

# 1 Manchukuo and Japan

Today the words “*Empire of Japan*” evoke multiple meanings: one set of images for former colonial subjects, another for former enemies in the Pacific War, and yet another for the Japanese themselves. No epoch did more to inscribe these words with meaning than the period between 1931 and 1945, when Japan moved aggressively to expand its overseas territory, occupying first China and then Southeast Asia, and initiating a series of military conflicts against Nationalist and Communist forces in China, against the Soviet Union, against the United States, and against the British Empire. At the heart of the new empire Japan won and then lost in the military engagements of these years lay the puppet state of Manchukuo in Northeast China.

Although Manchukuo was created in 1932, its roots went back to 1905, when Japan acquired a sphere of influence in the southern half of Manchuria as a result of victory in the Russo-Japanese War. A mix of formal and informal elements, the South Manchurian sphere of influence was anchored by long-term leases on the Liaodong Peninsula and on lands held by Japan’s colonial railway company, the South Manchurian Railway, which the Japanese knew as Mantetsu. Over these leased territories, which represented but a small fraction of South Manchuria, Japan ruled directly through a formal colonial apparatus. Over the rest of South Manchuria Japan exerted influence indirectly, through the relationship with local Chinese rulers, through economic dominance of the market, and through the constant threat of force by its garrison army.

The first phase of Japanese involvement situated the sphere of influence in Manchuria within a rapidly expanding empire. By the end of World War I, the empire included Taiwan, Korea, the Pacific island chains the Japanese called Nan’yō, the southern half of Sakhalin, as well as partici-

pation in the unequal treaty system in China. Initially, Manchuria occupied a peripheral position within this wider empire: it was neither the strategic focus of foreign policy nor the site where key innovations in imperial management took place. But all this changed after 1931, as Japanese focused their energies on the construction of a new kind of empire in the Northeast.

The new face of empire showed itself in three areas of activity—military conquest, economic development, and mass migration. First, under the guidance of the garrison force known as the Kwantung Army, thousands spilled their blood in a series of military campaigns from 1931 to 1933 collectively designated the Manchurian Incident. In the course of these campaigns, Japan brought all of Manchuria under military occupation, extending formal control to the Amur River and the border of Soviet Siberia in the north, and to the Great Wall of China in the south. Second, under a new regime of colonial management known as the controlled economy, the Japanese-run Manchukuo government conducted a bold experiment in planned economic development and state capitalism. The project involved the integration of the two economies, tying Manchurian development to domestic production goals through the creation of the Japan-Manchuria bloc economy. Third, an ambitious plan to send five million Japanese farmers to settle in the Manchurian hinterland was designed to create a new generation of “continental Japanese” who would secure a more thorough domination of colonial society. Linking social policy in the metropolis and the empire, the Japanese government sought to make the Manchurian population 10 percent Japanese through the export of impoverished tenant farmers, who were the most visible manifestation of Japan’s rural crisis.

In the service of these three endeavors, over a million Japanese soldiers, entrepreneurs, and agricultural emigrants crossed the waters that separated Japan from the continent. While they invested their futures and sometimes their lives in the building of Manchukuo, at home many times their number labored over the empire in indirect, though no less essential, ways. During the military campaigns of the Manchurian Incident, a wave of war hysteria swept Japanese society. War fever generated the domestic political and social support that gave the Kwantung Army freedom of action to engage in aggressive military imperialism, as Japanese fought to defend “the Manchurian lifeline” (*Manshū seimeisen*). Businessmen and intellectuals, inspired by utopian visions of economic opportunity, used their social standing to sell the idea of staking Japan’s future on “Manchurian

development" (*Manshū kaihatsu*). Local elites led rural communities to endorse plans to send as many as half their villagers to colonize Manchuria and build "a new heaven on earth" (*shintenchi*). Although they never set foot in Manchuria, these different groups of people were empire builders nonetheless.

Together they constructed the metropolitan infrastructure of empire. Japan's empire building in Manchuria thus produced two imperial systems—one in the colony and one in the metropolis. In Manchuria, Japanese established a state apparatus, structures of economic domination, and mechanisms of social control; at home they built a parallel set of political and social structures to mobilize the resources essential to the success of the imperial project. These efforts, and the transformations they wrought, are the subject of this book.

