the civil-military contract during these years. Instead, as will be seen, it was a time of confusion in this as in many things.

At this moment of moving from one era to the next, let us take stock and borrow a panoramic assessment of Japanese society from the vantage point of Takayama in the Hida mountains. The town got its first local newspaper, *Takayama Shimpō*, in 1906. On New Year’s Day 1913, the editor of the *Takayama Shimpō* surveyed the world around him and was disturbed by what he saw. In his view, calamity regularly outweighed any cause for celebration, meaning that ‘happiness is rare and unhappiness common’. Part of the problem, he accepted, was the general malaise which followed the death of the Meiji emperor. Even more worrying, however, was the apparently ever-increasing

hostility of the Western powers despite the fact that Japan had been a treaty ally of the British empire since 1902. He warned that, notwithstanding the earlier victories over China and Russia, Japan could not match the most technologically advanced of the Western forces, especially in the realm of aviation. This meant it lacked the modern weapons necessary to defend itself fully in a dangerous world. Most alarming of all, however, was the weakness and division within Japanese society. In his words:

Murders, suicide, theft, deceit, how frequent these crimes are! Meanwhile, the rising trends are of extravagance and indulgence. In the towns and villages, among high and low, everyone rushes to follow what is fashionable. It is lamentable how the image of the careful and industrious worker seems to recede with each passing day from the thoughts of ordinary people.

For him as a professional recorder of the community, civilian life at the start of a new era seemed to be characterized by violence, exploitation, egoism and indifference. It was an unsatisfactory report card on four decades of nation building, compulsory national schooling, and military service.

Social commentators naturally agreed that the future of Japan lay in the hands of educated youth; they were to be the material producers and the military protectors of the nation. However, the dominant theme of public opinion since at least 1905 was that Japan's teenaged males were soft, self-centred and, in their exaggerated concern over their appearance, disturbingly effeminate. Indeed, they were generally regarded as precisely the kind of modern materialists criticized by the *Takayama Shimpō*. In January 1913, the Education Ministry again intervened in another attempt to toughen the minds and bodies of male pupils. This involved adopting the army infantry manual as the new textbook for lessons in physical education and changing the name in the curriculum from 'military-style exercises' to 'military drill'. Individual educators also called on the public to do more to steel the character of children. For example, Kishibe Fukuo (whom we encountered during the Russo-Japanese war telling his pupils that the enemy had already invaded Japan and it was now up to them to march off and fight) encouraged readers of *Women's World* (*Fujin Sekai*) in October 1914 to teach martial songs at home as a form of spiritual education. This was his antidote to the mass of recent popular songs which he condemned as 'all weak and girlish' (*yowayowashii josei-teki mono bakari*). He also urged mothers to buy toy swords and bugles for their sons.<sup>2</sup> What this suggests, of course, is that Japanese songwriters and mothers up to World War I did not view themselves as duty bound to uphold military values. It also suggests that the emphasis on these values in schools and song in the previous two decades of war and peace had not produced a generation of militarized young men.

For local educators, the propagation of military ideals was merely one task among many. This can be seen in a general meeting of rural teachers and

officials at Yoshiki county, north of Takayama, in January 1914. The agenda began with ways to commemorate the enthronement of the new emperor, and then moved on to the educational budget and school projects for 1914. Later, there was discussion about taking groups of children mountain climbing (an increasingly popular form of youth exercise from this time). Next, there was consideration of various topics, including the problem of rabid dogs, followed by the teaching of military ideas.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, the immediate public health fear of rabid dogs took, perhaps temporary, precedence over lessons in warrior values. One historian of education in Gifu prefecture, Tobe Hōbun, adds that, at a separate meeting of Gifu primary school teachers in June 1914, it was agreed to use teaching materials both with more local rather than national emphasis, and which would stimulate individual rather than group learning.<sup>4</sup> This shows that schools were ready to teach other values alongside those of the military. Thus, while there was an increasing militarization of some aspects of school life, most notably in physical training, it would be misleading to describe provincial schools in Japan as the cradles of militarism.

As we saw earlier, one of the bodies set up to assist with the moral and spiritual education of male youth was the reservist association. Early in 1910, before the army ministry merged them into a national organization, a local assessment of their general success or failure in Gifu was given in a new journal called *Citadel* (*Kanjō*), published by the Gifu-ken Shifūkai or Gifu Prefectural Society for Samurai Ways. The Shifūkai was created in about 1909 and based in Gifu city. Along with the existing Butokukai or Military Virtue Society, plus the many swordsmanship clubs (*shōbukai*) around the prefecture, it promoted traditional military ideals and practices among local men. There was, however, some crossover between these groups. For example, there were many members of the Ōgaki reservist association who, putting aside any inter-urban rivalries, were also members of the Shifūkai. This being the case, one might expect the article in *Citadel* to offer a generous assessment of the prefecture's reservist groups. In fact, however, it was damning in its comments both on reservist associations and local communities. It attacked them as mutually indifferent to each other's interests and likened their relationship to two groups on opposite banks of a river each observing a fire on the other side. Going further, it claimed that civilians regarded the military in peacetime as nothing more than a nuisance. As for the reservists, they stood accused of defeatism, of giving up on public support even before they asked for it. The article rejected the excuse of some reservists who attempted to deflect criticism by saying they could never expect help from influential civilians without a leader of their own from the senior officer class. In an early case of what would now be called 'naming and shaming', the article concluded by listing one example of the most inactive and hollow reservist associations from each of nine counties, or half the total of the prefecture (the nine counties were all in the Minō region).<sup>5</sup>

What needs to be emphasized here is that members of local reservist associations in 1910 included many men with recent military service in a modern



total war, fought against a Western power boasting the largest army in the world, and in which the ordinary Japanese soldier had encountered death, injury, illness and trauma on an unprecedented scale. For the next three decades, no other reservists could rival their combat experience. Any meaningful definition of popular militarism must assume that the public will not only uphold the values of the military, it will also protect and respect its former servicemen, in peace as in war. This was not always the case in 1910 and, if the reservists of that time did not merit unconditional support and respect from the civilian community, no future generation was likely to fare better.<sup>6</sup>

The estrangement between civilian society and the military in the decade after 1905 was naturally of grave concern to senior commanders. In May 1914, *Japan Weekly Mail* interviewed an army adjutant in Tokyo. The *Mail* asked him about what it described as ‘the universal tendency on the part of the public to abhor the army’. The adjutant did not challenge this description but explained it, in his view, as the result mainly of ‘misrepresentation of the army by poorly informed people’. He insisted that, ‘the army authorities of recent years are making every effort to bring the people and the army into closer touch and with visible good results’.<sup>7</sup> There is some evidence that this was true, at least in northern Gifu where local commanders were much more active from about 1911 in seeking out and strengthening contacts with local people. Conscripts from the Hida region generally went across the border to Toyama or Kanazawa. From 1911, the commander of the Kanazawa 9th Division and other of his senior officers began making regular and extended visits to towns and villages in the three counties of Hida. For example, a lieutenant-colonel in March 1912 gave a two-hour talk, among other things, on the relationship between the army and the family at the Betsu-in temple in Takayama. This was to an audience in excess of 800, including reservist association members, local town and village officials, and ordinary people. In March 1913, Major-General Inoguchi of the 9th Division also spoke on the army and the family at the Takayama Betsu-in, and then went on to discuss the army and the provinces at a primary school in the small town of Hagiwara, south of Takayama. Despite its size, the audience at Hagiwara was also said to exceed 800. In December 1913, Colonel Ōmura, commander of the Toyama 69th Regiment, spent eight days in Yoshiki county, touring a different village nearly every day. As these examples suggest, the hope was to present the army as an integral part of the civilian community, not something remote or alien. Public talks by military officers, normally ranging from generals to colonels, and usually held at a town or village primary school across the prefecture, continued through the 1910s and into the 1920s, and appear always to have been well attended. This may have had something to do with the senior rank of the officers. Equally, local reservist associations and officials were active on these occasions in ensuring a good turnout.<sup>8</sup>

Even allowing for talks by high-ranking officers or occasional forays by army units on field training, the military remained at most a transitory figure for much of the prefecture. As in the 1890s, perhaps the only place in which it

appeared frequently was in the newspaper serials of samurai fiction and on the stage. Indeed, it may be that, for many people, the military from the 1890s to the 1920s was only a genuinely familiar and popular presence in the realm of entertainment and, even there, only so long as its stories and characters were dramatic and thrilling. That it had receded from other areas of public culture is apparent if we remain with Takayama and examine a random selection of adverts in the local press over the course of 1913. Among these, the sole, admittedly vague, allusion to the military comes in the name of Kabuto Beer, *kabuto* being the traditional warrior helmet, and in its rival, Hero Cider. Instead of military themes and images, the world of Takayama advertising on the eve of World War I was dominated by local hospitals, medicines, and life insurance companies. In fact, the health industry seems to have far outmuscled any other sector of commerce in regional advertising. Health worries, especially over stomach, eye and sexual ailments, were a part of daily life for people of all ages. In theory, militarism might have offered a degree of psychological comfort through its ideals of collective strength. However, there is scant evidence that anyone was either buying or selling it in provincial Gifu in 1913, and this remained the case into the 1920s.<sup>9</sup>

One of the means by which the military regularly showed itself to the public in a positive and heroic light was, of course, the grand manoeuvres. After 1905, these were increased in size and usually involved units from three or more army divisions (the general rule was that each division should participate in the manoeuvres on average once every five years). In 1913, they were held in the Nagoya-Gifu region for the second time and involved both of the divisions taking Gifu recruits, the 3rd from Nagoya and the 9th from Kanazawa. The development of a local press in Takayama allows us on this occasion to investigate more closely civil-military relations in Gifu's north as troops from Kanazawa and Toyama transited the region en route to the manoeuvres. That year, Takayama was celebrating the 350th anniversary of its founding but the postwar recession continued to dampen the spirits of local residents. Providing accommodation for about 2,000 troops between 28 and 29 October was not going to change the town's fortunes but it was no doubt a matter of civic pride that a town which historically had been an important military centre should carry out its responsibilities to the army effectively.

It seems, however, that any large-scale contact with the military often provoked unease. In a letter to the local press about a week before the troops' arrival, one ex-serviceman warned his fellow residents, 'When the army has passed through in previous years, the reception has varied and there have been extremes of good and bad so I hope this time the town will unite in greeting the forces in a proper manner'.<sup>10</sup> To minimize any difficulties along the route, local officials issued an extensive and detailed set of instructions to the towns and villages through which the troops would pass. These instructions reveal the kind of demands made on local people by the military, and they also hint at underlying tensions in the civil-military relationship. One of the most important duties was for villages and hamlets to prepare maps.

These were to show local roads and houses, highlight those houses to be used as army billets, and identify both the name of the householder and the number of troops each house could take. Villagers were also ordered to erect signs along the roads to be used by the forces and, vital for the health of the troops, at places where there was safe drinking water to be had from rivers, streams or wells. Within the village or hamlet, space was to be set aside for army horses. For the troops, lanterns were to be placed on high poles to facilitate nighttime cooking. Households serving as billets were to prepare a suitable place for soldiers to hang their guns and overcoats, and to ensure there was enough bedding and washbuckets. On a more general level, all houses were instructed to fly the national flag during the manoeuvres in order to show the visiting troops that they enjoyed the public's support. Reinforcing this point, the instructions warned that, 'the soldiers involved in the manoeuvres must be treated with goodwill and, though this does not extend to giving them free food and drink, they must always be dealt with kindly and, on no account, are they to be viewed as strangers (*tanin*)'. The wording of this sentence is almost identical to official instructions to villagers concerning army exercises in the Kakamigahara region in October 1908. Indeed, the two sets of instructions from 1908 and 1913 are remarkably similar (the 1908 set gave slightly greater emphasis to preparing cups of tea for the weary troops, and also included a helpful diagram on how to build a gun rack). It would seem that the military and civilian authorities had created a standard format which remained unaltered over the years. What also seems to have remained unaltered, however, is the fear that soldiers from other regions might be treated almost as foreigners.<sup>11</sup>

In Takayama, with a population of 20,000, the relatively large reservist association handled much of the civic leg work. It was they who drew maps of the town and erected signposts for the army. They also worked with the mayor to prepare small gifts; some fine local craftwork, postcards of the region, and a small hand-towel for the officers, just the postcards and towel for the lower ranks. Flag parades and physical competitions were arranged as part of the welcome and, as the last of the troops departed on 30 October, the visit appeared to have been a great success. Within days, however, there was another letter to the press from a reservist soldier which accused all the town's bureaucrats of refusing to offer their homes as billets for the troops.<sup>12</sup> If this were the case, and remembering the public criticism of officials and their lack of donations during the Russo-Japanese war, it would imply that provincial officials considered their responsibilities when dealing with the military were to make arrangements on behalf of others, not to sacrifice their private interests. Even if the criticism was overstated, however, the letter reinforces the point that civilians were never shy of condemning the bureaucracy.

The immediate aftermath of the troops' departure is a reminder of the insecurity of life in Taishō Japan. The day after the soldiers departed was the new emperor's birthday and so the festivities, including fireworks, continued without interruption. Late on the evening of the 31st, however, the worst fire

to hit the town in decades (probably started by a firework) erupted in the central district and destroyed more than 120 households and warehouses, causing damage estimated at 500,000 yen. This meant that whatever happened in the grand manoeuvres was really no longer of any consequence to local people. In terms of how they defined their identity, moreover, a comment on the fire from a Takayama member of the prefectural assembly is revealing. Nearly two weeks after the disaster, he claimed that the prefectural government in Gifu city had sent only a solitary official to inspect the damage. From this, he accused the people of Minō not merely of indifference to the Hida region but of actively hoping for its demise.<sup>13</sup> While allowing for the intense emotions caused by the conflagration, the nature of the accusation suggests that, in the three decades since Hida was added to the new prefecture of Gifu, neither war nor conscription or even mandatory schooling had succeeded in creating any real sense of unity among the high and low counties.

Prior to World War I, the army attempted to establish another fixed presence in Gifu beyond the barracks at Kita Nagamori. This was in mid-1912 at the village of Tama in Fuwa county. Fuwa, in the lower west of the prefecture, is the region around Sekigahara and, as may be recalled, Sekigahara was one of the places in 1907 competing for a regimental base. In 1912, the army no doubt expected a positive response when it approached the county with a view to purchasing land for a large munitions store and related facilities. County officials were certainly receptive but the problem was that the army estimate of the land's value was far lower than that of the villagers, especially the major landowners. In their arguments to the county authorities, the villagers of Tama used much the same reasoning as at Kita Nagamori in 1907; that is, they emphasized their ancestral connection to the land being sought by the army and refused to sell it cheaply. They also insisted that the mountain, which constituted nearly half the area wanted by the military, be excluded from any deal. No specific reason for this is recorded in the documents but it is probable that the mountain was valuable as an economic resource, especially for timber, or it was of particular religious significance for the village. Whatever the reason, this exclusion made any deal untenable. Over two months, repeated meetings between county officials and local landowners proved unable to find a compromise. Instead, the village was split. The major landowners refused to make concessions but the poorer villagers were afraid that, if the army had to resort to the land appropriation law, it would punish them by refusing to employ them as labourers in the construction work (the army had said it would need about 300 day labourers for the job and used this as an economic carrot to win them over). This meant that, with the loss of their land and the lack of alternative jobs locally, the poorer villagers would have to drift to other towns and villages merely to survive.<sup>14</sup> With this kind of pressure, the army finally got its way and Gifu got another army asset. However, the negotiations showed once again that the military could drive a hard, and even ruthless, bargain in dealings with local people.

World War I was the third, and last, international war in which modern Japan could claim a victory. Yet, it is an odd kind of conflict. Although a belligerent nation, Japan's active participation in the field was brief and, though it set a new standard for total war elsewhere, it made a very minor claim on the nation's social and economic resources. Instead, it actually brought vast and dizzying wealth to many but this wealth was to help bring about a situation in 1918 where Japanese fought Japanese.

Anyone with sympathy for militarism is likely to greet war as a purifying and regenerative force of human nature. In none of its wars, however, did the mass of Japan's ordinary citizens welcome the start of battle. In 1914, the familiar response was a mix of anxiety and the desire to understand. This mixture of emotions can be seen even among the children of Gifu city. In September 1914, a questionnaire on the war was put to local primary schoolchildren. Their answers showed that they had been taught to see the conflict as emerging from European race hatred between Slavic and Germanic peoples. With the sudden expansion of hostilities across Europe, Japan had become involved for three main reasons. First, there was the Anglo-Japanese alliance which made Germany the mutual enemy of Britain and Japan. Second, there was Germany's role in the Triple Intervention against Japan in 1895. This suggests that Japanese, or at least some of the children's teachers, were looking for a way to make the war directly meaningful for themselves but it was probably no more than a case of recycling past insults to serve present purposes as no one in Japan since 1895 had spoken of Germany as a major threat. The third reason was that, at the start of war, Germany had used its fleet to impede Japanese merchant shipping in Asian waters. This obviously could not be tolerated and served as a convincing justification for war. Other answers, however, suggested that the children were uncertain about whom to fight. While a few had a precise understanding of who was on which side, many others confused Germany's ally of Austria with Britain's dominion of Australia (Australia's anti-Asian immigration policy no doubt convinced some Japanese it was an enemy), while some thought that America or China were on Germany's side; some even believed that Japan was entirely isolated and at war with all other major powers including France, Britain and America.<sup>15</sup> It seems that the kind of fear about Japan's place in the world seen earlier in the *Takayama Shimpō* had percolated down to the level of children.

The local adult trepidation about the resurgence of war is explicit in a message from the Gifu prefectural governor in September 1914. In this, he urged residents to begin conserving money and goods and to avoid excess or waste. In particular, he stressed that neighbours and civic groups must look after the families of men on active service and make sure that none of them despaired about how to survive. Where private help was inadequate, he insisted, local officials must be ready to act quickly and effectively. More generally, he warned that war undermined the system of international credit and led nations to shore up their currencies by reducing imports; this was a

dreadful prospect for Taishō Japan which relied for its wealth and strength on exports. The most valuable of Japan's exports was textiles and, as a major textile producer, the resumption of war placed Gifu's economy under immediate threat. He offered some comfort with the idea that the decline globally of European exports might give Japanese companies an advantage in expanding their markets at home and in the non-belligerent countries, especially China. However, an additional danger in riding out the economic storm of war was rumour-mongering which might unsettle local financial markets or encourage speculators to engage in profiteering. Consequently, people were advised to act and speak with caution. These points about war and the economy were made by local officials elsewhere in Japan and, as events were to show, they were remarkably prescient, especially on the threat of speculation.<sup>16</sup>

One of the remarkable things about local Japanese reactions to World War I is how quickly people so remote from the battlefield were able to recognize its capacity for mass destruction. Thus, on 6 September 1914, the GNN could already assert that the most obvious fact of the war just started was the level of dead and wounded caused by the immense power of modern armaments. Also obvious was that war had entered a new age with the clearly shocking tactic (however small in scale it may have been when compared to later years) of bombing from the air. Shimoda Utako, the high-profile female educator who had assisted Gifu in 1907 in winning the 68th Regiment, commented on these matters in October 1914 for a women's journal. As she put it<sup>17</sup>:

Every day we read with amazement the press reports of the war. There surely cannot have been a conflagration as great as this since history began ... Previous wars were fought on the surface. Today's war is fought on the surface, in the air, and under the sea. Its violence and its cruelty are beyond comparison with any war to date. The daily tragedy is played out on the borders of France and Germany and on those of Russia and Austria, in the North Sea and in the Mediterranean but its impact has even reached us in the East.

She warned that this kind of war, even more than Japan's earlier conflict with Russia, could not be fought by militaries alone. She added her voice to that of provincial officials, arguing that the role of Japanese civilians, more than ever, was to cut back on spending, to save wherever possible, and to be ready to contribute their last coin to the war effort. The problem for Japanese communities compared with Europeans, however, was that they were still paying off the debt from the Russian war. This meant that the threat of becoming embroiled in a genuinely world war was financially terrifying.

Despite the years of hardship since 1905, the campaign for public donations to the war effort in 1914 was as well supported as any previous one. Indeed, having recognized the enormity of World War I from its outset, people may well have been even more willing than in the past to make personal sacrifices. One striking example of this in September 1914 came from

some of the Kanazu women. A group of geisha made a pledge among themselves to stop using cosmetics and to send whatever money they saved to the armed forces. As the GNN noted, the career of a geisha depended on her face and to appear before customers with no make-up was an extreme sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately for Japan, the need for donations lasted only about two months, by which time the military had received over 600,000 'consolation bags' of small gifts, and cash in excess of 53,000 yen. Much of this money had already been used and the way in which it was spent tells us something about the servicemen, their public image, and their relations with the people. According to figures in *Japan Weekly Mail* (21 November 1914), the authorities had bought 530,000 envelopes, 2,000,000 sheets of Japanese writing paper, 20,000 pencils, 30,000 Japanese writing brushes, and 58,000 picture postcards. This reaffirmed how important it was for troops to stay in contact with their families and localities. In addition, 69,000 cakes of soap, 43,000 sacks of tooth powder, 75,000 towels, and 105,000 handkerchiefs had been purchased as part of the war on disease. Much of the remainder had been spent on more direct comforts for the troops: 53,000 bags of confectionery, 2,400 bottles of *saké*, 4,000 bottles of beer, and 1,240,000 cigarettes. Regardless of any ideology of military asceticism, no one in the Japanese army or public expected the soldiers to fight without the basic pleasures.

