

cartography until the twentieth century, earlier Chinese maps have more artistic than practical value. Qing boundary negotiators before 1880 often did not have more than a very general idea about where allegedly integral territories were actually located. Mid-nineteenth-century court officials in Beijing displayed an astounding ignorance of the actual extent of Manchuria, the homeland of the ruling Qing dynasty: They knew virtually nothing about the lands north of the Amur River and little about the Ussuri River coastal region although the inhabitants of both areas paid regular tribute to the Qing court. Han and Manchu settlements were most concentrated on the lower reaches of the Amur River and in the Ussuri River region (the Russian Maritime Province) but there were also notable settlements further inland along the Amur, particularly between the mouth of the Zeia River (the site of modern-day Blagoveshchensk) and the mouth of the Bureia River to the south.<sup>57</sup>

Although some Chinese have gone so far as to equate tributary relations with sovereignty, on the eve of the foundation of the Qing dynasty, Manchu sources refer to China, Korea, Mongolia and Manchuria as *gurun* (Manchu for country – or 國 in Chinese). This indicates that Manchuria was not an integral part of China at the time.<sup>58</sup> Yet in Chinese historiography, many authors take for granted that much of Siberia and Central Asia had long been Chinese. For each border area these authors point to the dynasty that extended furthest to justify their territorial claims. These views are fraught with contradictions and greatly exaggerate the integration of the borderlands into Chinese proper. On the one hand, the Mongol or Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) is considered an alien dynasty that subjugated China before being quite properly overthrown by a Han Chinese dynasty, the Ming (1368-1644). On the other hand, some Chinese imply that the lands constituting the territories of the Yuan dynasty, most of which had never before been even remotely connected with China, are part of the lost patrimony. By such an accounting, Moscow itself would be part of Chinese territory.<sup>59</sup>

57 Шренк Л. Географическо-историческая и Антропо-этнологическая части. Т. 1. Об инородцах Амурского края. СПб., 1883. С. 65-66, 72; Веников М. И. Опыт военного обозрения русских границ в Азии. СПб., 1873. С. 86, 127, 136; Барсуков И. П. Граф Николай Николаевич Муравьев-Амурский. Т. 2. М., 1891. С. 167; F.A. Golder, *Russian Expansion on the Pacific 1641-1850* (1914; reprint, New York: Paragon Book Reprint, 1971), pp. 46-48; вон Милдендорф А.Ф. Путешествие на Север и Восток Сибири. Т. 1. СПб., 1860-67. С. 154-155, 157, 163, 167; John J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 15, 17; Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, pp. 109-111.

58 David M. Farquhar, "The Origins of the Manchus' Mongolian Policy," in John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 199-200.

59 R.K.I. Quedstedt, *The Expansion of Russia in East Asia, 1857-1860* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1968), pp. xviii-xxi; 孫福坤 [Sun Fukun] 『俄帝侵華史』 [*The History of Russian Aggression in China*] (Taipei: 中央文物供應社, 1953), pp. 1-6; Alastair Lamb, *Asian Frontiers: Studies in a Continuing Problem* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), pp. 29-30; 佟冬 『沙俄與東北』, pp. 1-2.

The Russian and Chinese failure to come to terms with their mutual boundary created an opening for the Japanese. When Chinese central power collapsed with the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 and the Manchu abdication in 1912, the country fractured into a mosaic of competing warlord-fiefdoms. Manchuria came under the control of Zhang Zuolin (張作霖). Zhang aspired to maintain his independence from Russia, Japan, and the Guomindang, which had nominally unified the country with the Northern Expedition (1927-28). Manchuria, however, was the homeland, not of such Han Chinese as Zhang, but of the Manchus. The Kwantung Army found Zhang insufficiently attentive to Japan's interests and so assassinated him in 1928. His son Zhang Xueliang (張學良), who succeeded him, turned out to be even less compliant.

