

The 40-Year History of Dalian under Japanese Colonial Rule

[日本殖民統治大連40年史]

(Geo, Tiezhuang [郭鐵楨] Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press [社會科學文獻出版社], 2008)

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I.

On June 3, 1988, at a reception for the participants of an international academic conference entitled “China in the 1990s and the World” [90年代的中國與世界], Deng Xiaoping stated that China’s development strategy is closely linked to the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and emphasized that many more Hong Kong’s should be built in the central regions of the China (*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, pp. 266-267). The Chinese looked to Dalian, located on the southern end of the Liaodong Peninsula, as a candidate city qualified enough to become the Hong Kong of the north. Dalian development efforts gained momentum, and since then, Dalian has grown rapidly into a modern city.

Interest in Dalian did not stop with the urbanization and modernization of the city’s outward appearance; there also developed a growing interest in its history. Dalian is highly accessible by sea and can serve as a gateway to the vast continent that lies to its north. Despite Dalian’s superb geostrategic location—with the Yellow Sea to the east

and only Balhae to the west, the government of Ching China paid little attention to the city situated in the empire's northeastern border region. Rather, the modernization of Dalian was set in motion when foreign powers—i.e., Great Britain, Russian, and Japan—took notice of it. From 1898 to 1945, Dalian was under de facto control of Russia and Japan. Accordingly, there coexist divergent cultural characteristics that are remnants of Russian and Japanese rule. This is what sets Dalian apart from other Chinese cities and why its history has become the subject of scholarly interest.

Dalian's history did not use to be treated as a key topic in Chinese history. However, as Dalian came under the spotlight with China's reform and opening, diverse studies have been undertaken on the city's history. Since the 1990s, many papers have been published on the colonial rule, urban development, working class, and customs of Dalian, mainly by researchers at universities and research institutes in Manchuria. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences publishes a series called *Key Works in the Study of Sino-Japanese Relations* [中日歷史研究中心文庫] for scholarly research on the history of China-Japan relations and for the history education of Chinese and Japanese youth. *The 40-Year History of Dalian under Japanese Colonial Rule* (hereafter "*History of Dalian*") is the sixth publication in the series. Co-authored by three experts on China-Japan relations—Guo Tiezhuang [郭鐵:], Guang Jie [關捷], Han Junying [韓俊英]—the two volumes deal with the history of Japanese rule over Manchuria from the early to mid 1900s. The work covers a wide range of topics, including Japan's colonial ruler over Manchuria and Dalian's economy, culture, and education. In effect, *History of Dalian* can be regarded as a two-volume compilation of the studies on various topics concerning the history of Dalian that have thus far been studied.

The work comprises 4 parts and 26 chapters. The parts are organized by time period. Part 1 "The Establishment of Colonial Rule over the Kwantung Leased Territory (May 1904-July 1914)" discusses the Russo-Japanese rivalry for control over Dalian, the founding and

evolution of colonial governing bodies, South Manchuria Railway, colonial industries, and the commercial ports of Dalian. Part 2 “The Development of Colonial Rule over the Kwantung Leased Territory (July 1914-September 1931)” covers the organization of military force to complete the system of colonial rule, Japanese right-wing groups, Chinese resistance to colonial rule, commerce and trade, resource exploitation, the colonial urban development, and cultural aggression. Part 3 “Kwantung Leased Territory after the September 14 Incident (September 1931-July 1937)” deals with changes in Japanese colonial rule, the suppression of anti-Japanese resistance in Kwantung Leased Territory, the linkage between the Kwantung Army and the South Manchuria Railway, changes to Dalian economy and industries following the Japan-Manchuria economic integration policy, exploitation of the labor force, and the indigenous economy [民族經濟] of Dalian. Part 4 “Kwantung Leased Territory: From Development to Fall (July 1937-August 1945)” discusses the status of Dalian during the Sino-Japanese War. By the onset of the Sino-Japanese War, Dalian, as a part of Manchukuo, was under Japanese control. Part 4 also discusses the relationship between the South Manchuria Railway, the key organ of the Japanese colonial government, and the July 7 Incident [七七事變] as well as the collapse of the Kwantung Leased Territory.

History of Dalian makes apt use of massive amounts of Chinese and Japanese sources and offers effective comparisons between them to present diverse issues and perspectives on colonial rule. The work successfully tackles the issue of Japan’s colonial rule over Dalian from standpoints of both the ruler and the subject. Thus, it could make a useful contribution to not only the study of modern and contemporary history of Dalian but also to that of the history of Manchuria and that of the history of Japanese colonial rule.

