

# Constraint Novelty: Literature and “National Concordance” in Manchukuo

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## **Constraint Novelty: Literature and “National Concordance” in Manchukuo**

Manchukuo has attracted academic attention in recent decades for its ideological novelty of “national concordance.” Drawing upon the examples of the writings of Japanese writers such as Ōuchi Takao, Kitamura Kenjirō, Yamada Seisaburō, and Kawabata Yasunari, as well as those of Chinese writers such as Tian Bing and Yi Chi, this article seeks to reveal that rather than a consistent discourse, “national concordance” in Manchuria was inherently constructive. With the influx of Japanese emigrants in 1937, Chinese literature and its Japanese translations served as a means of colonial governance to produce colonial identities and relations within the ideological scope of “national concordance.” Within this constructed literary space, depiction of the “White Russian” community became a contested field in which Japanese and Chinese authors sought to articulate their different political views.

**Keywords:** Manchukuo, colonization, Chinese literature, translation, White Russian

# Constraint Novelty: Literature and “National Concordance” in Manchukuo

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Although Manchukuo, the Japanese colonial territory in northeastern China, existed for less than fifteen years, it represents an excellent example of the complexity of colonialism and colonial governance in the twentieth century. Over the past few decades, Manchukuo’s ideological novelty in its accommodation of transnationalism has attracted considerable academic attention. Prasenjit Duara, Rana Mitter, Louise Young, Hyun Ok Park, Komagome Takeshi, and Suk-Jung Han, among others, have enriched the narrative of Manchukuo’s history tremendously. Their efforts have successfully shifted the study of Manchukuo from that of a nation-centered paradigm that prioritized Manchukuo’s “puppet” nature to one of transcultural and transnational perspectives that emphasize the regional and de-territorial forces. The role of culture and ideology in the building of a “transnational” Manchukuo has also been recognized. The new scholarship tends to highlight the imperative to theorize the concept of colonialism—a term that was often defined narrowly and linked to territorial expansions that relied on violence and killing.

A further step, however, leads to the question of *how* within the

transnational and pan-Asian ideological framework colonial governance by means other than elimination and suppression could have operated. In what follows, by using the writings of a group of Chinese and Japanese authors, an attempt is made to show how the rhetoric of “national concordance” was constructed according to specific colonial agendas and how it led to the further consolidation of colonial rule in Manchukuo. Chinese literature and its Japanese translation, authorized by the “national concordance” rhetoric, worked as an apparatus to promote Japanese migration to Manchuria after 1937. Yet, in the very deployment of colonial power, and through the depiction of “White Russians” in literature, the Chinese writers found a way to voice their opinion on “national concordance.” This was in sharp contrast to that of their Japanese counterparts, who also found the image of the “White Russians” a useful vehicle of expression. Instead of pitting the constructs of transnational and national, and resistance and collaboration against each other, this article aims at revealing the interplay between these forces and the way in which colonial power sought to govern.

### **Constraint Novelty: “National Concordance” in Manchukuo**

As early as the late 1980s, Manchukuo’s critical position in Japan’s modern history persuaded academics such as Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie to distinguish it from other forms of Japanese imperialist dominations. Different from both the “Japanese colonial empire” and the “informal empire” gained through the unequal treaty system, Manchukuo was considered a part of “Japan’s Wartime Empire” in Northeast Asia. It was viewed as the beginning of an “ill-considered” adventure “beyond the boundaries of the formal empire,” and a turning

point in the “rational” Japanese expansion since the Meiji period.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the above opinion, Prasenjit Duara interprets the history of Manchukuo as a deviation from Japan’s older mode of colonial governance in Korea or Taiwan. “No matter how imperialistic the intentions of its builders, Manchukuo was not developed as a colony, but as a nation-state,” Duara argues.<sup>2</sup> For its highly advanced urban industry and economy, Manchukuo should be “distinguished not only from pre-modern states, but also from most nineteenth-century colonial states.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Louise Young has focused on Manchukuo’s “bravery,” backed by the formal colonial institutions such as the Kwangtung governor general and other informal controls, such as market dominance and cultivation of a collaborative elite.<sup>4</sup>

Among Manchukuo’s many acclaimed “particularities,” its ideological capability to implement “regionalism,” “Asianism,” “transnationalism,” and even “globalism” or “cosmopolitanism” within the same colonial space stands out.<sup>5</sup> Founded in 1932, Manchukuo was propagated as a land of the “Kingly Way” (王道) that was characterized by the “concordance of five nations” (五族協和).<sup>6</sup> The Declaration of

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<sup>1</sup> Mark R. Peattie, “Introduction,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 57.

<sup>2</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Prasenjit Duara, “Nationalism, Imperialism, Federalism, and the Case of Manchukuo: A Response to Anthony Pagden,” *Common Knowledge* 12, no. 1 (2006): 60.

<sup>4</sup> Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 11.

<sup>5</sup> See Han Suk-Jung’s discussion on the “nationalization of transnationalism” in Manchukuo. Han Suk-Jung, “The Problem of Sovereignty: Manchukuo, 1932-1937,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 12, no. 2 (2004): 464-470.

<sup>6</sup> This paper’s author prefers to translate *gozoku* as “five nations” rather than “five races” or “five ethnicities” from the acknowledgement that the adoption of *gozoku kyōwa* in Manchukuo was largely a response to rising national aspirations and to thoughts of national self-determination after 1918. Therefore, *minzoku kyōwa* is rendered as “national concordance” and *gozoku kyōwa* as “concordance of five nations.”

Manchukuo Foundation stated that there should be no differences between those living within this new territory, and people of all nations including the five nations—Han Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Japanese, and Koreans—were to be treated equally, as long as they wished to permanently reside in Manchukuo.<sup>7</sup>

This rhetoric of “national concordance” was in full accordance with Manchuria’s demographic makeup, in which the Chinese were the dominant population.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the 1920s, between 800,000 and one million Chinese—predominantly from the provinces of Shandong and Hebei—crossed the Great Wall and moved to Manchuria.<sup>9</sup> Before the foundation of Manchukuo, more than 30 million *Manjin* were already living in the Manchurian area.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, by 1936, only 4,245 individuals from 2,367 Japanese households relocated to Manchukuo although the first wave of Japanese immigration had started in 1932.<sup>11</sup> The large-scale Japanese migration occurred after 1937. In 1940, however, there were only 820,000 Japanese people among Manchukuo’s total population of 43,203,000.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the Chinese and Japanese, there were other national groups, as well. For example, in 1939, roughly one million Mongols and an equal number of Koreans, in addition to “White Russians” and communities of Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Poles, and Crimean Tartars co-habited this region.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Manshūkokushi hensan kankōkai, ed., *Manshūkokushi* [The History of Manchukuo] (Tokyo: Manmō dōhō engokai, 1970), 219.