In 1931, the Japanese Imperial Army attempted to take advantage of the ambiguities in the contested myth of original sovereignty in order to create a base of operations in Manchuria.<sup>60</sup> To legitimize its actions, it tried to resurrect the Manchu dynasty, by spiriting its deposed ruler, Puyi (溥儀), out of retirement in Tianjin and onto the throne of Manchukuo – both the country and the throne created by Japan for this purpose. The justification was that Manchuria rightly belonged neither to China nor to Russia, but to the Manchus. Of course, Manchuria did not belong to the Japanese either, hence the need for Puyi. Actual power remained firmly in the hands of the Kwantung Army, which first set about restoring order and then realizing its vision for nation-building, a task it soon expanded into Jehol and North China

#### THE EXAGGERATION OF JAPAN'S NEGATIVE ROLE

For all the machinations of Japan to detach Manchuria from China and install Puyi on the throne, its role in Manchuria was by no means entirely negative. Prior to the ill-conceived invasion of China south of the Great Wall in 1937, the Japanese succeeded in stabilizing the Manchurian currency, making massive investments in the transportation infrastructure (especially in railways) and in heavy industry (particularly in resource extraction), and in restoring their own economy along with Manchuria's. Before the currency reform, there had been in circulation fifteen currencies and 136 types of bank notes, many of which regularly had been debased by warlord printing presses.<sup>61</sup> Currency reform and economic restoration put Manchuria in stark contrast with the rest of China, which lacked a unified currency, suffered from often catastrophic bouts of inflation and grinding rural poverty, and no longer enjoyed foreign investment after the onset of the Great Depression.<sup>62</sup> Economic recovery also put Manchuria and Japan in stark contrast with the West, which had been unable to shake the depression.

60 西村成雄「日本政府の中華民国認識」, pp. 5, 10.

61 安富歩 [Yasutomi Ayumu] 「『満州国』経済開発と国内資金流動」 ["Manchukuo" Economic Development and Internal Capital Flows] in 『『満州国』の研究』, p. 239.

62 Eastman, "Nationalist China," pp. 151-153.

The economic achievements of Japanese nation-building in Manchuria were considerable. They are revealed in Japanese investment and production statistics for Manchukuo, particularly for the 1931 to 1937 period, that is, before onset of the full-scale Sino-Japanese War in 1937. From 1932 to 1939, Manchukuo railroad mileage increased by over 15,000 kilometers. Coal production in 1941 was almost 2.5 times greater than what it had been in 1930, electricity was nearly seven times, while pig iron was about 3.5 times. By 1943, Manchukuo produced nearly half of all Chinese coal, 80 percent of its electricity, 90 percent of its pig iron, and over 60 percent of its concrete, making it the most industrialized region of China.<sup>63</sup> When Foreign Minister Yoshizawa Kenkichi (芳沢謙吉) addressed the Diet in 1932, he accused China of "ignoring the historical fact that the present development of Manchuria is entirely due to Japanese efforts." In contrast to the rest of China, he observed that Manchuria was enjoying peace and prosperity.<sup>64</sup>

Manchukuo production peaked in the 1937 to 1941 period. With the expansion of the war south of the Great Wall and ever more deeply into the Chinese interior, both the Imperial Japanese Army and the Japanese home economy became overextended. The Kwantung Army took a growing share of Manchukuo government revenues; new investments from Japan declined; and Manchukuo economic growth slowed. Manchukuo production actually started to decrease soon after the expansion of the war to the United States in 1941. The United States Navy disrupted Japanese supply lines, overstretched the Imperial Japanese Navy, and undermined Manchukuo's trade. Japanese investment evaporated. The expansion of the war to China proper and then to the Pacific Ocean region culminated in the collapse of both the Manchukuo and Japanese economies.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the Soviet Union found the Japanese investments in Manchuria to be worth taking at the end of the war in the form of disassembled factories and equipment. Despite this Soviet "decapitalization" of Manchuria, it still remained the most industrialized region of China at the end of World

63 東北財経委員会調査統計所 [Statistical Survey Department of the Committee on Manchurian Finance and Economy], ed., 『旧満州経済統計資料』 [*Statistical Materials on the Economy of Old Manchuria*] (1949; reprint, Tokyo: 柏書房株式会社, 1991), p. 5. This statistical compilation was originally published in the People's Republic of China.

64 外交史料館, 外務省, A.1.1.0-21-35, vol. 2, "Address of Foreign Minister Yoshizawa to the 60th Session of the Diet," 21 January 1932, pp. 79-80.

