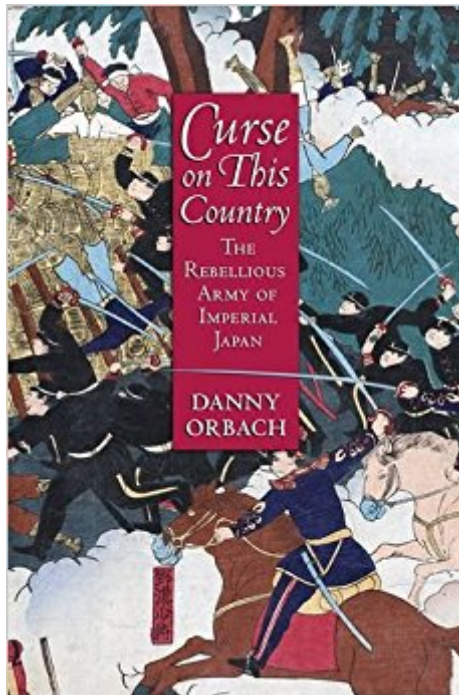




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Curse On This Country: The Rebellious Army Of Imperial Japan



Synopsis

Imperial Japanese soldiers were notorious for blindly following orders, and their enemies in the Pacific War derided them as "cattle to the slaughter." But, in fact, the Japanese Army had a long history as one of the most disobedient armies in the world. Officers repeatedly staged coups d'État, violent insurrections, and political assassinations; their associates defied orders given by both the government and the general staff, launched independent military operations against other countries, and in two notorious cases conspired to assassinate foreign leaders despite direct orders to the contrary. In *Curse on This Country*, Danny Orbach explains the culture of rebellion in the Japanese armed forces. It was a culture created by a series of seemingly innocent decisions, each reasonable in its own right, which led to a gradual weakening of Japanese government control over its army and navy. The consequences were dire, as the armed forces dragged the government into more and more of China across the 1930s— a culture of rebellion that made the Pacific War possible. Orbach argues that brazen defiance, rather than blind obedience, was the motive force of modern Japanese history. *Curse on This Country* follows a series of dramatic events: assassinations in the dark corners of Tokyo, the famous rebellion of Saigō Takamori, the "accidental" invasion of Taiwan, the Japanese ambassador's plot to murder the queen of Korea, and the military-political crisis in which the Japanese prime minister "changed colors." Finally, through the sinister plots of the clandestine Cherry Blossom Society, we follow the deterioration of Japan into chaos, fascism, and world war.

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"The original and compelling *Curse on This Country* makes a significant contribution to both military history and the history of Japan. Danny Orbach offers a new interpretation of the relationship between the Japanese army and government that goes a long way to explaining how Japan ended up fighting World War II. Orbach has delved deeply into the archives that reveal how politicians, army officers, and ruffians felt about each other as individuals. He makes a convincing case for a culture of military insubordination in Japan that derived from historical precedent, structure flaws, and individual initiatives. By idealizing men who had been persecuted, if not executed, for crimes against the state, the Meiji government inadvertently promoted the culture of individual action that later officials found impossible to control." — Anne Walthall, University of California, Irvine, author of *Japan: A Cultural, Social, and Political History* "Featuring a long-term perspective and analyzing Japan's development over several decades from the 1870s to the 1930s, *Curse on This Country* is accessible and highly useful for experts in different fields. It is an indispensable addition to the body of literature on modern Japanese politics, addressing a broad audience within and outside the field of Japanese studies." — Sven Saaler, Sophia University "Curse on This Country fills an important gap in our understanding of Japan's military history leading up to the Pacific War. A particular strength of this book is Danny Orbach's extensive use of hitherto unexamined primary sources in five different languages." — Yoichi Funabashi, Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation

Danny Orbach is Senior Lecturer in the Departments of Asian Studies and General History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of *The Plots against Hitler*.

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