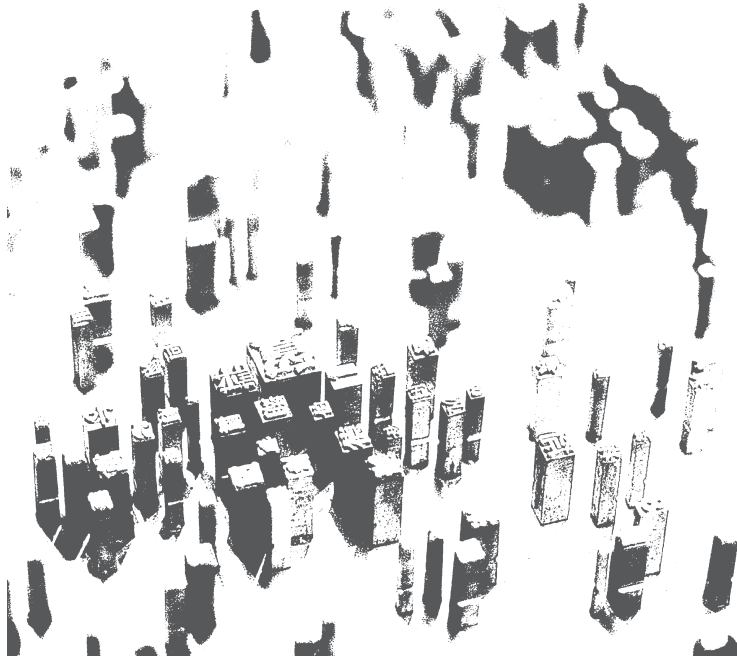


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Contents

Articles

Li-Lin Tseng

The Story Teller: Benjamin Brodsky and His Epic Travelogue,
A Trip Through China (1916) 7

Ricardo K. S. Mak

Western Advisers and Late Qing Chinese Military Modernization:
A Case Study of Constantin von Hanneken (1854-1925) 47

Byung-Ho Lee

Imagined Commonalities: Making Sense of China's Genealogical Nationalism 71

Balázs Szalontai

Instrumental Nationalism? The Dokdo Problem Through the Lens
of North Korean Propaganda and Diplomacy 105

Field Report

Irina S. Zhushchikhovskaya, Yuri G. Nikitin, and Alexei Telelyuev

Old Korean Settlements in Russian Primorye Examined from an Archaeological
Perspective 165

Book Reviews

Miji Lee

Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China 189

Lars Peter Laamann

After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885-1924 195

Hartmut Walravens

*Karl Haushofer und Japan: Die Rezeption seiner geopolitischen Theorien
in der deutschen und japanischen Politik*

[Karl Haushofer and Japan: The Reception of His Geopolitical
Theories in German and Japanese Politics]

199

John DiMoia

Science for the Empire: Scientific Nationalism in Modern Japan

213

Pui-Tak Lee

*Toward A History Beyond Borders:
Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations*

223

Chong-Myong Im

The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea

227

Emily Anderson

*On the Margins of Empire:
Buraku and Korean Identity in Prewar and Wartime Japan*

235

ABOUT THE JOURNAL OF NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY

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동북아역사재단
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Articles



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The Story Teller: Benjamin Brodsky and His Epic Travelogue, *A Trip Through China (1916)*

Li-Lin Tseng
Pittsburg State University

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The Story Teller: Benjamin Brodsky and His Epic Travelogue, *A Trip Through China* (1916)

In the embryonic stage of early Chinese cinema, Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960), an American photographer, film director, film producer, and film entrepreneur, was one of the most pivotal figures. He introduced China to the United States through an epic travelogue, *A Trip Through China* (1916). The work was in part the result of the efforts to satisfy a Western journeyman's desire to tell the story of another culture. Nevertheless, between 1916 and 1919 the film was openly screened in major cities in America, particularly in New York, for commercial and educational purposes. In this paper, Brodsky's pioneering project is explored, focusing on his constructs and representations of Shanghai and local people. This paper considers Brodsky's unsophisticated approach to indigenous culture to have arguably sharpened national and ethnic stereotyping. The travelogue reflects a style of thought that was fundamentally grounded in an ontological and epistemological system of values far more intrinsic to the West than the East

Keywords: Benjamin Brodsky, *A Trip Through China*, early Chinese film, travelogue, cinematic narrative, ethnographic film, Chinese identity



The Story Teller: Benjamin Brodsky and His Epic Travelogue, *A Trip Through China* (1916)

Li-Lin Tseng
Pittsburg State University

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, through his talents of filmmaking and film distribution, Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960) resolutely set out to explore and yet capitalize on the dissimilarities between China and the West. He not only ushered in the newly emerging era of cinema in the Far East, but also produced documentary films about China, Hong Kong, and Japan. Through an epic travelogue, *A Trip Through China* (abbreviated *Trip* hereinafter), Brodsky introduced Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and other interior cities of China to audiences in the United States.¹ At a time when most Americans knew nothing or very little about Asia in general and China in particular, Brodsky and his work were crucial to opening up a unique window

¹ In the film, Brodsky uses the title, *A Trip Through China*, but *A Trip Thru China* appears in most promotional advertisements in the United States. Also see Ramona Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II, Taking *A Trip Thru China* to America," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 18, no. 2 (2011): 143, 173. Curry notes that the *American Film Institute Catalogue* lists the film as *A Trip Through China*, but newspaper headlines and advertisements in the 1910s often shortened the preposition. The film also played under the title of the *Trip Through* (or *Thru*) *China* in the East, the Midwest, and the West of the United States.

through which those in the West could glance and then fantasize about that distant land. As significant as it was or is, however, *Trip* has never been thoroughly examined; it was neither analyzed in the two volumes of Cheng Jihua's authoritative project, *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi* (中國電影發展史 *History of the Development of Chinese Cinema*) nor in Jay Leyda's pioneering work, *Dianying/Electric Shadows: An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China*.² Brodsky has long remained one of the most "enigmatic" filmmakers in the history of early Chinese cinema, as contemporary film scholars Law Kar and Frank Bren suggested.³

Even so, during the past decade, the biography of Brodsky has sparked great interest among a number of international filmmakers and film historians. Directed by Hsieh Chia-kuen and produced by the film historian Liao Gene-fon in collaboration with the National Taiwan University of Arts, a documentary film *Xunzhao buluosiji* (尋找布洛斯基 or *Searching for Brodsky*, 2009, 60 minutes) premiered on July 2, 2010, during the Taipei Film Festival.⁴ In the film, Hsieh compares original scenes of the cities included in *Trip* to contemporary views of these metropolises.⁵ The project was a fruitful outcome of Liao's study of Brodsky when Brodsky's grandson Ron Borden discovered a copy of *Trip* in 1989 and later donated the most complete surviving version of the travelogue (9 reels, 80 minutes) to the Chinese Taipei Film Archive in Taiwan.⁶ In addition, in their collaborative work *Hong Kong Cinema: A*

² Cheng Jihua, *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi* [History of the Development of Chinese Cinema], 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1963); Jay Leyda, *Dianying-Electric Shadows: An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1972).

³ Law Kar and Frank Bren, "The Enigma of Benjamin Brodsky," *Hong Kong Film Archive Newsletter*, no. 14 (November 2000), 7-11.

⁴ Derek Elley, "Review," *Film Business Asia*, July 5, 2010, <http://www.filmbiz.asia/reviews/searching-for-brodsky>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Cross-Cultural View, Kar and Bren contributed a chapter, titled “Ben Brodsky’s China,” offering a rich narrative of Brodsky’s early life and his film career, especially his interactions with his business partners in Hong Kong.⁷ Masako Okada’s studies center on Brodsky’s production of *Beautiful Japan* (1918).⁸ Ground-breaking work on the legacy of Brodsky and his transnational operations of film business appeared in Ramona Curry’s long two-part article.⁹ In Part I, Curry teases out some mysteries of Brodsky’s biography, clarifying his birthday and birthplace, and examines his private and professional relationships and interactions with a group of Chinese students returning from America and with government officials who helped produce *Trip*.¹⁰ In Part II, Curry provides a critical textual analysis of *Trip*, analyzing the section held by the Chinese Taipei Film Archive. Her review highlights Beijing with a focus on Brodsky’s association with a number of Chinese ruling elites, including the then-President Yuan Shikai and his cabinet ministers. She also illuminates Brodsky’s marketing and presentational strategies while *Trip* was screened in the United States.

Brodsky’s *Trip* was truly a canonical text remarkable in promoting cultural exchanges, cultural transmissions, and cultural transferences between China and the West. Most importantly, it helped shape Chinese identities in the West. In the travelogue, with assistance from his production crew, Brodsky worked as a spirited observer, wandering

⁷ Law Kar and Frank Bren, *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-Cultural View* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 29-46.

⁸ Masako Okada, “Beautiful Japan, the Film and Its Producer Benjamin Brodsky” (unpublished manuscript, Tokyo, July 30, 1997).

⁹ Ramona Curry, “Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part I, Making *A Trip Thru China*,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 18, no. 1 (2011): 58-94; Ramona Curry, “Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II, Taking *A Trip Thru China* to America,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 18, no. 2 (2011): 142-180.

¹⁰ Curry, “Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part I”: 61.

around in metropolises (such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Nanjing, Tianjin, and Beijing), roaming from street to street and district to district in order to record what he considered the motif of Chinese culture. With his camera, Brodsky also gazed through both the interior lands and the coastal provinces of China, widely documenting urban poverty and primitive modes of labor that produced a vivid image of a pre-modern world. He acted as an ardent voyager who restlessly navigated through one metropolis after another and captured on film the people he encountered along the way. Initially, the travelogue was in part the result of the efforts to satisfy a Western journeyman's curiosity and his desire to tell the story of his personal encounters with another culture. Nevertheless, between 1916 and 1919, *Trip* was openly screened in major cities in the United States, particularly in New York and Los Angeles, for commercial and educational purposes.¹¹ Brodsky sold the film to American regional distributors in 1917, so that *Trip* was also shown nationwide through the East (Connecticut and New York State), Midwest (St. Louis, Missouri) and to the West (Utah and San Francisco).¹² Intriguingly, some international film archives (for example, in New Zealand) also hold individual reels of *Trip*, suggesting that sections of the film may have been played overseas after 1917.¹³ Brodsky's transnational presentations for mass consumption raise several critical issues. Analysis of his cinematic narrative in this piece refers less to the simple questions surrounding the representation of Chinese culture and people: it is more relevant to a crucial debate on the public representation and circulation of filmed culture and people.¹⁴

¹¹ See *Motion Picture News* 15, no. 21 (May 26, 1917). Also see Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": 152, 154. Curry indicates that the film did not play publicly in San Francisco until almost two years after its premiere in California in 1916.

¹² *Ibid.*, 173.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁴ At this point, my reading of the film has benefitted from Alison Griffiths's *Wondrous Difference*:

Significantly, even if *Trip* looks uncolored and believable to the average viewer, it was hardly an innocent depiction of China as it was manipulated by Brodsky's hand and mediated according to his will.¹⁵ To project a sense of "truthfulness" or "authenticity" to what appears on screen, he employed a highly realistic, documentary style of cinematography, providing rich verisimilitude and objective details. Still, *Trip* is fundamentally Brodsky's subjective perception and conception of China, shifting between matter-of-fact reports of what he had seen and personal evaluations of the local people he had experienced. In essence, *Trip* contains a biased subtext, casting a complex Westerner's gaze on China and its people that remains deeply disquieting.

What is particularly interesting is Brodsky's role as a story teller since his travelogue presents powerful imagery and attributes of China to audiences in the West. In his "The Storyteller," Walter Benjamin perceptively pointed out that the truth of narrative is situational in which the work of truth is reciprocal. Wisdom comes from conviction, however you construct it.¹⁶ Edward W. Said's discourse on "Orientalism," in particular, his discussion of how the way one's knowledge of another culture is introduced, produced, and, most importantly, distributed, informs this analysis of Brodsky, though Said did not cover visual arts in China.¹⁷ In line with this critique of Western colonialism, Fatimah Tobing Rony and Alison Griffiths provide critical views that assist in

Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

¹⁵ Although Brodsky had assistants (for example, Roe Errol Hasbrook) to help him do preliminary editing, he made the final decision. See Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": 161.

¹⁶ Peter Brooks, "The Storyteller," in *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling* (Oxford, U.K. and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 101. Also see Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 83.

¹⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 10.

examining travelogues, ethnographic films, and printed visual images.¹⁸ Fundamentally, this paper concerns the power of representations made to oneself and to others, representations that both shape our reception of the cultural other and our adaptation to that cultural other.

Benjamin Brodsky: A Film Mogul or a Showman?

As early as 1912, in an exclusive interview published in *The Motion Picture World*, Brodsky provided American readers with a detailed account of his early career and the establishment of his film business in the Far East.¹⁹ Brodsky stated he was of Russian-Jewish descent from Odessa, and arrived in Asia at the turn of the twentieth century during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). At that time, he worked for the Russian government as an official interpreter. He also had told the interviewer that he could speak eleven modern languages, notably Russian, English, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, and was also fluent in four of the esoteric Chinese dialects.²⁰ Interestingly, in a later interview, an American newsman also observed that Brodsky's English was strongly tinged with a particular Chinese accent.²¹ However, Brodsky's public persona is quite far from reality. Ramona Curry points out that Brodsky was in fact born in "a small town in Russia near Tektarin," which was rather distant from Odessa.²² In addition, although Brodsky drafted the English

¹⁸ Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996). Also see Griffiths's *Wondrous Difference*.

¹⁹ Hugh F. Hoffman, "A Visitor from the Orient," *The Moving Picture World* 12, April-June (May 18, 1912), p. 620-621. A photographic portrait of Brodsky also used to accompany the article.

²⁰ Ibid. The article says that Brodsky can speak eleven languages, including English, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Korean [Korean], Hebrew, Arabic, and Malayan.

²¹ George S. Kaufman, "Bret Harte Said It: The Heathen Chinese is Peculiar," *New York Tribune*, August 27, 1916.

²² Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part I": 64.

intertitles of *Trip*, he was barely able to read and write.²³ Brodsky's personal narrative style seems to have overstated his origins and language skills.

At the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Brodsky went to San Francisco with all of his savings and was running a successful real estate business when the great earthquake of 1906 put a temporary end to his financial dealings.²⁴ Out of the chaos of the San Francisco earthquake, he emerged with an old Edison Universal moving picture machine and forty or fifty reels of junk film.²⁵ The printed portions of these films had been translated into Chinese.²⁶ With these, Brodsky sailed for the Orient and arrived in the interior city of Tianjin, where no theater houses had yet been opened.²⁷ In his narrative, Brodsky indicated that, initially, his cinematic exhibitions were given in tents illuminated by means of gas, while natives squatted on the ground.²⁸ Soon, he found that in some western coastal cities, there were established theaters, but those were separated into different theaters for the Chinese and for the Westerners. Brodsky started to import a number of educational and high-class film reels for the Occidental residents, but for the most part, pictures portraying tough and strenuous living conditions were the kind of movies in demand in China. He also purchased movies in wholesale lots, including some wild western films of American cowboys and Indians as well as feature films such as *The Odyssey*, *Life of Buffalo Bill*, *Dante*, *Inferno*, and others.²⁹ According to Brodsky's account, the shows went

²³ Ibid., 64, 150.

²⁴ Hoffman, "A Visitor from the Orient," pp. 620-621.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Kaufman, "Bret Harte Said It: The Heathen Chinese is Peculiar."

²⁷ Hoffman, "A Visitor from the Orient," pp. 620-621. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, there were no established movie theaters in the interior of China.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. Also see Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": 163. Brodsky's film dealer Pliny Powers Craft also helped circulate

very smoothly until some cowboys in the movies came tearing down the road, shooting pistols. The Chinese audience rose en masse and fled for safety.

Through a number of interviews, Brodsky provided such humorous anecdotes, at the expense of the indigenous people, as he spun tales about his film business in China. He further suggested that in the beginning, the Chinese audience never derived their full measure of enjoyment from the proceedings because they frequently failed to understand the screened films. One time, he tried to give a show, but the local audiences would not come. The Chinese were afraid of his machine and his pictures, which to them were ghosts.³⁰ In order to entice local residents to his shows, Brodsky said that he actually hired people from local communities to sit in the audience.³¹ For this service, he employed hundreds of persons at the rate of twenty cents per day to act as audience members, in effect, as decoys to bring in viewers.³² To allay their general fear and establish confidence in his “actors,” Brodsky had to explain the entire projection process to them. With diplomatic perseverance, he let them examine the equipment and convinced them there was no danger connected with viewing his films.

In 1916, in an interview with *New York Tribune*, Brodsky told the newsman that with the profits he made by showing films to both Western and local Chinese audiences, he was able to build several dozen theaters in cities all over China.³³ He also pointed out that the theater seating was another difficulty he had encountered:

...[T]o this day there are no seating accommodations for the multitude in

Brodsky's *A Trip Through China*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kaufman, “Bret Harte Said It: The Heathen Chinese is Peculiar.”

the Chinese movie houses —the Interborough would find it a delightful country. A few of the patrician Chinese buy seats and pay handsomely for them (\$1.50, in most cases); the common people stand on the great floors, wedged tightly against one another. Many of the Brodsky theatres take care of 15,000 persons in this manner; the smallest of them holds 5,000.³⁴

In spite of this story told by Brodsky, it should be noted, however, that in past and current studies of early Chinese films, no specific scholarly works have mentioned or proved Brodsky's establishment of cinema houses in China. Curry suggests that Brodsky's early primary business investments and identity were actually as a "showman," which was a much different title than in Brodsky's narrative of his great success in China.³⁵

The aforementioned 1912 interview also revealed interesting details of Brodsky's transnational film business. He did represent the Variety Film Exchange Company of San Francisco, which operated actively in the Orient, as it had well-established exchanges in Honolulu, Yokohama, Tokyo, Vladivostok, Harbin, Shanghai, and Hong Kong.³⁶ The company at that time was buying twenty-eight prints per week, both licensed and independent; it supplied eleven theaters in Honolulu.³⁷ The company also supplied the American government with movies with which to entertain its seamen on battleships sailing between distant ports. In addition to his film business, Brodsky also contracted with the Detroit Engine Works to import machinery such as electric lights to interior cities in China.³⁸ In

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part I": 68.

³⁶ Hoffman, "A Visitor from the Orient," pp. 620-621.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

the interview, Brodsky was ambitiously planning to open branches of the Variety Film Exchange Company in Manila, Singapore, and Java.³⁹

The Production of *A Trip Through China* (1912-1915)

Brodsky's film business in China was marked by the completion of the shooting *Trip* between 1912 and 1915.⁴⁰ The travelogue carries the viewer from the southernmost city of China to the north, starting in Hong Kong and then visiting Shanghai, Beijing, and many others. In the work, Brodsky predominately focused on the novelty of indigenous cultures (notably customs, fashions, and religions) and landscapes (the destructive typhoon of 1914 in Shanghai), spotlighting such archetypes of cultural symbols as the Shanghai Longhua Pagoda (Figure 1), the Ming Dynasty Tombs, and the Forbidden City.⁴¹ In addition to scenic features of these cities, cultural and mercantile activities of their people also are depicted, including four of Yuan Shikai's younger sons and their tutors in Beijing.⁴² Chinese superstitions and religious parades comprise an integral part of his depiction of the land, as well (Figure 2).⁴³

³⁹ Curry points out that Brodsky's ambitious plan was not carried out.

⁴⁰ Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part I": 70; Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": 154, 156. Curry suggests Brodsky gained access to political and probably also financial support for making films in China from the American film trade press. In 1912, Brodsky expanded his distributing network and found a collaborative American-Chinese filmmaking enterprise, the China Cinema Company.

⁴¹ George W. Graves, "Brodsky's *Trip Through China*," *Motography* 17, no. 21 (May 26, 1917): 1120.

⁴² See *New York Times Film Reviews*, May 22, 1917, 11. Also see Curry, p. 74. Curry suggests Brodsky was in fact acquainted with and as a filmmaker visibly enjoyed the cooperation of powerful national politicians in the mid-1910s in China.

⁴³ "Screen Reports for the Box-Office," *Exhibitor's Trade Review* 1, no. 26 (June 2, 1917). A decennial religious procession from the Chingan Temple (the temple is not visible on film) brings the crowds into the street. The parade starts from the Longhua Pagoda situated a short distance from the city.



Figure 1. Shanghai Longhua Pagoda. Still from *A Trip Thru China* (1916). This and all still frames appear in this essay courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Figure 2. Still: A decennial religious procession in Shanghai.

A Cross-Cultural Presentation

Through *Trip*, Brodsky presented this distant country to Western spectators in 1916, extensively circulating his unique travel activities and experiences in the Far East.⁴⁴ During its public screening period, the film aroused American viewers' curiosity and imagination about this Eastern country. The travelogue was essentially filmed and edited by Brodsky with the assistance of his production crew members, who included a Chinese photographer named Lum Chung and the American Roe Errol Hasbrook.⁴⁵ When it was presented at the Eltinge Theatre on Broadway, the main entrance was decorated in exotic Oriental tapestries.⁴⁶ A lecturer named Harry Dean appeared on stage between the two halves of the film

⁴⁴ Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": 161. The film landed in America in February 1916. See Hoffman, "A Visitor from the Orient." Hoffman indicates that Brodsky arrived in China and Japan, and was buying film in wholesale lots. His business card reads: "Variety Film Exchange Company, Honolulu."

⁴⁵ The advisement says that Brodsky spent ten years in China, of which five years were devoted to the making of *Trip*. See *The Evening Post: New York*, May 22, 1917. Also see Kar and Bren, *Hong Kong Cinema*, 40. Also see Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": 143.

⁴⁶ *New York Times Film Reviews*, May 22, 1917, p. 11.



Figure 3. “‘Flower of the Sun’ Bride in the Wedding Ceremony” in *Motion Picture News*, May 26, 1917.

and commented on the authentic Chinese music, which improved the audience members’ experience with the Eastern country.⁴⁷ *Motion Picture News* praised *Trip* with the following words: “Entertaining. Educating. Amusing.”⁴⁸ The *News* also contained a still taken from a sequence presenting a “rich Manchu marriage” with caption that read, “‘Flower of the Sun’ Bride in The Wedding Ceremony in ‘A Trip Thru China’” (Figure 3). In the picture, the bride wears a traditional wedding gown that looks completely different from Western bridal dresses at the time, highlighting a strange beauty rarely seen in the West.⁴⁹ Without a doubt, Brodsky’s *Trip* truly raised awareness of the geographical gaps and cultural differences between China and the United States.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *Motion Picture News* 15, no. 21 (May 26, 1917).

⁴⁹ Some American media provided such reviews during the public screening period of the film. See Hoffman, “A Visitor from the Orient.”; “‘A Trip Through China’ offers interesting views of the customs of the country,” *Exhibitor’s Trade Review* 1, no. 26 (June 2, 1917): 1823. Also see Curry’s description of the still in Part II of her article, p. 147. Curry suggests the filmmakers were also invited to the party, revealing Brodsky’s contacts with members of the long-standing northern Chinese ruling class.

Shanghai as an Embodiment of the Semi-Colonial Status of China

As mentioned above, scholars have rarely focused on a close textual analysis of *Trip*. Curry did offer a careful examination of the film, highlighting the section on Beijing, in particular, Brodsky's personal relationship with the ruling elites of China. In her analysis of *Trip*, Curry notes that the work did mark a distinction between the East and West: at points, it exuded the condescending tone similar to many ethnographic films. Fundamentally, Curry argues that *Trip* in effect “avoids presenting China as colonized, yet only by insisting on an ahistorical—and evidently brutal—imperial stasis as the nation's essential condition.”⁵⁰ The present article takes a reading of *Trip* quite different from Curry's, however, and offers an alternative interpretation of the travelogue by focusing on Brodsky's representation of Shanghai. Brodsky's interest in Shanghai is not a surprise. At the turn of the twentieth century, as one of the earliest treaty ports open to foreign trade following the first Opium War (1839-42), Shanghai flourished as a multinational hub of commerce. The metropolis immediately became the gateway to mainland China, showcasing critical gaps between the nation and the West. Shanghai was also recognized for its distinct semi-colonial status. Along with its international settlements, the city blended many of the novelties of Western modernity with the mystique of Chinese antiquity, the charm which allured global entrepreneurs, intellectuals, travelers, explorers, and voyagers. Shanghai indeed was a paradise for adventurous souls.⁵¹

In the following, the crucial episode (seventeen minutes and fifty seconds) held by the Library of Congress will be analyzed as it provides

⁵⁰ Curry, “Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II”: 148, 156.

⁵¹ Richard M. Barsam, *Nonfiction Film: A Critical History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 3-28.

a complete view and a classic example of Brodsky's narration of the metropolis. This section of the film, the significance of which lies in Shanghai's unique situation that, at some points, epitomized China's semi-colonial condition after the failure of opium wars in the mid-nineteenth century, has not been previously analyzed.

Since *Trip* was completed in 1916, Brodsky's presentation of Shanghai also prefigured the style of Western film genre about cities, such as *Manhatta* (New York, 1921)⁵² by Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand, *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (Berlin, 1927) by Walter Ruttmann, and *Man with a Movie Camera* (Odessa and other cities in the Soviet Union, 1929) by Dziga Vertov. Brodsky's *Trip* was made more than five years earlier than *Manhatta*, eleven years earlier than *Berlin*, and thirteen years earlier than *Movie Camera*. Due to its art historical significance, a thorough textual analysis of the section about Shanghai seems necessary to understand Brodsky's cinematic strategy, in particular his construction of the travelogue. The analysis will also explain how Brodsky brought the "outlandish" oriental land to the light of Western eyes, and how he presented it to educated, middle-class American audiences.⁵³

One City, Two Lives: The Chinese as a Dramatic Mirror to the West

The section analyzed here comprises twenty acts. At the beginning of each act, a title card written in English announces a particular theme, and has been inserted for its intended audiences in the West (Figure 4).⁵⁴ In

⁵² Note that *Manhatta* is the correct name of the film.

⁵³ The remaining portion of *A Trip Through China* is available for viewing in the division of the film and photography section of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Also see *Motion Picture News* 15, no. 21 (May 26, 1917).

⁵⁴ See the Part II of Curry's article, where she has a more detailed description of the introduction of the selected Chinese cities in *Trip*.

Brodsky’s cinematic narrative about Shanghai, he accentuates the differences of Chinese and Western motifs. The entire city is characterized by a bizarre cultural mixing, full of conflicts between the indigenous and the modern (or Western). Perhaps, the most intriguing part of the film lies in Brodsky’s cinematic construction, notably in his cutting, editing, and organization of the scenes he shot, which further reinforces the gap between the “primitive” Chinese and the “modern” West. Under his camera, the vulgarity of the Chinese working class serves as a mirror image to reflect the urbanity of the Western leisure class.

In his way of telling the story of Shanghai, Brodsky purposefully divided the city into two worlds that dramatized its semi-colonial status. The first world focused on the poverty and hardships in Chinese communities in the old walled city of Shanghai (Figure 5), which was a favorite place for begging long before the Republican period (1911-1949).⁵⁵ The second world highlighted the leisure activities and recreation in the international settlements and foreign concessions (Figure 6) outside the walled city.⁵⁶ Through the



Figure 4. The caption reads: “Floating City—house boats where millions of poor Chinese live.”



Figure 5. The caption reads: “In each small house boat a whole family lives.”

⁵⁵ Hanchao Lu, “Becoming Urban: Mendicancy and Vagrants in Modern Shanghai,” *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 1 (October 1999): 11.

⁵⁶ Zhenchang Tang, Yuezhi Xiong, and Ming Xu, *Shanghai’s Journey to Prosperity, 1842-1949*



Figure 6. The preceding title card ascribes:
“At the Races”

entire episode, Brodsky carefully and skillfully edited, arranged, and juxtaposed the crude forms of Chinese laborers and their difficult lifestyles with the leisure events of Western burghers. The strong contrast between the two communities creates a compelling imagery in which the Chinese look like a negative inversion of the

West. When the travelogue was screened in New York on March 17, 1917, an article printed in *Motion Picture News* further confirmed the sharp distinction between the West and the indigenous Chinese that Brodsky had made:

Chinese sports, forms of labor, and means of transportation are all handled on a large scale. Comparisons are made, which show that with the advent of European brains, money, and interest, squalor gave way to splendor, and even today in cities where both Europeans and natives reside there is to be seen the marked contrast.⁵⁷

Such a drastic comparison inevitably provokes an inquiry into Brodsky’s unsophisticated approach to local culture and an inquiry into the correlation between his narration and representation of the Chinese. By

(Hong Kong: The Commercial Press, 1996), 78.

⁵⁷ F. G. Spencer, Review of A Trip Through China, *Motion Picture News*, March 17, 1917, p. 1719. “The beautiful parks, boulevards, colleges and hospitals prove conclusively that a new dawn is awakening and modern methods are fast superseding the old, and the Chinese are slowly but surely abandoning their belief in witchcraft as a curative agency. A school for the deaf, dumb and blind, in which were shown scores of children at work, and also at play, is keenly interesting, proving as it does that the deformed and otherwise imperfect children are not destroyed at birth now as was the custom of old. The rickshaw is still the favorite and fashionable mode of transportation for the well-to-do, as was evidenced in every city visited.”

underlining the “modernity” of the West over the “backwardness” of the Chinese, Brodsky presented an absolute demarcation between the East and the West, further reinforcing a binary view of cultural stereotyping.

The Life Inside of the Walled Chinese City

During the colonial period of Shanghai (1843-1945), the Walled Old City remained exclusively inhabited by Chinese residents. Westerners seldom ventured there. Bulwarks of the city had been designed and expanded centuries ago in the Ming and the Qing dynasties. In the past, only the rich lived in the city. However, as the settlement developed at a greater speed than the Old City, to be able to move into the settlement was an occasion for rejoicing. Thus, those living inside the Old City became “country folk.”⁵⁸ From generation to generation, thousands of the poor lived in small houseboats among junks, sampans, and ferries in the area (Figure 7), which formed the most deprived district in Shanghai. Perhaps with the assistance of his Chinese cameramen, Brodsky was able to include the scenery in this region. By featuring its primitive methods of transportation and living conditions, Brodsky enabled the viewer to peek into the darkest corner of Shanghai. On the Huangpu River, men rock the boats to travel in the city while women laborers serve as a crucial work force, carrying freight as well as local passengers. As part of an urban community (or urban poor), these river residents (or vagabonds)



Figure 7. The caption reads: “The Family Home from generation to generation.”

⁵⁸ Tang, Xiong, and Xu, *Shanghai's Journey to Prosperity, 1842-1949*, 78. Around 1911, the city wall was torn down.

were mostly unskilled and illiterate workers.⁵⁹ Brodsky exposed the poverty and hardships of the river population that also alluded to hidden dangers of the city. Through his lens, the smell of impoverishment prevails over a “savage” land.

The Street Portraits



Figure 8. Still: The rickshaw is still the favorite and fashionable mode of transportation for the well-to-do.



Figure 9. The caption reads: “The Traveling Shoemaker.”

In addition to the indigence of the river dwellers, Brodsky put on display portraits of other Chinese. He captured images of street laborers and coolies, focusing on the bizarre appeal of vanishing trades and small businessmen (Figure 8), in which, for example, the rickshaw is still the favorite and the fashionable mode of transportation for the well-to-do. He also offered first-hand “close-ups” of the primitive lives of these Chinese people. By the river, a traditional traveling shoemaker (Figure 9) is hammering and fixing a shoe. In a narrow alley, a Jitney driver manually transports almost a dozen children to school on a wooden Jitney bus. Soon after, in the process of modernization, these outdated professions, primarily

⁵⁹ Lu, “Becoming Urban: Mendicancy and Vagrants in Modern Shanghai”: 8.



Figure 10. The caption reads: “Street paving— steam roller unknown.”



Figure 11. The caption reads: “Chinese pile driver in action.”

existing in pre-modern or pre-industrial times, would disappear. In Brodsky’s narrative, the stunning human power of the Chinese coolies remains the focus of the great hastening metropolis.

Perhaps the most daunting scenes are those of the street-paving steam rollers (Figure 10) and pile drivers (Figure 11). The former represents a group of physical laborers who work as horses, dragging an oversized, moveable street roller manually to make road repairs and to perform maintenance. These road builders made their living entirely through labor-intensive work which exacted a heavy toll on their physical health. The latter features dozens of workers manually hammering or pounding with a stone weighing 1,000 pounds. In this section, Brodsky shot a large amount of footage in order to expose these laborers who earned merely about 12 cents a day.⁶⁰ On the screen, these anonymous construction workers lost their individual identities. These portraits serve as images of generic types of collective Chinese, the types of people who work diligently, but mechanically. Here, Brodsky’s rendition of urban poverty shows no sign of any sense of decency or humanity.

The power of the city, essentially supplied by these undaunted human forces and their manual labor, is orchestrated into a visual melody

⁶⁰ See “Screen Reports for the Box-Office.”

that raises social awareness of cultural differences. This part of Shanghai appears to be a pre-industrialized world in which the urban setting is stained by the crude, subsistent lifestyle and primitive working methods of the indigenous. Of course, Brodsky presented the other side of the city as well, in particular its international settlements, providing a stark contrast. In the film, these foreign concessions serve as an exotic playground for Western residents and visitors. The district is represented as a comfortable antithesis to the plight of the Chinese city.

Life Outside the Walled Chinese City



Figure 12. The caption reads: “Review of the Shanghai International Volunteers who offers their services for the protection of Shanghai.”

The French Concession and international settlements were located outside the walled Chinese city where other Europeans and Americans resided, as well. Some prestigious Chinese also lived in the area. In the film, the communities were immersed in festive activities (Figure 12), occasions celebrated by their proud residents and commemorative events.

Shanghai International Volunteers: The Colonial Armies and Their Administrators

Here, Brodsky featured grand parades of the Shanghai International Volunteers, notably the British and American armies (Figure 13). Dressed in handsome uniforms and carrying advanced weapons, these international officials and soldiers represented the well-trained, well-organized colonial powers. These soldiers on parade starkly contrasted with the abject Chinese coolies whose images appeared in the previous

section about the walled city. Brodsky claimed in the caption that the purpose of these military forces was to offer their services “for the protection of Shanghai.”

However, Brodsky’s assertion was not entirely correct. In fact, these colonial armies were assembled during 1854 due to the fires that occurred as a result of the uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1850-64). The revolt seriously threatened the safety of the foreign concessions. In a fear-driven response, the British and American consulates in Shanghai established a committee for a joint defense, calling on their nationals to join the volunteer corps.⁶¹ At the time, as an integral part of the colonial treaties, the international settlements acquired a rather high degree of independence. The area functioned as a self-governing entity. In addition to their own militia, these international residents also enjoyed the privilege of full extraterritoriality in Shanghai. Besides their own legislative and administrative rights, these westerners were able to follow their own judicial procedures as they held immunity from local law enforcement. These foreigners were exempt from both civil and criminal actions. In other words, if they committed a crime, they might not be sued or arrested. Their property and residences were also inviolable; they were usually exempt from both personal and property taxes, too. These foreign authorities (both in the International Settlement and in the French



Figure 13. Still: The British nationals here held a military review.

⁶¹ Tang, Xiong, and Xu, *Shanghai's Journey to Prosperity, 1842-1949*, 39. “Originally, the British Settlement only measured 130 acres or thereabouts. In 1893, it covered an area of over 1,300 acres. By 1899, the British and American Settlements merged into a single whole known as the International Settlement with an area of 5,583 acres. The French Concession originally covered an area of 56 hectares. It grew larger and larger, ending up with an area 20 times as large as the original area.”

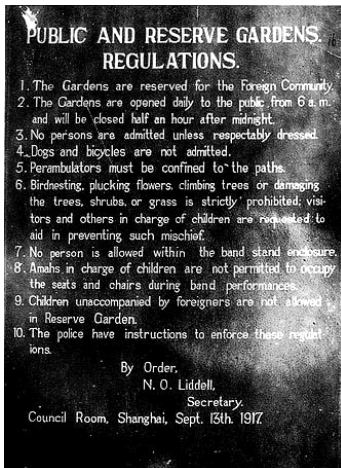


Figure 14. Park regulations, 1917.

The Public Garden (renamed Huangpu Park after WWII) was closed to Chinese people between 1890 and 1928.

[Source=enwiki;
Author=unknown. The website says that this image is now in the public domain in China because its term of copyright has expired.]

Concession) drove public nuisances, namely, Chinese beggars or vagrants, out of the concessions and into the Chinese territory.⁶² As a matter of daily routine, the police in the concessions drove beggars off the streets of the foreign concessions in order to maintain the “decency” of these areas.⁶³

Initially, the indigenous Chinese had only limited or entirely restricted entry into the communities due to the rigidly administered regulations enacted by the foreign controlled Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC).⁶⁴ For example, the Public Garden (renamed Huangpu Park after World War II) was closed to Chinese civilians between 1890 and 1928 (Figure 14).⁶⁵ The Chinese perception

of such strict governance was also highlighted by a noted Bruce Lee film, *Jing wu men* (精武門 or *Fist of Fury*, 1972). Situated in early twentieth-century Shanghai, the film paints a poignant image of the semi-colonial situation in the city. A famous scene depicts a British uniformed Sikh guard stopping the protagonist (played by Bruce Lee)

⁶² Lu, “Becoming Urban: Mendicancy and Vagrants in Modern Shanghai”: 21.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Robert A. Bickers and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “Shanghai’s ‘Dogs and Chinese Not Admitted’ Sign: Legend, History and Contemporary Symbol,” *The China Quarterly* no. 142 (June 1995): 444-466.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

from entering a public park by pointing towards a wooden sign that reads, “*Guo yu huaren bude runei*” (狗與華人不得入內 or *No dogs and Chinese allowed*). Although the Bruce Lee film exaggerates and even distorts the historical facts, this scene has become quite well-known in Chinese communities, for it captures the unusual status of the British and American settlements that became “states within a state.”⁶⁶ In a way, the Bruce Lee film reflects the trauma of the colonial experience in Shanghai, which remains in the collective memory of the people.

In his travelogue, Brodsky overlooked or was unaware of the complexity of the aforementioned colonial experience and history. In his cinematic narrative, these international volunteers were organized to protect “Shanghai,” but, in reality, these mighty colonial forces were organized to defend solely the international settlements and the properties of the foreign residents. In this sequence, Brodsky underscored the powerful settlement authorities, emphasizing the order, the discipline, and the dignity of the Western armies and their success in seizing jurisdiction over the locals.

Another scene also illustrates the dominance of the omnipresent colonial powers. Brodsky spotlighted heavily armed British uniformed Sikh police officers or administrators who were supervising groups of Chinese prisoners (Figure 15). These captured Chinese inmates look weary, resigned, and defenseless as they trudge, strenuously dragging heavy wagons. The image reveals an uneasy power relationship between



Figure 15. Still: Prisoners must labor twelve hours per day at this strenuous work.

⁶⁶ Tang, Xiong, and Xu, *Shanghai's Journey to Prosperity, 1842-1949*, 37. The British and American settlements appeared in 1898.

the colonists (the British uniformed Sikhs as masters) and the locals (the Chinese as prisoners). These anonymous forced laborers are characters that seem to lack humanity. The scene presents a distressing Western style of dominating, restructuring, and exerting authority over the vulnerable indigenes. This coarse scene also recalls a notion of a well-known term, “sub-colony,” that was a concept suggested by the Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yet-sen in the early twentieth century. Sun argued that the status quo of China at that time was even worse than that of a colony. In the picture, British uniformed Sikh administrators certainly hold power over Chinese prisoners.

Horse Races: The Celebration of Modern Leisure



Figure 16. Still: In 1862, Shanghai Race Club was built.

In the last section, Brodsky featured horse racing at the Shanghai Race Club (Figure 16). During the colonial period, horse racing, together with canoeing, was among the most fashionable sports in the settlements and in Shanghai social circles. Here, Brodsky presented the event as packed with hundreds of middle and upper-middle class

viewers, typically men in Western straw hats and ladies in modern styles of dresses. The scene recalls the paintings by the nineteenth century French impressionists, notably Edouard Manet and Edgar Degas. In Western tradition, such as Manet’s *Les Courses à Longchamp* (*The Races at Longchamp*, 1866), horse racing was associated with the lifestyle of the leisure class, an activity intended to show off their “noble taste” (Figure 17). The activity was also a display of social status, in which, for outward verification, each owner rode his or her own thoroughbred. Horse races are an excellent example of rank and wealth in modern life.

In the early twentieth century in Paris, prestigious events attracted the best horses and their high-class owners from around the world, and so did the international settlements of Shanghai.

When *Trip* was openly screened in New York in 1917, a professional magazine, *Motion Picture News*, reviewed the film:



Figure 17. A still taken from *A Trip Thru China*.

The beautiful parks, boulevards, colleges and hospitals prove conclusively that a new dawn is awakening and modern methods are fast superseding the old, and the Chinese are slowly but surely abandoning their belief in witchcraft as a curative agency.⁶⁷

Speaking from a position of authority, the final remark in Brodsky's travelogue expresses a disconcertingly condescending tone toward the indigenous. Brodsky's presentation of the local life in Shanghai, in particular, his stress on the overwhelming presence of physical laborers and their destitution, constructed a believable ethnographic knowledge of the Chinese and, in a way, produced a discomfiting anthology of national, ethnic, and racial identities.

In 1916, when *Trip* was screened in California, a review printed in a San Jose newspaper further confirmed the racial distinction that Brodsky made between China and the West.

Contrasts between the Far East and the Far West, between the civilization of the Caucasian in California and the ancient civilization

⁶⁷ F. G. Spencer, Review of *A Trip Through China*, *Motion Picture News*, March 17, 1917, p. 1719.

of China, between the active and aggressive methods of the American and the resigned and passive fatalism of the oriental can be studied first hand without the trouble and expense of a journey across the Pacific...*A Trip Thru China*...show[s] every phase of the [life] among the pulsating millions of the vast empire.⁶⁸

Vulgarity vs. Respectability

Brodsky's epic travelogue surely established a rather simple antithetical view of the Chinese (as the vulgar) and the West (as the respectable). In the episode about Shanghai, his representation of the former, their communities function as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of most honorable human characteristics. The uncultivated locals show a lack of propriety and good taste. These coolies were backward, oppressed people sticking to traditional practices. Brodsky acted as a wandering journeyman who entered the wasteland at his peril. He was watching and looking for the most diverse situations to compare and contrast. His Western audiences saw and understood the Oriental city completely through his eyes, based on his interests, his beliefs, his selections, and his value judgments. The comparable Chinese ideas, visions, and voices were completely absent from this representation. In her studies of *Trip*, Curry also points out that Brodsky totally ignored modernization and democratic development in China. For instance, Chinese railways were surprisingly not included in the film.⁶⁹ Through Brodsky's lens, the indigenous became a living tableau of queerness. The behaviors,

⁶⁸ Re-quoted from Part II of Curry's article, p. 158. The original text, "B. Brodsky, Producer of a *Trip Through China*, with Camorant [sic]" was printed in the *San Jose Mercury Herald*, December 29, 1916, p. 16.