65 For information about Japan's economic development and administration of Manchukuo, see: 山本有造 [Yamamoto Yuzo], 「『満州国』をめぐる対外経済関係の展開 — 国際収支分析を中心として」 [The development of 'Manchukuo's Economic Relations with the Outside: Focusing on an Analysis of International Receipts and Disbursements] in 山本有造, ed. 『「満州国」の研究』, pp. 198-199, 206-208, 214-215, 220, 230-231; 安富歩 「『満州国』経済開発と国内資金流動」, pp. 237, 239, 253; 西沢泰彦 [Nishizama Yasuhiko] 「『満州国』の建設事業」 ["Manchukoku" Construction Industry] in 山本有造 ed. 『「満州国」の研究』, pp. 407, 414; 塚瀬進 [Tsukase Susumu] 『中国近代東北経済史研究』 [*Research on Modern Chinese Economic History of Manchuria*] (Tokyo: 東方書店, 1993), pp. 29, 41, 50.

War II.<sup>66</sup> Manchurian economic development was a significant Japanese achievement.<sup>67</sup>

Many Japanese had long felt that the West had applied a double standard to China and Japan.<sup>68</sup> Whereas prior to World War II the Chinese had committed all manner of atrocities on their fellow countrymen and often ignored international law, Japan, prior to the invasion of Manchuria, had hewed to a course set by international law and had given the West timely warning about Soviet intensions in the Far East. Yet Japan has reaped Western opprobrium for its brutality in China, while China has hidden behind a variety of myths to shield its own complicity in the horrors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The policy objective of the United States in Asia after World War II was essentially the same as that of Japan prior to the war: containment of Russia and the promotion of a market economy and a non-communist government in China. The United States was no more successful than Japan. In 1949, Americans berated themselves for "losing" China to the communists. After the 1969 Sino-Soviet border war, the People's Republic of China started to contain the Soviet Union on its own. Then under Deng Xiaoping, China finally started initiating the very economic policies so long ago recommended by Japan and the West. Political reforms, however, have yet to follow.

Had China heeded Japan's long-standing advice to adopt a Meiji reform program of its own, China might have been spared a Japanese invasion and the communist takeover that came in its wake. In the peace negotiations following the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the great Japanese statesman, Ito Hirobumi (伊藤博文), had begged the great Chinese statesman, Li Hongzhang (李鴻章), to follow Japan's example to embark on a national reform program to bring Chinese institutions more in line with those in the West, but to no avail.<sup>69</sup>

The Chinese rejection of Japan's constructive role in China helped set Japan on a militaristic course that proved equally destructive to both China and Japan.

## CONCLUSIONS

Japanese policymakers in the 1930s could not extricate themselves from the web of myths entangling their relations with China. The faith of the Chi-

66 A.M. Ledovsky, *The USSR, the USA, and the People's Revolution in China*, Nadezhda Burova, trans. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), p. 102; Борисов О. Совртский Союз и манчжурская революционная база 1945-1949. М., 1975. С. 49, 53-54, 57; Raymond L. Garthoff, "Sino-Soviet Military Relations, 1945-66," in Garthoff, ed., *Sino-Soviet Military Relations* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 83.

67 This discussion is not meant to dismiss the terrible human toll from the Japanese invasion of China, rather it is meant to fill a significant gap in the historical record.

68 西村成雄「日本政府の中華民国認識」, pp. 10-11; Mutsu, Munemitsu, *Kenkenryoku: A Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1895-95*, Gordon Mark Berger, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 164.

69 Paine, *Imperial Rivals*, p. 346.

nese public in the myth of Soviet and Tsarist discontinuity and in the myth of Russo-Chinese friendship meant that the Chinese failed to understand the Soviet threat to their country. They did not realize that the Soviet Union did not want a strong, unified, and prosperous China on its border, but a weak and pliable buffer state. The Chinese belief in these myths fueled their prejudices against Japan, which they blamed for its reaction to their own country's endemic instability. The exaggerated myth of Chinese victimization then further heightened the Chinese sense of aggrievement vis-à-vis Japan. Chinese instability, however, was not caused by Japan, but by the interminable factional infighting within China that was financed to a certain extent by the Soviet Union. For the Soviet Union, the widespread Chinese acceptance of these myths was highly desirable. It needed China and Japan to be at odds so that no strong power emerged on its long and vulnerable Far Eastern frontier.

