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CONTENTS

- 1** Manchuria as a Borderland: History, Culture and Identity in East Asia
Shao Dan and Ronald Suleski
- 5** State Service, Lineage and Locality in Hulun Buir
Christopher P. Atwood
- 23** Borderlanders Between Empire and Nation: Banner People in Early Twentieth-Century
 Manchuria
Shao Dan
- 47** Inscribing Manchuria: Gender, Ideology and Popular Imagination
Faye Yuan Kleeman
- 67** Reconstructing Life in the Youth Corps Camps of Manchuria, 1938–45: Resistance to
 Conformity
Ronald Suleski
- 91** From Pusan to Fengtian: The Borderline Between Korea and Manchukuo in the 1930s
Suk-jung Han
- 107** Community and Identity in Northeast Asia: 1930s and Today
Gavan McCormack

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Cover illustration Takabatake Kashō, “My skin was like Jade when I left my country”; Yamauchi Hideo, young hero of the “Song of the Mounted Bandit.” Reproduced with permission of Yayoi Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

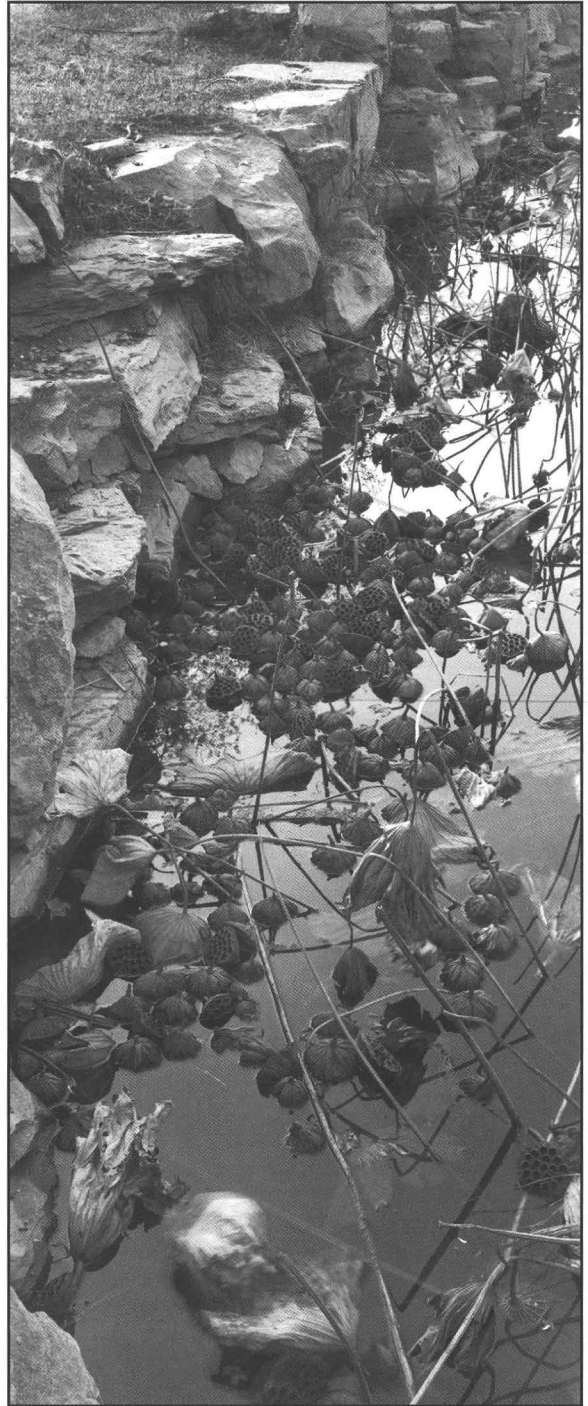
Errata In recent issues Yan Zhenqing's 顏真卿 name was mistakenly given as 顏偵卿 due to a change of fonts. We apologise for this error.

In the previous issue of *East Asian History* (No.29), in the article “In Search of Smokers” by Xavier Paulès, the caption on Figure 4, page 120, should read “Occupation of the population of Cantonese adult males in 1928.”

The editor and editorial board of *East Asian History* would like to acknowledge the contribution that two colleagues have made to the creation and evolution of our journal over the years.

Professor Mark Elvin, who took up a position as Professor of Chinese History at The Australian National University in February 1990, was the inspiration behind and instigator of *East Asian History* in its present form. With his encouragement and support we redesigned *Papers on Far Eastern History* and re-launched it as *East Asian History* in 1991. Mark retired from the department in December 2005.

Helen Lo, who began work with us in September 1987, was the designer and editorial assistant of *East Asian History* from its inception until her retirement in June 2005. She was the artist behind the style of the journal and her contribution is sorely missed.



Lotus at the Garden of Perfect Brightness,
Lois Conner, 1998

INSCRIBING MANCHURIA: GENDER, IDEOLOGY, AND POPULAR IMAGINATION

史 Faye Yuan Kleeman 阮斐娜

I am going, so you should, too.
We are tired of living in this cramped Japan.
Beyond the waves, China is there;
Four hundred million people are waiting for us in China.
have neither father nor mother;
No one will be sad to see me go.
Only my beloved;
I will see her in my dreams.
My skin was like jade when I left our country;
Now it is scarred with wounds from gun and knife.
“This is what it means to be a man,”
I say, smiling through a spiky beard.
A morning breeze on Changbai Mountain;
I grasp my sword, gazing down.
The great plains of Northern Manchuria
Are still too cramped for my home.
More than ten years since leaving my country,
I am now the great Mounted Bandit of Manchuria!¹

• • •

Before a window of drifting willow blossoms,
We are unfolding the map.
We search the land of Manchuria for
The five river systems,
The Xing'an Mountain Range, the international border,
Bohai Bay, the Yellow Sea.
Before a window of drifting willow blossoms,

We stare at the compass
 Longing to open up
 The great forests not felled for a thousand years,
 The distribution of natural resources, communication routes
 In the cities and villages, and on the great plain.
 Before a window of drifting willow blossoms,
 We fly the five-color flag.
 We dream of the winds, the customs,
 And coming across the Mongolian dessert
 Camels, flutes, the Great Wall—
 Oh, the rise and fall of peoples.
 Before a window of drifting willow blossoms,
 Shall I show you the bright moving images?
 The Greater East Asian dream we have
 The tenth anniversary of the founding of Manchuria
 Guarding and advancing to the North
 Why should we care about the Red Soviets?
 Before a window of drifting willow blossoms,
 The willow blossoms are dancing like snow flakes²

Romancing the Empire

¹ *Bazokuno uta* [Song of a Mounted Bandit]. This lyric is variously attributed either to Ikeda Kikan or to Miyazaki Tōten. There are various versions of the song and lyrics; another is attributed to Miyajima Ikuhiko (lyrics) and Tottori Shun'ō (melody).

² Kitahara Hakushū *Manshū chizu* [A map of Manchuria] (Tokyo: Futaba Shoin Seikōkan, 1942, pp.17–8). Also see Minato Kawamura *Bungaku kara miru 'Manshū'* ['Manchuria' seen from literature], "*Gozoku kyōwa*" no *yume to genjitsu* [The dream and the reality of five ethnic groups in harmony] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998), pp.1–3.

³ R.L. Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.vii–viii.

⁴ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: Knopf, 1967), p.9.

Kitahara Hakushū's 北原白秋 sentiment, expressed in this poem as the unnamed subjects unfold a map of Manchuria (most likely in a speeding train on a track built by the Southern Manchurian Railway—*Minami-Manshū Tetsudō Kabushiki Kaisha* 南滿州鐵道株式會社) is reminiscent of that of Robert Louis Stevenson, who was inspired to write *Treasure Island* (1883) while gazing at the map of an imaginary island he had drawn for his young stepson.³ Or perhaps a more apt comparison could be made with Marlow, the character in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), who professes his passion for maps. He recalls how he would:

look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map I would put my finger on it and say, "When I grow up I will go there."⁴

Poems and songs of distant Manchuria stirred the popular imagination of the Japanese during the first half of the twentieth century. The mere mention of Manchuria conjured up exotic visions of a vast, unbounded frontier, filled with bandits, mystics, exotic women and enigmatic nomads.