II

As aforementioned, save for the foreword, *History of Dalian* organizes the Japanese rule of Dalian from 1904 to 1945 into four time periods. In terms of the organization of content, it is divided into the following themes: politics, economy, educational culture, and colonial resistance. The book begins by pointing to great power confrontations in Dalian as the historical backdrop of colonial rule. The combined British-French army that attacked Beijing in 1860 came via Dalian's shores. In Dalian, the British-French army carried out military drills, plundered and looted, and surveyed the surrounding areas and produced a map. Dalian was given the name "Victoria" on this map. Later, the Russians named Dalian "Dalny" [達理尼, Дальний], which means far, distant, or remote. Naming generally involves the careful observation of a target, detecting distinctive traits, and coming up with a meaningful name. Great Britain was the first great power to recognize the value of Dalian, which also went by the name Jingniwa [青泥洼]. The name "Victoria" did not last long. However, "Port Arthur," which was the name given to Lushun at the same time Dalian was christened "Victoria," is still being used internationally as the English name of Lushun. In short, it was the great powers, rather than China, that first recognized the geostrategic importance of Dalian and Lushun and began their imperialist activities there. There is a sweeping overview of these imperialist activities that preceded Japan's full-fledged control of Dalian in the foreword, providing a historical background for a better understanding of Dalian, the modern city.

In discussing colonial rule, it is impossible to avoid the question of whether colonialism contributed to the "development" of the colonized state or whether it only amounted to aggression and exploitation. The basic stance of *History of Dalian* is in opposition to that of *The 40-Year History of the Development of Manchuria* (1966, Tokyo: Kenkosha [謙光社]) edited by Japan's Manchuria History Society [滿史會]. In the

latter, it is argued that Japan's capital investment gave rise to modern industries and that Western aggression on Asia was thwarted because Japan defeated the Russian army. *History of Dalian* is of the position that the claims made in *The 40-Year History of the Development of Manchuria* comprise a discourse of pilfering and pillaging (p. 26) and offers specific counterarguments.

First, *History of Dalian* looks at the colonial government organizations. Until 1914, Japan concentrated on laying down a firm basis for colonial rule. It set up the Kwantung Governor-General (later, Kwantung Bureau), Kwantung Army, and an official judicial/law enforcement organ of colonial rule. The book also takes a very close look at the South Manchuria Railway Company (hereafter "Manchuria Railway") that was set up by the Japanese government in 1907. On the surface, it was established for the industrial management of the railway system, seaports, and mines in Manchuria. In reality, however, it was a government monopoly that received significant capital investment and support from the state. Accordingly, the Manchuria Railway went beyond its original task of business management and actually performed government/administrative duties and gathered intelligence. The fact is that the Manchuria Railway played a central role in fostering trade in Manchuria, expanding the Port of Dalian and turning it into the second largest Chinese free port after Shanghai. It also had a profound influence on Dalian's transportation, commercial, financial, industrial development. However, in *History of Dalian*, it is argued that Manchuria Railway limited commercial and industrial activities of Chinese and non-Japanese nationals, stunting indigenous [民族] industrial growth. In the meantime, the Japanese could easily pocket huge profits. All the key officials of Manchuria Railway were appointed by the Japanese government. They were ordered to set up an intelligence department that reported directly to the military. It is also pointed out in *History of Dalian* that the South Manchuria Railway carried out illegal administrative affairs—i.e., law enforcement and tax collection—in the

areas in and around the railway. Such an analysis of the South Manchuria Railway looks at the ownership of the company's raw materials and the production and distribution methods, following the basic Marxist principles. It is concluded that while South Manchuria Railway fundamentally adhered to capitalist management principles, it was more importantly a government apparatus that legitimized state aggression.

Second, *History of Dalian* examines economic and industrial development. The development (vs.) exploitation debate is especially intense concerning the economic and industrial legacy of Japanese colonial rule. This is certainly true in the discussion of Japan's colonial rule of China, as it is in the discussion of Japan's colonial rule of Korea. As has been pointed out above regarding the book's coverage of the South Manchuria Railway, *History of Dalian* explains that Japan had placed great importance on economic exploitation from the very early stages of its invasion of Manchuria. After the September 18 Incident, Japan attempted to control the economy of Manchuria in its entirety by the use of force—i.e., the Kwantung Army. It is assessed that Japan's aim was to gain control over all of Manchuria's resources and incorporate Manchuria into the Japanese economy for economic growth and enhanced defense capabilities. *History of Dalian* does not make an outright refutation of the colonial modernization thesis—i.e., that the industrial legacy of Japanese colonial rule of Manchuria contributed to turning the region into one of China's key industrial powerhouses today. Nevertheless, the book is of the view that Japan's development goals—exercising control over Manchuria's economy and integrating it into the Japanese economy—were manipulated and implemented according to Japan's needs. Thus, the book holds that Japan's rule did not contribute to the healthy development of the Chinese economy and actually hampered indigenous economic [民族經濟] growth. In line with this general position, *History of Dalian* does not use the term “modernization.” It focuses on the development potential of the indigenous Chinese economy that formed as migrant Chinese merchants