#### STUDYING EMPIRE

Historians have usually examined Japanese expansion in Manchuria from the top down, studying the formation of empire almost entirely as an activity of state. Consisting of policy studies, analyses of bureaucratic politics, and monographs on key military figures, the historical record presents a portrait of the official mind of empire. Accounts of the military occupation of Manchuria in the early 1930s have focused on the question of who made the decision for war. Was it an act of subimperialism and insubordination on the part of Kwantung Army officers in Manchuria? Or was it directed by responsible government authorities in Tokyo?<sup>1</sup>

1. Dated, but still useful historiographical essays dealing with the debate over Japanese military expansionism are Waldo H. Heinrichs, Jr., "1931–1937," and Louis Morton, "1937–1941," both in Ernest R. May and James C. Thomson, Jr., eds., *American-East Asian Relations: A Survey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 243–290. The key works on the military history of the Manchurian Incident in English include: Robert J. C. Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of the War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), pp. 28–47; Alvin D. Coox, "The Kwantung Army Dimension," in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 395–428; James B. Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930–1938* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 82–186; Sadako N. Ogata, *Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931–1932* (1964; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984); Mark R. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 87–181; and Takehiko Yoshihashi, *Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963). For analysis of the Japanese debate

Studies of Japan's economic development of Manchuria have also concentrated on state actors. Taking up different components of economic policy, the debate in this case has revolved around the question of assessing the success or failure of the Manchurian experiment. Was the controlled economy in Manchuria a bold innovation in industrial policy that provided the foundation for the postwar "economic miracle"? Or was it a risky experiment with heavy industrialization through economic autarky, doomed to failure because of the dependence of Japan's capital- and resource-poor national economy on Western markets?<sup>2</sup>

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that divides scholarly interpretations into Marxist and non-Marxist camps, see Hatano Sumio, "Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931-1945: Historiography," in Sadao Asada, ed., *Japan and the World, 1853-1952: A Bibliographic Guide to Japanese Scholarship in Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 217-240. The Japanese literature on the subject is voluminous, but successive revisions of the Marxist interpretation of the Manchurian Incident can be traced in Rekishigaku kenkyūkai, ed., *Manshū jihen*, vol. 1 of *Taihei'yō sensōshi* (Aoki shoten, 1971); Fujiwara Akira and Imai Seiichi, eds., *Manshū jihen*, vol. 1 of *Jūgonen sensōshi* (Aoki shoten, 1988); and Eguchi Keiichi, *Jūgonen sensō no kaimaku*, vol. 4 of *Shōwa no rekishi* (Shōgakkan, 1988). The non-Marxist interpretation is represented by the first of the seven-volume series, *Taihei'yō sensō e no michi: kaisen gaikōshi*, translated into English under James William Morley, ed., *Japan Erupts: The London Naval Conference and the Manchurian Incident, 1928-1932* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); and Inoue Mitsusada et al., eds., *Kindai 2*, vol. 5 of *Nihon rekishi taikei* (Yamakawa shuppansha, 1989).

2. For the "doomed experiment" interpretation, see Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 22-49, 64-114. For the "bold innovation" thesis, see Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), pp. 116-156, esp. pp. 124-136. Discussions of the Manchurian economy in English include W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 175-197; Kang Chao, *The Economic Development of Manchuria: The Rise of a Frontier Economy*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, no. 43 (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 1982); F. C. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 100-220; Ramon H. Myers, *The Japanese Economic Development of Manchuria, 1932 to 1945* (New York: Garland, 1982); Nakagane Katsuji, "Manchukuo and Economic Development," in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 133-158; Ann Rasmussen Kinney, *Japanese Investment in Manchurian Manufacturing, Mining, Transportation, and Communications, 1931-1945* (New York: Garland, 1982); and Kungtu C. Sun, *The Economic Development of Manchuria in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1973), pp. 75-102. In Japanese see Asada Kyōji and Kobayashi Hideo, eds., *Nihon teikokushugi no Manshū shihai: jūgonen sensōki o chūshin ni* (Jichōsha, 1986), pp. 547-926; Kobayashi Hideo, "DaiTōa kyōeiken" no keisei to hōkai (Ochanomizu shobō, 1975), pp. 47-91, 167-176; Manshūshi kenkyūkai, ed., *Nihon*

While the subject is not much discussed in English, the considerable body of Japanese-language work on the colonization of Manchuria falls into two camps, between which lies an interpretive gap. One camp consists of academic studies of the formation and implementation of settlement policy within the framework of Japanese aggression. These works stress the exploitation of the Chinese and Korean peasants who worked the lands in Northeast China. The other camp is made up of popular accounts by former colonists, which tell the story of their own victimization. These focus on the tragic denouement of Manchurian colonization for the many Japanese colonists who died at the hands of Chinese and Russian soldiers at the end of the war. Whether, as agents of the imperial state, the colonists were victimizers of the people of Northeast China or were themselves victims remains the point of contention between the two camps. Yet despite their differences, both interpretations of colonists-as-victims and colonists-as-victimizers share the assumption that colonists were controlled by the state.<sup>3</sup>