Manchuria has long been a crossroads of cultural interaction. Since the twelfth century, Manchurian peoples have repeatedly extended political control

into China proper, most notably during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Later, Chinese and Korean settlers encroached upon the Manchurian wilds, drawn by its fertile earth and rich natural resources. Japan first made inroads into Manchuria following the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, occupying key cities such as Fengtian 奉天 and Dalian 大連, and embarking upon the ambitious project of constructing and running the Southern Manchurian Railway. By the 1920s, Japan was firmly entrenched in Manchuria, with well-established schools, hotels, restaurants and other elements of the infrastructure of Japanese society necessary to serve the growing population of expatriates.

In this article, I will first examine how the discursive space of this imperialist project was constructed in the Japanese popular psyche during the early twentieth century. Then, by asking questions such as: “How was the popular imagination of Manchuria formulated within the metropole?”, “How were the mass media used to form and manipulate public opinion for political ends?”, “How was gender represented in the discourse?” and “How were literary genres consumed?”, I hope to clarify the social and cultural contexts of this construction. I will then describe some recent manifestations of the trope, considering how it is now being reappropriated by contemporary writers and artists, using the same masculine icons and ideology in mythic narrative patterns derived from the genre of tales that “related the strange” (*denki* 伝奇). Finally, I will address how one might read this metaphoric and cartographic undertaking in the context of the contemporary Japanese cultural landscape.

In earlier work on the colonial cultural milieu in Taiwan and the South Pacific during the Japanese occupation (1895–1945), I have examined the literary construction of the South and its colonial vision.⁵ Manchuria can serve as a contrast to help us understand how differently the empire was conceptualised in each place. Whereas Taiwan was a classic case of a tightly managed plantation economy, Manchuria was the first example of Japan adopting a new political strategy that sought to advance its colonial frontier through the creation of a (supposedly) independent nation. In Manchuria, Japan showed a certain understanding of the fluidity in the geopolitical reality and a willingness to accommodate the international community by fashioning a rhetorical social order that reflected the multiethnic, multicultural nature of Manchuria.⁶ The political, economic and military variations in the nature of the colonial administration were also manifested in literary and cultural representations of the two colonies. The longing for the south (*nanpō dōkei* 南方憧憬) and the later, northbound fantasy (*hoppō gensō* 北方幻想) pervaded Japan’s colonial imagination.

Japan’s popular imagination of the South had its genesis in the popular genre of the seafarer epic, which fascinated male readers at the turn of the century. Adventure epics (*kaibyō shōsetsu* 海洋小説, *bōken shōsetsu* 冒険小説) such as the popular series of heroic tales created by Oshikawa Shunrō 押川春浪 (1876–1914)—including works like *Ocean Island Adventurous Tales: The Underwater Fleet Ship* (Kaidō bōken kidan kaitei gunkan 海島冒険奇譚海底軍艦, 1900) or *Heroic Tales: New Japan Island* (Eiyūshōsetsu shin

⁵ Faye Yuan Kleeman, *Underan Imperial Sun: Japanese Colonial Literature of Taiwan and the South* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003).

⁶ Certainly Manchuria was not an isolated case. Yamamuro Shin’ichi’s study shows that previous experience with other colonies such as Taiwan and Korea played a major role in the establishment of the colonial managerial structure and human resources (administrators, bureaucrats, technical staff and so on) that circulated actively among the three colonies. See Yamamuro Shin’ichi, “Shokuminteikoku Nihon no kōsei to Manshū-ōkoku: tōchi yōshiki no sen’i to tōchi jinza no shūryū” [The structure of the Japanese colonial empire and Manchukuo: transformations in administrative mode and circulation of administrators], in *Teikoku to iu gensō*, ed. Peter Duus and Kobayashi Hideo (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1998), pp.155–202.

⁷ Based on an actual incident in which a battleship commissioned by the Japanese government and built by the French disappeared in the Taiwan Strait in 1886, Oshikawa spun a whole series of fantasy tales reminiscent of Western stories such as *Treasure Island* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* or the Chinese heroic romance of *The Water Margin* (Shuihuzhuan 水滸傳), narratives of intrigue on a large scale. Though highly nationalistic in outlook, Oshikawa's works were still a far cry from the advocacy of militarism and hero worship that characterized literature during the Russo-Japanese War and the during the lead-up to the Pacific War; rather, they emphasized the alliance between the weaker nations who were under the sway of Western imperial powers such as the USA and Britain. See Kitagami Jirō, *Bōken shōsetsu ron kindai hīrō zō 100 nen no bensen* [Adventure novels: a century of changes in the modern heroic image] (Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobō, 1993), pp.335–41.

⁸ The director Kinugasa Teinosuke, and the script writer Okuni Hideo, planned to make a film on the anti-colonial heroes Aquinaldo and Jose Risal in 1942. In the script, Risal's mother, who was of Chinese descent, was identified as Japanese to emphasize the connection with Japan and their common fight against the USA. See Peter B. High, *Teikoku no ginmaku* [The Empire's silver screen] (Nagoya: University of Nagoya Press, 1995), p.398.

⁹ Yanagita Kunio, *Meiji Taishō shi: Sesō-ben* [Meiji and Taishō history: social conditions] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1967), p.107.

Nipponjima 英雄小説新日本島, 1906), with their anti-Western nationalistic bent—were hugely popular among teenage male readers.⁷ Together with the political novel (*seiji shōsetsu* 政治小説), another genre that was also popular among male readers of the time, these writings were important in fostering in the populace an outlook that was global yet nationalistic. In a sense this literature of geography, in the form of narratives about explorers, surveyors and geographers as well as other more fantastic storytelling, transported them, in their imagination, beyond the confining boundaries of the nation state. For example, Yamada Bimyō 山田美妙, who is credited with leading the vernacular movement (*genbun'itchi undō* 言文一致運動) that defined the characteristics of modern Japanese prose, was also preoccupied with the independence movement in the Philippines. His portrayal of the Filipino hero Emilio Aquinaldo in the novel *The War Tales of Philippine Independence: Aquinaldo* (Firippin dokuritsu senwa Aginarudo 比律賓獨立戦話あぎなるど, 1902) is a passionate plea for the independence of that island nation, which had suffered under the Spanish and American colonial powers.⁸ This increasing expansive engagement with the outside world, coupled with the onslaught of a disorientingly fast-paced modern life, prompted the pre-eminent Japanese ethnologist Yanagita Kunio, to comment:

The ocean landscape has begun to change dramatically since the beginning of Meiji. There are changes in appearance in the deep mountains with the opening up of railroads and mining or with the flourishing of forestry, but the ocean became even more lively than those. On the whole, things that are active are increasing, and the things that are inactive are on the wane.⁹

If the oceanic epics anchored the southbound imagination of the Japanese public from the late nineteenth century, the northbound imagination can be found lodged in the infinite vastness of the continental landmass, specifically the sparsely populated plains of Manchuria and Mongolia, where heroes and bandits galloped about and men dreamed of making it big in the new frontier. These imaginations of colonial landscapes reflected a masculine fantasy that was deeply rooted in Japan's modernization process—a response to the humiliating encounter with the West, Japan's forced opening to the West, and the subsequent unequal treaties that the West (the USA, and later Russia and France) had imposed on Japan since the mid-1800s. Furthermore, the newly acquired industrial prowess and confidence in defeating two older empires of China (1895) and Russia (1905) prompted a new enthusiasm on the part not only of the government but also of the general public to proceed with colonial expansion. In this respect, the adventurous fantasy was a metaphor for the male libidinal drive for empire. Unlike Japan's other colonies, Manchuria was conceived from the start as a utopian paradise of the kingly way (*ōdō rakudo* 王道楽土) in which five ethnic groups (Japanese, Chinese, Manchurians, Koreans and Mongolians) would live in harmony (*gozokukyōwa* 五族協和). In Taiwan, the settler communities consisted mostly

of administrators, bureaucrats, police and educators who administered the colony; but the colonial ideology applied to Manchuria required the willing participation of the Japanese people as well. The masses were mobilised to emigrate to Manchuria, where they would struggle under harsh conditions to realise the utopian vision. This required not only political and military will and material incentives—but also a narrative with a romantic vision that could rally the population to embrace this *terra incognita*. Both the seafaring adventures to the South and the northern expansionary vision later became part of the ideological framework of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere (*Daitōa kyōeiken* 大東亜共栄圏) in the 1940s. This expansive vision of a Japan without borders seemed increasingly real as the Japanese military advanced further and further into the Asian mainland.