The reason why donations became unnecessary was that actual combat by the Japanese forces during the formal years of World War I was limited almost entirely to the attack on Germany's 4,000 men and small naval contingent in Shandong province, China. Japanese forces were easily able to land in Shandong at the start of September and began a low-risk strategy of siege in force supported by a naval blockade; this was supplemented by their own early adoption of aerial bombardment against German positions in the city of Qingdao. Enemy defences were destroyed on 28 October and all resistance ended on 6 November but the Japanese kept the German commander in Qingdao until 14 November 1914, exactly 17 years to the day since Germany had seized the territory as belated payment for its part in the Triple Intervention.<sup>19</sup> In this way, one of the reasons given to the Japanese public for the nation's entry into the war was satisfied.

The apparent end of the war, at least in Asia, was greeted with euphoria. Spreading over several days in November 1914, there were mass celebrations of victory and peace across towns and villages. At Takayama, the crowds were said to number 20,000, equal to the entire urban population. Towns were blanketed with the national flag and, where available, the flag of Japan's British ally. At Gifu city and Takayama, the festivities began with a cannon salute: 21 guns in Gifu, three in Takayama. Here and in many places besides, there were civic parades of reservists, youth clubs, schoolchildren and other residents, usually with local merchants taking the opportunity to mix parading with advertising. In Gifu city, the new Minō Electric Railway Company decorated a tram with flowers for the parade, while the GNN mounted an electric victory banner outside its offices. At a civic party held at the Inaba

Shrine on 8 November, Mayor Hattori boasted that Germany had spent 17 years consolidating its fortress in China but, within days, it had capitulated to Japan. For a moment, it seemed like the good old days of the Sino-Japanese war. He immediately followed this demonstration of national pride, however, by emphasizing that the real importance of the German surrender in China was that peace could return to East Asia ‘without the catastrophe of gunpowder and the hail of bullets’. With this realization, restaurants across the prefecture enjoyed excellent business, as did the pleasure quarters with geisha dances prominent in the carnival atmosphere. There seems to have been only one moment where the public’s joy was threatened: in Takayama on the evening of 7 November, the teenagers parading from the local middle school attempted to cut across the line of the men parading from the reservist association. Just a few years earlier, the Butokukai had vowed to recruit Gifu’s middle school boys for training in the traditional military arts. If the educated youth of Takayama had indeed become steeped in the practices and values of bushidō, this might have developed into a very interesting confrontation between Japan’s old and new military ways. Perhaps for everyone’s benefit, what looked like becoming an all-in brawl was halted by the intervention of the police and other revellers.<sup>20</sup>

After the short and successful action of 1914, the Japanese army was largely at peace for the rest of World War I. Local relations with the military also returned effectively to the normality and regularity of peacetime. The reminders of the ongoing war elsewhere in the world were in the daily press reports and in the presence of some 3,000 German prisoners of war (POWs) in Japan. In passing, it is worth mentioning that the POWs in Nagoya, like Russian captives a decade earlier, encountered no obvious public hostility and, according to one history of the region, were able within days of being placed in the POW camp to walk around the city, go shopping, or even set up small market stalls retailing German breads or crafts.<sup>21</sup>

From 1915 to 1918, civil-military contacts in Gifu were limited in the main to those times when the army conducted field exercises or sent its officers to speak to local gatherings, and to the annual inspections of draft-age males and roll-calls of reservists. The most dramatic change to the military presence in Gifu, however, came at the village of Kakamigahara, a few miles east of Kita Nagamori. As mentioned earlier, there had been an army firing range near Kakamigahara since the 1870s but this had fallen into virtual disuse in the late 1890s due to local complaints over the threat of stray shells. In 1910, the army purchased an alternative site at Ena county in the east of Gifu and, the following year seemed ready to abandon its holding at Kakamigahara when it transferred some of the land from Naka village to the home ministry which, in turn, attempted to sell it to an outside developer. The response of the villagers relates directly to our topic. They reminded the authorities that the original agreement had stated that, if the land became superfluous to the army, it would be sold back to the village. They took their case to the commander of the 3rd Division, the prefectural governor of Gifu and, obtaining



no satisfaction there, went to the relevant ministries in Tokyo. Finally, through persistence and their appeal to the terms of a lawful contract, they were finally able to prevent the Home Ministry from selling on the land. It was a case where local people refused to be manipulated, exploited or ignored either by the military or civilian authorities.<sup>22</sup>

With the coming of World War I, the army found an alternative, and mutually profitable, use for the Kakamigahara firing range. As Japan had shown on a small scale in 1914, and as the European powers were showing on a much grander scale thereafter, war had entered a new age with the incorporation of airpower. In Japan, the first flight of any description had been made in 1910 by Captain Tokugawa Yoshitoshi, a descendant of the shōguns. It was from 1916, however, that the central government began to invest increasingly in army aviation. At that point, the army had only a single airship, the Yuhi (purchased in 1912), which, at 20 mph, had only one-third the speed of a Zeppelin, and only 20 serviceable airplanes, again with no more than one-third the horse power of European aircraft. Further, there was only a single air base at Tokorozawa, northwest of Tokyo. In searching for a second base for this developing, and technologically crucial, branch of the military, Kakamigahara had much to offer. First, there was its location in the centre of Japan's main islands and its proximity to the 3rd Division at Nagoya, plus the benefit in terms of security for any new base provided by the nearby Gifu regiment. Moreover, the land at the artillery range was flat, well drained, and soft, providing a necessary and reliable cushion for airplanes either taking off or landing. Thus, in June 1916, Captain Tokugawa flew from Tokorozawa to Kakamigahara where he was greeted by several thousand well-wishers. The same month, Kakamigahara was officially declared an adjunct air base of the Tokorozawa unit. Construction of facilities continued into 1918 and, in November that year, one section of the Tokorozawa unit was formally transferred to Gifu. By 1920, the base was home to two army air force units of its own – these were upgraded to regimental status in 1925 – and could claim to have become the centre of Japan's military aviation. These were still the infant years of the Japanese air force and the local joke was that pilots setting off from Kakamigahara to the nearby army division at Toyohashi might never arrive if there was a strong headwind. However, the army ministry had already made clear its commitment to airpower, creating in 1919 a separate Office of Army Aviation. This commitment was also a guarantee of continuing investment in Kakamigahara and, in 1921, the industrial giant, Kawasaki, opened a factory for aircraft production beside the base. This, in turn, provided jobs and attracted other civilian businesses including restaurants, shops, and a post office, turning Kakamigahara over the years into a bustling town.<sup>23</sup> The growth of the air base elevated the importance of Gifu to the army. It also indicated the rise of technology over manpower and this was to have major repercussions for the army and army towns in the mid-1920s.

Being effectively at peace while its major industrial rivals continued relentlessly to seek each other's ruination was an enormous advantage to the Japanese

economy and, between 1914 and 1920, Japan as a nation went from being a debtor of more than one billion yen to being a creditor of nearly three billion. Moreover, as a result of the wartime boom, there was a rush of newly minted 'millionaires' and others with suddenly accumulated wealth, popularly described, and derided, as the *narikin* or nouveau riche. Much of this wealth was drawn from speculative ventures which could not survive the return of European competition in the 1920s; much of it was also the result of wartime profiteering. However, the core of Japanese industry at this time, and central to the fate of Gifu, was textile production, especially of silks. Spinning and weaving companies across Japan shared in the wartime boom and in Gifu, up until about 1919, demand from the lowland textile factories brought in thousands of young women, especially from Hida, as migrant workers. As an official report from the 1920s noted, this allowed them to earn enough to join the ranks of consumers of cosmetics and fine clothes. The report also complained, however, that wealth made these young workers selfish and idle in the off-season between December to February, and that their newly acquired habits impacted adversely on youth in the Takayama region. Among the accusations were that they spread sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis.<sup>24</sup> Materialism, it seemed to conservative opinion, was not just a danger to morality, it was a major health problem. One of our recurring themes has been that war and expansion in the armed forces never brought a sense of peace or security to the Japanese people. In the same way, neither did materialism. Instead, one of the features of retailing directed at women is that, from the time of World War I, adverts increasingly began to create anxieties, especially concerning the threat of hysteria and mental illness which, they insisted, was common in the modern world and could strike even ordinary and happily married women at any moment.<sup>25</sup>

While some profited from World War I, and all were glad that the fighting in Japan's region had been brief and successful, the wartime rise in prices far outpaced the average wage. Among those hardest hit were disabled veterans and, late in 1917, the central government finally introduced a law specifically to provide help for them and for the poorer men on active service. This came into force from January 1918 and, according to a survey by the Gifu prefectural office, was applicable locally to 70 households of disabled veterans and 237 households of serving men whose families were struggling to survive. By comparing these figures on the disabled of 1917–18 with those of 1907, we can chart something of their progress before this law came to their aid. In 1907, there had been 726 ex-servicemen in Gifu with greater or lesser physical disabilities (the press listed every form of disability, showing that paralysis of an arm or a leg was the most common injury but many others had lost one or more limbs, been blinded in one or both eyes, or become deaf). On average, there were about 30–40 such men in each county. Beginning in 1907, sanitariums for severely disabled veterans had been set up in Tokyo, Osaka and Fukuoka but, according to Gunshi Jun, the authority on this subject, they never managed to fill their collective capacity of 350 beds and, in the case of

the 1907 report from Gifu, only one man was listed as an inmate. The reason for this was probably that sanitariums were only open to unmarried men and, while in convalescence, any reward monies for their military service were suspended.<sup>26</sup> The prevailing attitude remained that the burden of nursing and feeding the broken men of 1904–05, and any who were injured or suffered a nervous collapse while in uniform thereafter, should and did fall on their relatives, supported where necessary by charity from the local community. However, the figure of just 70 households eligible for aid under the new law of 1918 suggests that the majority of the 726 disabled men of 1907 had failed to survive more than a decade with their injuries.

Nationally, the major civic group working to relieve poverty among servicemen and their families was the Aikoku Fujinkai or Patriotic Women's Association. Yet, two years after the Russian war, it seemed to have disappeared from view in Gifu and the GNN could ask rhetorically, is the Aikoku Fujinkai not already dead? The official history of the Gifu branch does not detail any particular activities for the years 1906–14 but the question of the GNN was misplaced. After 1905, its focus shifted towards education and moral reform, especially the promotion of thrift and savings among women. Also, its membership continued slowly to expand. This was particularly true in the northern counties: in 1907, the 540 members of Gifu city were the equal of all the Hida members combined but, in the next five years, membership across Hida nearly doubled. By 1912, the Gifu branch had a total of 9,000 members or slightly less than two per cent of all local women. The resumption of war in 1914 offered an opportunity for the Aikoku Fujinkai to return to its original goal of assisting the military but this disappeared with the early cessation of Japan's battlefield involvement. This gave a bitter-sweet tone to the first ever Gifu branch general meeting, held in 1915 at the Gifu city Butokukai Hall. Along with nearly 4,000 branch members, the guests included 700 disabled troops or family members of men killed in service (representatives of these two groups were given gifts of money from the association's national president). However, from late in World War I, the Aikoku Fujinkai moved even further away from being simply a military support group and engaged much more in general social welfare, for example, providing food to hungry children and, in the 1920s, adding the victims of household fires to its list of cares.<sup>27</sup> In this way, it expanded its definition of patriotism to incorporate more of the poor and needy of Japan.

On New Year's Day 1918, the GNN invited leading men of the community to give their predictions for the year ahead. Among the respondents were Mayor Hattori of Gifu city, Colonel Kanada, commander of the Gifu Regiment, and the managers of local banks. One point on which they all agreed was that, despite Japan's years of peace since 1914, there remained a very grave threat of a renewed and even greater world war or, alternatively, of a war-related crisis for which Japanese society was ill prepared. Hattori and Kanada in particular were both insistent that the real military challenge for Japan lay ahead and that the nation was not strong enough to meet it. Where

they differed was in their proposals for self-strengthening. Kanada believed the answer lay in Japan's warrior spirit. He called on the prefecture's youth groups or *seinendan* to go, in a sense, in the opposite direction to the Aikoku Fujinkai, and transform themselves from being a kind of community-help body to one much more concerned with the spiritual discipline of its members. He cited with approval the example of about 200 members of the Mugi county youth association who recently had visited the 68th seeking advice and instruction about how to prepare for military service. Against this, however, he admitted to worries about Japanese youth in general and, echoing the views of army officers going back more than a decade, noted with regret the impact of materialism on youth morality and continuing high levels of sexually transmitted diseases among young men.<sup>28</sup>

While Colonel Kanada invested Japan's future security in the spirit of its youth, Mayor Hattori argued that it was more important to strengthen their physique. He recalled with something akin to horror the example of the Russo-Japanese war – a war he now felt justified in describing as relatively short and small in scale – and the case of reservists at the battle of Port Arthur. It was said that some of them had been too feeble even to bear the weight of their ammunition belts and had buried them in the ground. Hattori agreed with Kanada that the youth associations were the best incubator of a new breed of strong, healthy Japanese able to match the West, and he announced that, in 1918, he would use municipal funds to set up youth associations in Gifu city. Similar action was taken in Ōgaki where, between 1918 and 1919, four new youth associations were established.<sup>29</sup>

In their separate but complimentary ways, the mayor and the colonel were echoing a broader wartime consensus on the part of Japan's authorities about the need more effectively to mobilize and regiment teenage males. The surprise, however, is that they should be making these statements more than two years after the central government had set up a nationwide youth association combining, in Richard Smethurst's words, 'the new patriotic, athletic, and military training with the old ethical and work functions'.<sup>30</sup> As a result, associations for young men across Japan began to spend more time listening to inspirational lectures from important people, and on physical fitness and sporting competition (girls' groups developed more from the 1920s along with the national campaign on 'daily life improvement' and focused far less on strenuous physical activity and more on such things as health, nutrition and thrift). What all of this seemed to amount to, however, is a further admission that the years of schooling, when children spent so many hours under centralized instruction, had yet to raise the health and spirit of Japanese youth to the level required for 'security'.

The contribution to the GNN debate from the manager of the Nōbi Agricultural and Industrial Bank was less concerned with the physical and moral discipline of youth than with what he saw as the real and impending wartime crisis. In a piece titled 'the age of panic', he explained that the three boom years for Japan had already ended in 1917 following the collapse of Russia in

the Bolshevik revolution and cutbacks in American spending after its entry into World War I. In his view, 1918 would see a catastrophic reversal in Japan's economy leading to widespread panic. Even as his words appeared in print, the warning signs were there with repeated press announcements in January 1918 about rising prices in food, lodging, travel, and even cosmetics.<sup>31</sup> By mid-year, the cost of rice alone was to increase by nearly 100 per cent.

In the summer of 1918, just months before the end of World War I, the Japanese army was ordered into action against its fellow citizens in the so-called 'rice riots'. According to Michael Lewis, author of the major study of the riots in English, 100,000 troops were mobilized in 140 localities, resulting in 30 civilians killed by the army and 5,000 rioters convicted. The fighting was especially fierce between the military and miners (who perhaps remembered the use of 400 soldiers against 2,000 of their striking colleagues in the infamous 1907 Ashio mine dispute). Of those charged with riot-related offences, about 10 per cent were members of reservist associations and another 10 per cent were members of youth associations. The disturbances began at the height of summer in Gifu's neighbouring prefecture of Toyama but quickly spread across the country. In the main, Lewis explains, the soldiers were used to guard rice exchanges and government offices and were able to maintain some semblance of order by their presence alone. However, when confronted with rioters carrying stones or clubs, they did not hesitate to use their swords, rifles or even machine guns. Further violence was forestalled by donations of millions of yen from the central government, the imperial household, and leading industrialists such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi. These donations were used to purchase sacks of rice for distribution to the protesters.<sup>32</sup> The government, as in the 1890 food crisis, also increased imports of cheap rice from overseas, this time using Japan's colonies. These imports continued into the 1920s but, while keeping urban prices low, they also served to depress the incomes of Japanese farmers (which never recovered until after 1945) and contributed to widespread rural unrest throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

An official history of Gifu from 1928 states that there was no local violence during the rice riots and, thus, no need for the Gifu regiment to be used. The police kept a close watch on public spaces such as the central park in Gifu city but the city council, in alliance with leading businessmen, is credited with acting before the situation got out of hand. By mid-August, the municipal authorities had arranged for 50,000 yen in emergency aid and this was used to fund a system of food vouchers, handed out daily to poorer residents at the city hall and neighbourhood schools. These vouchers were then exchanged for rice bought at controlled prices by the city's grains co-operative. By late August, the worst of the crisis appeared to be over and the system was gradually phased out.<sup>33</sup>

While Gifu was relatively peaceful during the rice riots, Gifu city had experienced its own street battles on the eve of World War I. The trigger had been the soaring price of energy. In 1908, the newly established Gifu Electricity

Company had purchased a monopoly on the right to provide electric lighting to the city and, with no competition, it set its own rates. By mid-1914, there was a series of civic meetings attended by thousands of residents demanding fairer prices. When the corporation refused to listen, they retaliated in the first days of July by destroying street lights, stoning the company's offices as well as those of any group which supported it (including the *Nōbi Nippō* newspaper), and attempting to burn down the power plant. Three hundred policemen were sent to prevent further damage while the mayor and the governor pressured the company into a nominal concession. This combination of government action and police repression succeeded in quieting the protests. Just two months later, however, there was even greater public rioting across the prefectural border in Nagoya. In the first week of September 1914, a civic movement calling for lower tram fares erupted in violence when the city tram company rejected talks. Trams were attacked and burned, and the police only inflamed the situation, allegedly using swords against men, women and children. In the face of what was described at the time as Nagoya's worst ever disturbance of the modern age, 400 troops of the 3rd Division were sent into the street.<sup>34</sup> Thus, in the region surrounding Gifu, World War I both began and approached its end with confrontations between the military and civilians demanding economic justice. There are two points here. One is the economic stress under which ordinary Japanese lived for much of the period from the 1890s to 1920s (that is, even before the Great Depression). The other is that citizens in Gifu and elsewhere were not docile in the face of a modern, centralized state and industrial economy. They were willing and able to define their own sense of what constituted a just contract and, when they felt it was necessary, of taking action against institutions and symbols of power.<sup>35</sup>

After the euphoria of easy victory in 1914, and the profits of 1915–17, World War I came to a formal close in 1918 at a time of intense disquiet in Japan. In the same month as the rice riots, the Gifu Regiment was among the first Japanese troops dispatched to Siberia. This was as part of the Allied military intervention in support of the anti-Bolshevik forces in the Russian civil war. Before the start of World War I, the troops of Gifu had only been sent overseas in small numbers to Korea in 1909, to northern China during the republican revolution of 1911–12, and then again to Korea early in 1914. Now they were heading to an entirely new battlefield and to confront an unfamiliar enemy; not a professional or conscript army but a body of men inspired by revolutionary ideals. According to the regiment's official history, its role in Siberia was mainly to police the areas of Nerchinsk and Vladivostok, and to cooperate with American and British forces in a guerrilla war against left-wing partisans.<sup>36</sup>

The very nature of a guerrilla war precludes grand set-piece battles and offers few opportunities for heroic deeds. In a letter to the people of Gifu from Colonel Kanada in mid-November 1918, there was no mention of any fighting in the five months since the regiment's arrival in Siberia. Instead, he reported that the troops were managing to keep warm despite the extreme

cold, and that they had enough to eat. He even confessed that the men were showing a considerable increase in body weight (suggesting that they had little to do but eat and wait). He also reassured the public that, despite problems with rail transport to the army PX, the regiment had been able to send a supply officer to towns in Manchuria and obtain two of the items essential for troop morale: stationery and confectionery. The thrust of his letter was that the men were generally safe and in good health. The real threat, however, was the so-called Spanish influenza pandemic, already sweeping the world as troops from Europe returned to their homes and which, ultimately, was to claim more lives than all those killed on the battlefields of World War I. As Kanada explained, the regiment had already lost several men to this disease and the rest were doing all that they could to prevent further losses.<sup>37</sup>

The Gifu Regiment was replaced after a year and returned to Japan in October 1919. The following month, Colonel Kanada addressed the men about to be demobilized. Having been conscripted at the end of 1916, they were no doubt aggrieved at having had to serve an extra year because of the Siberian intervention, and may not have agreed with Kanada when he told them they had become even better soldiers with the added time in uniform. The main point of his speech, however, was to warn them about what to expect as they reentered civilian life. Japanese society, he said, in part due to the wartime boom, had been overtaken by luxury and extravagance. As soldiers, he continued, it was up to them to counter these social trends by spreading the military spirit through involvement in civic bodies such as the reservist associations and youth groups. He also warned that, since the end of World War I, there had been a rise in Japan of ‘dangerous ideologies’, the usual code for socialism. He reminded the men of the chaos and bloodshed they had witnessed in Russia and, if Japan were to avoid a similar fate, charged them with an ongoing mission in civil society to protect Japan’s ancient traditions. He also stated the obvious: that the wider world of 1919 offered no peace to Japan.<sup>38</sup> The soldiers might well have asked, therefore, what was the point of World War I or, indeed, of the Siberian intervention?