<sup>8</sup> The population consisted mostly of Han Chinese and Manchu people, who were lumped together by the Japanese under a category known as *manjin* (滿人).

<sup>9</sup> Yamamuro Shin’ichi, *Manchuria Under Japanese Domination*, trans. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Takamushō daijin kanbō bunshoka, ed., *Takumu tōkei Shōwa jūichi-nen* [Statistics of Exploration in 1936] (Tokyo: Takumu daijin kanbō bunshoka, 1938), 225.

<sup>12</sup> Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 31.

<sup>13</sup> John J. Stephan, “Hijacked by Utopia: American Nikkei in Manchuria,” *Amerasia Journal* 23, no.

In addition, the adoption of “national concordance” in Manchukuo was a result of various international pressures. Following the end of World War I, the decline of colonial control in Asia, combined with rising nationalism in what would later be known as the Third World, changed the global power balance. Anti-imperialist movements attained new heights in East Asia starting with the March First protest in Korea in March 1919 and China’s May Fourth Movement in the same year. An absolute annexation such as those that took place in Taiwan and Korea would have been an anachronistic move. Instead, it was more advisable to preserve the language, religion, culture, and customs of the peoples that lived in the state. Even the dethroned Qing Emperor became an effective means to accommodate Chinese nationalism, to mobilize Chinese local elites, and to support the tenuous sovereignty that had been undermined by the Lytton Commission.<sup>14</sup>

The path to realizing “national concordance” in actuality was fraught with many challenges. For example, there was never a law of nationality to clearly define the subjects of Manchukuo. According to Mariko Asano Tamanoi, classifying who was to be considered Manchurian involved multiple and sometimes contradictory parameters.<sup>15</sup> For example, although they were considered a part of the five nations, the Korean people faced ambiguities. Like their Japanese counterparts in Manchukuo, the Koreans continued to hold dual “nationalities”—in both Japan and Manchukuo. They were required to

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3 (January 1997): 2.

<sup>14</sup> For research on the ideological and cultural means adopted by the Manchukuo government, see Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*. Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000). Warren Smith, *Confucianism in Modern Japan* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1973). Komagome Takeshi, *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no bunka tōgō* [The Cultural Integration of the Colonial Japanese Empire] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996).

<sup>15</sup> Mariko Asano Tamanoi, “Knowledge, Power, and Racial Classification: The ‘Japanese’ in ‘Manchuria,’” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 2 (May 2000): 255-256.

register in the family registry system organized by the Government-General of Korea. They paid taxes to the Manchukuo government, while being mobilized into the voluntary army by the Government-General of Korea.<sup>16</sup> After 1935, the education affairs of the Japanese people in Manchuria were entrusted to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, while the administration of Korean people's education was transferred to Manchukuo.<sup>17</sup> The Korean people living in Manchukuo were torn between Manchukuo's "concordance of five nations" and the colonial policy of "Japan and Korea are one body" (内鮮一体) that was especially favored by Minami Jirō (1874-1955), who was the Governor-General of Korea between 1936 and 1942.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, the "White Russians" did not even constitute Manchukuo's "five nations," yet became a frequent theme in many different writings and researches during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Consequently, their history and status were frequently reported, which seems to suggest that "national concordance" was a rhetorical exercise at best.

Manchukuo's "national concordance" was further undercut by the national conflicts that constituted a regular part of daily life. As Louise Young has suggested, labels such as "corruptibility," "lack of patriotism," and "banditry" were frequently used to cast aspersions on Chinese nationalism, to exploit cheap labor, and even to justify the killing of civilians.<sup>19</sup> This unequal relationship, however, was not just between the Japanese and Chinese people. Rather, it existed among various nations.

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<sup>16</sup> Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 134-139.

<sup>17</sup> Tanaka Ryūichi, "'Manshū kokumin' no sōshutsu to 'Zaiman Chōsenjin' mondai [The Birth of 'Manchukuo's National Subjects' and the Issues of 'Korean People in Manchuria']," *Higashi Ajia kindaiishi* 6 (2003): 29-30.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-37.

<sup>19</sup> Louise Young, "Rethinking Race for Manchukuo," in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Frank Dikötter (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 165-167.

For example, in 1938 many Chinese workers from the provinces of Hebei, Shanxi, and Henan were recruited in Manchukuo as “coolies.” Without a local identity, they usually worked under the supervision of Korean people, while the Japanese themselves seldom participated in construction work.<sup>20</sup> As the present paper will later show, this form of multilayered national inequality was encapsulated in the writings of many Chinese writers. “National concordance” in Manchuria was subject to a bigger crisis when the great migration policy was adopted in August 1936 by the Hirota cabinet.

Against this background, colonial governance had to be enhanced across multifarious domains, and the cultural and literary dimension that has been largely underestimated thus far can be seen as a likely area where colonial governance could have been applied. Colonialism, or imperialism, is not just a system of military enforcement, bureaucratic mechanisms, legal institutions, and economic enterprises, but also an engine of cultural mobilization and literary expression. During this time, writers and translators were equally entrapped in the ubiquitous net of colonial power and participated in colonial governance.

Here, the concepts of governmentality and governance from Foucault are borrowed. By doing so, this paper aims to study the dimension of colonial governance that did not necessarily rely on deduction or suppression. In Foucault’s theory, governmentality, or the so-called art of governance, takes the population as its direct object, and sets as its aim the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health and so on.<sup>21</sup> In this paper, Foucault’s concepts are introduced into the colonial context. As Foucault suggested, it was, among other factors, the establishment of

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<sup>20</sup> Liu Chunying, “Dayaxiya yu ‘dadongyazhanzheng’ [Pan-Asianism and the Greater East Asian War],” *Ribenxue luntan* 190 (2008): 51-52.

<sup>21</sup> Michel Foucault, “Governmentality,” in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 94.

colonial states since the sixteenth century that yielded a problem for governments in the first place.<sup>22</sup> By introducing Foucault's concepts into Manchukuo, Foucault's question of "how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed"<sup>23</sup> turns into a concrete question of how to govern different nations residing in Manchukuo under various international and internal constraints.

Aided by Foucault's concepts, colonial power can be conceived beyond the narrow definition of deduction, subtraction, or suppression—in a word, a right of seizure that depends on prohibition and punishment; rather, it also takes the form of producing or enabling the existence of the colonized "other" as well as colonial relations.<sup>24</sup> As this paper will show, Chinese literature and the "White Russian" community were to some extent supported rather than purely suppressed in the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, this does not mean that colonial power was by nature benevolent; it rather invites reflection on such power's devious route. Resistance is accordingly no longer limited to a single form of opposition to colonial suppression. Rather, as Foucault suggested, where there is power, there is resistance, and resistance never exists outside the power relation.<sup>25</sup> It was through the deployment of colonial governance that colonial resistance uttered its voice.