⁶⁹ Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": pp. 156, 159. Here, Curry also states that the *Trip's* extensive and arguably sympathetic representation of Chinese labor ultimately distinguishes it from other ethnographic travelogues. However, this point seems disputable.

institutions, and characters of the Chinese appeared to be the negation of Western morality. However, his portrayals of the international settlements look quite glamorous, celebrating the advancements of the metropolitan life and modern culture. Brodsky's camera seems to have primarily focused on the genuine arena of this Western culture from which grows all meaningful human life.⁷⁰

In *Trip*, such powerful visuals and accompanying texts produced meanings and gave an artificial context for the filmed subjects. The episode should not have been simply viewed as a historical record, merely documenting the contemporary life in Shanghai. Rather, it contains a biased subtext, suggesting a not-so-subtle colonial prejudice that should be examined and exposed. In his writing about the concept of Orientalism, Edward W. Said asserted, "The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony."⁷¹ Although Said's "Orient" does not directly refer to China, his insight is still useful in examining the relationship of power between the colonized Chinese and their colonial authorities. In his studies of culture and colonialism, Chinua Achebe further points out that "There is such a thing as absolute power over narrative. Those who secure this privilege for themselves can arrange stories about others pretty much where, and as, they like."⁷² Notably, Brodsky's narration was a conscious choice, constructed with both written and visual texts, producing historical records that superficially

⁷⁰ *Beautiful Japan* (1918) represents various aspects of Japanese life after World War I, including Brodsky's ethnographic interests in the Bear Festival in an Ainu village in Hokkaido during which a young pet bear was strangled.

⁷¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 5.

⁷² Chinua Achebe, *Home and Exile* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 24. Achebe also argues that "if colonial writers try to imitate and, indeed, go one better than the Empire, they run the danger of undervaluing their homeland and their own people. He contends that to redress the inequities of global oppression, writers must focus on where they come from, insisting that their value systems are as legitimate as any other. Stories are a real source of power in the world, he concludes, and to imitate the literature of another culture is to give that power away."

portrayed and limited understanding of the facts of local life. *Trip* is hardly an innocent representation of the Chinese. It intentionally creates a particular vision and perception of the nation and its people.

The Return Gaze of the Chinese

The visual power of Brodsky's travelogue is further strengthened by the return gaze of the Chinese subjects, especially that of the children who live in the poor communities of the riverside dwellers as well as the anonymous street coolies, street pedestrians, and street peddlers together with the photographs of British uniformed Sikh policemen (Figure 5, 8, and 15). Their gazes are a mix of surprise, curiosity, and even aloofness, which reinforce a compelling sense of "authenticity" and "credibility" generated by the camera. These return gazes not only reveal the position of the cameraman, they also create an invisible contact zone linking him to the locals. The return gaze reconfirms the status of the cameraman as an outsider to the communities, which in turn fortifies his experience or encounter with another culture. In the scenes about the Huangpu River dwellers, a group of village children gather in front of the run-down houseboats and raise their hands eagerly waving at the camera. Here, the camera functions as a "celebrity" in the eye of the filmed subject. However, it also affirms the subject's social and ethnic identities. The subject's return gaze is complex, as it forms a dialectical process of exchange, interaction, and meaning-production between the cameraman and his subject.⁷³

The subject's return gaze also draws attention to the cinematic representation itself as an effective form of cultural encounter. In *Trip*, most filmed subjects were neither vulnerable victims, nor powerful

⁷³ This discussion is much inspired by Griffiths's *Wondrous Difference*, in particular in "Chapter Two: Science and Spectacle Visualizing the Other at the World's Fair and Knowledge" and "Chapter Three: Visuality in Nineteenth Century Anthropology," 46-126.

contenders. Many of them were indifferent onlookers, unaware that their presence would soon be transformed into a visual spectacle and exhibited overseas in a public realm for commercial and educational purposes.

Furthermore, Brodsky adapted a documentary style as his cinematic technique, which emphasizes objective reporting. In his film, these underclass Chinese coolies, construction workers, and street laborers appear resigned, primitive, and inferior to Western noble residents, reinforcing typical images of racial stereotypes. At several points, Brodsky drew upon social classes, racial types, and cultural symbols in the film in order to legitimize his cinematic and ethnic production as authentic and educational. His use of the documentary camera looks rather “artless,” lending credence to the images as natural and innocent. This carefully crafted work helped him to objectify his personal travel experiences and cultural encounters, which also contributed to the collective imagery of Chinese national identity. Through this artistic strategy, he created a seamless, convincing visual record of the cultural other. Brodsky certainly was a remarkable storyteller.

Trip might have enhanced the depth and intensity of cultural exchanges between China and the West. However, here the issues regarding how cinema came to assume the role of mediator of cultural differences remain critical. In her in-depth studies of early ethnographic films, particularly in the genre of travelogue, Alison Griffith has noted that the interplay between cinema, tourism, and virtual travel all relate to the questions of authorship and authenticity.⁷⁴ A travelogue is essentially a construction, not a reality. The most critical part in the discourse of travel films perhaps lies in the power of the camera’s proclivity for mimesis, record-making that served as colonial propaganda, as Griffith suggested.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*, 203-227.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 229-252.

Audiences in the United States

An examination of the film's original audiences further exposes the crucial issues concerning the ethical and ideological implications of the cross-cultural image-making in the travelogue. Produced primarily for speakers of English, Brodsky's *Trip* reached broader audiences as it was widely circulated in public in the United States. Curry suggests the film was mainly marketed to a middle-class educated audience and middle-class white theater patrons, although some Chinese people overseas in Los Angeles would also have seen it when it premiered in California in June 1916.⁷⁶ Brodsky's cinematic display of China and its people thus became a vehicle for mass consumption, generating a visual site through which American filmgoers expected to learn more about the anthropology and culture of China.

On May 21, 1917, *Trip* debuted in New York at the aforementioned Eltinge Theatre on 42nd Street, the center of the professional and commercial playhouses of the city. Distributed by the Supreme Feature Film Company, the work was scheduled to screen there daily, including both matinee and evening shows.⁷⁷ A late afternoon "extra" in between for children and their teachers from the public schools of New York was also added.⁷⁸ In fact, the public and private schools and colleges of the state also cooperated in advertising the travelogue, endorsing the "authority" and "authenticity" of the film.⁷⁹ The cost of the tickets was priced on a scale ranging from twenty-five cents to one dollar, a fairly high rate for seeing a movie at the time.⁸⁰ In this cross-cultural

⁷⁶ Curry, "Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II": 150, 154, 165, 168.

⁷⁷ *Variety*, May 18, 1917, p. 23.

⁷⁸ "Evelyn Nesbit in Film," *New York Times Film Reviews*, May 22, 1917, p. 11.

⁷⁹ *Motion Picture News* 15, no. 21 (May 26, 1917).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

presentation, *Trip* certainly offered spectators an easy encounter with the Chinese people who were an ethnic other to Western audiences. Commercial screening of the film, in a way, encouraged peeping at the cultural other, and the observers' pleasant moments of viewing were heightened by their ethnological curiosity. Alison Griffith has insightfully pointed out that the problem with such commercialization of travelogues is that an ethnic attraction is easily turned into a profit-making cinema of attraction.⁸¹

Consciously or unconsciously, Brodsky's documentary approach to the Chinese seemed ethnographical. His construction of anthropological images and ideological meanings of the cultural other were also imbricated with the broad circulation and commodification of the film. The meaning of the work in this regard does not simply reside in the textual or formal qualities of the cinematic images, but was/is generated and embedded within the sites of the exhibitions (including the theater and its advertisements and professional film reviews printed in newspapers and magazines) and in the viewing contexts, as well.

George S. Kaufman's Cross-Cultural Perception of Early Chinese Cinema

Broad presentation of *Trip* was quite successful, which brought Brodsky more shooting opportunities and also stimulated the general public's interest in the Far East. Brodsky received an invitation from the Japanese government to direct a film, titled *Beautiful Japan* (1918, 100 minutes), a travelogue he made in collaboration with the imperial railways in order to promote international tourism.⁸² Furthermore, the American press

⁸¹ Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*, 46-85.

⁸² Masako Okada, "Beautiful Japan, the Film and Its Producer Benjamin Brodsky" (unpublished manuscript, Tokyo, July 30, 1997). Quoted from Law and Bren, "The Enigma of Benjamin Brodsky," pp. 7-11.

extensively covered stories of Brodsky and his film business in Asia. Not all reviews were positive; some were quite critical. In his article, “Bret Harte Said It: The Heathen Chinese is Peculiar” (1916), published by the *New York Tribune*, the noted playwright George S. Kaufman interviewed Brodsky and featured Brodsky’s film production in China. Kaufman stated he was shocked to learn that the Chinese had been flocking to movie houses for one-half dozen years and had even made movies for five years.⁸³ Kaufman observed:

The Chinese films, most of them, are bound up with the traditions and the fetishes that are China. Ancestor worship, of course, plays a prominent part in many of them. The Chinese superstitions, also, are constantly getting in the way of the pictures, and many and horrible are the threats that have to be resorted to in order to persuade actors to perform the prescribed stunts. One performer, for example, refused flatly to be photographed in a coffin, citing the highest religious authorities on the question and declining to put himself in line for the visitations of the evil one. As a method of persuasion he was overpowered, placed in the coffin and made to stay there for 36 hours, with the additional promise that he would be kept there forever if he refused to listen to reason. Thereupon the scene was taken. These little incidents, however, render movie making in China a somewhat uncertain profession.⁸⁴

In spite of the difficulties described by Kaufman, Brodsky actually managed to establish the first Chinese film company, the Asian Film Company (possibly formed in 1909, and transferred ownership in 1913)

⁸³ Kaufman, “Bret Harte Said It: The Heathen Chinese Is Peculiar.” “But it is a shock, nevertheless, to learn that the Chinese have been flocking their movie houses for half a dozen years, that they have been making their own pictures for five years, and, in short, that the business is highly organized and flourishing.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.

both in Shanghai and in Hong Kong. The company produced at least four feature movies, including two dramatic films produced in Shanghai, *Empress Dowager* (20 reels) and *The Unfortunate Boy*.⁸⁵ The other two works, *Revealed by the Pot* and *Stealing the Cooked Ducks*, were produced in Hong Kong.⁸⁶ Moreover, his Hong Kong Company (listed as the Oriental Film Co., in a caption) also produced an eleven-and-one-half-minute short film, *The Revolution in China* (1912), attempting to tell the events of the 1911 Revolution.⁸⁷ However, the plot of the film was completely staged and overly dramatized. Kaufman actually reviewed some of the above works and characterized *The Unfortunate Boy* as a “thrilling melodrama.” Furthermore, in their interview Brodsky told Kaufman that, in making the film about the empress dowager of China, the Qing government even loaned a huge segment of the Chinese army (60,000 men) for him to use.⁸⁸ Since the film is lost, it is uncertain whether Brodsky’s claim is true or not. There are no historical records to prove this assertion.

In 1912, for an unknown reason, Brodsky transferred his ownership of the Asia Film Company in Shanghai and some shooting equipment (perhaps not voluntarily) to two managers from the United States Essler and Lehrmann, whose first names are unknown, of the Nanyang Insurance Company.⁸⁹ The American bosses employed two local talents, Zhang Shichun (a comprador who worked as an agent for a Western

⁸⁵ See Leyda, *Dianying-Electric Shadows*, 9-10. In *War in Shanghai*, the July fighting in Shanghai, when the revolutionary forces attacked the arsenal and Woosung forts, was recorded on film by the Asia Film Company, which had been revived in Shanghai just in time for this moment in history. Their film *War in Shanghai* was ready to be exhibited at the end of September, along with their other, Shanghai fictional films.

⁸⁶ Leyda, *Dianying-Electric Shadows*, 16-17.

⁸⁷ Brodsky’s *The Chinese Revolution* (11 min 30 sec), 1912, by Oriental Film Co., is a staged drama.

⁸⁸ Kaufman, “Bret Harte Said It: The Heathen Chinese Is Peculiar.”

⁸⁹ Leyda, *Dianying-Electric Shadows*, 9-11, 16-17.

enterprise) and Zheng Zhengqiu (a noted Beijing opera critic), and made *Nanfu nanqi* (難夫難妻, or *The Difficult Couple*, 1913), launching the birth of Chinese feature film.

In the interview, Kaufman also repeated Brodsky's observation about the Chinese style of acting in which most of the actors' performances show "a lack of imagination."⁹⁰ Of course, during the development of early Chinese cinema, most local filmmakers had backgrounds in traditional theaters. Many performers, directors, and playwrights copied the theatrical models of Beijing opera and *wenminxi* (文明戲, or civilized drama, a type of spoken stage drama popular in the early twentieth century) in order to produce movies for Chinese audiences. Their exaggerated style of acting and theatrical techniques took root in local tales and costumes that were quite different from any Western traditions. Even if Brodsky had extensively worked with local talents during the early stages of his film career, he was lukewarm about such theatrical traditions, as Kauffman was, too. In the article, Kauffman summarized Brodsky's film business in China with the following headline: "For Ways That Are Dark and Tricks That Are Vain There Is Nothing to Surpass the Charley Chaplins and the Mary Pickfords of the Orient. Movies in China? Well, We Should Remark."⁹¹

Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, Brodsky's travelogue and the stories of his film business in China bestowed the country and its people with a vivid image, identity, and definition. Although most of his works were produced for commercial, profit-making purposes, Brodsky skillfully transformed his personal view of the people and the nation into the realm

⁹⁰ Kaufman, "Bret Harte Said It: The Heathen Chinese Is Peculiar."

⁹¹ Ibid.

of mass culture in the United States. By so doing, he contributed to a striking, but in essence stereotyped image of the “non-Western other.” The danger in the distribution and circulation of such cultural artifacts lies not in its intellectual and artistic successes. Rather, as Walter Benjamin suggested, the peril is situated in the strength of the effectiveness, usefulness, availability, and authority of the images.⁹²

As mentioned above, *Trip* conquered American audiences and was extensively screened in the East, the Midwest, and the West of the United States, but Brodsky’s second travelogue, *Beautiful Japan*, encountered a quite different outcome. Since Brodsky accepted the commission from the Japan Tourist Bureau and the Imperial Railways, the patrons held the final say in the project.⁹³ Originally, this production aimed to make a travelogue that would attract potential American tourists. However, due to the underlying tone and cinematic style that Brodsky presented, some powerful Japanese government officials were deeply offended by certain sections of *Beautiful Japan*.⁹⁴ Curry explains that some footage Brodsky wanted to include in the film as a way to interest and amuse American audiences actually made the Japanese a “laughingstock.”⁹⁵ In marketing *Beautiful Japan*, the Japanese government knew exactly what it wanted, which was a thoroughly attractive travelogue that would interest wealthy Western tourists in vanishing Japan, not an ethnographic documentary that would draw clear distinctions between East and West and make Japan look backward.⁹⁶ In the case of *Trip*, Curry further points out that the Chinese production crew and those who facilitated Brodsky’s

⁹² Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 83.

⁹³ Curry, “Benjamin Brodsky (1877-1960): The Trans-Pacific American Film Entrepreneur - Part II”: 176.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 178-179.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

filmmaking in Hong Kong and China were neither in a position to insist on previewing the work nor had the national government censorship to inspect foreigners' film imports and exports.⁹⁷

Brodsky's presentation of China did not altogether misrepresent the people and the nation. Perhaps his travelogue should be viewed less as a false image of the country than as a coherent, but "incomplete" picture. The film was executed and dispersed for a purpose, according to the tendencies and beliefs held in specific historical, intellectual, and economic settings. *Trip* looked so truthful and authentic, yet it was a fabrication, a social and cultural construction. Without doubt, Brodsky was not only an experienced traveler, filmmaker, and film entrepreneur, but also a compelling story-teller. As Said elaborated further on the central idea of *Orientalism*, Western knowledge about the East is generally not generated from facts or reality, but from preconceived archetypes envisioning all "Eastern" societies as fundamentally similar to one another, and fundamentally dissimilar to "Western" societies. Particularly valuable was that *Trip* and the phenomena it aroused in the United States was not exactly a veridical discourse about China. The indigenous view is omitted. And Brodsky's cinematic text presents an ahistorical vision, one lacking an awareness of cultural, national, and racial affinities. The conundrum of the travelogue lies in Brodsky's unsophisticated, primitive approach to and narrative about local culture, which arguably sharpened national and ethnic stereotyping: China is merely poor, awkward, and indecent as opposed to the honorable, dignified, and respectable West. The travelogue reflects a style of thought that was fundamentally grounded in an ontological and epistemological system of values far more intrinsic to the West than to the East.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

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Western Advisers and Late Qing Chinese Military Modernization: A Case Study of Constantin von Hanneken (1854-1925)

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Western Advisers and Late Qing Chinese Military Modernization: A Case Study of Constantin von Hanneken (1854-1925)

Major works on Western advisors in modern China pay much attention to these sojourners' cultural arrogance, moral rightness, and desire to change China. In fact, they were people with different skills and world views who came to China for different reasons. Their careers in China were in many ways determined by the success they achieved and the problems they encountered. Their experiences in China are thus simply too diverse for one to make meaningful generalizations. This paper attempts to expose untold stories of Constantin von Hanneken, who played a leading role in the construction of China's coastal defense between 1879 and 1886. Drawing principally on his personal correspondence, which remains underutilized since its publication in 1998, this paper aims not only to assess this German officer's actual contributions to China's military modernization, but also to present his life drama in China, which was interwoven with hope, greed, ambition and bitterness.

Keywords: Constantin von Hanneken, the Chinese navy, military modernization, Port Arthur, the Battle of the Yellow Sea

Western Advisers and Late Qing Chinese Military Modernization: A Case Study of Constantin von Hanneken (1854-1925)

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I. Introduction

Historians must deal with myth. The late Arthur Marwick stated in one of his very illuminating lectures the relationship among the past, myths, and sources. For him, the past is gone for good, but it has left behind sources and given rise to myths. Through investigating sources, historians challenge myths and create more credible understandings of the past.¹ Broadly speaking, myths include all stories that reveal aspects of historical events and figures as well as faiths, beliefs, and perceptions of particular groups of people.² Myths, which are in fact mixtures of facts and falsities, knowledge and hearsay, and reality and wishes, reveal how their believers conceive themselves, their life experience and things and

Presented on March 6, 2013, at the Annual Conference of the Chinese Military History Society in New Orleans, this paper draws heavily on the constructive comments of Elisabeth Gaske and Ines Eben.

¹ Arthur Marwick, *Writing History* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Open University, 1976), Video recording.

² Robert A. Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

people they encounter. We may go so far as to say that myths endure because individuals as well as communities make sense of their existence through creating and believing in myths.³

The “challenge-and-response” thesis which dominated East Asian Studies in the United States and was later transmitted throughout the Western world in the 1960s has produced at least two myths. First, it is believed that despite their ever-increasing contact with Europeans since the sixteenth century, pre-modern Chinese political leaders who were secure in the superiority of the Chinese culture displayed or pretended to display little interest in the wider world. Second, many still hold that China managed to escape from premodernity only after it came under the influence of the advanced Western nations in the mid-nineteenth century. These two myths have joined to create a Western-centric view that on the one hand overlooks China’s own endogenous momentum for change, and on the other hand overrates Western impact on modern China. The recent reprinting of Paul Cohen’s *Discovering History in China*, which reflects on three paradigms of American Sinology, namely “challenge-and-response,” “tradition and modernity,” and “imperialism,” shows that their influence persists today.⁴ The advancement of Chinese and Western historical scholarship over the last few decades has helped revise many misconceptions, but many more are yet to be demythicized.

The Western advisors’ contribution to the modernization of China, which this case study strives to address, is a major theme to be revisited. Obviously, China’s military and industry were two key areas where Chinese reformers in the 1860s, despite their political and cultural differences, accepted the need for innovation along Western

³ Martin S. Day, *The Many Meanings of Myth* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 9.

⁴ Paul Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*, Studies of the East Asian Institute (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). A new edition was reprinted in 2010.

lines.⁵ However, China lacked many conditions necessary for military and industrial reorganization at that time, including capital, technology, infrastructure and a new elite more adaptive to change and understandably more open who understood to advanced Western scientific knowledge. Recruiting Western experts and advisors met the short-term as well as long-term goals of China. Besides transferring Western knowledge and technology directly to China, they could help nurture a new generation of educated Chinese locals upon whom China could rely. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, China therefore witnessed the inflow of a large number of Western soldiers, engineers, bureaucrats, and others who soon occupied important positions in the Customs Service, a number of arsenals, shipyards, and military schools as well as banks and railway consortiums. Although their abilities and attitudes varied, and some of them took on tasks they were not familiar with, it is generally believed that they were instrumental to the earliest modernization program of China.

Edmund S. K. Fung positively assesses Western military instructors in different types of military schools in the late Qing.⁶ David Pong highly regards the professionalism of the French engineers and technicians in the Foochow Navy Yard.⁷ Catherine Ladds discusses in great detail the work and lifestyle of the middle- and low-ranking Western officers in China's Customs Service.⁸ In the eyes of Jonathan Spence, Frederick Townsend Ward, who repeatedly suffered miserable defeats in his early encounter with the Taipings, eventually became "a brave and effective

⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁶ Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Military Dimension of the Chinese Revolution: The New Army and Its Role in the Revolution of 1911* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1981), 68.

⁷ David Pong, *Shen Pao-chen and China's Modernization in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 325.

⁸ Catherine Ladds, *Empire Careers: Working for the Chinese Customs Service, 1854-1949* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2013).

leader of men within the limits of his opportunities.”⁹ Quoting Spence, “[Ward] had, as well, managed for the first time to train Chinese troops to fight in the most effective manner; had provided a model for Li Hung-chang’s Huai Army...and had built up the foundations of a force that was to be more effectively used by his successor, Gordon” in eliminating the Taipings.¹⁰ Using a range of sources to expose the human weaknesses of some of these Westerners, Spence has, to a certain extent, demythicized them. On the whole, however, he is more impressed by their moral qualities, which originated from a sense of superiority:

The superiority sprang from two elements: the possession of advanced technical skills and a sense of moral rightness. Convinced that their goals were good and that their advice was solely needed, the Westerners adopted a proprietary air toward China; Chinese refusal to accept the validity of their goals, and Chinese rejection of their advice, were met with Western bewilderment or anger.¹¹

Drawing principally on Constantin von Hanneken’s *Briefe aus China, 1879-1886* (Letters from China, 1879-1886), this paper attempts an in-depth account of the German Army officer’s early life experience in China, a life which has been quite often overlooked and at times mythicized. Notably, William Kirby’s pioneer work on Sino-German relations hardly mentions him.¹² Over the last two decades, Hanneken has only caught the attention of historians interested in the Chinese navy and experts on the First Sino-Japanese War. However, relying primarily on Chinese sources, their understanding of Hanneken appears less than

⁹ Jonathan D. Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China* (New York: Penguin, 1980), 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 73, 92.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 290.

¹² William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).

complete. Wang Jiajian, for instance, praises the contribution of this “German expert in battery building” to the development of China’s modern coastal defense, despite Hanneken having received only one and a half years’ training in engineering before going to China.¹³ Wang agrees that Hanneken caused Li Hongzhang great financial strain, but he maintains that Hanneken stood out among his Western colleagues for the efforts he put into designing and completing the forts at Port Arthur (Lushunkuo). In another work, Wang Jiajian shows high regard for this German engineer’s diligence and proactiveness.¹⁴ The works of other scholars such as Xie Junmei, Hu Qiyang and Gao Linyou are too brief to give Hanneken a fair treatment.¹⁵ Liu Yue and Liu Jinqiu, whose biography of Hanneken extensively utilizes *Briefe aus China*, focus their attention on his contribution to China’s maritime defense.¹⁶ Recently, Hanneken’s business undertakings in China and his lavish life in Tianjin during the early twentieth century have come to be more precisely

¹³ Wang Jiajian, *Li Hongzhang yu Beiyang jiandui: Jin dai Zhongguo zhuang jian hai jun de shi bai yu jiao xun* [Li Hongzhang and the Beiyang Navy] (Taipei: National Institute for Compilation, 2000), 299.

¹⁴ Wang Jiajian, *Yangyuan you bei yang hai fang jian she* [Westerners and the Building of North China’s Coastal Defense] (Beijing: Beijing guzi chubanshe, 2004), 126.

¹⁵ Xie Junmei, “Hannagen yu jiaiwu zhongri zhanzheng” [Hanneken and the Sino-Japanese War] in *Jiawu zhanzheng yu jindai zhongguo he shijie* [The Sino-Japanese War and Modern China and the World], ed. Qi Qizhang and Wang Rukui (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2005), 581-594; Wu Qyang, “Shixi huaer, Hannagen yu wanqing lujun xiandaihua” [A Preliminary Study of Ward and Hanneken and the Modernization of the Army in Late Qing], *Xin xueshu* 2 (2008): 184-86 and Gao Linyou, “Zhongguo xinjun cehuaren hannagen” [Hanneken, the Founder of the Modern Chinese Army], *Zhengfu fazhi* 5 (2010), 55. In addition, many works on the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 include less than substantial accounts of Hanneken’s contributions to the Beiyang Navy.

¹⁶ Liu Jinqiu and Liu Yue, *Li Hongzhang de junshi guwen: Hannagen zhuan* [The Military Advisor of Li Hongzhang: A Biography of Hanneken] (Shanghai: Wenhui Publishing Limited, 2010). While paying attention to Hanneken’s leading role in the construction project at Port Arthur, the peaceful side of his life in China, and his relationship with his father back in Germany, this book provides rather minor details about his inner struggle, conflicts with Chinese official-scholars, criticisms of Chinese political culture and emotional ups and downs during his stay at Port Arthur.

presented in Chinese popular literature. Nevertheless, his conventional image as a professional German officer who not only devoted his early life in China to modernizing late Qing military infrastructure, but who also volunteered to defend China from French and Japanese aggressions remained largely unchallenged.¹⁷

Constantin von Hanneken: Briefe aus China 1879-1886 contains 172 letters, 112 of which Hanneken received from his father, Bernhard (Carl August Herman) von Hanneken, while another 60 were from Constantin von Hanneken to his parents, brother, sister, and nephew. These letters, which discussed a wide range of issues, such as Hanneken's reasons for going to China, his experiences and frustrations during his eight-year stay, and his impressions of the Chinese officials and the other Western advisers, sufficiently reveals the inner world of a realist who saw his work in China merely as a necessary step to continue his military career. Though speaking Chinese and working closely with many Chinese people, Hanneken found himself a stranger in a foreign land from which he often tried to escape.

II. The Reluctant Chinese Sojourner

Born to a family with a strong Prussian military heritage, Hanneken entered the Prussian Academy for Cadet Corps (*Preußisches Kadettenkorps*) in his early years. After graduation in 1873, he joined the Eighth Regiment of the East Prussian Army in Metz as *Portepeefähnrich* (similar but not entirely equivalent to ensign), which was another step toward higher levels of command.¹⁸ He withstood the tough

¹⁷ These include Li Xingjian, “Daqing yangshuai Hannagen de Zhongguo qingjie” [The Chinoiserie of Hanneken, the Late Qing Foreign Military Advisor], *Renwu chungju* (March, 2013): 19-22 and many other short Chinese articles and audio-visual programs on the internet.

¹⁸ For a brief discussion of the education system of the *Preußisches Kadettenkorps*, see Robert B. Kane, *Disobedience and Conspiracy in the German Army, 1918-1945* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2002), 201.

examinations and became Second Lieutenant. In 1877, he was reassigned to the Field Artillery Regiment in Mainz. Though his life seemed to be proceeding smoothly, Hanneken left the army and began receiving theoretical and practical training in engineering. One year later, Hanneken accepted the post of military advisor to Li Hongzhang, thanks to the patronage of Gustav Detring, who was a close friend of his father.¹⁹

The reasons behind Hanneken's early exit from the German Army and the motives that pushed him to set sail toward an unfamiliar world are questions that deserve further investigation. As Elisabeth Gaske points out in her thorough study, the lucrative package that the Chinese government offered only proved attractive to lower-ranking German officers who had little career prospects or those who were forced to leave the army for disciplinary reasons.²⁰ In the introduction of *Briefe aus China*, the editor Falkenberg attributed Hanneken's sudden departure to a dispute with civilians. Liu Yue and Liu Jinqiu were told by members of Hanneken's family that his brawl with several leftist Social Democrats after an overheated political discussion led to his dismissal.²¹ In one of his letters to Max von Brandt, the German Envoy in China, dated October 22, 1882, Hanneken mentioned that his departure from the Prussian Army was a penalty (*Bestrafung*). According to Gaske, a court of honor (*Ehrengericht*) that dealt with disciplinary cases of non-criminal nature decided that Hanneken, though allowed to retain his rank, was

¹⁹ Vera Schmidt's *Aufgabe und Einfluß der Europäischen Berater in China: Gustav Detring (1842-1913)* in *Dienste Li Hung-changs* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984) provides a detailed study of Detring's life and work in China; Po Chung Yam's "Westerners in Li Hongzhang's Mufu: With References to Gustav Detring and Hosea Ballou Morse" (M.Phil. Thesis, Hong Kong Baptist University, 2009) compares the works of Detring and Morse, both of whom were important Western advisors to Li Hongzhang.

²⁰ Elisabeth Gaske, *Das Bismarcks Missionäre: Deutsche Militärinstitute in China 1884-1890* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 47-50.

²¹ Liu and Liu, *Li Hongzhang de junshi guwen: Hannagen zhuan*, 6.

stripped of his position.²² Hanneken probably hoped that after accumulating a wealth of military experience in China, he would be able to “at least request an official discharge” (*wenigstens den wirklichen Abschied zu verschaffen*).²³ Taken together, it seems clear that going to China had never been a priority for Hanneken in considering his career path.

Unprepared for his new mission in China, Hanneken was cynical towards his first encounters in China. Many a German stereotypical perceptions of China filled his first few letters to his father: noisy Chinese men with shaved heads, poor people and naked children, poorly built and ill-defended barracks, dirty streets and filthy houses that resembled the ugliest side of the Egyptian city of Alexandria, and so on.²⁴ What particularly caught his eye during his first visit to the magnificent city of Beijing were the Jesuits’ unused and broken astronomical instruments that had been left lying near the city wall.²⁵ The longer he stayed and the more people he met in China, Hanneken reaffirmed that nothing could save China from decline. Driven by self-interest, all the Chinese officials Hanneken met and worked with, regardless of rank, strove solely to make themselves or their family rich and powerful. Their egoism, Hanneken sadly remarked, would eventually bring down this “colossal thousand-year empire.”²⁶ Hanneken’s visit to the Taku Fort in December 1880 reaffirmed his impression that China was in a state of eternal standstill: “The Chinese people are still at the level that they reached one thousand years ago. They still use bows and arrows, without knowing that there are much better weapons today. They

²² Gaske, *Das Bismarcks Missionäre*, 51.

²³ Constantin von Hanneken, *Briefe aus China, 1879-1886*, ed. Rainer Falkenberg (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1998), 337.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20-21, 32, 55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

are left untouched by the recent cultural developments.”²⁷ Western ideas, practices, and institutions transmitted into China through the treaty ports after the Opium War, unfortunately, injected little new energy into the Chinese society. The Chinese Customs Service created by Robert Hart (1835-1911), for example, had had to coexist with the traditional customs officials. While the former served to administer business transactions of Westerners, the latter continued to “repress and exploit” Chinese merchants.²⁸

Though seemingly without a strong sense of mission to change China, Hanneken, who went to China a disillusioned man, once dreamt of a better career there. Excited by his first conversation with Li Hongzhang in November 1879, he told his father, “I have found here a position. I am no longer an aimless and useless loser and I feel that I have partly rebuilt my personality.”²⁹ Without doubt, Hanneken was cheered by the handsome reward, Li Hongzhang’s repeated compliments, Detring’s encouragement, and above all Robert Hart’s appreciation, which, according to Detring, a German in China could hardly think of. Furthermore, he concluded after several military drills that he possessed an expertise few Chinese military officials and Western advisors in China could challenge.³⁰ In his eyes, even the foreign educated Chinese naval officers were not qualified to be “commanders of washbasins” in Germany.³¹ Therefore, it was with such confidence that Hanneken took on whatever tasks were assigned to him using merely what he had learnt from the Academy for Cadet Corps.

²⁷ Ibid., 116; Ernst Schulin’s *Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung des Orients bei Hegel und Ranke* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958) is the pioneer work that fully explores the German conception of China in the nineteenth century.

²⁸ Hanneken, *Briefe aus China*, 118.

²⁹ Ibid., 30.

³⁰ Ibid., 31-35.

³¹ Ibid., 119.

Back in Germany, Berhard von Hanneken, knowing that Li Hongzhang and Robert Hart were the persons who could decide Hanneken's future, repeatedly reminded his son to stay close to them. However, a soldier rather than a politician, Hanneken was overly cautious, so it took him a while to get into the complex political life in China. In a single downturn, Hanneken was caught in an incident a few months later that nearly cost him the patronage of Detring, to whom Hanneken reiterated his awe and gratitude in his early months in China. Simultaneously, this escalated Hanneken's hatred of some Chinese political practices, an intolerance that would become a major obstacle to his development in China.

China's growing demand for Western arms tempted Hanneken to explore opportunities in the Sino-German arms trade as early as in late 1879. Hanneken also perceived the arms trade as a way to help his retired and impoverished father, who was left with only a small pension and some connections with the Prussian Army and the German military industries. In February 1880, he inquired of his brother Hermann, who was serving in the German Army, of the quantity of four-pounders, Chasspots, and German needle guns that could be sold to China.³² Like his father, he believed that the German needle guns, given their simple structure and user-friendliness, fit the still ill-trained Chinese soldiers most. For Hanneken, a successful arms deal with China would win him the appreciation of Li Hongzhang, earn Hanneken Senior a commission, and provide Chinese reformers with improved weapons, liberating them from the grasps of shameless English and German arms agents.³³ The Hannekens eventually came up with an offer in May 1880 of 30,000 needle guns and 50 guns at a price of 1,767,700 German Marks.³⁴ The

³² Ibid., 60.

³³ Ibid., 87.

³⁴ Ibid., 75.

negotiation entered its final phase in late June as details of shipping and insurance came to be finalized.³⁵ Before setting off in June for a survey trip to Port Arthur, where the first Chinese naval base in North China would be built, Hanneken wrote in great confidence to his father, advising him to prepare for a trip to Berlin when he would draw up an agreement with the Chinese officials. The deal, however, was aborted at the last minute. Upon returning to Tianjin in mid-August, Hanneken was informed that the Chinese delegation in Berlin had decided to cancel the deal due to the disappointing performance of the German needle guns. What struck him most was that Detring, who was well aware of the delegation's decision beforehand, did not make any attempt to inform him about the abrupt change, let alone do anything to save the plan. Subsequently, Hanneken spelled out in great frustration his suspicions about Detring.³⁶ Although Hanneken soon resumed cooperation with Detring, and married his eldest daughter in 1895, he was also unmoved by his father's repeated urging to look to Robert Hart for further support.

III. As Soldier-turned-engineer Trapped in Northeast China

Disheartened, at least for a while, by the “unfaithful” actions of Detring, Hanneken chose to distance himself from political matters. His contempt for the political tricks of power-hungry Westerners in the Qing court was well reflected in a letter to his brother one year later: “Everybody here tries to be a great diplomat, and to have diplomatic influence. It is such great amusement when you stand between them and listen to what they say.”³⁷ Perhaps finding light from Max von Brandt's earlier advice to “do

³⁵ Ibid., 85.

³⁶ Ibid., 96.

³⁷ Ibid., 115.

only what they ask you to do, try your best to save money; go home when you have saved enough money, [and] do not try to attain unachievable goals,” Hanneken accepted in 1880 without hesitation the new mission of supervising the creation of a naval base at Port Arthur.³⁸ Prompted by his bad experience in the needle gun trade, he stated, “I do not want to have anything to do with the army and I shall throw myself entirely into the task of constructing the fortification.”³⁹ Soon enough, Hanneken came up with his first construction blueprint.⁴⁰ Though admitting it was his first big construction project as an engineer, Hanneken was quite self-assured because he had realized early on that nobody around him could question his expertise.⁴¹

Hanneken was delighted by the immensity of his first task to construct a new fort, which would watch over the entrance to Port Arthur, especially considering he could be away from Tianjin and Detring. While Hanneken was exceedingly confident of both his construction plans and his competence, Hanneken Senior never stopped furnishing his son with useful technical details about fort building and his own observations of the fort of Toulouse, which was in a geographical environment very much similar to that of Port Arthur. Nevertheless, Hanneken was still certain that “if I am not the only, I should be the most knowledgeable person of these skills here.”⁴² His fears regarding both the shortage of equipment and skilled workers were soon proved to be unfounded. To his surprise, the Chinese farmers, fishermen, and carpenters in that area swept aside their own business to join his workforce for merely a few pennies. Working at a level of tenacity, diligence, and self-discipline far beyond Hanneken’s comprehension, these untrained, ill-equipped

³⁸ Ibid., 53.

³⁹ Ibid., 111.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 93.

⁴¹ Ibid., 52.

⁴² Ibid., 92.

Chinese helped erect the first fort mostly with their bare hands.⁴³

Hanneken enjoyed the power vested in him so much that, for a while, he saw himself as “a little emperor,”⁴⁴ with great financial and administrative autonomy. Delighted by the proposal of Ma Jianzhong, who visited Port Arthur on Li Hongzhang’s behalf in April 1881, to further expand the Port Arthur fortification,⁴⁵ Hanneken mentioned in September 1881 about an expansion plan that included three other forts.⁴⁶ Apart from directing the construction work, he began to pay attention to the reform of the Chinese army and proposed a new army academy in Port Arthur. Though Hanneken’s work proved eminently effective, his growing ambition irritated Li Hongzhang. The amount of financial resources invested in Port Arthur was far less than sufficient for Hanneken and his father, but much beyond his means for Li Hongzhang. In spite of the construction work’s remarkable progress and Hanneken’s outstanding performance, Li Hongzhang refused to provide additional funding after the first inspection, forcing Hanneken to shelve his expansion plans in February 1882.⁴⁷ This marked a watershed in relations between Hanneken and Li Hongzhang and in the following years, Hanneken occasionally criticized Li Hongzhang for his indecisiveness and poor leadership.

The resources at Hanneken’s disposal were too little to modernize the coastal defense of Port Arthur, but sufficient to provoke jealousy from other Chinese officials. Consequently, Hanneken was confronted with intentional attacks upon general observations that he had lost the favor of Li Hongzhang. In mid-1882, things took a turn for the worse

⁴³ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 138.

⁴⁵ Jiang Ming, *Longqi piaoyang de jiandui* [The Fleet with the Dragon Flag] (Beijing: San lian chubanshe, 2002), 281.

⁴⁶ Hanneken, *Briefe aus China*, 151.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 160.

with the arrival of the new director Yuan Baoling (1841-1889). While many Chinese sources credit Yuan Baoling's enthusiastic succession of directorship, who took over the directorship enthusiastically, for restoring the financial viability of the Port Arthur construction project,⁴⁸ Hanneken saw Yuan Baoling as an ignorant mandarin whose unwise moves not only destroyed all his groundwork for the naval base, but also vastly increased building costs.⁴⁹ Still entrusted with the task of supervising a series of dredging and pumping works, Hanneken admitted he was no longer the "little emperor" he used to be.⁵⁰ Fearful of being swept aside, Hanneken withdrew his proposal for the second fort and spent the winter of 1882-1883 in Tianjin reading and writing, so as to acquire advanced knowledge in engineering and to prepare another construction plan for Li Hongzhang.⁵¹

Hanneken's frustrating misfortune intensified his desire to return to the German Army. In October 1882, he asked for Max von Brandt's support in either re-entering the German Army as a reserve officer or at the very least to be formally discharged from it.⁵² While awaiting for the the German Army's final decision, Hanneken resumed his work in Port Arthur in the early summer of 1883 and actively prepared for the second fort on the west side of Port Arthur.⁵³ To boost his declining influence, he helped prepare for a possible Sino-French military confrontation in North China and went so far as to tell his father in a letter to lead the Chinese army against the French. However, nothing gladdened him so much as a

⁴⁸ For instance, see Zhou Yuxing and Huang Zhuanhui, *Longqi: Qingmo beiyang haijun jishi* [The Dragon Flag: An Account of the Beiyang Navy in Late Qing] (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2007), 243 and Liu Guicui, "Yuan Baoling yu Lüshun gongcheng ju" [Yuan Baoling and the Construction Bureau at Port Arthur] *Dalian jindaishi yanjiu* 9 (2012): 480-83.

⁴⁹ Hanneken, *Briefe aus China*, 169.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 194-195.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 337.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 203.

Kabinettsorder (cabinet order) he received along with a letter from his father in mid-July 1883. The contents of the *Kabinettsorder* were not revealed in any of Hanneken's letters, but Falkenberg states in the introduction of *Briefe aus China* that Hanneken received the honorable discharge he had long been seeking in 1883. Probably containing a message about his honorable discharge, the *Kabinettsorder* drove Hanneken to spell out with great joy that he could finally escape from a six-year-long nightmare and was now in a position to plan for a better tomorrow.⁵⁴

Unfortunately, Hanneken remained at Port Arthur for the next three years and experienced tremendous ups and downs. While the long stay at the remote Port Arthur enabled him to escape from different kinds of political struggles in Beijing and Tianjin, it prevented him from creating political allies and networks that would have been vital to his career development. Unlike Detring, who gradually extended his influence to postal services and many other political and diplomatic undertakings, Hanneken had no way to explore other career opportunities while focusing solely on construction work in Port Arthur. Much to Hanneken's delight, he was asked in October 1883 to complete the second fort and, if possible, a third one by the autumn of 1885.⁵⁵ Indeed, the war-like atmosphere and the imminence of a possible French attack in North China eventually led the Chinese political leaders to conclude that the naval base at Port Arthur required further strengthening, albeit at minimal cost. Despite the twist of events, he was shuffled from one task to another and many of his suggestions fell on deaf ears. Concomitant with his growing duties was a reduction in funding. In the next eighteen months, he was forced to rewrite the budget four times.⁵⁶ Construction of

⁵⁴ Ibid., 205-206.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 219.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 260.

the third fort, which was a very important component of his plan, was postponed.