To Manchuria!: The Popular Imagination

Literary output on the subject of Manchuria was considerable both during the interwar period and through the war, continuing into the postwar era. These writings can be categorized into various genres according to their functions, sites of production and intended audiences, and the nationalities of the authors. Literary works in and on Manchuria were written in Japanese, Manchurian, Korean and Russian in Manchuria. I will treat only Japanese-language texts here.¹⁰

Japanese Manchurian literature can be roughly divided into three types. The first is travelogues by Japanese who journeyed through the land. One of the most famous (or notorious) is Natsume Sōseki's 夏目漱石 *Places in Manchuria and Korea* (Mankantokorodokoro 満韓とところどころ).¹¹ Shimaki Kensaku's 島木健作 *Manchuria Travelogue* (Manshū kikō 満州紀行) also belong to this category.¹² The second type, the mainstay of Japanese Manchurian literature, was created by those who lived and worked in Manchuria. This category primarily encompassed three literary coteries and their journals: *Manshū Rōman* 満州浪漫, *Sakubun* 作文 (which consisted mainly of employees of the Manchuria Railway Company), and the Modernist *tanka* 短歌 (a genre of traditional poetry) group *A* 亜 in Dalian. The third type of writing on Manchuria, a residual legacy of Japan's involvement there, is the literature created by writers who were either born or raised in Manchuria but started their writing careers after being repatriated back to Japan. Sometimes referred to as the Manchurian repatriate group (Manshū hikiageha 満州引き揚げ派), this category includes writers such as Abe Kōbō 安部公房, Miki Taku 三木卓, Betsuyaku Minoru 別役実, Miyao Tomiko 宮尾登美子, Uno Kōjirō 宇野浩二, and Kiyooka Takayuki 清岡卓之, the recipient of the Akutagawa Literary Award (Akutagawa shō 芥川賞) for his *Dalian of the Acacias* (Akashiya no Dairen アカシヤの大連) of 1969.¹³

These examples of Manchurian literature can be characterized as main-

¹⁰ A sample of colonial writing on Manchuria can be found in the recent anthology edited by Kurokawa Sō, *"Gaichi" no Nibongo bugaku sen, Manshū Uchi-mōko Karafuto* [Selected works of Japanese language literature from *Gaichi*; Manchuria, Mongolia, Sakhalin] (Tokyo: Shinjuku Shobō, 1996).

¹¹ Natsume Sōseki, *Mankan tokorodokoro* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 1910, reprinted 1989).

¹² Shimaki Kensaku, *Manshū kikō* [Manchurian Travelogue] (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1940).

¹³ For an in-depth discussion of Manchuria and modern Japanese literature, see Kawamura Minato, *Ikyō no Shōwa bungaku: "Manshū" to kindai Nihon* [The Showa literature of a foreign land: Manchuria and modern Japan] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990); *Manshū hōkai daitōa bungaku to sakka tachi* [The fall of Manchuria: Greater East Asian literature and authors] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1997); *Bungaku kara miru "Manshū": "gozoku kyōwa" no yume to genjitsu* [Manchuria seen from literature: the dream and reality of "five nations living in harmony"] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998).

¹⁴ On Manchuria and Japanese proletarian literature, see Nunono Eiichi, "Nihon no puroretaria bungaku ga egaita 'Man-shū'" [Manchuria portrayed in Japanese proletarian literature] in *Shokuminchi to bungaku*, ed., Nihon shakaibungaku kai (Tokyo: Orijin Shuppan Sentā, 1993), pp. 254–70.

¹⁵ Satō adopts Aono Suekichi's periodization of Japanese women's magazines. The first period was around the Russo-Japanese War, the formative period of capitalism when progressive scientism and Protestant-like moralistic acculturation were the main foci for magazines such as *Jogaku sekai* [The world of female students] and *Fujokai* [The world of women]. The second period was around the World War I, when capitalism was firmly established, with magazines such as *Fujin kōron* [The public voice of women], *Shufu no tomo* [Housewife's friends], and *Fujin kurabu* [Women's club], which to this day are very popular with a large female readership. The third period started in the mid-1920s, when magazines became a mass-produced consumer commodity marketed through department store chains and product tie-in promotions. See Satō Takumi "King no jidai kokumin taishū zasshi no kōkyōsei" [The age of *King*: the public nature of national mass circulation magazines] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), pp. 28–33.

stream and modernist writings, but there is also a sub-category of socialist and proletarian literature on Manchuria. Following a series of purges from 1928 to 1930, the Japanese Communist Party had effectively ceased to exist. The Socialist People's Party (*Shakaiminshū tō* 社会民衆党) showed great interest in Manchuria, sending members like Koike Shirō 小池四郎 and Katayama Tetsu 片山哲 as observers to the region. Katayama's *How the Japanese Proletarian Class Views the Manchurian-Mongolian Issue* (Nihon musankaikyū wa Man-Mon mondai o dō miru 日本無産階級は満蒙問題をどう見る) of 1932, was in part the result of such a visit. The Socialists made distinctions regarding whom they would ally with in Manchuria: "The proletarian class will not sacrifice our lives to defend the profit of bourgeois corporations like Mitsui or Mitsubishi. We are taking up arms to make sure the struggle will further the survival of the Chinese and Japanese proletarian classes." Nonetheless, they shared with the official discourse the assumption that Manchuria was an "economic paradise" and a "goose that lays golden eggs," and they agreed that these riches were the rightful reward for the Japanese masses who had shed blood and paid taxes for Manchuria since the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁴

Although these literary products, whether produced by mainstream modernists or socialist critics, are often treated as representing the viewpoint and experience of many, they were read only by an intellectual minority, and did not reach a wide audience at the time. The real force in mobilising the masses was to be found in more popular venues such as magazines, popular fiction, popular songs and films. Meiji national slogans for males (including young boys) such as "establish yourself and enter into the world" (*rishshin shusse* 立身出世) coincided with a more outward-looking jingle advocating heroic adventures in foreign lands (*kaigai yūbi* 海外雄飛; *tairiku yūbi* 大陸雄飛); these were at the heart of the Manchurian romance (see Figure 1). For the brief existence of Manchukuo 満州国, an ephemeral nation-state that lasted a mere thirteen years, its allure as a migration destination among the Japanese populace outshone that of the Americas (South and North) or Hawai'i, which were also being promoted by the government.