## Chinese Literary Space Constructed

Despite Manchukuo's policy of "national concordance," in the early stages of Manchuria's literary development there was virtually very little interaction between Japanese writers and their Chinese counterparts, and

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>24</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 136-137.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 95.

this remained largely the case until 1937. In the early days of Manchukuo, Japanese and Chinese writers not only lived and worked in different areas of Manchuria, but also tended to favor different literary forms. Japanese literature in Manchuria cultivated traditional literary genres such as *haiku*, *tanka*, and poetry, while Chinese literature in Manchuria, influenced by the May Fourth Movement, was rooted in short stories and novels. The development of Japanese-language literature in Manchuria was geographically associated with the development of the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR), extending along the railway lines and concentrated in the hub cities of Dalian and Changchun (later Shinkyō) whereas Chinese literature thrived mainly in Harbin where policing and screening systems were lax.<sup>26</sup> By 1928, Chinese literature in the form of poetry and novels had already begun to flourish in Manchuria. The first literary group “Poplars” (白楊社) was founded in Jilin in 1920 by Mu Mutian (1900-1971), who later came to be a well-known symbolist poet of China.<sup>27</sup> Eight years later, another literary group was formed under the name “Beyond the Borders” (關外).<sup>28</sup>

However, the foundation of Manchukuo marked the start of censorship and regulation. Books, magazines, newspapers, broadcasting, and films were initially regulated by the propaganda department within the so-called Finance and Politics Bureau (資政局). However, the Bureau

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<sup>26</sup> See Okada Hideki, *Bungaku ni miru “Manshū koku” no isō* [The Manchukuo Phase Seen from the Perspective of Literature] (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 2000), 114. “Shinkyō” (新京) was the name used to refer to the Chinese city Changchun (長春) under Japanese occupation. Changchun was renamed Shinkyō in 1932, shortly after the establishment of Manchukuo, and served as the capital of Manchukuo until Japan’s defeat in August 1945. After that, it was re-named Changchun, its original Chinese name. In this article, “Changchun” is used to discuss activities that happened before 1932, while in other cases the Japanese name “Shinkyō” is used to keep the original historical meaning.

<sup>27</sup> Ōuchi Takao, *Manshū bungaku nijūnen* [The Twenty-Year History of Manchurian Literature] (Shinkyō: Kokumin gahōsha, 1943), 337.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 339. The group’s name alludes to the division of China by the Shanhaiguan (山海關, the mountain-sea barrier) into “inside” and “outside” (where Northeast China lies).

was disbanded in July 1932 and the task of propaganda and censorship was entrusted to the Information Sector within the Management and Coordination Agency of the General Affairs State Council (國務院總務庁情報処), which was eventually expanded and re-named the Propaganda Agency of the General Affairs State Council (國務院總務庁弘報処) in 1937. Authorized by the Publication Law of 1932, the police had the right to destroy any content they deemed as “dangerous.”<sup>29</sup> The police arrested and murdered many Chinese writers in the years between 1934 and 1936 and Chinese literature in Manchuria lost its vibrancy.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, in October 1935, in order to enhance propaganda in Manchukuo, the Kwangtung Army came up with the idea of establishing the Association for Propaganda (滿洲弘報協會).<sup>31</sup> It controlled not only publication houses, but also newspapers and many small newspapers were forcibly disbanded. Before 1935, local newspapers, such as *Shengjing Times* (盛京時報), which blended Japanese ownership with Chinese management, were the main forums for the publication of Chinese-language literature. With Japanese interference, Chinese writers lost the space where they had once published their works and views.<sup>32</sup> Faced with such difficulties, Chinese-language literature subsequently ground to a halt.<sup>33</sup>

Yet, the situation took a sharp turn in 1937. After a long period of silence, the renaissance of Chinese literature started with the establishment

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<sup>29</sup> Xie Xueshi, *Weimanzhouguoshi xinbian* [New Account of the History of Manchukuo] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008), 370.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>31</sup> “Kyōryoku na genron kikan junbi no hitsuyō: Kōhō kyōkai setsuritsu ni tsuki Itagaki sanbōchō setsumei [The Necessity of Setting Up Propaganda Offices: Chief of staff Itagaki Seishirō’s Explanation Regarding the Establishment of the Association for Propaganda],” *Manshū nichinichi shinbun*, September 1936.

<sup>32</sup> Norman Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo: Chinese Women Writers and the Japanese Occupation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 41.

<sup>33</sup> Ōuchi, *Manshū bungaku nijūnen*, 350.

of three literary journals between 1937 and 1938: *Brightness* (明明 *Mingming*), the *Journal of Arts and Literature* (藝文志 *Yiwenzhi*), and *Manchurian Romanticism* (滿洲浪漫 *Manshū roman*). Ōuchi Takao's two collections of translations of Chinese works in 1939 and 1940 were also published during this period.<sup>34</sup> Many Chinese literary works as well as Ōuchi's translations made their debut in these three journals.

Born in 1907 in Fukuoka, Ōuchi moved to Changchun in 1921. In 1925, he was admitted to the East Asia Common Culture Academy (東亞同文書院) in Shanghai. During this period, Ōuchi gravitated toward a Chinese literary group named the Creation Society and enjoyed close personal interactions with Chinese writers who used to study in Japan.<sup>35</sup> Ōuchi joined the SMR immediately after his graduation in 1929, during which time he also edited the *Manchurian Review* (滿州評論 *Manshū hyōron*).<sup>36</sup> Influenced by his early interactions with Chinese writers and the overall pan-Asianist atmosphere at the East Asia Common Culture Academy, Ōuchi constantly criticized Manchukuo's early policies. He was accused of having broken the Peace Preservation Law in 1931 and 1933, respectively, and was repatriated to Japan, as recorded in *The Japanese Communist Movements in Manchuria*.<sup>37</sup> Eager to make a contribution to Manchukuo's "national concordance," Ōuchi devoted himself to translating Chinese literature after 1937.

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<sup>34</sup> The Japanese character adopted by the journal was “曼,” rather than “漫,” which was equivalent to the word “romanticism.” However, since there is no better word than romance by which to translate “浪漫,” “Manchurian Romanticism” is used in this paper, while fully recognizing the limitations of its use.

<sup>35</sup> The Creation Society was a literary organization founded in Japan in 1921 by Chinese overseas students. It marked a new trend of revolutionary literature after 1928. In February 1929, it was forced to dissolve under Kuomintang pressure.

<sup>36</sup> For a brief biography, see Okada Hideki, “The Realities of Racial Harmony: The Case of the Translator Ōuchi Takao,” *Acta Asiatica* 72 (March 1997): 61-80.