Although Hanneken now seemed to be content with the role of a mere *Baumeister* (architect), he felt that his work environment remained less than positive.⁵⁷ With the arrival of many younger German military instructors since 1883, he was no longer irreplaceable at Port Arthur. His duties as military instructor were soon handed over to another German colleague.⁵⁸ He sadly saw that the incoming German instructors, most of whom were of poor moral and professional qualities, were so obsessed with the power game in China that they did not behave as German officers should.⁵⁹ In August 1885, he wrote in despair that his future would be uncertain after the completion of the project in the following autumn.⁶⁰

IV. Hanneken's Rage

After receiving the Royal delegation in May 1886, Hanneken was reassigned to the new naval base at Weihaiwei, where he spent just a few months. On November 17, 1887, he returned to Germany for eight months on sick leave. Two days after his departure, a long article published in the *Chinese Times* praised him not only for his contribution to army reform and construction work at Port Arthur, but also for his brave deeds during the Sino-French conflict. Its long conclusion, however, highlighted his grievances over the years:

Captain von Hanneken and the other German Officers named then threw in their lot with China at all costs, and not even for their native

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 238.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 323.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 316.

country could they have acted with more devotion. Von Hanneken's noble, warlike spirit was at this time appreciated, and he for a while had his way, but as soon as peace was sure his services were forgotten; he was again subjected to mean and jealous spites, irritating stupidities, and dishonourable intrigues. His arduous labours, his superb citadel, his sunken and masked docks, his fine extemporized defenses, his creation of order out of unconditioned chaos, his loyalty, were turned to his hurt, and his position became painful to a high-minded soldier and gentleman.⁶¹

The author of this anonymous work, as its tone and content suggest, was probably either Hanneken himself or one of his very close friends.

In 1892, Hanneken returned to China. Although it was said that he was again appointed military advisor to Li Hongzhang, little about him was recorded before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. It was not until July 1894 that Hanneken's star shone again. His heroism in accompanying 1,300 reinforcement troops to Korea by sea and his dramatic escape from the *Kwoshing*, which was sunk during a Japanese assault, placed Hanneken back in the spotlight. Together with several Western advisors and technicians, he directed the *Dingyuan*, the flagship of the Beiyang Navy, after Admiral Ding Yuchang was badly injured in the first phase of the Battle of the Yellow Sea. In October 1894, Hanneken was further summoned to the capital to propose a new military reform with the following major points:

1. To create a 100,000-strong new army, divided into two divisions and under the leadership of European officers. They would be stationed at Shanhaiguan after a five-month training period, to fend off a Japanese offensive

⁶¹ Ibid., 335.

2. To strengthen the Beiyang Navy by buying battleships from Chile and Argentina and by integrating some battleships of the Guangdong Navy into it
3. To set up a defense line stretching from Yingkou to Mudken

As his plan abruptly reached another dead-end, Hanneken returned to Germany for a time. At the turn of the twentieth century, he reappeared in China, but as a businessman staying away from military affairs.

Two unreleased reports entitled “The Conditions of the North China Navy and Its Performance in the First Phase of the Sino-Japanese War” (*Bericht über die Zustände in der nordchinesischen Flotte and über ihre Tätigkeit während der ersten Hälfte des japanisch-chinesischen Krieges*) and “A Report on the Unsuccessful Attempt to Create a Royal Chinese Army during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95” (*Bericht über das Scheitern des Organisationsplans für Bildung einer Kaiserlich-chinesischen Armee während des chinesisch-japanischen Krieges 1894/95*),⁶² collected in *Briefe aus China*, provide far too many sources about the Battle of the Yellow Sea to be discussed here. In fact, they in many ways help revise our understanding of China’s miserable defeat in this decisive battle. More importantly, in his critical reexamination of the weaknesses of the Beiyang Navy, Hanneken revealed in these two reports his no-holds-barred hatred of the Chinese government and culture. According to him, instead of being humbled by the forces of the new Asian modernity that Japan represented, China was brought down by its own outworn system. After decades of reform, China remained reliant on incompetent and shortsighted leaders produced by the traditional

⁶² The content of these two reports contrast vividly to that of two other reports which Hanneken submitted to Li Hongzhang earlier. The earlier reports, which are now available in Japanese only, gave an account about the Battle of the Yellow Sea, without going deep into the causes of the Beiyang Navy’s failure. Here, I would like to thank Mr. Chen Yue, an expert in the history of the modern Chinese navy, for sending me a copy of the two earlier reports.

examination system, an authoritarian style of governance that gave rise to nepotism and factionalism, and Western advisors who did whatever they could to please their Chinese patrons. Before the war with Japan, he saw in China “a conceited but lackluster government, an arrogant but incompetent army, a navy without self-confidence, a chaotic command structure, empty arsenals, empty pockets and empty brains.”⁶³

Phil N. McGiffin, who was on board the Chinese ironclad battleship *Zhenyuan* during the Battle of the Yellow Sea, dictated for *The Century* magazine another account of the battle which only partly confirmed Hanneken’s observations. While admitting that the Japanese fleet had better ships, more supplies and better commanders, unlike Hanneken, he admired the extraordinary will and courage of the Chinese crews that enabled the ill-equipped Beiyang Navy to stand until the last minute.⁶⁴ Hanneken’s two reports, compared with McGiffin’s, showed in many ways his vengeful rage and accumulated grievances.

V. Conclusion

It is said that “no man is a hero to his valet.” Equally true is the fact that a man is a hero only to people watching him from afar. Constantin von Hanneken, long known for many general rumors surrounding him yet unconfirmed due to missing pieces that are yet to be completely uncovered, is slowly identified as a man struggling between differing cultures and inner desires. Through deciphering *Briefe aus China*, light is thrown on Hanneken’s previously obscure life in China. The productive, contributive yet conflicting German adviser was never too aware that central authority and power were at the tip of his fingers. From the letters sent back to Germany, we come to comprehend Hanneken’s failure in

⁶³ Hanneken, *Briefe aus China*, 363.

⁶⁴ Phil N. McGiffin, “Battle of the Yalu,” *The Century* 50, 4 (1895), 593.

consolidating his position in Chinese affairs. Too wound up in his hatred and frustration towards the betrayal and complexities of politics, Hanneken oversaw the realism of affiliation and its importance. On a more positive note, Hanneken's attempts at bettering the Chinese navy and its heroic endeavor during the Sino-Japanese War have been further reaffirmed in *Briefe aus China*. Though seemingly always in confrontation with obstacle after obstacle, the German adviser nonetheless once came under the favor of crucial figures such as Li Hongzhang and Gustav Dietring. From this, we witness that Hanneken, after all, was not apolitical as commonly perceived. Personal emotions, tough luck and miscalculated choices were what left the man in the middle of a bitter misfortune.

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Imagined Commonalities: Making Sense of China's Genealogical Nationalism

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Imagined Commonalities: Making Sense of China's Genealogical Nationalism

The concept of a common, genealogical ethnic origin plays a key role in Chinese nationhood to accommodate heterogeneous groups within one imagined family often depicted as common descendants of the Yellow Emperor. This mythicized narrative of genealogical unity has forged a sense of imagined commonalities through a trans-ethnic kinship metaphor—we, the Chinese nation, are one big family with many members. This paper focuses on the continuity and persistence of the genealogical discourse of ethnohistory from ancient times until today. It also suggests that China's hegemonic familial rhetoric is regularly employed to control non-Han groups, whose discontents are mediated not through the politics of exclusion, but rather through the politics of inclusion.

Keywords: nationalism, ethnicity, Chinese nation, the Yellow Emperor, Sima Qian



Imagined Commonalities: Making Sense of China's Genealogical Nationalism

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I. Introduction

When Ban Ki-moon, the then-foreign minister of South Korea, was elected as the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations in late 2006, the Chinese media soon proudly produced numerous articles on his ‘Chinese’ origins, tracing the history of his lineage. This argument was based on the genealogical ties between two Ban clans, one in Korea and the other in China’s Henan Province. Their kinship affiliation dates back to the thirteenth century, when the progenitor of the Ban branch in Korea, Ban Wenjie (Ban Mun-jeol in Korean), migrated to the Korean Peninsula and settled there. In 2009, the local media in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, challenged the existing theory and argued instead that Ban Ki-moon’s ancestors originated from the Ban lineage in Quanzhou, separate from its northern branches.¹

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¹ “Ban Ki-moon’s Ancestral Home Was Originally Quanzhou,” *Quanzhouwanbao* [Quanzhou

China has a long history of imagining primordial kinship ties modeled on the myth of common descent. As the debate on Ban Ki-moon's ancestry reveals, the Chinese have constructed a sense of "imagined commonalities" with non-Chinese, no matter how alien they may be to the Chinese standard. One exemplary case would be the diplomatic strategy of Qiying (耆英, 1787-1858), a Manchu imperial kinsman of the Qing state, for negotiating a peace treaty with Great Britain after the First Opium War. In 1843, despite his pejorative attitude against European "barbarians," he proposed an honorary adoption of the son of the chief British plenipotentiary, Sir Henry Pottinger (1789-1856). As John King Fairbank vividly describes:

Seeing a miniature of Pottinger's family, for example, Ch'i-ying [Qiying] explained that, having no son himself, he wished to adopt Sir Henry's eldest boy. On being told that the boy must first finish his education in England, Ch'i-ying replied, "Very well, he is my adopted son from this day"; henceforth his name should be "Frederick Keying Pottinger." Having obtained the son's miniature, he then made bold to ask for that of his mother and offered a portrait of his own wife in exchange. After some hesitation Sir Henry gave up Lady Pottinger's picture also. Ch'i-ying received it in elaborate Manchu fashion and ordered it borne home in his chair of state.²

It proved to be a merely symbolic gesture in that Sir Henry's son, Sir Frederick Pottinger (1831-1865), did not become Qiying's adopted son. Nevertheless, this episode illustrated the strategy of "harmonious kinship" (和親) and alluded to the traditional Chinese way of

Evening News], March 21, 2009. I would like thank Professor Liang Chen at Nanjing University for bringing this news to my attention.

² John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 110.

conceptualizing foreigners.

The *mentalité* of conceiving commonalities through fictive kinship ties, which endures into the present, is a mainstay of modern Chinese nationalism. In particular, the unifying myth in China, as elsewhere, has been crucial to the formation of modern nationhood since it has apparent advantages for cementing the various groups together. In contrast with the process of exclusive ethnic boundary-making in most of the world's nationalizing states, however, this primordial foundation of the Chinese nation has displayed the supra-ethnic feature of boundary-clearing in the sense that the rhetoric of common blood and kinship is not to exclude but to accommodate heterogeneous ethnic groups into a single genealogical origin. I suggest that the Chinese practices of imagining kinship commonalities could be conducive to the development of a social theory of nationalism in an age of post-imperial and post-colonial nation-states.

From a comparative-historical perspective, moreover, it is important to note that the Chinese notion of common descent, one that strives to accommodate all ethnicities, differs significantly from the Judeo-Christian idea of God's chosen people, in which the superiority of one ethno-religious group over others is assumed. As Philip Gorski, who has challenged the modernist approach to nationalism, convincingly suggests, the Hebraic mythology which entails a binary opposition between sacred "us" and profane "others" not only became a crucible in which Western nationalism was forged but also had its roots well before the early modern period.³ As he put it, the Hebraic idiom was "well-nigh universal in Medieval Europe" and was later precipitated particularly by Calvinism in early modern Europe.⁴ As Christian universalism was replaced by confessional particularism, some nationalist discourses in early modern polities were "no less nationalistic than the nationalism

³ See Philip S. Gorski, "The Mosaic Moment: An Early Modernist Critique of Modernist Theories of Nationalism," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 5 (March 2000): 1428-468.

⁴ Gorski, "The Mosaic Moment," 1455.

of the French Revolution.”⁵ Although I limit my argument to China’s case, I wish to remind readers of how China’s boundary-clearing conceptualization of common descent, including present-day genealogical nationalism, can be distinct from other boundary-making ideas embedded in nationalist discourse.

II. Imagined Kinship and Primordial Ethnicity

In general, ethnicity is defined as an extension of the concept of family. In modern society, ethnicity “has replaced kinship as the principal method of identity-conferment.”⁶ Furthermore, ethnicity as an extended family, either real or imagined, manifests “a greater resiliency and recuperative power than corporate bodies which are not centered on primordial qualities.”⁷ In this sense, the strength of ethnic nationhood in a given society primarily hinges upon its ability to arouse primordial sentiments based on kinship bonds and blood ties. The process of modern nation-building tends not to silence such primordial sentiments but to accelerate them.⁸

The scholarship on ethnic nationalism has paid attention to the myth of common descent and eventually focuses on biology in a genealogical sense.⁹ Max Weber clarified that ethnic group identity is almost always based on the subjective belief in a common ancestry, from

⁵ Gorski, “The Mosaic Moment,” 1428.

⁶ Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 46.

⁷ Edward Shils, “Tradition,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, no. 2 (1971): 158.

⁸ See Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Free Press, 1963), 105-57.

⁹ See Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Ronald Grigor Suny, “Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations,” *Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 4 (December 2001): 862-96.

which the shared characteristics of co-ethnic members are ostensibly derived. Ethnic groups are, therefore, “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.”¹⁰ Other ethno-symbolic elements like shared memories, values, symbols, and traditions also play a critical role in what constitutes the foundation of ethnic and national identities.¹¹ So the notion of ethnic nationhood entails a sense of ascribed, inalienable attachment to a larger community, especially via the myths of common descent and shared histories. Here, the issue of nationhood becomes not a question of choice but a matter of destiny that transcends individuality. This nationalist appeal to primordial traits is, by and large, more strident when the ethnic identities in question seem to be threatened. As Ronald Suny aptly illustrates, “Even though immutable identities should be the least threatened, primordialist nationalists, as if unconvinced by their own rhetoric, fear the loss of identity and seek actively to intervene to save it.”¹² The problem is that this kind of primordial feeling tends to demarcate rigid ethnic lines between the national majority as a core and the ethnic minority as an alien outsider. In turn, ethnic groups having clear-cut and uncontested boundaries are more likely to enter into conflict with each other in many forms: ethnic and national discrimination, forced segregation, violence, oppression, exploitation, and resistance movements. Extreme forms of ethnic conflict, accompanied and driven by the politicization of ethnicity, include ethnic cleansing and genocide in the contexts of post-colonial and post-imperial nation-state building.

¹⁰ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 389.

¹¹ See Anthony D. Smith, “The ‘Sacred’ Dimension of Nationalism,” *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (December 2000): 791-814.

¹² Suny, “Constructing Primordialism,” 893-94.

In China, as elsewhere, ethnicity has been imagined as an extension of family, whose idea has been essential in the process of post-Qing nation-making. The narrative of common descent, in particular, has served not only as the source of primordial sentiments to the Chinese nation comprising the Han and non-Han peoples, but as the official propaganda of a “unified multiethnic state” (統一的多民族國家). In the familial metaphor of the Chinese nation as being one big family (中華大家庭), China’s ethnic minorities are considered as the “brothers” of Han peoples who constitute “inalienable” family members rather than the exotic and inferior “Others” who need to be civilized by the “Self.” Such rhetoric represents an essential facet of the all-inclusive whole of the Chinese nation, one that embraces fifty-six official nationalities.

It should be emphasized here that this boundary-clearing nationhood makes China incommensurable to most post-colonial and post-imperial nation-states, which are modeled on the logic of ethnic or racial boundary-making and include neighbors such as postwar Japan, two post-colonial Koreas, and Vietnam. This crucial bifurcation began to emerge in the course of the empire-to-nation transformation. The dissolution of other continental empires such as the Ottoman and Habsburg resulted in ethnic separatism in nascent national states, the condition of which was also common aftermath of European colonial powers. On the contrary, China has reconfigured its ancient ideas of common descent and kinship across various ethnic groups, so much so that its historical heritage has to be taken into account to explain the primordial foundation of modern Chinese nationhood. The question, then, is: in what ways have the Chinese created, expanded, and transmitted such ancient conceptions?

III. The Formation and Expansion of the Myth of Common Origin

The notion of genealogically-defined descent group persists, most

notably through the ancestral worship of the mythical Yellow Emperor (黃帝) and the Flame Emperor (炎帝). Since no later than the fourth century BCE, the Yellow Emperor has been regarded as the founder of Chinese civilization and an ancestor of the legendary sage-rulers of antiquity such as Yao (堯) and Shun (舜).¹³ For modern Chinese nationalists, the Yellow Emperor has remained the most revered figure,¹⁴ although many historians like Gu Jiegang (顧頡剛, 1893-1980) and Yang Kuan (楊寬, 1914-2005) have been skeptical about the historicity of such a figure. In this respect, the national discourse on the Yellow Emperor as the progenitor of the Chinese people is not simply an “invented tradition” of modern times but is based on an ancient cultural repertoire. My intention is not to examine the factuality of Chinese myths of common descent which, after all, is a task that belongs to historians. Given that the myths of common descent need not, and usually will not, correspond to historical realities, sociologists are concerned “not with actual descent, but with the sense of imputed common ancestry and origins.”¹⁵ So I focus on the socio-political function of the myth of the descent of the Yellow Emperor, emphasizing its all-embracing feature. Both yesterday and today, the Chinese imagination of descent group has sought not to preclude or demonize ethnic strangers, but to construct primordial myths over the “Chinese” origins of non-Chinese peoples.

Indeed, the use of fictive kinship metaphors as a way of integrating a heterogeneous population is common in ancient world history. China is

¹³ Around the sixth-fifth century BCE, the legends around Yao and Shun became well known and people came to believe that these two sage-rulers really existed. Later, the myths of Yao and Shun were incorporated into a part of the genealogy of the Five Emperors. See Masaru Mitari, “Myths and History: The Chinese Case,” in *Ethnic Identity and National Characteristics*, ed. Wolfram Eberhard, Krzysztof Gawlikowski, and Carl-Albrecht Seyschab (Munich: Simon & Magiera, 1982), 148-54.

¹⁴ See Terence Billeter, “Chinese Nationalism Falls Back on Legendary Ancestor,” *China Perspectives* no. 18 (July-August 1998): 44-51.

¹⁵ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 24.

not an exception. Just as the supposed ancestor, Abraham, united the various tribes of ancient Israel, so did the Chinese during the Warring States period (475-221 BCE) aspire to embrace virtually all clans of the Sinitic cultural sphere under a common genealogy descended from the Yellow Emperor. The first authenticated reference is found in a bronze inscription attributed to King Xuan of Qi (齊宣王, r. 319-301 BCE) to whom Mencius gave advice.¹⁶ Although that does not mean that the idea of the Yellow Emperor was an invention of the Qi kings, the Yellow Emperor was nevertheless the high ancestor of the Tian family, the ruling house of Qi. The myths of the Ying clan, the ruling family of the state of Qin that eventually established the first unified empire, also centered around the Yellow Emperor and his descendants.¹⁷ More probably, the ancestral worship of the Yellow Emperor was widespread among the ruling houses of such large powers as Qi and Qin, which were “most anxious to establish the cosmic and historic prestige of their own pedigrees.”¹⁸ It also reflected the political ideal of unifying all the states into one large empire, one that prevailed during the Warring States period.

This mythology of the descent from a quasi-divine, quasi-human sage-ruler of the remote past was not limited to the political sphere, but disseminated into the philosophical and religious domains. In particular, the Taoist school in the pre-imperial period made attribution to the Yellow Emperor as its origin, which later created the Yellow Emperor-Laozi, namely Huang-Lao (黃老), Taoism, so popular during the early decades of the Former Han dynasty (前漢, 206 BCE - 9 CE). The linkage between the Yellow Emperor and Taoism (and other schools) clearly appeared in the Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor (黃帝四經), also

¹⁶ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 239.

¹⁷ Mitarai, “Myths and History,” 149.

¹⁸ Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 239.

known as the Huang-Lao Silk Manuscripts (黃老帛書), excavated from the Mawangdui (馬王堆) tomb, Hunan Province, in 1973.¹⁹ In this document that was most probably written during the late Warring States period, the Yellow Emperor was depicted as the only one who united All-under-Heaven (天下) as one.²⁰ As a corollary, the Yellow Emperor as a universal sovereign was believed to be the ancestor of all humankind.

This notion of a single kinship community as the common descendants of the Yellow Emperor had grown more elaborate during the early imperial period, for the Chinese continued to encounter various foreign groups previously barely known to them. In the first half of the Former Han dynasty, the syncretic complex of Huang-Lao Taoism became so dominant that it even received imperial support until the triumph of Confucianism as state orthodoxy.²¹ As a follower of Huang-Lao thought, Sima Tan (司馬談, d. 110 BCE), who served as the court historian and astronomer, proclaimed the superiority of Taoism over other schools of thought. His son, Sima Qian (司馬遷, ca. 145-86 BCE), was also influenced deeply by the Huang-Lao scholarship, which is clearly reflected in his monumental writings, *Shiji* (史記).

Sima Qian lucidly formulated the allegedly shared ancestry not only in terms of Chinese but also of non-Chinese on the basis of his belief that all human history and society stemmed from the Yellow Emperor, as summarized in Figure 1. Thus, the first chapter of *Shiji* is the Basic Annals of the Five Emperors (五帝本紀) and, among them, the

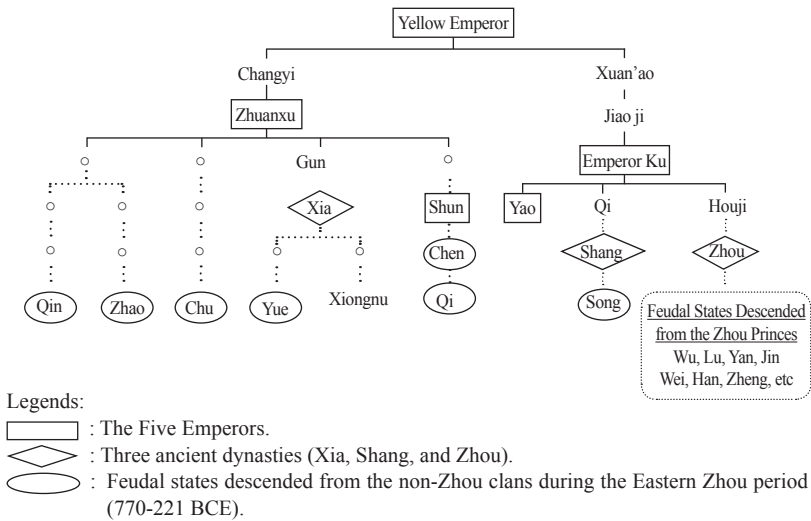
¹⁹ For the English translation with general discussion of the Four Canons, see Leo S. Chang and Yu Feng, *The Four Political Treatises of the Yellow Emperor: Original Mawangdui Texts with Complete English Translations and an Introduction* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998); Edmund Ryden, *The Yellow Emperor's Four Canons: A Literary Study and Edition of the Text from Mawangdui* (Taipei: Kuangchi Press, 1997).

²⁰ Chang and Feng, *The Four Political Treatises of the Yellow Emperor*, 155.

²¹ For the discussion of the Huang-Lao Taoism and its changes, see Ryden, *The Yellow Emperor's Four Canons*; Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 237-54.

Yellow Emperor comes in first.²² In fact, the very first word of the *Shiji* is the “Yellow Emperor.” Sima Qian accordingly created a narrative of imagined commonalities among all human societies from the creation of the state by the Yellow Emperor until his own days.

Figure 1. The Genealogy of the Yellow Emperor Recorded in the *Shiji*



To construct the myth of common descent within Han proper, Sima Qian wrote that originally non-Sinitic polities of pre-imperial times like the Chu, Yue, and Qin indeed originated from the descendants of the Yellow Emperor (see Figure 1). For instance, he related how the ancestors of the

²² The Five Emperors in the *Shiji* consist of the Yellow Emperor, Zhu'anxu, Emperor Ku, Yao, and Shun. At the beginning, however, there were no such sequential and genealogical relationships. These gods had originally been worshipped in a parallel manner by the different clans in the various regions in early antiquity. So the very early form of the Chinese myths had been shaped independently by each clan. See Gu Jiegang, *Zhongguo shanggu shi yanjiu jiangyi* [Commentaries on Classics for the Study of Ancient Chinese History] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 13-19, 86-95; Mitarai, “Myths and History,” 148.

kings of the state of Chu in the central Yangtze River basin were descendants of Zhuanxu (顓頊), one of the Five Emperors and believed to be a grandson of the Yellow Emperor, and by the end of the Shang dynasty they were “at times in the Middle Kingdom (中國) and at times among the alien (夷狄) peoples.”²³ His records on the genealogical origin of the state of Qin were the same as Chu: the ancestors of the Qin core group descended from Zhuanxu and resided “sometimes in the Middle Kingdom and sometimes among the alien peoples,” having been located in the northwestern fringe of the Sinitic culture realm.²⁴

When Sima Qian recorded the history of foreign states beyond Han proper, he pointed out that they were mostly founded by disaffected or defeated Chinese who fled to the wilderness and reestablished their regimes there. So he formulated their ethno-genealogy as having some connection to Chinese ancestors—the descendants of the Yellow Emperor. His intention in the *Shiji* is clearly embodied in the chapters on Vietnam (then the Nam Viet kingdom), Korea (then the Wiman Joseon kingdom), and even the Xiongnu (匈奴), China’s main enemy. The passage on the ethnic origins of the Xiongnu people reads: “The ancestor of the Xiongnu was a descendant of the ruling clan of the Xia dynasty (夏后).”²⁵ Hence, the Xiongnu became the descent of the Yellow Emperor because, from the Yellow Emperor down to Yu the Great, one of legendary sage-kings who founded the Xia dynasty, they all shared the “same *gens* (同姓) but adopted different appellations for their states.”²⁶ This “Chinese” origin of the Xiongnu marked them out as legitimate constituents of Chinese history from the very beginning and, more importantly, made them part of the family alongside the kinship rhetoric

²³ Sima Qian, *Shiji* [Records of the Grand Historian], 10 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 1689-690.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 173-74.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2879.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 45. See also Figure 1.

in Han-Xiongnu diplomacy formed by the policy of marriage alliance. Such reconstructions of the Xiongnu's remote past "have a highly normative function and fulfill two goals: making the unknown seem familiar, and establishing a certain subject as one worthy of investigation (and therefore worthy of record keeping)."²⁷

The works of Sima Qian reflect the typical Chinese understanding of the Middle Kingdom and its neighboring states during early imperial times. The construction of the myth of the Yellow Emperor as a common ancestor tells us how the ancient Chinese began to imagine their communal ethnic history by forging a fictive kinship narrative to make sense of the ever-increasing inhabitants within and beyond China proper. Yet they did not have a belief analogous to the Israelite's self-image as Yahweh's chosen people. As mentioned, they conceived the nomadic peoples outside the Great Wall not as the descendants of the wicked ancestors banished to the outer world but as having a common kinship with the native Chinese. There was no similar story in the myth of the Yellow Emperor comparable to the expulsion of Abraham's eldest son Ishmael to live in the wilderness. In the long run, such interpretations had become the foundation of China's all-inclusive conception of ethnicity. Moreover, this imagined commonality was asserted not only by native Chinese, but by non-native peoples as well.²⁸

About half a millennium later, despite going largely unnoticed in much of the scholarship, Sima Qian's kinship rhetoric of the Xiongnu was appropriated by Helian Bobo (赫連勃勃, r. 407-425), the founder of the short-lived Xia, the last Xiongnu state in Chinese history. When he established the empire, he proclaimed himself as a descendant of the Xiongnu Xiahou clan (which exactly followed the *Shiji*) and thereby

²⁷ Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 298.

²⁸ See Bret Hinsch, "Myth and the Construction of Foreign Ethnic Identity in Early and Medieval China," *Asian Ethnicity* 5, no. 1 (February 2004): 81-103.

chose “Great Xia”(大夏) as the name of his state.²⁹ At the same time, unlike his ancestors who sinicized their surname to Liu, the imperial surname of the Han dynasty, he went back to the old Xiongnu noble clan name, which reveals that he was keenly conscious of his ethnic identity. It was not contradictory for Helian Bobo to be both Xiongnu and Chinese on the ground of his reference to the “Chinese” origin of the Xiongnu in the *Shiji*.

During the Age of Disunion (220-589), we can observe many instances in which fanciful ethno-genealogies were drawn up. Several alien conquerors, who adopted the image of the Chinese ruler as the exclusive holder of the Mandate of Heaven, portrayed themselves as the descendant of the Yellow Emperor. Although he was of the proto-Tibetan Di origin, for example, Fu Jian (苻堅, r. 357-385) of the Former Qin, who temporarily unified northern China, strove to be the sole legitimate ruler of the Middle Kingdom. To prove his qualification as the Son of Heaven, he identified himself with the personage of the Yellow Emperor.³⁰ In addition, the rulers of the Northern Wei dynasty (北魏, 386-534), the Tuoba clan of the Xianbei (拓跋鮮卑), declared that their ancestors descended from the Yellow Emperor, which is well reflected in the Book of Wei (魏書). On the ethnic origin of the Touba Xianbei, it reads:

In antiquity, the Yellow Emperor had twenty-five sons. Those who stayed at home became the ancestors of the Hua Chinese (諸華); those who went abroad scattered in the wilderness (荒服). The youngest son, Changyi, was given the northern lands containing the Great Xianbei Mountain, from which he took his tribal name.... Since the Yellow Emperor ruled through the virtue of earth (土德) and northerners call the earth “Tuo” and the ruler “Ba,” therefore, “Tuoba” became their lineage

²⁹ Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin Shu* [Book of the Jin], 10 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 3202.

³⁰ Michael Rogers, trans., *The Chronicle of Fu Chien: A Case of Exemplar History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968), 163-164.

name (氏).³¹

Imagining non-Sinitic nomads as descendants of the Yellow Emperor becomes quite explicit here: even the tribal name Tuoba stands for the descendants of the Yellow Emperor. Likewise, the Yuwen clan of the Xianbei (宇文鮮卑) that established the Northern Zhou dynasty (北周, 557-581) claimed descent from the Divine Husbandman (神農), also known as the Flame Emperor—the legendary founder of Chinese agriculture and herbal medicine.³² Later, the royal house of the Liao dynasty (907-1125) was recorded in the *Liao shi* (遼史) to be descended from the Yuwen Xianbei. The Khitans were, therefore, simultaneously descendants of the Divine Husbandman. Perhaps they intended to consolidate the political legitimacy of the Liao in Chinese history by tracing their ancestry to the Northern Zhou placed in the legitimate line of dynastic succession.³³ In summary, for alien rulers, the manipulation of ancient mythologies and symbols of an idealized antiquity represents their efforts to secure the right to govern the Middle Kingdom and its multiethnic subjects. It was also a political strategy to mitigate any potential threat from the majority native population. In this sense, the appropriation of ancient Chinese mythology was one practical way to coordinate diverse ethnicities.

Although scholars of modern Chinese nationalism have paid little attention to it, this shared sense of common ethnic origin has been fundamental since ancient China. In addition, the historical memories of

³¹ Wei Shou, *Wei shu* [Standard History of the Wei], 8 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 1.

³² Scott Pearce, “Form and Matter: Archaizing Reform in Sixth-Century China,” in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, ed. Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 150.

³³ However, the later conquest dynasties of the Jin, Yuan, and Qing did not share the ancestral myth of the native Chinese but cherished their own tribal mythologies. To accommodate all ethnicities, they instead pursued the ideal of political unification and employed Confucianism as the official state ideology, one that preaches a trans-ethnic cultural universalism.

interethnic exchanges have contributed to the metaphorical narrative of familial genealogy not just between Han and non-Han, but between Chinese and non-Chinese. Most importantly, this genealogical mentality based on a primordial belief in common descent has shaped the Chinese national self-image up to the present.

IV. The Search for Shared Commonalities in Modern China

After the collapse of Qing China in 1911, the idea of common blood has been the dominant force in the formation of post-imperial Chinese nationhood. The Republican-era (1912-1949) nationalists transformed the ancient myth about the Yellow Emperor into a systematic theory of the antiquity and consanguinity of the Chinese nation.³⁴ The Republican government adopted a calendar based on the Yellow Emperor and the fourth of April was declared a national holiday in honor of his birthday. As critical historian Gu Jiegang recollected, “The official bulletins posted on every street and lane in the days of the Revolution [of 1911] stated that we were living ‘in the year of the Yellow Emperor 4609.’ On what basis was this chronology compiled?”³⁵ Moreover, Chinese nationalists regarded non-Han groups such as the Manchu, Mongol, Hui Muslim, Tibetan, and Miao as racially related “branches” (分枝) off the Han line of evolution. Their emphasis on the “Chinese” origin of non-Han peoples was in a manner remarkably similar to Sima Qian’s fictive ethno-genealogy that united the Han and Xiongnu peoples in common blood and kinship. Thus, even when the Chinese began to read their

³⁴ See Frank Dikötter, “Group Definition and the Idea of ‘Race’ in Modern China (1793-1949),” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13, no. 3 (July 1990): 420-32; James Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China: From the Yellow Emperor to Peking Man,” *Modern China* 32, no. 2 (April 2006): 181-220.

³⁵ Arthur W. Hummel, trans., *The Autobiography of a Chinese Historian, Being the Preface to a Symposium on Ancient Chinese History (Ku Shih Pien)* (Leyden: Brill, 1931), 81.

national history through the idea of linear history³⁶ and the notion of race³⁷ since the late nineteenth century, their application of such concepts has asserted the inseparable ties among the members of the Chinese nation. As shown in his wartime treatise, Chiang Kai-shek claims that “our various clans actually belong to the same nation, as well as to the same racial stock. ... In short, the differentiation among China’s five peoples is due to regional and religious factors, and not to race or blood. This fact must be thoroughly understood by all our fellow countrymen.”³⁸ This practice of emphasizing interethnic commonalities has, of course, continued in the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

In the PRC, the basic principle for interpreting ethnic relations in the past has been to search for the “scientific” evidence of shared primordial commonality between Han and non-Han nationalities. That has been a central tenet of nationhood and statehood, as reflected in the PRC’s official mantra that China is a “unified multiethnic country,” articulated both by statesmen and scholars. China’s current ethnic discourse is not simply intended to substantiate a putative binary opposition between the advanced Han and the backward minorities. Rather, the orthodox theory of the origin and development of Chinese civilization has been what Fei Xiaotong coins the “pluralistic unity” (多元一體)—there has been but one enduring civilization with regional and ethnic variations.³⁹ From two examples of contemporary historiography, I will discuss how the Chinese strive to essentialize “inalienable” links between Han and minorities by means of the ideas of race and social

³⁶ See Luke S. K. Kwong, “The Rise of the Linear Perspective on History and Time in Late Qing China c. 1860-1911,” *Past & Present* no. 173 (November 2001): 157-90.

³⁷ See Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

³⁸ Chiang Kai-shek, *China’s Destiny and Chinese Economic Theory* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1947), 39-40.

³⁹ Fei Xiaotong, ed., *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* [The Pattern of Diversity in Unity of the Chinese Nation], Revised (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 1999).

evolutionism.

1. Tibetan as the Racial Brothers of Han Chinese

It has been well-known to foreigners that the Chinese government has always wanted to legitimize its possession of Tibet proper. Outside China, however, what has been less understood is China's justification—treating the Tibet peoples as racially defined “brothers” of the Han peoples without regard to the will of the Tibetans. For instance, the authors of *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* counter the theory of Tibetan independence found in much Western scholarship by insisting, “This 1000-year-long written history between the Tibetans and various other nationalities in the big Chinese family is an inalterable fact.”⁴⁰ As for defending China's sovereign claim to Tibet, most of the state-sponsored works on Tibetan history have been dedicated to the argument that Tibet is and historically has been an inalienable part of China. This idea of interethnic commonalities is modeled on at least two aspects of the indivisible Sino-Tibetan connection—one is historical-cultural and the other is racial.

On the one hand, the PRC's official sources unanimously underscore the long-lasting cultural and economic exchanges between Han and Tibetans, especially since Princess Wencheng of the Tang (文成公主) was married off to the Tibetan ruler (*btsan-po*) in 641. Following the government's propaganda line, almost all scholars in the PRC highly esteem the history of marriage alliances as a catalyst for reciprocal interactions between the Han and Tibetan peoples, one that ultimately consolidates China's political integrity.⁴¹ At present, therefore, the epic of

⁴⁰ Wang Jiawei and Nyima Gyaincain, *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1997), 4.

⁴¹ Ma Dazheng, “Zhongguo jiangyu de xingcheng yu fazhan [On the Formation and Development of China's Territory],” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 14 (2004): 1-17.

Princess Wencheng is taught in nearly every school in China and serves as a critical instrument for asserting Beijing's undeniable control over Tibetan regions. Hence, the memories of Chinese princesses who became mothers of the Tibetans serve the PRC's national interest (*raison d'état*). As common in cases of primordial nationalism, these imaginary narratives simply transcend time and space. Likewise, on the political status of Tibet, the Chinese state highlights a historical continuity of Chinese "rule" since the Mongol Yuan dynasty that invaded Tibet in the 1240s, despite the fact that even Mao Zedong acknowledged that for hundreds of years "there was no unity between the Han people and the Tibetan people."⁴² Yet still, it deliberately discounts the reality that Tibet's political relations with Ming were sparse and merely maintained through a nominal recognition of Tibetan leaders and a tea-horse trade, albeit the Chinese label of "tribute."

On the other hand, the Chinese government makes use of the modern science of race to corroborate blood ties across its ethnic groups. It asserts genetic similarities between Han and Tibetans and differences between Tibetans and Indians.⁴³ The eminent ethno-sociologist Ma Changshou (馬長壽, 1907-1971), for instance, argues for Han-Tibetan racial similarity on the grounds that both belong to the Mongoloid race and the same Sino-Tibetan language family.⁴⁴ He then tries to refute two major claims that contradict his argument. First, based on some anthropometrical researches suggesting physical similarities between Han and Tibetans, he criticizes the theory that treats the Tibetan race as an inherently separate group from the Chinese nation as an ideological

⁴² Mao Zedong, "Speech on the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (May 24, 1951)," in *The Writings of Mao Zedong: 1949-1976*, vol. 1, September 1949-December 1955, ed. Michael Y. M. Kau and John Leung (Armonk, NY; London: M.E. Sharpe, 1986), 201.

⁴³ Barry Sautman, "Peking Man and the Politics of Paleoanthropological Nationalism in China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 1 (February 2001): 107.

⁴⁴ Ma Changshou, *Ma Changshou minzuxue lunji* [The Collected Ethnological Works of Ma Changshou], ed. Zhou Weizhou (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2003).

weapon of Western imperialism. Second, despite admitting to a long history of cultural interaction between Tibetans and Indians, he harshly denounces the idea of the Indian origin of Tibetan peoples as falling short of any “objective” validity: “We are against a subjective idealist who constructs a deductive reasoning of racial origin on the basis of religious origin.”⁴⁵ His idea apparently resonates with the PRC’s official narrative: both Tibetans and Han peoples share inseparable commonalities in terms of racial and linguistic grounds and maintain hospitable relations since the age of Princess Wencheng. As such, China’s appropriation of modern racial theories is not so much to delineate a dichotomy of “superior” Han and “inferior” non-Han as to construct blood-linked brotherhood to accomplish its political goal of maintaining territorial integrity.

2. Minority as the Living Past of Chinese Civilization

In line with the theory of race, the linear evolutionary perspective on ethnic history has been another important framework accounting for the conceptual development of the modern Chinese nation. The PRC’s official vision of historical progress, in particular, has been based on Marxist social developmental theory, initially proposed by the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan and later developed by Friedrich Engels in his work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Insofar as the goal of research has been given to Chinese archaeologists and ethnologists by the state, it has been precisely to prove the correctness of the Morgan-Engels unilineal evolutionary theory in terms of the Chinese situation.⁴⁶ So Western scholars, critical of ethnic

⁴⁵ Ibid., 348.

⁴⁶ See Charles F. McKhann, “The Naxi and the Nationalities Question,” in *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1995), 39-62. According to the Marxist-Leninist theory of ethno-social development practiced in the PRC during the 1950s, all human societies should go through the progressive sequence of primitive band, matrilineal clan, patrilineal clan, slave society, feudal society, capitalist society,

studies in the PRC, criticize Chinese ethnologists for totalizing the diverse aspects of minorities' cultures within the linear stage theory, rather than appreciating their history, society, and politics in their own rights. For example, Stevan Harrell remarks that, under the guidance of the dominant Morgan-Engels historical paradigm, Chinese scholars have envisioned “the Han as the leading nationality and big brother to the backward minorities.”⁴⁷ What he fails to observe, however, is that even during the apogee of canonical Marxist-Leninist historiography, the emphasis of their discourse was not so much to prove a superiority of the hegemonic Han as to confirm a fundamental premise of interpreting China's past—the commonality between the Han and the minorities.

Chinese ethnologists and historians, including both Han and minorities, have considered some non-Han nationalities as having preserved the primordial and ancient nature of Sinitic culture. They tend to conceive these groups, particularly the Yi (彝族) and the Naxi (納西族) minorities in the southwest borderland, as holding traces of many of Morgan's major stages and are probably the examples *par excellence* of the application of Morganian theory.⁴⁸ In this respect, these groups have been conceived as the “living past”—a crucial key to solving the question of the origins of Chinese civilization. The writing system of Naxi nationality, for instance, supposedly of greater antiquity than that of the ancient Egyptians, is believed to enshrine the traits of archaic Sinitic language, which subsequently leads to the bold nationalist assertion that

socialist society, and, ultimately, communist society. This paradigm still influences Chinese archaeology today. Tong Enzheng, “Thirty Years of Chinese Archaeology (1949-1979),” in *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. Philip L. Kohl and Clare P. Fawcett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 182.

⁴⁷ Stevan Harrell, ed., *Perspectives on the Yi of Southwest China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 4.

⁴⁸ Stevan Harrell, “The History of the History of the Yi,” in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1995), 63-91; Harrell, ed., *Perspectives on the Yi of Southwest China*; McKhann, “The Naxi and the Nationalities Question,” 39-62.

Han Chinese is the oldest language in the world.⁴⁹ Even though the Morgan-Engels paradigm is not as popular as it used to be, the revisionist perspective on the Yi ethnohistory still continues to hold this “living past” hypothesis. This new scholarship since the 1980s aggressively places the ancestors of the Yi at the forefront of the development of early Chinese civilization and portrays them as having been pushed to the periphery only in the last thousand years.