During the Russo-Japanese war, General Hamilton had looked in the faces of Japanese schoolchildren and seen the invincible army of 1920. In 1920, however, the Japanese army was caught in a quagmire in Siberia and proved incapable of extricating itself until 1922. It was a confused, costly, and deeply unpopular use of the military, and it ended in failure. The unwillingness of the children from 1905 to fight in 1920 can be seen in the reaction of army reservists of the Kanazawa 9th Division, just over Gifu’s border. According to the *Hida Nippō* of 16 January 1920, there was ‘extreme tension’ among locals at the prospect of being sent to Siberia. To ease the disquiet, the divisional commander had to issue a public statement insisting that, if the dispatch went ahead, only those on active service would be sent.

In the wake of World War I, the lack of national security, the failure of the Siberian intervention, and the violence of the rice riots contributed in bringing

the popularity of the military to its lowest level in three decades. However, if the Tokyo press early in 1914 had been correct, this was not a sudden and radical collapse of public favour but, rather, an extension of a prewar trend. Popularity, moreover, is not the same as business. Provincial society continued to regard the presence of army bases as an economic asset and, in that sense, the civil-military contract remained in place.



## 7 Under reconstruction

### The civil-military contract in the 1920s era of army rationalization

From its creation in the 1870s through to the 1920s, the imperial army had continued to expand in numbers, conscripting more civilian men and increasing its bases around the provinces. This expansion was particularly rapid after each of the wars against China and Russia and, by 1920, there was a total of 21 army divisions across Japan. In the 1920s, however, the process of expansion was halted and reversed. Confronted with a depressed economy after World War I, parliamentary critics used the failure of the Siberian expedition (which had cost nearly 440 million yen or more than double the bill for the Sino-Japanese war) to bring about massive cuts in military spending. These cuts were made more urgent by the expense of rebuilding Tokyo and Yokohama after the great earthquake of late 1923. As a result, between 1922 and 1925, the size of the army was reduced by the equivalent of nine divisions. These reductions over several years meant that the mood in barracks, more so among the officers whose careers were suddenly and surprisingly under threat, was as riddled with insecurity as that of any civilian workplace at the time. They also meant that provincial communities with an army base, whatever their personal attitudes towards the military, its values, or the morality of soldiers, were threatened with the loss of an economic asset. This forced them to re-evaluate their relations with the army.

The accepted wisdom among historians is that the Japanese public abandoned militarism in the late 1910s and converted to anti-militarism in the 1920s.<sup>1</sup> However, as we have seen, in the years preceding World War I, there was only fragmentary evidence of popular militarism and considerably more evidence of public coolness, criticism or even hostility towards the army. The events of the rice riots and the Siberian expedition did nothing to improve the army's image with its critics, opponents, or even its supporters. One response by the army to its poor reputation in the last years of the Meiji era had been to reach out to regional communities, sending officers to talk to local gatherings in order to explain the army's position and to hear the comments of ordinary people. Clearly, that strategy had not been adequate to bridge the gap between army and society which existed then, and which appeared only to be widening in the early 1920s. The extent of this gap can be measured from an article by an army paymaster named Shimizu in the May 1924 issue of

*Kaikōsha Kiji*, the long-established journal written by and for army officers. Shimizu began by citing at length a survey from the new academic discipline of social science which had just been reported in the national press. From the data they had collected, the researchers concluded that Japanese women refused to marry men from only one occupation – the military – while civilian men categorically refused to marry any daughter of a soldier or sailor. The absolute nature of these conclusions, at least as summarized by Shimizu, inevitably raises questions about their reliability but the reason he accepted them at face value is because they confirmed his own general observations. In fact, in his experience, he wrote, it was almost exclusively drunkards on trains who were ready to sing the praises of the military. As he put it, many drunkards upon seeing a serviceman at a station or in a train would call out, ‘Ah, sir, I am really sorry to bother you but, you know, I love military men’, and then, addressing the people around, ‘Oy, you lot, listen up! Men in the military, they do it for the country ... *Banzai* for the military!’ Shimizu did not explain the crowd’s response to this boozy brand of militarism but the logic of his article is that they ignored it.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most interesting points about this article written for other army officers is that Shimizu places the blame for the public’s coldness entirely on the military. As he saw it, the basic problem was the military’s arrogance towards civilians and its refusal to compromise with civilian ways. According to Humphreys, this arrogance led to street confrontations in the 1920s between citizens and soldiers, with the result that some soldiers began wearing civilian clothes to and from work as a form of self-protection. However, as Shimizu further explains, some soldiers even chose to dress differently in private life in order to maintain a separation between themselves and the masses. Thus, off duty, a serviceman was more likely to be in a traditional cap and clogs than the now usual felt hat and shoes and, even if a serviceman did adopt a felt hat, there was, it seems, a distinctive military style of wearing it. Shimizu also criticized the military for its bureaucratic rigidity, claiming that jobs being done in the army by 40 year olds were commonly handled in civil society by men 10 years younger. In other words, talent, energy and ambition were rewarded and respected among civilians but not in the military where the goal appeared to be order rather than progress.<sup>3</sup>

This internal criticism of the army as deliberately isolating itself from civil society (a move implicit also in the revised handbook on life in the barracks from 1908) suggests that the army knowingly obstructed the realization of its own concept of ‘good soldiers, good citizens’. The concept was already on shaky ground in the 1900s but, with accelerating industrialization, urbanization and consumerism in the 1910s and 1920s, it became even less persuasive as the military, in order to seal itself off from sociopolitical trends in civil life, became increasingly identified in the public mind as both elitist and anachronistic. The result was that the soldier appeared to look, speak, and think differently from many ordinary people, especially those in urban society: the evidence of the social scientists in 1924 and the observations of officers like

Shimizu is that many civilian Japanese rejected him as their model of the 'good citizen'.

Even as Shimizu was warning his fellow officers about this civil-military estrangement, there were signs that the army was attempting to change with the times. From small and scattered press reports in the early 1920s, we can see regional army units experimenting with new ideas and practices in order to improve the lives of their soldiers and keep the military more in step with civil society. For example, the Toyama Regiment in mid-1923 introduced dance as a new form of physical education, an innovation welcomed by the troops as a break from the old and tired routine of calisthenics. Also at Toyama, local commanders in 1925 invited two members of the Tokyo Academy of Cooking to visit the base for a week to advise on ways to improve the men's diet; the invitation not only pleased the men, it also showed the regiment how it could save up to 10,000 yen a year on its food bill. In an attempt to educate and stimulate the minds of its soldiers, the 5th Division at Hiroshima in 1924 began to move away from simple recitation of imperial rescripts and, instead, use readings from primary school textbooks (in passing, this suggests that literacy levels of the average soldier remained very basic, especially in predominantly rural areas such as Hiroshima).<sup>4</sup> A further innovation being suggested was the use of film. In another article from *Kaikōsha Kiji* in mid-1921, a captain criticized the army for being the only branch of the military still neglecting film as an educational tool. In his view, the benefits of film far outweighed the costs (which, he asserted, could be reduced by using commercial productions) because film spoke directly to the conscripted men. This made it far more effective for the men to view a film, something they regularly did on their days off, than, in his words, 'listen to a lecture from an educational officer who himself is half asleep'. Through film, the men could be inspired by footage of military reviews or of the Meiji and Yasukuni Shrines, and also educated about other branches of the military which they might never observe at close quarters, such as the work of artillerymen and engineers.<sup>5</sup>

The attempt to 'civilianise' aspects of life in the army extended even to the young elite. As Theodore Cook has explained, the high attrition rate of students at the officer cadet schools led to a new system after 1920 of 'nurturing' (*ho'iku*). In this, cadets with health concerns were allowed to wear warmer undergarments and the rigid exam system, which had dominated their lives since the 1890s, was replaced with shorter, less demanding tests. In addition, they were allowed greater access to newspapers instead of only approved clippings, and sports popular with the public such as baseball, tennis and soccer were added to the curriculum. Popular sports were also introduced at the army's highest educational institution, the Military Academy, and, according to British army officers on attachment there, basketball and tennis were played nearly every afternoon in the early to mid-1920s.<sup>6</sup>

For local communities, perhaps the most positive reports about the military in the 1920s continued to be the press accounts of conscripts joining or

leaving the army. It was common for the local media to narrate the journeys of new conscripts each year as they travelled to their allotted barracks. This was part of the annual rhythm of provincial life and the scene was generally unchanging; the youths would set off early in the morning from their villages or towns, farewelled by family, friends and usually by some local members of the reservist association. They would then head, by whatever means, to the nearest railway point and make their way to the barracks. The journeys were described in simple, approving language without flourishes of patriotic rhetoric. Instead, what stands out from a 1925 *Hida Nippō* report of conscripts arriving at camp is the public's lack of solemnity about the military. The report noted that the young men first underwent another physical examination, took the army oath of allegiance, and then received their uniforms but, as it explained, 'some clothes are too big, some too small, some shoes too wide, some trousers too long: in every unit, such scenes of tragi-comedy are performed'.<sup>7</sup> In this way, a local newspaper used the initial disorder of army life to make the military seem more human and less of a machine.

One point which was stressed repeatedly by the local press in the mid-1920s was that the Army Ministry had deliberately changed the date of induction for new conscripts from 1 December to 10 January (though volunteers, as opposed to conscripts, continued to be inducted in December). The inference was that the army recognized New Year as more a time for families than for the nation or for the 'army-as-family'. A less sentimental explanation is suggested by Arakawa Shōji who describes it as part of the 1922 Yamanashi reforms, intended primarily to save money by reducing the conscript's time in uniform by 40 days.<sup>8</sup> The actual origin of the change in date was not the major concern of the press. Rather, its aim was to reassure the public about the welfare of local young men while in the care of the army. The *Hida Nippō* in January 1926, for example, praised the standard of living in an army barracks as high as that of a middle class home, with good food, good clothes, officers 'filled with benevolence' (conscripts who felt the cold apparently were allowed to wear gloves), and, perhaps stretching credulity too far, relatively good pay.<sup>9</sup>

The realities of life in the Gifu regiment in the 1920s may be gleaned from two personal accounts of army service. One dates from the 1980s and may suffer from the distance in time; the other was privately published in Gifu in 1924. The first, by Matsubara Hisanao, starts with a surprise. In 1925, he took the draft examination, fully expecting to be rejected after having had two recent bouts of severe mental illness. He also had a slight deformity with one shoulder hanging lower than the other. He did not attempt to exploit or exaggerate his condition in order to avoid military service but he also did not expect the result of the examination which placed him as one of the few men in the top category of grade A. Taking this in his stride, Matsubara opted not to wait and see whether he would be picked in the draft lottery but, instead, chose to offer himself as a one-year volunteer. He entered the 68th Regiment in December 1925. Once in the barracks, his only initial discomfort was

caused by the uniform which, true to form, did not fit. Apart from that, he actually enjoyed discovering that, in his unit, there were men from all walks of life, including some from wealthy or privileged backgrounds such as a young villager from Inaba county who had graduated from the elite Waseda University in Tokyo. This mixing of the social classes was, he felt, something he could never have experienced in civilian life. In addition, he found that the officers were kind and helpful; when they realized he was travelling so far to visit his mother on leave days, they encouraged him to set off at 5 am and return at 8 pm rather than abide by the standard leave hours of 8 am to 5 pm. He also found that the routine of army life was not particularly demanding of his energies, nor did he find the discipline especially onerous.<sup>10</sup>

The second account is by Endō Shōji. It was intended as a contribution to the contemporary debate on ways to improve army life. He was drafted in about 1922 and, as he says, set off for Kita Nagamori filled with pride at having the chance to serve the nation. However, within weeks of his arrival, he was shocked to hear of a fellow first-year private who had deserted. This led him to ponder what would drive a man so quickly to flee the army when the consequence of flight was inevitable punishment. His conclusion was that, apart from the brutal, informal disciplining of new troops by the older soldiers, there were three fundamental problems: the quality of the officers, the rigidity of army education, and the spatial confines on conscripts. In an earlier chapter, we have already heard his views on the repressive environment and the need for quiet spaces for conscripts to relax. In the classroom, the only teaching was on narrow military topics meaning that the army, at least as far as Endō was concerned, was failing in its self-appointed duty to continue and broaden the education of Japan's young men. Instead, they were left weary and uninspired. As for the officers, they appeared indifferent towards the troops, demanding respect without making any attempt to earn it, and also making no attempt to expand their own intellect. The volunteer non-commissioned officers, by contrast, were worked so hard by their seniors that they had no time for study and, once they realized the obstacles to being promoted, they often became disillusioned. From this, Endō argued that greater encouragement for officers and non-commissioned officers to study would improve their capacity to function as role models for conscripts and, in time, enhance the ideal of 'good soldiers, good citizens'.<sup>11</sup>

From the two accounts, it is clear that life in the imperial army depended on how the conscript approached it. One fact about life as a soldier or as a reservist in the 1920s, however, is how brief it could be. The graveyard at the Gifu army base was a reminder that death could come in battle but could also strike in peace. The local press reports of good food and good clothing suggested that soldiers were better protected against hunger and cold than their civilian counterparts and this, no doubt, is largely true. Yet, the official Gifu prefectural 'Record of deceased military personnel' (*Shibōsha Heiseki-bo*) shows a constant stream of soldiers and reservists from the 1900s to 1920s who died of illness between the ages of 20 and 30 years. By far the most

common cause of death was tuberculosis. The mortality rate among even the fittest of Japanese youth (though Matsubara's experience casts a doubt on using the army draft as a measure of fitness) suggests that the Toyama regiment's invitation to professional chefs was not based solely on improving the taste of army food. In a related experiment, school lunch-boxes were first tested in several primary schools in Tokyo from 1923 with the aim of strengthening the health of children and preparing them better for the rigours of adult life.<sup>12</sup>

Against the backdrop of piecemeal attempts to improve its public relations, the Japanese army between 1922 and 1925 underwent a massive restructuring and modernization. Unlike the limitations placed on the navy, which resulted from external pressure by Western governments in the 1922 Washington naval treaty, the cuts to the army were in large part dictated by internal economic forces. By the start of the 1920s, the argument of senior commanders that national security demanded any expense – what earlier critics had called the policy of 'poor nation, strong army' – had exceeded the bounds of reason. In addition, the rise of cabinets beholden to big business (cabinets in the 1920s were often described as either 'Mitsui' or 'Mitsubishi' depending on their particular affiliation) meant that industrial and commercial imperatives had a greater influence in political affairs than in earlier decades. Thus, beginning on 15 August 1922 and extending into 1923, the reforms of Army Minister Yamanashi Hanzō led to the shedding of 2,200 officers and more than 60,000 men (as well as 13,400 horses). As historians Matsushita Yoshio and Izu Kimio note, this is the equivalent of cutting approximately five divisions.<sup>13</sup>

The Yamanashi reforms never threatened the survival of the Gifu regiment. However, there is some evidence that they undermined its internal stability. The standard practice was for the regimental commander to be rotated every two to three years but, starting in 1922, this happened every 12 months for three consecutive years (after 1924, matters reverted to a two- or three-year rotation).<sup>14</sup> Press reports at the time show that the public understood one aim of the reforms was to rid the army of underperforming officers. They also show that locals were aware of the nervousness among army officers, with mess room conversation dominated by talk of the cuts and the loss of careers.<sup>15</sup> The unusually rapid turnover at the level of regimental command can only have heightened this mood of uncertainty in camp. Moreover, in their emphasis on machine technology rather than human spirit, the Yamanashi and subsequent Ugaki reforms also challenged the prevailing orthodoxy in the Japanese army since 1905; that spirit could overcome any enemy. It was, perhaps, an admission that the idea itself had always been unpersuasive and, in the years since 1905, had proved even less convincing to the Japanese public as both society and the nature of war continued to change. This challenge to beliefs which had been entrenched in the army for nearly two decades no doubt left the older officers feeling disoriented and made the teaching manuals sound out of date.

In purely military terms, the Yamanashi reforms still left the Japanese army far behind the major Western powers in areas such as armoured vehicles,

aviation, and wireless. Moreover, the great earthquake which hit Tokyo and Yokohama late in 1923 meant that military spending had to be reduced further to help pay for the reconstruction of the national capital and its major port. This combination of military and financial logic led to a second round of restructuring under Army Minister Ugaki Kazushige from 1924–25. Ugaki stated his intention in mid-1924; this was not to emulate Yamanashi and shave personnel from units spread all over Japan but to abolish in their entirety four of Japan's 21 divisions. In practice, this meant a cut of just under 37,000 officers and men (along with 5,600 horses) and, to that extent, the Ugaki reforms were much lighter than those of Yamanashi.<sup>16</sup> However, with their direct assault on entire divisions, they threatened to erase the army from large regions of Japan. The rumour in Gifu from late 1924 was that the 68th might well be among the regiments to be axed or relocated.

If we accept that the public's original enthusiasm for an army camp in the environs of Gifu city was generated by economic self-interest, then anxiety in the 1920s at any threat to the Gifu regiment was inevitable. This anxiety was clearly shared, and demonstrated, elsewhere. In Ōtsu city, capital of Shiga prefecture, for example, the mayor led an impassioned campaign at the start of 1925 to retain the local regiment. His argument was that the prosperity and stability of the prefectural capital, and by extension of the prefecture, was directly linked to the continuing presence of the military. In the words of the city's formal resolution, it was 'for the sake of the nation, the region, and also the morals of a generation', that the regiment should remain in Ōtsu. However, in this case, the campaign was a failure, in part because public support was lacking from outside the city (although there is no guarantee that any level of public agitation would have influenced the army ministry). In the event, the Ōtsu regiment was relocated to Fushimi, south of Kyoto. A similar drama unfolded at Hamamatsu in Shizuoka prefecture where more than 500 residents met in February 1925 to organize a movement to keep the 67th Regiment. They described this as a matter of life or death for the city. They took their case to the army minister, the prime minister, and both houses of the Diet but, ultimately, with only mixed results (when they realized that the 67th was to be scrapped, they did manage to persuade the army to leave one unit of 500 men in place). Where a division or regiment was abolished or relocated, the social and economic consequences for a city or town could be swift and stark. In November 1925, a Nagoya journalist wrote that the former regimental town of Moriyama was 'as if a fire had been snuffed out', and the places where soldiers had gathered, 'once filled with the sound of singing voices ... [were] now silent in the autumn winds'. He also reported that the mayor had collapsed and died the previous month after being blamed by local people for the regiment's demise.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of Gifu city, the campaign to retain the 68th was, by default, more of a popular civic movement than, as in Ōtsu, an action spearheaded by local government. In fact, for most of 1924 and the first two months of 1925 the city was without a mayor either to organize a lobby or take responsibility

for its failure. Mayor Marushige had resigned in April 1924 and the city council, which was violently divided between two factions (the old money of landlords and established business versus the new money of the modern economy) split irreconcilably over his successor. Matsuo Kunimatsu, the man who finally took up the duties of mayor at the very end of February 1925, describes the city council at this time as 'having become like a zoo'.<sup>18</sup>

In the absence of strong direction from city hall, the initial step to keep the army in Gifu was taken by the prefectural assembly. Late in 1924, it drafted a resolution setting out the arguments for leaving the 68th in place. After this, however, the campaign was taken over by a city-based popular movement organized by leading businessman, Sawada Bunjirō. Sawada was a dynamic entrepreneur. In the 1894–95 war, and still only in his twenties, he had led a team of 100 labourers working for the army in Korea and Manchuria. Following that war, he created one business after another in Gifu city, including the modern Ukai Hotel alongside the River Nagara in 1903, the Midono Theatre in 1907, and the Shōchiku Theatre in 1922. He was also heavily involved in the textile and paper industries and his success in business led him to serve at different times on both the city council and in the prefectural assembly.<sup>19</sup> In December 1924, he organized the so-called Alliance to Retain the 68th Infantry Regiment and sent agents to Tokyo to gather the latest information on the army's thinking. The Alliance then convened a mass meeting of residents at the Gifu Theatre in January 1925. At this, it was agreed that the potential loss of the regiment impacted on too many local people to leave matters just to the city authorities or chamber of commerce. Instead, a broad-based civic movement was necessary. The make-up of the crowd at the Gifu Theatre is unclear from the surviving records but it seems probable that the nucleus was similar to that of Hamamatsu where, according to Arakawa, there were three main groups: local officials and members of reservist associations; businessman either with army contracts or retailing food, drink and entertainment, as well as those renting rooms to officers; plus homeowners from the vicinity of the army base. Reinforced by the public support of the Gifu Theatre meeting, the Alliance proceeded to collect donations and used this money to send successive teams to Tokyo to seek help from influential natives of Gifu, such as the former army minister, General Ōshima Ken'ichi, and Shimoda Utako, the female educator who had assisted in winning the regiment in 1907. It also formulated direct appeals to the Army Ministry, Home Ministry, and Diet (in approaching the Army Ministry, the Alliance is said to have been strengthened by the personal acquaintance of one of its members with General Ugaki).<sup>20</sup>

In order to understand the provincial view of civil-military relations at this moment of crisis, it is intriguing to compare the Gifu prefectural assembly resolution of late 1924 with the Alliance's written appeal of early 1925. What they reveal is two very different interpretations of that relationship or, perhaps it is more accurate to say, two very different tactical approaches by civilians aiming to persuade the army to keep investing in their community. On the



one hand, the assembly chose to emphasize the national danger of changing the status quo by removing the 68th from Gifu; on the other, the Alliance chose to emphasize the local value of a regiment now firmly embedded in a particular region.