<sup>37</sup> Kantō kenpeitai shireibu, *Zaiman nikkei kyōsanshugi undō* [The Japanese Communist Movements in Manchuria] (Tokyo: Kyokutō kenkyūjo shuppankai, 1969), 244. Yet, Ōuchi was not a communist and he called himself a humanist.

In addition to the three journals and Ōuchi's collections of his translations, in 1938, a bilingual "National Collection" that published not only Chinese classical works, but also works of modern Chinese writers, was launched in Manchuria. In 1939, the third issue of *The Yearbook of Manchurian Literature and Arts* (満洲文藝年鑑) for the first time demonstrated a willingness to incorporate the works of Chinese writers. From then on, not only did Chinese and Japanese intellectuals gain a shared space for publication, but they also had occasion to interact directly with one another in journal editing and publishing roles.

The Manchurian literary arena in the late 1930s and early 1940s, which was in principle a difficult period for people living in colonial Taiwan and Korea, was more productive than usually assumed, due to Japanese promotion of Chinese literature and literary interactions between the Japanese and the Chinese people in Manchuria. Yet, the fact that Japanese and Chinese authors interacted more frequently after 1937 was not a sign of Manchukuo's loss of control in cultural affairs. It instead reflected the fact that imperialism in Manchukuo was not solely based on the means of negating the existence of others. The colonial government exhibited its control by constructing colonial identities and relations within the society. This period of growth of literary translations of Chinese works coincided with a crucial moment in the development of Manchurian cultural identity.

According to the "Treaty between Japan and Manchukuo regarding the living conditions, taxation and other matters of Japanese subjects in Manchukuo" that was signed by Manchukuo and Japan in 1936 and 1937, Japanese people could travel freely between Manchukuo and Japan with rights over land and property in Manchukuo.<sup>38</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>38</sup> "Manshūkoku ni okeru Nihonkoku shinmin no kyojū oyobi Manshūkoku no kazei tō ni kansuru Nihonkoku Manshūkoku kan jōyaku [Treaty between Japan and Manchukuo Regarding the Living Conditions, Taxation and Other Matters of Japanese Subjects in Manchukuo]," n.d., File No. A03022067100, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, <http://www.jacar.go.jp>.

waves of Japanese farmers, bureaucrats, and intellectuals were transferred to Manchukuo. By 1937, Manchukuo had undergone far-reaching administrative reforms, starting with the retirement of many influential figures that had founded Manchukuo, along with the arrival of a new generation of leaders including Hoshino Naoki (1892-1978), Tōjō Hideki (1884-1948), and Matsuoka Yōsuke (1880-1946) transferred from Tokyo. The influx of Japanese migrants and the new leadership subsequently triggered a debate over “Manchurian literature” (満洲文学) in 1936 and 1937, demonstrating an identity crisis among Japanese people living in Manchuria. For example, many Japanese authors, including Ōuchi, opined that the literature of Manchukuo had its own value and was distinct from Japanese literature. Yoshino Haruo (1901-), the journalist for *Manshū nichinichi shinbun* and the Secretary-General of a semi-official literary organization called the Manchurian Literary Association (満洲文話会), not only differentiated Japanese literature in Japan from Japanese literature in Manchukuo, but also argued that Manchurian literature should be written by people living in Manchukuo rather than by visitors.<sup>39</sup> The debate over “Manchurian literature” could be regarded as a response to the relinquishment of Japanese civilian extraterritorial rights over Manchukuo.<sup>40</sup>

Developing Manchurian cultural identities was then a crucial task for the state of Manchukuo. As part of legitimizing the projected image of an independent cultural identity, Manchukuo in turn needed a corresponding notion of an independent Manchurian literature. Chinese literature became indispensable to Manchurian cultural identity, and more broadly, to Manchukuo’s future legitimacy. In the words of Kanō

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<sup>39</sup> Amano Masami, “Henyō suru bungaku: Manshū bungaku ronsō o megutte [Changing Literature: On the Manchurian Literature Debate],” in “Shōwa” *bungakushi ni okeru “Manshū” no mondai dai-2* [The Issue of Manchuria in the Literary History of the Shōwa Period No. 2], ed. Sugino Yōkichi (Tokyo: Waseda daigaku kyōiku gakubu Sugino Yōkichi kenkyūshitsu, 1992), 54.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Saburō, “It is useful to define the essence of Manchurian literature through its interaction with Chinese literature, and draw on the elements that can secure Manchukuo’s independence.”<sup>41</sup> As such, after 1937, the rhetoric of independent Manchurian literature and cultural identity reached an apex in its discourse, leading to a wave of state-sponsored literary activities.

With the official plan to restore Manchurian culture, a large sum of money was offered to support the literary activities of Chinese living in Manchukuo by the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union, which was founded by the Cultural Affairs Department of the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Shinkyō in 1933. It had allocated a financial largesse to support the publication of *Journal of Arts and Literature* since 1939, the year it commenced. It had also sponsored the publication of *Manchurian Romanticism* and covered other expenses for the purpose of intellectual interchange.<sup>42</sup> In 1937, the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union funded the meeting of the Symposium of Arts held from September 4 to October 9 of that year.<sup>43</sup> One major topic of the Symposium was promoting Chinese literature in Manchukuo and the development of literary journals.<sup>44</sup> In short, the development of Manchurian literature was to a large degree influenced by the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union, which in turn, received money from the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo.

Although legitimized by the “national concordance” and dictated by the imperative to build an independent Manchurian identity, the

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<sup>41</sup> Kanō Saburō, “Manshū bunka no tame ni [For the Sake of Manchurian Culture],” *Manshū hyōron* 21, no. 5 (May 1941): 13.

<sup>42</sup> “Man-Nichi bunka kyōkai kiyō e shokuinhyō sōfu Shōwa jūgonen gogatsu [The Summary Report of the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union and the List of Staff],” n.d., File No: B05016056800, Sheet No. 11, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, <http://www.jacar.go.jp>. Also see Ishida Takuo, “Geibunshi to Man-Nichi bunka kyōkai [Journal of Arts and Literature and the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union],” *Chūgoku tōhoku bunka kenkyū no hiroba* 1 (October 2007): 15-21.

