

KITAHARA, Michio:

“WHY DID JAPAN ATTACK PEARL HARBOR?

JAPANESE FURY AGAINST WESTERN RACISM.

Japan's Tragedy: The Psychic Road to World War II »

Das Buch erschien in japanischer Sprache 2001 in Tōkyō im Verlag TBS Britannica. Japanischer Titel „Naze taiheiyo sensō ni natta no ka. Seiyō no egoismu ni honrō sareta nihon no higeki“.

Ich traf den Autor 2002 in Zürich und unterhielt mich mit ihm über sein Buch. Stark vereinfacht vertritt er die Ansicht, dass Japans Politik die Folge der Politik der Westmächte, nicht zuletzt der USA, war. Begonnen hatte sie mit der Ankunft der Missionare auf Kyūshū und der Politik der Portugiesen, auch in Japan für ihre Kolonien Sklaven zu nehmen. In der Bibliothek des Japanischen Parlamentes in Tōkyō habe ich deswegen im Herbst 2005 in den Berichten des portugiesischen Missionars Luis Frois diesbezügliche Eintragungen gesucht (Die portugiesischen Dokumente wurden 1904 vom Zürcher Jesuiten Beck ediert und mit japanischen Vermerken versehen) und tatsächlich Hinweise auf Befehle des portugiesischen Königs gefunden, in denen verboten wurde, Japaner als Sklaven zu nehmen. Michio Kitahara begründet den ersten Befehl von 1597, die Missionare auszuweisen und das Christentum auszurotten damit, dass der damals herrschende Shōgun Toyotomi Hideyoshi darüber in äusserste Wut geraten sei.¹

Eine gute Darstellung der Missionierung Japans und der zum Verbot der Missionierung, der Ausweisung der Missionare und der Verfolgung der Christen gibt das Buch von VITTORIO Volpi: „Il Visitatore“, erschienen 2004 im PIEMME Verlag. Ein Auszug findet sich in http://www.eu-ro-ni.ch/publications/Volpi_Valignano.pdf.



Hervorhebungen und Bemerkungen zur vom Autor selbst erstellten englischen Zusammenfassung: Dr. Richard Dähler, Japanologe, 2006.

(r. 01.08.2016)

http://www.eu-ro-ni.ch/publications/Kitahara_Why_Japan_attack_PH.pdf

www.eu-ro-ni.ch

¹ Kitahara hat am 21.11.2011 folgenden Aufsatz ins Netz gestellt: „Portuguese Colonialism and Japanese Slaves“.

<http://sites.google.com/site/michiokitaharaspublishings/japanese-slaves> (21.11.2011).

Andere Bücher von Michio Kitahara:

„The Tragedy of Evolution the Human Animal Confronts Modern Society”

„The Entangled Civilization“

Michio Kitaharas Ansichten werden nicht überall geteilt.

Abstract: Michio Kitahara sees the root of the attack on Pearl Harbour in the attitude of Western Colonialism, starting with the advent of Jesuit missionaries in Japan, followed by traders. The latter aroused the anger of the suspicious Shogun when it was discovered that Japanese had been abducted as slaves. Kitahara then follows through the relationship Japan-West up to WW II, listing a number of incidents, particularly in the 20th century, when Japan felt humiliated beyond bearing, all this leading up to the fatal attack on Pearl Harbour.

Key words: Jesuit missionaries, Portuguese King, taking slaves in Japan, Japan's policy of isolation, prohibition of Christianity, persecution of Christians, the Shogun's fear of Japan becoming colonized

This is an extract from Jun Kitahara's book in Japanese: *Naze Taiheiyō Sensō ni natta no ka* (Why did the Pacific War break out?), published in Tōkyō by TBS-Britannica, in 2001. (Jun Kitahara is Michio Kitahara's pen name when he publishes in Japanese).

In the world outside Japan, especially in the United States, it is little known that one **of the key reasons, probably the most decisive reason, why Japan attacked Pearl Harbor was a result of Japan's long-standing hatred and hostility toward the West, including Japan's violent reaction against racism in Europe and the United States** that became apparent in the beginning of the 20th century.² In order to understand why Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, then, it is necessary to study Japan's relations with the West over centuries, which began with Portugal and Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries.