The popular Japanese magazine *New Youth* (Shinseinen 新青年) was later to become an incubator for experimental writing in the newly imported genre of the detective story (by writers such as Edogawa Ranpō 江戸川乱歩), but it originally catered to ambitious young people who dreamed of adventures and entrepreneurship overseas. As Suzuki Sadami's 鈴木貞美 study of the Meiji magazine *Sun* (Taiyō 太陽) and Satō Takumi's 佐藤卓巳 meticulous exposition of the popular magazine *King* (キング, 1924–57) during the Taishō 大正 and early Shōwa 昭和 periods have demonstrated, these popular media not only reinforced the burgeoning appeal of capitalism (through advertisements that both enticed and educated its consumers) but also reflected and consolidated nationalist sentiments during the Russo-Japanese War and later, the Pacific War.¹⁵ In the 1930s, the general cultural magazine *King*, together

Figure 1

Takabatake Kashō, Farewell to my home!
[Saraba Furusato!]. Reproduced with
permission of Yayoi Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

with the female-oriented *Housewife's Friend* (Shufu no tomo 主婦の友) and *Light of the House* (Ie no Hikari 家の光), which catered primarily to the rural population, became the first three magazines with circulations of over a million copies. *King* combined a *rissbin shusse* type of modernism with popular nationalism, while *Light of the House* (published by the predecessor of today's Agriculture Union or *Nōkyō* 農協) promoted a traditional agriculturalist ideology (*nōhon shugi* 農本主義) that was easily amalgamated into the conservative fascism of the militarists. *Housewife's Friend*, though initially apolitical, increasingly steered toward government-sanctioned themes such as austerity during wartime and home front (*jūgo* 銃後)-related issues. The ability of this medium to use this public space to shape public opinion, and later to mobilise the public will and imagination, was tremendous.

Other popular media such as broadcasting and film also played a crucial role in molding the public consciousness on Manchuria. Alan Tansman has identified the late 1920s as the era of the birth of Japanese popular music (*ryūkōka* 流行歌).¹⁶ Though Western-sounding music gained great popularity, some native genres that had evolved from earlier forms were also popularized through radio and record distribution. *Naniwabushi* 浪花節, which derived from eighteenth-century Osaka street performances, was performed in the late nineteenth century in portable huts. Its popularity surged after the victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, creating Japan's first recording stars such as Tochuken Kumoemon 桃中軒雲右衛門 and Yoshida Naramaru 吉田奈良丸. This developed into a genre called *rōkyoku* 浪曲, a sentimental narrative form of chant on themes of love, duty, and rootless drifting, often told from the perspectives of gamblers, travelers, itinerant



¹⁶ Alan M. Tansman, "Mournful Tears and Sake," in *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture*, ed. John W. Treat (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), pp.113, 116–17.

¹⁷ A sub-genre called *gunji rōkyoku* 軍事浪曲 developed, which combined the *rōkyoku* melody with lyrics on military subjects. See <<http://www.teichiku.co.jp/chako/history/history03.html>>.

¹⁸ Kamijō Hiroyuki, “Nagano ken to ‘Manshūkoku’” [Nagano province and Manchukuo] in *Shokuminchi to bungaku*, ed. Nihon Shakai Bungakukai (Tokyo: Orijin Shuppan Sentā, 1993), p.242.

rebels, and the seedy underworld of outlaws and *yakuza*. During the 1930s and through the war, while other types of popular music were deemed Western-influenced and thus morally corrupt, *rōkyoku* and pro-militarist songs were sanctioned by the government because of their nationalist sentiment.¹⁷ Many of the *rōkyoku* singers traveled and performed in, or were conscripted to, Manchuria; and Manchuria came to be the dominant theme of a sub-genre identified as *tairiku rōkyoku* 大陸浪曲 (*rōkyoku* on Chinese, literally “mainland,” subjects). One of the most popular postwar entertainers, the *enka* 演歌 singer Minami Haruo 三波春夫 (1925–98) was once a *rōkyoku* performer who traveled to Manchuria, and was later detained by the Russians and spent four years in Siberia before being repatriated to Japan.

Another icon of the popular consciousness associated with Manchuria was the so-called continental drifter (*tairiku rōnin* 大陸浪人 or *shina rōnin* 支那浪人). This term referred to disillusioned former aristocrats or nationalist activists who worked, in an unofficial capacity, with politicians, industrialists and the military to advance Japan’s interests in China. This phenomenon began in the 1880s, with Hiraoka Kōtarō 平岡浩太郎 and Tōyama Mitsuru 頭山滿 (1855–1944) who co-founded the Genyōsha 玄洋社 in 1881, and later the Black Dragon Association (*kokuryūkai* 黒龍会). Members of both groups were active in China and Korea, helping the Japanese government gather military information and conducting geographical surveys during the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars. Others like Kita Ikki 北一輝 (1883–1937) and Miyazaki Tōten 宮崎滔天 (1871–1922) assisted in Sun Yat-sen’s 孫逸仙 national revolution. Miyazaki was one of the founding members of the Tongmenghui 同盟会 and fought alongside Sun Yat-sen in Huizhou 惠州. He was also involved in the Philippine Independence Movement. After suffering defeat in both battles, Miyazaki became an itinerant performer for a time and performed his life story in *rōkyoku*. He is reputed to be the author of the lyrics to the famous “Song of a Mounted Bandit” quoted at the beginning of this essay. With *rōkyoku* and *rōnin*, the Japanese media seduced Japanese youth and inspired them to engage in manly adventures on the continent.

Popular images of Manchuria focused on opportunities for heroic adventure, but from the standpoint of the government the imperative was to recruit agricultural workers, followed by construction workers, for immigration to Manchuria. Groups organized by the government to emigrate to Manchuria were always said to be engaged in *kaitaku* 開拓 (or *shūgō kaitakudan* 集合開拓団, *nōkō kaitakudan* 農耕開拓団, *kinō kaitakudan* 帰農開拓団), which means the opening up of new land for cultivation, and they were contrasted with emigrants who came of their own free will (*jiyu imin* 自由移民, *bunsan imin* 分散移民, *jikei imin* 自警移民).¹⁸ The main objective of these agricultural groups was to work the land, but they were also responsible for arming themselves and defending Japanese interests against Russian or Chinese attacks if necessary. Roughly a third of those who emigrated to Manchuria could not stand the hardship and withdrew from the group.

Beginning in 1932, juvenile armed immigration groups were organized to solve the shortage of adult males, who were by now being conscripted to other fronts. The juvenile immigrants also were easier to manage than the adult groups. Their daily life consisted of 40 per cent agricultural activities, 40 per cent military training, and 20 per cent academic instruction.

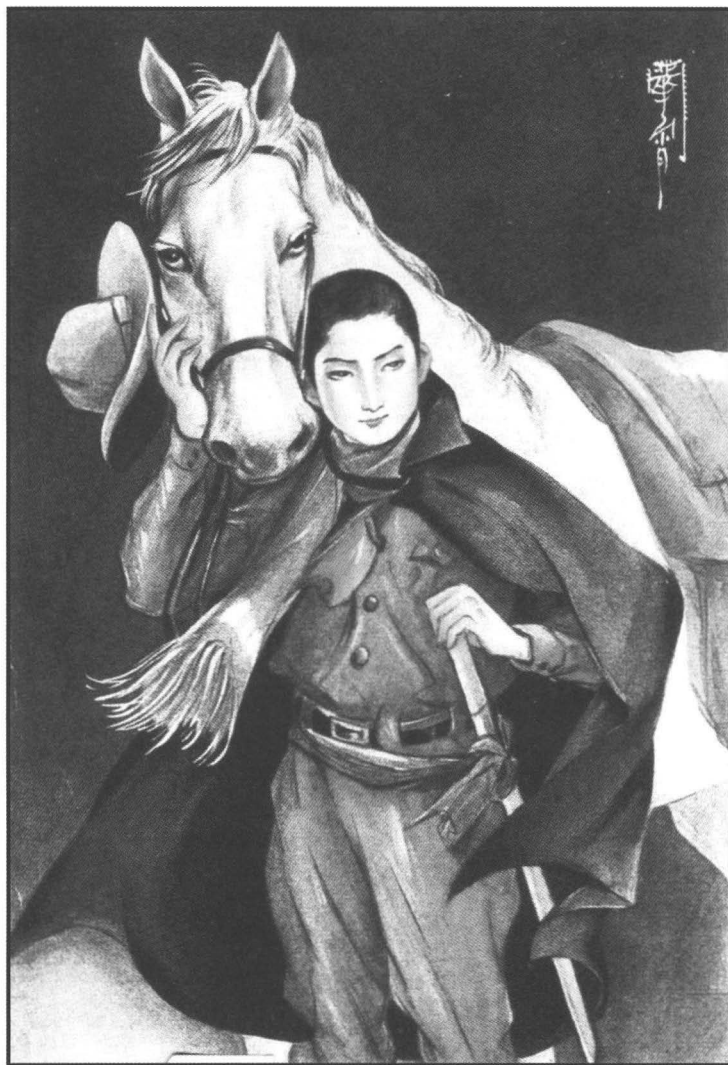
No doubt these teenage boys had a variety of reasons for leaving their homeland, but we can be confident that many were inspired by the popular story *Song of a Mounted Bandit* (*Bazoku no uta* 馬賊の唄, 1916, 1925, and 1930, see Figure 2). First serialised in the magazine *Nipponshōnen* 日本少年 by Arimoto Hōsui 有本芳水, the story recounts the escapades of a 15-year-old Japanese youth named Shinohara Isamu 篠原勇 and his sister Yumiko 弓子. Their father is a captain who fought in the Russo-Japanese War and subsequently stayed on in Manchuria, became a mounted bandit, and fought for the Chinese revolution. After the death of their mother, the orphaned siblings go to Manchuria to search for their father. With the help of the *tairiku rōnin* Tōkawa Minoru 十川実, they are able to join the bandit leader Lin Yuanxing 林元興, originally a loyal subject of Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛, who had fled Japan after the failure of the Satsuma 薩摩 Rebellion of 1877.