Several native Yi ethnologists, led by Liu Yaohan (劉堯漢, 1922-2012), who set up the “Chinese Yi Culture School” (中華彝族文化學派), have emphasized the inalienable relationships between proto-Yi/Tibetans and proto-Han people in the earliest stage of Chinese civilization, and argued that the former’s contribution to the latter was very significant. One of the similarities between ancestors of the Yi and the Han is that they all respected black color and thought of black as a precious thing.⁵⁰ Liu Yaohan and his Yi colleagues also suggest that although the worship of black ceased to exist among Han people, contemporary Yi people still respect black (“Ni” in Yi language) as spiritual energy and thus Ni becomes the highest object of worship. In this way, PRC scholars support the hypothesis that the Yi nationality today preserves China’s glorious past, and gives useful clues for deciphering the origins of the Yellow River civilization, although they admit that the ancient connection between proto-Yi and proto-Han people is still hard to prove.

Not only did he argue that the elementary cultural traits of the Yi are the prototype of Chinese civilization, Liu Yaohan even proclaims that Taoism indeed originated from the Yi culture.⁵¹ He also asserts that the

⁴⁹ Sautman, “Peking Man and the Politics of Paleoanthropological Nationalism in China,” 106.

⁵⁰ Liu Yaohan. *Yizu shehui lishi diaocha yanjiu wenji* [A Collection of Essays of Research and Investigation of Yi Society and History] (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1980), 212-17; Liu Yaohan, *Zhongguo wenming yuantou xintan: Daojia yu Yizu hu yuzhouguan* [A New Approach to the Origins of Chinese Civilization: Taoism and the Tiger World View of the Yi Peoples] (Kunming: Yunnan Renmin chubanshe, 1985), 25-34.

⁵¹ See Liu, *Zhongguo wenming yuantou xintan*.

ancestors of the Yi are believed to have made at least three great contributions not only to Chinese civilization but to the world: the ten-month solar calendar, the binary mathematical system, and the knowledge of crossbreeding the horse with the donkey to give birth to the mule.⁵² Interestingly, his radical Yi-centric “nationalism” is hardly challenged by Han scholars in public. Insofar as he makes a contribution to the formation of the Chinese nation rather than to its deconstruction, there is no need to repudiate his arguments. The current discourse on the Yi ethnohistory evidently reveals what seems to be politically correct in the PRC.⁵³ By the same logic, the PRC’s minority policy generally tends to be lenient as in this interesting analogy from Lucien Pye:

[T]he Chinese policy, if transferred to America, would be similar to the United States government’s sponsoring the ‘Black Power movement,’ monopolizing the teaching of ‘Afro-American studies,’ and directing those who are thus trained to be more ‘knowledgeable’ about a somewhat synthetic ‘black culture’ to make all their ‘cultural performances’ climax in uninhibited praise of the President.⁵⁴

To sum up, treating some non-Han peoples as the “living past” of earlier phases of Chinese civilization is to forge a sense of shared commonality between the majority and the minority. Even the ultra-nationalistic historiography of minority scholars who may challenge the leading role of Han majority is tolerated as long as it does not breach the principle of a unified multiethnic state modeled on the idea of a common genealogy

⁵² Jiao Pan, “Theories of Ethnic Identity and the Making of Yi Identity in China,” in *Exploring Nationalisms of China: Themes and Conflicts*, ed. C. X. George Wei and Xiaoyuan Liu (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 200.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 200-01.

⁵⁴ Lucien W. Pye, “China: Ethnic Minorities and National Security,” in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, ed. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 508.

from the Yellow Emperor, or even more remotely from Peking Man, as a common ancestry of the Chinese nation.⁵⁵ By contrast, any opposition to this line of official narrative would be strictly forbidden. When the Tibetans mobilized into armed revolt in March 1959, the response from the PRC government was to defend the Chinese nation as a great family: “Tibet is an inalienable part of China. It belongs to the big family of the Chinese people, not to the handful of reactionaries, much less to the imperialists and foreign interventionists.”⁵⁶ This familial metaphor embodies a striking continuity in conjunction with a universalistic ideal of Chinese empire—namely, “All-under-Heaven is one family” (天下一家).

V. The Familial Metaphor in China: Yesterday and Today

I have suggested that the primordial kinship discourse is not simply a modern invention but rather a cultural repertoire that has persisted since early China. Much scholarship on Chinese nationalism, however, has largely conceived this primordial aspect of the Chinese nationhood as an “instrumentalist manipulation” or “invention of primordial essence”⁵⁷ without paying due attention to its historical background. As discussed, one of the typical characteristics of Chinese historiography has been the

⁵⁵ See Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China”; Sautman, “Peking Man and the Politics of Paleoanthropological Nationalism in China”; Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People’s Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-Century China* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁵⁶ Resolution of the Question of Tibet, adopted on April 28, 1959, by the First Session of the Second National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China. As rendered by George N. Patterson, “China and Tibet: Background to the Revolt,” *China Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (March 1960): 102.

⁵⁷ Uradyn E. Bulag, “The Chinese Cult of Chinggis Khan: Genealogical Nationalism and Problems of National and Cultural Integrity” (presented at the Statement for Discussion, Victoria, Canada, October 3, 2003).

appeal to the conception of common ancestry, which holds that both Sinitic and non-Sinitic peoples originated from the same ancestors.⁵⁸ Similarly, Patricia Ebrey points out that the ethnic dimension of Chinese identity “was rooted in the habit of thinking of the largest we-group in terms of patrilineal kinship, that is, imagining the Hua, Xia, or Han, metaphorically at least, as a giant patrilineal descent group made up of intermarrying surname groups.”⁵⁹ She is right, but this emphasis on kinship relations has not been exclusively beneficial to the development of in-group solidarity among Han Chinese. My point is that the Chinese have imagined some primordial commonality between the Han and non-Han peoples on the basis of the myth of common descent and the historical memory of interethnic exchanges. Furthermore, the discourse of such ‘imagined commonalities’ as constituent of the genealogically informed Chinese nation reverberates with the state project of the PRC. From the 1980s, in particular, this has been an important part of the state’s efforts to construct a new nationalism that would serve as an ideological bond to traverse and transcend complex class, regional, and ethnic lines in order to fill the vacuum left by the decline of Maoist ideology.⁶⁰ At the same time, PRC policy has re-emphasized greater autonomy for non-Han groups, which partly accounts for the current trend of ethnic revival among them, such as Manchus, Mongols, Yao, Yi, and Zhuang.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Hinsch, “Myth and the Construction of Foreign Ethnic Identity in Early and Medieval China,” 102-03.

⁵⁹ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Women and the Family in Chinese History* (London: Routledge, 2003), 166.

⁶⁰ See Frank N. Pieke, “The Genealogical Mentality in Modern China,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 1 (February 2003): 101-28; Hui Wang, “The ‘Tibet Issue’ Between East and West: Orientalism, Ethnic Regional Autonomy, and the Politics of Dignity,” *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 42 (2010): 7-30.

⁶¹ For the discussion of the Manchus, see Lian Bai, “Identity Reproducers Beyond the Grassroots: The Middle Class in the Manchu Revival Since the 1980s,” *Asian Ethnicity* 6, no. 3 (October 2005): 183-201. For Mongols, see Almaz Khan, “Chinggis Khan: From Imperial Ancestor to

But China's assertion of shared commonalities is not always consensual, for it often faces a severe resistance from outside the PRC on the ground that such a genealogical idea renders the position of China's non-Han groups highly vulnerable.⁶² The Dalai Lama, for instance, denounces the PRC's claim of historically constituted common blood relations and argues that "archaeological findings have revealed that the Tibetans and Chinese have been two distinct people since the dawn of human civilization."⁶³ Similarly, the recent cult of Chinggis Khan as the number one "Chinese" national hero, the unifier of China and the only "Chinese" who ever defeated Europeans, would offend many Mongols in Outer Mongolia and elsewhere.⁶⁴ After the Cultural Revolution, the cult of Chinggis Khan has been intensified as implied by an official evaluation; in 1980, he was praised in the *People's Daily* (人民日報) as a "leader of Chinese and foreign peoples, an outstanding military strategist and statesman" without identifying even his Mongol ethnicity.⁶⁵ The Beijing government has also espoused the official sponsorship of the rituals of Chinggis Khan as a proof of concern and love for the Mongol nationality. The annual honoring ceremonies have been held in the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum located in Ordos of Inner Mongolia, which was built in the 1950s and rebuilt after the destruction of the Cultural Revolution.⁶⁶ Such addition of Chinggis Khan to the Chinese national

Ethnic Hero," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1995), 248-77. For Yao, see Ralph A. Litzinger, "Memory Work: Reconstituting the Ethnic in Post-Mao China," *Cultural Anthropology* 13, no. 2 (May 1, 1998): 224-55. For Zhuang, see Katherine P. Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China* (Boulder, CO: Rienner, 2000), 125-48.

⁶² Pieke, "The Genealogical Mentality in Modern China," 121.

⁶³ Sautman, "Peking Man and the Politics of Paleoanthropological Nationalism in China," 107.

⁶⁴ Uradyn E. Bulag, *The Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002); Bulag, "The Chinese Cult of Chinggis Khan."

⁶⁵ Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 466-67.

⁶⁶ See Khan, "Chinggis Khan: From Imperial Ancestor to Ethnic Hero."

pantheon is an intricate process, “reflecting the complex relationship between Mongols as an ethnic minority that wishes its culture and heroes to be properly represented by the state and the state’s desire to integrate minorities, including Mongols, into a national state.”⁶⁷

Taking such ethnic politics of the PRC into account, foreign scholars and human rights activists together with overseas non-Han nationalists have been critical of the official theory of the Chinese nation as an ideological weapon to suppress the rights of self-determination for non-Han groups, which would inevitably eliminate their cultural independence—leading to “cultural genocide” in Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang [Eastern Turkestan]. Among them, for instance, the overseas Mongol anthropologist bitterly rejects the PRC’s formulation of the Chinese nation, noting that “an inclusive concept presumes the ‘Han’ as its core and is deeply inflected by racism.”⁶⁸ He is certainly correct to argue that this is grounded in the all-embracing whole that does not demarcate an immutable ethno-racial line. However, his accusation of Han “racism” is problematic in light of Chinese realities. The representation of Chinggis Khan as winning the “racial” glory for the Chinese people is absurd yet still understandable within the context of the race-oriented genealogical nationalism in China today. In this sense, the nationalist question stems from its all-encompassing definition, which in turn does not tolerate any state-seeking nationalism from the minorities. It is a case of the violence of inclusion.

The conceptualization of ethnicity in China, because of its inclusionary nature, can be distinctive from that among colonial powers and the post-imperial and post-colonial national states. It does not necessarily impose a fixed objectification of “Self” and “Other,” nor does it essentialize non-Han minorities as inferior beings. Also, it is not based

⁶⁷ Bulag, *The Mongols at China’s Edge*, 243.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

on the representation of ethnic minorities as “impure” and “foreign” vis-à-vis the national majority. From pre-imperial times to the present day, there is a historical continuity and persistence in the making of a primordial dimension of nationhood. In the past, the Son of Heaven embodied the father of the imagined family. In the present, although the Han is customarily considered as the core ethnicity, the leader of the giant family of the Chinese nation is not so much the ethnic Han as the Communist leaders. In this respect, the ethnic logic of nation-building, which was crucial to the empire-to-nation transformation in post-Ottoman, post-Habsburg and post-USSR societies, has not been fully implemented in post-Qing China.

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Instrumental Nationalism? The Dokdo Problem Through the Lens of North Korean Propaganda and Diplomacy

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Instrumental Nationalism? The Dokdo Problem Through the Lens of North Korean Propaganda and Diplomacy

The article examines North Korea's standpoint on the Dokdo question from the perspective of North Korean propaganda and diplomacy. It describes Pyongyang's historical and legal arguments in favor of Korean ownership, summarizes the successive phases of North Korea's Dokdo policy, and analyzes factors that induced North Korean leaders to alternately highlight or de-emphasize the dispute. It concludes that Pyongyang's attitude toward the Dokdo issue has not been shaped solely by the factor of nationalism, but rather by varying combinations of North Korean-Japanese, South Korean-Japanese, and inter-Korean relations. Finally, it seeks to explain the fluctuations in Pyongyang's Dokdo policy by placing it into the theoretical framework of ethnic nationalism versus state-centered nationalism.

Keywords: Dokdo, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, territorial dispute, state-centric nationalism

Instrumental Nationalism? The Dokdo Problem Through the Lens of North Korean Propaganda and Diplomacy

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Introduction

The territorial dispute between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan over the island of Dokdo (known as Takeshima in Japanese and as Liancourt Rocks in English) has attracted considerable scholarly attention ever since its eruption in 1952. Relevant publications extensively investigated the historical, diplomatic, political, legal, and economic aspects of the dispute, both from a South Korean and from a Japanese perspective. Some scholars also examined the attitude the United States adopted toward the Dokdo problem, from preparations for the San Francisco Peace Treaty to current American efforts to ensure Japanese-South Korean cooperation in the face of North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Despite the broad scale of scholarly literature on Dokdo, some aspects of the dispute remain more or less underresearched. One such topic is the attitude that North Korea (by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK) adopted toward Dokdo, and the relative significance of this issue in North Korean diplomatic strategies and tactics. In Korean, the most comprehensive and

sophisticated analysis of this subject is an article written by Bae Jin-su and Yang Ju, which skillfully placed North Korea's press comments on the Dokdo issue into the context of Japan's respective relations with North Korea and South Korea.¹ In English-language publications, only a handful of authors pointed out that the DPRK regarded Dokdo as inherent Korean territory just like the ROK, and they did so only passingly.² On the one hand, publications with a focus on the dispute made few, if any, references to Pyongyang's standpoint, but concentrated on the primary actors South Korea and Japan. On the other hand, studies on North Korean diplomacy in general, and Japanese-North Korea relations in particular, paid little or no attention to the question of Dokdo. Even such a comprehensive analysis of North Korean nationalist propaganda as *The Cleanest Race* by Brian Myers did not mention Dokdo, though it carefully examined North Korean images of Japan and South Korea.³

This research gap reflects the fact that North Korea is neither a possessor nor a claimant in the Dokdo dispute, and therefore its direct impact on the conflict has been fairly negligible. Actually, neither of the

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¹ Bae Jin-su and Yang Ju, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok: Buk-il gwangye mit Han-Il gwangye ganggwanseong eul jungsim euro" [Content Analysis of News Articles (1948-2008) of the North Korean Newspaper, *Rodong sinmun*, on the Dokdo Issue: In the Context of DPRK-Japan and ROK-Japan Relations], *Tongil jeongchaek yeongu* 18, no. 1 (2009): 119-149.

² Daniel Gomà Pinilla, "Border Disputes Between China and North Korea," *China Perspectives* 52, no. March-April (2004): 7; Hideki Kajimura, "The Question of Takeshima/Tokdo," *Korea Observer* 28, no. 3 (1997): 427-429; David C. Kang, "Japan-Korea Relations: History Impedes the Future," *Comparative Connections* 7, no. 1 (2005): 127; and Heon-ik Kwon, "For the Desirable Resolution of the Dokdo Issue," *Dokdo Research Journal* 11 (2010): 37-38.

³ Brian R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2010), 131, 152-155.

two parties has shown any inclination to invite Pyongyang to join the fray. Yet, the North Koreans were by no means silent or passive as far as Dokdo was concerned. On the contrary, in certain periods, North Korean propaganda launched vituperative attacks on Japan's territorial claims and extensively covered South Korean protests. The extent of North Korean interest in Dokdo may be gauged from the fact that between 1997 and 2012 the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) mentioned this subject in over 500 articles, of which 121 were published in 2005 alone. For this reason, it appears worth investigating the evolution of Pyongyang's attitude toward the problem of Dokdo, all the more so because North Korea's related statements provide considerable insight into the dynamics of Japanese-North Korean and inter-Korean relations.

At the same time, it also deserves attention that North Korea's coverage of the Dokdo issue has undergone perceptible fluctuations, a phenomenon correctly highlighted by Bae and Yang.⁴ For instance, the dramatic increase of KCNA references to Dokdo in 2005 and in 2012 (121 and 88, respectively) stood in marked contrast with the extremely low number of Dokdo-related articles in 1997 and in 2003 (2 and 1, respectively). In other words, North Korea's interest in Dokdo was neither of a static nature nor did it show exponential growth. This phenomenon suggests that Pyongyang's attitude toward the dispute has not been shaped solely by the force of ethnic nationalism, although ethnic nationalism did constitute an integral element of the regime's official ideology. Instead, it seems possible that specific diplomatic considerations also influenced the shifting attitude of North Korean leaders, who may have alternately decided to raise or downplay the Dokdo issue for "instrumental purposes" (a term coined by Yinan He with regard to Chinese Communist propaganda⁵), that is, to achieve

⁴ Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunsok": 123-124.

⁵ Yinan He, "Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-

certain diplomatic aims.

This article seeks to fill the aforementioned research gap by examining North Korea's standpoint on the Dokdo question. Specifically, it enumerates the arguments Pyongyang made to refute Japan's claims to the island, summarizes the successive phases of North Korea's Dokdo policy, and analyzes factors that induced leaders of the ruling Korean Workers' Party (KWP) to alternately highlight or de-emphasize the dispute. Finally, it attempts to explain the contradictions in Pyongyang's attitude by placing the latter into a theoretical framework of ethnic nationalism versus state-centric nationalism.⁶

The Case for Korean Ownership of Dokdo: Pyongyang's Arguments

Since North Korea's legal standpoint on Dokdo, unlike the intensity of its attention, has remained largely unchanged in the recent decades, it appears practical to start this analysis with the theoretical basis of Pyongyang's Dokdo policy. At first sight, the DPRK's historical and legal arguments look quite similar to those of the ROK. For instance, an article published in *Rodong sinmun* (the daily newspaper of the Korean Workers' Party) summarized North Korea's views as follows: "The islet is part of the Korean territory in view of the principles of discovery, possession, and use, which are internationally recognized irrefutable evidence of legal possession of no-man's island and in view of a legislative step of a state to possess it."⁷

Japanese Relations," in *Inherited Responsibility and Historical Reconciliation in East Asia*, ed. Jun-Hyeok Kwak and Melissa Nobles (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 101.

⁶ To highlight the significance of state-centric nationalism, this article extensively refers to the two Korean states by their official name, rather than merely as North Korea and South Korea.

⁷ "Tok Islet is Inseparable from Korean Territory," Korean Central News Agency, October 13, 1998 (accessed on March 4, 2013). All KCNA statements cited in this article were accessed in English at <http://www.nk-news.net/index.php>

Indeed, historical sources cited by North Korean authors were usually identical with those South Korean scholars relied on in their research. Of the pre-modern Korean sources enumerated in KCNA articles, *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms, 1145], *Sejong sillok jiriji* [Geographical Annex to the Annals of King Sejong, 1432], *Goryeosa* [History of Goryeo, 1451], *Sinjung Dongguk yeoji seungnam* [Augmented Geographical Survey of the Eastern Nation, 1481], *Paldo chongdo* [Map of the Eight Provinces, 1531], *Sukjong sillok* [The Annals of King Sukjong, 1728], *Jeongjo sillok* [The Annals of King Jeongjo, 1776-1800], *Mangi yoram* [Handbook of State Affairs, 1808], and others are mentioned. Similarly, both North Korean and South Korean authors cited those pre-modern and more recent Japanese records and maps which appeared to be compatible with their views, such as Hayashi Shihei's *Sangoku tsūran zusetsu* [Illustrated Description of Three Countries, 1785].⁸

In several cases, overlaps between North Korean and South Korean statements resulted from careful monitoring of the South Korean media by North Korean authorities, which allowed them to quickly publicize any new discovery made abroad that could boost their position on Dokdo. For instance, in December 2008, KCNA reported that three days before the South Korean scholar Kim Mun-gil had announced his discovery of documents about a Japanese fisherman executed in 1838 by Japanese authorities “for violating the ‘ordinance banning sailing’ to Juk Islet and Song Islet (Tok Islet).”⁹ Nor did Pyongyang ignore non-Korean scholars who adopted a pro-Korean standpoint in the Dokdo dispute. Among others, KCNA referred to the International Dokdo Symposium held in Washington, D.C., in May 2009 and the presentation that Jon M.

⁸ For an overview, see “Tok Islet, Inalienable Territory of Korea,” KCNA, May 14, 2004 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

⁹ “Japan’s Document on Tok Islet Discovered,” KCNA, December 4, 2008 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

Van Dyke delivered there.¹⁰

Based on the aforementioned sources, KCNA sought to trace the Korean ownership of Dokdo back to the sixth century by using the principle of contiguity, that is, Dokdo's relative proximity to Ulleungdo, albeit without mentioning the term as such:

Early in the 6th century, there existed on Ullung Island a state called Usan that was built by Korean immigrants, and Tok Islet was under its control.¹¹

As Usan State comprising Usan Islet (Tok Islet) and Ullung Islet was attached to Silla, Korea put the ownerless islet under its control in 512 according to one of the basic principles of territorial acquisition stipulated in international law.¹²

This historical argument is fully in accordance with Seoul's standpoint. Similarly, both Koreas laid strong emphasis on the "An Yong-bok incidents" (1693-1699). As KCNA put it, "Japan's historical data compiled in the 17th century contain the facts that Tsushima and the Tokugawa shogunate governments formally recognized before and after the An Ryong Bok case that the island and the islets were part of the inviolable territory of Korea."¹³

North Korean and South Korean views were also identical as far as Japan's incorporation of Dokdo on February 22, 1905, was concerned. That is, both sides accurately pointed out that this act took place in a period when the Japanese government was gradually extending its

¹⁰ "Tok Islets are Inalienable Territory of Korea," KCNA, March 1, 2013 (accessed on August 5, 2013).

¹¹ "Japan's Claim to Tok Islet Flailed," KCNA, August 2, 2001 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹² "Japan's Claim to Tok Islet Slammed," KCNA, March 28, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹³ "Japan's Claim to Tok Islets Termed Nonsensical," KCNA, May 29, 2012 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

political and military control over the whole of Korea, treating the latter as a subordinate entity rather than a state of equal sovereignty. In January 2004, the North Korean Lawyers' Society questioned the legitimacy of the incorporation on the grounds that the Shimane Prefectural Notice had not been made public in an official newspaper of the Japanese government, nor did Tokyo notify Korea or other countries at the time of this act.¹⁴

Still, in several respects, Pyongyang's arguments appeared somewhat different from those advanced by Seoul. For instance, KCNA extensively referred to such Japanese sources that suggested the Japanese authorities had regarded Dokdo as Korean territory until the late nineteenth century, but it made less effort to describe the arguments the Japanese government raised in 1904 and 1905 and afterwards to justify its claims over the island. To mention but one example, in 2012, the Department of History at Kim Il Sung University released a report dismissing Japan's claims as "brigandish sophism devoid of any legal and historical propriety."¹⁵ Paradoxically, this dismissive rather than analytical approach seems to have caused North Korean authors to pay little attention to certain inconsistencies in the official Japanese standpoint which were eagerly exploited by critical South Korean and Japanese scholars. Among others, KCNA did not mention that as late as 1904 Japanese officials were still divided over the issue of whether Japan should incorporate Dokdo or not, and whether such an act would be sufficiently legitimate. As the Japanese historian Hori Kazuo pointed out, bureaucrats of the Ministry of Home Affairs, unlike the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, continued to oppose incorporation of the island.¹⁶

¹⁴ "Japan's Claim to Tok Islet Assailed," KCNA, January 29, 2004 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹⁵ "Japan's Claim to Tok Islets Termed Nonsensical," KCNA, May 29, 2012 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹⁶ Kazuo Hori, "Japan's Incorporation of Takeshima into Its Territory in 1905," *Korea Observer* 28, no. 3 (1997): 517-518.

Nor did KCNA directly juxtapose the original Japanese justification of Dokdo's incorporation ("no evidence can be found of this uninhabited island being under the possession of any foreign country") with Tokyo's post-1953 arguments. To be sure, North Korean authors rebuffed the claim the island had been *terra nullius* until 1905 just as emphatically as they denied that Japan had established its sovereignty over Dokdo as early as the seventeenth century. Still, they did not highlight the fact that Tokyo had not made a claim about its historical title to the island at the time of incorporation, but only 50 years later. In contrast, South Korean authors laid strong emphasis on such contradictions. As a publication of the Northeast Asian History Foundation ironically noted, "The inconsistency in Tokyo's position raises a seemingly unanswerable question of how Japan could 'add' to its territory an island that had already been its territory since 'olden times.'"¹⁷

Interestingly enough, North Korea, despite its inclination to criticize the United States for "keeping mum" about the Dokdo problem, did not comprehensively investigate the shifting role Washington played in the initial stage of the dispute, that is, during the preparations for the San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan.¹⁸ KCNA did mention that Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers Instruction (SCAPIN) No. 677 excluded Dokdo from the area of Japanese administration.¹⁹ However, it did not describe how initial drafts of the San Francisco Peace Treaty by the United States up to November 2, 1949, had intended to compel Japan to renounce its claims on Dokdo, and how American political, security, and other considerations finally induced Washington to set conditions more advantageous to Tokyo, and omit the clause

¹⁷ *Dokdo: Korean Territory Since the 6th Century* (Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2006), 28.

¹⁸ "US. Intervention in Tok Islet Issue under Fire," KCNA, April 1, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹⁹ "Japan's Claim to Tok Islet Flailed," KCNA, August 2, 2001 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

delineating Japan's territorial limits. Notably, these events were carefully examined by Japanese and South Korean scholars such as Kimie Hara, Jung Byeong-yun, and Nam Kijeong.²⁰ Instead, KCNA, averse as it was to any sort of ambiguity in the dispute, made the following categorical, but inaccurate statement: "International conventions including the Cairo Declaration (December 1, 1943) and the Potsdam Declaration (July 26, 1945), which called for settling the issue of Japan's territory after the war, defined Tok Islet as an object Japan should abandon and stipulated that the islet shall belong to Korea."²¹

Nevertheless, these differences between North Korean and South Korean statements were only of a tactical nature; they reflected, above all, the impact of heavy-handed state control over research in North Korea. Since KCNA repeatedly cited various northern scholars, including Ho Jong-ho (President, DPRK History Society) and Kim Un-taek (Professor, Kim Il Sung University), the deficiencies of these KCNA articles may have been at least partly indicative of North Korean scholarship on Dokdo.²²

The point where Pyongyang's arguments did considerably diverge from those of Seoul was the question of post-1952 South Korean state control over Dokdo. In the legal dispute over the island, Seoul's position has been buttressed by the principle of effective possession, that is, the physical occupation of Dokdo by South Korea during the past sixty years. The origin of this occupation can be traced back to Seoul's

²⁰ Hiroshi Hara, "Impact of the USSR's 200 Mile Fishery Zone on the Japanese-Soviet Fishery Negotiations" (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Rhode Island, 1979), 25-47; Byungjoon Jung, "Korea's Post-Liberation View on Dokdo and Dokdo Policies (1945-1951)," *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 5, no. 2 (December 2008): 5-53; Ki-Jeong Nam, "The Origin of Dokdo Issue: Having Another Look at the San Francisco Peace Treaty," *Dokdo Research Journal* 11 (2010): 32-36.

²¹ "Japan's Claim to Tok Islet Slammed," KCNA, March 28, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

²² "Tok Islet Belongs to Korea," KCNA, January 27, 2000 (accessed on March 4, 2013); "Tok Islets, Inviolable Territory of Korea," KCNA, August 26, 2002 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

response to the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Shortly before the treaty came into force on April 28, 1952, President Syngman Rhee (1948-1960) issued the Declaration of Sovereignty over Adjacent Seas on January 18, 1952, and established the euphemistic “Peace Line” (commonly known as the “Rhee Line”) which included Dokdo within the territorial waters of the ROK.²³ Since 1956, the South Korean police have been responsible for the defense of the area. From 1996 onward, South Korean authorities demonstrated their effective control over Dokdo in increasingly spectacular ways, culminating in a visit by President Lee Myung-bak in August 2012.

In the sphere of legal theory, Pyongyang shared Seoul’s standpoint. As KCNA put it, “The Tok Islets are part of the inalienable territory of Korea in the light of the principle of the prior occupation, the requirement of international law for putting land under one’s jurisdiction, as well as in the light of the principle of effective domination and management of it.”²⁴ In practice, however, North Korean authors did not highlight this aspect of South Korea’s position. From 1997 to 2012, KCNA made no reference to the “Peace Line” and Rhee’s subsequent conflict with Japan. Its articles on Dokdo did not cover the years of 1952 and 1953 at all, and the single one that mentioned both Rhee and Dokdo failed to describe his actual role in the dispute. On the contrary, it drew a flawed picture of Rhee by portraying him as a pro-Japanese figure:

The Liberal Party of traitor Syngman Rhee, the Democratic Republican Party of the Yushin dictator, the Democratic Justice Party of the fifth republic, the Democratic Liberal Party of the sixth republic and the New Korea Party of traitor Kim Young Sam, which are the GNP’s

²³ P. Allan Dionisopoulos, “Japanese-Korean Relations: A Dilemma in the Anti-Communist World,” *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (May 1957): 61-72.

²⁴ “Tok Islets are Part of Inviolable Territory of Korea,” KCNA, April 4, 2011 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

predecessors, *were characterized by their inveterate pro-Japanese treachery* [emphases added].²⁵

These words reveal that Pyongyang's attitude toward the Dokdo problem could not remain unaffected by the long political rivalry between the two Korean states. From the perspective of the KWP leaders, rejecting Tokyo's claims to Dokdo was one thing, but to endorse Seoul's Dokdo policy was quite another. While they harbored no doubts about Korea's historical entitlement to Dokdo, they were far less ready to regard the ROK as a legitimate representative of Korean statehood. Under such conditions, they must have felt that their approval of the South Korean government's actions in such a major national issue would grant national legitimacy to the very state they frequently depicted as a puppet regime devoid of real sovereignty. Therefore, Pyongyang's actual policies toward the Dokdo problem have been strongly influenced not only by the dynamics of Japanese-North Korean relations,²⁶ but also by the twists and turns of inter-Korean relations. While inter-Korean rapprochement could (and did) facilitate the emergence of a North-South consensus on Dokdo, hostile relations between Pyongyang and Seoul greatly hindered such a process.

The First Phase of North Korea's Dokdo Policy: A Low-Key Approach

While the DPRK could not directly influence the Japan-ROK dispute over Dokdo, at certain times North Korean propaganda did make considerable efforts to take advantage of the conflict. Significantly, on

²⁵ "DPRK History Society Indicts Japan and GNP," KCNA, June 23, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

²⁶ A factor highlighted by Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok": 149.

many occasions, Pyongyang's criticism was not directed solely against Japanese claims to Dokdo but also against certain South Korean leaders who allegedly "abandoned dominium over Tok Islet."²⁷ Yet, the KWP leaders would also repeatedly, but temporarily tone down their propaganda about Dokdo, and instead stress their readiness to achieve rapprochement with Japan. These controversial features of North Korean conduct indicate that Pyongyang's diplomatic aims, as far as Dokdo was concerned, were not confined to the defense of Korea's historical entitlement to the island.

To explain these shifts in North Korea's attitude toward Dokdo, it is advisable to enumerate the main milestones of the dispute in chronological order, and examine how the DPRK reacted to the successive events. Since KCNA's electronic archives are accessible only from December 1996 onward, alternative sources were consulted to reconstruct North Korea's earlier views, such as declassified reports of the Hungarian embassy in Pyongyang, various publications that cited *Rodong sinmun*, broadcasts of Radio Pyongyang, and, in a few cases, articles from the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*. Unlike post-1953 Soviet Union-DPRK relations, Soviet control over North Korea from 1948 to 1953 was strong enough to prevent any major divergence between Soviet and North Korean public statements. For this reason, one may consider *Pravda's* pre-1953 comments on Dokdo and Japan-ROK relations to be largely similar to that of the North Korean media, all the more so because the Soviet articles repeatedly cited KCNA and various North Korean newspapers as sources.

Interestingly enough, *Pravda* published an article related to Dokdo as early as June 17, 1948. On the basis of KCNA and the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS), the article summarized a recent

²⁷ Among others, see "DPRF Spokesman on South Korean Authorities' Treason," KCNA, October 2, 1998 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

announcement made by the “South Korean political authority” as follows: “On June 9th, approx. 9 four-engine airplanes with American identification markings bombed Korean fishing boats in the Sea of Japan, 48 kilometers south of the 38th parallel, in the area of Dokto (*sic*) island.” The article, focused as it was on the human and material losses caused by the American bombing exercise, did not raise the question of whether this area was Korean or Japanese territory. It noted only that the aircraft involved in the incident did not belong to forces controlled by the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), but came from bases located in Japan.²⁸

Still, *Pravda*’s use of the name “Dokdo” deserves attention, all the more so because no alternative names (that is, Takeshima or Liancourt Rocks) were mentioned in brackets or otherwise. This fact in itself cannot be considered a sign of Soviet support for the South Korean standpoint on Dokdo, but the article did not challenge South Korea’s narrative of the incident in any way. On the contrary, *Pravda*’s underlying aim seems to have been to portray Koreans as victims of America’s reckless actions. This approach must have been shared by the North Korean leadership. Indeed, the effect the incident produced on South Korean public opinion was certainly advantageous from Pyongyang’s perspective. As South Korean historian Jung Byungjoon pointed out, “The Dokdo bombing incident fanned the flames of public resentment toward USAMGIK and Japan, taking USAMGIK aback. A USAMGIK report said that all political parties and social organizations condemned the incident as a barbarous act.”²⁹

In contrast with this manifestation of Soviet (and presumably North Korean) interest in the Dokdo bombing incident, the re-emergence of the

²⁸ “Bombardirovna koreiskikh rybachikh lodok v Iaponskom more” [Bombing of Korean Fishing Boats in the Sea of Japan], *Pravda* No. 10.910, June 17, 1948, p. 4.

²⁹ Jung Byungjoon, “Korea’s Post-Liberation View on Dokdo and Dokdo Policies (1945-1951),” *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 5, no. 2 (December 2008): 37.

Dokdo issue between 1951 and 1953 did not elicit similar reactions from *Pravda* and the KWP leaders. While both Moscow and Pyongyang vigorously condemned the San Francisco Peace Treaty, at first they seem not to have paid any particular attention to the treaty's implications for Dokdo. Since the text of the treaty did not delineate Japan's territorial limits, the question of Korean versus Japanese ownership of Dokdo was left unanswered, rather than highlighted. This is probably why the statement that North Korean Foreign Minister Bak Heon-yeong made on September 15, 1951, did not mention Dokdo, albeit Bak did enumerate several islands of disputed status: Taiwan, the Penghu Islands (Pescadores), and the Paracel Islands. However, these islands were claimed by China, rather than Korea. In general, Bak's declaration mainly emphasized the exclusion of Korea and China from the treaty as well as the threat the US naval and air bases in Japan posed to North Korea and China.³⁰

The limited interest the DPRK displayed in Dokdo in 1951 had much in common with the contemporaneous attitude of the South Korean government. Jung Byeong-jun's observations about Seoul's temporary priorities appear to be at least partly valid for Pyongyang, too:

Amid the turmoil of the Korean War, the country's priority was staving off the Communists, with preparations for the conference in San Francisco understandably taking a backseat. And even at the San Francisco Conference, obtaining the status of an Allied Power and becoming one of the signatories to the treaty were placed at the top of the agenda. Second on the agenda was getting compensation from Japan and taking punitive measures against war criminals. Such issues as the designation of fishing zones and territorial boundaries were relegated to

³⁰ “Po povodu podpisaniia nezakonnovo `mirnovo dogovora` s Iaponiei” [On the Signing of the Illegal “Peace Treaty” with Japan], *Pravda* No. 12.097 (September 17, 1951): 3.

third priority.³¹

In 1952 and 1953, however, North Korean and South Korean public attitudes toward the Dokdo question began to show increasing divergence. In the one-year period that followed Rhee's Declaration of Sovereignty over Adjacent Seas, *Pravda* made virtually no reference to the establishment of the "Rhee Line," the dispute over Dokdo, or other manifestations of Japanese-South Korean friction. The absence of related articles was particularly conspicuous if one takes into consideration that throughout 1952 *Pravda* covered the Korean War on a daily basis in a regular column titled "Events in Korea." Nevertheless, these articles were focused on other subjects, such as America's alleged use of bacteriological weapons and the prolonged armistice negotiations.

The aforementioned omissions were probably of a deliberate nature, because whenever *Pravda* raised the issue of Japanese-South Korean relations, it stressed the elements of cooperation between Seoul and Tokyo (which it invariably condemned), and downplayed or fully ignored the occurrence of conflicts. Citing a letter written by the pro-North Korean United Democratic Front of Koreans in Japan on November 4, 1952, *Pravda* accused the Japanese government of interning a number of ethnic Korean residents with the purpose of "sending them to South Korea to be shot."³² This tendency appeared in a particularly clear form in a *Pravda* article that bore the following telltale title: "Collusion in Tokyo" (January 10, 1953). This article, almost exceptionally, contained an indirect reference to the Dokdo dispute, but

³¹ Jung, "Korea's Post-Liberation View on Dokdo and Dokdo Policies (1945-1951)": 52-53.

³² "Japonskoe pravitelstvo sozdaet kontsentratsionnie lageri dlia koreitsev, prozhivaiushchikh v Japonii" [The Japanese government establishes concentration camps for the Koreans living in Japan], *Pravda* No. 12.511, November 4, 1952, p. 4. In reality, however, the Rhee government refused to accept such deportees, "arguing that they had legal status in Japan and were not subject to forced repatriation." See Dionisopoulos, "Japanese-Korean Relations: A Dilemma in the Anti-Communist World": 63.

in a very brief way. Describing Rhee's meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (1948-1954), the author (a certain N. Khokhlov) did mention the existence of disagreements between the two sides over such issues as Japanese demands for financial compensation and "fishing rights in Korea's coastal waters" (*sic*), but concluded that these problems "were pushed to the background" during the talks. Citing KCNA and *Minju Joseon* (the newspaper of the North Korean government) as sources, he claimed that Japan-ROK collaboration was assuming an increasingly military character. In any case, Khokhlov devoted only a single sentence of his three-column article to the subject of Japanese-South Korean friction.³³

The motives behind this flawed depiction of Japan-ROK relations may be revealed if one examines the first sentence of Khokhlov's article: "The traitor of the Korean people, South Korean 'President' Syngman Rhee recently visited Japan." That is, *Pravda*, reflecting Pyongyang's views, did not regard the political administration headed by Rhee as a legitimate representative of the Korean nation, and flatly rejected the ROK's self-definition as a sovereign state. This North Korean view had been formed as early as 1948 and the outbreak of the Korean War fully precluded any kind of consensus between the two antagonistic regimes. Under such conditions, the KWP leaders were most unwilling to acknowledge that any action of the southern government might serve Korean national interests. This situation was especially true for Japanese-South Korean relations. In 1949-1950, North Korea condemned the economic and political negotiations between Seoul and Tokyo with particular harshness. For instance, in the fall and winter of 1949, broadcasts of Radio Pyongyang repeatedly attacked South Korean plans to export rice to Japan in exchange for machinery.³⁴ In January 1950,

³³ "Sgovor v Tokio" [Collusion in Tokyo], *Pravda* No. 12.578 (January 10, 1953): 4.

³⁴ *Joint Weeka, 1948-1959*, vol. 3, 1949-1951 (Seoul: Yongjin-sa, 1993), 87, 160, 176. *Joint Weeka* was a collection of joint weekly analyses – which included monitoring of the North Korean press

shortly before Rhee visited Japan, Kim Il Sung likened Rhee to the national traitor Lee Wan-yong, who had aided the Japanese annexation.³⁵

Actually, North Korea's interpretation of why Rhee established the "Peace Line" made Pyongyang even more reluctant than usual to acknowledge the national implications of his act. Namely, Rhee's conflict with Japan erupted in the same year as when he forcefully modified the South Korean constitution and won the manipulated presidential elections held on August 5, 1952, which *Pravda* and the North Korean media dismissed as a "puppet show."³⁶ As Kim Ryo-gyun, a middle-ranking official of the North Korean Foreign Ministry, later told a Hungarian diplomat,

Syngman Rhee established the aforesaid maritime line for political reasons: by presenting himself as a "defender of the interests of the Korean people," he wanted to gain popularity among the popular masses who were dissatisfied because of the war. This step was taken before the conclusion [*sic*] of the separate peace treaty with Japan in San Francisco, at which time Japan was not yet able to fight back. In other respects, this issue became grist to the mill of the USA, because after the conclusion of said treaty, the Americans cited precisely this issue to start the remilitarization of Japan, on the pretext of protecting [Japanese] ships.³⁷

During the Korean War, Pyongyang was on equally hostile terms with Seoul and Tokyo, and thus it could not take much advantage of the

and radio – by the United States Embassy in Seoul.

³⁵ *Rodong sinmun*, January 20, 1950. Cited in Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War II: The Roaring of the Cataract 1947-1950* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, 1990), 458-459.

³⁶ "Komediia 'vyborov' na iuge Koreii" ["Electoral" Comedy in Southern Korea], *Pravda* No. 12.420 (August 5, 1952): 3.

³⁷ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, March 3, 1961, XIX-J-1-j Korea 1945-64, Top Secret Documents [henceforth KTS], 5. doboz, 5/b, 003637/1961, Magyar Országos Levéltár, MOL [Hungarian National Archives].

Japanese-South Korean conflict over Dokdo. This is probably why *Pravda* preferred to ignore the issue altogether. In the mid-1950s, however, North Korea's attitude toward Dokdo underwent yet another change. In this period, inter-Korean relations were still extremely tense, and save a few empty gestures, Pyongyang made no overtures toward Seoul.³⁸ In contrast, Japanese-North Korean relations, for the first time since 1949, started to show signs of improvement. The significance of this new trend may be gauged if one takes into consideration that Japanese-South Korean friction over Dokdo continued well after 1955.

In response to the initiative of Japanese Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichirō (1954-1956), who sought to achieve rapprochement with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, on February 25, 1955, North Korean Foreign Minister Nam Il issued a statement calling for economic and cultural cooperation with Japan. From May 1955 onward, several Japanese delegations arrived in the DPRK, and in October, Pyongyang signed its first commercial agreements with a few Japanese firms. For the Japanese side, these deals were purely economic ones, whereas North Korea pursued both economic and political aims. On the one hand, North Korean industry badly needed spare parts for the Japanese-made machines which remained in operation after 1945. On the other hand, the KWP leaders sought to obstruct Japanese-South Korean cooperation by offering various economic incentives which, they hoped, would persuade Tokyo to maintain contacts with both Koreas, rather than solely with Seoul.³⁹

From the latter perspective, the Japanese-ROK dispute over Dokdo and the "Rhee Line" turned out to be definitely advantageous to the

³⁸ Balázs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), 53-54.