PORTUGUESE SOLD JAPANESE AS SLAVES

The first contact between Japan and Europe took place when Portuguese arrived in Japan in 1543. At first, Japanese welcomed Portuguese, and the Japanese Government permitted trading and missionary activities by Portuguese and later also by Spaniards. But in 1587, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was de facto head of the State, discovered outrageous activities that were being carried out by Portuguese. To his great amazement and anger, Portuguese were selling Japanese in large numbers as slaves mainly to southern China, Southeast Asia, and India. There is some evidence that Japanese slaves were shipped as far way as to Portugal and Argentina. Toyotomi Hideyoshi tried to stop this, and he even offered to buy back Japanese slaves. But Portuguese in Japan, including merchants and

² Siehe auch http://www.eu-ro-ni.ch/publications/Frings_Alexander.pdf (10.5.2011).

Jesuit missionaries, as well as Portuguese kings (siehe meine Bemerkung oben wegen des portugiesischen Königs), did not bother with the Japanese anger. They did only lip service without doing anything to terminate the slave trade. It simply continued as ever.

This was enough to create very strong anti-Portuguese, anti-European, and anti-Christian sentiments among the Japanese. Then in 1596, a historically decisive event took place. A Spanish ship named San Felipe sank near Japan, the crew was rescued by Japanese. It was reported that a crew member had revealed to Japanese that, **in order to colonize a foreign country, Spain would first send missionaries**, and when the natives were converted to Catholicism, Spain would send the military and conquer it.

When Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had already become extremely hostile and suspicious toward Europeans, learned about the San Felipe incident and what her crew had revealed, he acted quickly and decisively. He arrested and executed six Spanish missionaries and twenty converted Japanese in 1596. The Tokugawa family took over the control of Japan after Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and they continued the same policy toward these foreigners. In 1613, Christianity was totally banned in Japan and the Christian churches were all demolished. In 1641, Japan became totally closed to all foreigners, except for extremely limited contact with the Chinese and the Dutch. In this way, Japan isolated herself from the rest of the world for more than 200 years and developed her own civilization and identity. However, this all changed in 1853.

PERRY'S THREAT TO JAPAN³

In 1853, the fleet of the United States Navy, led by Commodore Perry, arrived in Japan and demanded that Japan terminate her seclusion policy and open the country to the outside world. Perry undertook this mission of opening Japan under President Fillmore's instruction, which consisted of three very clear objectives. First, Japan was to rescue and help crew whenever an American ship should sink in the Pacific. The United States was demanding this because, by that time, Americans were carrying out two important commercial activities in the northern Pacific: (1) fur trade with Alaska, and (2) large scale whale hunting in order to obtain the oil for lighting at American homes (Note that Americans actively and significantly reduced the total number of whales in the Pacific by doing this). Second, the United States wanted to utilize Japan as the base for supplying fuel and water for American ships that were to travel back and forth between the United States and China

³ Eine ausgezeichnete Beschreibung findet sich im Buch „The Japan Expedition 1852-1854. The Personal Journal of Commodore Matthew C. Perry“. Roger Pineau, Hg. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. 1968. Perry hebt sein selbstbewusstes Auftreten deutlich hervor.

over the Pacific. Third, the United States wanted to trade with Japan as well. But because of the bitter experience in the past with Portugal and Spain, Japan firmly rejected these American demands.

When Perry realized that the Japanese were determined not to open the country, he decided to threaten and scare Japanese persistently by displaying the military and technological power of the United States. He threatened the Japanese by saying that if Japan continued to refuse, the United States would invade and conquer Japan. As a result, Japan was forced to yield to the American demand and opened the country in 1854 by signing a treaty.