At the root of this historiographical preoccupation with the state is the issue of responsibility: responsibility for empire and responsibility for war. Public memory in Japan avoids the question and adheres to the view, enshrined by the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, that a military cabal seized hold of government and forced the people into a reckless war. Even after fifty years, the pervasiveness of this narrative of victimization—what Carol Gluck has called “history in the passive voice”<sup>4</sup>—is striking. Despite the popular conviction that ordinary people were not the agents but the victims of their imperial past, there is an increasingly vocal call among the community of progressive scholars in Japan to investigate the “people’s war responsibility” and “fascism at the grass roots.”<sup>5</sup> This challenge suggests

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*teikokushugika no Manshū* (Ochanomizu shobō, 1972), pp. 1–211; and Okabe Makio, *Manshūkoku* (Sanseidō, 1978), pp. 75–146.

3. Representative of the policy studies critical of Manchurian colonization are the essays in *Manshū iminshi kenkyūkai*, ed., *Nihon teikokushugika no Manshū imin* (Ryūkei shosha, 1976). Representative of the colonists’ view is Mantakukai, ed., *Dokumento Manshū kaitaku monogatari* (Azusa shoten, 1986).

4. Carol Gluck, “The Idea of Showa,” *Daedalus* 119, no. 3 (Summer 1990), pp. 12–13.

5. These are the titles of two recent books on World War II that focus on popular support for Japanese expansion in Asia: Takahashi Hikohiro, *Minshū no gawa no sensō sekinin* [The People’s War Responsibility] (Aoki shoten, 1989), and Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Kusa no ne no fashizumu: Nihon minshū no sensō taiken* [Fascism at the Grass Roots: The War Experience of the Japanese People], vol. 7 of *Atarashii sekaishi* (Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1987). Two very suggestive applications of this approach to the Manchurian Incident are Eguchi Keiichi, *Nihon*

the need to revise the historical record on Manchukuo, for missing from the picture are the millions of people who were involved in its construction—through war support associations, business unions, colonization committees, and countless other organizations. It clearly took more than ministers and generals to make an empire, and this book examines how society—both the institutions and the individuals that comprised it—was engaged in the empire-building process. The state is not eclipsed as an object of analysis, but rather the focus is on the roles of both state and society and the ways in which they mobilized each other for the imperial project.

Since the concepts of “state” and “society” are here used to formulate the problem of agency, a brief word is in order about what is meant by these terms. I understand them, first, to signify an expression of power in relationship to one another and to the empire. The state wields power in its ordering of society, while society exercises power in its shaping of the state. As each projects its power overseas, both state and society become agents of empire. Second, such power is deployed through institutions. State power operates through bureaucratic organizations: government ministries, agencies, and committees. Social power is similarly effected through organizations such as chambers of commerce, political parties, and women’s groups. In both state and society such institutions provide the vehicles through which individuals effect power by collective action. In other words, institutions mediated the relationship between the individual and the empire, whether that individual was a government official or a private citizen. To ask the question, then, Who were the agents of empire? involves looking at the roles of both private and public institutions in mobilizing support for Manchukuo. It means seeing how Manchukuo looked from the bottom up as well as from the top down, and depicting the popular, as well as the official, mind of empire.

Although the concepts of state and society are here paired as dichoto-

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*teikokushugi shiron: Manshū jihen zengo* (Aoki shoten, 1975), pp. 149–196, and Awaya Kentarō, “Fasshoka to minshū ishiki,” in Eguchi Keiichi, ed., *Nihon fashizumu no keisei*, vol. 1 of *Taiei Nihon gendaishi* (Nihon hyōronsha, 1978), pp. 251–302. Iwanami shoten’s recent eight-volume series on Japanese colonialism has expanded on this theme, devoting two entire volumes to “popular” imperialism—vol. 5 on Japanese expatriates in the colonies and vol. 7 on colonialism and popular culture: Ōe Shinobu et al., eds., *Bōchō suru teikoku no jinryū*, vol. 5 of *Iwanami kōza kindai Nihon to shokuminchi* (Iwanami shoten, 1993); and Ōe Shinobu et al., eds., *Bunka no naka no shokuminchi*, vol. 7 of *Iwanami kōza kindai Nihon to shokuminchi* (Iwanami shoten, 1993).