³⁹ Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok": 131; Kiwon Chung, "Japanese-North Korean Relations Today," *Asian Survey* 4, no. 4 (April 1964): 791-792; Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, 75.

DPRK. After all, these disagreements lessened the likelihood of a Japanese-South Korean alliance against Pyongyang. A Hungarian diplomatic report written in late 1957 summarized North Korea's attitude toward this situation as follows:

According to the official [North] Korean opinions, the so-called “Korean-Japanese,” that is, South Korean-Japanese negotiations have stalled because of the conflicts and contradictions between the two sides. In the view of the competent [officials] of the DPRK, the main question is the so-called “Syngman Rhee maritime line.” In our opinion, the DPRK skillfully takes advantage of these contradictions to improve relations between the DPRK and Japan.⁴⁰

Indeed, the obstacles the “Rhee Line” created for Japan induced an increasing number of Japanese fishing enterprises to seek Pyongyang's permission to conduct operations along the coast of the DPRK. Hungarian diplomatic reports contrasted South Korea's confrontational attitude toward Japanese fishermen with North Korea's greater flexibility and efforts to use this issue to gain political advantages. Namely, the KWP leaders proposed that Japanese fishing in North Korean waters be regulated by an intergovernmental agreement, which in turn would necessitate mutual establishment of fishery offices or consulates.⁴¹ While North Korean proposals of this nature were usually turned down by Tokyo, non-governmental economic and cultural cooperation made significant progress between 1955 and 1960. Thereupon, Japan-ROK relations underwent further deterioration, for Seoul sharply protested against Japanese contacts with the North. Under such conditions, KWP leaders, irrespective of their legal standpoint on Dokdo, saw no reason to

⁴⁰ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, December 7, 1957, KTS, 5. doboz, 5/bf, 00256/1958.

⁴¹ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, December 7, 1957, KTS, 5. doboz, 5/bf, 00256/1958.

confront Tokyo over this issue, let alone seek a consensus with the ROK against Japanese territorial claims. On the contrary, their engagement policies were focused on Japan, the country's former colonial overlord, rather than South Korea.

In the first half of the 1960s, the aforesaid trend in North Korean diplomacy became even more pronounced, for various reasons. For one thing, Soviet-DPRK relations underwent increasing friction between 1962 and 1964, resulting in declining Soviet machinery exports to North Korea. In response, Pyongyang gradually built up economic relations with Japan and other non-Communist states. In 1963, the volume of Japanese-North Korean trade rose to seventeen million dollars. By 1964, Japanese-made cars, trucks, and dumpers had become quite numerous in Pyongyang.⁴² Secondly, Pyongyang's friendly gestures toward Tokyo seem to have been strongly influenced by the intention to outcompete Seoul. From October 1961 onward, the new southern administration of Park Chung-hee, 1961-1979) made determined efforts to normalize South Korean-Japanese relations, whereas the KWP leaders were equally determined to resist this trend.⁴³ In December 1962, the DPRK issued a "Statement on the Japan-South Korea Talks," declaring that "hasty attempts to bring about diplomatic relations should not be carried out in principle until after the unification of Korea has been established," and therefore North Korea should also participate in the negotiations.⁴⁴

Since the latter was unlikely to happen, Pyongyang sought to achieve its aims by other means. On the one hand, North Korean propaganda approved and encouraged the resistance the Japanese-South Korean normalization talks generated among South Korean students and

⁴² Kiwon Chung, "Japanese-North Korean Relations Today": 795; Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, 205-206.

⁴³ Shigeru Oda, "The Normalization of Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea," *The American Journal of International Law* 61, no. 1 (January 1967): 39-40.

⁴⁴ Chung, "Japanese-North Korean Relations Today": 788.

Park Chung-hee's parliamentary opposition. On the other hand, North Korea, having adopted an openly confrontational attitude toward Park's authoritarian regime from early 1962 continued to pursue a policy of engagement toward Japan so as to dissuade Tokyo from making a separate deal with Seoul.⁴⁵

Again, the latter objective would have been incompatible with a propaganda campaign against Japanese claims over Dokdo. This may be why Tokyo's new attempts to raise the issue of Dokdo in 1962 did not produce an adverse effect on Japanese-DPRK relations. On the contrary, in November 1962, the Japan-North Korea Trade Association finally managed to persuade the Japanese government to allow direct trade between the two countries.⁴⁶ From a North Korean perspective, it may have appeared advantageous to watch the Dokdo dispute from the sidelines, hoping that it might hinder Japanese-South Korean rapprochement. Notably, in April 1962, Japanese Foreign Minister Kosaka Zentarō made a statement before the Diet in which he "assured the Japanese people that relations with South Korea would not be normalized until the question of entitlement to Takeshima has been resolved."⁴⁷

The Second Phase of North Korea's Dokdo Policy: Increasing Attention

Nevertheless, the process of Japanese-South Korean normalization was eventually decoupled from the question of Dokdo. Both Seoul and Tokyo had a strong economic and political stake in achieving reconciliation, and since neither side wanted to yield to the other as far as Dokdo was

⁴⁵ Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, 188-189.

⁴⁶ Soon Sung Cho, "Japan's Two Koreas Policy and the Problems of Korean Unification," *Asian Survey* 7, no. 10 (October 1967): 712.

⁴⁷ Oda, "The Normalization of Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea": 54.

concerned, they finally opted for a treaty that sidestepped, rather than solved, this thorny issue. Despite the intense South Korean protests against the talks with Japan between April and June, 1964, the administration of Park Chung-hee managed to retain its control over society, and soon resumed its negotiations with Tokyo. On June 22, 1965, the two governments signed the Japan-ROK Treaty on Basic Relations, which was duly ratified on December 18 the same year.⁴⁸ The prospect of Japanese-South Korean reconciliation posed a new strategic challenge to North Korea, not only because it reinforced Seoul's international position, but because it also lessened Tokyo's interest in maintaining contacts with Pyongyang. Between 1965 and 1966, the government of Prime Minister Satō Eisaku (1964-1972) began to reverse the earlier trend of Japanese-DPRK rapprochement and imposed new restrictions on economic cooperation.⁴⁹

During their conversations with Hungarian colleagues, North Korean officials openly expressed their anxiety over the treaty. For instance, in June 1967, the head of the Youth League's International Liaisons Office informed a Hungarian diplomat as follows:

While previously only the USA was present in South Korea, now Japan has also intruded, and she is playing an increasingly important role. In the final analysis, the three strongest imperialist powers – the USA, Japan, and West Germany – have completely gotten hold of South Korea in a political, economic, and – last but not least – military sense. These conditions make the cause of revolution difficult, and create additional problems for the DPRK.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ For an overview, see Kwan Bong Kim, *The Korea-Japan Treaty Crisis and the Instability of the Korean Political System* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

⁴⁹ Soon Sung Cho, "Japan's Two Koreas Policy and the Problems of Korean Unification": 718-719.

⁵⁰ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, July 22, 1967, KTS, 1967, 61. doboz, 200, 001202/3/1967.

Under these circumstances, the post-1955 policy of engaging Japan and isolating South Korea – which necessitated a low-key approach toward the issue of Dokdo – must have appeared less and less feasible to the KWP leaders. Consequently, in 1965, a significant change occurred in Pyongyang’s public attitude toward Dokdo.

As the Japanese-South Korean negotiations progressed, North Korean propaganda against the Japanese government took an increasingly shrill tone.⁵¹ In February 1965, the North Korean Foreign Ministry told Hungarian diplomats that the Japan-ROK talks were nearing conclusion.⁵² This may be why it occurred in this period, and not earlier, that *Rodong sinmun* raised the issue of Dokdo for the first time. The KWP leaders seem to have concluded they had nothing to lose. The articles published on February 23-24 and March 5 placed the territorial dispute squarely into the context of the Japanese-South Korean negotiations. On August 5, that is, after the conclusion of the treaty and before its ratification, *Rodong sinmun* carried yet another article about this subject, warning the Korean audience that “Dokdo was not for bargaining.”⁵³

Actually, Dokdo was one of the few issues in which the administration of Park Chung-hee firmly refused to make any concession to the Japanese side. On the basis of a recent conversation with President Park, on June 15, 1965, the United States ambassador in Seoul reported the following:

It is quite clear that the Korean position against any mention of

⁵¹ M. T. Haggard, “North Korea’s International Position,” *Asian Survey* 5, no. 8 (August 1965): 384.

⁵² Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, February 10, 1965, KTS, 1965, 73. doboz, IV-101, 001825/1965.

⁵³ Bae and Yang, “Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok”: 124-130.

Tokto [*sic*] in the agreement with Japan is adamant. I believe that the government's appraisal of the adverse effect which any mention of this ill-fated subject would have on the prospect for ratification and especially upon the principle of mobilization of indispensable support from the members of the DRP [Democratic Republican Party] is probably accurate.⁵⁴

Still, North Korean propaganda, unwilling as it was to acknowledge that Park's policies might be in accordance with Korean national interests, preferred to present the treaty as an implicit threat to Korea's control over Dokdo. While this interpretation was supported by the fact that the treaty failed to force Japan to abandon its territorial claims, North Korea's charges about Park's alleged treacherous intentions revealed that Pyongyang's objective was not only to create friction in Japanese-South Korean relations, but also to discredit the South Korean government.

From 1965 to 1969, Japan-DPRK relations underwent a downward trend, all the more so because the United States President Richard Nixon's "Guam Doctrine" encouraged Japan to play a more active role in East Asia, while the first Nixon-Satō communiqué (November 21, 1969) explicitly linked Japan's security with the defense of South Korea.⁵⁵ Predictably, *Rodong sinmun* continued to publish articles about Dokdo and the Japan-ROK maritime boundary between 1967 and 1969, clearly expressing Pyongyang's dissatisfaction with both South Korean and Japanese foreign policies.⁵⁶

In 1971, however, the Japanese government, inspired as it was by

⁵⁴ Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, No. 0600Z, June 15, 1965, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. 29, Part 1, Korea, pp. 793-794.

⁵⁵ Victor D. Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 75-99.

⁵⁶ Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok": 123.

Nixon's declaration to visit China, expressed its readiness to improve its relations with Beijing and Pyongyang, no matter whether Seoul liked it or not. Unnerved by Tokyo's conciliatory statements on North Korea, and by the fact that the Nixon-Satō communiqué of January 1972 no longer included a "Korea clause," South Korea adopted an increasingly critical attitude toward Japan between 1971 and 1972.⁵⁷

From a North Korean perspective, these new developments appeared quite advantageous, all the more so because they were accompanied by a rapid growth of Japan-DPRK trade, from \$58 million in 1971 to \$360 million by 1974. In 1974, Japan became Pyongyang's second largest commercial partner after the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ Encouraged by this new trend, in April 1972, Deputy Premier Bak Seong-cheol told the following to the Hungarian ambassador:

Park Chung Hee is becoming increasingly isolated in the field of *foreign policy*, too. [...] Nor is Japan the same as it was before. Satō has already grown old. The Japanese progressive forces, who are becoming stronger day by day, might dismiss Satō from his post, [or] Satō might even die, and Park Chung Hee can hardly expect any kind of effective Japanese support if Satō is no longer present [emphasis in the original].⁵⁹

To be sure, the KWP leaders were soon compelled to realize that Tokyo was hardly, if at all, interested in establishing diplomatic relations with Pyongyang in the same way as it had done with Beijing.⁶⁰ Still, they

⁵⁷ Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, 115-122.

⁵⁸ Seung K. Ko, "North Korea's Relations with Japan Since Detente," *Pacific Affairs* 50, no. 1 (April 1977): 37-40.

⁵⁹ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, April 19, 1972, KTS, 1972, 59. doboz, 81-130, 00808/45/1972.

⁶⁰ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, October 16, 1972, KTS, 1972, 60. doboz, 81-16, 2510/6/1972.

could take advantage of the fact that due to various incidents (such as the abduction of Kim Dae-jung from Tokyo by South Korea's Korean Central Intelligence Agency and Japan's uncooperativeness in the wake of Mun Se-gwang's assassination attempt against Park Chung-hee), "between 1973 and 1974 Japan-South Korean relations regressed to their lowest point in the post-normalization era." What particularly irritated Seoul was that in 1974, Japanese Foreign Minister Kimura Toshio publicly questioned the South Korean thesis that the DPRK posed a threat to the ROK, and declared that he did not consider the latter the sole legitimate government in Korea.⁶¹

In light of this dramatic improvement of Japanese-North Korean relations, it was quite understandable that the DPRK reverted to its low-key approach toward the issue of Dokdo. From 1970 to 1976, *Rodong sinmun* did not carry any articles about Dokdo.⁶² Actually, in this period the combined effect of Sino-Japanese, Sino-North Korean, and Japanese-North Korean rapprochement even induced Pyongyang to make a most unusual gesture of sympathy toward Japan. That is, on a few occasions the North Korean newspapers republished certain Chinese propaganda materials which – reflecting Beijing's intention to create a Sino-Japanese alliance against the Soviet Union – expressed support for Japan's claims to the Soviet-held Kuril Islands.⁶³ Due to the external origin of these articles, their publication in the North Korean press constituted only an indirect form of support to the Japanese standpoint. Still, it deserves attention that North Korea, albeit only sporadically, expressed sympathy for Japan's territorial claims against the Soviet Union.

Apart from such diplomatic considerations, North Korea's renewed

⁶¹ Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, 124-130.

⁶² Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok": 123.

⁶³ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Telegram, December 10, 1977, KTS, 1977, 78. doboz, 82-1, 004490/1/1977.

silence on the Dokdo question may also have reflected the fact that between 1965 and 1975 was a phase of tranquility in the history of the Dokdo dispute. As the South Korean scholar Byoung-Woo Lyou noted,

There were two reasons for the tranquility. One was that Japanese fishing vessels generally respected the three nautical mile waters of Dokdo as Korean territorial sea. Therefore, fishing vessels of both countries operated peacefully. The other reason was [the] flourishing economic interdependence between Korea and Japan.⁶⁴

Under such conditions, North Korea had little to gain, but very much to lose, from confronting a hitherto cooperative Japan over a largely dormant issue.

From 1977 onward, however, Pyongyang again devoted increasing attention to this problem. To explain this policy shift, it may not be sufficient to investigate only the immediate causes of North Korea's post-1977 behavior. It also appears advisable to examine whether the factors that had initially dissuaded North Korea from raising the Dokdo issue were still in operation after 1977, or whether they also underwent some kind of change.

The Japanese historian Kajimura Hideki regarded a *Rodong sinmun* article dated February 11, 1977, which emphatically called Dokdo an "inherent Korean territory," as a turning point in North Korea's public attitude toward the Dokdo question.⁶⁵ This view seems to be correct, all the more so because at the same time, the Japanese-South Korean dispute over Dokdo also entered a new phase. In fact, Pyongyang's decision to publicly express its standpoint on the Dokdo issue was probably closely

⁶⁴ Byung-Woon Lyou, "A Constructive Proposal to Solve the 'Dokdo' Controversy Between Korea and Japan," Unpublished manuscript, 2010, http://works.bepress.com/byungwoon_lyou/1 ACCESSED.

⁶⁵ Kajimura, "The Question of Takeshima/Tokdo": 429.

related to the renewed friction between Tokyo and Seoul. Namely, *Rodong sinmun* published the aforesaid article in response to a declaration that Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo (1976-1978) made on February 5, 1977. Fukuda's statement, which stressed that "Takeshima is Japanese territory beyond all doubt," elicited similar protests from the South Korean government.⁶⁶

The mere fact that Fukuda made such a statement may not have necessarily induced Pyongyang to express its own standpoint, since between 1952 and 1964 Japanese declarations of this kind had not produced a strong effect on North Korea's public attitude. Therefore, the specific context and motivation of Fukuda's declaration also deserves attention. In the previous year, both the United States and the Soviet Union proclaimed Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) stretching 200 nautical miles from their coasts. These regulations greatly reduced the access of Japanese and South Korean fishing vessels to the northwestern Pacific Ocean, and, as a consequence, led to a dramatic increase in competition between the two nations in the East Sea (Sea of Japan).⁶⁷ Predictably, these new challenges induced Japan and the two Koreas to seek to establish their own EEZs.

Since the possession of an island located outside a nation's coastal EEZ can considerably enlarge the country's fishing grounds, the question of whether Dokdo was inherent Korean territory or Japanese territory suddenly acquired new importance. Tokyo sought to apply its new conception of twelve-mile territorial waters to the area around Dokdo, not least because such a change would have further expanded Japan's fishing grounds at South Korea's expense.⁶⁸ These Japanese efforts ran

⁶⁶ Min Gyo Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia: Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (New York: Springer, 2010), 78-80.

⁶⁷ Hara, "Impact of the USSR's 200 Mile Fishery Zone on the Japanese-Soviet Fishery Negotiations," 53-54; Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia*, 79.

⁶⁸ Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia*, 80.

counter to Seoul's analogous plan to extend its own territorial waters to twelve nautical miles, and particularly to South Korea's intentions to populate the hitherto uninhabited Dokdo.⁶⁹ Thus, Min Gyo Koo correctly placed Fukuda's declaration into an economic context: "Behind this provocative and preemptive statement were the fishery problems and the emerging global trend towards a 200 nm EEZ regime."⁷⁰ Notably, in February 1977, Japan conducted fishery negotiations with the Soviet Union, too, during which the Japanese refused to agree to Soviet fishing jurisdiction over the two hundred-mile zone around the disputed Kuril Islands.⁷¹

North Korea, a country sharing the East Sea with South Korea and Japan, could not remain indifferent to this trend. As early as January 30, 1974, when Tokyo and Seoul concluded an agreement on the continental shelf boundary and the creation of a joint development zone, Pyongyang summarily declared the agreement to be invalid.⁷² In 1977, the DPRK again issued a protest against the renewed Japanese-South Korean maritime border talks.⁷³ These protests were at least partly motivated by North Korea's own economic interests. In the summer of 1977, Pyongyang's interests directly clashed with that of Japan, for the two states declared their EEZs nearly simultaneously, North Korea on June 21 and Japan in July.⁷⁴ By the end of the year, only an informal

⁶⁹ Sungjoo Han, "South Korea 1977: Preparing for Self-Reliance," *Asian Survey* 18, no. 1 (January 1978): 51.

⁷⁰ Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia*, 80.

⁷¹ Hara, "Impact of the USSR's 200 Mile Fishery Zone on the Japanese-Soviet Fishery Negotiations," 36.

⁷² Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Telegram, February 20, 1974, KTS, 1974, 65. doboz, 81-10, 00650/5/1974.

⁷³ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Telegram, July 11, 1978, MOL, XIX-J-1-j South Korea, Top Secret Documents, 1978, 81. doboz, 82-5, 004404/1978.

⁷⁴ Kim, *The Korea-Japan Treaty Crisis and the Instability of the Korean Political System*, 89; Jon M. Van Dyke, "The Republic of Korea's Maritime Boundaries," *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law* 18, no. 4 (December 2003): 509-540.

agreement was reached “whereby North Korea gave its provisional permission to Japanese fishermen to fish within North Korea’s economic zone outside the military boundary.”⁷⁵ In light of these events, it seems likely that Pyongyang’s unusual reaction to Fukuda’s statement was inspired by North Korea’s awareness of the economic motives behind this declaration. The KWP leaders decided to respond to Fukuda’s words because they felt that not only South Korea’s national interests but also their own concrete interests were at stake. From their perspective, the declaration probably appeared as but one manifestation of Japan’s new maritime expansionism.

The post-1974 process of Japan-ROK rapprochement, combined as it was with a simultaneous deterioration of Japan-DPRK relations, may also have influenced Pyongyang’s statement on Dokdo. To North Korea’s chagrin, Japan’s Prime Minister Miki Takeo (1974-1976) began to reverse the trend that had dominated Japan’s relations with the two Koreas during Tanaka Kakuei’s years in office (1972-1974). In practice, Miki abandoned the equidistance policy in favor of a tilt toward the ROK, and “reaffirmed the Korea clause in 1975 along with his commitment regarding bases in Okinawa for the defense of South Korea.”⁷⁶ This unfavorable change in Tokyo’s political stance probably further lessened the KWP leadership’s readiness to take Japanese “sensitivities” into consideration. Significantly, in December 1977, the Hungarian embassy in Pyongyang reported that the North Korean press no longer published such Chinese materials supporting Japanese claims to the Kuril Islands.⁷⁷

Finally, it appears likely that the specific state of Japan-ROK and

⁷⁵ B. C. Koh, “North Korea in 1977: Year of ‘Readjustment’,” *Asian Survey* 18, no. 1 (January 1978): 43.

⁷⁶ Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia*, 79.

⁷⁷ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Telegram, December 10, 1977, KTS, 1977, 78. doboz, 82-1, 004490/1/1977.

inter-Korean relations also influenced Pyongyang's reactions. In 1973, inter-Korean relations, having briefly improved between 1971 and 1972, underwent a new and prolonged decline, whereas Japan-DPRK relations reached this stage by 1975. This means that between 1975 and 1977, North Korea was on increasingly hostile terms with both Seoul and Tokyo. From 1952 to 1953, Pyongyang's simultaneous conflict with the two countries compelled the DPRK to adopt a passive stance toward Dokdo, because North Korea, locked in mortal struggle with South Korea, could not afford politically to acknowledge the nationalist character of Rhee's initiative. In 1977, however, the dispute was revived on the initiative of Japan rather than South Korea. Under such circumstances, the KWP leaders did not have to cope with the thorny question of whether they should or should not express agreement with a nationalistic southern initiative. On the contrary, they could (and did) try to use this situation to discredit Park Chung-hee's authoritarian regime. In February 1977, *Rodong sinmun* attacked not only Tokyo but also Seoul. As Kajimura noted, the article "criticized the Park Chung-hee regime's stance on Japan for failing to persuade Japan which was resolutely claiming it [Dokdo] as its own territory."⁷⁸ Since some groups of the South Korean democratic opposition held the same opinion, the KWP leaders may have wanted to tap into these sentiments and make a good impression on South Korea's public opinion.

From mid-1978 onward, additional signs of tension appeared in Japanese-North Korean relations. For one thing, the KWP leaders were dissatisfied with the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, which brought no concrete benefits for Pyongyang. In a conversation with the Czechoslovak ambassador, Deputy Defense Minister Bak Chung-guk complained, "Now Japan already completely ignores North Korea, because it has settled everything with China. Japan will criticize

⁷⁸ Kajimura, "The Question of Takeshima/Tokdo": 429.

and attack North Korea more boldly than before, for it knows that China will not take a stand against Japan, whereas South Korea will receive more attention and support from Japan.”⁷⁹ Secondly, the Japanese-South Korean friction in 1977 turned out to be quite ephemeral, followed by a long period of economic and political cooperation. The dispute over Dokdo started to abate as early as the spring of 1978, for the establishment of South Korea’s twelve-mile territorial waters around Dokdo (April 30, 1978) was implemented in a way that informally granted Japanese fishing vessels a certain access to the area within the twelve-mile limit.⁸⁰

These circumstances probably played a role in that on September 8, 1978, after the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese Treaty (August 12) and before its ratification (October 18), *Rodong sinmun* published another article about the South Korean-Japanese maritime border and the Dokdo question.⁸¹ The significance of this date is underlined by the fact that the very next day, on September 9, Kim Il Sung also made a public speech in which he lashed out not only at America and the Park Chung-hee regime, but also at Japan.⁸² Kim’s public attack on Tokyo indicated a shift in North Korean foreign policies, for a few months earlier, during the visit of Chinese Communist Party Chairman Hua Guofeng to the DPRK (May 5-10, 1978), the KWP leaders had scrupulously refrained from criticizing Japan.⁸³

⁷⁹ Balázs Szalontai, “Hub or Backwater? North Korea Between Alternative Conceptions of Northeast Asian Regional Economic Cooperation,” *Korea Review* 2, no. 2 (2012): 87.

⁸⁰ Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia*, 80-81.

⁸¹ Bae and Yang, “Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok”: 138.

⁸² Kim Il Sung, “Let Us Step Up Socialist Construction under the Banner of the Juche Idea. Report at the National Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, September 9, 1978,” http://www.uk-songun.com/index.php?p=1_163_LET-US-STEP-UP-SOCIALIST-CONSTRUCTION-UNDER-THE-BANNER-OF-THE-JUCHE-IDEA

⁸³ Embassy of Hungary in the USSR, Telegram, May 12, 1978, CTS, 1978, 77. doboz, 78-1,

In the next decade, Japan-ROK cooperation became particularly extensive, culminating in the state visits of Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone (1982-1987) and President Chun Doo-hwan (1980-1987) in January 1983 and September 1984, respectively.⁸⁴ Determined to achieve Chun's downfall by one means or another, the North Korean leaders must have regarded the dramatic growth of Japanese economic and political support to his authoritarian regime as an unfavorable trend. Apparently this is why *Rodong sinmun* published yet another article on Dokdo on March 4, 1983, not long after Nakasone's visit to South Korea.⁸⁵ North Korea seems to have raised this issue to discredit the "unpatriotic" Chun regime and hinder cooperation between Seoul and Tokyo. Notably, in 1983, South Korean authorities briefly banned the popular Korean pop song "Dokdo neun uri ttang" [Dokdo is Our Land], lest it create friction in Japanese-South Korean relations.⁸⁶ It also deserves attention that in 1984, *Rodong sinmun* repeatedly castigated Japan's claims to the Kuril Islands, indicating Pyongyang's increasingly critical attitude toward Tokyo.⁸⁷

The Third Phase of North Korea's Dokdo Policy: Opening the Floodgates

In 1987, South Korea's transition from military-dominated authoritarian

002378/8/1978; Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Telegram, May 15, 1978, CTS, 1978, 77. doboz, 78-1, 002378/5/1978; Hungarian Foreign Ministry, Memorandum, May 23, 1978, CTS, 1978, 77. doboz, 78-1, 002378/7/1978.

⁸⁴ Hong N. Kim, "Japanese-Korean Relations in the 1980s," *Asian Survey* 27, no. 5 (May 1, 1987): 503-508.

⁸⁵ Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok": 139.

⁸⁶ Sung-jae Choi, "The Politics of the Dokdo Issue," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 5, no. 3 (September 2005): 469.

⁸⁷ Embassy of Hungary in the DPRK, Report, October 16, 1984, KTS, 1984, 86. doboz, 81-13, 005440/1984.

rule to democracy created new conditions both for the Dokdo dispute and inter-Korean relations. For one thing, the end of censorship and other forms of authoritarian control allowed South Korean civil society more opportunities to express critical views about various aspects of past and present Japanese policies (including Japanese claims to Dokdo) than before. While the authoritarian regimes of Park and Chun did stand up to Tokyo on several occasions, they usually preferred to exclude civil society from these disputes, lest the conflicts spiral out of control. As Doowon Suh and Andrew K. Linkhart stressed, “The military government regularly silenced anti-Japanese sentiment through censorship and oppression.”⁸⁸ Thanks to democratization, South Korean civil society became an active and increasingly influential participant in the Dokdo dispute. From the mid-1990s, a wide range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) emerged aiming to draw attention to the Dokdo problem and protesting against Tokyo’s territorial claims.⁸⁹

Secondly, South Korea’s democratization potentially facilitated the improvement of inter-Korean relations. Since authoritarian regimes frequently justified their repressive policies by citing the “northern threat,” and presented North Korea in the worst possible light, the transition to democracy led to a critical re-examination of these theses, and to calls for broader contacts with the DPRK. Indeed, many activists of the democratic opposition movement felt that inter-Korean reconciliation would provide an additional guarantee against a reversal to authoritarian rule.⁹⁰ In any case, South Korea’s perceptions of the North

⁸⁸ Doowon Suh and Andrew K. Linkhart, “Korean NGOs in Historicizing Foreign Affairs and Democratizing Foreign Policies: Agenda Setting and Discourse Framing in the Dokdo/Takeshima Conflict Between Korea and Japan, 2005-2008,” *Journal of International Politics* 16, no. 2 (2011): 178.

⁸⁹ Choi, “The Politics of the Dokdo Issue,” 470-472; Suh and Linkhart, “Korean NGOs in Historicizing Foreign Affairs and Democratizing Foreign Policies,” 179-184.

⁹⁰ Chien-peng Chung, “Democratization in South Korea and Inter-Korean Relations,” *Pacific Affairs* 76, no. 1 (April 2003): 10-11.

as a hostile and alien entity were alleviated by South Korea's growing economic and military superiority over North Korea, the inter-Korean agreement on reconciliation (December 1991), and the North Korean famine of 1995-1998.

The combined effect of these two trends seems to have provided a stimulus to North Korean propaganda to highlight the Dokdo issue, and utilize the dispute in its efforts to influence South Korean public opinion. Thanks to democratization, the relative improvement of inter-Korean relations, and the explosive growth of electronic communication, Pyongyang's messages could reach the South Korean audience easier than before, and the chances of reaching inter-Korean consensus on certain issues of national interest were growing. All these factors created favorable conditions and incentives for a growth of North Korean interest in Dokdo.

Yet, it should not be assumed that under these new circumstances, North Korean propaganda consistently laid a strong emphasis on the Dokdo question. On the contrary, ebbs and flows in North Korean interest in Dokdo were still perceptible, but these did not necessarily coincide with the dynamism of the Japanese-South Korean dispute. A case of particular interest was Pyongyang's attitude toward Japan in 1997 and the first half of 1998, at which time the Dokdo dispute entered yet another explosive phase. In 1994, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) authorized states to claim Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) within 200 nautical miles around their sovereign territory. This new situation enhanced the economic significance of Dokdo for both South Korea and Japan, and induced the two countries to revive the dispute. In early 1996, the ROK started to build a wharf facility on Dokdo, whereupon the Japanese Foreign Minister reaffirmed that "Takehima is a part of Japanese territory." By mid-1997, under Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996-1998), the conflict escalated to such an extent that the Japanese side started seizing South Korean fishing boats within its unilaterally declared EEZ, an act

that generated massive protests in the ROK.⁹¹

Peculiarly enough, this time North Korea was by no means eager to join the fray. From March 1997 to September 1998, KCNA published only a single article that made any kind of reference to Dokdo. In the light of the ongoing Japanese-South Korean quarrel over the island, it appeared fairly ironic that this article covered a definitely non-political subject: an endangered bird species, the black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*), which used Dokdo as a breeding ground.⁹²

The reason of Pyongyang's low-key attitude may be understood if one takes into consideration that in these years, North Korea actively pursued a policy of rapprochement toward Japan. In November 1997, *Rodong sinmun* carried an article titled "The Normalization of DPRK-Japan Ties is an Urgent Requirement of the Two Peoples and the Times":

A series of positive changes, including an agreement on the resumption of talks between the governments of the DPRK and Japan, have recently been witnessed in the relationship between the two countries. [...] If Japan sincerely shows remorse for the past and refrains from pursuing the policy hostile towards the DPRK and from obstructing the reunification of Korea, the Korean people will treat Japan with friendly feelings. [...] The Japanese authorities had better be mindful of the old diplomatic saying that there are neither eternal friends nor eternal enemies.⁹³

Just like from 1955 to 1964 and from 1971 to 1974, economic factors must have strongly influenced North Korea's flexible policy toward

⁹¹ Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia*, 85-89; Mark J. Valencia, "Domestic Politics Fuels Northeast Asian Maritime Disputes," *AsiaPacific Issues* 43 (2000): 3.

⁹² "Rare Blackfaced Spoonbill," KCNA, August 1, 1997 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

⁹³ "*Rodong Sinmun* on Questions in Improving DPRK-Japan Relations," KCNA, November 6, 1997 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

Japan. In October 1997, Japanese Foreign Minister Obuchi Keizō announced that Tokyo would provide \$27 million in food aid to Pyongyang.⁹⁴ Japan's economic significance to the DPRK may be gauged from the following data: From 1994 to 2001, North Korea's exports to Japan consistently surpassed its exports to the ROK, and its imports from South Korea did not exceed imports from Japan until 1999.⁹⁵

Another factor that probably influenced Pyongyang's attitude to the dispute over Dokdo was the deterioration of inter-Korean relations during the administration of Kim Young-sam (1993-1998), a process starting with Seoul's protest against the United States-DPRK Agreed Framework in October 1994.⁹⁶ The KWP leaders presumably concluded that the Kim Young-sam administration sought to isolate their country, for in February 1997, *Rodong sinmun* denounced "the South Korean puppets for trying to keep Japan from normalizing the relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." It deserves particular attention that this article raised the Dokdo issue, but used it to attack Seoul rather than Tokyo. That is, *Rodong sinmun* castigated the "sycophantic treachery" of South Korean leaders who wanted to subordinate Japanese-North Korean rapprochement to the progress of inter-Korean relations, "while turning their face away from the Tok Islet problem."⁹⁷ Once again, the DPRK found it easier to come to terms with Japan than with the ROK. Since Kim Young-sam tried to use the territorial issue to boost his waning popularity in 1997, the KWP leaders must have been

⁹⁴ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Economic Power and Security: Japan and North Korea* (London: Routledge, 1999), 100.

⁹⁵ Dick K. Nanto and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *The North Korean Economy: Overview and Policy Analysis*, Congressional Research Service Report, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, April 18, 2007), 14.

⁹⁶ Chung, "Democratization in South Korea and Inter-Korean Relations": 24-27.

⁹⁷ "Rodong Sinmun on Sycophantic Treachery," KCNA, February 11, 1997 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

particularly unwilling to acknowledge that the foreign policies of their southern opponent might represent Korean national interests.⁹⁸

In contrast with the low-key attitude displayed from March 1997 to September 1998, KCNA abruptly started to pay great attention to Dokdo in October 1998. North Korea's suddenly increased interest seems to have been triggered by the first official visit of President Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) to Japan, during which he and Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō (1998-2000) made a joint declaration of a new ROK-Japan partnership (October 8, 1998). The declaration called for extensive economic, security, and cultural cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul, signaling a de-escalation of the Dokdo dispute.⁹⁹ Notably, North Korea began to express its displeasure with this process of rapprochement as early as October 1, 1998, when Pyongyang denounced the South Korean authorities as follows:

It has been reported that a “fishing agreement” was recently concluded between the South Korean authorities and the Japanese reactionaries. [...] The “agreement” is a treacherous one that abandons the dominium over Tok Islet, part of the inviolable territory of Korea, and sells territorial waters to outside forces. [...] We do not recognize the treacherous and aggressive “South Korea-Japan fishing agreement” and declare the “waters under joint control” of 135 degrees and 30 minutes east longitude null and void.¹⁰⁰

Actually, the Japanese-South Korean Agreement on Fisheries was signed as late as November 28, 1998, entering into force in January 1999. Still, it did establish a compromise joint-use zone around Dokdo, instead of

⁹⁸ Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia*, 89.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

¹⁰⁰ “DPRF Spokesman on South Korean Authorities’ Treason,” KCNA, October 2, 1998 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

insisting on the exclusive sovereignty of one side or another.¹⁰¹ Presenting this ambiguity as outright treachery, from October 1998 to February 1999, KCNA criticized the agreement in twenty-five articles, accusing Kim Dae-jung of selling Dokdo to Japan.

During its campaign against the agreement, North Korea, ironically, found itself on the same side as South Korea's conservative Grand National Party (GNP), which in January 1999 called for "defending Dokdo" and "nullifying and renegotiating the Korea-Japan fisheries agreement."¹⁰² Under usual circumstances, North Korean propaganda was habitually inclined to castigate the GNP for its alleged anti-national stance, but in this particular case, KCNA approved the party's complaints about the agreement.¹⁰³

Judging from the fact that in 1997, Pyongyang had refrained from making any comment on Japan's claims to Dokdo, it is doubtful that this sudden attack on Kim Dae-jung was motivated solely by North Korea's concerns about Tokyo's territorial ambitions. It appears more likely that the KWP leaders considered the process of Japanese-South Korean rapprochement, whose security and cultural aspects they similarly condemned, a threat to their own interests, and wanted to hinder it by raising such a contentious issue as the Dokdo question. Paradoxically, Kim's reconciliation-oriented Sunshine Policy could hardly lessen Pyongyang's dissatisfaction with his simultaneous readiness to cultivate friendly relations with Japan, not least because in September 1998, the earlier trend of Japan-DPRK rapprochement had ground to a halt due to North Korea's missile test.¹⁰⁴ Facing this double challenge, the North

¹⁰¹ Jon M. Van Dyke, "Legal Issues Related to Sovereignty over Dokdo and Its Maritime Boundary," *Ocean Development & International Law* 38, no. 1-2 (January 31, 2007): 193.

¹⁰² Choi, "The Politics of the Dokdo Issue": 471.

¹⁰³ "'Fisheries Accord' between South Korea and Japan Effectuated," KCNA, January 26, 1999 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ Hughes, *Japan's Economic Power and Security*, 101.

Korean leaders seem to have used the issue of Dokdo to lash out at both South Korea and Japan.

In early 2000, however, Pyongyang's propaganda about Dokdo underwent yet another shift. As the Sunshine Policy started taking effect, KCNA in March ceased carrying articles directly accusing Kim Dae-jung of having sold Dokdo to Japan. True, an example of indirect (South Korean) criticism appeared as late as June 10, a few days before the historic North-South summit. Still, from mid-2000 to mid-2004, most of KCNA's Dokdo-related articles, save for a few cases of indirect criticism, solely targeted Japan. The shifting focus of North Korean propaganda was probably not only a consequence of inter-Korean rapprochement, but actually an integral element of North-South interactions. Namely, the DPRK sought to create a sort of inter-Korean consensus on the basis of the two sides' shared commitment to Dokdo. The latter idea was clearly expressed in June 2001 when the Dokdo Museum opened a North Korea-South Korea joint exhibition of historical materials.¹⁰⁵ In August of the same year, a festival for national reunification took place in Pyongyang, ending with a North-South joint statement:

They agreed to continue having various forms of joint events to lay bare the Japanese imperialists' occupation of Korea and their thrice-cursed crimes against the Korean nation and get an apology and compensation for them and to strengthen a joint action of non-governmental organizations to firmly protect the dominium over Tok Islet and have an academic symposium in this regard as an immediate task.¹⁰⁶

This kind of consensus on Dokdo was an entirely new phenomenon, since up to 1998 both Seoul and Pyongyang had usually found it easier to

¹⁰⁵ "South-North Joint Exhibition of Materials Held," KCNA, June 9, 2001 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ "Joint Press Statement Released," KCNA, August 21, 2001 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

reach a *modus vivendi* with Tokyo than with each other. Only inter-Korean rapprochement could enable the two sides to synchronize their public attitudes toward the Dokdo issue. Yet, as will be seen below, this synchronization remained more or less imbalanced, because North Korea's attention was focused on South Korean non-governmental organizations and socio-political movements, rather than the South Korean state.

North Korea's efforts to seek consensus with the South on Dokdo implied that Pyongyang intended to dissuade Seoul from cooperating with Tokyo. Indeed, the visits of Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō (2000-2001) and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō (2001-2006) to South Korea invariably elicited negative comments from KCNA. On both occasions, KCNA pointed out that the Dokdo Research Society and other South Korean non-governmental organizations sharply protested against the visits.¹⁰⁷

At the same time, however, North Korea was also pursuing its own policy of rapprochement with Japan. As early as mid-2001, Pyongyang sent feelers for the resumption of negotiations.¹⁰⁸ Initially, the campaign for inter-Korean consensus on Dokdo continued unabated. Between January and May 2002, KCNA still carried nine articles criticizing Japanese claims to Dokdo. Nevertheless, only one article of this kind was published during the remainder of 2002, to be followed by an even longer period of silence next year. Throughout 2003, KCNA mentioned Dokdo only in a single article on *Rodong sinmun*'s analogous attitude.¹⁰⁹ Pyongyang's peculiar silence, which stood in a marked contrast with its

¹⁰⁷ "Mori's Junket to South Korea Rejected," KCNA, October 20, 2000 (accessed on March 4, 2013); "Koizumi's Remarks Assailed in South Korea," KCNA, October 21, 2001 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹⁰⁸ Hong Nack Kim, *The Koizumi Government and the Politics of Normalizing Japanese-North Korean Relations*, Working Paper (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2006), 4.

¹⁰⁹ See Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok": 129.

pronounced interest in Dokdo from 1999 to 2001 and early 2002, seems to have reflected the combined effect of two external factors: the short-lived Japanese-North Korean rapprochement from August to October 2002 and the temporary de-escalation of the Dokdo dispute.

On the one hand, Koizumi's unprecedented visit to Pyongyang in September 2002, during which Kim Jong Il went so far as to apologize for the earlier abduction of Japanese citizens, raised hopes that Japanese-North Korean relations might be finally normalized after all. Since "it was not until late August 2002 that significant progress was made for the resumption of the suspended Japanese-North Korean normalization talks," it was probably not a coincidence that KCNA's last attack on Japan's territorial claims occurred on August 26.¹¹⁰ Significantly, KCNA's use of such pejorative terms as "Japanese militarism" and "Japanese reactionaries" also dropped to an unusually low level from September to December 2002. On the other hand, it deserves attention that in the winter of 2002 and 2003, Japan-DPRK relations once again took a turn for the worse, this time because of Pyongyang's nuclear program, yet North Korean propaganda continued to ignore Dokdo. One may attribute this phenomenon to the fact that in 2003, Japan-ROK relations were largely free of tension. During his trip to Tokyo in June, President Rho Moo-hyun (2003-2008) was the first "South Korean leader visiting Japan [who] did not bring up the history issue, let alone ask for an apology."¹¹¹ Thus the opportunities for reigniting the dispute looked unfavorable, all the more so because in the midst of the nuclear crisis, Pyongyang could ill afford to alienate the still-friendly Roh administration by attacking its Japan policy.

But if KCNA's references to Dokdo showed a dramatic decline in

¹¹⁰ Kim, *The Koizumi Government and the Politics of Normalizing Japanese-North Korean Relations*, 5.

¹¹¹ Seongho Sheen, *Japan-South Korea Relations: Slowly Lifting the Burden of History?* Occasional Paper (Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2003), 1-2.