What is most striking about the assembly resolution is its extraordinary sense of alarm. It focuses almost entirely on threats to two of the army's key facilities in Gifu: the major air base at Kakamigahara and the large munitions store near Sekigahara. Neither of these, it claims, has anything like adequate facilities for its own defence. Thus, at the time of the great earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, there were all kinds of rumours and fears at Kakamigahara over the safety of the base. Only troops of the 68th were able to arrive quickly and reinforce its perimeter. With aviation set to become even more important in national defence, it continued, and in a situation such as a great earthquake where airplanes might become the army's sole means of mobility, the need to keep a regiment close to Kakamigahara was obvious. Similarly, the prefecture was home to some of Japan's main arteries of communications, including three rivers running north to south and, even more important, the central Tōkaidō rail line crossing east to west. Any attack on the river bridges of the railway could sever Japan's communications and paralyze both the military and industry. To remove the 68th, therefore, was to expose these arteries to attack. Interestingly, the implied enemy in these various nightmare scenarios was not some foreign power but radical forces within Japan. The resolution acknowledged the present instability in Japanese society and insisted that, for the sake of public order, it was essential to keep the 68th in place (the resolution identified no particular radical group as a threat but, at this time, the military police in Gifu were watching more than 10 political associations in Gifu city alone, including branches of the recently established Suiheisha anti-class discrimination movement). Almost as an afterthought, the resolution added in closing that the people of Gifu had developed close ties with the 68th and that these had aided enormously in spreading the ideas and values of the army. Any alteration to this relationship, it warned, would have grave consequences in terms of popular support for the military.<sup>21</sup>

The appeal of the popular Alliance chose to start its arguments where the prefectural assembly had ended. It made no reference to the air base at Kakamigahara or to the weapons store near Sekigahara. It also made almost no reference to radical ideas and groups within Japan. Instead, its central theme was the bond between the people of Gifu and the Gifu regiment which, it stressed, was the only army base in the entire prefecture of more than 1 million citizens. It declared that locals had come to view the 68th as 'our regiment' and, to remove it would cause irreparable damage to their sense of being part of the nation-in-arms. More specifically, it would harm the native pride of soldiers from Gifu and undermine their commitment to any non-Gifu regiment. This, in turn, would weaken the cohesion of their new regiment (this seems conveniently to have overlooked the example of Gifu men

sent to Toyama and Kanazawa). Returning to a point made in 1907 in the original drive to obtain an army base, the appeal also argued that the climate of lower Gifu was ideal for soldiers and that the health benefits to the military were visible in the excellent performance of the 68th. The sub-text here was that soldiers of Gifu could not enjoy such fine health and perform so efficiently in a regiment away from home. The appeal also added that it would be costly and inconvenient for the army and local officials to return to the pre-1907 system of dispatching men outside of the prefecture.<sup>22</sup> Overall, the document is a remarkably explicit statement of the conditional nature of the civil-military contract: in effect, it says that local people will support the military and its values only to the extent that the military is directly committed to their region.

With a pessimism which seems typical of lower Gifu, the popular belief in the early spring of 1925 was that, notwithstanding the efforts of the Alliance, the army had already decided to abolish the 68th. When the formal decision of the Army Ministry was made public on 27 March 1925, therefore, the residents of Gifu were delighted to find that the four divisions to be abolished were the 13th, 15th, 17th and 18th at Takada, Toyohashi, Okayama and Kurume, respectively. The GNN originally got its facts wrong, stating that the 16th Division at Kyoto, not the 15th at Toyohashi, was among those to disappear. When the truth was known, the people of Gifu were probably reminded of their failed competition with Toyohashi to obtain a division in 1907. They may also have taken the news as a warning about the speed with which the army could remove what it had once declared to be essential for national security.

There quickly proved to be a double reason for people of Gifu to celebrate. Not only were the troops of the 68th to remain local, the army's increased spending on modern technology meant that the aviation unit at Kakamigahara was to be expanded and, in May 1925, its two battalions were upgraded to the status of regiments. In fact, it is probable, as the prefectural assembly resolution had argued, that it was the importance of aviation in modern war and the presence of the air base at Kakamigahara which was decisive in keeping the 68th in Gifu. An additional advantage was that the Ugaki cuts seemingly did not assess each case on its military or economic merits but, instead, simply targeted the more recently established divisions. As part of the 3rd Division at Nagoya, one of the oldest in Japan, the Gifu Regiment was protected by the history of its 'parent'.

The celebrations on retaining the 68th show just how deeply local people had come to identify the continuing military presence with the general welfare of the region. They began at 6 am on 3 April 1925 with the firing of two cannons from the mountaintop north of the city. This was followed by a vast public gathering at Gifu City Park where the crowd was treated to a display of fireworks and a fly-pass of four planes from the Kakamigahara air base scattering thousands of posters. The city hall was festooned with balloons from its rooftops and even nature seemed to favour the mood with clouds of cherry blossom everywhere. Festivities continued into the next day and, as the GNN declared, 'it was all a great spectacle not seen of late'.<sup>23</sup>

As part of the celebrations, a party was held on the evening of 3 April at which the new mayor, Matsuo Kunimatsu, acknowledged the fears which had driven local people to mobilize themselves and lobby on behalf of the regiment. He also praised the 68th as having become over the years a ‘model regiment’, and urged people not only to remember the happiness of this moment but to strengthen even further the bonds between the community and the army base.<sup>24</sup> In a much later series of reminiscences about the 68th, ‘Its name was the Botan Regiment’, published in 1961 in the *Gifu Shimbun* (the present-day name of the GNN), a former soldier began with the statement<sup>25</sup>:

The 68th Regiment was loved by the people of the city and had the reputation of being a model for the rest of the nation. Right from its foundation at the end of Meiji, the warm and enthusiastic welcome from local people continued and showed that the unity of military and civilian was a living reality, not an empty slogan.

In fact, in the 1900s–1910s, any reference in the Gifu press to ‘our regiment’ was very rare (an isolated instance is the GNN, 9 July 1919, which carried a photograph of the 68th in transit in north China or Siberia and to which it added the heading ‘our regiment on the move’). Instead, veteran Gifu journalist Michishita Jun argues that it was only in the wake of the 1925 civic campaign that the 68th came generally to be known as ‘the local regiment’ (*kyōdo rentai*) or even ‘the fine boys of Gifu’ (*Gifu no kenji*).<sup>26</sup>

As always, however, rhetoric never completely matched the reality on the ground. For example, the official history of Kasahara, a renowned pottery and *saké*-producing town in the southeast of the prefecture, states that it first became a practice area for the army from the late Taishō period when it was still a village (it became a town in 1923). However, it also notes that, following a two-day training session for over 120 troops in July 1926, one of the town’s two wards, Gōdo-ku, lodged a formal complaint and requested that, in future, it be exempted from providing accommodation to soldiers.<sup>27</sup> Compared to the villagers we saw north of Ōgaki late in 1890 who fabricated all kinds of excuses to avoid billeting troops, this was a very public and explicit rebuff to ‘our regiment’. The census for Kasahara shows that its population had fallen from 6,145 in 1921 to 5,722 in 1926.<sup>28</sup> In view of this decline, it would be natural to assume that townspeople would welcome extra income from any source. The only conclusion is that the cost of providing lodging for the soldiers, or the disruption to civilian life, so far outweighed any real or perceived profit that the residents of Gōdo-ku chose to cut their losses and openly distance themselves from the army.

After the turbulence of 1925, civil-military relations in provincial Japan largely returned to their earlier pattern. The emphasis in local society was, as it always had been, on linking the military to male youth. This took place through the male youth associations and through the schools. In September 1926, the first all-middle school military exercises were held in Gifu. These

were planned as a grand event and incorporated army aircraft from Kakamigahara. Thereafter, it also became the annual practice for each of the middle schools to include in their curriculum a period of accommodation and training at the Gifu regimental barracks.<sup>29</sup> In addition, there was the Buto-kukai and other martial arts groups across the prefecture which continued to teach traditional warrior skills and values to young men, while local reservist associations maintained their work with youth associations, preparing them for army life, and arranging talks by visiting military officers for them and for the wider public. As late as 1926, there is also at least one example of an urban reservist association building a war memorial in the grounds of a local primary school.<sup>30</sup> This, however, is also a reminder that attempts to militarize the lives of children could be very slow.

For its part, the reconstructed army continued, at least sporadically, to pursue ways to make the life of conscripts more in tune with civilian norms. For the people of Gifu, there were several examples from the Toyama regiment. In February 1926, the *Hida Mainichi Shimbun* reported that the regiment had a standing committee on ways to improve the comfort of soldiers and that this had now arranged for the purchase of a film projector; henceforth, the troops were to be treated every Saturday evening to a movie sourced from the army educational office. The same committee had also established a rest room where the ordinary men could write letters, read journals, and listen to the radio (radio was a state monopoly so there was no danger of the troops being ‘corrupted’). Seemingly intent on realizing nearly all of the suggestions proposed by Endō Shōji (though there is no evidence of any link between his book privately published in Gifu city and the Toyama army commanders), the regiment had even taken land previously used for horse riding and created a regimental garden with over 100 benches.<sup>31</sup>

The Hida press generally carried news of the army at Toyama and Kanazawa rather than at Gifu city; for the people of the Hida region, these were their ‘local’ units. That only scattered fragments of the lowland newspapers have survived from the 1920s makes it difficult to say whether the innovations at Toyama were repeated in the Minō counties of Gifu. The probability is that, in a national institution like the army, whatever succeeded in one camp was attempted elsewhere. However, the trend at the army’s elite schools suggests that any easing of life for the soldiers was reversed later in the 1920s as army commanders returned to a regime devoted to spirit, endurance and what they saw as ‘tradition’. By 1928, Military Academy cadets were forbidden from entering any restaurant, café or cinema on their leave days, and the fashion for modern sport had been almost entirely replaced by the earlier curriculum of fencing and judo. With the dispatch of troops (including the 68th) to mainland China in 1928, and the greater shift to more of a war-footing from the time of the 1931 Manchurian incident, senior officers no doubt felt that comfort in the barracks was no longer appropriate. The army continued to present its most cheerful face to the civilian community: a poster created by the army study society, Kaikōsha, in 1931 was titled ‘A day in the army camp’

and subtitled 'A view of the happy camp life' (*Yukai naru hei'ei seikatsu no tenbō*). Yet, a soldier's memoir from the 68th in the mid-1930s records that 'the most enjoyable and contented times for the troops were sleeping and meals; outside of these, they had nothing of hope, happiness or expectation'.<sup>32</sup>

A final point concerns what may be the moment of greatest notoriety in the history of the army in Gifu. In November 1927, the grand manoeuvres were held in Aichi prefecture and, naturally, the 68th was among the participating forces. At the end of the manoeuvres, the Shōwa emperor, Hirohito, was reviewing the troops at the Nagoya parade ground when suddenly a first-year Gifu conscript broke ranks and approached him with a letter. The conscript was Kitahara Taisaku, member of the Gifu Suihessa, a political movement to defend the rights of *burakumin* or the former class of 'untouchables'. His letter was in response to a recent high-profile case of class discrimination against a *burakumin* in the Fukuoka regiment, and it called on the emperor, in his capacity as supreme commander-in-chief, to bring about an end to any kind of prejudice in the military. Kitahara was immediately arrested but the army authorities, including the prime minister, General Tanaka Giichi, decided that his crime went no further than 'disrespect' to the monarch. This meant that his sentence was just (if that is the word) a year in an army prison. The Gifu regiment suffered collective punishment, being forced to march home from the manoeuvres rather than, as originally planned, enjoying the comfort of a train ride. Kitahara was described as a pure anarchist and, at his draft examination, had silently protested against the system by refusing to write a single word in the literacy test. Yet, he admits in his memoirs that he had earlier been a state-centred nationalist, and he describes his fury at a cinema in Tokyo in the early 1920s when the audience, watching a newsreel of then Crown Prince Hirohito, ignored the message on the screen to remove their hats as a mark of respect.<sup>33</sup> He also contradicts the image of radical agitators in the minds of local politicians and the military police: instead of mounting an attack on railway bridges or air bases, he engaged in the highly democratic (but also highly traditional) act of appealing for justice directly to the sovereign. It is a wonderful irony that, among the civilian conscripts from Gifu over the decades, the one who most publicly demonstrated the ideal samurai virtue of acting on behalf of a noble cause without concern for his own comfort or safety should have been an anarchist armed with a pen.

# Conclusion

The logical minimum condition for the existence of popular militarism is that the military should be popular. On the eve of the regional army grand manoeuvres in 1890, however, the GNN had commented on the lack of local public trust in the armed forces, and expressed the hope that a new civil-military relationship of mutual support and understanding might emerge from this rare opportunity to see the army up close. Yet, in the spring of 1914, the *Japan Weekly Mail* was asking about the ‘universal tendency on the part of the public to abhor the army’. By 1924, a senior army officer could write that the only citizens to express open affection for the army were drunks on trains. Here we have a provincial newspaper, a national newspaper, and a professional soldier, all informed and contemporary observers, insisting that the military never enjoyed lasting popularity in imperial Japan. Instead, their comments indicate that the normal status of the army over these four decades was to be deeply unpopular.

During the national crises of war, the military naturally received public support. In a modern total war, everyone was potentially at risk and, for the ordinary soldier or sailor, the chance of death was greatly increased by the industrialization of war. Civilians had access to new forms of information; journalists at the front providing intricate detail of the day-to-day movement of forces and the lives of the troops, and magic lanterns or newsreels bringing home compelling images of men and battle. With this deeper, more vivid understanding of war, the majority of civilians gave of their money and possessions in order to fund the cost of war and to protect or comfort servicemen with tobacco, *saké*, blankets, sandals, or simply letters of encouragement. Civilian men, women, and schoolchildren were often at the railway stations to greet passing troop trains, at funerals to mourn the loss of a local man, and at the parades marking victories or the end of wars. Yet, just as often, there was intense local friction or rivalries at these various wartime sites of civil-military unity. Among the many examples in Gifu are victory celebrations in 1905 for the navy’s success at Tsushima in which part of the prefectural capital refused to participate; and at Takayama in 1914 when the boys of the middle school nearly came to blows with army reservists over who had priority in marching. There were also reports of patriotic donations being misappropriated in the

Russian war; and there was a public backlash in 1905 against the unending demands for war bonds and donations in a war which the Japanese people simply could not afford.

Outside of war, the army enjoyed its greatest popularity when it staged a theatrical performance. The grand manoeuvres each year attracted many thousands of spectators; these increased in number as the communications network of road and rail expanded across Japan. Also, local regimental flag days were well attended as family, friends, and other guests came to enjoy demonstrations of swordsmanship, marksmanship, and other martial arts. Broadly speaking, where the military had a script, a guarantee of victory, or a promise of excitement without too much expense, it always found an audience. Thus, in novels, on the stage, and in movies, military themes (especially of traditional swordsmen) were often popular. Once again, however, we should remember the comment of the GNN that the domestically produced movie melodrama late in the Russo-Japanese lacked a core audience. It may be that the public grew weary of too much display of war, especially when the real cost in money and lives was so great, or that it sought only truth from film. To thrive, militarism needs a diet of energy and fear; weariness is its ruin. Equally, the desire for truth strips away the romanticization of war which is vital to militarism.

One way in which the army tried to improve its public relations was by sending officers to talk to local communities. This seemed to elicit a good response with sizable crowds coming to listen and, no doubt, also to be heard. A question, however, is how large the audience would have been without the efforts of local officials, reservist associations, and school teachers. Even with this kind of outreach programme, the army never overcame its reputation for arrogance towards civilians. As the GNN warned the 'swaggering military' after an incident between a troop train and Ōgaki station officials in 1907, any public respect garnered from war could quickly be lost in peacetime. Those soldiers who chose to dress and speak differently to civilians only reaffirmed the sense of an unbridgeable divide. Yet, the two were not so very different. Senior officers may have been respected (or feared) for their high standards of performance but they were also recognized to be career professionals. When the lieutenant-general commanding the 3rd Division in the 1890 grand manoeuvres was defeated, some called for his resignation but no one was suggesting that he commit suicide to restore his honour (similarly, there was no public expectation that army officers at the battle of Mukden in 1905 should kill themselves as atonement for their failure to capture the enemy). In later years, the army authorities created a cult around General Nogi, who committed suicide with his wife in 1912 in order to follow the Emperor Meiji in death, precisely because his was such an unusual, and anachronistic, act of warrior devotion. By contrast, in the army restructurings of post-1905 and 1922–25, the public was well aware that officers were more concerned with keeping their jobs than questions of honour.

Among provincial communities, ordinary soldiers probably enjoyed sympathy more than popularity. There were civic receptions of family, friends and local

dignitaries for those about to leave for military service and for those who completed their three, or later two, years in the army. However, as we have seen in the case of a Takayama youth in 1908, there could also be a very public party for those who failed to pass the draft examination. Despite the army's attempts to sell itself as a warm and welcoming 'family', with images of the 'happy camp life', local people were aware that conscript pay was barely enough to cover the cost of cigarettes and *saké*, and that first-years could expect to be brutalized by the senior soldiers. Locals could read in detail about the steady stream of conscripts, often from villages, who reacted against the hardships of army life by choosing to desert or, in extreme cases, take their own lives. In Gifu, they were also told that, despite supposedly being the fittest of Japan's male youth, the health of local soldiers was so fragile that it suffered badly when they were taken out of their native climate. In wartime, the major concern of local society appeared to be with the safety and welfare of men at the front rather than tales of heroism; press reports and letters home were filled with stories about food, heat and shelter. As the regimental commander reassured the people of Gifu in 1918, the men on service in Siberia were content because they now had stationery and confectionery. The army doctor in the China war who trumpeted the joy of war did not speak for the ordinary soldier. Where public sympathy may have lapsed, however, is over immorality. In both civilian and military discourse, there was a constant fear about soldiers and the sex trade, especially in the recurring periods of economic distress (often just after a war) when the number of unlicensed prostitutes increased and so did the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. Given the low wages of soldiers, this fear may have been exaggerated but, like the opposing mythic image of the incorruptible Japanese warrior, it refused to fade.

The spread of civic associations for veterans or those on the army reserve list was at its height following the Russo-Japanese war. As much as the promotion of military values in local communities, one of the aims of these associations was to police the behaviour of their own members and to ensure that they used their rewards for military service carefully. This was a sign that ex-soldiers were not entirely trusted. They were also not unconditionally respected. Even though the veterans of 1905 were the men with the hardest battle experience of any Japanese up to 1937, the 1910 assessment of a Gifu military affairs journal was that local reservist associations were treated coolly by their communities. It described the two as separate parties, each standing on the opposite bank of a river and observing with indifference a fire on the other side. The same journal denounced reservists groups across the prefecture for their lack of activity or ambition. A separate comment in the town of Takayama was that the local shrine to the war dead was falling to pieces as reservists ignored it outside of ceremonial occasions. One of the main civic tasks of reservist associations was to work with teenage boys and prepare them for life in the army. In this, they overlapped with, and were assisted by, other groups such as the sword-practice clubs and the Butokukai. In view of



the public criticism of reservists, and also of the sometimes coercive methods of the Butokukai which caused so much public anger, their success in moulding the spirit of local youth may have been more limited than previously has been assumed.

Even with the aid of reservists and others, the formal youth associations in local communities were either unwilling or unable to militarize the minds and bodies of teenagers. This is why there was a new attempt from 1915 on the part of the national authorities, and from 1918 on the part of Gifu authorities, to reinvent these associations. However, over the previous 30 years, neither compulsory education nor existing youth groups had solved the problem of youth morality which was an endless topic of debate among civilians and army commanders. Rural youth, it was said, spent their years between school and conscription lounging around, drinking, and chasing women. In the towns, young men were accused of sexual and cultural decadence, spending money on prostitutes, or on clothes and cosmetics which made them, to conservative eyes, seem dangerously effeminate. To contemporary observers, militarism was no match for materialism. The problem of youth appeared only to deepen with education; the sons of the wealthy and better educated were regularly accused of being the worst offenders against the law on conscription, while private universities were said to be turning draft dodging into a profitable enterprise by putting on extra courses for graduates only seeking ways to stay out of the army. When the army and the education ministry issued warnings against this bending of the law, the numbers of students taking these extra, and perhaps superfluous, courses only increased.