mous categories to make a point about the involvement of non-government actors in the imperial project, a final caveat must be added about the problem with defining them in oppositional terms. In any specific instance the boundary line between state and society is extremely fuzzy, making it difficult to say where state ends and society begins. Are public school teachers, for instance, state actors or social agents? If army officers are part of the state, where do conscript soldiers belong? The arbitrariness of the answers to such questions suggests that rather than posing state and society as a dichotomy, we should conceive them as reflections of one another, or alternate formulations of the same entity. Mobilized for empire all individuals become extensions of the state even as they remain members of society.

Though fundamentally empires are social products, they are not much studied as popular enterprises. Preoccupied with identifying a theoretical model that would explain the causes of imperialism—and particularly the sudden burst of European expansionism in the late nineteenth century—literature on European and American imperialism has tended to focus on the rival merits of economic and political theories of causality. In the former instance, this meant showing how the structures of an expanding industrial capitalism sought to open and control new overseas markets. In the latter, scholars focused on the decision making of both metropolitan leaders and their on-site agents. They identified the motives for the so-called new imperialism in both the rivalrous dynamics of the international system as well as growing political instability on the borders of the European empires in Asia and Africa. For a long time divisions within the Anglo-American academy between Marxist and anti-Marxist scholars fossilized this debate into a series of revisions of the capitalist theory of imperialism on one side and debunking attacks on the other.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years this has changed, as historians of imperialism have taken up the question of culture. Beginning in the early 1980s, books on empire and technology, science, ideology, propaganda, popular culture, and other topics have appeared, shifting the focus away from political and economic structures of empire.<sup>7</sup> Although this conversion to culture reinvigorated

6. See Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 1–70, 117–142, for samples of this debate. For a summary of the various positions, see Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, trans. P. S. Falla (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 70–141.

7. There has been a recent explosion of work on culture and imperialism, largely inspired by Edward W. Said's pioneering study *Orientalism* (New York:

the study of imperialism, cultural theories of imperialism have only begun to challenge the monocausal terms of the older debate. In much of this literature culture simply supplanted economy or politics as the sole independent variable. And yet, in the empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is impossible to reduce the roots of expansionism to a single cause. No more than Marxist theories of imperialism, power-politics models, or arguments about subimperialists and turbulent frontiers, can studies of the cultural construction of empire account for the multidimensional nature of experience. In an age of unified markets, globalized mass communications, and the exposure of the individual to multiple systems of meaning, it is impossible to look at the economic without considering the political, to study the cultural without thinking about the social, to discuss the national without reference to the international. Therefore we need to look at ways in which economics, politics, culture, and society work together as a unit and the ways in which national systems are integrated into international systems. We need, in short, a total theory of imperialism.

#### TOTAL IMPERIALISM

Like many abstract concepts, imperialism is a term that resists concrete definition. Most historians deploy the term to describe the annexation of territory and imposition of alien rule over the peoples that live there: domination formalized in the creation of institutions of direct colonial administration. More problematic are instances of informal domination—where a country retains nominal independence, but falls within another nation's "sphere of influence." Historians agree that the colonization of Senegal by France or Ceylon by Great Britain were expressions of impe-

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Vintage, 1978), which was recently reformulated as *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993). Said theorizes the relationship between culture and empire in a sophisticated way, situating cultural production within the institutions of imperial domination. Said is chiefly interested in explaining the structures and conventions of high culture rather than elucidating a theory of imperialism. Thus, his work has introduced a new methodology for studying the impact of imperialism on culture, but is not as helpful for thinking about the relationship the other way around. Several new volumes of essays on the subject are moving in this direction, studying the cultural technologies of colonialism as well as the cultural effects of the colonial encounter. See Nicholas B. Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), and Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993).