The serialised epic was so popular that it inspired a popular song of the same name. A decade later, a different story with the same title and similar story structure but different protagonists appeared. The 1925 version of the *Song of a Mounted Bandit* was written by Ikeda Fuyō 池田芙蓉, also known as Ikeda Kikan 池田亀鑑, the most important scholar on *Genji monogatari* of his day. Aided by the dazzling illustrations of the popular artist Takabatake Kashō 高畠華宵, the book's popularity surpassed the previous version. The young protagonist, now named Yamauchi Hideo 山内日出夫 (see Figure 3 overleaf), sets out on a journey to Manchuria, accompanied by his pet lion Lightning and his faithful horse West Wind, to search for his *tairiku rōnin* father and brother. Hideo be-

Figure 2

Takabatake Kashō, illustration from "The Song of the Mounted Bandit." The protagonist riding his horse West Wind accompanied by his loyal pet lion Thunder who later sacrificed his life in a battle, with the Great Wall visible in the background. Reproduced with permission of Yayoi Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan



**Figure 3**

Takabatake Kashō, "My skin was like jade when I left my country"; Yamauchi Hideo, young hero of the "Song of the Mounted Bandit." Reproduced with permission of Yayoi Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

comes the leader of a group of mounted bandits, and after numerous perilous escapes and brave victories finally saves his father's life. The reworking of the protagonist's name from the generic "bravery" (Isamu 勇) to "man of the sunrise" (Hideo 日出夫) reflects the nationalist content that made its way even into a genre of fantasy adventure for young people.¹⁹ In such tales, the hero not only penetrates and finds his place within indigenous male society as a mounted bandit, but also wins a place as their leader through his valor, decisiveness and quick intelligence.

The coming of age of Japanese popular literature in the late 1920s and early 1930s saw not only the production and circulation of various media for the masses, but also a diversification of genres as publications catered to niche markets that varied in the age, gender and social status of their readers. Magazines accommodated women, teenage girls and boy readers

¹⁹ In fact, the author Ikeda took a minor character from Oshikwa Shunrō's *Underwater Battle Ship* (Kaitei gunkan), a young boy also named Hideo 日出夫 who had a ferocious dog (not a lion) also named Lightning (*inazuma*). Kitagami, *Bōken shōsetsu*, p.338.

²⁰ See Kume Yoriko, "Shōjo shōsetsu sai to kihan no gensetsu sōchi" [Shōjo fiction: the discursive devices of difference and regulation], in *Media hyōshō ideogii: Meiji sanjūnendai no bunkakenkyū* [Media, Representations, and Ideologies: Cultural

(in fact, the usage of the terms *shōjo* 少女 and *shōnen* 少年 to represent age-distinct categories did not emerge until the turn of the century).²⁰ *Youth World* (Shōnen sekai 少年世界), *Japanese Youth* (Nippon shōnen 日本少年) and later the most popular *Youth Club* (Shōnen kurabu 少年クラブ) were all published with juvenile males in mind (see Figure 4). In his discussion of the generic and pedagogical impact of these magazines upon their young readers, Satō Tadao 佐藤忠雄 has pointed out that whereas adult-oriented

Figure 4

Covers of the teenage boy's magazines *Nippon Shōnen* and *Shōnen Kurabu* (artists unknown)

magazines highlighted the modern cosmopolitan ideals of chic urbanites such as stylishness (*iki* 粋), Western fashion (*haikara* ハイカラ) and ennui, the juvenile-oriented journals tended to stress conservative, traditional values such as loyalty, filial piety, harmony, industriousness and fulfilling social expectations. Thus, these venues appealed to the uncomplicated moral values of rural, agricultural Japan; while providing a fantastic escape for urban readers they also encouraged rural youth to seek their fortune in the big cities or overseas. Using circulation data, Satō also notes that the readership of *Shōnen kurabu* peaked in 1933 (at 700,000 copies) and gradually declined after 1941. The decrease is understandable in the light of wartime austerity measures that



limited non-essential printing in order to conserve paper, but Satō argues that the increasingly abrasive militarist and fascist rhetoric permeating these magazines deprived them of the earlier romantic and imaginative elements, and was in fact the main cause of the decline in the number of young readers.²¹

If the male domain in the representation of Manchuria romance emphasizes the “epochal” (Homi Bhaba’s term) and the exceptional (Henri Lefebvre’s), the female sphere is firmly rooted in the quotidian. Though there were women

²¹ Kitagami, *Bōken shōsetsu*, pp.354–59.

²² Jinno Morimasa, *Tairiku no hanayome: kyōka shō ni kakarenakatta sensō* [Continental brides: the war that is not recorded in textbooks] (Tokyo: Nashi No Ki Sha, 1992).

²³ See Wakakuwa Midori, *Sensō ga tsukuru joseizō* [Images of women created by war] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2000). Images of Japanese women associated with Manchuria were not restricted to the continental brides and maternal labor force (see Figures 5 and 6). Though the scope of this paper does not extend this far, a series of celebrated women were associated with Manchuria and have become cultural icons in their own right; women such as Kahara Sōko, Kawashima Yoshiko, Aisin-Goro Hiro, and the movie star Li Xianglan are just some of the best-known figures.

²⁴ Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000).

who served as military nurses and clerks, the mobilisation of female subjects in the imperial enterprise was mainly limited to the homefront. Other than a few celebrities such as the cross-dressing female spy Kawashima Yoshiko 川島芳子, or the ethnically ambiguous film star Li Xianglan 李香蘭, the connection of Japanese women with Manchuria was at best tenuous.

Women's access to the new frontier was predominantly through marriage. The term continental bride (*tairiku hanayome* 大陸花嫁) referred to women who responded to the call for marriage to pioneers in Manchuria. They were crucial in two aspects central to Japan's Manchurian enterprise: agricultural production and biological reproduction.²² The most frequently produced images of women during wartime were mothers who were sustaining their households, raising children and educating them to be loyal imperial subjects, and sending their boys to the battlefield. Women were encouraged to give birth to as many boys as possible who would fight for the empire. Those who died for the national cause were deified as martial deities (*gunshin* 軍神) and were enshrined in the Yasukuni Shrine. Their mothers were also exalted as "mother of the martial deity" (*gunshin no haba* 軍神の母), a significant honor at the time. Later, images of women performing other types of wartime labor appeared, such as repairing airplanes or working in factories or as scientists or firefighters—in short, stepping into many jobs that were left open by men who had gone to the battlefield. Representations of women in Manchuria closely follow the constellation of images and metaphors that Wakakuwa Midori 若桑みどり refers to as "maternal fascism," even including the mother and child figures that Wakakuwa compares to the Madonna, but their focus is consistently rural and agrarian; images of women in industrial or urban settings are notably lacking (see Figure 5, and Figure 6 overleaf).²³

In *The Manchurian Myth*, Rana Mitter argues that in China a positive trope, a discourse of native resistance to the Japanese occupiers, was created by wedding a constructed image of heroism to nationalism.²⁴ This potent narrative, or the Manchurian myth, as Mitter calls it, remains a part of China's political consciousness to this day. Similarly in Japan, with the help of the mass media, the trope of Manchuria created a heroic masculine space of mythic proportions. In this section of the article I have traced the articulations between state power and cultural production not through government-sanctioned official venues, but through the more popular, mundane or "trivial" form of visual and verbal expressions. In the 1920s and 1930s, popular magazines and newspapers mediated the relations between politics and aesthetics, the conflicts between tradition and modernity, and the cultural dislocations brought on by colonialism and global capitalism. In so doing, they inadvertently endorsed the ideology of nationalism.