<sup>43</sup> The summary report of the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union, Sheet No. 43.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

“transnational” literary space was only limited to Chinese literature. Mongolian literature and Korean literature failed to find equal stature, although the widely defined Korean literary field in Manchuria encompassed many writers, such as An Su-gil (1911-1977), Kim Tong-in (1900-1951), Kim Cho-gyu (1914-1990), and Imamura Eiji, and contained a rich body of content ranging from anti-Japanese writings to works celebrating Manchukuo’s founding.<sup>45</sup> The development of Chinese literature was by no means a random occurrence, but rather was partially sanctioned by Japan’s international agenda. It took place against the backdrop of the Japanese Army seriously considering a confrontation with the Soviet Union around 1938, at which time the idea of Sino-Japanese cooperation (日華提携) became the new slogan of the times. In 1940, when Konoe Fumimaro’s government conceived a future position for Japan at the center of a New Order of Greater East Asia, the official position was to publicly promote a Japan-Manchukuo-China partnership.<sup>46</sup> With the support of this policy and backed by substantial financial sponsorship, Chinese literature enjoyed a revival of sorts.

This renaissance, however, belied the significant gap between reality and rhetoric, as demonstrated by Chinese writer Wang Ze’s sarcasm: “No one in Manchuria would deny the existence of Japanese literature, but the existence of Chinese literature has been recently discovered by the Japanese.”<sup>47</sup> As such, the space of Chinese literature

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<sup>45</sup> Kawamura Minato, *Bungaku kara miru “Manshū”*: “*Gozoku kyōwa*” no yume to genjitsu [Manchurian Seen in Literature: The Dream and Reality of Five Nation in Concordance] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1998), 110-121. The birth and death date of Imamura Eiji was unclear.

<sup>46</sup> Tachibana Shiraki, “Kyōwakai no shinro kakutei ni kansuru kanken [My View Regarding the Future of the Manchurian Concordia Association],” in *Shiraki chosakushū dai-2-kan* [Collected Writings of Tachibana Shiraki, vol. 2], ed. Tachibana Shiraki Chosakushū Kankō Inkai (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1966), 191-192.

<sup>47</sup> Wang Ze, “Man-Nichi bungaku kōryū zatsudan [Conversation on the Literary Interactions between the Chinese and Japanese],” in *Manshū rōman dai-5-shū* [Manchurian Romanticism, vol. 5], ed. Lu Yuanming, Suzuki Sadami, and Ryū Kenki, reprint of 1940 edition (Tokyo: Yumani shobō, 2002), 87.

after 1937 was constructed as a way to combat the Manchurian cultural identity crisis. It ensured that there would be steady Japanese migration into Manchukuo, and would strengthen the bonds being formed between Japan, Manchukuo, and China. It also highlighted the colonial power's capacity to not only eliminate the culture of the colonized other, but also to produce, transform, and construct colonial relations according to its own political needs. Literature, as a field of colonial governance, helped Manchukuo attain its stability and wealth.

## The Surrogate Nation in Chinese Literature

The Japanese population constituted the dominant power in Manchukuo. They not only occupied important positions throughout governmental organizations and various institutions, but were also better paid than people from other nations. However, in almost all the Chinese writings in Manchukuo, it is interesting to note that there was no major Japanese protagonist. Chinese writers tended to avoid depicting Japanese characters. If a Japanese character was written into a scene, the writer was expected to reveal his or her attitude toward the Japanese people as well as Manchurian reality.<sup>48</sup> More often than not, Chinese writing preferred to dramatize the lives of “White Russians” in exile instead. For example, Chinese writers such as Jue Qing (1917-1960), Tian Bing (1910-?), Yi Chi (1913-?), Xiao Jun (1907-1988), and Shu Qun (1913-1989) all included “White Russians” in their writings. This was an easy way for the Chinese writers to voice their opinions toward the reality of Manchukuo.

When Manchukuo was founded, more than 75,000 Russians were living in the area, referred to by the colonial state as “foreigners.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Okada Hideki, *Weimanzhouguo wenxue* [Literature of Puppet Manchukuo] (Changchun: Jilin daxue chubanshe, 2001), 159.

<sup>49</sup> Guang Yang, “Lun weimanzhouguo Chao, Ri wailai minzu yu guojifa de nanchan [Korean and Japanese Nationality in Northeastern China and the Failure of Manchukuo's Nationality Law]”

Among them, approximately 30,000 were so-called “White Russians” who had “lost” their nationalities and the rest were considered citizens of the Soviet Union.<sup>50</sup> Most had occupied the area in the final years of the nineteenth century due to the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway. By the mid-1920s, joined by refugees from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the ensuing Russian Civil War in the early 1920s, the number of Russians in Harbin alone grew to 150,000, while some 35,000 Russians lived in other settlements in Manchuria.<sup>51</sup> When China officially recognized the Soviet government, in order to keep their jobs at the Chinese Eastern Railway, many Russians opted to become either Chinese or Soviet citizens. Those who refused to declare their allegiance were re-classified by the colonial government as “White Russians,” who together with the earlier refugees, came to form the stateless “White Russian” community.

This transitional historical period is captured in Shu Qun’s short story “Children without Countries,” which depicts the interactions among Chinese, Korean, and Russian students at the Chinese Eastern Railway School in Harbin. At the end of the story, in the wake of the founding of Manchukuo, the Russian students choose to return to the Soviet Union, while the Chinese and the Korean students seek refuge in Shanghai. Historically, Shanghai in the 1930s was a haven for many exiles from around the world, among which many were “White Russians.” In fact, there was even a wave of “White Russian literature” in Shanghai’s literary arena in the 1930s. Chinese left-wing writers, however, often portrayed these Russians as traitors of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>52</sup>

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(Master’s Dissertation, Yanbian Daxue, 2005), 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> John J. Stephan, *The Russian Fascists: Tragedy and Farce in Exile, 1925-1945* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), 37-40.

<sup>52</sup> See Mark Gamsa, *The Reading of Russian Literature in China: A Moral Example and Manual of Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 84.

Chinese writers in Manchuria, in contrast, were inclined to emphasize that Russians in Manchuria were simply people who had no protection from the state, and were, therefore, worthy of pity. For example, Xiao Jun wrote about young Russians who sneaked into ships without tickets on their way back home. The Russian protagonist in Shu Qun's "People without Nationalities" sings the refrain: "Beneath the cloud, I have my country, my sweet home. In the rain, there is my flower. Yet, the blossom fell and the heart has been broken, in this remote land," while the children ask the question "Why do we seem to be the only people in the world that do not have a country?"<sup>53</sup> "Wild Geese Flying Southward," a piece by another Chinese writer, Yi Chi, written during the Chinese literary boom, depicts the hard life of "White Russian" dairy farmers. The protagonist Andrei Lennon is an immigrant to Manchuria who earns his living by selling dairy products. Another character named Alexander works for the Manchukuo government and persuades Lennon to join the cooperative society, informing him that there is no protection of White Russians' private property anymore. And yet, Lennon's fate is not decided by Alexander, but by the person who is in uniform and silently stands behind him. The man in uniform symbolizes the presence of the silent Japanese authority that Chinese writers were unable to portray directly.<sup>54</sup> The identity of "White Russians" and the conflict with the authority symbolized by the uniform is emphasized throughout the entire story. In the end, the protagonist asks bitterly, "Where is the place that we White Russians can call home?"<sup>55</sup> The story fully reveals the living predicament the "White Russians" experienced in Manchukuo.