rialism. But whether Soviet influence in Eastern Europe or American interventions in Indochina are properly characterized as "imperialism" is a subject of debate. My own definition of imperialism, designed to characterize Japan's relationship to China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, accommodates both formal or direct, and informal or indirect, mechanisms of domination. Imperial domination implies that the dominated society not only is altered by the interventions of the dominating society, but loses its ability to reject those interventions. The Chinese, for example, were not in a position to tell the Japanese to go home in 1907 or 1932. By contrast the Japanese could and did send their European advisors away in the 1890s. The former was a relationship defined by imperialism, while the latter illustrated Japan's measure of independence from European control. A further characteristic that distinguishes imperialism from other forms of influence is the scale of the disparity of power between the two societies and the one-sided pattern of intervention that emerges. In this way, imperialism is different from interdependence. Japanese influenced basic decisions which structured the economic and political conditions of Northeast China, but Chinese had no such power in Japanese government circles. Such interventions, moreover, may be effected through both formal and informal channels. Hence, the term *imperialism* is not synonymous with colonialism, but rather subsumes it. Japanese conditioned social life in Northeast China both through formal colonial institutions—the Kwantung governor general and the Manchukuo government—as well as through such informal methods of control as military threat, market dominance, and the cultivation of a collaborative elite.

A final distinction may be added here between imperialism as process and empire as structure. Imperialism is empire building; it represents the process of constructing a relationship of domination. Empire signifies what is built—the structures that produce and reproduce dominance. For Japan and Manchukuo this distinction captures both the mercurial dynamism of the process as well as the ossified weightiness of the structures that together, incongruously, characterized the imperial project.

The phenomenon of imperialism can be traced back to the beginnings of recorded history; its early modern period began with the European voyages of exploration at the turn of the sixteenth century. Here I address imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when the features identified with modernity inscribed themselves on the processes of imperialism and created what I call total empires. Conditioned by the advent of

the nation-state, industrial capitalism, and other revolutions of the modern age, imperialism became increasingly multidimensional, mass-mobilizing, and all-encompassing. The relationship between modernity and empire, moreover, was dialectical: just as modernization conditioned the growth of empire, the process of imperialism shaped the conditions of modern life. An attempt to puzzle out the evolving relationship between modernity and empire occupies the theoretical heart of this book.

The political revolution of the nation-state represented a key element in this relationship, transforming the meaning of imperialism in the nineteenth century. The rise of nations and nationalism meant that imperialism was increasingly an enterprise of both nation and state, in contrast to the crown colonies of the Americas and the trading factories of Asia that were established under the charter of the absolutist monarchies of early modern Europe. Indeed, imperialism became fundamental to modern projects of state making and nation building, both in Japan—as the government’s designating itself “the Great Empire of Japan” (*DaiNihon teikoku*) and the patriotic popular response to the Sino-Japanese War suggest—and elsewhere around the globe. Moreover, the articulation of constitutional contracts that bound states to represent the interests of society meant that imperialism henceforth would be a joint endeavor. If a faction within the government—such as the Japanese Army—sought to expand the nation’s power overseas, it needed to mobilize social support for the task. Similarly, private groups with imperial ambitions—such as Japanese business organizations—pressured their governments to lend state support to their plans. Such developments led to the emergence of an imperialized nationalism, while making imperial policy the crucible of a growing intimacy between state and society.

All of this was occurring, of course, in the midst of the global expansion of industrial capitalism. The advent of the industrial revolution in Europe stimulated integration of colonial markets into the world economy in a manner that facilitated the export of colonial wealth and resources to the industrial metropole and tended to hinder the development of industrial capitalism in the colonial periphery. Although Japanese colonial policies stimulated economic development in Manchuria and Korea, Japan, too, sought access to colonial export markets and colonial sources of cheap raw materials in order to maintain its own industrial production. Moreover, industrial capitalism not only produced a new form of economic integration between metropolitan and colonial societies, it also stimulated the emergence of what is known as social imperialism—that is, the projection overseas of the social discontents and dislocations engendered by indus-

trialization at home.<sup>8</sup> In Japan's case, social imperialism operated both to diffuse radical demands of factory workers and to deflect class tensions in a rural economy battered by the effects of industrialization. Finally, industrial capitalism was responsible for the mass production and commodification of culture, and, hence, the invention of what we know as mass culture. The mass production of culture transformed the nature of the imperial project because it created new vehicles for the mobilization of popular support. In Japan and elsewhere, war fevers, yellow journalism, and what J. A. Hobson called in 1901 the "psychology of jingoism" became familiar features of modern empires.