The school system was the place where the state had greatest control. Over the years, the school curriculum became increasingly militarized, especially in lessons for physical education. Textbooks presented images and stories of military heroes, such as the fallen bugler in the first great battle of 1894, while martial songs were the soundtrack to many an emotional encounter between school groups and soldiers at rail stations or receptions for leaving or returning conscripts. Yet, many children were absent from school, either because of poverty, the seasonal work needs of the family, or illness. School lunch-boxes were introduced in the 1920s but illness or an early death, often from tuberculosis, was commonplace in Japan at least up to the 1930s. Moreover, many pupils forgot how to write between the years of leaving primary school and going up for the draft examination. Some were entranced by the heroism of the martial songs, while others forgot the words or reduced them to the basics of 'Japan won, Russia lost!' For every martial song, there was a myriad of others which, to some adult ears, were vulgar or 'girlish' but which, in addressing love and loss, were genuinely popular. Educators might call on lyricists to produce more manly fare, or on mothers to buy toy bugles for their sons, but neither toys nor martial tunes could achieve what the experience of two recent wars had not. Children in the war against China were taught to believe that war was a grand game, played to the approbation of a watching public. However, they became the teenagers of 1905 who caused so much

moral panic, while the children of 1905 who observed a much darker wartime mood became, in turn, the young consumers of the 1920s age of the mass market. A militarized school system, it seems, did not produce a future generation of militaristic adults.

With the rise of nursing and the growth of the Aikoku Fujinkai, as well as other, smaller associations, women enjoyed an improved social status through connections to the military. Nurses were relatively few and only prominent in wartime but they had a symbolic power beyond their numbers. Songs and illustrations emphasized their tenderness but also their strength and fortitude in caring for the sick and wounded. The patriotic women's groups also were suddenly alive and active from the 1900s, very publicly providing tea and small gifts to passing troop trains in 1904–05, and offering aid and sympathy to the poorer families of men at war. This military-centred patriotism, however, did not protect them from public criticism or mockery, or translate to respect for other women. There were accusations against civilian nurses that they graded their treatment of ordinary hospital patients according to the size of the tips they received. The Aikoku Fujinkai, meanwhile, was frequently criticized as an under-performing club for the wealthier members of society. This class hostility may have been part of the reason for the rivalry between the Gifu Aikoku Fujinkai and the much smaller, more open women's group of Gifu city, the Chū-Ai Fujinkai. In later years, however, the Aikoku Fujinkai redefined patriotism. It evolved to become far more than a military-support group, working first in women's education and then, from the 1920s, aiming to protect a much broader range of citizens in distress. A further point here is that the contribution to the military of nurses and other patriotic women was to repair the damage of war; as realists who dealt with blood and misery, they may have accepted preparation for war as desirable but they were hardly seeking to fetishize the military or to glorify battle.

Listening to the voices of ordinary people in provincial Japan, one of the most striking conclusions is that civilians regarded all forms of authority, short of the emperor, as fair game for attack. Politicians at the national and local levels were frequently dismissed as corrupt, incompetent, or divisive. Members of the national Diet were mocked as 'PMs', while an incoming mayor in Gifu city in 1925 could describe the city council as a 'zoo'. Governors and mayors were favourite targets. So were local bureaucrats: the wording of a 1904 letter to the press asking for a vivisectionist's opinion on their patriotism was extreme but the sense of hostility was not. A blunt assessment of local relations with central bureaucrats was given by the GNN: officials bringing contracts were welcomed and feted, those from such as the education ministry were ignored. As with the military, one of the common complaints was that all officials were arrogant. Perhaps the sharpest barbs, however, were reserved for the police. At the height of the scandal about police coercion to collect patriotic and other donations in 1907, a GNN editorial could assert that, 'ordinary people obey the police to their face but, in reality, hate them like a serpent and this is true not only in Gifu but across nearly the whole of

the country'.<sup>1</sup> The concept of popular militarism implies civil respect for authority but, outside of superficial compliance, this was in short supply in provincial Japan.

For local society, dealing with the military always came with a price. During army exercises, there was the cost of lodging and feeding the troops. In wartime, even in the relatively soft war of 1894–95, there was a heavy cost in war bonds, donations, and helping the distressed families of local servicemen. The war with China was the only one directly to earn a profit but even this led to a burst of inflation after 1895 so that ordinary people no longer felt any obvious benefit of victory. War also brought no security and, with each victory up to 1920, the military only continued to expand in size and expense. For local people in peacetime, the responses to a passing unit of soldiers could be welcome or rejection. Late in 1890, troops on field training in west Gifu were pleased, and surprised, to find a village head who took them in as honoured guests; in 1926, some townspeople in east Gifu publicly objected to billeting troops again. The real issue of profit or loss, however, came down to land. In his short essay exposing the myth of the traditional samurai, Bolitho argued that, at least up to the late sixteenth century when war remained a fact of life, the samurai were not obsessed with death and honour but, as he wryly states, 'very much more earth-bound'. He explains that documents relating to the samurai show an obsession with land, involving 'grants of land, complaints about grants of land, lawsuits about grants of land, and requests for more grants of land'.<sup>2</sup> As the imperial army expanded in Japan, it too needed land. However, it grossly miscalculated local sentiment in its post-1895 expansion and found itself the victim of rampant profiteering when it went to the provinces to buy land. In 1907, it did not make the same mistake and offered civilian communities a harsh bargain: the siting of new army bases would go to the highest bidder, and the nature of the bid was free land for the army. In a time of postwar recession, local people responded, although not without protest and some dissenters (most famously, Watanabe Jinkichi telling the representatives of Gifu city to let the army base go to Ōgaki). They were motivated by the hope of local profits from military spending and military-related investment. The deal, however, was highly speculative. In the first instance, local consumption by soldiers of the Gifu regiment was disappointing, perhaps especially for the licensed sex industry (retailers of cigarettes and sweets did better). Yet, in the longer term, the presence of a local regiment led to the creation of a munitions store and an air base, and almost certainly helped to justify greater railway construction in the prefecture. In 1925, when the army appeared set to abandon its part of the bargain, the people's movement in Gifu city to retain 'our regiment' could calmly restate the civil-military contract and warn that local support for the army and its values was conditional on the military retaining an investment in the locality.

Militarism as a social phenomenon is a product of fear. Those who are afraid may look for strength through joining a disciplined collective. Vagts describes the economically disadvantaged of modern society searching for

safety in ‘the mass movements and processions in which the equal step [and] the music of bands and mass chanting drown out, temporarily, the dissensions of ordinary life’.<sup>3</sup> In Japan from the 1890s to the 1920s, there were so many fears: poverty, food shortages, disease, moral concerns over gambling, youth and materialism, the rise of radicalism, and the often incomprehensible hostility of foreign powers. War, however, provided no security and neither did materialism. Instead, one of the saving graces of provincial life was humour. The women of the Kanazu bordellos were among the sharpest wits. They playfully satirized war and the military when they described someone too drunk to stand as having ‘fallen gloriously in battle’. When an army officer failed to pay his bill, they locked him in a closet and dubbed him ‘an undistinguished POW’. Other citizens mocked local officials on pay day heading for the Kanazu quarter as ‘the invasion of the bureaucrats’. Elsewhere, a local man could laugh at himself, and share the joke through the press, when he wrote a letter of encouragement to troops at the front and signed it with a woman’s name, only to find the recipient eagerly looking forward to a photo of his new ladyfriend. If militarism feeds off fear, it is probably, like fascism, too dour to do anything but choke on humour.

When one listens closely to the voices of provincial civilians over the tumultuous years of the 1890s to 1920s, there is nothing particularly unusual about Japanese society. The fears, complaints, hopes, ambitions, passions and enthusiasms are all entirely recognizable and understandable to an outsider. The same is true of the men who volunteered or were conscripted for military service. Reading their letters home in several wars, they seem no more or less brave or patriotic than the millions of men from many societies in World War I who continued to go over the top of European trenches despite the carnage and slaughter all around them.

From all we have seen and heard, it is just possible that much of the modern history of Japan, especially its relations with the West from 1895 to 1945, could have been very different. If observers in the West had recognized the essential humanity, and even ordinariness, of the Japanese people, then they would have been less easily unnerved or excited by the spectre of the ‘militaristic Japanese’ with their iron culture of bushidō. Instead, they would have seen that it was a hollow creation, a phantom entirely lacking in bone and sinew. This, in turn, would have lessened the military and diplomatic tensions of the 1900s which led to what political scientists call an insecurity spiral and, ultimately, to war. Seeing and hearing this humanity from the 1890s to the 1920s, it becomes easier to understand why the Japanese people after 1945 so quickly abandoned the ideas and institutions from an indefensibly destructive and unprofitable war and, in the typically eloquent phrase of John Dower, embraced defeat.<sup>4</sup>

# Notes

## Introduction

- 1 Harold Bolitho, 'The myth of the samurai', Alan Rix/Ross Mouer, eds., *Japan's Impact on the World*, Nathan 1984, p. 2.
- 2 S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*, Cambridge 2003, p. 350.
- 3 General Sir Ian Hamilton, *A Staff Officer's Scrap-Book during the Russo-Japanese War*, London 1907, p. 15. See also W. Petrie Watson, *The Future of Japan*, London 1907, p. 259, writing on the Japanese male: 'it is regarded as a glorious privilege, not a duty, to offer his life for the Emperor, and mothers, instead of regretting that the call has included their sons, sigh because they have no more sons to give'. My thanks to Simon Partner for this last reference. On stereotypes of the 'warrior Japanese' up to World War I, Colin Holmes/A. Hamish Ion, 'Bushido and the samurai: images in British public opinion, 1894–1914', *Modern Asian Studies*, 14–2, 1980, pp. 309–29.
- 4 On the 'Japanese invasion' literature from the late 1890s, see David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850–1939*, St. Lucia 1999, ch. 8.
- 5 Michael Mann, *States, War and Capitalism: Studies in Political Sociology*, Oxford 1988, p. 166. For the broader scholarship on militarism, see the summary of major themes and approaches in V. R. Berghahn, *Militarism: the History of an International Debate 1861–1979*, Leamington Spa 1981.
- 6 For a brief history of Gifu newspapers, Nihon Shimbun Kyōkai, ed., *Chihō-betsu Nihon Shimbunshi*, Tokyo 1956, pp. 235–43; *Shimbun Sōran*, Tokyo 1910, reprint overseen by Kitane Yutaka, Tokyo 1991, pp. 294–99. On the Japanese press more generally, the authority in English is James Huffman. His major work is *Creating a Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan*, Honolulu 1997.
- 7 Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military*, revised edition, London 1959, p. 17.
- 8 On the creation of 'local units' from 1889, Arakawa 2001, pp. 21–24.
- 9 Itō Katsushi/Niwa Kunio, *Gifu-ken no Hyaku-nen*, Tokyo 1989, p. 4.
- 10 Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Tsūshi-hen Kindai*, Gifu 1981, p. 261.

## 1 On the periphery

- 1 Gifu Nichi Nichi Shimbun, hereafter GNN, 5 January 1890.
- 2 Ōgaki Shiyakusho, ed., *Ōgaki Shishi*, 1, Ōgaki 1930, p. 1028. The size of the military population is indicated by the castle town of Kanō on the left bank of the Nagara River where warrior retainers occupied nearly one-third of the urban wards, Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Tsūshi-hen Kindai*, Gifu 1981, p. 151.

- 3 For a note on the defence budget and the first Diet, see Stewart Lone, *Army, Empire and Politics in Meiji Japan*, London/NY 2000, pp. 23–24.
- 4 On ‘P.Ms’, GNN, 13 December 1890. For a broad discussion of changes in the nature of the press in the 1890s, see James Huffman, ‘Commercialization and the changing world of the mid-Meiji press’, pp. 563–80 in Helen Hardacre/Adam Kern, eds, *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, Leiden: Brill 1997.
- 5 On the assembly battles of Hida/mountain versus Minō/water, see Matsuda Yukitoshi et al, *Gifu-ken no Rekishi*, Tokyo 2000, pp. 243–46.
- 6 GNN, 4–10 December 1890. Description of the national Diet as ‘a scene of carnage’, GNN, 12 December 1890.
- 7 See especially, GNN, 7–14 September 1890.
- 8 Rice crisis, GNN, 2, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22 May 1890; Tottori samurai, GNN, 30 April 1890; flood damage, Itō Katsushi/Niwa Kunio, *Gifu-ken no Hyakumen*, Tokyo 1989, p. 86. The import of cheaper rice also came too late to prevent two major social consequences of the food crisis in Gifu. One was an increase in crime. In the former castle town of Ōgaki, something like a 100% growth in crime over 1889 was blamed on the rising cost of rice. The other was a drop in school attendance. As early as the start of 1890, it was reported that about 100 out of 800 boys of the Gifu City Ordinary Primary School had dropped out, whereas across Yamagata county in the spring of 1890, the average attendance for school-age boys and girls was said to be no more than about 30 per cent. Crime figures, GNN, 14 May, 2 July 1890; school attendance, GNN, 24 and 25 January, 29 April 1890.
- 9 Home ministry figures for cholera victims, GNN, 7 October 1890; Gifu prefectural responses, GNN, 25 September, 7 and 16 October 1890.
- 10 Just two from the many examples of reports on gambling fever are GNN, 12 September and 14 November 1890.
- 11 GNN, editorials, 19 and 28 February 1890.
- 12 Quoted in Gotarō Ogawa, *The Conscript System in Japan*, NY 1921, p. 6.
- 13 Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Tsūshi-hen – Minzoku*, Gifu 1977, pp. 8–9; Fujii Juntarō, ed., *Gifu Shōkō Annai*, Gifu 1916, p. 10.
- 14 Army firing range, Kakamigahara Kyōiku Iinkai, ed., *Kakamigahara Shishi: Tsūshi-hen – Kinsei Kindai Gendai*, Kakamigahara 1987, pp. 382–84. Naturally, the site was also used for shooting practice by the infantry. In 1890, an infantry regiment of the 3rd Division spent about three weeks in continuous practice there, GNN, 4 and 6 September 1890.
- 15 GNN, 29 May 1890. The actual system and process of draft medical examinations is clearly explained, and illustrated, in Sabine Fruhstuck, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*, Berkeley/LA 2003, pp. 28–33.
- 16 On draft avoidance in Gifu, Kakamigahara Kyōiku Iinkai 1987, p. 379; Minō-shi, ed., *Minō Shishi: Tsūshi-hen*, Gifu 1980, p. 348.
- 17 Examples of parties for departing or returning troops in 1890 and later, GNN, 30 November and 14 December 1890, 13 November–3 December 1892. The sum of 1–3 yen as a common reward for military service at this time is noted in GNN, 25 November 1892.
- 18 Quotation from GNN, 2 March 1890. On past relations of the army and local society, see GNN, 28 March 1890. The resistance to conscription may have taken various forms but there were also men who treated it with good humour. The GNN, 18 May 1892, recorded a conversation between an army officer and a man from Kanō on the day of the draft examination. The officer asked the man, ‘What is your *jūsho* (address)’ to which the man, pointing to his groin, replied, ‘My *jūshō* (heavy injury) is here’. The officer smiled and persevered, ‘No, where is your *machi* (town)’ Pointing to his shoulder, the man responded, ‘My *rōmachi* (rheumatism) is here’.
- 19 The scenario for the 1890s manoeuvres is explained in *Kaikōsha Kiji*, 48, November 1890, pp. 33–38, and GNN, 30 March 1890.

- 20 British War Office records, WO106/5514, Major-General W.S.G. Dobbie report on Imperial Grand Manoeuvres, Hokkaido 3–5 October 1936. Lengthy reports on the manoeuvres of 1918, 1919, and 1920 appear in Captain Malcolm Kennedy, *The Military Side of Japanese Life*, London 1924, chapters 3, 10, and 15. Public applications in Gifu 1924, *Hida Nippō*, 24 October 1924. The view that the grand manoeuvres were a form of public theatre is supported by Ueyama Kazuo, “‘Gunkyo’ ni okeru guntai to hitobito”, in Ueyama Kazuo, ed., *Teito to Guntai*, Tokyo 2002, p. 76.
- 21 Editorial, GNN, 29 March 1890; translation of German article, *Kaikōsha Kiji*, 48, November 1890, pp. 33–38.
- 22 Accommodation of troops, GNN, 29 March 1890. Apart from Gifu city and Kasamatsu, 1,000 soldiers were billeted at villages outside of Kanō town, and another 700 artillerymen in Kanō itself.
- 23 GNN, 3 April 1890.
- 24 Unfair distribution of billets, GNN, 1 April 1890; threat of legal action, GNN, 8 April 1890.
- 25 Rickshaw fares, *waraji* prices and Osaka troops, GNN, 3 April 1890. In the 1918 grand manoeuvres, one British army observer calculated that 10 per cent of reservist soldiers discarded their boots and marched in socks or sandals; see Kennedy 1924, p. 40.
- 26 GNN, 2 April 1890.
- 27 Loss of horses, GNN, 5 April 1890; 4th Division payments, GNN, 7 and 15 May 1890.
- 28 Ibaragi manoeuvres, GNN, 13 November 1892.
- 29 Local kindness to returning soldiers, GNN, 15–16 April 1890.
- 30 GNN, 12 July and 5 August 1890.
- 31 On General Kurokawa, GNN, 5 September, 13–15 November 1890.
- 32 Letter, GNN, 16 November 1890.
- 33 GNN, 8–9 November 1890.

## 2 The profits of war

- 1 Chapter by Harada Keiichi in Hiyama Yukio, ed., *Nis-Shin Sensō no Shakaishi: ‘Bunmei Sensō’ to Minshū*, Osaka 1994.
- 2 Anti-inflammatory medicine advert, *Nōbi Nippō*, 11 January 1894; female warrior illustration, *Nōbi Nippō* serial fiction, 24 January 1894.
- 3 Reports on Kyoto patriotic group, and on Tsumaki village head, GNN, 3 May 1894.
- 4 Gifu police, and banning of Tokyo newspapers, GNN, 10, 15 June 1894.
- 5 GNN, 25 July 1894.
- 6 City mood, donations and Shintō prayers, GNN, 24, 31 July, 3 and 4 August 1894; Kanayama group, GNN, 3 August 1894.
- 7 Hiroshima deserters, GNN, 20 June 1894; Toyohashi shooting, GNN, 4 August 1894. The level of unease within the army is further suggested by the memoir of a soldier in the elite Imperial Guards Division in Tokyo. This states that even the young officers of the Guards were shocked at the outbreak of war; see Tokyo Hyakunenshi Henshū Iinkai, ed., *Tokyo Hyakunenshi*, 3, Tokyo 1979, p. 239.
- 8 Soldier’s letter to schoolchildren in Shiga prefecture, quoted in GNN, 25 October 1894.
- 9 Zen-Nihon Shimbun Renmei, ed., *Nihon Hōdō Hyakunenshi*, Tokyo 1976, p. 186.
- 10 Matsushita Yoshio, *Kindai no Sensō I: Nis-Shin Sensō*, Tokyo 1965, pp. 298–99.
- 11 Changes to GNN operations, 11 and 24 October 1894; advance notice of New Year’s Day special issue, GNN, 16 December 1894. On the changes to *Hōchi Shimbun*, see its issue of 27 December 1894 excerpted in Nakayama Yasumasa, ed., *Shimbun Shūsei Meiji Hennenshi*, 9, Tokyo 1936, p. 181.