JAPAN'S DETERMINATION TO BECOME A MILITARY POWER

Since the Japanese were forced to realize that they must yield to the unjust American demand due to the inferiority of their military power and technology, their immediate reaction was to build up a strong military power in order to fight back, not only against the United States, but also against equally threatening European powers, such as England, France, Holland, and Russia. Japanese intellectuals were well informed about the two Opium Wars between England and China and how China was defeated miserably. The Japanese were determined not to become like China.

Japan was able to build up her military power in an amazingly short period of time. By the end of the 19th century, Japan was a modern military power. Japan won the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Japan was on the winning side in World War I. As a result of these successes as a military power, the Japanese began to believe that Japan was a first-rate country in the world. They looked at Japan as a "new type of Western nation," if I quote the expression widely used by many politicians and political philosophers in Japan at that time. The Japanese became complacent to be what they called "the Europe in Asia." They believed that Japan was at least as good and respectable as any Western nation.

----- Einfügung von R.D.-----

THE RISE OF THE "YELLOW PERIL" ARGUMENT IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Gelbe Gefahr, politisches Schlagwort, aufgekommen um die Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert, artikulierte die nach dem Boxeraufstand in China (1900) und dem Sieg Japans über Russland (1904/05) v.a. in Europa entstandene Furcht vor der politischen Emanzipation und dem erwarteten Bevölkerungsdruck der Asiaten («gelbe Rasse»). Das

Schlagwort verwies zeitweise auch auf die Konkurrenz der wirtschaftlich aufsteigenden asiatischen Staaten.

Die gelbe Gefahr! Warum gelb?

Erst im 18. Jahrhundert, mit dem Aufkommen von theoretischen Rasseneinteilungen, machten sich einige Schreibtischtäter, die einen Chinesen im ganzen Leben nicht zu Gesicht bekommen hatten, daran, sie für gelb zu erklären. In einem verbreiteten Handbuch beschrieb etwa ein Göttinger Professor die mongolische Rasse als »meist waizengelb (theils wie gekochte Quitten, oder wie getrocknete Zitronenschalen)«. Die Vorliebe der Chinesen für die Farbe Gelb kam den Vorurteilen natürlich entgegen. Da gibt es den »Gelben Fluss« und den sagenhaften »Gelben Kaiser«, und der letzte Kaiser Pu Yi (*1906, †1967) schreibt: »Die Dachziegel waren gelb, die Säufte war gelb, das Futter meiner Kleider und Hüte, die Schalen und Teller... Es gab nichts um mich, was nicht gelb war.« Außer der Haut seiner Landsleute natürlich! (c) Bibliographisches Institut & F. A. Brockhaus AG, 2003

----- Ende Einfügung-----

But from the Japanese point of view, there emerged a totally unexpected development in the West - the strong anti-Japanese sentiments in Europe and the United States, as well as in Commonwealth countries such as Australia. Already after Japan's victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany expressed the racist ideology of so-called "yellow peril," openly directed against the Japanese. This racism was further strengthened by Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. The emergence and development of such hatred against the Japanese was remarkable, because, in reality, practically none of European countries had any significant contact with Japanese nationals at that time. Nor were there trade wars between Europe and Japan. This was entirely a product of racist thinking on the part of Europeans.

In contrast, there was an obvious reason why anti-Japanese sentiments developed in the United States - Japanese immigrants. The immigrants from Japan were accused of having, for example, such characteristics: (1) racial pride, (2) unwillingness to be assimilated; (3) high birth rates; (4) cheap labor; (5) low standards of living, and (6) loyalty to Japan. Because of these anti-Japanese attitudes on the part of majority Americans, President Roosevelt banned the immigration of Japanese from Hawaii to the United States in 1907. In 1908, Japan was forced to agree not to issue a passport to a Japanese national who was intending to travel to the United States. In 1913, in the State of California, Japanese were prohibited to own land.

In addition, there were many attempts to pass anti-Japanese laws, mainly in California, such as, (1) segregation of Japanese residential areas; (2) high taxes against Japanese fishermen; (3) special taxes to Japanese; (4) prohibition of sales of alcohol to Japanese; (5) discriminatory taxes to non-citizens, mainly aimed at Japanese, and so on.