Re-envisioning Manchuria in a Postcolonial Japan

Starting in the 1980s, a Manchuria Boom burst onto the mass culture scene

Figure 5

Japanese woman with children in Manchuria, from Wakakuwa Midori, Sensō ga tsukuru joseizō, Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2000, p.179 (artist unknown)



in Japan again. Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* and Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai's (Japan Broadcasting Association, hereafter NHK) serialised drama *Children of the Vast Land* (Daichi no Ko 大地の子) were the two major events that ignited the phenomenon. The renewed interest in Manchuria evoked nostalgia among the older generation, who had either experienced life in Manchuria first hand or had lived it vicariously through the media and second-hand knowledge. For the younger, postwar, post-ideological generation who knew little about Manchurian history, Manchuria, (and by extension, Asia as a whole) became a site for self-reflexivity, the re-imagining of history, and the consumption of a safe and remote romance. In the drama *Daichi no Ko*, the protagonist Lu Yixin 陸一心 (also known as Katsuo 勝男) is torn between his Japanese biological father and his Chinese surrogate (adopted) father. His final decision is to remain in China to work in a Sino-Japanese joint-venture steel mill because he is, after all, "a child of the Vast Land." Based on a novel of the same title by Yamazaki Toyoko 山崎豊子, who spent eight years interviewing three hundred Manchurian orphans (*tairiku zanryū koji* 大陸残留孤児), the drama was broadcast at the height of the wave of repatriation in the mid-1980s.²⁵ This multi-handkerchief tear jerker, with its spectacular scenes of old Manchukuo and affable characters, was so successful that a truncated version of the drama was later shown again in 1995 to celebrate NHK's seventieth anniversary and became the most watched Japanese television drama of the twentieth century. The Manchuria boom was followed by movies, *manga* and a revival of interest in Li Xianglan 李香蘭 (also known as Ri Kōran 李香蘭, Yamaguchi Yoshiko 山口淑子, Shirley Yamaguchi). The renewed attention to Manchuria also stimulated interest in novels by mainstream writers such as Hisama Jūgi

²⁵ When the Russians took over Manchuria at the end of the World War II, many Japanese left small children behind, entrusting them to Chinese friends. In the 1980s, these now grown children received permission to relocate to Japan in order to be reunited with their birth parents.

Figure 6

Japanese women in Manchuria depicted as the Madonna (artist unknown). From Wakakuwa Midori, Sensō ga tsukuru joseizō, p.175



久間十義 (1953–), Murakami Haruki 村上春樹 (1949–), and Nakagami Kenji 中上健次 (1946–92).

Contemporary writers and artists have reappropriated the potent image of Manchuria in various literary media. *Manga* artists such as Takemiya Keiko 竹宮けいこ, Yasuhiko Yoshikazu 安彦良和 and Minatoya Yumekichi 湊谷夢吉 frequently use Manchuria in their works. Yokoyama Mitsuteru's 横山光輝 seven-volume *Wolf Constellation* (Ōkami no seiza 狼の星座) depicts a legendary mounted bandit of Japanese origin. Minatoya, an underground manga artist (*mangaka* 漫画家) and independent filmmaker, was particularly obsessed with this discursive space, and created various stories with Manchuria as their primary setting that blend elements of international political intrigue, science fiction, mysticism and martial arts.

The fullest development of this theme, however, is found in novels.

Here I will discuss three modern authors who treat this subject: Hisama Jūgi, Murakami Haruki and Nakagami Kenji. Hisama Jūgi's novel *Tapestry Japonica* (Yaponika tapesutorii ヤポニカ タペストリー, 1992) begins in the present, as the narrator, a middle-aged cram-school teacher and part-time novelist, struggles to write a novel late at night. In his small apartment on the outskirts of Tokyo, with his family already in bed, he recalls his early childhood, when his late grandfather held his hand and they both walked together through a solid wall. The narrator, now in his forties, yearns for some sort of a sign from his grandfather of a continuing connection. The narrator's own magical power has long since faded, a consequence of contracting what his grandfather called "the disease of life" (*jīnsei no yamai* 人生の病).

The narrative quickly takes us through the eventful life of the grandfather, Kanō Ryōzō 加納良蔵, who is born into a well-to-do merchant family in 1897. Ryōzō's unusual path is foretold in a singular event in his childhood: when

a maid takes him to a revival meeting, a faith healer from Kumano identifies him as a “child with magical powers” (*mōshigo* 申し子). The faith-healer wants him to come back the next day, but the healer is arrested for practising medicine without a licence and Ryōzō never meets him again. Ryōzō’s normal childhood comes to an abrupt end when he is thirteen; his father’s business fails and he is sent to work as an apprentice in a gun factory.

The gun factory in which Ryōzō works becomes a manufacturer of the popular *Kamome* 白鷗 bicycle and enjoys an unprecedented boom after the Russo-Japanese War, despite the stock market crash of 1908 and the general economic depression of the time. Like every Meiji 明治 youth, Ryōzō has great plans for himself. He works hard and goes to night school but his ambitions are abruptly curtailed when he is diagnosed with tuberculosis and fired. Instead of going to a sanatorium to live out the remainder of his life, Ryōzō flees to Manchuria. Thereafter, Ryōzō’s life, we are told, is like “an express train careening along an unfinished track.”²⁶

On the ship to Manchuria, the narrative discards its detailed, objective tone, and begins to take on the color of what the publisher refers to on its cover as an “occult fantasy romance” (*okaruto denki romansu* オカルト伝奇ロマンス). In Manchuria, Ryōzō proceeds to Thousand Blossom Mountain (Qianhuashan 千華山), a sacred Daoist peak, where he is healed of tuberculosis and becomes the disciple of a great Daoist sage, Master Hong. Assuming the Chinese name Xiao Bailong 小白龍 (Little White Dragon), he studies martial arts and masters the supernatural powers of telepathy and levitation. After becoming the leader of a group of bandits, the Red Sword Gang (*Hongdaobui* 紅刀會), Little White Dragon comes into contact with various historical figures, including the charismatic cult leader Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎 (1871–1948), founder of Ōmotokyō 大本教, his follower Ueshiba Morihei 植芝盛平 (who later founded the martial art form *Aikidō* 合気道), and the self-proclaimed father of Manchukuo, the élite leader of the Kwantung army, Ishihara Kanji 石原莞爾 (1886–1949). Ryōzō aids them in establishing the Independent State of Manchuria and Mongolia (*Man-Mō dokuritsukoku* 滿蒙独立国).²⁷

The best-selling author Murakami Haruki first took up the subject of Manchuria in *The Wild Sheep Chase* (*Hitsuji o meguru bōken* 羊をめぐる冒険 1982). He turned to it again in the more recent *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* (*Nejimakitori kuronikuru* ねじ巻き鳥クロニクル, 1997), in which the Nomonhan Incident was retold at length.²⁸

In *The Wild Sheep Chase*, Manchuria is a source of magic power that manifests itself in the form of a mystical sheep who possesses a right-wing industrialist to create an underground empire of wealth and political influence. To read this as a colonial text, one need look no further than the premise set forth by Murakami that the “opening” and subsequent settlement of Hokkaidō 北海道, first by the Yamato 大和 people and later in a more organized fashion by the Meiji government, foreshadowed the conquest of Manchuria half

²⁶ Hisama Jūgi, *Yaponica Tapesutorii* [Tapestry Japonica], Kawade bunko edition (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1992), p.18.