- 12 Asahi Shimbun Nagoya Shakaibu 1975, p. 190.
- 13 Expressions of bravado, letters in GNN, 7 and 8 December 1894; lack of winter clothes, GNN, 8 December 1894; death by freezing, GNN, 20 December 1894; on freezing conditions, see also 3rd Division soldiers' letters, GNN, 15 February 1895.
- 14 Arakawa Shōji, *Guntai to Chiiki*, Tokyo 2001, p. 54.
- 15 GNN, 27 October 1894.
- 16 Reports from Manchuria, GNN, 9 February and 1 May 1895; excellence of Chinese soldiers, letter, GNN, 23 December 1894.
- 17 Compare this with the work on later wartime racism by John Dower in *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, NY 1986.
- 18 Tan'ō Yasunori/Kawada Akihisa, *Imeeji no Naka no Sensō*, Tokyo 1996, p. 13.
- 19 Adverts for magic lantern slides and projectors, *Nōbi Nippō*, 29 August 1894, GNN, 14 September 1894; Ōno county show, GNN, 23 October 1894; harvest festival, GNN, 16 October 1894; Nakatsugawa show, GNN, 5 September 1894; lantern slide tour of Mashida county, GNN, 25 October 1894. On the wood-block prints, see Shumpei Okamoto, ed., *Impressions of the Front: Woodcuts of the Sino-Japanese War 1894–95*, Philadelphia 1983.
- 20 Benridō advert, *Nōbi Nippō*, 29 August 1894; women textile workers, GNN, 22 September 1894; Baron Y. Saneyoshi, *The Surgical and Medical History of the Naval War between Japan and China during 1894–95*, Tokyo 1901, p. 480.
- 21 On the emperor's brief visit, GNN, 15 September 1894. Arakawa 2001, p. 52, argues that civilian groups at rail stations were acting largely on army instructions. This seems overly cynical in the context of a popular war. The diary of a soldier from Sendai in Japan's north, however, states that his troop train was met by no one at any station west of Kobe even though they were travelling at the height of the war in November 1894, Hatori, Keiichi et al, eds, *Meiji 27–8-nen Sen'eki Jūgunki*, Niigata 1974, p. 9.
- 22 Funeral attendance in three counties, GNN, 1–2 December 1894; sergeant's funeral, GNN, 22 February 1895; mountain area attendance, GNN, 26 September 1894; Ena county resolution, GNN, 4 October 1894; police chief's instruction, GNN, 9 November 1894.
- 23 Statistics from the Official Gazette show that, for the period 21 September 1894 to 6 February 1895, the total of Japanese soldiers killed in battle was 364, those dying in the battle zone from wounds was 89, and those dying of illness was 796. These figures excluded men who died following repatriation to Japan. Of the dead included in this report, Gifu had lost 52 men. The highest losses were from prefectures with divisional bases such as Hiroshima with 173 dead and Aichi with 103. Details in GNN, 17 February 1895. On total Gifu war dead, Kiyoshi Nobushige, *Furusato Gifu no Monogatari*, Gifu 1994, p. 131.
- 24 Military funerals, GNN, 10 February 1895; Buddhist-Shintō joint victory prayer service, Takayama, GNN, 6 January 1895; Buddhist life insurance companies, GNN, 19 November 1897, 26 January 1898; examples of rural and urban memorial stones, GNN, 1 February, 15 April, 8 and 12 May 1898. Tan'ō/Kawada 1996, pp. 9–10, explain that a drawing of the bugler at the moment he fell was added to the national primary school textbook in 1895 and an expanded version to a primary school ethics text from 1918.
- 25 Saneyoshi 1901, pp. 429–33.
- 26 Faded village flag, Asuda family papers, diary, 11 February 1895; role of shrines in spreading use of the national flag, GNN, 18 September 1894, 8 February 1895, Kasamatsu-chō, *Furusato Kasamatsu*, Gifu 1983, p. 502; victory celebrations and shrines, GNN, 14 February 1895; shrine swordsmanship displays and competitions, GNN, 20 September 1894, 20 and 27 October 1894. The official history of Gifu prefecture states that the practice of flying the national flag on New Year's Day began to spread beyond Gifu city with the war against China; see Gifu-ken, ed.,



- Gifu Kenshi: Tsūshi-hen Kindai*, 2, Tokyo 1972, p. 332. The papers of Yokoyama Tsuneo in the Gifu Historical Archives show that at least one village head, at Naka close to the army's firing range, also tried to persuade all residents to fly the national flag on New Year's Day 1895; see letter from village head Tokuyama, 29 December 1894.
- 27 Unuma women's group, GNN, 28 November 1894.
- 28 Song lyric, *Kokumin Shinbun*, 22 September 1894; brothel waitresses, *Mainichi Shinbun*, 18 October 1894; serial fiction illustration, GNN, 14 October 1894; Yanagimachi geisha dance, GNN, 12 December 1894; Red Cross advert, GNN, 11 December 1894; Ishiguro letter reprinted in GNN, 6 and 8 January 1895; Gifu Red Cross membership, GNN, 18 September 1894. The Japan Red Cross was also active at this time in promoting support for the war. The Anpachi county branch in December 1894 asked the Army Ministry for about 25 trophies of war, including Chinese flags, uniforms and weapons, to be exhibited in Ōgaki Castle. The invitation card for this exhibit between 17 and 23 February stated very firmly that the items were to be displayed only at Ōgaki and nowhere else in the prefecture, GNN, 2 December 1894; invitation to Ōgaki exhibition, Asuda Family Archives, Gifu Rekishi Shiryōkan.
- 29 The Hyōgo prefectural education board policy, repeated elsewhere in Japan, is summarised in GNN, 28 October 1894; Tobe Hōbun, *Gifu-ken Kyōiku Hattatsushi*, Gifu 1991, p. 116. The official history of Gifu prefecture takes the same view as Tobe; see *Gifu-ken 1972*, pp. 1240–44.
- 30 Advert for 'Martial songs for conquering the Qing', GNN, 14 September 1894; Matsushita 1965, pp. 246–53.
- 31 Ōgaki battle, GNN, 4 December 1894; Mugi battle, GNN, 14 February 1895.
- 32 The education ministry instructions on physical exercise are in GNN, 4 September 1894; change to boys uniform, GNN, 2 February 1895; wooden rifle advert, GNN, 4 May 1895; rise of school trips, Tobe 1991, pp. 118–19. Tobe uses the example of a school from the town of Tajimi in March 1895 which travelled to Nagoya and, during which, the pupils wore a military uniform and carried wooden rifles. In October 1897, several Gifu schools made trips to observe the army's artillery practice at Kakamigahara; see GNN, 13–15 October 1897. The 1896 school survey appears in GNN, 5 November 1897. The survey showed that 108,000 children (of whom less than 40,000 were girls) were in school in 1896, while nearly 75,000 (of whom 27,000 were boys) were absent.
- 33 Itō Katsushi/Niwa Kunio, *Gifu-ken no Hyakunen*, Tokyo 1989, p. 127; GNN, 30 January 1895. At the national level, a contemporary observer insisted in the aftermath of the war that Diet members were regarded by the public as indifferent to anyone's interests but their own and had become no more than wage earners. See 1899 article by Yokoyama Gennosuke in Morimatsu Yoshiaki/Konishi Shirō, eds, *Seikatsu-shi*, 3, Tokyo 1969, pp. 115–16.
- 34 Bond purchases, GNN, 5–16 September 1894, 25 December 1894; Ōgaki-shi, *Shinshū Ōgaki-shi: Tsūshi-hen* 2, Ōgaki 1968, p. 52; Asuda family papers, diary, 9 September 1894; Tani Risa, 'Nis-Shin sensō ni okeru minshū', *Gifu-ken Rekishi Shiryō Kampō*, 21, March 1998, p. 164; Ōhama Tetsuya, *Meiji no Bohyō*, Tokyo 1990, pp. 64–66. Figures for bond applications from other regions up to the end of 1894 include 2.44 million and 3.1 million from Kyoto-fu, and 1.04 million and 1.23 million from Niigata prefecture. Watanabe Jinkichi founded the 16th Bank in Gifu city in 1877 when he was just 20 and his partners in the enterprise were about the same age. This led the bank to become known to the Finance Ministry in Tokyo as the 'Gifu children's bank', Kuwabara Zenkichi, *Hakuga Hitorigatari*, Gifu 1982, p. 143.
- 35 Army Juppeibu official list of acceptable items for donation, 6 August 1894, reprinted in Gifu-ken, ed., *Gifu Kenshi: Shiryō-hen Kindai* 1, Gifu 1998, pp. 878–79; Hira village youths, GNN, 14 September 1894; Ōgaki group, Ōgaki-shi 1968, p. 52;

- examples of village harvest festivals, GNN, 12 and 13 September 1894. Some villages, however, deliberately opposed the trend, insisting that poor harvests in recent years meant it would be tempting fate not to celebrate an excellent crop.
- 36 Natural catastrophes in Yamagata, Akita and Shimane prefectures, *Geibi Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 6 November 1894, GNN, 1 December 1894. Home Ministry and military families, Gunshi, Jun, *Gunji Engo no Sekai: Guntai to Chiiki Shakai*, Tokyo 2004, pp. 11–12.
  - 37 Poverty of military families, GNN, 24 September 1894, 25 November 1894, 10 February 1895; Ōhama 1990, pp. 69–71.
  - 38 Mugi system, GNN, 9 September 1894; Kasamatsu system, GNN, 19 September 1894; Gōdo-chō, *Gōdo Chōshi*, 2, Ōgaki 1969, p. 179. Complaints over slow or inefficient distribution of aid, GNN, 23 September 1894.
  - 39 Unpublished Gifu report, ‘Jimuhikitsugu enzetsusho – Gifu-ken, Meiji 28’, in Gifu Rekishi Shiryōkan. The Kanagawa official report of March 1895 stated, ‘in desolate villages, there is little money from volunteers and so some villagers do not receive protection and are verging on starvation’, see Kanagawa-ken Kenminbu Kenshi Henshūshitsu, ed., *Kanagawa Kenshi: Tsūshi-hen 4 – Kindai Gendai 1*, Yokohama 1980, p. 671.
  - 40 Michael Lewis, *Becoming Apart: National Power and Local Politics in Toyama 1868–1945*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2000, pp. 223–24.
  - 41 Conmen, Gifu-ken 1972, p. 330; seamstress jobs, GNN, 4 December 1894.
  - 42 Figure for Gifu army labourers, Tajimi-shi, ed., *Tajimi Shishi: Tsūshi-hen*, 2, Tajimi 1988, p. 620; lack of men responding to army recruitment, GNN, 24 October 1894; army surgeon-general’s view of army labourers, letter in GNN, 6 January 1895; regulations on the duties of army labourers, Tokyo Hyakunenshi Henshū inkai 1979, p. 246; pay scales, Hiroshima Kenchō, *Hiroshima Rin-senchi Nisshi*, Hiroshima 1899, pp. 13–19; postwar payments to families of dead labourers, GNN, 15 January 1897, 9 April 1897.
  - 43 Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Shiryō-hen Kindai 1*, Gifu 1977, p. 212; Giichi Ono, *Expenditures of the Sino-Japanese War*, New York 1922, pp. 279–99. Taking 1893 as a benchmark of 100, Ono sees taxation rising by 1897 to 134 and, by 1899 to a level of 187.
  - 44 Anpachi county figures, GNN, 23 April, 1 May 1898; Kamo county, GNN, 25 June 1898; Echigo villager, GNN, 2 June 1898.
  - 45 Unidentified soldier’s comments, GNN, 30 April 1897; army volunteers, GNN, 9 March 1897, 16 February 1898; navy volunteers of about 180 annually, GNN, 2 March 1897, 16 February 1898.
  - 46 Kakamigahara-shi Kyōiku Inkai, ed., *Kakamigahara Shishi: Tsūshi-hen – Kinsei Kindai Gendai*, Kakamigahara 1987, p. 388.
  - 47 *The Japan Times*, 29 June 1897.
  - 48 Honda Masanao group, GNN, 18 November 1897; Butokukai, Gifu-ken 1972, pp. 340–41; Kasamatsu and sword practice, Ginan-chō, ed., *Ginan Chōshi Tsūshi-hen*, Gifu 1984, p. 799.
  - 49 Red Cross nurses, GNN, 22 and 23 February, 3, 26 and 30 March 1897; Red Cross membership in Gifu, GNN, 11 August 1899. Of the female members, 38 were in Gifu city alone. GNN, 2 March 1898, gives a total Red Cross membership in Japan of more than 400,000.
  - 50 Examples of pistol adverts, GNN, 5 May 1894; *Nōbi Nippō*, 5 August 1894, 5 March 1898; gambling epidemic, GNN, 8 January 1897, 20 February 1897, 18 December 1897, 6 February 1898, 7 September 1899.
  - 51 The first GNN editorial openly attacking Russian ambitions in northeast Asia comes on 22 December 1897. However, in January and February 1898, it was reporting that there was the possibility of improved relations with Russia, and even the chance of a Russo-Japanese alliance against British expansionism.

## 3 The costs of war

- 1 Kurono village, GNN, 24 May 1905; Kasahara figures, Kasahara-machi, ed., *Kasahara Chōshi 3: Kasahara no Shashinshū*, Gifu 1988, p. 18; Kokufu village, Itō Katsushi/Niwa Kunio, *Gifu-ken no Hyakunen*, Tokyo 1989, pp. 129–30. For an excellent study of one village elsewhere in Japan during the war, see Simon Partner, ‘Peasants into citizens: The Meiji village in the Russo-Japanese war’, *Monumenta Nipponica*, 62–2, 2007, pp. 179–209.
- 2 The wartime diary of the village head of Kita Nagamori is heavily excerpted and discussed in Nohara Toshihiko, ‘Kita Nagamori Sawada nikki ni miru Nichi-Ro sensō’, *Gifu-ken Rekishi Shiryō Kampō*, 20, March 1997, pp. 122–32. See also Partner 2007, p. 188.
- 3 Government aid, GNN, 12 August 1904; official monitoring of widows’ rewards, GNN, 19 and 20 October 1904; city officials ‘stare and salivate’, letter, GNN, 26 May 1905; Mitsui and Kanebuchi offers of employment, GNN, 20 August 1904.
- 4 Ōno county spending, GNN, 15 February 1907. A report in the GNN, 27 October 1904, criticized the governor for telling the press in Tokyo that the prefectural authorities were trying to find productive means to help military families. The GNN insisted that there was no evidence anywhere in the prefecture of this intention being realized. A letter in GNN, 16 October 1904, states that people in the town of Takayama had only just begun to discuss ways to help military families fend for themselves. In Gifu city, the homes of men on active service were identified with a special label but the writing was difficult to read and the symbol it used was easy to confuse with that of a member of the fire department, letter, GNN, 19 August 1904.
- 5 Letter, GNN, 12 April 1905.
- 6 For details of the wartime quota system, Partner 2007, p. 190. For one suggestion that the police used coercion to raise donations, see letter, GNN, 21 July 1905. An example of a major temple’s role in purchasing and encouraging bonds and donations is Yoshida Itsuzō, ed., *Gifu Betsu-in*, Gifu 1918, p. 140.
- 7 Giyūkai accounts, GNN, 11, 21, 22 October 1904; talk of return of donations, letter, GNN, 21 October 1904; GNN editorial on donor exhaustion, 14 April 1905; examples of personal criticism of mayor, letters, GNN, 9 and 20 October 1904. A letter to the GNN, 14 November 1905, argued that the Giyūkai at a village in Ena county sometimes collected money but never handed it out and ignored the needs of local military families. A separate letter, GNN, 29 July 1905, also raised suspicions over the Gifu branch of the Japan Red Cross, claiming it had no open inspection of its accounts. For the national satire on misappropriation of donations, see *Tokyo Puck*, June 1905.
- 8 Letter attacking Watanabe, GNN, 11 October 1904; letter attacking officials, GNN, 16 October 1904.
- 9 GNN, 1 September 1904.
- 10 Prefectural textile industry, GNN, 2 August 1904, 4 May 1905; military textile and footwear production, Ushisaburo Kobayashi, *Military Industries of Japan*, NY 1922, pp. 198–99; Ōgaki downturn, letter, GNN, 21 July 1905; rickshaw business, GNN, 7 August 1904; Gifu city rickshaw numbers, *Nōbi Nippō*, 19 October 1905; small business failures in Kanō, Takada and Tajimi, GNN, 19 October and 20 November 1904.
- 11 Gifu city annual festival, GNN, 7 and 8 April 1905; Yanaizu festival, GNN, 9 October 1904; Tajimi shrine festival, GNN, 19 October 1904; Emperor’s birthday celebrations, GNN, 5 November 1904; Takayama POW camp proposal, GNN, 5 November 1904. There were still summer tourists during wartime, although mainly consisting of school parties making trips to national landmarks such as historic battlefields. These brought some profit to the town of Sekigahara, GNN, 7 August 1904.

- 12 Examples of wartime advertising from the GNN include: Kirin Beer, 7 August 1904, Kao Soaps, 12 August 1904, Swiss Watch Company (Osaka), 10 August 1904, Pierce Bicycles, 11 April 1905, Ebisu Beer, 9 April 1905, funeral goods, 25 October 1904; medicines, 1 October and 10–11 November 1905; Kiyomizu Clothes Store, GNN, 27 October 1904. We should note that none of these used the jingoistic brutality referred to by Michael Lewis.
- 13 For a summary of the wartime postcard industry and a wide range of contemporary examples, see Museum of Fine Arts Boston, *Art of the Japanese Postcard*, Boston, 2004, pp. 77–103; also Tomita Shōji, *Ehagaki de Miru Nihon Kindai*, Tokyo 2005, pp. 102–7; Hiraki Postcard Dealer advert, GNN, 29 April 1905; ‘100 views of Nōbi’, GNN, 2 June 1905; female colourist wages, GNN, 26 May 1905; schoolchildren collectors, letter, GNN, 25 May 1905; illicit photos, GNN, 11 and 14 July 1905.
- 14 On the history of the Kanazu brothel area, see Michishita Jun, *Furusato Gifu no Hiwa*, Gifu 2002, pp. 32–42; ‘invasion of the bureaucrats’, GNN, 4 April 1905; wartime sex industry depression, GNN, 27 April, 7 May, 3 and 18 June, 15 July, 3 August 1905; wartime slang, 23 September 1905.
- 15 Bicycle fraud, GNN, 12 August 1904. Contemporary with this, a group of men worked the region east of Gifu city giving false promissory notes to villagers in return for raw silk, GNN, 10 August 1904. August and September crime statistics, GNN 9 and 25 October 1904; police on train, GNN, 18 April 1905; criticism of police chief, letters, GNN, 13 August 1904, 8 October 1904. *Tokyo Puck*, July 1905, satirizes the ongoing national police effort to suppress obscene publications.
- 16 Naoko Shimazu, ‘Reading the diaries of Japanese conscripts: forging national consciousness during the Russo-Japanese war’, in Naoko Shimazu, ed., *Nationalism in Japan*, London 2006, p. 52, states that ‘the long journey of farewell produced a fundamental transformation in the identity of the soldiers, as they started to identify with the *kokumin* (national subject) at large ... The development of the horizontal bonding of the ordinary Japanese people, both as soldiers and as well-wishers, was the “miracle” that even the most fervently nationalistic bureaucrats could not have hoped to achieve through normal means.’
- 17 Ōta Saburō, ed., *Tarui Eki Monogatari*, Tarui 1984, pp. 218–20.
- 18 Ōta 1984, p. 221. That the earlier war with China had not produced the requisite time discipline was the view of a Lieutenant-Colonel Tōjō Eikyō. Speaking to a group of schoolteachers in Tokyo in 1897, he declared, ‘The Japanese people [remain] very lax about time in their minds and I can state clearly that the Japanese people are not [yet] suited to war’, quoted in Theodore F. Cook, ‘Making “soldiers”: the imperial army and the Japanese man in Meiji society and state’, in Barbara Molony/Kathleen Uno, eds, *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2005, p. 279.
- 19 Dr. Doi Keizō, ‘Guntai to karyō-byō’, *Taiyō*, 10(11), August 1904, pp. 185–94, see especially p. 191; Kanazawa hospital, GNN, 11 August 1904; ex-soldier’s letter, GNN, 24 June 1905; soldiers’ letters to nurses at the front, GNN, 27 October 1904.
- 20 Red Cross ‘ancients’, GNN letter, 16 October 1904; lack of bandages, GNN letter, 28 October 1904.
- 21 Unkind prefectural doctors, letter, GNN, 20 May 1905; nurses’ tips, letter, GNN, 16 November 1904. See also letter, GNN, 3 October 1904, which states that many nurses would quit if their ‘tips’ were stopped, and the letter in GNN, 18 November 1904, which explains that similar practices had just been forbidden in Tokyo hospitals.
- 22 Gifu Aikoku Fujinkai, GNN, 19 November 1905; Chū-Ai Fujinkai activities, GNN, 2 June 1905. The general history of Gifu by Matsuda Yukitoshi et al, *Gifu-ken no Rekishi*, Tokyo 2000, p. 248 misnames the Chū-Ai Fujinkai as Chūyū Fujinkai.

- 23 Letters, GNN, 11 October, 29 October, 20 November 1904. One woman, O-Rei of the Matsuokaya brothel, was said to be such an enthusiastic attendant of sick and wounded troops at Gifu station that she was planning to visit the army hospital at Kanazawa, GNN, 3 November 1904.
- 24 Criticism of Aikoku Fujinkai, letters, GNN, 12 May, 2 June, 4 August 1905; call for merger, letter, GNN, 21 July 1905.
- 25 Children singing, letter, GNN, 20 October 1904; criticism of popular songs, letter, GNN, 20 April 1905; Education Ministry and martial songs, GNN, 28 October 1905; Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History*, Chicago 2002, pp. 137–38. A study of this topic for the 1940s is Urry Eppstein, ‘School songs before and after the war: from “Children Tank Soldiers” to “Everyone a Good Child”’, *Monumenta Nipponica*, 42(4), 1987, pp. 431–47.
- 26 Asahi Shimbun Nagoya Shakai-bu, ed., *Meiji Tōkai Seijishi*, Tokyo 1975, p. 236. See also Tobe Hōbun, *Gifu-ken Kyōiku Hattatsushi*, Gifu 1991, pp. 126–27 which states that 5,500 teachers nationally were forced to retire and that, in Gifu, educational budget cuts in some villages were about 30 per cent.
- 27 Reports on the prefectural education system in wartime include, GNN, 11 August 1904, 17 May 1905, 6 and 20 June 1905; Tobe 1991, pp. 124–27.
- 28 Kishibe Fukuo, ‘Kodomo no sensō to gunka’, *Fujo Sekai*, 9(11), October 1914, pp. 20–25.
- 29 Gender reversal, letter, GNN, 7 September 1905; officer cadet volunteers, letter, GNN, 21 April 1905. One further example of youth ‘degeneracy’ was the fashion of Middle School males who wore a rose on their breasts to class, letter, GNN, 8 September 1905. On the public discourse on ‘dandyism’ versus a kind of bare-chested warrior masculinity, see Jason G. Karlin, ‘The gender of nationalism: competing masculinities in Meiji Japan’, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 28(1), 2002, pp. 41–77.
- 30 Children’s survey, GNN, 31 October 1905.
- 31 On the early cinema in Gifu, GNN, 14 June 1905; Michishita Jun, *Furusato Gifu no Hiwa*, Gifu 2002, pp. 1–3; examples of village and school magic lantern shows, GNN, 6 September 1904, 23 August 1905; new war diorama, GNN, 13 August 1904; Gifu cinema gramophone, GNN, 26 November 1904; electric-driven projector at Asahi-za theatre, GNN, 14 June 1905; colour film, Asahi-za advertisement, 30 July 1905. The film was presumably coloured by hand. It was advertised as GNN, being shown strictly for five days only and with no extension but it was a sell-out every evening and so was shown for an additional two nights, GNN, 3 August 1905.
- 32 Gifu city charity film screenings, GNN, 6 October 1904; Kasamatsu screening, GNN, 12 October 1904.
- 33 Gifu viewer on fake footage, letter, GNN, 17 August 1904; quote from *Kobe Shimbun*, 21 June 1905, in Peter B. High, ‘The dawn of cinema in Japan’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 19, 1984, p. 36.
- 34 Synopsis of Lt. Wakamiya movie, GNN, 14 June 1905.
- 35 Matsuo Kunimatsu, *Hachijū-nen no Kaiko*, Nagoya 1957, p. 43; popularity of Napoleon serial, letter, GNN, 16 August 1904.
- 36 Nakagawa Shobō, *Nichi-Ro Taisen-shi: Gifu-ken Sembotsusha Hōmeiroku*, Gifu 1906, p. 291. See also Gifu-ken, *Gifu Kenshi: Tsūshi-hen Kindai*, 2, Gifu 1972, p. 413.
- 37 9th Division (Kanazawa) regulations on funerals of war dead, GNN, 14 August 1904, 11 September 1904, 27 July 1905; Yasukuni ceremony, GNN, 13 April 1905. For examples of wartime eulogies by Governor Kawaji, GNN, 4 September, 19 October 1904; Yanaitu village priest’s mixing of Buddhism and Shintō, letter, GNN, 30 May 1905.
- 38 Examples of large-scale wartime funerals, GNN, 19 October 1904, 21 April 1905, 23 and 25 July 1905.