In these ways the revolutions associated with modernity revolutionized imperialism. I have named the new imperialism "total" both to describe the phenomenon itself and to suggest a methodology for its study. The term does not signify absolute or totalitarian, but is used, rather, as an analogue of "total war." Like total war, total empire was made on the home front. It entailed the mass and multidimensional mobilization of domestic society: cultural, military, political, and economic. The multidimensionality of total empire relates to the question of causality as well. Manchukuo emerged from multiple, overlapping, and mutually reinforcing causes; it was an empire propelled by economic forces as well as strategic imperatives, by political processes and cultural determinants, by domestic social forces as well as international pressures. In themselves, none of these variables explains or determines imperialism; rather, their synergy or concatenation is what gave total imperialism its peculiar force. Empire in this sense is overdetermined. Finally, in using the term *total* I want to convey the widespread, even comprehensive, character of Manchukuo's impact on Japanese society. The process of empire building in Manchuria touched the lives of most Japanese in the 1930s in one way or another.

This is not to suggest that all modern empires were total in this way. All overseas interests, whether formal colonies or informal spheres of influence, held the potential of becoming total empires—but not all did. By my definition French Algeria and British India were almost certainly total empires, and perhaps others were as well. But without careful comparative research it would be reckless to venture a taxonomy of total empires or to

8. The classic work on social imperialism is Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), a study of Germany's sudden conversion to empire in the late nineteenth century. The argument is summarized in English in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Bismarck's Imperialism 1862–1890," *Past and Present*, no. 48 (August 1970), pp. 119–155.

hypothesize more precisely about the common historical conjunctures that bring them about. In Japan's case it is clear that some imperial projects were more important than others, and that imperial interests in the Nan'yō (Pacific Islands), Taiwan, and Korea all meant different things at different times. Japan's experience suggests, as well, that nations build one total empire at a time. Before the emergence of Manchukuo in the 1930s, only Korea in the 1890s and early 1900s ever involved domestic society to a degree that approached my sense of total.<sup>9</sup>

Understood in these terms, Manchukuo was a total empire. This book tells the story of its construction: a process of empire building that was multicausal and multidimensional, all-encompassing and, by the end, all-consuming.

#### MANCHUKUO IN JAPAN

This is a story, first of all, about an imperial relationship. Imperialism wove an increasingly intricate web of connections between empire and metropolis. Military occupation set in place one network of ties; economic development engendered another. Both of these were intertwined with the associations generated by Japanese settlement. Each soldier who fought to defend the Manchurian lifeline, each shipment of cement used for the development of Manchukuo, and each tenant farmer who settled in the new heaven on earth added to the whole. This expanding web of connections locked Japan and Manchukuo into an intimate embrace, and meant, increasingly, that when Manchukuo caught a cold, Japan sneezed. Whether it was the infectious inflation of the late 1930s and 1940s or the spreading arrests of alleged Japanese Communists that began with Mantetsu (the South Manchurian Railway) in 1942–1943, such sneezes revealed the often unforeseen transformations that imperialism wrought on metropolitan society. For total empire building was a dialectical process in this sense as well, and with the passage of time this process deposited more of Japan in Manchukuo and more of Manchukuo in Japan.

This book concentrates on the latter dimension of this dialectic—the story of Manchukuo in Japan. It is an account of empire building at home, focusing on the proliferating intersections between Manchukuo and the course of daily life—Japanese encounters with Manchukuo in local politics,

9. Peter Duus's recent work on the social and economic dimensions of empire building in Korea provides strong evidence for including Korea in the category of total empire: Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895–1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

in schools, or in the morning news. The increasing frequency of such encounters naturalized the new empire. Over the course of the 1930s Manchukuo became ordinary and unexceptional—just another feature of the everyday landscape. The empire that began as a war devolved into a way of life.

My account of this process looks at imperialism through Japanese eyes. Like the ideas of other empire builders, Japanese views of Manchukuo were essentially solipsistic. Chinese and Korean residents of Northeast China had their own perceptions of the Japanese occupation, but these rarely penetrated the Japanese consciousness. Instead, Japanese interpreted Chinese actions to fit their own ideology of imperialism, painting military resistance as banditry or the mass immigration by southern Chinese as signaling a desire for Japanese-style order and justice. But even more striking than such intrusions of Asian others into Japanese imperial narratives was their frequent absence from these accounts. In Japanese dramatizations of the Manchurian Incident, the Chinese enemy was usually a faceless threat that hovered just off stage. Depictions of the hygienic new cities of Manchukuo kept the Chinese urban masses out of sight. Rural Manchuria, for its part, was imagined as empty, flat space—a vast frontier awaiting Japanese settlement. This depopulation of the imaginary landscapes of Manchukuo was an expression of the imbalance of power between Japanese and their others. Neither Chinese nor Koreans in Manchuria had a channel through which they could project their power back to metropolitan Japan, no means by which they could write themselves fully into the narratives of Japanese imperialism. This did not mean that Asian subjects of the Japanese empire had no agency in their own history. In their choices to collaborate or resist, Chinese and Koreans helped determine the shape of Japan's total empire. Their stories are every bit as complicated and contradictory as those of the Japanese. But for the most part colonial subjects were not agents of the history with which this book is primarily concerned, for they did not participate in the building of Manchukuo within Japan.