After the founding of Manchukuo, the government established the

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<sup>53</sup> Shu Qun, "Wuguoji de renmen [People without Nationalities]," in *Shu Qun daibiaozuo* [Representative Works of Shu Qun] (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 2010), 93-96.

<sup>54</sup> Okada, *Weimanzhouguo wenxue*, 159.

<sup>55</sup> Yi Chi, "Yan Nanfei [Wild Geese Flying Southward]," in *Mingming* [Brightness], ed. Xianzhuang shuju, reprint of 1937 edition (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2008), 201.

so-called Bureau of White Russians in 1934 to assist in the assimilation of the Russian population in Manchukuo. Yet, the Russian population diminished noticeably after 1935 when the Soviets sold the railway to Japan.<sup>56</sup> This was “an inevitable result of the economic policy of Manchukuo,” which introduced monopolies that suffocated private business.<sup>57</sup> The reality of the stateless Russian community aroused the sympathy of Chinese writers who tended to identify their own plight with this destitute group. However, how were these sentiments translated into Japanese? The answer may lie in Ōuchi Takao’s translation of Tian Bing’s short story “Alyosha.”

In “Alyosha,” the Chinese protagonist makes his way to a city (known only as “S”) and stays at a hotel where he meets a Russian boy by the name of Alyosha. The boy wants to trade a pair of old boots for a drink for his father. From the servants in the hotel, the protagonist hears the tragic story of Alyosha’s family. Alyosha’s father, a Russian aristocrat in decline had escaped to “X,” and sold himself to his present master. He works in his master’s vineyard where the conditions are horrible and the work exhausting. The father, who is an alcoholic, often steals from his master and then asks Alyosha to trade the stolen goods for alcohol. Alyosha’s sister, who is driven to prostitution, sells herself for a mere “twenty cents” for each encounter. In exchange for food, Alyosha’s mother has casual sexual relations with a Chinese man who works in a lime factory that produces construction materials. The Chinese worker, however, refuses to provide for Alyosha as well. The boy has to then either live with his father or wander the streets where he is easily subjected to bullying.<sup>58</sup>

In the original text, there is a scene in which Alyosha enters a shop

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<sup>56</sup> George C. Guins, “Russians in Manchuria,” *Russian Review* 2, no. 2 (April 1943): 83.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>58</sup> See Tian Bing, “Aliaoshi [Alyosha],” in *Mingming* [Brightness], ed. Xianzhuang shuju, Reprint of 1937 edition (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2008), 325-326.

and attempts to trade a pair of old boots for alcohol. The shopkeeper says he will consider it only if Alyosha's sister is willing to trade her body. The shopkeeper rails against Alyosha: "What the hell are you thinking? Your father is a bastard. Go home quickly and tell your sister to save a place for me."<sup>59</sup> Ōuchi, on the other hand, changes these words into "what the hell are you thinking? Go home quickly and tell your sister to come here."<sup>60</sup> In this exchange, the expression "to save a place for me" implies that the shopkeeper wants to visit the prostitute, which is not translated. Instead, it is replaced by "Tell your sister to come here." Thus, without reading the original Chinese version, readers will not understand the shopkeeper's true intentions.

In another scene, in which Alyosha's mother's abject poverty drives her into sexual relations with the lime worker, the original text reads: "In order to have a bowl of food, his wife has gone with a Chinese, a lime worker."<sup>61</sup> Ōuchi's translation reads: "His wife gets food from a Chinese in a lime factory."<sup>62</sup> How Alyosha's mother survives is completely omitted. The Chinese words "gone with a Chinese" (便跟了一個中國人) imply a partnership between a man and a woman. Even though Alyosha's mother goes with a Chinese and can buy food to fill her stomach, Alyosha's situation remains unchanged. In the story, it reads, "This was because the lime worker's salary is too low and he [the Chinese worker] simply does not like him [Alyosha], let alone want to bring him up. To him [Alyosha], the lime worker is also a distant person."<sup>63</sup> Ōuchi's translation reads: "This was because the lime worker's salary is too low

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<sup>59</sup> "混蛋你尋思什麼，你爹那個老王八。快回家告訴你姐姐給我留地方。" See *Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>60</sup> "馬鹿奴、何を考へてるんだ、此奴、早く家に帰って姉さんにやって来いといへ。" See Ōuchi Takao, "Aryōsha," in *Tanpopo: Manjin sakka shōsetsushū: dai ni shū* (Tokyo: Yumani shobō, 2000), 301.

<sup>61</sup> "他老婆為了弄盞飯吃，便跟了一個中國人，燒石灰的工人。" Tian, "Aliaoshi," 326.

<sup>62</sup> "彼の妻は食ふ物を石灰工場の支那人から貰ったりした。" See Ōuchi, "Aryōsha," 303.

<sup>63</sup> "這也是因為燒石灰的工人收入太少，從根本上，不喜歡他，更不肯養活他的關係。在他也覺得燒石灰的工人是生疏不相吻合的一個人。" See Tian, "Aliaoshi," 326.

and he [Alyosha] really does not appeal to him.”<sup>64</sup> The phrases “he simply does not like him,” “let alone want to bring him up,” and “the lime worker is also a distant person” are not found in Ōuchi’s translation. Wittingly or unwittingly, Ōuchi omits any reference to the discord between the Chinese and the “White Russians.”

The omission of Alyosha’s sister and mother’s behavior in Ōuchi’s translation might have been due to do his awareness of the “immorality” of these depictions and his willingness to consciously engage in self-censorship in the translation to avoid a repeat of his early unhappy experience of breaking the Peace Preservation Law and being subsequently repatriated. Norman Smith points to the fact that from the late 1930s onward, the Manchurian government managed to create the image of a self-sacrificing and obedient woman through all sorts of positive reinforcement and negative critiques. Women were urged to abandon their luxurious and intemperate lives and direct their energies towards family life and contribute to the war effort.<sup>65</sup> This was not so different from Japan’s own regulation of “sexual content” after 1938 in its promotion of a morally stable home front.<sup>66</sup> In February 1941, the colonial state announced the so-called Eight Abstentions (八不主義), which forbade any content concerning “love lust,” “recreational love that denigrates chastity,” “abnormal sexual desire,” or actions of “adultery.”<sup>67</sup>

While Ōuchi’s translation measured up satisfactorily to the moral standards of colonial rule, his translations also explored the metaphorical nuances associated with “family” and “father” in Chinese writing. In the original Chinese text, the shopkeeper says to the protagonist: “You think

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<sup>64</sup> “これ石灰焼き労働者の収入が余り少なかったかたであるが、それを本当に喜ばなかったからである。” See Ōuchi, “Aryōsha,” 304.