- 39 9th Division regulations, GNN, 27 July 1905.
- 40 Kamo county funerals, GNN letter, 16 April 1905; Ōno county, GNN letter, 7 April 1905; prefectural clerk's complaint, GNN letter, 16 April 1905; accusations of class discrimination, GNN letters, 18 August 1904, 23 April 1905; desolate graves, GNN letter, 18 April 1905. Despite the call for joint funerals, separate ceremonies were still announced at one village in Yōrō county for 19, 22, 27 and 28 September 1905, GNN, 22 September 1905.
- 41 Port Arthur victory celebration plans, GNN, 9 and 12 August 1904; examples of calls for circumsppection, letters, GNN, 16 August 1904; Port Arthur saying, *Asahi Shimbun Nagoya Shakaibu* 1975, p. 234.
- 42 Letter, GNN, 1 June 1905.
- 43 Prefectural victory celebrations, GNN, 1–7 June 1905; Chūyūkai origins, GNN, 5 and 7 May 1905; Gifu city separate celebrations, letters, GNN, 3–6 June 1905. The general tone of letters on the Chūyūkai's actions was that its members were tantamount to traitors but there appears to have been no physical violence against them, their property or interests.
- 44 Contemporary reports of the violence in Tokyo, Kobe and Kyoto, GNN, 5, 9, 10 September 1905.
- 45 Details of the protest meetings and their resolutions at Gifu city, Takayama and Tajimi are in GNN, 8, 9, 12, 17 September 1905. Partner 2007, p. 203, states that protest meetings elsewhere generally were organized and peaceful and insists that there is no credible report of rioting or agitation in village communities in Japan.
- 46 Public responses to the peace treaty, letters, GNN, 2–7 September 1905; brothel slang, GNN, 23 September 1905.
- 47 Kanazu 'POW', GNN, 14 December 1905; male photo, letter, GNN, 19 August 1905. A welcome exception to the historiographical omission of wartime humour is Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda*, Honolulu 2006.
- 48 This ties in with the statement of Partner 2007, p. 205, describing one village during the war as 'a community not so much united by patriotism or nationalism as divided by poverty, class, and unequal access to the benefits of modern life'.

#### 4 The business of bases in Late Meiji

- 1 On reports of European naval planning for a USA–Japan war, GNN, 30 January 1907. For a discussion of local reactions to empire in Kanazawa in later years, see Jeremy Phillips, 'City and empire – local identity and regional imperialism in 1930s Japan', *Urban History*, 35(1), 2008, pp. 116–33.
- 2 1914 debt level, Kozo Yamamura, 'The Japanese economy 1911–30: concentration, conflicts and crises', in Bernard Silberman/Harry Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy*, Princeton 1974, p. 302.
- 3 Nighttime lighting cuts, letter, GNN, 21 January 1908; Hokkaido migration, GNN, 16 March 1908; Gifu postcard industry, GNN, 18 March 1907. The report on the local postcard business noted also that photographic cards recently were more popular than illustrations but imported cards, however appealing they might be, were simply too expensive and sold very badly.
- 4 *Asahi-za* playbill, GNN, 9 May 1907.
- 5 On the aborted 1912 Japan International Exposition, see Heibonsha, ed., *Nihon no Hakurankai*, Tokyo 2005, p. 7.
- 6 *Fujo Tsushin* survey of female students' views of the ideal husband summarised in GNN, 24 February 1907. Mugi county marriage, GNN, 30 March 1907.
- 7 Charles Schencking, *Making Waves: Politics, Propaganda and the Emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy 1868–1922*, Stanford 2005, pp. 109–21.
- 8 Army expenses, Shigenobu Okuma, ed., *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 2 vols., London 1909, vol. 1, p. 216; changes to conscription, GNN, 13 January 1907.

- 9 Special prices on trophies of war for schools and reservists associations, and savings for army on storage, GNN, 11 January and 16 March 1907; army gifts for Gifu schools, shrines and temples, GNN, 20 March, 9 April, 16 May 1907.
- 10 Inaba county reading room, GNN, 13 January 1907; Mitake memorial forest, GNN, 1 April 1907. Other examples of schools and war memorial libraries or tree planting include GNN, 7 February, 1 April, 18 April 1907. Wartime work for unemployed or under-employed men, GNN, 4 April 1905.
- 11 GNN, 20 October 1905.
- 12 Ex-sergeant's profligacy, GNN, 26 May 1907; army ministry fears of ex-servicemen's use of rewards, GNN, 13 March 1907; regulations on post office accounts, GNN, 17 April 1907; gifts to the disabled from empress, GNN, 24 February 1907.
- 13 Ute Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks: Modern Germany, Military Conscription and Civil Society*, Oxford/NY 2004, pp. 203–4.
- 14 The Gifu Regimental Area Commander's memorandum on *zaigō gunjindan* is reprinted in Gifu-ken, ed., *Gifu Kenshi: Shiryō-hen – Kindai* 5, Gifu 2001, pp. 142–44.
- 15 Letter of 'devil of hill 203', GNN, 21 May 1907; Richard Smethurst, *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: The Army and the Rural Community*, Berkeley 1974, pp. 16–17.
- 16 Smethurst 1974, p. 9; examples of new *zaigō gunjindan* in Gifu, GNN, 5, 6, 8, 13, 15, 23, 25, 29 January 1907; 5, 15, 27 February, 6, 8, 12 March 1907; 15 February 1908. Anpachi county groups, 13 February, 12 March 1907.
- 17 Agenda of reservist association, Asobu village, Yoshiki county, GNN, 14 March 1907.
- 18 Minō-shi, ed., *Minō Shishi: Tsūshi-hen*, Gifu 1980, pp. 375–76. Such wooden replicas of soldiers were placed in temples elsewhere in Japan.
- 19 Criticism of Gifu city ex-servicemen and the committee to build a memorial stone, GNN, 17, 19, 20 January 1907, 1 February 1907; description of the planned memorial and donations, GNN, 25 January 1907; Port Arthur war memorial donations, GNN, 12–13 April 1907; Tsukechi memorial stone, GNN, 16 March 1907. In the case of Tsukechi, half the cost was borne by the Reservists Association and the Giyūkai, the rest by the townsmen.
- 20 Lists of donors and total of 8,705 yen collected to early April, GNN, 9 April 1907.
- 21 On the leadership and activities of the Gifu Butokukai, see the record of its February 1908 steering committee meeting reprinted in Gifu-ken 2001, pp. 144–47; membership figure, GNN, 14 February 1907.
- 22 Butokukai, Gifu branch, construction plans and delays, Gifu-ken 2001, pp. 146, GNN, 14 February 1907; Gifu police campaign for donations and popular criticism, GNN, 15 February, 14 March 1907, 22 May 1907; letter advising use of children and *saké* for donations, GNN, 24 March 1907; farmer's use of press, letter, GNN, 14 April 1907; Osaka police corruption, taken from *Osaka Shimpō* and *Osaka Jiji* as summarised in GNN, 15 March 1907; home ministry ban on police collection of donations, 5 May 1907; attack on waste by patriotic groups, and Japan Red Cross rebuttal, GNN, 18, 19 March 1907.
- 23 Troop train schedule and official response, GNN, 2 March 1907; description of receptions at Ōgaki and Gifu stations, GNN, 3, 5 March 1907; letter on 'old war women', GNN, 2 March 1907; letter on the cold reception given the military, GNN, 13 March 1907; army dispute with Ōgaki railway staff, GNN, 7 March 1907.
- 24 Editorial, GNN, 18 April 1905. On the reception for Prince Itō, Matsuo Kunimatsu, *Hachi-jū-nen no Kaiko*, Nagoya 1957, p. 44
- 25 Prefectural assembly resolution 1905, Gifu Kengikai-shi Hensan Inkaikai, ed., *Gifu Kengikai-shi*, 2, Gifu 1981, pp. 348–51; rumours of competing sums being spent to get an army camp, letter to GNN, 3 December 1905; Gifu city banker's land speculation, letter, GNN, 29 November 1905.

- 26 On links between Ōgaki and the army authorities from the late 1890s, see Michishita 2002, p. 61.
- 27 GNN, 13 January 1907, for speculation on the possible location of new divisions; calls to petition the army ministry, GNN, 3 February 1907; Gifu city residents' dismissal of wasted effort and expense, GNN, 5 February 1907.
- 28 GNN, 13 January 1907, for details of the army conditions.
- 29 Army secrecy to avoid inflated land prices, GNN, 27 January 1907. One example of the bidding war is between the relatively close cities of Shizuoka and Toyohashi, with Toyohashi offering the army ministry a donation of 100,000 yen and Shizuoka city increasing this to 150,000 yen; see Takamura Satoshi, 'Shizuoka-ken no guntai haibi to yūchi undō', in Ueyama Kazuo, ed., *Teito to Guntai: Chi'iki to Minshū no Shiten kara*, Tokyo 2002, p. 214.
- 30 Gifu prefectural missions to Tokyo, GNN, 7, 8, 9, 13 March 1907; on Shimoda's contribution, Matsushita 2002, p. 62.
- 31 Land speculation by Nagamori villagers, GNN, 20 March 1907.
- 32 Ide comment, GNN, 21 March 1907.
- 33 GNN, 22, 24 March 1907.
- 34 Kita Nagamori land prices, GNN, 26 March 1907; Utsunomiya comparison, letter, GNN, 31 March 1907.
- 35 Sympathy for landowners and threats to appropriate the land, GNN, 29 March, 7 and 8 April 1907; public resistance to any levy to pay for the land purchase, GNN, 16 May 1907.
- 36 Youth letter, GNN, 26 March 1907; relocation of brothel area, letter, GNN, 27 March 1907; warnings of Ōgaki conspiracy, GNN, 27, 31 March, 7 April 1907; mayor's absence, GNN, 28 March 1907.
- 37 GNN, 2 April 1907.
- 38 Watanabe response, GNN, 3 and 5 May 1907.
- 39 Michishita 2002, p. 63; city rates of donations, GNN, 22 May 1907.
- 40 Letter of 'a welcoming citizen', GNN, 25 February 1908.
- 41 Camp site immorality, letter, GNN, 1 February 1908; distaste over other camps, letter, GNN, 26 February 1908; soldiers and geisha, letter, GNN, 4 March 1908.
- 42 Welcome party expenses and donations, GNN, 19, 22, 25, 28 February 1908; Inaba county proposal, GNN, 28 February 1908; mayor's appeal to city residents, GNN, 27 February 1908.
- 43 GNN, 14–15 March 1908 details the look of the city and the celebration programme; Mayor Horiguchi death, Michishita 2002, p. 61.
- 44 The Chū-Ai Fujinkai account of the welcome party is from *Gifu Shōkō Shimpō*, 25 March 1908, reprinted in Gifu-ken 2001, pp. 148–49; pickpockets, GNN, 16 March 1908; reservist association officers, letter, GNN, 11 March 1908; journalists walkout, and prefectural officials' takeover of event, GNN, 17 March 1908.
- 45 GNN, 19 June 1907.
- 46 GNN, 21 September 1908, 'Gifu rentai no kōbairyoku'. The earlier wages for a private first or second class of 3–4 sen per day is noted in *The Japan Times*, 2 March 1898.
- 47 Poultry farmer, Nakamura Senkichi, 'Yanagase fukin no tenbō', manuscript from 1962, published in Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Shiryō-hen Kindai 2*, Gifu 1978, p. 5. One other industry to get some benefit from the new regiment was tailoring. Although the military produced its own uniforms, the Yamauchi Western Clothes Shop of Gifu city was already advertising early in 1907, obviously targeting the officer class, that it had all kinds of military uniforms in stock and could also alter any uniform to fit, GNN, 27 March 1907.
- 48 A chronology of prefectural railway development is in Hashimoto Tatsumi, ed., *Gifu Eki 70-nenshi*, Gifu 1957, p. 109.



## 5 'Good soldiers, good citizens'

- 1 Takayama draft success party, GNN, 18 May 1907; Takayama draft failure party, GNN, 24 June 1908. See also the reports on the willingness and refusal of provincial males to be drafted in GNN, 22 and 29 January 1907.
- 2 Criticism of well-off youth avoiding conscription, GNN, 22 January 1907; education ministry concerns, GNN, 29 January 1907. On the question of one-year volunteers, we should recall the observation of one soldier quoted from the late 1890s in Chapter 2.
- 3 Nihon Daigaku advertisement, GNN, 15 February 1908. Other examples of universities in Tokyo using the draft deferment as a selling point at this time include Chūō University and Tōyō University.
- 4 Army moves against postgraduate study, GNN, 8 May, 18 August 1908; 1910 official figures, *Japan Weekly Mail*, 1 April 1911. There were also reports of draft dodging at the other end of the system. In an article on reservists in *Japan Weekly Mail* in mid-1913, it was stated that 300 men of the 8th Regiment (part of the Osaka Division), had recently been called up for duty but, of these, 'thirty-five of them failed to respond to the call, and ... of the 265 who responded, the majority attempted to avoid drill by pleading ill health'. The article goes on to note that, upon being examined by a doctor, only 20 were shown genuinely to be ill, *Japan Weekly Mail*, 23 August 1913, 'Japanese conscription: the tendency to evasion'.
- 5 Male fashion, GNN, 13 January 1907; examples of criticism of Gifu Middle School pupils, GNN, 22 February, 2, 7, 21 March 1907. The history of the various middle schools is summarized in Gifu-ken Kyōiku-kai, ed., *Gifu-ken Kyōikukai Gojūnen-shi*, Gifu 1923, pp. 351–57.
- 6 Report on changes to conscription, GNN, 14 February 1908. Details of the changes are in Gotarō Ogawa, *The Conscription System in Japan*, NY 1921, pp. 49–53.
- 7 Gunsei Chōsakai report on 25,000 infantrymen increase annually, GNN, 1 February 1907. For a summary of how the revised draft system worked in practice in later years, see Edward Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*, Lincoln/London 1998, pp. 77–79.
- 8 Conscript examinations, GNN, 13 January, 24 February 1907.
- 9 Figures on educational levels of draft-age males, GNN, 11, 15, 19 May 1907.
- 10 Contrasting opinions of military inspectorate officers, GNN, 3 and 6 March 1907; eradication of illiteracy in the army, *Japan Weekly Mail*, 23 May 1914. Richard Rubinger, 'Who can't read and write Illiteracy in Meiji Japan', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 55(2), pp. 163–98, provides a detailed analysis of illiteracy using figures from conscript examinations.
- 11 Kiyoshi Nobushige, *Furusato Gifu no Monogatari*, Gifu 1994, pp. 226–27.
- 12 School principal, letter, GNN, 8 May 1907; city police, letter, GNN, 11 March 1908; stationmaster, letter, GNN, 31 March 1907.
- 13 Native climate and Gifu soldiers, GNN, 22 May 1907.
- 14 Unpublished report, 'Hoku-Shin Haken Tochū Eisei Gaikyō Hōkoku', 4 July 1912, in *Hoku-Shin Haken Ho-hei Dai-Rokujūhachi Rentai Dai-Go Chūtai*, Bōeichō Kenkyūjo Toshokan, Tokyo.
- 15 Seiro medicine, advert, GNN, 26 May 1907; Kao Soaps, advert, GNN, 9 January 1908; Nogi Musk Soap, advert, GNN, 1 January 1908. The 1910 edition of the overview of Japan's newspapers provides statistics on advertising of various products and services in the press of Gifu, Tokyo and Osaka for mid-1909 to mid-1910. See the reprint, *Shimbun Soran: Meiji Yonjūsannen-han*, Tokyo 1991, p. 296.
- 16 Instructions from army minister, GNN, 8 May 1908; army doctor's warning, GNN, 20 March 1908.
- 17 Editorial on conscripts and disease, GNN, 7 July 1907; Captain Sakane view, GNN, 24 June 1907; post-1918 resurgence in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

- in the army, Dr Koike Masa'aki, 'Guntai ni okeru karyūbyō no yobō ni tsuite', *Kaikōsha Kiji*, 603, December 1924, pp. 37–53. On the military's attempt to understand and control venereal diseases in later years, Sabine Fruhstuck, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, California 2003, pp. 35–41.
- 18 Figures on STD cases among Gifu men of draft age, GNN, 11 September 1907. The figure for 1903 was 121 cases.
  - 19 'Heart Beauty', Fruhstuck 2003, p. 40; report for 1904 STD cases, GNN, 23 April 1905. The counties with the lowest number of recorded cases were Yamagata at 126, Mashida at 187, Kani at 275, and Kaitasu at 353. For all other counties, the rough average was about 1,000 cases. The problem appears to have been gravest in the major urban centres; Gifu city alone had nearly 1,100 cases while Anpachi county, home to the important town of Ōgaki, had more than 3,400.
  - 20 Map and history of the Kanazu quarter, Mori Gi'ichi, *Gifu-shi Hattenshi*, Gifu 1933, pp. 148–53; Kanazu and 'god of good fortune', GNN, 25 April 1907; Sunday daytime opening, Kiyoshi Nobushige, *Furusato Gifu no Monogatari*, Gifu 1994, p. 228.
  - 21 Michishita Jun, *Furusato Gifu no Hiwa*, Gifu 2002, pp. 28–32.
  - 22 'Troubles for the captains', letter, GNN, 3 June 1908; report on discipline of officers and men, GNN, 8 June 1908.
  - 23 Ichinose Toshiya, *Meiji Taishō Shōwa Guntai Manuaru*, Tokyo 2004, p. 109; Gifu City Electric Hall, Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Tsūshi-hen Kindai*, Gifu 1981, p. 1077. Drea 1998, pp. 85–86, discusses the very low wages of troops in the 1920s–30s and concludes that 'A private soldier's monthly wages ... were inadequate even to feed him outside the barracks let alone provide for lodging or clothes'. In terms of the kind of souvenir a soldier might buy, a set of two fine quality stamped postcards in 1908 commemorating the arrival of the 68th regiment to Gifu cost 10 *sen*.
  - 24 Warning on money orders, GNN, 17 April 1908; majority of troops, Hirota Teruyuki, p. 86 in Ōkado Masakatsu et al, eds. *Kindai Shakai o Ikiru*, Tokyo 2003. Theodore Cook cites a 1901 publication from the northern city of Sendai urging parents not to send money to conscripts because they would only squander it in the pleasure quarters. See his 'Making "soldiers": the imperial army and the Japanese man in Meiji society and state', in Barbara Molony/Kathleen Uno, eds, *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2005, p. 281.
  - 25 Ogawa 1921, p. 225. See also his similar comment on p. 236.
  - 26 Endō Shōji, *Hei'ei Yabanashi*, Gifu 1924, pp. 26–27; 1894 army manual prohibition on rest, Hirota 2003, p. 84. A report from the Gifu city office in 1908 also complained that the area around the barracks was stark and devoid of trees which, it insisted, were essential both for the health of the troops and as a windbreak. It encouraged local businesses to donate even a single pine, willow, cedar, cherry or other tree to brighten the soldiers' landscape. In terms of housing, the soldiers of the 68th fared better than men of two divisions being repatriated from service in Korea and Manchuria in 1907 who, until proper barracks could be constructed, were billeted in two former prisoner of war camps at Tokyo and Osaka; see GNN reports, 20 and 22 January 1907.
  - 27 Dissatisfaction with Kita Nagamori shops, letter, GNN, 20 March 1908; exorbitant rents, letter, GNN, 31 March 1908; army minister's warning to local officials on rents and prices, GNN, 8 May 1908; discounts to military, GNN advertisements, 2 February, 26 March 1908.
  - 28 Ogawa 1921, p. 55.
  - 29 Anpachi county reservists and gambling, GNN, 25 January 1908.
  - 30 Army view of socialist agitators, GNN, 9 April 1908; socialist speaker on virtue and hunger, letter, GNN, 23 January 1908.
  - 31 Leonard Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: the Japanese Army of the 1920s*, Stanford 1995, pp. 14–15. Drea 1998, p. 77, shows how this family ideology in the army's public image-making was extended in the 1930s.