#### AGENTS OF EMPIRE

The builders of Manchukuo were a motley crew. Visions of empire fired the imaginations of a mixed collection of right-wing officers, reform bureaucrats, and revolutionaries of left and right, making bedfellows of erstwhile opponents. One could hardly imagine a more unlikely set of coimperialists than the right-wing pan-Asianist Ōkawa Shūmei, the author of Japan's most famous anti-war poem "Yosano Akiko," the left-wing revolu-

tionary Comintern spy Ozaki Hotsumi, and the sadistic military police officer Amakasu Masahiko. Yet all these people, and many others, shared the dreams of Manchukuo and worked with one another to bring those dreams to reality.

This did not mean that they held the same vision of Manchukuo's future. Far from it: their ideas were frequently at odds with one another. Where intellectuals saw in Manchukuo's new colonial cities an urban utopia, rural reformers dreamt of agrarian paradise; where businessmen looked upon Manchukuo as the remedy to a faltering capitalist economy, radical army officers saw it as the means to overturn capitalism itself. These contending visions and the political and social conflict that they represented are very much a part of the story of empire in Manchukuo. Although opposition to the imperial project was sometimes forcibly silenced or drowned out, more often it was coopted. Persuaded that the new empire had something to offer them, groups that had been indifferent or even hostile to expanding Japan's position in Northeast China in the 1920s joined together to build Manchukuo in the 1930s. Mobilized for empire, their particular and often contradictory agendas became incorporated into the increasingly complex and unwieldy plans for Manchukuo.

Empire was thus a collaborative project. As Manchukuo grew more elaborate, the mobilization of domestic resources intensified and drew in an increasingly inclusive sweep of Japanese society. During the military occupation, Manchurian policy commanded the attention of both national cabinet officials and local party politicians. Chambers of commerce and labor unions lobbied with equal fervor for their share of Manchurian development. The colonization movement mobilized the energies of tenants and landlords, men, women, and children. From the top down and from the bottom up, agents of empire sought to involve all segments of Japanese society in the Manchukuo project.

To mobilize popular support for Manchukuo, imperial activists used existing institutions and also created new ones. Thus much of my account will focus on schools, army regiments, political parties, mass media, and other social, cultural, economic, and political institutions, showing the ways in which they were shaped and reshaped into vehicles for empire building. Whether one looks at the mass media spreading the war fever of the early thirties, academic institutions recruiting engineers to build heavy industry in the new empire, or government agencies organizing the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Japanese farmers in the Manchurian plain, a variety of organizations played a part in the ongoing process of mobilization for empire.

The paper trail of these various agents of empire has led me beyond the collections of government documents and papers of leading statesmen through which historians have customarily read the imperial record on Manchukuo. Unlike the documents of government policy, however, there is no established body of sources that constitute the archives of civil society. A letter from one bureaucrat to another elucidates the ideas behind a policy decision, but how do we trace the thoughts of the popular mind of empire? To gain as broad a picture as possible, this study adopts an eclectic approach to sources, exploring the idea of Manchukuo as it was represented in popular magazines, pulp fiction, chamber of commerce records, propaganda pamphlets from the Army and Colonial Ministries, and military police reports. I also read city and prefectural histories from all parts of Japan for information about the local political impact of the Manchurian Incident and war-support campaigns. Recognizing the importance of continental travel as a vehicle for disseminating images of Manchurian development, I look at travel diaries, company histories of the tourist industry, travel guides, and such miscellany as maps, postcards, and souvenirs. And I analyze the numerous village studies produced by the Imperial Agricultural Association, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Manchurian Emigration Council, which document with great detail the history of the Manchurian colonists and the impact of their exodus on home villages. From such an array of sources, this book tells the story of Manchukuo from the point of view of the Japanese who built the new empire.

#### CULTURE AND IMPERIALISM

To a large extent, Manchurian empire building took place in the realm of the imagination. The imperial project generated three distinct imaginings of Manchukuo, cultural constructions that changed as the trajectory of imperial expansion moved from military occupation to economic development to colonial settlement. Japanese first knew Manchukuo as a battlefield; later it became associated with various schemes for economic renovation. Finally, they envisioned it in terms of hardy pioneers in an expansive frontier. For those at home, this succession of imagined empires was as real as their physical embodiments across the sea. In other words, for the vast majority of Japanese, the ideas and symbols of popular culture provided the primary medium through which they would experience Manchukuo.