from the north and overseas Chinese merchants flocked to Dalian after Japan declared it a free port. It also looks at what this development meant for Dalian's commerce and industry. *History of Dalian* also criticizes how the Japanese colonial authorities carried out a very strict economic regulation policy in Dalian after the July 7 Incident—especially after the onset of the Pacific War—and how that led to the weakening and near collapse of the indigenous economy. It is an insinuated support for the intrinsic development thesis—i.e., that the Manchurian economy would have developed on its own, without imperialist aggression.

Third, *History of Dalian* analyzes the process of urbanization. It maintains a negative view of colonial rule in this respect as well. The book traces the process of urban planning and development starting from when the area was leased to Russia. It also discusses the form of urban development carried out by Japan, which took the baton from Russia. Russia concentrated on turning Dalian into the Paris of the East through a major overhaul. At the early stages of colonial rule, continued Russia's plans for Dalian's urban development. With time, however, the city saw a growing number of Japanese immigrants and Chinese migrants. The city had to be expanded. *History of Dalian* points out that as this happened, there were changes to the city's Russian appearance; Dalian started taking after the appearance and organization of Japanese cities. The book makes it clear that the "exotic" city planning was just another aspect of colonial rule. Under Russian rule, the city was organized into an administrative zone, residential areas for Europeans, and residential areas for the Chinese. The book stresses that such an organization distinguished between the colonial rulers and the colonial subjects, discriminating against the latter. In this sense, there were no changes when Japan took control of the city after the Russo-Japanese War. Japan set up separate residential quarters for the Japanese and the Chinese. The Japanese quarter was equipped with educational, religious, and entertainment facilities for the residents' comfort and convenience. The Chinese quarter, on the other hand, was crowded and lacked the diverse amenities of the

Japanese quarter. It is thus pointed out in *History of Dalian* that even in urban planning, the Chinese were not the beneficiaries and that their residential areas were like slums. According to the book, such an arrangement evidences Japanese aggression that is likely to have made the Chinese feel a sense of alienation and relative deprivation.

Fourth, *History of Dalian* also discusses education and culture. As in Taiwan and Joseon, the colonial authorities recognized that education was very important in consolidating Japan's colonial rule over Dalian. *History of Dalian* shows that right from the start, the colonial authorities devised the Dalian colonial education policy in line with Japan's continental policy. The book points out that the educational curriculums for the Chinese and Japanese were different. Education for Japanese students aimed at turning them into the next generation of colonial rulers that would take on the "important task of developing Manchuria and Mongolia" based on the belief that Manchuria is Japan's vital lifeline. For Chinese students, on the other hand, the key educational goal was producing loyal subjects and docile tools that accepted Japanese rule. According to *History of Dalian*, Chinese students were indoctrinated with "slavish" ideologies of [Japanese] emperor worship and Japan-Manchuria amity.

It is also explained that the cultural values the colonial authorities set out to instill in the Japanese residents were different from those they tried to inculcate in the local Chinese. Regarding the Japanese residents in Dalian, the colonial authorities sought to fulfill their cultural and spiritual needs while also encouraging them to settle down in Dalian and strengthening their commitment to Japan's continental policy. In contrast, the local Chinese were taught the Japanese lifestyle, ideologies, and way of thinking so that they would assimilate into Japanese culture. To this end, the Japanese colonial authorities controlled the media and information. Of the 42 newspapers in circulation in Dalian until Japan's surrender in 1945, 38 of them were Japanese while only 3 were Chinese. The Manchuria Railway library kept diverse resources on Chinese

politics, economy, military, history, culture, education, and society that the Manchuria Railway intelligence department had obtained. The library compiled and edited the materials so that colonial authorities and Manchuria Railway employees could access them. Moreover, archeological resources and cultural relics in the Dalian were surveyed and plundered. According to *History of Dalian*, Japan did this to separate Manchuria from China and exercise permanent control over the region.

In effect, the book claims Japan's investment and development activities were skewed and that across all facets of Japanese colonial rule of Dalian—governance, economy and industry, urban construction, and educational and cultural policies, the objective was exploitation, not development. That is why the book refuses to use terms such as “development” and “modernization.”