- 32 Humphreys 1995, pp. 15–16.
- 33 Article, ‘Heishi to hanzai’, GNN, 2 February 1907.
- 34 GNN, 8 June 1908.
- 35 GNN, 17 February 1907.
- 36 GNN, 11 and 12 January 1907.
- 37 GNN, 8 and 12 March 1907.
- 38 GNN, 25 April 1907.
- 39 GNN, 7, 20 April 1908.
- 40 GNN, 9 July 1908.
- 41 GNN, 5, 6 August 1908.
- 42 Murai suicide, GNN, 16 July, 6 August 1908; trooper’s letter on home visits, GNN, 20 March 1908.
- 43 GNN, 16 August 1908.
- 44 GNN, 29 and 30 March, 10 April, 25 August 1908.
- 45 Arakawa Shōji, *Guntai to Chiiki*, Tokyo 2001, p. 114.
- 46 On the mass protest of troops at the Asahigawa barracks, see GNN, 10 March 1907.
- 47 On ‘the time of the devils’, Ōhama Tetsuya, ‘Guntai seikatsu’, in Kimbara Samon, ed., *Chihō Bunka no Nihonshi 9: Chihō Demokurashii to Sensō*, Tokyo 1978, p. 311; Drea 1998, pp. 83–85. Retrenchment of army officers, GNN, 5 January 1907, 17 January 1908.
- 48 Kita Nagamori Kyōdo-shi Kurabu, ed., *Zoku-Kita Nagamori Kyōdo-shi*, Kita Nagamori 1963, p. 66.

## 6 The discontents of Taishō

- 1 On the Taishō incident, see Stewart Lone, *Army, Empire and Politics in Meiji Japan*, London 2000, pp. 175–83.
- 2 Kishibe, Fukuo, ‘Kodomo no sensō asobi to gunka’, *Fujin Sekai*, 9–11, October 1914, pp. 22, 25. Education ministry shift to military drill, Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Tsūshi-hen*, Gifu 1981, p. 571.
- 3 *Takayama Shimpō* (hereafter TS), 27 January 1914.
- 4 Tobe Hōbun, *Gifu-ken Kyōiku Hattatsushi*, Gifu 1991, pp. 135–36. Despite his own evidence, Tobe insists that the reality of local schooling was nationalistic and militaristic.
- 5 Assessment of Gifu reservist associations, *Kanjō*, 2(2), February 1910, pp. 3–5; crossover of membership, *Kanjō*, 4–6, July 1912, p. 2. In a letter to the TS, 20 April 1913, one resident of Takayama in Hida also accused the local reservists association of indifference and inactivity. The nature of the criticism was that the reservists neglected the town’s *shōkonsha* or war memorial shrine outside of ceremonial occasions to the point where the structure had crumbled and become dangerous for the holding of the annual draft examinations.
- 6 Compare this with Richard Smethurst’s statement that rural reservists commanded natural respect in their communities because they were the fittest men in their prime work years and the leaders of other village organizations, *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: the Army and the Rural Community*, Berkeley/Los Angeles, California 1974, p. 30.
- 7 *Japan Weekly Mail*, supplement, 23 May 1914.
- 8 Lieutenant-colonel’s talk on the military and the home, TS, 5 March 1912; Inoguchi talks at Takayama and Hagiwara, TS, 5 and 25 March 1913; advance notice of Ōmura itinerary, TS, 27 November 1913. For later examples of talks across the prefecture by various senior officers, including the commander of the 68th regiment, Colonel Kanada, see GNN, 9 and 10 February 1918 and *Hida Mainichi Shimbun*, 14 February 1926.

- 9 Major advertisers in the TS in 1913 included the Banzai Life Insurance Company, the Meiji Life and Fire Insurance Company, the Nissin Life Insurance Company, and the newly opened Taguchi Hospital. TS, 20 April, 27 April, 12 May, 20 May, 5 June, 20 June 1913. From the same region, adverts in the *Hida Mainichi Shimbun* (HMS) in 1926 continue to show no use of military images or themes. This is true even where a military link might seem logical as in the case of Patriotic Life Insurance (*Aikoku Seimei*) which used an illustration of a middle class couple and two children, HMS, 14 January 1926.
- 10 Letter of an ex-serviceman, TS, 20 October 1913.
- 11 1913 county instructions, TS, 5 October 1908 instructions, Kakamigahara-shi Kyōiku Iinkai, ed., *Kakamigahara Shishi: Shiryō-hen Kindai Gendai*, Tokyo 1976, pp. 361–62.
- 12 Letter, TS, 12 November 1913; troops' welcome and activities of Reservists Association, TS, 5 November 1913.
- 13 Assemblyman's letter, TS, 12 November 1913.
- 14 Tama village land purchase, Gifu-ken, ed., *Gifu Kenshi: Shiryō-hen Kindai 6*, Gifu 2002, pp. 691–92.
- 15 Primary school questionnaire, GNN, 5–7 September 1914.
- 16 Governor Shimada's speech, 12 September 1914, in Gifu-ken, ed., *Gifu Kenshi: Shiryō-hen Kindai 2*, Gifu 2001. On similar instructions from Shizuoka prefecture, see Arakawa Shōji, *Guntai to Chiiki*, Tokyo 2001, p. 137.
- 17 Shimoda Utako, 'Senji ni okeru Nihon fujin no kakugo', *Fujin Sekai*, 9–11, October 1914, pp. 2–9.
- 18 GNN, 27 September 1914.
- 19 Charles Burdick, 'Japan and Germany during the First World War', in *Japan und die Mittelmächte im Ersten Weltkrieg und in den Zwanziger Jahren*, Bonn 1986, pp. 5–7.
- 20 Urban celebrations, GNN, 9 November 1914, also printed in Gifu-ken 2001, pp. 157–61. The Butokukai had expanded successfully in Hida by this time and there was, for example, a fine Butokukai Hall in Yoshiki county according to a letter in TS, 20 December 1913. The letter implied, however, that this expansion came at the expense of existing *shōbukai* or sword-practice societies.
- 21 Matsumura Hideo, ed., *Tōkai Hyakunen*, Tokyo 1968, p. 135.
- 22 Kakamigahara-shi Kyōiku Iinkai, ed., *Kakamigahara Shishi: Tsūshi-hen – Kinsei Kindai Gendai*, Tokyo 1987, p. 389.
- 23 On the early development of the army air force, see the reports in *Japan Weekly Mail*, 5 February 1916; on the rise of the Kakamigahara air base, Kakamigahara-shi Kyōiku Iinkai 1987, pp. 497–502; Gifu-ken Kakamigahara-shi, *Kakamigahara to Gifu Kichi*, Kakamigahara 1995, p. 4; Matsumura 1968, p. 137; GNN, 29 January 1918, 6 February 1918. Kakamigahara is still a centre of military aviation.
- 24 Report of the prefectural factory affairs office, September 1924, Gifu-ken 2001, pp. 67–69.
- 25 Adverts for Yukirin, a treatment for nervous disorders, and adverts and articles on hysteria, appeared frequently in the GNN in 1918.
- 26 Gunshi Jun, *Gunji Engo no Sekai*, Tokyo 2004, pp. 78–85; 1917 law, GNN, 3 January 1918; 1907 survey, GNN, 6 September 1907. That the law of 1917 was only limited in its reach, however, is suggested by the later action of the Gifu prefectural government. In 1924, it claimed to have introduced the first system in Japan of educational aid for the families of disabled servicemen; under this scheme, 15 young men and women out of 34 applicants received between 5 and 10 yen a month in order to study at the prefecture's middle schools, *Hida Nippō*, 10 April 1924.
- 27 'Death' of Aikoku Fujinkai, GNN, 25 April 1907; post-1905 education and moral campaigns, Watarai Sachiko, 'Senzen ni okeru Gifu-ken no chi'iki fujin dantai: sono tanjō kara Kokubō Fujinkai e no michi', *Gifu Kindaishi Kenkyū*, 4, October

- 1995, pp. 1–17; Hida membership figures, GNN, 20 August 1907, TS, 20 April 1913; general meeting 1915 and change in activities from 1918, Aikoku Fujinkai Gifu-ken Shibu, *Aikoku Fujinkai Gifu-ken Shibu Gaiyō*, Gifu 1942, pp. 30, 82–83.
- 28 Colonel Kanada Fusakichi, ‘Seinendan Kaizen’, GNN, 1 January 1918. A Japanese officer of the Salvation Army was writing about the same time that the gravity of the war in Europe had brought about a new seriousness among young men of that continent, awakening them from the lure of women and alcohol, GNN, 5 January 1918. The logic of this would suggest that the spiritual improvement of Japan’s youth necessitated a far greater involvement in the war. However, this is refuted by the example of the Russo-Japanese war.
- 29 Hattori Tadashi, ‘Gifu-shi to shite no tai-iku mondai’, GNN, 1 January 1918; Ōgaki Shiyakusho, ed., *Ōgaki Shishi*, 2, Ōgaki 1930, pp. 590–91. Hattori’s assertion that some reservists in 1904–05 could not carry their ammunition belts would have been even more alarming to those who knew that the Japanese soldier’s wartime equipment, at about 21 kilograms in the late 1890s, was considerably lighter than that of any European soldier, *The Japan Times*, 26 June 1897.
- 30 Smethurst 1974, p. 29.
- 31 Kameyama Kyōhei, ‘Panikku no jidai’, GNN, 1 January 1918. On early warnings about prices, see, for example, the survey by the Gifu City Chamber of Commerce for December 1917 which showed major price rises in 25 commodities (but also price falls in five including eggs and sour plums, presumably as people began to abandon certain luxuries), GNN, 17 January 1918.
- 32 Michael Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens: Mass Protest in Imperial Japan*, Berkeley 1990, pp. xvii, 26–30; figures on the Ashio mine dispute, GNN, 9 and 10 February 1907.
- 33 Gifu Shiyakusho, ed., *Gifu Shishi*, Gifu 1928, reprinted 1969, pp. 235–41.
- 34 Nagoya tram riots, GNN, 8 and 9 September 1914. Gifu city electricity riots, Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Tsūshi-hen Kindai*, Gifu 1981, pp. 503–9; Matsuda Yukitoshi et al, *Gifu-ken no Rekishi*, Tokyo 2000, pp. 251–52; Takamaki Minoru, *Waga Machi no Rekishi – Gifu*, Tokyo 1980, pp. 253–54.
- 35 For a broader discussion of the nature of civilian riots in this period, see Andrew Gordon, ‘The crowd and politics in imperial Japan: Tokyo 1905–18’, *Past and Present*, 121, November 1988, pp. 141–70.
- 36 Tajima Hiroichi, ed., *Gifu Rentai Ryakushi*, Gifu 1983, p. 9. For a summary of the Japanese military’s involvement in Siberia, see Leonard Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: the Japanese Army of the 1920s*, Stanford 1995, pp. 25–28.
- 37 Gifu-ken 2001, pp. 164–67, letter of Colonel Kanada Fusakichi, 15 November 1918.
- 38 Instructions of Colonel Kanada, reprinted in *Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai Gifu Shibu Kaihō*, 17, November 1919, pp. 2–3.

## 7 Under reconstruction

- 1 For example, Arakawa Shōji, *Guntai to Chiiki*, Tokyo 2001, p. 143.
- 2 Shimizu Kikuzō, ‘Gunjin no fu’ninki o ronshi gojin no kakugo ni oyobu’, *Kaikōsha Kiji*, 596, May 1924, pp. 81–88. A more general discussion by a Japanese officer on the impact of democracy and materialism in estranging modern militaries from their civilian communities is ‘H’, ‘Shakaijin to shite no gunjin oyobi sono shisō-teki keikō’, *Kaikōsha Kiji*, 591, December 1923, pp. 57–69.
- 3 Shimizu 1924, pp. 81–88; Leonard Humphreys, ‘Crisis and reaction: the Japanese army in the “liberal” twenties’, *Armed Forces and Society*, 5(1), November 1978, p. 85.
- 4 Introduction of dance P.T., *Hida Nippō*, 20 July 1923; use of primary school textbooks, *Hida Nippō*, 5 April 1924; culinary advisors, *Hida Mainichi Shimbun*, 5 February 1926. On the topic of food and the military more generally, see Harada

- Keiichi, *Kokumingun no Shinwa: Heishi ni Naru to iu Koto*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001, pp. 100–75, and, in English, the pioneering work by Katarzyna Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity*, London 2006, Chapter 3.
- 5 Adachi Katsumi, ‘Guntai kyōiku to katsudō shashin’, *Kaikōsha Kiji*, 563, July 1921, pp. 75–80.
  - 6 Theodore Cook, *The Japanese Officer Corps: The Making of a Military Elite 1872–1945*, Princeton University PhD, 1987, pp. 99–101. The rise and fall of modern sport at the Military Academy is noted in two reports to the British War Office: WO106/5485, Captain R.W. Russell, 18 January 1923 (Russell was on attachment from the Gurkha Rifles for one month in late 1922), and Captain C.G. Oxley Brennan, February 1928 (Brennan was on attachment from a Punjabi regiment of the British Indian Army for two months in the fall of 1927). The latter report stated that, by 1927, ‘Games are practically never played. They are not encouraged by the authorities nor is there time for playing them. Fencing, jujitsu and gymnastics take their place. In 1923 and 1924, however, there was a sudden craze for games. Soccer and rugger posts shot up and many games were played. This influence was soon defeated and has been replaced by an anti-foreign complex which has no room for games. Occasionally a little basketball is played’.
  - 7 *Hida Nippō*, 14 January 1925.
  - 8 Arakawa 2001, p. 156. *Hida Nippō*, 6 January 1925, claimed that this change had actually been made around 1913.
  - 9 *Hida Nippō*, 10 January 1926. A similarly rosy view of army life appeared in 1910s publications for incoming conscripts, Ichinose Toshiya, *Meiji Taishō Shōwa Guntai Manuaru*, Tokyo 2004, pp. 156–59. Hirota Teruyuki shows the Tokyo press in the 1910s also using the claim that camp food was as good as that of a middle class household, Hirota, p. 85 in Ōkado Masakatsu et al, eds, *Kindai Shakai o Ikiru*, Tokyo 2003.
  - 10 Matsubara Hisanao, *San’nin Shikyaku Jinsei*, Gifu 1986, pp. 27–33.
  - 11 Endō, Shōji, *Heiei Ya banashi*, Gifu 1924, pp. 8–17.
  - 12 School lunch-boxes, *Hida Nippō*, 6 March 1923; ‘Shibōsha Heiseki-bo’, unpublished records, Gifu Rekishi Shiryōkan. These records are normally restricted to outsiders on the grounds of privacy. However, from just one of the two volumes for 1929, it appears that over 100 men with present or previous military service in Gifu passed away in that year and, of these, one-third were victims of tuberculosis.
  - 13 On the Yamanashi reforms, *Hida Nippō*, 10 July 1923; Matsushita Yoshio/Izu Kimio. *Nihon Gunji Hattatsushi*, Tokyo 1937, pp. 200–201; Humphreys 1978, pp. 84–85.
  - 14 Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai Hombu, ed., *Hohei Dai-Rokujūhachi Rentai-shi*, Tokyo 1930, pp. 2–4.
  - 15 *Hida Nippō*, 23 October 1924, reported that many officers across Japan spoke of nothing else at dinner. GNN, 21 January 1925, shows that the announcement in mid-1924 of the Ugaki reforms only exacerbated the mood of uncertainty in the Gifu regiment.
  - 16 Numbers lost in Ugaki reforms, Matsushita/Izu 1937, p. 201.
  - 17 Reports on Ōtsu, *Kyoto Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 23, 24 February, 12 March 1925; description of Moriyama town, *Nagoya Shimbun*, 7 November 1925; civic campaign in Hamamatsu, Arakawa 2001, pp. 157–59, and Takamura Satoshi, ‘Shizuoka-ken no guntai haibi to yūchi undō’, in Ueyama 2002, pp. 217–18. Hamamatsu later benefited from the vacillation of Toyohashi city residents. Toyohashi lost an entire division in the Ugaki cutbacks but it was slated to receive some compensation in the form of a new army air base. However, when the city was unable to resolve a dispute over the land needed for the air base, the army swiftly cut its losses and decided to relocate it to Hamamatsu.

- 18 Matsuo, Kunimatsu, *Hachijū-nen no Kaiko*, Nagoya 1957, p. 93. Matsuo was clearly an excellent choice. An experienced bureaucrat in the Gifu prefectural office and county administration, he went on to serve as Gifu city mayor on six occasions between 1925 and 1946.
- 19 On Sawada's career, see Gifu Shimbunsha, ed., *Gifu-ken Meishi-roku*, Gifu 1927, p. 262.
- 20 On the Alliance, its members and activities, see Michishita Jun, *Furusato Gifu no Nijūseiki*, Gifu 2000, pp. 52–53, and GNN, 21 January 1925; on the make-up of the Hamamatsu movement, Arakawa 2001, p. 157.
- 21 The prefectural assembly resolution is printed in full in Gifu Kengikai-shi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Gifu Kengikai-shi*, 2, Gifu 1981, p. 910. GNN, 21 January 1925, lists the groups being watched by the military police.
- 22 The appeal of the Alliance to Retain the 68th Regiment, signed by Sawada Bunjirō and a number of officials from Gifu city, the prefectural assembly, county, town and village government, and the Gifu chamber of commerce, is reproduced in Gifu-ken, ed., *Gifu Kenshi: Shiryō-hen Kindai 6*, Gifu 2002, pp. 692–95.
- 23 City celebrations, GNN, 4 April 1925. This reference is to a series of clippings from the GNN preserved in the Sawada family papers at the Gifu Rekishi Shiryōkan.
- 24 Mayor's speech, 3 April 1925, unpublished document, Gifu Rekishi Shiryōkan.
- 25 'Sono na wa botan butai 7', *Gifu Shimbun*, 1 April 1961.
- 26 Michishita 2000, p. 53.
- 27 Kasahara-chō, ed., *Kasahara no Rekishi*, Tokyo 1993, p. 576.
- 28 *Kadokawa Nihon Chimei Daijiten 21: Gifu-ken*, Tokyo 1980, p. 224.
- 29 Middle school military training, Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi: Tsūshi-hen*, Gifu 1981, p. 571. On the activities of local young women's groups in the 1920s, see Anpachi-chō, ed., *Anpachi Chōshi Tsūshi-hen*, Gifu 1975, pp. 597, 602. A militant reinvention of the concept of 'good wife' was undertaken by a female youth group in Gumma prefecture in 1926. Its members brought about what was described as Japan's first teetotal village. According to *Hida Mainichi Shimbun*, 22 January 1926, they announced that they would refuse to marry any man who drank alcohol and, faced with this threat, the members of the young men's association capitulated and pledged themselves to abstinence.
- 30 Gero primary school war memorial, *Hida Mainichi Shimbun*, 2 February 1926. One example of a talk by an army officer to local reservists, youth association, and the general public was at Nibugawa village, north Gifu, on 11 February 1926; see *Hida Mainichi Shimbun*, 14 February 1926. This attracted an audience of about 300 although the fact that it took place on a national holiday may have contributed to its success.
- 31 On the Toyama regimental Committee on Methods to Comfort the Troops, *Hida Mainichi Shimbun*, 14 February 1926.
- 32 Furuta Kaoru, *Gunki wa Yaburetari*, Gifu 1971, p. 42. Army advertisement, *Kaikōsha Kiji*, July 1931. On the return to an earlier regime of personal restrictions and largely Japanese sport at the Military Academy, see the report quoted in note 6 by Captain C.G. Oxley Brennan, dated February 1928, in British War Office Records, WO106/5485.
- 33 On the 'direct appeal' incident, see Kitahara's autobiography, *Senmin no Kōei: Waga Kutsujoku to Teikō*, Tokyo 1974, especially pp. 124–34; his outrage at public disrespect towards the crown prince is noted on p. 78, collective punishment of the 68th on p. 136; also Gifu-shi, ed., *Gifu Shishi Tsūshi-hen Kindai*, Gifu 1981, pp. 517–21. After release from prison, Kitahara rejoined the Suiheisha movement, becoming one of its national leaders in the 1930s.

## Conclusion

- 1 GNN editorial, 28 February 1907. The lack of respect for the police, at least in the 1900s, led a law reform committee to consider abolishing the crime of contempt

towards officials. The idea was that, if the police were less protected from public criticism, only the better men would join the force, GNN, 13 March 1907.

- 2 Harold Bolitho 1984, 'The myth of the samurai', in Alan Rix/Ross Mouer, eds, *Japan's Impact on the World*, Nathan 1984, p. 4.
- 3 Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military*, revised edition 1959, p. 23.
- 4 John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War 2*, New York 1999.



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