Prior to World War II, Japan never successfully countered any of these myths. Instead it played a weak hand when it attempted to overturn the Soviet and Chinese variants of the myth of original sovereignty by inserting its puppet state, Manchukuo, into the Sino-Soviet frontier. If Chinese and Russia sovereignty over their huge frontier zone was ambiguous, legitimate Japanese claims over these areas were non-existent. The installation of a defunct Qing emperor fooled no one as to the real power brokers in Manchukuo.<sup>70</sup> Japanese disingenuousness on this score coupled with the other three myths – of discontinuity, friendship, and victimization – created a fifth highly disadvantageous myth for the Japanese, the myth of their exclusively negative role in China.

The Chinese public reacted so vehemently to the creation of Manchukuo that no Chinese national political leader could accept its existence and hope to stay in power. Yet this was the Kwantung Army's price for peace. As a result, Japan could never bring the war with China to a close. Instead the hostilities went on and on, and the military theater kept expanding. Meanwhile, the Chinese missed important lessons concerning economic development that they could have learned from Japanese economic policies in Manchukuo. Instead, after the Communist Revolution, they employed Soviet economic models. Then within the decade, they tried to create their own model with the disastrous Great Leap Forward (1958-60) that brought, not economic development, but famine. The Chinese have continued to shun any positive lessons in nation-building offered by the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) in Japan or by Japan's impressive economic development of Manchuria in the 1930s.<sup>71</sup>

The myths infecting Sino-Japanese relations were as advantageous for the Soviet Union as they were disadvantageous for Japan. In comparison to Japan,

70 Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, pp. 175-176.

71 Chinese history journals have virtually no articles on the Meiji Restoration. I have read the tables of contents for the last two decades of such major Chinese history journals as: 『文史折』 [*Literature and History*], 『中國社會經濟史研究』 [*Research on Chinese Social and Economic History*], 『中國史研究』 [*Research on Chinese History*], 『近代史研究』 [*Research on Contemporary History*], and 『歷史研究』 [*Historical Research*].

the Soviet Union played a very deft hand of diplomacy in China, escaping virtually all responsibility for its actions there. These ranged from its insistence on the First United Front that led to the Chinese Communist Party's near annihilation by Jiang Jieshi in 1927, to its prolongation of China's civil wars by funding multiple sides. It played its diplomatic cards so deftly that China and the United States bore the brunt of Japanese militarism in the 1930s and 1940s, not the Soviet Union, which Japanese policymakers had long considered to be their country's main national security threat. When the Chinese Communists were marginalized in Yan'an after the decimation of their forces in the Long March and when the possibility of a Guomintang accommodation with the Japanese still remained a possibility, the Soviet Union brokered a Second United Front. This provided the Chinese communists some protection from the Guomintang, but most important from the Soviet point of view, it precluded any Sino-Japanese peace that would have allowed Japan to turn on the Soviet Union. This left China and the United States to defeat Japan, not the Soviet Union.

The unanticipated result, however, was a strong and unified China under communist rule. The protracted Sino-Japanese War so inflamed Chinese nationalism and hatred for Japan that it forged the strong sense of nation necessary to create a unified China. The myths worked more to the advantage of the Chinese Communist Party than the Guomintang. The Chinese Communist Party had obvious ideological and political connections with the supposedly friendly Soviet Union, whereas the Guomintang was blamed for the Chinese inability to expel Japan. The Soviet Union had anticipated a divided China (like the future situation in Germany, Korea, and Vietnam) with the communists in the north and the Guomintang in the south. The United States, however, had walked away from Jiang Jieshi, who had failed to fight Japan with adequate vigor, and left him to his fate. Although the Chinese eventually became highly disenchanted with the Soviet Union, vociferously so after the 1960 Sino-Soviet split, they remain even more critical of the Japanese, in part, because of the endurance of the many myths surrounding Russo-Chinese relations. If nothing else, this essay has endeavored to show that widely held myths can have far-reaching consequences.