²⁷ The character is modeled after a historical figure, the legendary Xiao Bailong, who led a troop of bandits operating in Manchuria from the 1920s to the summer of 1945, when Japan was defeated. Born in Japan as Kohinata Hakurō 小日向白朗, he traveled to Manchuria when he was only sixteen years old. His original plans to cross the continent were changed when he made the acquaintance of military officers such as Doihara Kenji 土肥原賢二 and Itagaki Seishirō 板垣征四郎 and began to spy for them in Manchuria and Mongolia. Later, he was captured by bandits and became one of them, eventually being elected as their leader. His colorful life and his encounter with Deguchi Onisaburō were related in Kuchiki Kanzō’s fictionalised biography *Bazokusenki*. See Kuchiki Kanzō, *Bazokusenki* [Mounted bandits war record] (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1982).

²⁸ Also referred to as the Battle of Haruh River, the incident involved a border conflict between the People’s Republic of Mongolia and Manchuria. From 12 May to 15 September 1939, forces of the Japanese army, claiming to act in support of the Manchurian army, engaged in battle with elements of the Russian army acting under the terms of Russia’s alliance with Mongolia. The Japanese were defeated by the far superior Russian air force, an outcome which silenced the calls from hawkish militarists for war with Russia. Japan used biological weapons for the first time in this battle; later a group experimenting in biological warfare, the infamous Unit 731, was stationed permanently in Manchuria.

²⁹ The novel was serialised in *Gunzō* from May 1984 to November 1985, with a continuation from July to November 1988. The author intended that the third and final serialisation be published in *Gunzō* from January to December 1991, but his failing health did not permit this. Nakagami passed away in August 1992, and the last instalment was published in October of that year.

a century later. Murakami patiently takes his reader through the creation of Junitakimura 十二滝村, a typical Hokkaidō village that prides itself on being situated at the “northernmost point of wet rice agriculture.” Having fled from an impoverished village in Tsugaru 津軽 to escape their debtors, the settlers enlist the help of an Ainu アイヌ youth, called significantly “Waning of the Moon” (*Tsuki no michikake* 月の満ち欠け), in establishing their initial settlement. Gradually, the village prospers and is incorporated into the modern Meiji nation-state, but we later learn that the Ainu youth marries the daughter of one of the pioneers, fathers three children, and assumes a Japanese name. There are no more “Waning of the Moons.”

One of the major characters in the narrative, “Dr Sheep” (*Hitsuji Hakase* 羊博士), is an élite agricultural expert who is sent to Manchuria to breed sheep in preparation for the war that the empire anticipates in the near future. However, his mystical experience of a spiritual communion (*kōrei* 交霊) with a particular sheep leads to his expulsion from the army. When the sheep eventually arrives in Japan, it brings about the post-war dominance of a right-wing figure’s political and financial empire.

The last text I would like to touch upon is Nakagami Kenji’s *Of Different Tribes* (*Izoku* 異族).²⁹ Of all the texts this paper deals with, Nakagami’s *Of Different Tribes* is by far the most ambitious and the most politically ambiguous text. Like all the texts presented here, it is also the tale of a quest. Three protagonists—a Japanese-born Korean (Shimu シム), an Ainu (Utari ウタリ) and a man of outcast or *burakumin* 部落民 origin (Tatsuya タツヤ)—are sworn blood brothers who run a Karate *dōjō* 道場 for a rightwing bigwig. The three are united by a shared birthmark on their chests in the shape of Manchuria. The epic tale recounts the expedition of these three men in search of people bearing the same birthmark. The crusade takes them first to Okinawa, then to Taiwan, where they encounter an aboriginal youth who also bears the mark. The group continue on their journey southward, at each stop participating in karate matches with the locals and sometimes becoming entangled in local politics. The journey ends abruptly in the Philippines, where they find the eighth comrade with the same mark, in this case an old lady.

Of Different Tribes was Nakagami’s last novel. Critics have tended to avoid the text because it is an unfinished work, but also because the narrative traces, step by step, the precarious path of development of the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.” Furthermore, its blatantly rightwing, nationalistic rhetoric is disturbing. Ironically, in Nakagami’s text, although Manchuria is the controlling signifier, the group of characters never actually set foot on Manchurian soil. Instead, the topos is used as an epistemological and cartographical code to map out the multi-ethnic society that is to be Manchuria and the ambitious territorial vision of the empire, from its most northern point to its southern limit.

The association of Manchuria with violence, mysticism, intrigue, spirituality, colonial ambition and colonial idealism mirrors both the historical reality and

fictional imaginings of Manchuria. Murakami's Manchuria is a cipher for the mysterious and the inexplicable, used as a backdrop to establish the mystical connections between the enigmatic sheep and the financial/political potency of the right wing mogul.

Hisama Jūgi's *Tapestry Japonica* attempts a more focused, ambitious engagement with the masculinized, romanticized notion of "Manchuria." This so-called "occult fantasy romance" taps into the immense curiosity among mass readers for the mythic and for supernatural power (*rei nōryoku* 霊能力). This is particularly evident in its treatment of *qigong* 氣功, a practice which trains the individual to manipulate the "material force" or "ether" *qi* that in traditional Chinese cosmology is at the foundation of all existence. The closest Japanese analogue to *qigong* is *Aikidō*, which was inspired by the teachings of Deguchi Onisaburō and brought to fruition by Ueshiba Morihei, both of whom appear as characters in the novel.

Nakagami's appropriation of Manchuria is a caricature of the imperialist fantasy that replays and rejects this imperial myth. Violence occupies an axial place in all of Nakagami's texts, a raging violence that is often directed toward women. What differentiates this work from many of Nakagami's other texts is the sublimation of violence within the controlled, disciplined and aestheticized articulation of *kata* 形 or form. This process, which we may call "*kata*-ification," tames the chaotic energy of violence through spiritual discipline. It is realised primarily through male bodies, though Manchurian and Chinese female bodies are similarly capable and potent, but Japanese females are never associated with any combative act. "*Kata*-fied" violence can be seen to echo the controlled violence of Japanese military activity in the Manchurian theater. Thus the masculine discourse of martial arts in these fictional works reproduces the geographical trajectory of the imperial project. Here, we see a parallel discourse between the philosophized violence of martial arts and the more blatant execution of historical violence.

The aestheticized martial arts in general, as represented in television dramas such as the American TV program *Kungfu* (1972–75), stress the non-violent nature of the art. The purported goals are manifold, including physical and spiritual self-cultivation, and these arts are never supposed to be simply for violence. Yet for many, the true appeal lies in the ability to inflict violence in an effortless and morally sanctioned fashion. There is a similar paradox in the discourse on Manchuria. As Tomiyama Ichirō 富山一郎 points out, Japanese colonialist practice was never narrated as an opposition of races and cultures, "Asia" versus "the West"; rather, it was marked by a discourse of "cooperativism," couched in harmonious, inclusive terms. The frequent claims of shared ancestors (*dōbun dōshu* 同文同種) worked deep into the collective psyches of both officials and the Japanese masses.³⁰ But no amount of rhetoric about "Five Ethnic Groups living in Harmony," "The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere," and the "Paradise of the Royal Way" can mask the naked violence, both military and economic, of the Japanese exploitation of Manchuria.

³⁰ See Tomiyama Ichirō, "Colonialism and the Sciences of the Tropical Zone: The Academic Analysis of Difference in 'the Island Peoples'", in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Tani Barlow (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), p.216.

³¹ Murakami Haruki, *Hitsuji wo meguru bōken*, vol.2 (Tokyo: Kōdansha Bunko, 1985), p.55.