<sup>65</sup> Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 33-35.

<sup>66</sup> Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006), 62-64.

<sup>67</sup> Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 50.

this guy [Alyosha] is not handsome? He has two fathers!”<sup>68</sup> In other words, the shopkeeper wants to infer that Alyosha’s mother has become the Chinese worker’s mistress; therefore, Alyosha has two fathers. However, in Ōuchi’s translation the expression of “two fathers” implying Alyosha’s mother’s unfaithful relationship is omitted. He translates this as: “Haven’t you heard that his sister is \* \* \* \*. She does not seem so ugly.”<sup>69</sup>

The complex connotations surrounding “family” and “father” have a long history in Chinese literature, something Ōuchi knew well. He once wrote in 1941: “The family and its related problems are easily seen when one reads the recent literary works of Chinese writers in Manchukuo. Ten years ago, it was a typical theme in Chinese literature and this was also true for movies and dramas.”<sup>70</sup> Ōuchi once introduced the famous May Fourth writer Ba Jin (1904-2005), who wrote *The Family* (家) in 1931.<sup>71</sup> In modern Chinese literature, family did not exist as a simple social unit; *family* was bound with patriarchy. Family and state were viewed as paired concepts having tight unity. Ōuchi refers to the popularity of family novels (家族小説) in Manchukuo, commenting on their rich reservoir of material for literary writings.<sup>72</sup> However, Ōuchi did not disclose all the intentions of Chinese writers, who, while writing family stories, resorted to metaphors as a means of expressing views that were political. Tian Bing’s sarcastic way of writing “two fathers” may serve as a metaphor for the history of Manchukuo, similar to Shu Qun’s characterization of “White Russians” as “people without nationalities.”

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<sup>68</sup> “他姐姐沒聽說嗎，兩角錢一下，別看這傢伙樣不幾，兩爹呢。” See Tian, “Aliaoshi,” 325.

<sup>69</sup> “お聞きになった事ありませんか、この姉さんは\* \* \* \*なんですよ、これみたいに不様じゃありませんよ。” See Ōuchi, “Aryōsha,” 301.

<sup>70</sup> Yama, “Mankei to kazoku seido [Chinese People and the Family System],” *Manshū hyōron* 21, no. 18 (November 1941): 31. Yama is Ōuchi’s pseudonym.

<sup>71</sup> Huang Yang, “Shina kankei sūsho [Some Books Concerning China],” *Manshū hyōron* 23, no. 4 (July 1942): 28. Huang Yang is also Ōuchi’s pseudonym.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Translation has always been central to colonial encounters. According to Lydia Liu, translation was “indispensable to the processes of global circulation of colonial language theories, universal history, scientific discourse, material culture, and international law for the past few hundred years.”<sup>73</sup> It was an instrument for establishing and perpetuating the superiority of colonial cultures over the colonized.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the history of colonialism can even be perceived as a history of translation, a history of moulding people’s perceptions of self, of others, and the differences that lay between.<sup>75</sup> In Manchukuo, where Japanese demographic status possessed little clout, translation after 1937 was an integral part of colonial governance, installed by the state so that “national concordance” could maintain its lustre and an independent Manchurian cultural identity could stand the trial. However, although the development of Chinese literature was manipulated by the colonial power and mediated by Japanese litterateurs, Chinese writers found a way to voice their opinions in the very deployment of colonial power. Yi Chi’s “Wild Geese Flying Southward” and Tian Bing’s “Alyosha” were both written during the period of Japanese promotion of Chinese literature after 1937. The portrayal of the “White Russians” became the de facto contested field where both Chinese writers and Japanese translators, under the auspices of colonial government, competed for meaning and nuance. As a function of colonial governance, translation also faced its limits in colonial power.

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<sup>73</sup> Lydia H. Liu, “Introduction,” in *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, ed. Lydia H. Liu (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>74</sup> Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, “Introduction: Of Colonies, Cannibals and Vernaculars,” in *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London: Routledge, 1999), 17.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

## “National Concordance” Reinvented

The lives of “White Russians” appeared not just in Chinese writings, but also became a frequent theme in Manchukuo’s Japanese-language literature around 1940, despite its earlier absence. Three anthologies promoting literature of Manchukuo’s various nations were published between 1940 and 1942. They are the *Anthology of Short Stories of Japanese, Chinese and White Russian Writers in Manchukuo* (日滿露在滿作家短編選集) that was edited by the former leftist writer Yamada Seizaburō, and a two-volume series of *Anthology of Literature of Each Nation in Manchukuo* (滿洲国各民族創作選集) that was co-edited by Kawabata Yasunari, Kitamura Kenjirō, and the Chinese writer Gu Ding (1914-1964). Although entitled “literature of each nation,” the editors only included works by Japanese, Chinese, and “White Russian” writers. For example, the first volume includes pieces from Chinese writers such as Liang Shanding (1914-1997), Gu Ding, Yi Chi, Shi Jun (1912-1949), and Wu Ying (1915-1961). Among them were Ōuchi’s translation of Liang Shanding’s story and the writings of “White Russian” writers such as Arseny Nesmevelov (1891-1945). Notably, there was not a single piece from a Korean writer.<sup>76</sup> The consistent absence of Korean literature in Manchukuo’s blueprint of “national concordance” since 1937 reflected not only the discrepancy in Manchukuo’s political rhetoric and reality, but also the imperialist logic of constructing and rearranging colonial relations according to its own needs.

In addition to these anthologies that included writings of “White Russian” authors, many Japanese authors also cast their sights on the lives of “White Russians” in Manchukuo. For example, in 1940, Yoshino Haruo published his short story “Ivan’s Home” and Kitamura Kenjirō,

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<sup>76</sup> Annika A. Culver, *Glorify the Empire: Japanese Avant-Garde Propaganda in Manchukuo* (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 183.

the chief editor of *Manchurian Romanticism*, serialized his novel *New Year Scrolls* in *Manshū nichinichi shinbun*. This celebrated novel depicts how the Chinese and “White Russians” collaborated with the Japanese people in Manchukuo.<sup>77</sup> Ōtaki Shigenao (1910-1990) published another “White Russian” theme novel *Light and Land* in 1942.<sup>78</sup> In the same year, Fujiyama Kazuo (1889-1975), the former Manchukuo official who had drafted the “proclamation of Manchukuo’s Independence,” published *Romanovka Village*. Ōtaki and Fujiyama’s books were both published by the Society of Manchurian Settlement (満洲移住協会), which was a semi-official organization established in 1937 with the exclusive goal of promoting Japanese migration to Manchuria. Two years later, Yuasa Katsue (1910-1982), the former left-wing writer who had spent his childhood in Korea, published a novel entitled *The Village of White Russians*.<sup>79</sup> Around the same time, several reports as well as research on the lives of “White Russians” in Manchukuo were published, including *The Story of the Romanovka Village*, *Romanovka Village*, and *The Economy and Lives of White Russians*.<sup>80</sup> The early 1940s marked an unprecedented interest in Japanese writings on the lives of “White Russians” in Manchukuo. The Sino-Japanese literary interactions that started in 1937 developed into a literary space that encompassed the Japanese, Chinese, and “White Russians” in the 1940s.