My attempt here to map the imaginative terrain of empire rests on a three-fold conceptualization of culture. First, since my analysis separates

government from non-government initiatives concerning Manchukuo, I distinguish between official and mass cultures of imperialism, the former disseminated through government propaganda apparatuses and the latter through the mass media. Second, because I am trying to locate the idea of Manchukuo within a particular confluence of circumstances in the 1930s, I understand culture as a historical construction. That is to say, ideas, practices, and even traditions are not timeless and immutable inheritances from the past, but represent, rather, the inventions of specific historical moments. Finally, in order to place Manchukuo within the larger historical context of Japanese imperialism and understand how initiatives in Manchukuo both broke with and recapitulated the past, I look at culture as a process. The idea of Manchukuo did not suddenly appear full-blown, but evolved through a process of cultural invention and reinvention. In other words, Japanese imagined and reimagined "Manchukuo" in ways that innovated new imperial practices while drawing on the cultural accumulations of fifty years of empire building.

In all three senses, imperial culture intersected with economic, social, military, and political spheres. The Americanist Richard Slotkin put this well when he wrote: "The cultural historian tries to construct a historical account of the development of meaning and to show how the activities of symbol-making, interpretation, and imaginative projection continuously interlock with the political and material processes of social existence."<sup>10</sup> This means pointing out not only that social existence shapes the imagination, but also the reverse. Ideas about the economy shape its structures; political opinions are institutionalized in new programs and new bureaucracies; militarism helps direct the course of the military. In the context of Manchukuo, this dialectical relationship between ideas and institutions interwove the dreams and deeds of empire.

The pages that follow tell the story of total empire in Manchukuo from shifting vantage points. I begin in Chapter Two with an international history of Japan's advance into Northeast China, situating Manchukuo within the larger context of Japan's colonial empire. Tracing the developmental logic of Japan's expansion in East Asia, this chapter looks to the international context for the answers to the question, Why did Manchukuo be-

10. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), p. 5.



come the centerpiece of the Japanese empire in the 1930s? Chapters Three through Nine comprise the heart of the study and focus on the processes of domestic mobilization for each of the three facets of the imperial project in Manchukuo: military, economic, and migratory.

Starting with the watershed events of 1931, Part Two (Chapters Three and Four) attempts to explain, in social and political terms, the domestic forces behind the new military imperialism of the 1930s. Why did the Manchurian Incident become a turning point for Japanese imperialism, and what did it signify for those at home? The answers I find relate the popularization of the new imperialism to the growth of institutions of mass culture and mass politics.

Following the turn to economic methods of imperial expansion in the mid 1930s, Part Three (Chapters Five and Six) takes up the radical experiment in colonial development. These chapters focus on the mobilization of two key segments of the middle class: business elites and intellectuals. In spite of their mistrust of army policy in the puppet state of Manchukuo, both groups were instrumental in supplying the enormous resources necessary for Manchurian development. Looking at the hopes and fears different groups of Japanese projected onto the new empire, I argue that what brought these unlikely allies together was a shared vision of the utopian potential of Manchukuo.

Part Four (Chapters Seven through Nine) formulates an explanation for why Manchurian colonization grew into a nationwide social movement and a major government initiative in the 1930s. In my answer I trace the emergence of agrarian social imperialism—the broad support for the resettlement of impoverished Japanese farmers to the Manchurian countryside in order to resolve the social crisis that industrial capitalism had produced in Japanese farm villages. The Manchurian solution to the problem of the villages was promoted with equal fervor by reformists in and out of government. Together, their participation in the colonization movement brought about a new relationship between state, society, and empire. For bureaucrats in a central government experimenting with techniques of social management, and for rural activists who were demanding greater government responsibility for the social health of farm villages, Manchurian colonization represented a new level of state involvement with rural society on one hand, and a new level of rural involvement in the empire on the other.

Collectively, these chapters describe the efforts of rich and poor, of officials and private citizens, of urban and rural residents to build an empire

in Manchukuo. Although this is overwhelmingly a domestic story, it begins in the empire itself. It was international pressures that drove Kwantung Army conspirators to undertake the Manchurian Incident in 1931, and it was in the arena of foreign policy that the event demarcated the sharpest break with the past.