2002 and 2003, they underwent an explosive growth in 2005. While the Japanese-South Korean dispute also entered a particularly intense phase in 2005, North Korean propaganda seems not to have been a mere reflection of the former. Interestingly enough, the start of North Korea's Dokdo campaign actually preceded the eruption of the Japanese-South Korean crisis. In South Korea, the triggering factor was Shimane Prefecture's promotion of a bill in support of "Takeshima Day," which occurred in late February. In contrast, *Rodong sinmun* had raised the issue of Dokdo as early as February 7 by launching a direct attack on the South Korean government officials who had dissuaded the head of the National Police Agency from visiting Dokdo: "The south Korean authorities say quite often that Tok Islet belongs to Korea but, in actuality, commit an act contrary to this as in the aforementioned case. This disclosed their pro-Japanese toadyism."¹¹²

The nature of this charge revealed Pyongyang's dissatisfaction with the process of Japan-ROK rapprochement, which was still in motion in January 2005.¹¹³ Actually, the two countries were planning to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) within that year. In contrast, North Korea's renewed attempts to reach reconciliation with Japan did not yield the expected results. Following Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang on May 22, 2004, KCNA, which had published over twenty Dokdo-related articles between January 17 and May 15, again dropped the subject, and mentioned Dokdo only once during the rest of the year. However, in the winter of 2004 and 2005, the process of Japan-DPRK rapprochement stalled one more time because of a new dispute about the abducted Japanese citizens.¹¹⁴ Under such circumstances, Pyongyang had

¹¹² "South Korean Authorities Hit for Pro-Japanese Toadyism," KCNA, February 7, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹¹³ Kang, "Japan-Korea Relations": 125-126.

¹¹⁴ Kim, *The Koizumi Government and the Politics of Normalizing Japanese-North Korean Relations*, 24-29.

sufficient incentive to reignite the issue of Dokdo, all the more so because the territorial dispute, coupled with the two Koreas' shared opposition to Japan's bid for a permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, created an opportunity to revive the North-South consensus.

In early 2005, Pyongyang then opened the floodgates of its Dokdo propaganda to an unprecedented and, to date, unparalleled extent. Throughout the year, KCNA published a total of 121 Dokdo-related articles. In May 2005, the DPRK also issued stamps depicting Dokdo, which South Korea had done years earlier, and curtly rebuffed Japanese complaints against this act.¹¹⁵ The unusual intensity of North Korean attention certainly mirrored the massive scale of the protest movements in the ROK. Indeed, KCNA covered these movements with far greater interest and approval than the steps taken by the South Korean government. As late as mid-March after President Roh Moo-hyun and Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon had already made some sharply critical comments on Japan, *Rodong sinmun* still found it necessary to castigate South Korean authorities for their earlier decision to designate 2005 as "Japan-Korea Friendship Year."¹¹⁶ On March 22, however, KCNA finally reported that the South Korean government, the ruling Uri Party, and the opposition parties issued a joint protest against the "Takeshima Day ordinance."¹¹⁷ In April, the DPRK repeatedly called for a North-South consensus against Japan's territorial claims: "The prevailing situation requires all Koreans in the north and the south to shatter the Japanese militarists' moves for reinvasion through national cooperation."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Choi, "The Politics of the Dokdo Issue": 468; "Japan's Fax Message on its Claim to Tok Islet Sent Back," KCNA, May 25, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹¹⁶ "Claim to Ownership of Land of Ancestors in South Korea Flailed," KCNA, March 12, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹¹⁷ "Japan's Ambition to Grab Tok Islet Denounced in South Korea," KCNA, March 22, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹¹⁸ "Japanese Reactionaries' Moves to Grab Tok Islet Flailed," KCNA, April 22, 2005 (accessed on

During the North-South Ministerial Talks held in June 2005, the head of the northern delegation called upon his southern counterpart to “jointly cope with Japan’s moves to invade Tok Islet,” but the latter gave only an evasive reply.¹¹⁹

Probably this is why various South Korean non-governmental organizations such as the Dokdo Society, the National Alliance for the Protection of Dokdo, the Council for Promotion of Compensation to the Victims of the Pacific War, and the Bereaved Families of the Pacific War, and some minor leftist parties like the Democratic Labor Party, rather than the South Korean government, continued to receive the limelight in KCNA’s reports. In the first stage of the protests, the civic groups were certainly more eager to confront Japan than the state authorities and thus the stance of non-governmental organizations seemed more attractive to Pyongyang than the more cautious attitude of the Roh Moo-hyun administration.¹²⁰ The KWP leaders were obviously unnerved by any sign of Japan-ROK cooperation against their nuclear program: in May 2005, KCNA denounced Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon “who sang duet with the Japanese foreign minister calling for taking the nuclear issue of the DPRK to the UN Security Council.”¹²¹ For this reason, they must have welcomed those tendencies that aggravated, rather than defused, the Japanese-South Korean conflict over Dokdo. In any case, non-governmental organizations could be presented as representatives of South Korean society and by extension, the Korean nation, whereas KCNA continued to suggest doubts about the national legitimacy of

March 4, 2013).

¹¹⁹ “15th North-South Ministerial Talks Open,” KCNA, June 22, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹²⁰ Suh and Linkhart, “Korean NGOs in Historicizing Foreign Affairs and Democratizing Foreign Policies”: 181-182.

¹²¹ “Anti-National Behavior of South Korean Minister under Fire,” KCNA, May 13, 2005 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

South Korean state institutions.

Finally, it is worth taking a brief look at the role of the “Dokdo factor” in Pyongyang’s recent attitude toward President Lee Myung-bak (2008-2012). During the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations, North Korea sought to discredit the conservative GNP, which frequently criticized the Sunshine Policy, by accusing its leaders, including Lee Myung-bak, of pro-Japanese sentiments. As early as May 2008, KCNA blamed the new conservative administration for Tokyo’s persistent claims over Dokdo: “This is an inevitable product of traitor Lee Myung Bak’s pro-Japanese humiliating diplomacy.”¹²² Predictably, Lee Myung-bak’s attempt to sign an intelligence accord with Japan inspired particularly harsh charges of treachery.¹²³ Having branded him a “pro-Japanese lackey,” Pyongyang seems to have been taken aback when the president paid a visit to Dokdo in August 2012. Once again, the KWP leaders were unwilling to approve the nationalist act of a conservative South Korean president whom they intensely disliked, and hence they dismissed it as a trick to win popularity. Nevertheless, they probably also felt from their own perspective that Lee Myung-bak’s visit brought certain advantages, since it created serious friction between Tokyo and Seoul. These conflicting aims may explain why North Korean propaganda reacted to his visit in a somewhat peculiar way. The critical comments published by KCNA were made by such unusually selected persons as two professors of Kim Il Sung University and a Korean resident in the United States.¹²⁴ And since December 2012, the agency’s Dokdo-related articles have been directed mostly against Japan, rather

¹²² “Lee Myung Bak’s Humiliating Diplomacy toward Japan Accused,” KCNA, May 28, 2008 (accessed on March 4, 2013).

¹²³ See, among others, “White Paper of DFRK Central Committee Slams South Korea-Japan Military Nexus,” KCNA, August 13, 2012 (accessed on August 5, 2013).

¹²⁴ “Lee Myung Bak’s Tour of Tok Islets under Fire,” KCNA, August 17, 2012 (accessed on August 5, 2013); “Lee Myung Bak’s Sycophancy Censured by Korean in U.S.,” KCNA, August 18, 2012 (accessed on August 5, 2013).

than the South Korean government.

Conclusion

This article is the first stage of a planned long-term research project on North Korea's attitude toward the problem of Dokdo. Certain aspects of the topic, such as Pyongyang's Dokdo policy in the early and mid-1990s, still require additional investigation. Nevertheless, the article's findings seem to confirm its preliminary hypothesis. The abrupt and pronounced shifts that repeatedly occurred in Pyongyang's Dokdo-related propaganda, from a single KCNA article within a seven-month period to over 100 the next year, or vice versa, cannot be easily reconciled with any single-cause explanation, be it focused on ethnic nationalism or some other static ideological tenet. Instead, a multi-factor model of explanation may be more suitable.

The findings of this article seem to be in accordance with the following observations of Bae Jin-su and Yang Ju: "North Korea has thus far been using the Dokdo issue to its political and diplomatic advantage as hindering ROK-US-Japan partnership by instigating anti-Japan sentiment in Korea, blaming South Korean officials for their incompetence and corruption, alienating the Korean government and people, and holding back the cooperation between South Korea and its allies."¹²⁵ Indeed, in a number of cases North Korea did use the force of nationalism for instrumental purposes to obstruct Japanese-South Korean rapprochement, facilitate inter-Korean cooperation, or achieve other diplomatic aims.

Still, this model of explanation, focused as it is on North Korea-Japanese and Japanese-South Korean relations, needs further elaboration.

¹²⁵ Bae and Yang, "Bukhan *Nodong sinmun* eui Dokdo gisa (1948-2008 nyeon) hyeonhwang bunseok": 149.

Efforts to hinder Japan-ROK cooperation did constitute a major and constant element of Pyongyang's Dokdo policy, but the twists and turns of inter-Korean relations, the two governments' competing claims for legitimacy, and the dynamics of the Dokdo dispute, led to periodic shifts in the tactics of the KWP leaders. For instance, in certain periods, such as between 1949 and 1953, North Korean media attacks on Japanese-South Korean collaboration were not accompanied by references to Dokdo. On later occasions, Pyongyang sought to hinder Japanese-South Korean rapprochement by engaging Tokyo, while at other times it tried to achieve the same aim by forging an inter-Korean front against Japan. Therefore, the factor of DPRK-ROK relations seems to have been at least as important as the "Japan factor."

This examination indicates that Pyongyang's attitude toward the Dokdo issue has been shaped by varying combinations of the following external factors: (1) North Korea's relations with Japan (cooperative/hostile); (2) North Korea's relations with South Korea (cooperative/hostile); and (3) South Korea's relations with Japan (cooperative/hostile). While certain combinations such as inter-Korean rapprochement combined with Japanese hostility toward North Korea and/or South Korea, or the simultaneous deterioration of inter-Korean and Japan-DPRK relations in a period of Japan-ROK cooperation, seem to have been conducive to the growth of North Korean interest in the Dokdo question, other combinations, such as Japan-DPRK rapprochement in a period of inter-Korean hostility, or a hard-line South Korean attitude toward both Tokyo and Pyongyang dissuaded the KWP leaders from raising this issue.

One may also place these elements of North Korea's Dokdo policy into a broader theoretical framework by comparing them with Chinese Communist policies. As Yinan He elaborately described, from 1953 to 1981 the Chinese leaders, anxious as they were to achieve rapprochement with Japan, laid far less emphasis on the memory of Japanese war crimes than in the post-1981 period when they frequently used anti-Japanese

nationalism to enhance the domestic legitimacy of the Communist regime.¹²⁶

In both China and North Korea, the persistence of *de facto* one-party rule enabled the political elites to shape the course of public discourse on the nation's past and present relations with Japan. To be sure, the manipulative capabilities of the Chinese state were partly curtailed by the country's post-1978 reform process, which facilitated the emergence of spontaneous nationalist sentiments.¹²⁷ In North Korea however, society and intellectual life is still under extensive state control. Therefore, the DPRK's public discourse on Dokdo reflected, *ipso facto*, the objectives and priorities of the political leadership rather than the views and aspirations of civil society. In contrast with post-1987 South Korea, North Korean leadership's policy shifts were triggered primarily by external factors, that is, the actions of powerful neighboring states, rather than the pressure of non-governmental organizations or other domestic actors. Devoid of a diplomatic relationship with Japan, Pyongyang's bargaining position vis-à-vis Tokyo has been considerably weaker than that of Seoul or Beijing. Under such conditions, the KWP leaders often found it necessary to show more flexibility toward Japan than their South Korean or Chinese counterparts, provided that they considered rapprochement a feasible option at that time.¹²⁸

In light of the intense nationalism of the KWP leaders, which induced them to pursue a course independent from other Communist states, it might appear inexplicable that the DPRK repeatedly found it easier to reach a *modus vivendi* with Japan, Korea's former colonial overlord, than with the ROK.¹²⁹ After all, the self-defined national legitimacy of the North Korean state was explicitly based on the tradition

¹²⁶ He, "Remembering and Forgetting the War," 100-111.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 111-115.

¹²⁸ Kiwon Chung, "Japanese-North Korean Relations Today": 789-791.

¹²⁹ On North Korean nationalism, see Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, 229-248.

of anti-Japanese resistance, and Kim Il Sung's (real and alleged) guerrilla activities constituted a central element of his personality cult.¹³⁰

Still, the KWP leaders were not captives of their own nationalist ideology. On the contrary, they were both able and willing to tone down their anti-Japanese propaganda whenever they thought a rapprochement with Tokyo was both feasible and advantageous to North Korea. If they opted to do so, they proved capable of ignoring the Dokdo dispute not only in periods of de-escalation, but also in such periods of escalation as the crises of 1952 to 1953 and 1997 to 1998. And if they did raise the Dokdo issue, on some occasions, such as in February 1997, they were more interested in discrediting the South Korean government than in criticizing Japan.

To explain these contradictory phenomena, one should make a distinction between the partly overlapping but not necessarily identical concepts of ethnic and state-centric nationalism in Korea. On the basis of ethnic and historical identity, North Korea was as closely connected to the island as South Korea; but from the perspective of state-centric nationalism, Pyongyang found it difficult to harmonize its standpoint on Dokdo with that of Seoul. Ever since the establishment of the DPRK and the ROK, each of the two competing states has been prone to consider itself the sole legitimate government on the peninsula. Consequently, they regarded each other not simply as foreign states, but as non-state entities devoid of national legitimacy, a situation having much in common with the antagonistic relationship between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China on Taiwan. Under such conditions, political elites of both the DPRK and the ROK were strongly motivated to depict their rival regime as being unable and unwilling to defend Korean national interests vis-à-vis foreign powers. In other words, their attitude toward one or another specific national issue was

¹³⁰ Myers, *The Cleanest Race*, 96-102.

shaped not only by the need to uphold their own national legitimacy, but also by the intention to question the legitimacy of the other Korean state.

Concerning the unilateral proclamation of the Republic of Korea in 1948, its political elites were still considerably divided over the question of ethnic versus state-centric nationalism. Namely, certain political groups, like the “South-North Negotiation faction,” were of the opinion that national unification should precede the establishment of a formal state structure.¹³¹ However, as far as Dokdo was concerned, the South Korean conceptions of ethnic and state-centric nationalism could be easily reconciled with each other. Since Seoul’s legal and political position was based not only on Korea’s historical entitlement to Dokdo, but also on its effective administrative control over the island, the South Korean government faced no ideological dilemma.

In contrast, the DPRK was neither possessor nor claimant in the Dokdo dispute. While Japanese claims over Dokdo did clash with North Korean ethnic nationalism, they did not constitute a direct challenge to North Korean state authority in the same way as they questioned the legitimacy of South Korean administrative control over the island. This ambivalent situation influenced North Korea’s attitude toward the Dokdo issue in various ways. On the one hand, it increased Pyongyang’s room for maneuver, for the North’s government, unlike its southern counterpart, could afford to temporarily disregard Japan’s territorial claims, and pursue a policy of rapprochement with Tokyo in periods of Japanese-South Korean friction. On the other hand, the highly nationalist KWP leaders, reluctant as they were to acknowledge the national legitimacy of the South Korean government, felt compelled to react to any major Japan-ROK agreement which, implicitly or explicitly, affected Korea as a whole, including the agreements related to fishing, maritime

¹³¹ On statist and ethnic nationalist ideologies in the early years of the ROK, see Chong-Myong Im, “The Making of the Republic of Korea as a Modern Nation-State, August 1948 - May 1950” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 2004), 29-31.

boundaries, and other aspects of the Dokdo dispute. The net result of these conflicting factors was that if North Korea did raise the Dokdo issue, it usually, though not invariably, combined its attacks on Japan with critical comments on the South Korean government. For this reason, a North-South consensus over the question of Dokdo will probably remain an elusive aim unless a long-term normalization of inter-Korean relations is achieved.

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Old Korean Settlements in Russian Primorye Examined from an Archaeological Perspective

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Old Korean Settlements in Russian Primorye as Examined from an Archaeological Perspective

The article focuses on archaeological investigations of old Korean settlements in the Primorye region within the chronological frames of their existence between the 1860s and the 1930s. The remains of dwellings, economic, manufacturing, and sacral structures, and complexes of tools and utensils are considered material sources of information on various aspects of the life of the Korean population in the Russian Primorye region. The remains of settlements located in the Crabbe Peninsula and the Krounovka River valley seem to be the most interesting and promising for future investigations.

Keywords: Primorye district, Crabbe Peninsula, old Korean settlements, material culture, building traditions, implements, utensils



Old Korean Settlements in Russian Primorye Examined from an Archaeological Perspective

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Introduction

In recent decades, archeological research around the world has been actively expanding the scope of excavation sites to those pertaining to modern and contemporary periods in history from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. Such sites include remains of industrial enterprises, ruins of homesteads, sacral objects, traces of military camps and fortifications, roads, and traditional rural settlements. Excavating such sites allows a greater diversity of evidence to be brought forth which, along with other sources, can increase our knowledge about the economic, political, cultural, and ethnic histories of certain regions of the world.¹

The Russian Primorye region can be considered a prospective area for conducting archaeological studies on relatively recent history. The objects of study could be the remains of industrial complexes, military

¹ C. Melvin Aikens, Thomas J. Connolly, and Dennis L. Jenkins, *Oregon Archaeology* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2011).

installations, and homesteads of the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. From the same period, yet in a separate category, are numerous settlements left by Koreans in Primorye. These have not been studied systematically up to now, however, the subject of Korean communities in the Russian Far East during the late 1930s is not new to historical research. Studies have already been done on various issues throughout the economic, social, political, and cultural histories of Koreans in the Russian Far East during the pre-revolutionary period before 1917 and after, or since the Soviet Union was established.² Still, little attention has been paid to the material culture and everyday life of Koreans. Therefore, significant contributions to the study of these important aspects can be made by excavating preserved remnants of Korean settlements in the Russian Far East.

Korean settlements first appeared in southern Russian Primorye in the 1860s as a result of forced and illegal migration of members of the rural population from neighboring Korea. The reasons were, on the one hand, economic hardships in Korea and, on the other hand, the availability of vast unoccupied lands in the southern Russian Far East only at the beginning stage of development for residential and economic purposes. The area within the southern Russian Far East where Koreans

² Anatoly T. Kuzin, *Dal'nevostochnye Koreitsy: Zhizn I Istoriya Sudby* [The Koreans of the Far East: Life and History of Destiny] (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia: Literaturno-izdatelskoe obединenie, 1993); Alexander. I. Petrov, *Koreiskaia Diaspora Na Dalnem Vostoke Rossii: 60-90- E Gody XIX Veka* [The Korean Diaspora in the Russian Far East, 1860s-1890s] (Vladivostok: DVO RAN, 2000); Alexander. I. Petrov, *Koreiskaya Diapora v Rossii. 1897-1917 Gg.* [The Korean Diaspora in Russia, 1897-1917] (Vladivostok: DVO RAN, 2001); Elena N. Chernolutskaia, *Prinuditel'nye Migratsii Na Dal'nem Vostoke Rossii v 1920-1950 Gody* [Forced Migrations in the Russian Far East in 1920-1950] (Vladivostok: Izdatel'stvo Dal'nauka [Dal'nauka-Press], 2011); O. B. Lynsha, "Likvidatsiya Negratnosti Sredi Koreiskogo Naseleniya Primor'ya v 1920-30 Gody [The Eradication of Illiteracy among the Korean Population of the Primorye Region in the 1920-1930s]," in *Problemy istorii obrazovaniya na Dal'nem Vostoke Rossii* [The Problems of the History of Education in the Russian Far East], vol. 2 (Ussuriisk, Russia: Izdatel'stvo Dal'nevostochnogo Federal'nogo Universiteta [Publishing House of Far Eastern Federal University], 2012), 20-27.

mainly lived in the late nineteenth century was the Pos'yet plot (district) of Primorye region (now the Khasansky district). The mass immigration of Koreans to the far east of Russia and then the Soviet Union, primarily to the Primorye region, continued until the 1930s. Between the 1920s and 1930s, the Korean population was mainly spread across the districts of Posiet, Suyfun, Suchan, and Shkotovsky districts in Primorye. According to research data, by 1937, more than 165,000 Koreans resided in the far eastern territories of the Soviet Union.³ At present, the remaining Korean settlements are located in the Khasansky, Ocityabrsky, Ussurisky, Partisansky, and Shkotovsky districts of Primorye. In northern Primorye, remains of Korean settlements are concentrated at the estuary of the Bikin River in the Pozharsky district.

When Korean villages in Primorye and other far eastern regions were hastily abandoned after the deportation in 1937, the process of their desolation and destruction began, and continues into the present. The result has been a gradual shift of Korean settlements into the category of what might be defined as archaeological sites today. The grounds for such a definition are, first, the fragmented state of settlements as a whole and their structural and functional components in particular, and second, the presence of cultural layers - soil deposits in which various artifacts (fragments of buildings, tools, utensils, and other objects) are partially or totally buried.

Data gathered for this article are visual observations of the remains of Korean settlements in the districts of Khasansky, Ussuriisky, and Ocityabrsky in the Primorye region, a collection of Korean artifacts found at the settlements, and results of archaeological research performed at certain sites. This article attempts to systematize the materials currently in the collection and assess their prospects for the study of old Korean

³ Chernolutskaya, *Prinuditel'nye Migratsii Na Dal'nem Vostoke Rossii v 1920-1950 Gody*, 201-227.

settlements in the Russian Primorye region.

1. Settlement Pattern, Living Space Organization, and Building Technologies

According to Alexander I. Petrov, the farmstead settlement pattern of Koreans in Primorye carried unique characteristics largely due to geographic and economic factors. Villages often consisted of several farmsteads distant from each other and contained varying numbers of separate homesteads. The distance between hamlets sometimes reached up to a few miles away.⁴

Petrov further notes that the houses of Primorye Koreans were monotonous in their features. They had a rectangular floor plan, supporting wooden pillars along the perimeter, walls constructed of willow frame and coated with a mixture of clay and chopped straw plastered outside, and a gable roof of straw or reeds. The door and a wide window were usually built on the southern side of the house. A distinctive feature was the presence of *ondol*, or an underground heating system with a furnace hearth, flue duct, and a discharge pipe on the outside. The furnace hearth fulfilled cooking purposes and the supply of hot air to flues. A cast iron cooking cauldron would be placed on top of the furnace hearth. The smoke pipe would be located at some distance from the walls of the house and constructed of either the trunk or from wooden planks covered with clay.⁵

Publications by Korean researchers include detailed information on the principles of traditional structures of rural homesteads and housing technologies.⁶ The homestead is a complex of living and subsidiary

⁴ Petrov, *Koreiskaya Diapora v Rossii. 1897-1917 Gg.*, 114-119.

⁵ Petrov, *Koreiskaia Diaspora Na Dalnem Vostoke Rossii: 60-90- E Gody XIX Veka*, 239-240.

⁶ Suzanne Crowder Han, *Notes on Things Korean* (Seoul: Hollym Press, 2002); Yim Seock Jae, *The Traditional Space: A Study of Korean Architecture* (Seoul: Ehwa Woman's University Press,

structures covering the area of a rectangular plan. In different landscapes and climatic areas of the Korean Peninsula, certain historical variations of individual elements in the aforementioned homestead pattern can be observed at present or could be observed until recently. In the past, the specific allocation of the homestead and house were also determined by social factors. The homestead territory's perimeter would usually be enclosed by a wall built of mud or stone. Using stones to construct walls was widely practiced in Korea from early medieval times.⁷

The basic element of a homestead structure is the living house. There are several configuration options for a housing plan: straight-lined, in which all rooms are situated along the same line; Γ-shaped, in which two linear block spaces are joined at right angles; Π-shaped; and rectangular-shaped with an inner courtyard. Basic structural elements of a living house are a base platform made of stone and rammed earth, pole frames around the perimeter of walls, and a roof. In the Korean house-building tradition, the roof was an important element that carried, beyond its functional value, a representation of social status, as well. *Choga* roofs made of plant organic material (straw, reed, or cane) were characteristic of houses of ordinary villagers and common townspeople. Houses of the Korean *yangban* elite denoted by the term *hanok* had tiled *giwa* roofs, which was a marker of high social status.⁸

According to data collected for this article, the localization of old Korean settlements in many parts of the Primorye region corresponds to a dispersed farmstead pattern. As an example, the remains of Korean settlements in the Crabbe Peninsula in marginal southern Primorye

2005); Oh Hong-seok, *Traditional Korean Villages* (Seoul: Ehwa Woman's University Press, 2009); Song Ki-ho, *Hanguk godaeui ondol: Buk Okjeo, Koguryo, Balhae* [Ancient Korean Heating System: Northern Okjeo, Koguryo and Balhae] (Seoul: Seoul daehakgyo chulpanbu [Seoul National University Press], 2006).

⁷ Oh, *Traditional Korean Villages*, 11-39, 149.

⁸ Han, *Notes on Things Korean*, 58; Oh, *Traditional Korean Villages*, 97-101, 148-150; Yim, *The Traditional Space: A Study of Korean Architecture*, 13.

(Figure 1) can be considered. In 1872, a small Korean settlement was initially established there under the name Hydzhida. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Crabbe village of Pos'yet plot (district) had become one of largest and most economically prosperous Korean villages in the south of the Russian Primorye. There were two schools in the village, an Orthodox parish, and quite a large “fleet” of small boats to conduct marine fishing.⁹

The Crabbe peninsula at the Pos'yet gulf in the Khasansky district of Primorye is actually a fairly large closed area (Figure 1). It was first discovered and mapped in 1854 by the expedition of Count E.V. Putiatin, a Russian vice-admiral. The peninsula stretches in a southeastern direction for over eighteen kilometers, northwest from Cape Gakkel to Cape Astaf'eva. The southwestern coast of the peninsula is a steep, rocky, and rugged land jutting out into deep coves. The northeastern part of the peninsula is washed by the shallow waters of the Novgorodskaya Bay and has a flatter and less rugged terrain. More than forty archaeological sites belonging to different historical periods from the Neolithic to the early Middle Age have been recognized on the peninsula so far. The most interesting subject is an ancient earthen wall on the isthmus connecting the peninsula to the mainland. Primarily, this wall has been assigned to the medieval period. According to results of an archaeological survey from 1991 and further investigations conducted between 2008 and 2013, more than twenty sites with remains of old Korean settlements have been additionally uncovered (Figure 2).

Remains of farmsteads on the Crabbe Peninsula are concentrated mainly at the mouths of small streams close by the sea for almost the entire circumference of the peninsula. The farmsteads differ in the amount of separate homesteads. Thus, on the northeast shore of the

⁹ Petrov, *Koreiskaia Diaspora Na Dalnem Vostoke Rossii: 60-90- E Gody XIX Veka*; Petrov, *Koreiskaya Diapora v Rossii. 1897-1917 Gg.*

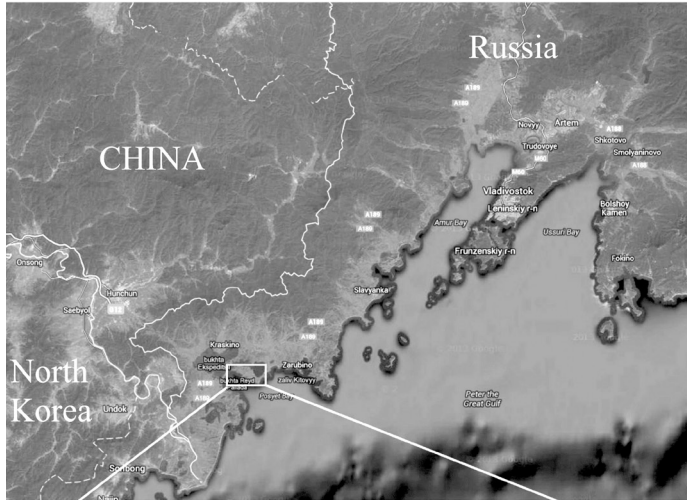


Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 1. Map of the Crabbe Peninsula localization in the Map of the Southern Part of the Primorye Region

Figure 2. Map of the localization of the remains of Korean farmsteads on the Crabbe Peninsula, Khasansky district, Primorye Region

Minonosok Bay (the peninsula's southwest side) in the valley of a creek, remains of at least eleven homesteads were marked to have been located in the immediate vicinity of the sea and on slopes of surrounding hills. Remains of a large settlement including about fifteen homesteads were

identified on the northeast side of the peninsula in the bay between Cape Novgorodski and Cape Konechny. Remains of hamlets consisting of three to six homesteads were identified on the shores of Temp, Kreiserok, and Klykova bays. In one of the small nameless bays on the southwestern coast of the peninsula, to the east of Cape Nizmenny, remains of a single homestead were located.

Data from visual observations on the Crabbe Peninsula provides an insight into the principles of how spaces were organized at homesteads. Homesteads could be distinguished by fenced and unfenced territories. In most cases, fences were constructed with stones walled up to a height between 0.5 and one meter. A rare variant of such fences would be formed with a low bar made of soil and stones. Remains of stone walls along the perimeter of homesteads could also be found in other districts of Primorye, for instance, in the Krounovka River valley.

Enclosed territories of old Korean homesteads on the Crabbe Peninsula usually have a distinct rectangular plan. Sometimes a fence marks a territory with only two sides like a corner. In cases where square-walled homesteads were measured, such as those in the Minonosok Bay, each was between 200 to 400 square meters. The orientation of homesteads situated on the Crabbe Peninsula's southwest coast depended on their entrances looking out toward the sea to the south or southwest. The location of an entrance could be identified by a gap of about two meters wide in a stone wall.

Remains of houses in areas where Koreans settled are primarily determined by the presence of base platforms made of earth and stones. A platform covered with a turf layer and dense vegetation is usually the only preserved structural element of a house. The height of platforms averages 0.7 to one meter, and their length ranges from six to 10 meters or longer. Typically, platforms have clearly elongated rectangular plans that correspond to the straight-lined configuration of a house. Sometimes, a platform's plan corresponds to the Γ -shaped configuration of a house, and such cases were traced in Tizinhe, the first Primorye Korean village

in the Khasansky district's Vinogradnaya River valley.

According to our observations on the Crabbe Peninsula, a house's platform is usually placed very close to the fenced wall opposite a homestead's entrance. The standard length-to-width ratio of rectangular platforms was about two to one, while the size of fixed platforms differed between 72 to 170 square meters. There were no remains left of house walls in most cases. This may reflect the fact that walls or frames of houses were indeed built with materials difficult to be preserved, such as adobe or plants such as wood and would thus be completely destroyed after dwellings were abandoned. However, a platform's perimeter could be determined along the traces of walls in some cases. Thus, in the homestead detected in one of the bays of the Crabbe Peninsula's southwest coast, remains of walls built of stone slabs are preserved at the north, east, and west sides of a house's platform. The height of those walls according to preserved parts reaches 1.3 or 1.5 meters.

Since traces of roofs were typically not fixed, one can assume short-lived organic plant materials were used for this element of housing construction. However, there are cases where remains of tiled roofs have been detected, for instance, at the site of the first Primorye Korean settlement, Tizinhe, which was mentioned above. There, on the platform surface upon a Γ -shaped plan, evidence of a collapsed roof, whole tiles as well as some fragmented ones, was discovered. The semi-cylindrical shaped tiles are a bright red-orange color from being made of ferruginous clay and display stamped decoration on their exterior. One variant of such decoration is similar to a "herringbone" pattern, and another is encircled, portraying a floral-like motif. These variants of tile decoration bear close analogies to medieval and traditional tile manufacturing in Korea (Figure 3).¹⁰ Roof tiles were also found among inhabitants of the

¹⁰ Jeju National Museum, *History and Culture of Jeju* (Seoul: Tongcheon Munhwasa, 2002), 114, 124.

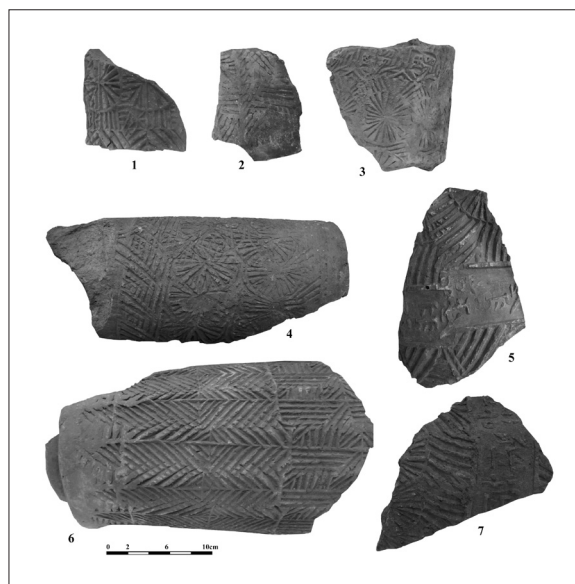


Figure 3. Samples of roof tiles 1 – Roof tiles collected at the site Tizinhe, Vinogradnaya River valley, Khasansky district of Primorye Region; 2 - Traditional Korean roof tiles [Note: Jeju National Museum, History and Culture of Jeju (Seoul: Tongcheon Munhwasa, 2002), 214]

modern village of Tsukanovka in the valley of the Tsukanovka River in the Khasansky district. The village used to be one of the largest old Korean villages in southern Primorye, and was named Lower Yanchihe. Isolated findings of roof tiles are known to have been made on the Crabbe Peninsula. The presence of houses with tiled roofs is probably evidence of their special social status.

A distinctive feature of house platforms at old Korean settlements is the *ondol* heating system. In many cases, flat stone slabs are laid horizontally upon the surfaces of platforms. Those are traces of the upper level of fume channels. The remains of Korean houses with *ondol* were investigated during excavations of the multilayer site Chernyatino 2 on the right bank of the Razdolnaya (Suifun) River in the western Primorye



Figure 4. Remains of a Korean farmstead in Minonosok Bay, on the southwest coast of Crabbe Peninsula: part of a stone wall at the homestead; on the wall – a cast iron cauldron

district of Ocyabrsky.¹¹ On the Crabbe Peninsula, some house platforms not only had stone slabs for *ondol*, but preserved hearth pits lined with stones also were detected. Very often, cast iron cooking cauldrons were discovered in close proximity to house platforms or on homestead territories (Figure 4).

At homestead settings, not only can platforms of houses be recognized, but also remains of subsidiary structures associated primarily with agricultural operations. The functions of such structures can be determined by the presence of massive millstones which were basic parts of stationary grinders. According to observations in the Crabbe Peninsula, millstones could be placed in a special barn with stone walls (Figure 5), but more often in the open air on rounded platforms slightly raised and paved with stone (Figure 6).

¹¹ Yuri G. Nikitin and Jung Suk Bae, *Arheologicheskie Issledovaniya Na Poselenii Chernyatino 2 v Primorye v 2008 Godu* [Archaeological Research at the Settlement Chernyatino 2 in Primorye in 2008], 3 vols. (Chungnam vuekun: Dal'nevostochny Gosudarstvenny Technichesky Universitet, Rossiyskaya Akademia Nauk, Gosudarstvenny Universitet kulturnogo nasledia Respubliki Korea [Far Eastern State Technical University, Russian Academy of Sciences and the State University of Korean Cultural Heritage], 2009), 208-213.



Figure 5. Remains of a subsidiary building with stone millstones, southwest coast of the Crabbe Peninsula

Figure 6. Remains of an open-air grinding construction, Crabbe Peninsula, northeast coast, Novgorodskaya Bay

2. Household Utensils

The categories of tools, equipment, household utensils, and other items retrieved at places of old Korean settlements are manifold. These include ceramic and porcelain wares, millstones of several different types, iron agricultural tools and cauldrons for hearths, bronze ware, jewelry, metal coins, and more. In recent years, these exotic artifacts have increasingly become the subject of poaching by “black” (illegal) archeologists destructing the cultural layer of settlements. Systematic study of collections of tools and utensils could be a valuable source for reconstructing features of everyday culture, economic, and industrial activities and relations in the Korean society of Russian Primorye during the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Due to the limited length of this article, only a brief survey of ceramic or porcelain wares, the main categories of excavated artifacts, were covered. Our collection of pottery and porcelain comes from old Korean settlements of the Khasansky district such as Crabbe, Tizinhe, Lower Yanchihe, and Sidimi, and includes intact items as well as fragments. There are four basic groups of ceramic and porcelain wares that are similar to those of traditional Korean provenance. The first group

is represented mainly by the fragments of large, thick-walled, and glazed vessels which may be compared with categories of Korean ceramic ware such as *onggi*, *hangari*, or *tok*. These containers are used in household activities, especially for the fermentation and storage of various food supplies, such as soy bean products, vegetables, pickles, red pepper, fish, and others.¹² The second group of ceramic ware also serves household needs, namely a variety of pots such as bowls thrown on a potter's wheel with unglazed walls, sometimes decorated with a simple incised pattern. Because of a particular way of burning (reducing or smudging), the pots' walls often possess a gray or dark gray color. The third group is represented by intact whole items and fragments of which the walls are covered inside and out with a shiny glaze of grayish, bluish, greenish tones resembling the hue of celadon glaze (Figure 7). Intact vessels are mostly small cups and bowls. Judging from certain technical features of ceramic ware production, it can be assumed that the majority of such objects were produced at cottages. This group can be related to *buncheong*, one of the most interesting categories of traditional Korean pottery. The technology to produce this group of ceramic ware dates back to the production of true Korean celadon ware, but the technology itself as well as the design of *buncheong* is not as meticulous or complicated compared to that of celadon ware. *Buncheong* ware produced for mass consumption was an affordable imitation of celadon ware, which was greatly admired, but expensive in Korea.¹³ The fourth group includes fragments and whole specimens of ordinary porcelain bowls, tea cups, plates, and saucers serving dining needs.

The question will then arise as to where such ceramic and porcelain wares were produced. As for porcelain, factory stamps or labels that identify the origin of products are printed on the bottom of their exterior.

¹² Han, *Notes on Things Korean*, 81; Sunhwa Rha, *Pottery: Korean Traditional Handicrafts* (Seoul: Ehwa Woman's University Press, 2006), 103-139.

¹³ Han, *Notes on Things Korean*, 85.

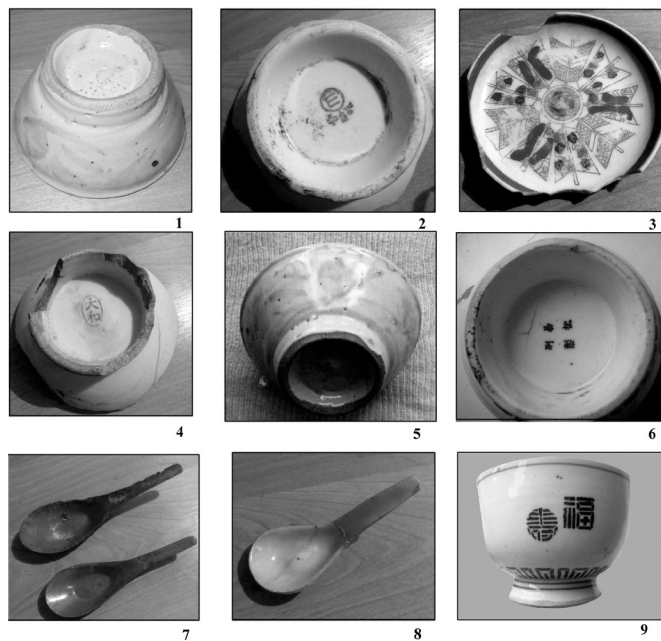


Figure 7. Samples of porcelain tableware collected at the Crabbe Peninsula:
 1 – A teacup covered with a celadon-like glaze; 2 – Bottom piece with a factory mark; 3 – Saucer with a polychrome decoration, presumably produced in Japan

The collection of porcelain ware is of Korean, Japanese, and supposedly Chinese origin (Figure 7). Also, a few examples of Russian pre-revolutionary and Soviet Union production were identified.

On the other hand, local pottery production could have also been possible. An example is the remains of a pottery firing kiln discovered in 2011 during a survey of an old Korean homestead in the upper Krounovka River valley in western Primorye (Figure 8). The site is named Leopardovy 1, after the name of the nearest stream.¹⁴ The kiln

¹⁴ Alexei L. Telelyuev, *Otchet Ob Arheologicheskikh Razvedkakh v Oktyabrskom I Ussuriiskom Raionah Primorskogo Kraya v 2011 G.* [Report on the Archaeological Field Survey in Octyabrsky and Ussurisky Districts of Primorye Region in 2011], 2011, Institut Istorii,

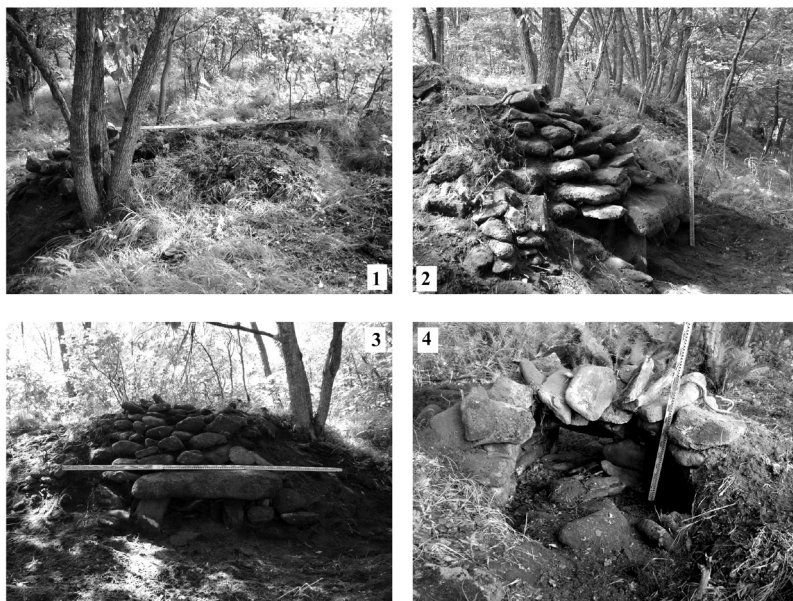


Figure 8. Remains of a pottery firing kiln, Site Leopardovy 1: 1 – General view of the kiln tunnel; 2 – View of the kiln’s mouth

resembles a tunnel-like construction built of local rock debris. The observed length of a kiln’s part is about 4.5 meters with a width of more than 2 meters and height between 0.85 to 0.9 meters. The kiln was formed at the edge of a river bank’s terrace in an inclining position. Its mouth oriented to the river was constructed of two massive stone slabs placed vertically and covered by another massive horizontal slab.