Anti-Japanese sentiments were carried out in action as well. In Berkeley and San Francisco, Japanese children were temporarily prohibited from attending public schools. Many Japanese workers in saw mills were physically attacked in many occasions. Farms, dry cleaning shops, barber shops, and restaurants that were owned or operated by Japanese were threatened or attacked. These incidents were so wide-spread that, in 1911 and 1912 in California, there were rumors of a forthcoming war between the United States and Japan.

THE REJECTION OF JAPANESE PROPOSAL TO BAN RACISM AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

The strong anti-Japanese sentiments both in Europe and the United States were further intensified after World War I. Since Japan was allied with the United Kingdom since 1902, when World War I broke out, Japan took part in the war and ended up with the winning side. But this became yet another reason for Europe and America to hate the Japanese. For this reason, when the plan to establish the League of Nations in order to prevent wars such as World War I in the future was discussed at the Paris Peace Conference, Japan presented the proposal to include the prohibition of racial discrimination in the forthcoming Constitution of the League of Nations.

Since politicians, journalists, and the masses in Japan were well informed about what was happening in the world, there was a well-established national opinion about Japan's position internationally. The Japanese as a whole were unanimous about the necessity of having an article in the new Constitution of the League of Nations in order to prevent racial discrimination. Leading newspapers in Japan actively promoted such an idea. In 1919, a meeting was held in Tokyo to prevent racial discrimination in the world, and more than 300 people attended, including leading politicians. They resolved that **racial discrimination was against freedom and equality, causing international conflicts and wars, and that as long as racial discrimination continued, it was meaningless to have international treaties.**

At first, the United States and the United Kingdom were not especially hostile to Japan's proposal. But the situation was quite different for Australia. At that time, Australia was troubled with the extreme anti-Oriental sentiments due to a large number of Chinese

immigrants. For this reason, it was impossible for Australia to accept such an idea. Also, the British colonies as a whole argued that, if they must accept the Japanese as equals, they must also accept the Indians and the Chinese as equals as well, and this was totally unthinkable to them. Canada proposed to use the expression "equality of nations" instead of using the expression "equality of peoples." But Australia firmly rejected even this compromise solution. The United States and the United Kingdom were influenced by Australia's extremely hostile arguments, and, as a result, the Japanese proposal was rejected.

THE RISE OF VIOLENT ANTI-WESTERN SENTIMENTS IN JAPAN

Since there was a very strong and unanimous opinion to pass such a resolution in Japan, it is easy to understand that an extremely violent reaction developed after the failure to approve it at the Paris Peace Conference. The League of Nations was founded in 1920 in the way the West wanted without any stipulation against racial discrimination. After this, to make it worse, the international situation was additionally intensified by the developments in the United States.

The United States wanted to pass a new immigration law in order to prevent Orientals from entering the United States, and the target date for this was July 1, 1924. A large number of protests were made by Japan in order to prevent it. Masanao Hanihara, Japanese Ambassador to the United States at that time, wrote an official letter dated April 10, 1924 to Secretary of the State Hughes, stating that the new immigration law would result in extremely grave consequences. The Tokyo Branch of the War Veterans Association of Japan sent a letter to all its members in Japan, arguing that the passing of the new immigration law would be a great insult to the Japanese and the Japanese nation. On June 5, an anti-American meeting was held at the sumo (Damit ist die grosse Sumo-Sporthalle gemeint R.D.) Arena in Tokyo, and there were even people who shouted: "Declare a war against America!" On June 15, a similar meeting was held in Yokohama, gathering about 1500 people, and it was resolved that the Americans were strongly urged not to pass the new immigration law discriminating the Japanese. On June 7, several men with samurai swords violently entered a leading hotel in Tōkyō and threatened people, when a dance party was being held involving many foreigners. In another incident, the Stars and Stripes at the American Embassy in Tōkyō was dragged down to the ground.