History of Dalian also covers Chinese resistance against colonial rule. The people of Dalian put up a very fierce resistance against Japanese colonial rule. The book claims that the most notable form of such resistance came from the workers. The early stages of anti-Japanese resistance are described as follows. As with modern industries in other parts of Manchuria, Dalian's industrial development was spurred by foreign capital. After Japan gained control of Dalian, it was only Japanese capital that flowed into Dalian. Dalian's industrial development was geared toward Japan's interests, and Japanese colonial authorities did not hesitate to exploit Dalian's working class. The early forms of workers' resistance prior to 1919 called for shorter work hours, higher wages, improved working environment and conditions, and higher living standards. The anti-colonial resistance entered a new phase in the 1920s, and *History of Dalian* points to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) founding of an underground party branch in Dalian as the cause of this transition. The key organizations of Dalian's labor movement were the Engineering Society of China [中華工學會], Federation of Dalian Chinese Printing Technicians [大連中華印刷職工聯合會], and Dalian Chinese Youth Association [大連中華青年會]. Yahedaduhui [壓河大刀會] was an

anti-Japanese militant group that attacked Japanese forces. There was also the Dalian Intelligence Organization [大連國際情報組] (a.k.a. Band of Anti-Japanese Arsonists [抗日放火團]), an international intelligence operation set up by the Intelligence Directorate of the Russian Red Army Staff to destroy military facilities in the areas controlled by Japanese forces. According to *History of Dalian*, the CCP had a direct and an indirect influence on Dalian's labor movement. While Dalian's labor movement started off as an anti-Japanese movement over labor issues, it evolved into a liberation movement after the founding of the CCP.

III

The topics covered by *History of Dalian* and its viewpoints are as discussed above. I would like offer my impressions of the work in the place of a review.

I would first like to talk about the book's strengths. As aforementioned, *History of Dalian* was written to contribute to the history education of Chinese and Japanese youth and to the scholarly research of the history of Sino-Japanese relations and of the war history of anti-Japanese resistance. The work consists of 4 parts and 26 chapters, with the 4 parts arranged in chronological order. The book is thus accessible to those readers without any background knowledge. The chapters comprising each part are organized by theme and in accordance with the defining characteristics of a given period. Hence, the overall organization of the work is rather straightforward. That is, *History of Dalian* is not too dense or difficult as some academic texts tend to be. Therefore, the general reader will not have any serious difficulties with it and will be able to gain an understanding of the history of Japan's colonial rule of Dalian. At the same time, there are many charts and graphs as well as abundant statistical information that specialized researchers will find useful.

History of Dalian focuses on the period of Japanese colonial rule

over Dalian. Be that as it may, the work could have benefitted from additional historical background information. It was with imperialist intentions that Great Britain surveyed Dalian and the surrounding areas, but it did not take any further steps. On the other hand, Russia, with German and French cooperation, thwarted Japan's plan of acquiring a lease of Dalian as compensation for the Sino-Japanese War. Russia then seized the lease itself. A lease is a special agreement between two states whereby one state borrows a given territory of another state for a set period of time and exercises control over it. Strictly speaking, once the lease period is up, the leased territory must be returned or the lease extended. However, the two countries solidified their respective colonial government bodies, carried out city planning, encouraged their respective citizens to migrate to Dalian, discriminated against the local Chinese, and exploited Dalian for their respective economic interests. Russia and Japan's policies and practices evidence the countries' intentions of permanently controlling Dalian. Thus, while nominally, Russia and Japan had been in Dalian as lessees, their stays are called periods of colonial rule. *History of Dalian*, however, does not delve into the historical background prior to the period of Japanese control, and thus, does not provide adequate coverage of Japanese and Russian intentions regarding Dalian. If there were more detailed coverage on the matter, the book would have been able to explain why and how Dalian became the stage of great power rivalry in the late 19th century. In turn, it would have been able to highlight Dalian's geostrategic importance. This would have shed light not only on Dalian's present-day geostrategic significance in Manchuria but also on its future role and status in Northeast Asia. It would have also contributed to realizing China's goal of turning Dalian into a second Hong Kong.

Korea, too, has recently seen a flurry of research activities related to the history of individual cities under Japanese colonial rule. Some of the cities thus studied include Gyeongseong, Busan, Daegu, Mokpo, and Incheon. The studies have analyzed the urban planning and development

carried out by the colonial authorities in order to examine the forms and governance structures of colonial cities. Dalian and other cities whose urban planning were intended to facilitate colonial rule could be studied in conjunction with the Korean cities under Japanese colonial rule. *History of Dalian* could serve as basic reference for undertakings. While Lushun and Dalian have close connections to Korea's anti-Japanese independence movement, they have not gotten adequate attention from the Korean scholarly community. *History of Dalian* is a work that could generate interest in Lushun and Dalian and serve as informative reference on the area.