The upper part of the firing chamber had collapsed from the inside and its inner surface was coated with a layer of burned clay. In the immediate vicinity of the kiln remains, many fragments of gray-colored pottery were uncovered. Some fragments have visible traces of

Arheologii b Etnografii narodov Dal’nego Vostoka [Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of Peoples of the Far East].

deformation due to the temperature rising too rapidly during the firing process. It may be noted that sloped tunnel-like firing kilns are typical for the craft of making traditional Korean pottery.¹⁵

3. Stone Piles

Stone piles tend to be present at certain areas where the remains of famous Korean settlements are located. They are situated on the Crabbe Peninsula, in the Krounovka River valley in western Primorye and some other places (Figure 9). Usually, clusters of stone piles are found at some



Figure 9.
Stone piles and burial mound
at southeast coast of Crabbe
Peninsula

¹⁵ Gerald Carrico, "A Korean Pottery," *Ceramics Monthly* no. 6, 1973: 29-36.

distance from such settlements. The height of piles built of small- and medium-sized stones is between 0.4 and 0.6 meters. Some stone piles look similar to the platforms of rectangular-like, Γ-like or Π-like configuration. However, stone piles are not clearly shaped in many cases. The function of stone piles has not yet been clearly defined. Perhaps they are the result of clearing land to devote to farming.

However, it should be noted that in traditional Korean culture, namely in sacral life, it was a common custom to stack piles of stone named “*seonghwangdan*” upon slopes and under trees of villages until the beginning of the twentieth century (Figure 10). Such piles were used as “altars” in shamanistic cult ceremonies to pray to the mountains gods for, among others, rain, prosperity and health. This custom was



Figure 10.
Stone piles in the southwest coast of the Crabbe Peninsula

especially popular among the rural population.¹⁶ It is possible that clusters of stone piles detected near some Korean settlements at Primorye were also relevant to sacral rites.

Conclusion

Based on all the data discussed above, it can be noted that even a brief survey of the remains of Korean settlements in Russian Primorye demonstrates, first, their great diversity and then the possibility to apply means of archaeological science toward studying such sites, particularly excavation methods. There are diverse categories of records containing information on settlement patterns, living space organization, building technologies, agricultural activities, handicrafts, trade patterns, and other aspects of the Korean community in the Russian Primorye region from the final decades of the nineteenth century into the 1930s.

The archaeological study of remains of Korean settlements is of significant interest and value in terms of methodological aspects. This article considers Korean settlement remains as a new type of archaeological site in the area of the Russian Far East. These sites which belong to the recent past require the application of special approaches to analyze and interpret them. Great attention must be paid to the correlation between data from archaeological investigations and documentary records written on the history of the Primorye region, the Russian Far East, and neighboring countries of East Asia between the 1860s and the 1930s. Also, important methodological contributions may stem from observations on the dynamics and peculiarities of cultural layers accumulated at places where settlements had been located and subsequently abandoned at a certain point in history. The results of these

¹⁶ Yundviga Ionova, *Etnographiya Korei* [The Ethnography of Korea] (Moscow: Rossiyskaya Akademia Nauk [Russian Academy of Sciences], 2011), 121-159.

observations are useful for increasing knowledge about the processes through which archaeological sites and their cultural layers were formed.

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Book Reviews



동북아역사재단
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Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China

by Naomi Standen

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006

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Miji Lee

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It is not unusual for one, including the reviewer, to be greeted with a mixed response of surprise and appreciation for having researched for one's doctoral dissertation a barely known subject such as the Goryeo-Khitans diplomatic relations between the tenth century and the twelfth century. The Goryeo dynasty has remained a rather unpopular area of study within Korean history, or at the very least an area that could have been popular but not to the point of gaining great attention. What about the Khitans? People easily confuse the Khitans with the Jurchens or even the Mongols. They also become confused regarding which people founded which dynasty. By no means is such confusion a cause for reproach, considering that people are generally inexperienced in studying such subjects, particularly when these are not critical issues in Korean history compared to the Japanese invasion and annexation of Korea in the modern period or the Korean War.

Within such a milieu, it was astonishing to be told that a monograph on the Khitan Liao had been written and published outside of Northeast Asia. A series of questions subsequently arose: How did the author manage to find the funding and opportunity to publish such a

book in the United States where the Khitans are most likely barely known? What prompted the author to take an interest in the Khitans? Had the author discovered a way to overcome the lack of primary sources to work with? If so, then how?

Answers to these initial questions may be found in the book's preface and introduction provided by the author. It turns out that it was not the Khitans that Naomi Standen had originally been attracted to, but their lives in the frontier zone. Before moving on, rather than plowing through the preface and introduction here, it is worth noting what caused Standen to take note of frontiers. Standen's personal experience of cycling through Eastern Europe in the 1980s made her think about the creation of borders and the commonly accepted assumptions regarding frontiers. She then applied her ideas and questions to a totally different world called China in the tenth and eleventh century.

This period is typically understood as one of transition from Tang China to Song China. Many scholars, including this reviewer, have unconsciously followed the generally accepted understanding that the two dynasties, Tang and Song, are the main characters in this period of chaos that allowed opportunities for foreign people such as the Khitans to take the stage. Once the center of East Asia, Tang China had begun to lose the power to control its periphery. The absence of a controlling power gave the Khitans a chance to establish a dynasty of their own.

Regarding such a period, Standen makes several refreshing arguments. She marks the uncertainty of this period, an uncertainty that allows changes from what had been before. Standen took an interest in the lives of the individuals who had been living in the periphery during this period and the inevitable consequences brought by their choices to reside then and there. This intriguing period had witnessed a "plethora of leaders." Minor leaders would promise protection from hunger, war, or sudden death in order to attract more followers. Leaders would also occasionally be driven to switch their alliance or join forces with a superior counterpart in order to survive, and all those under their wing

would blindly follow. The Khitans managed to survive among the major alliances and succeeded in establishing a new dynasty, as did the Song. Standen therefore argues that the Khitan Liao should be considered a successor equivalent to Song China in the post-Tang world.

In addition, the author urges readers to consider the Khitan Liao as the major keyword holding up the history of China in the tenth century. She further proposes that Liao should not be studied as one of the conquest dynasties, such as the Jurchen Jin and the Mongol Yuan, which followed the Liao. Although the reviewer personally cannot sympathize with the latter argument, Standen's contention still seems fairly logical. Such persuasive statements claiming the historical importance of the Khitan Liao are indeed rare to find unless one's research on this subject is quite extensive.

Turning to the relationship between leaders and their followers during the tenth century, Standen puts forth the following questions while pursuing the origin and signification of "loyalty" (忠, *zhong*). What happened to the followers of a leader who decided to side with the Khitans, and those whose leader lost in combat against the Khitans and became captives under Liao control? Could such followers be deemed traitors? Against whom did they commit treachery? Above all, what constituted betrayal? Who assessed them and with what criteria? Are scholars or historians from the eleventh century qualified to evaluate the tenth century? Is it acceptable for modern historians like us to interpret in an identical context words such as loyalty, ethnicity and borders used in the tenth century?

In the book's second chapter, the author pursues the diverse usages and interpretations of "loyalty," researching in both secondary materials and Chinese Classics, such as *Lunyu*, *Xunzi*, and *Yan shi jiaxun*. The notion of loyalty goes back to as early as the Spring and Autumn period. The concepts of *xin* (信), *zhong* (忠), and *dao* (道) were immediately acknowledged according to the needs of their users: the overlords (諸侯), the ministers (大夫), the retainers (士), and the rulers (君主). In the tenth

century, the idea of obeying the mandate (天命) provided excuses for “apostates” who had once faithfully worked for one of the five dynasties before turning to side with the Song government. The idea of committing to loyalty justified the deeds of border crossers, serving the Liao court until the Liao moved beyond their own boundaries. The author asserts that Liao was classified as a conquest dynasty from the moment it acquired lands in the south (the sixteen prefectures of the Yan-Yun region). Intellectuals and historians of later periods, especially those of the Southern Song, marked Liao as “the enemy” and heavily criticized border crossers by applying the criteria of loyalty.

Standen’s survey is certainly worth noting and inspires this reviewer’s own research on Goryeo, which was a tributary state to both Liao and Song. On the other hand, there seems to be room to raise objections, particularly on the part covering the survey, perhaps because the author’s reasoning or arrangement of text seems to be the opposite of the style that the reviewer has been trained under and grown accustomed to. The most notable pattern is to start off by stating the author’s argument as if it is an already verified and established theory and then present evidence and references to support preceding statements. This is not to say the author’s arguments are pointless. On the contrary, her table on the development of types of loyalty in Chinese polities is something scholars studying the same period will find well worth consulting.

After examining the formation of the criteria deployed to classify border crossers, border crossing itself is analyzed in the third chapter. Standen collected 225 cases of border crossing from *Liao shi*, *Jiu Wudai shi*, *Zizhi tongjian*, *Xin Wudai shi*, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, and *Song shi*, and supplied details on each case in chronological order with full citations in the appendix. This appendix is a testament to the intensity that permeates the author’s research: the dates and places where each crossing occurred and the changes in frequency each year can all be located easily from a table in the appendix.

The third chapter also contains a table that categorizes types of

crossings to the Liao into four groups, each represented in percentages, as well. The four categories are crossing for alliance, voluntary crossing, crossing under duress, and involuntary crossing. The categorization would have been more convincing had the procedure through which the enormous data was arranged, all cleanly falling into no more than four groups, been disclosed alongside the table. The number of cases in which records could not be retrieved regarding how borders had been crossed, information that the author omitted in order to maintain focus on the act of crossing, might have reinforced the author's methodology and conveyed a stronger touch of reality to those who only superficially sympathize with the difficulty of studying the period covered in the book.

The border crossing cases are further examined by comparing military crossings to civilian crossings and the crossings of the Han population against non-Han people. The author then moves on to real-life stories of individual border crossers. It seems the author most enjoyed writing this section, the first three chapters in part two of the book. As briefly mentioned in the preface, Standen delves into how the lives of individuals who happened to inhabit the frontier during the period she is focused on were "defined, deployed, subverted and ignored" in the face of changing times and observers.

A total of five cases are unveiled: the lives of Han Yanhui (882-959), Zhang Li (d.947), Zhao Yanxhou (d.948/9), Li Huan (d.962), and Wang Jizhang (d.1022). On one or two accounts of historical research, it would not be a stretch to say it is fortunate for scholars sharing similar research interests to have records and interpretations of such cases. All five individuals crossed the border from the south and served at the Liao court. Some of them contributed to the Liao government in building a Chinese-style state and in winning battles and negotiations. Some were unconcerned about their cultural identity while others failed to assimilate. The choices these five individuals made were as unique as the consequences of their decisions. Standen introduces and compares in

detail how each individual's respective lives were evaluated by later intellectuals and historians who traced them.

Nearing the end of the book, doubts about Standen's differentiation of the Liao from Jin China and Mongol Yuan still linger. The author maintains that it is rather inappropriate to categorize the Liao as a conquest dynasty. But then how fitting is it for the Jurchens to be considered as one when the two seem to have more in common than not? Also, the narrative style of deductive reasoning that prevails throughout most of the book makes the reading experience less comfortable.

Besides these few cavils, the author's clearly inspiring arguments warrant the book to be a pleasant challenge. Possessing geographical and cultural attachment to a topic such as that of this book can sometimes hinder one from thinking beyond the confines of their pre-established set of assumptions. In such cases, it may not be easy to separate individuals from the state or dynasty they belong to. However, the author's approach in dealing with this topic is quite refreshing in that she paid attention to both individuals as well as their affiliated states. She also distinguished border crossings in the tenth century from evaluations of them conducted later on.

Standen's book, especially the first part, seems to be a recommendable read for researchers just beginning to study Chinese history, regardless of their nationality. It can be a good opportunity to develop a bird's-eye view on the region in the tenth to eleventh century and easily compile a glossary and list of basic primary sources any researcher working on topics related to this period of Chinese history needs to be familiar with.

Despite the fear that this has become yet another typical recommendation, it is ultimately up to those who read the book to determine whether they agree or not.

After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885-1924

by Peter Zarrow

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012

—
Lars Peter Laamann

University of London

Peter Zarrow has taken on a topic which addresses the crucial questions faced by every historian of modern China, namely, “Why did China embark on the massive transformations of the twentieth century?” and “Could it all have been very different?” Zarrow succinctly puts his task into this seven-word statement: “This book is thus about political modernity” (5). The gargantuan undertaking, despite all professed simplicity, is based on a scrutiny of intellectual opinions from the Self-Strengthening period until the May Fourth years collected in public pronouncements or in the private correspondence of reformist literati, in the press, and in renowned publications.

Zarrow is well aware of the opinions of his colleagues in historical studies, discussing the interpretations of Joseph Levenson and Chow Tse-tung alongside the latest works by Wong Young-tsu and Jeremy Barmé. Importantly, Zarrow also takes into account the extensive Chinese scholarship which has grown around the late Qing and early Republican China, an important development which Western authors often acknowledge without properly making use of this in their own writings. But Zarrow also knows his way around the archives, in particular those

documenting the opinions of reformist and revolutionary intellectuals as well as of their orthodox counterparts. The result of this detailed historiographic study is a volume written both for the curious student and for expert historians of modern China. While the former will be intrigued by the chronologically compact minutiae of the transition from the Qing empire to the Republic of China, the latter will appreciate the unceasing analysis of historical interpretation, most fruitfully discussed in Zarrow's endnotes.

The monograph begins and ends with a discussion of Yuan Shikai's (袁世凱) sacrifice at the Temple of Heaven in 1914, dissecting the symbolical significance of its ritualistic details, critically compared to the annual ritual as performed by the Qing emperors. Each individual chapter represents one of the intellectual milestones in the development of republican China. Chapter one thus embodies the story of Kang Youwei (康有為) and the reformist movement prompted by policy changes he proposed. In neat chronological sequence, the genesis of Kang's democratic (i.e., people (民)-centered) political thought, of his writings, interactions with court officials and fellow intellectuals is being developed. Kang Youwei's private ambitions apart, the opening chapter presents Kang's Confucian vision for a *better-functioning* dynastic empire, rather than a qualitatively novel form of government. The vision of Liang Qichao (梁啟超) regarding the democratic state becomes the topic of the subsequent chapter. Where his teacher still harbored dreams of a "Confucian China" as eventually being on a par with "Christian Europe," Liang only saw one way forward, namely that of a "modern China" based on the foundations of a strong and politically justified state. The democratic quality of the latter was not an absolute prerequisite, but rather a dignified way of ensuring the coming state's viability.

The following two chapters deal with the significant role of translation – as an intercultural phenomenon, a tool of Westernization and as an inescapable consequence of the growing role of Japan in the late colonial Asian East. The very reason for the existence of (the post-

1815) international diplomacy, as well as its relevance during the so-called Opium Wars and their consequences, needed to be conveyed to an intellectual public more acquainted with the perfection of moral dispositions and equitable government than with international relations. A strong “state” (國家), argued by translators and authors such as Zheng Guanying (鄭觀應), Yang Tingdong (楊廷棟), and once again by Liang Qichao, was essential in order to (re)integrate China into the world’s more influential powers. Enthralled by the superior forms of government this generation of intellectuals encountered in Western statecraft writings, the will to create a strong state outweighed any cultural, ethnic, or political misgivings. In Zarrow’s words (117), “Cai [Yuanpei] was beginning to look to the people while Liang looked to management.”

Chapters five and six deal with the gradual abandonment of traditional answers to China’s woes and thus also with the radicalization of China’s intellectual youth. Here we encounter the intellectual confrontation - and eventual bankruptcy - of Western utilitarianism (as expressed in Zhang Zhidong’s (張之洞) “Chinese essence, foreign learning” (中體西用) theory, supported by cautious reformers such as Wang Renjun (王仁俊) and the radicalism which propelled Yan Fu (嚴復), Huang Zunxian (黃遵憲), and Tan Sitong (譚嗣同) to attack the Confucian edifice of traditional China. Meanwhile, intellectuals opposed to surrendering to the new winds from the West, such as Su Yu (蘇輿), Zhu Yixin (朱一新), Ye Dehui (葉德輝), or Liu Dapeng (劉大鵬), gathered their forces. Anti-Manchuism and Han racialism, eloquently extolled by known intellectuals such as Zou Rong (鄒容), Liu Shipai (劉師培), and Zhang Binglin (章炳麟), dominate chapter five. Readers familiar with Zarrow’s research interests will sense his need for self-restraint when it came to delineating the bare structures of both phenomena. Zarrow’s latest monograph thus offers an intellectual framework into which his earlier studies can be placed. While chapters one through five deal with the intellectual gestation of the republican revolution, the final three chapters spell out its course: first in terms of republican vocabulary in

chapter six, then in chapter seven for the different classes inhabiting the transient China of the 1910s and eventually chapter eight which deals with the ultimate demise of imperial China and the fate of its last aristocrats. It is in this context that we encounter Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙) and also the first overtures to socialist idealism, and this mere fact is in itself a key reason as to why Zarrow's latest book is a true academic achievement. A new conceptual basis for the relationship between State and People, rather than republican activism as professed by Sun and his political allies, provided the death knell to an imperial model which had ceased to provide the answers to the predicaments nineteenth-century China was experiencing.

However, Zarrow's analysis does not afford the same level of attention to all aspects of the period under review. The late Qing reforms (新政) are given short shrift, with the end of the examination system in 1905 appearing as a curious lacuna. Importantly, in the context of anti-Manchuism, the Taiping rebellion is almost entirely omitted. The same goes for violent mass action without any direct input by intellectuals, from the Nian (捻) to the Red Spears (紅槍會). What possibly could any notions of "state" mean to a population which had been accustomed to a universe of fortified village walls and absentee landlordism? The defense of local privileges and livelihoods has been a key marker of Chinese life right into the present era, which ought to have been reflected in this otherwise excellent volume. In summary, *After Empire* is an important contribution to the historical discourse of China's imperial-republican transition and should also be widely welcomed by non-specialists with an interest in China.

*Karl Haushofer und Japan:
Die Rezeption seiner geopolitischen Theorien
in der deutschen und japanischen Politik*
[Karl Haushofer and Japan: The Reception of His Geopolitical
Theories in German and Japanese Politics]

by Christian W.Spang
Munich: Iudicium, 2013

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Hartmut Walravens
Berlin

Karl Haushofer (1869-1946), Bavarian general, professor, and prolific writer has attracted attention mainly because of his role during the “Third Reich,” which was turned by war propaganda into “the man behind Hitler.” It is also well known that he had a special interest in Japan, and Japanese scholars often referred to his geopolitical ideas but so far there is no in-depth investigation of Haushofer as an important figure and mediator in German-Japanese relations and the reception of his geopolitical theories involving Japan - both in Germany and Japan. The present massive study therefore focuses on these aspects to fill an important gap. The book’s author has been working and teaching in Japan for years and perused Japanese sources, published and unpublished, to track the geopolitical influence of Haushofer as well as Germany, and now provides a carefully documented view of the subject.

The work is divided into six main chapters: the first chapter offers a preface, the current state of research and ends with information on the sources and defines the questions to be dealt with. Readers may profit from returning to this introductory chapter after finishing the book, especially if they are not already familiar with geopolitics and its

development, since plenty of basic information is provided in the following chapters. The second chapter traces Haushofer's life and career as a geopolitician and an expert on Japan. Chapter three deals with geopolitics and the theory of foreign policy, including the development of geopolitics in Germany and its instrumentalization as a propaganda tool. Haushofer as a mediator between Germany and Japan is the subject of chapter four, in which German influence on the development of geopolitics in Japan is also traced. Chapter five investigates the role geopolitics played, in theory and practice, in the Japanese expansion while the final chapter sums up preceding chapters and presents a conclusion. Besides a list of abbreviations and a glossary of important and frequently used Japanese terms, there is an index of personal names and an overwhelming bibliography, including unpublished sources, occupying almost two hundred pages. As the author points out, his work was not designed to be a Japanological study and therefore inserting *kanji* was dispensed with; this is quite understandable and most readers probably would not profit from them. With regard to the index of Japanese names, however, it might have been useful to have *kanji* considering the ambiguities involved in reading Japanese names and for the purpose of facilitating further research. In addition, there are no less than seventeen appendices: 1. Haushofer's works in Japanese university libraries; 2. Haushofer's curriculum vitae; 3. Haushofer's trip to Japan (itineraries); 4. Haushofer's reading material before his voyage to East Asia; 5. Drawing of the Hōon-in temple where the Haushofers lived near Kyoto; 6. A list of names of Haushofer's "Japanese relations of lasting value"; 7. Biographical entries from the Brockhaus' encyclopedia (1906); 8. A comparison between two Haushofer documents, his "Personal Difficulties" and "Final Interrogation Report" (1945) (to reveal apologetic efforts); 9. Japanese professional journals in the fields of geography and geopolitics; 10. The summer workshop on geopolitics organized by the Japanese Society for Geopolitics in 1942; 11. Statistical breakdown of the journal *Chiseigaku*; 12. The Pacific Society (*Taiheiyō*

kyōkai); 13. Japanese renderings of “geopolitics”; 14. The representatives of the Tokyo school of Japanese geopolitics; 15. Members of the Yoshida no kai; 16. The framework of the Kyoto School of Japanese geopolitics; 17. Albrecht Haushofer’s “Weltfahrt” [Trip around the World] 1937: Japanese contacts.

The author has taken great pains to document his statements, and in general one quarter to one third of each page is covered by footnotes; these annotations are not restricted to bibliographical references but provide further information, quotations and form a very important part of the study. In order to facilitate reading, the author concludes each chapter with an abstract or conclusion which proves quite helpful.

Karl Haushofer came from a family of academic teachers - his grandfathers were respectively a painter and professor at the Prague Academy of Arts, and a professor at the University of Munich, while his father held the chair of Staatswissenschaften (“sciences off the state” which developed later into political science) at the Technical University of Munich. Karl entered a military career by studying and teaching at the military academy and also engaged in active service, especially during World War I at the end of which he was appointed major-general. The decisive event that led to his future vocation and a second career was when he was sent as a Bavarian military observer to Japan in 1908. This was triggered by a transfer to a post in the province that he disliked and depressed him. So when the opportunity arose, he applied for the mission. This was by no means a position like a military attaché, or an instructor: the term *observer* was used in its literal meaning, moreover the appointed person had to cover most of the expenses himself. In Haushofer’s case, this was only possible because his father-in-law agreed to step in, along with encouragement from his wife Martha (1877-1946) to grab such an opportunity and who later decided to accompany him to Japan. Martha was certainly the more enterprising and outgoing of the two for she had a good talent for picking up languages and developed a practical command of the Japanese colloquial. She also helped her

husband with his papers and publications and supported him wherever possible so that, in all fairness, one may say that Haushofer would never have become so successful without the assistance of his wife.

By the time Haushofer returned from Japan, he was already well known in the Bavarian military and was asked to personally report to the Bavarian Prince-Regent Luitpold, to the Reichsmarineamt and the Foreign Office in Berlin. In Japan he had tried and managed to get in contact with important and influential officers and politicians, and settled for part of his stay in Kyoto, instead of “wasting” his time in the foreign community in Tokyo. It certainly helped that his father's academic work was known in Japan, and that many well educated Japanese had studied in Germany, or at least visited the country. One may call it luck, or an auspicious constellation, but Haushofer actively tried to make connections and stay in touch with them later on, despite World War I and the difficult times afterwards. It has been pointed out by a number of Haushofer's acquaintances that “he understood the Japanese and their mentality”: he was probably a good listener, showed a polite, polished behavior and sympathy for Japan and the Japanese, which was also expressed in his many publications. These personal qualities helped him keep his connections and build his reputation until the end of his life.

Haushofer saw the value of military observers in a very critical light; he emphasized, however, that such an appointment might be of the highest value for the respective individual (like himself). Later on he stated that Germany might learn a lot from Japan, not in terms of technology, but patriotic mentality, determination, and a maritime view as opposed to the prevalent continental view in Germany. In the context of Haushofer's theories it is noteworthy that he went to Japan by boat via India, Ceylon, Singapore (that is, the tropics which he later called the “monsoon countries”) and returned via the Trans-Siberian Railway, which certainly influenced his continental block theory in some way. In general, Haushofer was not fond of travelling, and he preferred to stay in his native Munich. He never returned to Japan and concrete plans for

another trip did not materialize for one reason or another. One may justly state that without his “world trip” of two years between 1908 and 1910 by boat and rail, he would never have developed his concept of worldwide foreign policy. Aside from his war experiences, it was the Japan appointment that strengthened his confidence and a sense of mission that drove him on.

In a way, Haushofer’s second career was already in the making after his return from Japan. As he was suffering from serious health problems, he was unable to work and had to take leave. While recuperating in Arosa, Martha, in order to distract him, persuaded her husband to write a book on Japan and together they managed to finish *Dai Nihon* within three months. Afterwards, he still had some of his leave left and Martha urged her husband to take his doctoral degree. So, he arranged with the Munich geographer Erich von Drygalski to write a thesis on *Der deutsche Anteil an der geographischen Erschließung Japans und des subjapanischen Erdraums, und deren Förderung durch den Einfluß von Krieg und Wehrpolitik* (The German Share of the Geographical Exploration of Japan and the Sub-Japanese Areas, and Its Promotion through the Influence of War and Military Politics). He continued to read geography after this thesis, and during the war, it dawned upon him that his future might lie in the field of geopolitics when he came across Rudolf Kjellén’s (1864-1922) *Der Staat als Lebensform* and *Die Großmächte der Gegenwart*. In 1919, Haushofer took his habilitation (thesis required for teaching at a university) and submitted *Grundrichtungen in der geographischen Entwicklung des japanischen Reiches* (Basic Directions of the Geographical Development of the Japanese Empire), again encouraged and supported by his wife.

From then on, he taught as Privatdozent (unsalaried lecturer) and as *Honorar professor* from 1921 at the Geographical Institute of the University of Munich. Only in 1933 was Haushofer officially appointed as a full professor, but no chair was created for him. This suited him well because he was kept busy with his manifold activities, so he was quite

satisfied with the title. He received invitations to chairs at other universities but declined as he was not interested in leaving Munich. Haushofer gave approximately eighty classes at the university over the years of which almost a third dealt with military issues in the widest sense. Perhaps a quarter, with a decreasing tendency, were devoted to Asian-Pacific subjects. Nevertheless, in general, Haushofer liked to draw attention to East Asian parallels or examples and seems to have been popular with his students. In academia, he found much acclaim because of his presence in the media, his many publications, his position as a university professor, also as editor of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, and as co-founder of the *Deutsche Akademie* founded in 1925 sort of as a predecessor to the Goethe Institute. However, he was also considered an outsider by some colleagues as he was not a trained geographer, and geopolitics was not yet acknowledged as an academic discipline. He was certainly not recognized as a Japanologist by colleagues from that field: Japanology in those days basically meant a language-oriented discipline, a branch of philology where other fields might be included as long as their methods were largely text-based. Therefore, historians of merit like Ludwig Riess¹ and Oskar Nachod² were kept in high esteem, yet would not be called Japanologists. Japanese Studies without the basis of Japanese texts were classified as “Japankunde.” One of the few contacts Haushofer had among Japanologists was Friedrich M. Trautz (1877-1952), who had been to Japan as a military observer. Trautz quit his military career to protest “Stresemann politics,” acquired a doctoral degree in Japanese Studies, then took his habilitation and became German director of the newly established Japan Institute in Berlin. He

¹ 1861-1929, cf. Kentarō Hayashi, “Ludwig Riess, Einer Der Väter Der Geschichtswissenschaft in Japan,” in *Japan-Sammlungen in Museen in Mitteleuropa*, Bonner Zeitschrift Für Japanologie 3 (Bonn, 1981), 31-45.

² 1858-1933, cf. Hartmut Walravens, “Oskar Nachod (1858-1933), Japanforscher Und Bibliograph,” *Nachrichten Der OAG*, 2010 2009.[2012]

had to cope with strong opposition as he did pioneering research on Japanese stupas, the role of scientists like Engelbert Kaempfer and Ph. Franz von Siebold and was sent on leave to Japan. There he gave lectures and published articles like *Insularität und Bodenständigkeit des japanischen Volkes*, and certainly sympathized with geopolitical ideas. While supportive of Nazi ideology, he felt so much pressure from the local Nazi representatives that he quit his position as director of the German Research Institute in Kyoto and took an early retirement.³

Haushofer had the benefit of being friends with Rudolf Hess (1894-1987) who later rose to become Hitler's deputy. In this capacity, he protected Haushofer's family while Martha was considered one-half Jewish, and the sons one-quarter Jewish. Thus, the son Albrecht (1903-1945) was able to become professor of geography in Berlin and an advisor to Ribbentrop who was later appointed foreign minister.⁴ Realizing that Hitler's actions could neither be modified nor otherwise stopped, Albrecht joined the opposition, was arrested after the attempted assassination of Hitler, and executed a few days before the end of the war. While Haushofer enjoyed a highly regarded reputation, he never had any real power in foreign policy during the "Third Reich."

The author then moves on to describe the development of geopolitics and its dissemination especially in Germany and Haushofer's role in it. One important root of geopolitics was social Darwinism popularized in Germany by Ernst Haeckel. It considered the society as an organism, and thus applying Herbert Spencer's slogan "survival of the fittest." Originally a zoologist, the geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844-

³ Cf. Hartmut Walravens, "Dokumente Zu Leben Und Wirken von F. M. Trautz," *Japonica Humboldtiana* 15 (2012): 217-250.

⁴ Joachim Ribbentrop, 1893-1946 (executed after the Nürnberg Trials), became rich as a distributor of sparkling wine and spirits. He only became interested in politics when Hitler's influence rose, and in 1934 he was appointed foreign policy advisor to Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy. After serving as ambassador to the United Kingdom, from 1936 to 1938, he was appointed foreign minister, a position he held until the German capitulation.

1904) adopted the idea of the state as an organism which has a natural drive to grow and expand; if one followed this view up, the last resort of political efforts might be war since the world did not have much empty space left. The American marine strategist Alfred T. Mahan (especially in his book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*) and the British geographer Halford J. Mackinder were influential regarding the further development of geopolitics. Geographers and other interested parties were trying to identify a definition when Rudolf Kjellén, the Swedish scholar, offered one as “the science of the state as a geographic organism,” which led to deterministic interpretations based on connections with social Darwinism and the theory of *Lebensraum* (living space). The editors of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, founded in 1924 with Haushofer as editor, tried to find a compromise and ended up with a very general statement. There was a strong interest in geopolitics on the side of the National Socialists who found the *Lebensraum* aspect and the underlying revisionist facets appealing and were quick to integrate such elements into their own ideology. In 1932 a new *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Geopolitik* (Working Group on Geopolitics) was established. Kurt Vowinkel, publisher of the *Zeitschrift*, became the manager and formed a link to the circle around Haushofer who had been awarded the first membership in the new organization. Nevertheless, Haushofer remained closer to the *Zeitschrift*, and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* drifted more and more under the National Socialist influence. Efforts to make geopolitics an academic discipline at German universities took place, but did not pan out as geographers and other scholars claimed that geopolitics was not an entirely new field of science, but more of a combination and new constellation of existing disciplines. Thus, only the Berlin Hochschule für Politik established a chair of geopolitics.

The development of geopolitics during the 1930s was characterized by constant complaints, especially from National Socialists, that traditional geopolitics were geodeterministic and neglected the human factor, namely, race. Haushofer and most geographers were not willing to

give in, even though their replies would have offered verbal appeasement. While Haushofer's influence and reputation did not seem to have dissipated, it became noticeable that, as of 1939, when he retired from the University, his advice was less in demand. Also, the war had developed its own dynamics, which situation became obvious when Rudolf Hess flew to England, leaving Haushofer without his protector.

Haushofer's world trip between 1908 and 1910 formed the basis of his foreign policy concept. He recognized the worldwide dimension of the British Empire and the inviolability of a German-Russian-Japanese alliance by sea powers. Consequently, as of 1913 at the latest, Haushofer propagated a cooperation between Berlin, St. Petersburg/Moscow and Tokyo. In the 1920s, he combined, by dint of the *have not* theory, the idea of German recuperation with the anti-colonial movement (only the one in Southeast Asia, however). For a long time, he hoped to integrate India and China. Haushofer was pleased at the problems that the Southeast Asian Union Japan intended to create, under Japanese leadership, for the Western colonial powers. The positive effect he expected from this was more political leeway for Germany. His main goal was to establish Germany as a world power once more, and therefore his support for the *have not* theory was clearly and merely strategic. The development of the relations between Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1941 largely followed Haushofer's ideas. Yet, did Haushofer's views really reach decision makers in Germany and Japan?

Haushofer met Hess for the first time in 1919 and Hitler in 1920. While the two men were imprisoned in Landsberg in 1924, Haushofer visited several times and brought books and issues of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*. It seems that Hitler's early foreign policy ideas and his view of Japan were thus influenced. Until 1933, East Asia did not play any particular role for Hitler. Only after he came to power did he become interested in closer relations with Japan in order to put pressure on the Soviet Union from both sides. Haushofer had the opportunity to exert

some influence through Ribbentrop and his office. He was well known in the area of German-Japanese relations and was visited by Japanese diplomats, military men, and scholars as well as German dignitaries such as ambassadors Herbert v. Dirksen⁵ and Eugen Ott.⁶ Therefore, it was probably not without reason that the Japanese government awarded him an order on the first anniversary of the Anti-Komintern Pact.

While Ribbentrop had given up hope to get to an agreement with Britain and became more interested in better relations with the Soviet Union by the beginning of 1938, Hitler followed this line partly after the Munich Agreement. This was not on account of Haushofer's views or advice, but just an interim step in his own political plans. Both Ribbentrop and Haushofer were taken by surprise by the events of 1941, even if they might have had an inkling that cooperation with the Soviet Union might not last.

In spite of the fact that Haushofer's ambivalent attitude towards the Soviet Union was hardly any different from that of the German Army leaders, it still seems enigmatic to some observers. He was mainly focused on German-Japanese cooperation, the axis Berlin - Tokyo. Despite his stout anti-Communist leanings, he pleaded for the inclusion of the Soviet Union in this scheme as a kind of "land bridge" between Japan and Germany as he realized that such a continental block would be unassailable. The Anti-Komintern Pact was not directly in line with the desired alliance, but the problem was theoretically solved by the argument that the pact was a means of warding off international bolshevism and not a hostile act against the Soviet Union. Haushofer did not have a network there as in Japan, and therefore he had to rely on

⁵ 1882-1955; Dirksen "became head of the Eastern Dept. of the Foreign Office and was then appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union; in 1933 he was transferred to Tōkyō where he served for five years. Cf. Gerald Mund, "Herbert von Dirksen (1882-1955). Ein deutscher Diplomat in Kaiserreich, Weimarer Republik und Drittem Reich. Eine Biografie" Dissertation, Berlin, 2003.

⁶ 1889-1977, major-general, 1934 military attaché in Tokyo, 1939-1942 German ambassador as successor to Dirksen.

other sources like his friend Oskar von Niedermayer.⁷

Along with medicine, music and law, geography belonged to disciplines in Japan that were most influenced by German concepts. Therefore, the works of Ratzel were known early on in Japan, and even in 1942 Watanuki Isahiko published a short contribution titled *Today's Understanding of Ratzel*, analyzing Ratzel's influence on National Socialism and the German military.⁸ Haushofer's works and the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* became more widely known in Japan since around 1925. The dissemination of German geopolitical ideas profited from, among others, Haushofer's military and academic connections, Albrecht Haushofer's trip to Japan in 1937, German institutions in Tokyo, and the Foreign Office in Berlin. Kjellén's books were known as well. However, as Japan belonged to the winners of World War I, there was no geopolitically inspired revanchism as in Germany. Only after the Japanese-Chinese War did geopolitical ideas become more fashionable in certain Japanese circles.

From the viewpoint of foreign policy, the situation of Japan had deteriorated at the beginning of the 1930s on account of Japan's occupation of Manchuria and its withdrawal from the League of Nations. The Sino-Japanese war led to exaggerated patriotism and international isolation as military success was marred by the inability to finish the war by political means. Therefore, more attention was given to German geopolitics, and after the outbreak of the war in Europe, it was assumed that geopolitics and Haushofer's concepts were behind the German army's exploits and the change of National Socialist foreign policy as signaled by the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Haushofer's idea of unifying monsoon countries and the continental block theory were useful to justify Japan's

⁷ 1885-1948, a fellow Bavarian, major-general, geographer of the Drygalski school, unofficial representative of the German army in Moscow until 1932, later professor of military science in Berlin.

⁸ Watanuki Isahiko, "Rattsueru no gendai-teki rikai," *Kagaku shichô* 1 (1942): 58-61.

expansion (the so-called *Daitōa kyōeiken* 大東亞共榮圈, the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere) and its alliances with Germany and the Soviet Union.

The author distinguishes between two schools of geopolitics in Japan: The Tokyo and the Kyoto School. As he points out, one cannot really speak of a Tokyo school since its representatives have shown too much of a diversity of viewpoints to be considered a “school.” A certain integration was provided through the Pacific Association (*Taiheiyō kyōkai* 太平洋協會) and the Japanese Association of Geopolitics (*Nihon chiseigaku kyōkai* 日本地政学協會) and their seminars, lectures, and workshops. The former provided translations of some of Haushofer’s works and had good connections among the leadership oligarchy, while the latter disseminated geopolitical ideas among academics and journalists and through its journal *Chiseigaku*.

The Kyoto School was more closely knit and was led by Komaki Saneshige (小牧実繁, 1898-1990) of Kyoto University. Almost all members of the Yoshida Association (Yoshida no Kai, 吉田の会) had studied geography at Kyōto University and were alert to geopolitical ideas. The objective was to build Japan-based geopolitics with a strong orientation towards the future. Projections of future development were in the interest of military forces, and therefore, on a number of occasions, the General Staff asked the Association to work out practical proposals. Besides cooperating with the General Staff, there were also close connections with the Total War Institute (*Sōryokusen kenkyūjo*) and the Imperial War Association (*Kōsenkai*).

The author also analyzes development after World War II in Germany and Japan; he notices similar apologetic tendencies on the side of the geographers who claimed not to have been involved, that there had been good geographers and a few “bad” geopoliticians.⁹ Repressing recollections of recent events seems to have been quite common, more so in Japan, where some of the leading figures like Komaki lived until 1990. In the meantime, geopolitics has returned and old taboos seem to be

forgotten.

When trying to fathom Haushofer's ambivalent attitude to National Socialism, it may be important to recall that he never became a member of the Nazi party, but nevertheless attended four national party conventions as a guest of honour. His alleged Geopolitical Institute, with at least one thousand staff that prepared Hitler's military actions, was a figment of war propaganda.

The present work is the first comprehensive study of Haushofer as a pivotal figure in German-Japanese relations and his role as a propagator of geopolitics in both countries. The author worked his way through an enormous amount of material, both published and unpublished, and his research results may, without flattery, be called a work on the subject that stands out. While it clarifies many points and rectifies errors regarding Haushofer's standing and activities in Germany and provides meticulous documentation of all details, the truly new part for the European reader is the in-depth study of Haushofer's reception in Japan. The translation of his publications, the evaluation and adaptation of his theories, and their practical application all provide a wealth of information. Spang's comments and annotations show a very balanced approach and a wide and intimate understanding of his target's historical background. The reader may remain on firm ground and not be confronted with rash conclusions or fanciful speculations. Again, all statements are well documented. The arrangement of the chapters is logical, and a number of "interim conclusions" is given for the reader's convenience. The book makes good reading compared to German scholarly monographs that sometimes indulge in complicated structures and more technical language than necessary, which is not the case here.

² Cf. Carl Troll, "Die Geographische Wissenschaft in Deutschland in Den Jahren 1933-1945. Eine Kritik Und Rechtfertigung," *Erdkunde* 1 (1947): 3-48. (Published in English: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 1949, 99-137); Kôji Iizuka, "Haushôfa no shinu," *Keizai hyôron* June (1946): 18-25.

From a technical perspective, the book is well printed and bound and forms part of the well established series of the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo.

*Science for the Empire:
Scientific Nationalism in Modern Japan*

by Hiromi Mizuno
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**Questioning the “Irrational”:
Defining Science in Modern Japan**

In July 1942, at the greatest extent of the Japanese empire, a group of intellectuals assembled in Kyoto to address the problem of “Overcoming Modernity,” a set of circumstances with no clear resolution. Weighted with philosophical and cultural baggage, the term “modern” was associated with the broad category of the “West,” and was taken as a stand-in for much of the culture that Japan sought to challenge through its efforts. In addition, “science” emerged as a major part of the same problematic, with this category representing an ongoing issue for the Japanese, certainly at least since the mid-nineteenth century and the diverse reforms of the Meiji period (1868-1912). In fact, the category of science brought with it a great deal of unease, and according to Hiromi Mizuno’s account, this uncertainty nearly ended the discussion prematurely. Much of the discomfort stemmed from the inability of the Japanese actors to articulate to their satisfaction a *modern, non-Western science*, a vision that would allow Japan to imagine itself as triumphant, whether in this conflict, or in the future.

In her work, *Science for the Empire: Scientific Nationalism in Modern Japan*, Hiromi Mizuno, associate professor at the University of Minnesota, selects this opening vignette quite deliberately as her frame, aiming to complicate prevailing tropes concerning the relationship between modern Japan and its science. Both insiders and external observers have frequently adopted a stance similar to the one discussed in Kyoto, with the wartime enthusiasm for all things technological seen as something of an aberration, an irrational, frenzied impulse spilling over into the excesses of the war. The year 1945 brought with it not only military defeat, but also a conscious move away from the zeal associated with this style of scientific practice, soon exchanging it for the measured, regulated, technocratic cadences of Japan's more celebrated postwar success. However, Mizuno questions such a neat distinction centered on the 1945 divide, and equally, any suggestion that Japanese science during the war was somehow excessive or irrational in its approach.

With this contrast informing the core of her story, Mizuno sets for herself the task of refashioning the historiography of Japanese science in the first half of the twentieth century, organizing her work according to three broad sections, each of which contributes to the overall argument. The first section, encompassing chapters one and two, builds on the terminology of “technocracy,” especially as defined through the Japanese phrase *kagaku-gijutsu*, or “science-technology,” suggesting a convergence of the distinction between the basic and the applied. Next, the complex discourse of Marxism emerges as a formative part of Japan's intellectual milieu for the 1920s and 1930s, with chapters three through five taking up the writings of a select group of Marxist intellectuals and their proposed vision of a scientific Japan, especially in contrast to comparable state-directed visions deriving from the same period, even as the two started to converge. Finally, the last section, here covering chapter six, examines the popularization of science in Japan, looking at a range of periodicals and related materials. Through these three sets of actors, Mizuno depicts Japanese not merely as consumers of science, but

equally as vibrant actors deeply invested in its creation and dissemination.