Leading newspapers published editorials against the new immigration law, rejecting racial discrimination. One of them, Osaka Asahi Shinbun, violently attacked the United States in its editorial of June 24, 1924. It stated that Japan was discriminated against on an unjust ground. It further stated: "For the sake of our national honor, we are determined

to reject such a practice. Even when we are silent, our blood is boiling because of our furies." It is extremely important to point out here that, although immigration to the United States was an important issue, the decisive reason why the Japanese became so furious was the way they understood the heart of the matter. They firmly believed that Japan was a first-rate nation, winning wars against China and Russia and becoming a major power. Nevertheless, they were insulted as a racial group and as a nation, and this was something they could not and would not accept. They believed that their racial and national pride was insulted by such a law in the United States.

THE IDEOLOGY OF WAR BASED ON MARXISM

Despite these violent reactions in Japan, the **new immigration law was passed in the United States. It is not an exaggeration to say that this became the single most important event for the relations between the United States and Japan before Pearl Harbour.** By reflecting the two totally incompatible political climates in the West and in Japan, many politicians, political thinkers, and journalists began to express their views against the United States openly and violently. Among them, without doubt, the most influential man was Kita Ikki.

Objectively speaking, Kita Ikki was a very interesting thinker, who combined Marxism, anti-Western philosophy, militarism, and the Japanese version of racism, which emerged as a reaction to Western racism. Already in 1919, he wrote a manifesto, in which he proposed how Japan should act. His most important argument in terms of the forthcoming attack on Pearl Harbour is his **division of the countries in the world into two categories: the countries that have, and the countries that have not.** Here, he was applying the Marxist division of people into those who have (capitalists) and those who have not (workers) to international relations.

On this basis, he argued that a **country that has not, such as Japan, is fully entitled to attack a country that has, such as the United States,** because the sharing of resources in the world was unjust. A country such as Japan was fully entitled to attack a country such as the United States, exactly in the same sense that workers were entitled to attack capitalists and overthrow the unjust system by means of revolution. Japan was entitled to occupy Australia or Russia, and peoples under Japanese control were to be "Japanized." This document was banned in Japan, but it was published underground in 1923 and was eagerly read by officers in the Japanese military.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOTALITARISM IN JAPAN

In addition to Kita Ikki, there were many influential politicians and political thinkers who began to express the same or similar views, and in practically all cases, the **problems in the world were understood in terms of racial conflict**. According to them, the West was trying to rule the world by means of racism, and, for this reason, the future wars in the world would be wars between races. As stated above, in 1919, a historically very important meeting was held in Tokyo in order to fight racism and injustice in the world. Within five years after this meeting, many political organizations based on this kind of ideology began to emerge, involving practically most of the leading politicians and political thinkers in Japan. When these individuals began to control Japan firmly, those who were against them began to be persecuted or were forced to go along with the majority. In this way, Japan was more and more unified toward the preparation of a war against the West, especially the United States.

THE FAILURE OF THE LAST ATTEMPT TO AVOID THE WAR

The United States was well aware of the development in Japan, and Japan was also well aware of the fact that there would be no possibility to win a war against the United States. For this reason, Ambassador Nomura of Japan and Secretary of the State Hull discussed the tense situation in order to avoid a war without success. The United States made the final proposal to Japan, on November 26, 1941, which Japan rejected firmly. On December 7, within two weeks after the receipt of the final proposal from the United States, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour.

It may be difficult for Americans to understand why Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. But it is very important to emphasize that a violent reaction in Japan against Western racism made the Japanese to act in the way they did, without considering the huge sacrifice they might have to accept. Much of human actions may be illogical or irrational, and this is true on both the individual level and the international level. Unfortunately, the attack on Pearl Harbour is such an example.

It should be added that the Japanese are not unique in the world in acting this way. The Finns are also a good example in this regard. In 1939 and 1940, in the so-called "Winter War," Finland was decisively defeated by the Soviet Union. Despite this reality that was obvious to anyone, including the Finns themselves, Finland nevertheless attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, because of their extreme anger and hatred against the Soviet Union. If you are familiar with this historical fact, it may be a little easier to understand why Japan attacked Pearl Harbour.