³² Japanese social scientists and anthropologists devoted tremendous amounts of time and resources to documenting and researching the ethnography of the indigenous people of Taiwan and the Southern Islands. The academic discourse was primarily based on the Western dichotomy of the savage and the civilised. Politicians often exploited the cultural and racial animosity between the “native” mountain tribes and the Han people to their own advantage. For studies on this subject, see Komagome Takeshi, *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no bunka tōgo* [The cultural hegemony of colonial imperial Japan] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), pp.166–90, and Leo Ching, “Tracing Contradictions: Interrogating Japanese Colonialism and its Discourse” (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1994), pp.75–95.

This kind of dualistic ambiguity is also evident in another prevailing element of mass culture shared by these works: a popular belief in the supernatural. While the emerging official colonial axioms were territorial and economic, the seductive element for the mass population was nevertheless the heroic (as discussed above) and the mystic. Manchuria was conceived as a remnant of the old, magical nomadic society, in stark contrast to the settled, highly structured society of Japan. The uncontrolled nature of supernatural power was threatening to the empire builders. The Deguchi Onisaburō who appears in *Tapestry Japonica* is based on the actual charismatic leader of Ōmotokyō, whose 83-volume *Tales of the Spiritual Realm* (Reikai monogatari 靈界物語) delineates his radical vision of a new world that blends archaic Shintoist mythology and ecumenical theology. His revolutionary evocations of socio-political reform, which he called first the Taishō Restoration (*Taishō ishin* 大正維新) and later the Shōwa Reformation (*Shōwa ishin* 昭和維新) did not sit well with the authorities, and his cult was persecuted severely by the government. In the *Wild Sheep Chase*, Dr Sheep is ostracized after his spiritual communion with the sheep in an incident drawing upon indigenous myth. He characterizes his life after the departure of the sacred sheep as: “Hell. A hell swirling with nothing but conceptions. An underground hell without a ray of light nor a scoop of water.”³¹ A part of the Japanese colonial enterprise was extending modern Japanese civilisation (including Japanese language and concepts of hygiene) even to the most “primitive,” marginalised members of the empire, such as the mountain aborigines of Taiwan.³² In *Of Different Tribes*, Nakagami presents these people as sharing in the mystic, pan-Asian union denoted by their Manchuria-shaped birthmarks. From Ainu/Moshiri アイヌモシリ territory to Okinawa 沖縄, Taiwan, Kore, and the Southern Islands (*nanyō* 南洋), this (post)colonial adventure seeks to construct a new empire of the Asian dispossessed, incorporating the peoples and cultures of the periphery.

It seems to me that these narratives attempt to reclaim the magic that was lost in Japan’s rush to modernization. Hisama and Murakami recuperate the enchantment within the locus of Manchuria. Nakagami, on the other hand, problematizes the issue via the trajectory of the southward expansion, though the potentiality of Manchuria is very much on his mind. Magic and enchantment were lost amidst the frenzied modernization and state-building of modern Japan; the growth of the imperial ideology left no room for other beliefs. This is reflected in the arrest of the spiritual healer that the grandfather Ryōzō encountered as a child, and in the sense of loss and emptiness felt by Dr Sheep after the escape of the magic sheep. A similar contemplation of coloniality, modernity and magic is evident in Latin American literature, where the contestations of the European, the indigenous and the hybrid are still ongoing. The mystical, silenced energy bubbles away beneath the surface and finds its outlet in the literary device of “magical realism.”

Conclusion

Through the literary creations discussed above, Manchuria—the imagined, the real, and the contested—grows in signifying potency. It is transformed into a symbol through which to read the modernization process and its cultural implications from both within and outside the Japanese nation-state proper. The process of Japanese modernization was indeed brutal, as reflected in the fate of Ryōzō, who is discarded by capitalist society once he is physically incapable of economic production. There is no better symbol of this onrushing modernity than the railroad, which cut across geographical, political and cultural boundaries while slicing through the “dragon veins” (*longmai* 龍脈) through which, as traditional *fengshui* 風水 geomancy taught, coursed the magical lifeblood of the old world. The Manchurian Empire was founded upon the Southern Manchurian Railway, but for Hisama’s Ryōzō the whole enterprise is indeed like “an express train careening along an unfinished track,” a train headed for a disastrous crash.³³

But what does Manchuria, a phantasmal empire that lasted only thirteen years, mean to contemporary intellectuals? Why do contemporary writers and artists return to it again and again? As the narrator in *Tapestry Japonica* struggles to write about his grandfather’s life, his wife tries sympathetically to understand this urgency, commenting: “By writing about your grandfather, you must want to talk about yourself.”³⁴ In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, as the Japanese, having slaughtered the animals in the Changchun 長春 zoo, board boats for Japan, the narrator comments: “In only a few days, the phantom state of Manchukuo will disappear, swallowed by the quicksand of history.”³⁵ In these novels of Hisama and Murakami we see an attempt to recuperate these memories for their generation, so that the epic adventure of Manchuria will not be lost forever.

Jay Rubin, translator of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, reproached Murakami for delving unnecessarily into violence for the first time in his writings, specifically in dealing with the Nomonhan incident. In a dialogue with the psychiatrist Kawai Hayao 河合隼雄, Murakami responds to Rubin’s criticism by referring to the violence in his text as “an echo of the multi-layered character of historical violence.”³⁶ Elsewhere he explains, “Somehow there is no way for me to think that [the Nomonhan incident] was something in the distant past that happened only to others.”³⁷ To Murakami, the events of the war still have an immediacy that demands resolution.

There is a link between these fictional explorations of Japan’s colonial past and Murakami’s forays into current events. His recent venture into non-fiction has caught the attention of both readers and critics alike, and there has been considerable discussion of his transformation into an “activist.” Murakami interviewed victims of the sarin gas incident in *Underground* (Audāguraundo アンダーグラウンド, 1997) and followers of the Aum Perfect Truth movement (Ōmu shinrikyō オーム真理教) in the subsequent

³³ Kitagami, *Bōken shōsetsu*, pp.354–59.

³⁴ Hisama Jūgi, *Yaponika Tapesutorii*, p.15.

³⁵ Murakami Haruki, *Nejimakitori kuronikuru* [The wind-up bird chronicle], vol.3 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1997), p.138.

³⁶ Kawai Hayao and Murakami Haruki, *Murakami Haruki, Kawai Hayao ni ai ni iku* [Murakami Haruki: A meeting with Hayao Kawai] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1999), pp.198–204.

³⁷ Kawai and Murakami, *Murakami Haruki*, p.182.

³⁸ Robert Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.5.

The Place that was Promised—*Underground 2* (*Yakusokusareta basbo de—Audāguraundo II*, 約束された場所でアンダーグラウンド II, 1998). To fathom the roots of this violence, an organized violence indiscriminately targeting strangers, to grasp the reality of the victimizers (in this case the adherents of Aum), whose passionate search for otherworldly salvation and an idealistic utopia traumatized a nation, is to understand the dark impulses that lurk just beneath the surface of a peaceful, prosperous society. Narrating these stories, be they fiction or non-fiction, can serve as catalyst for a process that will begin to heal a long-standing historical wound.

As Robert Dixon points out in *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, adventure fiction was always an international form, and its writers occupied shifting and often conflicted positions in the field of imperial literary production.³⁸ Since the bursting of the economic bubble a decade ago, Japan has also been going through a process of soul searching, reconsidering its economic role in the new global context and re-evaluating its own late-capitalist social structure. The authors discussed in this article are engaged in a parallel reflection, pondering the consequences of the dreams and violence of their forefathers, trying to find a new way to inscribe a Japanese vision upon a postcolonial East Asia. They thus seek to reopen the epistemic fracture of imperialism without succumbing to nostalgia for the lost utopia of a fallen empire.

The ideological locus of Manchuria has been put under scrutiny here in an attempt to excavate the intersections of the utopian impulse and the rift between the ideological and rhetorical—and to understand the implications of the larger project of Japanese colonialism with its faulty and incomplete goal of modernity.

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