This last point is significant because although she does not explicitly challenge the literature concerning the Meiji Restoration and its impact upon Japanese practice, Mizuno recognizes a prevailing understanding of the period as one based largely on the reception and implementation of Western science, a form largely borrowed from abroad. On this point, she cites a familiar dichotomy from the period of discourse, the alleged contrast between “Eastern ethics and Western science and technology” (3), implying a familiar spiritual/material divide taken from the age of high imperialism. If Mizuno’s goal is to tackle imperial Japan (1868-1945) more broadly by bringing together the major categories that constitute the modern—in this case, science and nationalism—she also seeks to extend these debates backwards in time to include the earlier periodization. In other words, the hotly contested debates of the 1920s through 1940s, while clearly situated in the context of the mobilization and conduct of the Pacific War, also hold serious implications for the preceding Meiji period, as well as for the Shōwa period (1926-1989), and even the present-day Heisei period (1989-present).

Competing Sets of Protagonists

Beginning with “Toward Technocracy” (chapter one) Mizuno opens the work with the formation of the Kojin Club in 1920, situating this new organization within the dense thicket of transitional developments taking place between the late Meiji and the early Taishō (1912-1926) periods. Formed by Miyamoto Takenosuke, a civil engineer, the Kojin Club represents an effort to bring together Japanese engineers in a new kind of professional solidarity through an organizational structure. Moreover, the effort to foster group identity and class consciousness was not without a set of explicit professional aims, specifically, finding a means to further

the collective interests of engineers, and to provide them with greater access to the inner mechanisms of government. From Mizuno's perspective, Miyamoto and others like him remained a minority in comparison to the class of "law-bureaucrats" (6) prevailing in governing circles, despite their relatively elite status. The club was not only an attempt to enhance status, but also an effort to redefine the category of engineering against its typical understanding originating from the Meiji period.

The labels most commonly associated with engineers derived from the earlier period of rapid social overhaul (25), and often placed engineers in a lesser position, essentially at the service of "law-bureaucrats," who crafted and made the majority of the legal standards by which Japanese society lived. In contrast, engineers like Miyamoto saw their own work as not only technical in nature, but also as equally capable of defining the social order. Moreover, some of their goals might be attainable in the aftermath of World War I, with a rare chance to mobilize and take a stand during the "Taishō democracy" moment of mobility. If Miyamoto's appeal to trade unionism and class consciousness would ultimately fail, Mizuno is less interested in pursuing this story than its succeeding alternative, involving an embrace of the language of the nation. The attempt to define technology (*gijutsu*) by the same set of actors responsible for building much of the nation's material infrastructure made for an appealing alternative to Marxism, and offered in turn a powerful set of patrons to this group of engineers seeking greater exposure for its ideas. Particularly with the global depression of the late 1920s, engineers offered a form of expertise that might provide industrial rationalization, and at least in theory, a means to bypass class politics and economic woes.

In this section and the succeeding section on the development of Japanese Marxism, Mizuno is particularly strong in bringing the Japanese national story into the context of a larger, comparative frame. If her narrative impulse is not necessarily transnational, we are reminded,

nonetheless, of the technocratic appeal of engineering expertise in other parts of the world in the period during and following World War I. As part of that conflict, the Anglo-French blockade placed on Germany greatly reduced Japan's access to its critical supplies of "industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and precision instruments" (13). Rather than seeking another source for such materials, Japan chose to emphasize its own domestic production, and more importantly, the corresponding development of a research infrastructure. In this sense, Mizuno's wartime story, here referring to the Pacific War (1931-1945), approaches a major gap in the literature, one in which the Meiji Restoration story is told exclusively as one of successful transformation through the first decade of the twentieth century. Again, Mizuno's story holds implications for challenging the periodization in both directions, and here, we witness the formative stages in Japan's subsequent industrial development, as it continues to pursue an independent research tradition as a major actor in the second industrial revolution.

Not surprisingly, engineers like Miyamoto were hardly alone in seeking to draw greater attention to their interests, and Mizuno next turns to the rich legacy of Japanese Marxism, another major part of the interwar story. If the technocrats in part one held a particular vision of their role as potential overseers of Japanese science and technology, the Marxist actors in part two take a very different position, with their approach claiming to explain the underlying social and historical circumstances of Japan's experience with modernity, still deemed incomplete. Recall that Miyamoto and the Kojin Club members ultimately deferred on the appeal of identifying with class interests, and that their major complaint with the Japanese government was "because it [Japan] did not let the technocrats run the nation and the empire" (92). Intellectuals like Ogura Kinnosuke, on the other hand, viewed Marxist analysis as the appropriate means to analyze the problems of Japanese society, and moreover, Ogura viewed the analytical tools he wielded as a universalist, scientific means, one that extended to include both the social

and natural sciences.

A reformer initially invested in mathematics education, Ogura sought to use pedagogy as a tool to introduce Japanese children to the natural sciences earlier than in the existing school curriculum. Rather than conveying an abstract notion of the “scientific spirit” (78), an enthusiasm for “the discovery of scientific theories and new technologies” (78), science education according to this vision provided an analytic way of thinking, one well-suited to living in a modern world. As Mizuno carefully traces out Ogura’s reading of Marxist scholarship, she tracks the corresponding development of his growing cultural critique. Originally interested in Japanese mathematics and the history of science, Ogura, with Marxism as his guide, began to conceive of a much sharper vision in which the problems of Japanese science were seen as the historical problems of Japanese capitalism, itself deeply rooted in feudalism through at least the late Tokugawa period. By the early 1930s, Ogura had developed a take on Japanese modernity bridging the social and natural sciences, and more importantly, one that sought to bring the second category into a much closer working relationship with the social problems of Japanese society.

The succeeding chapter further develops this discussion by following Ogura and other like-minded individuals to the formation of the *Yuibutsuron kenkyūkai* (*Yuiken*; Society for the Study of Materialism) in 1932, an organization of Marxist intellectuals headed by Tosaka Jun, and one dedicated to bringing Marxist analysis to bear upon a range of social problems. As Mizuno points out, this was a period of intense and heated debate over the significance of the “scientific”; and, moreover, there were serious consequences to this activity, as the government soon suppressed much of this style of discussion beginning in the mid-1930s, following the turn to war. The survival of the *Yuiken* project until February 1938 was therefore somewhat distinctive and important because of its ability to reach out to new actors and sites through the publication of its journal, and because of its “extensive and continuing

discussion of the sciences” (103). With a large number of natural scientists among its members, the Yuiken group did not simply use the category of science as a cover for their Marxist interests, and instead, sought to sharpen the very character of their analysis, especially in contrast to what they perceived as “unscientific” or loosely conceived ideological forms of inquiry.

With the turn to war by the late 1930s, it was difficult for the Yuiken members to maintain their existence as a group, let alone to preserve any notion of autonomy. In the final chapter of this section, Mizuno presents us with the case of Saigusa Hirota, a Yuken member who continued his scholarly work beyond the formal dissolution of the organization in 1938. Saigusa pursued a project of tracing the historical arc of Japanese scientific tradition, looking for past examples in the Tokugawa period, in effect, building his own idiosyncratic canon. On the one hand, Saigusa played a central role in establishing the history of science and technology as a field in Japan, seeking to critique accounts linking science with “things Japanese” (126), that is, making claims to an exceptionalist Japanese character or set of origins. At the same time, Mizuno cautions against regarding Saigusa’s work as unproblematic, pointing to its convergence with the state’s interests in celebrating science and technology, especially on behalf of the nation. In other words, the very act of establishing of a tradition in which Japanese science emerges during the Tokugawa period was itself contingent on the “specific wartime map of the scientific ... shaped by the state’s active mobilization of science and technology” (130).

If Saigusa’s project, like that of others before him, borders upon the murky territory wherein scientific activity becomes mobilized on behalf of the Japanese wartime nation, this is entirely in keeping with the larger themes of the work and its cautionary vision. The chapter closes with a brief mention of some of his later writings, and here the tone shifts subtly, with Mizuno emphasizing the simultaneous play of subversive tendencies amidst the dark politics of the late 1930s. In a 1943

publication, for example, Saigusa offers a vision of science and technology that echoes the phrases of nationalists—here referred to as the “*minzoku*-specific” (132) (“ethnicity/people”) notion of culture—even while challenging their constrained ideas. If Saigusa entertains the notion of a modern science in Japan, in other words, it remains one based on an appeal to universalist claims about knowledge, and is most emphatically not a uniquely “Japanese science.” Still, Mizuno closes the chapter with a reminder of the ways in which this project was appropriated by the wartime state, here choosing to disagree with Nakayama Shigeru’s reading of Saigusa.

In the final chapter, chapter six, the narrative turns to the theme of popularization, looking at how this collective of issues might have played out to readers at the time. Titled “The Mobilization of Wonder,” the chapter reminds us that the heady debates of the preceding five chapters often took place within a constricted playing field, appealing only to a limited number of elite readers. Mizuno therefore turns to the much larger body of material made available through popular science magazines, including those intended for adults and children. Particularly in the latter case, magazines for children went well beyond the topics covered in the school curriculum, actively appealing to and seeking to instill a sense of wonder. As with earlier chapters, however, there is a palpable tension here, as Mizuno points out the potential danger of “popular science culture ... [being] co-opted by the wartime state” (144). The wonder of discovery, in other words, might easily be transferred to the celebration of new weapons on the battlefield as mobilized on behalf of the nation.

With this caveat in mind, much of the chapter concerns the diverse strategies involved in drawing the reader into the content of these publications. One analogy that proves useful here is to the world’s fairs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a development roughly concurrent with the development of a newer commercial culture in Japan, taking the form of the department store. “Visitors could see an array of

materials from all over the world, packaged in one location” (148) in a store, and similarly, a reader might encounter a display of artifacts taken from around the world. If the politics of some of these publications tended to circulate and reinforce ethnic stereotypes—“a sense of wonder was invoked from looking at the unfamiliar customs and appearances of the various people in ‘exotic’ locations such as Africa and the South Pacific” (148)—Mizuno is quick to point out that the relationship with readers was not always this top-down. Still, the need to create imperial subjects capable of functioning within a modern, scientific world remained as the background concern, especially with children, who served as “scientific subjects” (150) and as the future of the nation.

If the narrative arc of *Science for the Empire* returns us frequently to the theme of the wartime state and its use of science and technology as mobilized towards the achievement of specific goals, this is not the most valuable contribution here, although it remains significant. Even more useful is the task of carefully selecting and accumulating a new and critical analytic vocabulary, a lexis of Japanese science and technology that embraces the diverse intellectual and cultural currents informing debates spanning from the Meiji period to the present, even as the first half of the twentieth century comprises the central focus. Among these keywords would be *kagaku-gijutsu* (“science-technology”), *gijutsu* (“technology”), and *minzoku* (“ethnicity” or “people”), the key items in a complex debate concerning the formative relationship of a nation and its connection to both new and familiar forms of knowledge practice. If this ultimately remains an intellectual and cultural history, and offers less focus on materiality, the strategy reflects a deliberate choice by the author, and the Japan which appears by the end is rendered far less familiar than the celebrated Meiji success story, and equally, far more complicated than the oft-criticized wartime monolith.

What remains is a Japan with many lingering questions to address, and this, too, offers us rich possibilities for future work. Although Mizuno never states so explicitly, her work presents numerous

opportunities to begin transnational inquiry, especially given the enormous soft power of the postwar Japanese state in northeast and southeast Asia. Certainly the project of a (Japanese) analytic vocabulary works for the former colonies of Taiwan and South Korea (and for North Korea, for that matter), and one can speculate about how useful this line of inquiry might be for a site like Singapore, with its industrial production in electronics borrowing heavily from Japanese managerial and bureaucratic practice. Moreover, in stating this implicit transnational impulse, it is clear that the work has successfully challenged the 1945 divide, raising all kinds of questions concerning possible continuities with the postwar state. In part, recent work by other scholars has continued this project of complicating wartime and mid-century Japan, and here the work of Janis Mimura and Aaron S. Moore comes to mind. If *Science for the Empire* concisely and incisively challenges an older portrait of Japan, it offers similar questions to scholars of the nation's regional neighbors and partners.

*Toward A History Beyond Borders:
Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations*

edited by Daqing Yang, Jie Liu, Hiroshi Mitani, and Andrew Gordon
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012*

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In the past few years much attention has been paid to Sino-Japanese relation, particularly after nationwide anti-Japan demonstrations broke out in China and the Japanese government declared sovereignty over Diaoyu islands (called the Senkaku islands by the Japanese) by purchasing them from the unknown Kurihara family. At one point, the two countries were on the brink of war. In this context, *Toward a History Beyond Borders: Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations* is a timely publication addressing the controversial history of Sino-Japanese relations.

The thirteen papers, which have been included in this book, dealt

² In order to gain a wider readership, the Chinese and Japanese version of this book, respectively entitled *Zhaoyue guojing de lishi rengshi: Laizhi Ribenji haiwai Zhongguo xuezhe de shijiao* 超越國境的歷史認識：來自日本及海外中國學者的視角 and *Kokkyō o koeru rekishi ninshiki: Nicchū taiwa no kokonomi* 國境を越える歴史認識：日中対話の試み, were published in Beijing and Tokyo, respectively, both in 2006. The readership has now expanded to those of the English language. It is rare for an academic publication to have version of three different languages. This review will not attempt to compare the three versions, therefore, the discussion here is based on the English version.

with general issues such as the Twenty-one Demands, the Tanaka Memorial, the Nanjing Massacre, and war responsibility. At first glance, this book does not seem to offer any groundbreaking interpretations regarding Sino-Japanese relations. What is new about the book is its methodological approach and its emphasis on moving Sino-Japanese relations from a ‘rivaling’ to a ‘reconciliatory’ stage.

The first half of the book deals with issues from before and during the war period: “Modes of Narrating the History of Sino-Japanese Relations: The Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century,” by Toshio Motegi (20-52); “A Prototype of Close Relations and Antagonism: From the First Sino-Japanese War to the Twenty-One Demands,” by Shin Kawashima (53-80); “Sino-Japanese Diplomacy during Cycles of Mutual Antagonism: On the Eve of the Manchurian Incident,” by Jie Liu (81-120); “Controversies over the Tanaka Memorial,” by Ryuji Hattori (121-147); “Issues in the History of Manzhouguo: Contemporary and Succeeding Perspectives,” by Hidemi Higuchi (148-177); “The Nanjing Atrocity: Is Constructive Dialogue Possible?” by Daqing Yang (178-204); and “Wang Jingwei and the ‘Nanjing Nationalist Government’: Between Collaboration and Resistance,” by Jie Liu (205-239). The second half of the book covers issues from the postwar period: “Japan’s History Textbook System and its Controversies,” by Hiroshi Mitani (240-266); “Sino-Japanese Mutual Understanding as Seen in History Textbooks,” by Satoshi Ibaraki (267-298); “Historical Perceptions of Taiwan’s Japan Era,” by Toyomi Asano (299-339); “Politics and Commemoration in Postwar Japan,” by Ryota Murai (340-371); “From War Reparation to Postwar Reparation,” by Zhihui Yang (372-410); and “Historical Dialogue and Documentary Research,” by Shin Kawashima (411-432).

The book represents three distinct features. The first is the high quality of the papers, all of which are based on extensive archival research and are aimed at overcoming historiographical discrepancies between the scholarship in China and Japan. In presenting evidence, each

chapter (except the chapter on history textbooks) includes the key documents that are coherent with the argument pursued in the chapter. Readers thus can easily trace the formation and development of the controversy regarding a chapter's subject. As such, the book offers an opportunity for dialogue between scholars from the two countries. It also reminds both sides of the divergences in their historical perspectives. This book represents a new endeavor of scholarship on the history of Sino-Japanese relations.

The second distinct feature is that most of the contributors were born in the 1960s and have been educated or professionally trained in either Japan or China, or both. For such contributors, language proficiency in both Chinese and Japanese is a merit rather than an obstacle. More importantly, they are able to work as a team, as suggested in the book's title "Beyond Borders." It would have been even better had the team recruited more members from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese communities overseas, such as in Singapore. The language proficiency and transnational endeavor differentiates the contributors from historians of the older generation, including those who published in English, such as Marius B. Jansen, Peter Duus, Akira Iriye, and Joshua Fogel. One of the significant shifts is the switch in the Romanization system and the use of terminology. Wade-Giles has been replaced by Pinyin, thus "Manchukuo" is now spelled as "Manzhouguo." And "Nanjing Massacre" is now referred to as "Nanjing Atrocity," indicating that the contributors are at liberty to choose according to their own "historical perception."

The third feature is that the book encompasses the most up-to-date research in political and diplomatic history on modern China and Japan. It also reflects the strengths of the editors and the contributors. However, what of economic, cultural, social, and even religious aspects? Does it mean that once political issues are resolved, it will be easier to tackle other economic and cultural issues? As there is no definite answer, the debate regarding which topics are the most important cannot be

undertaken, but an even balance would more easily persuade readers.

The joint efforts of this new generation of Japanese and Chinese scholars to promote research on modern Chinese, Japanese, and East Asian history are impressive. It is worth mentioning that in addition to this book, other “joint” projects have produced a number of publications which are complementary to each other and also to this book.¹ More importantly, some of these publications have involved the participation of South Korean scholars. It seems that there is a considerable amount of Japanese-language scholarship to read.

¹ Okuda Yasuhiro and Kawashima Shin, eds., *Chūgoku sengō hoshō: Kyōdō kenkyū – Rekishi, hō, saiban* [中国戦後補償: 共同研究: 歴史・法・裁判; Reparations to China in the Postwar Period: A Joint Research Project in History, Legal Aspects and Jurisdiction] (Tokyo: Meiseki shoten, 2000); Nitani Sadao, *21 seiki no rekishi ninshiki to kokusai rikai: Kankoku, Chūgoku, Nihon kara no teigen* [21世紀の歴史認識と国際理解: 韓国・中国・日本からの提言; Historical Perceptions and International Understanding in the Twenty-first Century: Suggestions from South Korea, China, and Japan] (Tokyo: Meiseki shoten, 2004); Mitani Hiroshi and Kimu Teechan [Kim Taechang], eds., *Higashi Ajia rekishi taiwa: Kokyō to sedai o koete* [東アジア歴史対話: 国境と世代を越えて; Dialogues on History in East Asia: Going Beyond National Boundaries and Generations] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2007); Kondō Takahiro, *Higashi Ajia no rekishi seisaku: Nit-Chū-Kan taiwa to rekishi ninshiki* [東アジアの歴史政策: 日中韓対話と歴史認識; Policies on History in East Asia: Dialogue and Historical Perceptions among Japan, China, and South Korea] (Tokyo: Meiseki shoten, 2008); Ryū Ketsu [Liu Jie] and Kawashima Shin, eds., *1945-nen no rekishi ninshiki: ‘Shūsen’ o meguru Nit-Chū taiwa no kokoromi* [1945年の歴史認識: 「終戦」をめぐる日中対話の試み; Historical Perceptions of the Year 1945: Attempts at Historical Dialogue between Japan and China on the Issue of the ‘End of the War’] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2009); Kasahara Tokushi, *Sensō o shiranai kokumin no tame no Nit-Chū rekishi ninshiki: “Nit-Chū rekishi kyōdō kenkyū” ‘Kin-gendaishi’ o yomu* [戦争を知らない国民のための日中歴史認識: 『日中歴史共同研究「近現代史」』を読む; Historical Perceptions of Japan and China for Japanese and Chinese Nationals Who Do Not Know about the War: Reading ‘Modern and Contemporary History’ in *The Joint Japanese-Chinese Historical Research Project*] (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2010); Hattori Ryūji, *Nit-Chū rekishi ninshiki: ‘Tanaka jōsōbun’ o meguru sōkoku 1927-2010* [日中歴史認識: 「田中上奏文」をめぐる相剋 1927-2010; Understanding Japan-China History: Conflict over the Tanaka Memorial, 1927-2010] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2010); Uketsu Atsushi, *Ryōdo mondai to rekishi ninshiki: Naze Nit-Chū-Kan wa te o tsunagenai no ka* [領土問題と歴史認識: なぜ、日中韓は手をつなげないのか; Territorial Disputes and Historical Perceptions: Why Cannot Japan, China, and South Korea Join Hands?] (Tokyo: Seiunsha, 2012); Ryū Ketsu [Liu Jie] and Kawashima Shin, eds., *Tairitsu to kyōzon no rekishi ninshiki: Nit-Chū kankei 150nen* [対立と共存の歴史認識: 日中間係150年; Between a Historical Understanding of Conflict and Co-existence: Sino-Japanese Relations over 150 Years] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2013).

*The Great Enterprise:
Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea*

by Henry H. Em
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1. The Korean Nation and Nationalism

In the modern era the nation and its state play a significant role in the construction of the modern world to the extent that the modern period is commonly said to be the age of the nation. The nation-state and its global significances bring forth, and are brought forth by, the birth and prosperity of nationalism. This history of the modern period confirms the necessity for the study of nation and nationalism, producing much writing on the nation and its ideology, around the world and also in South Korea.

For a long time, more than a few post-colonial works from South Korea, embracing nationalism as a kind of *Zeitgeist*, took a historical approach toward the modern construct of the nation. The billowy era at the turn of the twenty-first century, however, urged some Koreanists to reflect upon their established understanding of the nation and nationalism, and to instead historicize the issues. This historicization made it possible for them to remain open-minded to possibilities for constant (re)construction of a nation and constant change in nationality. On top of this, their subsequent research influenced by post-modernist

and post-colonialist theories, and employing a variety of methodologies, illustrate that the Korean nation was and is a discursive formation, a relational entity, and a spatial and temporal construct. Pioneering works suggest that the construction of the Korean nation is also a “clear instance of historical contingency,” as in the parlance of Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, and that the Korean nation has been constructed and reconstructed as a historical contingency throughout the modern times of Korea.¹ Now, it is being established that the Korean nation is just a historical construct, and, to be specific, a modern construct.

Nevertheless, numerous topics pertinent to the nation and its doctrine remain uncharted. Among them is the issue of sovereignty. Sovereignty constitutes the cardinal concerns of modern imaginations at the level of the human collective or the individual person. That is, a “sovereign subject” (K. *juche*) who thinks and acts on his/her own will or independently from others exists as the ultimate goal that an individual should attain throughout one’s life. Likewise, national sovereignty is first and foremost in nationalist agendas to the extent that nationalism is said to be ultimately aimed at building a nationally sovereign state. This necessitates researchers to examine the issue of modern sovereignty in earnest. Despite such a necessity, the literature has not yet paid due attention to the primary nationalist agenda of national sovereignty. This constitutes one of the problems with existing research, which brings Henry H. Em’s *The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea* to our attention.

¹ Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

2. The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea

The Great Enterprise, problematizing “the relationship between imperialism and nationalism,” takes the issue “sovereignty and historiography in modern Korea” as the subtitle of the book and into its table of contents. Based on its focus, the book consists of two parts which respectively examine sovereignty and historical writing. While examining the two topics and modern Koreans’ *dae-eop* or *daemyeong* (“great enterprise” in English) of “establishing equality with the nations of the earth” the book employs a variety of methodologies pertinent to the issues it covers, such as the analysis of text and language, and political anthropology regarding royal rituals and ceremonies. It then shows research results very suggestive for our understanding of our own conundrums, for example, the relationship between imperialism/colonialism and nationalism as well as sovereignty and historical writing. For lack of space, however, this review focuses on examining what the book explains regarding sovereignty. As Em points out, sovereignty is “a legal concept that structures the modern nation-state and relations between empires and nation-states.” The legal concept has existed as “the paramount signifier,” producing nationalist desire for national subjectivity throughout the modern era of Korea. This historical significance of sovereignty persuades this review to examine the crux of Em’s argument.

In *The Great Enterprise* Em scrutinizes the historicity of sovereignty (K. *jukwon*), but from a viewpoint different from the usual. The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) resulted in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which launched the state with “absolute sovereignty” over its territory in Europe. About 150 years later, the French Revolution introduced the concept of national sovereignty to the European world, leading to the emergence of nation-states on the continent. These historical events, transforming the continent into “a community of sovereign nation-states,” established the concepts and practices of sovereignty and

national sovereignty. Sovereignty came to constitute the cardinal concerns of modern imaginations at the level of the human collective or the individual person. That is, a “sovereign subject” (*K.juche*) who thinks and acts on his/her own will or independently from others came to exist as the ultimate goal that an individual should attain during one’s life. Likewise, national sovereignty became first and foremost on nationalist agendas to the extent that nationalism is said to be ultimately aimed at the building of a nationally sovereign state.

If the above summarizes the usual understanding of the initial history of the two concepts of sovereignty and national sovereignty, *The Great Enterprise* approaches the topic from a new viewpoint. More than anything else, Em draws attention to the link between the concept of sovereignty and European liberalism. The former, according to Em, epistemologically went abreast with the “Enlightenment notion of individual personhood, of the unique individual as a self-aware, self-creating subject beyond (or prior to) social status, roles, and obligations.” That is, “equal sovereignty” was interlocked with “autonomous personhood.” Next, the author reveals the contradictory features of liberal theory and practice by stating that liberal theory carried “inclusionary pretensions” while liberal practice had “exclusionary effects.” Originally, according to Em, liberalism had “the exclusionary basis” which was “derived from its theoretical core: the legitimacy of political authority requires consent; consent, to be meaningful, requires the people’s giving that consent to be possessed of reason; certain groups of people (children, madmen, and idiots) are incapable of exercising that kind of reason; such people can be excluded, governed without their consent.” Thus, contrary to its inclusionary pretensions, liberalism practically functioned as an idea that supported the exclusion of “certain people,” such as American Indians. This suggests that there lay “violence at the center of liberalism.” Going a step further, in essence, exclusionary liberalism was linked to imperialism and colonialism. Thus, all kinds of imperialist/colonialist interests such as treaty ports and assorted

concessions secured in the non-Western world “went hand in hand with Western liberal claims about individual equality and equality between sovereign states.” In this way, Em shows us “liberalism’s essential link to imperialism and colonialism” and also that the ideologies shared the commonality of being based upon the concept of sovereignty, individual or collective, or that the concept of sovereignty, in turn, formed the basis not only of liberalism, but also of imperialism and colonialism.

The new perspective on sovereignty which Em articulates in *The Great Enterprise* can be found in his location of the constitution of sovereignty. As established literatures do, the book locates the origin of the concept of national sovereignty in modern European history. In no time, however, the author transfers the discussion from European countries to “Europe’s periphery” by stating, “Sovereignty was not fully articulated by the Peace of Westphalia and then extended to Europe’s periphery.” He then relates the following: “Sovereignty and international laws were improvised out of the colonial encounter and given various articulations by European colonizers in conditions of hegemonic contestation with other colonial powers to declare who was sovereign and why.” This shift of the locus for discussion signifies a change in the focal point from the inter-national relationship among European countries to “the colonial encounter” and “hegemonic contestation with other colonial powers.” With this note, Em concludes that colonialism became “central to the constitution of sovereignty.”

At the same time, according to *The Great Enterprise*, the Westphalian idea of sovereignty came to serve Western and Japanese imperialism in East Asia as elsewhere in the non-Western world. The author points out, “Treaties, institutions, and discourse on equality between sovereign states, and equality between men, served to open up both China and Japan to trade and diplomacy in the middle of the nineteenth century.” In this sense, it can be said that sovereignty and “[s]overeignty-based international law facilitated Euro-American imperialism.” Also, the interests such as extraterritoriality secured by

Western imperialism in East Asia gained ideational and practical support from “Western liberal claims about individual equality and equality between sovereign states.” These accomplishments of Western imperialism suggest that the idea of sovereignty “could and did serve as a cognitive map for nineteenth-century Western imperialism in East Asia.” Likewise, Japan, whose role as “the preeminent translator of the new semantics of sovereignty in East Asia,” was confirmed by the result of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). Sovereignty functioned as “pedagogy for Japanese imperialism and colonialism.”

Taking a step further, sovereignty led the non-Western world to embrace Western-centered modernization. Em suggests that sovereignty “required recognition from the Western imperial powers.” Thus “non-European polities had to demonstrate commitment to European civilization” in order to receive recognition of their sovereignty from Western powers, and thereby enter a “sovereignty-based nation-state system” while preventing themselves from being colonized. This means that non-European countries had to Westernize their “political, economic, and cultural institutions and practices” under the name of “reform” in order to meet the requirements Western imperial powers set upon non-Western polities. Insofar as the Western-oriented reform was geared to secure their equality of sovereignty with Western imperial powers, or to realize nationalist desire for their independence from Western imperialism, Westernization revealed in modern history that nationalist desire for equal sovereignty, promoting its Westernization, helped to establish Euro-American hegemony over non-Western areas. Given this, sovereignty forced nationalism to serve Western hegemony by making Western-oriented reform while transforming the West’s domination over the non-Western world into a hegemonic rule. From this perspective, the author points out the violence inherent in sovereignty, “the unavoidable accommodation to Euro-American modernity,” and the complicity of nationalism with imperialism/colonialism.

At the same time, however, *The Great Enterprise* pays due

attention to the creativity and productivity of sovereignty. While narrating a history of historical writing in modern Korea, in the second part of the book Em scrutinizes “sovereignty’s creative, productive power, calling on Korean historians who would privilege and deploy for their own purpose, the concept of equal sovereignty as the condition for rewriting Korea’s past.” This part explains that Korean historians imagine the Korean ethnic (K. *minjok*) as “a self-same unity that evolved (or developed) through linear time,” rendering “the ethnic nation as the sovereign subject (*juche*) of Korean history” while inviting “all Koreans -male and female, old and young, high-born and of low status- to become sovereign subjects of national history.” Em then argues that “sovereignty made it possible for Korean historians to imagine the nation as such, and to help create a democratic logic while locating Korea in global time.” This is true for language and other fields. In the field of language, “sovereignty as a form of command prompted Korean intellectuals, as writers, historians, and translators, to produce new meanings and new narratives through semantic innovations” and also constituted and identified “Korean and Koreans as distinct units.” All these happenings confirm the creative potentials of sovereignty, indicating that *violent* sovereignty simultaneously had “creative, productive powers.”

3. Searching for an Alternative

As briefly introduced thus far, Em examines “the historicity of sovereignty (*jukwon*), its complicity with power, and its creative, productive capacity.” Also, this book scrutinizes “the conventions, rationalities, and subjectivities that sovereignty elicited,” which are issues not introduced here due to lack of space. While dealing with those issues, Em shows that the post-Westphalian concept of sovereignty formed the basis of violence witnessed in liberalism and imperialism/colonialism. And he illustrates that the concept of sovereignty was reified through the contact between European colonial powers and the non-

Western world. Moreover, the author reveals that “sovereignty functioned both as political power and police power in modern Korea as well as in elsewhere around the world.” In these historical processes and workings, according to Em, sovereignty brought about not only its complicity with Japanese and Euro-American empires and colonial projects, but also the complicity of Korean nationalism with Western and Japanese imperialism and colonialism, which led to the establishment of the latter’s hegemony over Korea. All these explanations presented in *The Great Enterprise* offer an excellent opportunity to understand sovereignty.

Further, the explanations in *The Great Enterprise* provide us with the opportunity to critically reflect upon nationalism. Insofar as nationalism ultimately aims to build and manage the state with national sovereignty over a certain territory and population, it goes without saying that sovereignty forms the first and foremost agenda of nationalism. On another note, if sovereignty shows its complicity with imperialism and colonialism throughout modern history, the nationalism of the non-Western world aspiring for absolute sovereignty could help Western and Japanese imperialism and colonialism to establish their hegemonic rule over non-Western areas and populations. This was a sheer denial of the original problematic possessed by nationalism. Given this, the book, though briefly reviewed here, urges us to critically reflect upon the potentiality of nationalism as an alternative to hegemonic ideologies of imperialism and colonialism, and to thereby look for an alternative to nationalism in order to render the existing world no longer under a hegemonic rule of powers. This constitutes one of the academic and political implications that Em’s book carries, and also one of the major agendas *The Great Enterprise* raises for its readers

*On the Margins of Empire:
Buraku and Korean Identity in Prewar and Wartime Japan*

by Jeffrey Paul Bayliss
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013

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In recent years, the study of empire has emerged as a dominant trend in Japanese history. In sharp contrast to earlier works that relegated the outer regions, or *gaichi*, of the Japanese empire to Japanese international relations, diplomatic history, and economic history, these recent works have revealed the extent to which Japan's colonies and its own subjects abroad were integrated into the world of the home islands, or *naichi*. While some of these works have shed valuable light on the complex and fraught relationship between Japanese imperial subjects and colonial subjects abroad, as Jeffrey Paul Bayliss points out in his introduction, the similarly complex and at times violent relationships between marginalized and majority populations in Japan proper during this same period has been conspicuously neglected. *On the Margins of Empire: Buraku and Korean Identity in Prewar and Wartime Japan* is Bayliss's effort to fill this gap. Focusing on two key populations—burakumin and zainichi Koreans (Koreans in Japan proper)—he examines how the larger context of empire, and its attendant ideologies, shaped each group's experience of discrimination, how they attempted to transform their place in society through a variety of means and strategies, and, finally, how

these two groups interacted with each other as they each attempted to carve out a space of legitimacy in a society that labeled them as inadequate imperial subjects.

Bayliss acknowledges the heavy debt he owes to previous scholars, particularly those Japanese scholars who are activists dedicated to advocating on behalf of these two groups while also meticulously examining sources to produce histories of them. At the same time, he also argues that much is lost when scholars focus on only one minority group, because many of the same issues and limitations applied to multiple groups. In the case of burakumin and zainichi Koreans, racialized ideology that legitimized imperial expansion also rendered these two groups “not quite” imperial subjects. At the same time, the application of a putative “scientific” logic based on social Darwinism and pseudo-biology relied on early modern precedents—such as the mistaken but entrenched belief that burakumin were genetically distinct from other Japanese, and possibly even sub-human—to legitimize justifications of discrimination and marginalization. In other words, by approaching the experience of marginalized groups in pre-war and wartime Japan from a comparative perspective, Bayliss argues, it is possible to shed light on aspects of Japan’s modernity and imperialism left in the shadows by other studies of imperialism, or that focus on just one minority group.

Structurally, Bayliss approaches this comparative study chronologically, beginning with how discriminatory attitudes towards both groups developed within a rapidly shifting international context in the Meiji period, and extending through the politically dynamic Taishō period to the economic crisis of the early 1930s through the demands of total war mobilization and the complete devastation at the end of the war. Each chapter addresses both groups; however, while he argues for the critical need of a study that attempts to consider more than one minority group at a time, the sections on each side remain largely segregated. This study provides great detail on both burakumin and zainichi Korean

organizations, political engagement, and key figures, and for that alone, makes a valuable contribution, since there is currently little available in English-language scholarship. At the same time, an integrated approach would not only engage more effectively with complex issues such as inter-“minority group” conflicts (which he addresses only briefly in the last chapter), but it would also contribute towards making a more convincing case for why a comparative study is qualitatively superior to the single-minority group studies that have preceded it.

Chapter one establishes the historical context of discriminatory attitudes towards both burakumin and Koreans within Japan. Bayliss addresses the link between early modern precedent and Meiji-era attitudes towards both groups. In the case of burakumin, who had been subject to systematized discrimination for some time, the issuance of the “Kaihō-rei,” an ordinance that “liberated” burakumin (who were also referred to by the pejoratives *eta* or *himin*) from their subordinate status, created new complications. The ordinance may have ostensibly removed the devastating stigma that had defined all burakumin social interactions in the previous era, but it did not in any way promise equality with other Japanese. As Bayliss argues, as a result of this liberation, burakumin were in theory emancipated, but simultaneously expected to know their place. At the same time, the abolition of their untouchable status also meant that burakumin now had to economically compete with non-burakumin who entered into businesses that had been the monopoly of burakumin because of the taboos associated with their work. Thus, emancipation began with ambivalence.

In the case of Koreans, somewhat surprisingly, Bayliss focuses on developing Japanese attitudes towards Korea, and Koreans there, and not towards Koreans who were already living in Japan. On one hand, since the focus of the book is on how Koreans who migrated to Japan following colonization responded to life in the *naichi*, this makes some sense. On the other hand, however, this comparison feels out of place. Bayliss highlights the significance of social Darwinism in how both

burakumin and Koreans were viewed. Whereas burakumin were accordingly deemed biologically threatening and therefore detrimental to the nation's survival, Koreans were viewed as stagnant, and thus unworthy of independence.

Ultimately, Bayliss argues that the two wars Japan engaged in during the Meiji period, the First Sino-Japanese war and the Russo-Japanese war, both were instrumental in fixing attitudes towards both burakumin and Koreans. Burakumin are increasingly seen as both criminal and racially different, and Japan's political interference in Korea, along with An Jung-geun's assassination of Itō Hirobumi, then Resident General of Korea, make Koreans also seem dangerous and untrustworthy at the precise moment they are being forced into the empire.

After establishing how stereotypes of burakumin and Koreans are forged over the course of the Meiji period, in chapter two, Bayliss next turns to how these communities respond to these stereotypes. As he himself acknowledges, since he is forced to rely on an archive dominated by each community's elites, his analysis of their responses—particularly in this earlier period—reflect elite attitudes that are often critical of the rest of their communities. For example, the economic elites among the burakumin—who relied on members of their community for the labor that powered their industries—practiced a policy of “conciliation.” Rather than question the logic of discrimination that consigned them to a subordinate and suspect position in Japanese society, these elites focused their disapproval on those in their own community with fewer financial resources, blaming their inability (or refusal) to conform to social norms as the basis for the discrimination to which they themselves were subjected. Towards this end, this self-appointed leadership promoted education, emergency aid (in times of crisis), and economic stability as the factors that would surely elevate their own status. They also became enthusiastic boosters of the state's policies, particularly abroad, throwing their full support behind war efforts and territorial expansion.

In the case of Koreans, whose numbers in Japan were still quite limited until the 1920s, the earliest responses to Japanese stereotyping came from students who were studying abroad in major Japanese cities. Many of these students, who struggled to support themselves while studying, became increasingly aware of the derogatory and negative ways in which they—and all things Korean—were perceived.

Chapter three focuses on the post-World War I context, and how shifts in the international context appeared to offer new possibilities to these minority groups. For burakumin, being scapegoated by the press following the 1918 rice riots raised their awareness of systematic discrimination and marginalization. For Koreans, the labor shortage in the *naichi* during the wartime economic boom led to a sudden increase in the working class population of Koreans, shifting this community's concerns from those of students to those of laborers (and eventually, families). The March First movement on the Korean peninsula, and the eventual disappointment brought on by the violent suppression of this series of protests for Korean independence by the Korean Government-General, serves as significant context to shifting ideas for the Korean community in Japan. For both groups, the 1920s was a key period when efforts to gain acceptance by majority society were replaced by more politically engaged efforts to demand that majority society change both attitudes and discriminatory and marginalizing policies and practices. This chapter also introduces the key organizations that advocated on behalf on their communities: the Suiheisha for burakumin, and the Sōaikai for Koreans. However, while the Suiheisha's platform emphasized transforming majority attitudes of burakumin, the Sōaikai enjoyed the patronage of the colonial administration, and engaged in strike-breaking and community surveillance in addition to providing social welfare services for the community.

One valuable contribution Bayliss makes in this chapter is his discussion of the government officials who most often interacted with both minority groups. For example, Terauchi Masatake, who served as

the first Governor-General of colonial Korea and is often considered a key force behind the brutal “military rule” policy that dominated until the March First movement, was the Japanese prime minister when the rice riots occurred, and homed in on burakumin as a group to blame for the “criminal” behavior of rioters. This overlapping of colonial and *naichi* bureaucrats and officials helped to legitimize discriminatory attitudes towards both groups.

The next chapter addresses how different advocacy groups strategically used ethnic and class identities in their efforts to improve conditions for their communities. For example, Bayliss argues that in the case of Koreans, a small group of students shaped the Korean labor movement, emphasizing class over ethnicity, which enabled them to forge alliances with more radical Japanese labor groups. Both groups experienced growing pains as political disputes and ideological disagreements led to new groups splintering off of the more established ones. Even efforts to forge alliances with majority Japanese groups led to the anxiety that their own specific needs and interests would be obliterated by the majority group’s broader concerns.

Chapters five and six shift attention to the period leading up to and during the Second Sino-Japanese War and then World War II. In addition to addressing the degree to which these minority groups were particularly vulnerable to the disastrous effects of the Great Depression, Bayliss also introduces government strategies and policies, as well as community-generated programs, intended to demonstrate the allegiance and loyalty of these groups to the nation, and their desire to contribute to the total war mobilization effort. Some, such as a specific campaign to encourage burakumin migration to Manchukuo, failed completely. Efforts to “imperialize” Koreans in a manner similar to “*kōminka*” in colonial Korea had uneven success, in part because of the continuing low level of Japanese language proficiency among Koreans, despite the tremendous growth and increasing stabilization of this group. Chapter six examines the effects of wartime mobilization and increasing surveillance and

scrutiny of the organizations that claimed to speak for these minority groups. Bayliss argues that while suppression was experienced—some groups like the Suiheisha were forced to disband—other minorities found new opportunities, such as the zainichi Koreans who were elected into the lower house of the Diet.

The book concludes with a chapter that asks why there was so little cooperation between these two groups when a shared experience of marginalization and discrimination could have led them to join forces to attempt broad changes. Bayliss suggests that despite being subject to discrimination rooted in similar forms of racialized logic, these two groups mostly viewed each other as inferiors rather than as potential allies because each subscribed to the same logic that marginalized them. For instance, for Koreans, who were familiar with *baekjeong*, or the untouchable class in Korea, burakumin were their inferiors. For burakumin, Koreans were foreigners and thus inferior to them and also incapable of being fully assimilated as good imperial subjects. Thus the privileging of race or class identities precluded the possibility of a pan-“marginalized” identity that could oppose majority society with greater effect.

Bayliss’s work makes a valuable contribution by filling a gap in existing scholarship. Certainly in English-language scholarship, few works have attempted to provide as extensive a study of either group. An even more integrated approach that actively engaged with the interactions among these groups—moving beyond comparing the specific circumstances experienced by each group—would further achieve the aims Bayliss sets out in his introduction. Nonetheless, this extensive study provides a crucial first step towards examining the fraught and complex implications of imperialist ideology for those minority groups that are often overlooked in studies of the Japanese empire.



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