As mentioned above, Manchuria in the early days attracted Chinese writers, many of whom settled in Harbin where they worked for the Chinese Eastern Railway. The Russians, who figured prominently in some of the writings, also tended to live in Harbin, a cosmopolitan city in the 1920s influenced by Russian architecture and city planning. Japanese

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<sup>77</sup> Han Lingling, “Manshūkoku ni okeru Kitamura Kenjirō no sōsaku [Writings of Kitamura Kenjirō in Manchukuo],” *Nihon kenkyū* 48 (September 2013): 186.

<sup>78</sup> Kawamura, *Bungaku Kara Miru “Manshū,”* 160.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>80</sup> Han, “Manshūkoku ni okeru Kitamura Kenjirō no sōsaku,” 186.

authors, in contrast, tended to focus on three distinct “White Russian” communities: the Cossack villages in the Sanhe (三河) region, the Romanovka villages (ロマノフカ村), and the Kuanchengzi area (寬城子).

In the early 1930s, the Manchukuo government invited some 8,000 Russian peasants to the Sanhe region, many of whom chose to leave the Primorsky region of the Soviet Union and move to Manchuria in opposition to Soviet collectivization of farmlands.<sup>81</sup> These Russians adjusted well to the Manchurian climate and successfully developed a livestock industry. The Romanovka village, which was located at the then so-called Liushuhezi village, was in close proximity to the Hengdaohezi railway station. In late 1936, 26 households consisting of about 150 Russians were brought to this area, officially leading to the establishment of the community. The new settlers lived off the land, hunting and raising livestock.<sup>82</sup> By the spring of 1945, the population had increased to more than 200 residents, and the village enjoyed a modest living in which each household was said to own a minimum of three horses and two cows.<sup>83</sup> Their strong adaptability attracted Japanese attention and thus was set as the example for the newly arriving Japanese migrants. In 1938, the SMR established the Manchurian Exploration Research Institute (滿洲開拓科学研究所) next to the Romanovka village to study the customs of Russian families. The Kuanchengzi community was located near the Kuanchengzi railway station at Manchukuo’s capital Shinkyō, an area that was inhabited by many Russian railway workers due its proximity to the Chinese Eastern Railways where many of these Russians worked. After the railway workers left, however, exiled “White Russian” officers and aristocrats re-occupied the region, which once

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<sup>81</sup> Yukiko Koshiro, *Imperial Eclipse: Japan's Strategic Thinking about Continental Asia before August 1945* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 75.

<sup>82</sup> Fukuda Shinsei, *Hokuman no Roshiajin buraku* [The Russian Communities in Northern Manchuria] (Tokyo: Tama shobō, 1943), 80-81.

<sup>83</sup> Koshiro, *Imperial Eclipse*, 76.

again captured public attention around 1937 when Shinkyō began to experience a housing crunch due to the inflow of Japanese emigrants.<sup>84</sup>

Bringing attention to the “White Russian” communities became a part of colonial governance, whose aim was to direct the conduct of Japanese migrants in the 1940s. In September 1939, the Japanese and Manchukuo governments issued the *Principles of Exploring Manchuria*, which officially announced the start of a new phase of migration to Manchukuo. The official language before 1939 was *imin*, but was shifted to *kaitakumin* soon after. Beginning in 1940, many Japanese farmers were sent to Manchukuo, organized in the form of either “group settlements” (集合開拓) or “bloc settlements” (集団開拓). The former contained dozens of households while the latter contained hundreds of households.<sup>85</sup> The Japanese rural settlers, who were mostly scattered along the border with Siberia, were used by the colonial government as a human buffer zone to prevent the encroachment of the Soviet Union and to deter the guerrilla warfare from the Chinese resistance movement.<sup>86</sup> It was a risky experiment for the colonial state, which had little experience in handling such large-scale population mobilization. The original plan of moving one million farmers over the course of two decades was ambitious, but only some 300,000 Japanese farmers actually migrated to Manchuria. Many returned quickly to Japan because they could not withstand Manchukuo’s bitter cold and primitive conditions.<sup>87</sup>

In addition to all sorts of economic incentives such as providing livestock, crop mix, seed, and fertilizer, the colonial government also felt the need to prescribe a type of ideological diet for the population. The success story of the “White Russian” community was used as an apt

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<sup>84</sup> Han, “Manshūkoku ni okeru Kitamura Kenjirō no sōsaku,” 193.

<sup>85</sup> Hasegawa Kōyō, *Manshū kaitaku no enkaku to gaibō* [The History and General Picture of Manchurian Exploration] (Tokyo: Manshū ijū kyōkai, 1942), 37-39.

<sup>86</sup> Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 46.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

model for instructing Japanese emigrants on how to make a living under Manchukuo's unique natural and economic conditions. Rather than emphasizing the stateless drifting status of the Russians, as the Chinese writers were often wont to do in the late 1930s, the Japanese writers of the 1940s instead sought to convey that the "White Russians" were dissatisfied with the Soviet Union and therefore succeeded in establishing new lives in Manchurian farmlands. For example, Yoshino Haruo's "Ivan's Home" portrays a Russian farmer who fails in an urban setting. Ivan moves to the city as a railway worker, but is no longer able to support himself when the railway station is abandoned. In order to find a job, he moves into the Kuanchengzi community near the capital and becomes a drifter, forming a sharp contrast to his happy earlier life in the farmland.<sup>88</sup>

A similar example is Kitamura Kenjirō's *New Year Scrolls*, in which the Japanese military officer Ōno Kōtarō tells a pair of Chinese brothers how the North-Eastern Army led by Su Bingwen (1892-1975), seduced by money, ruthlessly attacked the "White Russian" settlers in Manchuria in late 1932, and how the "White Russian" family had saved his own life in a military attack. The Russian settlers in Kitamura's literature are depicted as collaborators with the Japanese Army. Out of appreciation, Ono agrees to take the girl Natasha and her husband to Manchukuo's capital, Shinkyō. Yet, Natasha's husband dies in Shinkyō because he is unable to adjust to city life and Natasha eventually returns to the farmland. Through the experience, Ono realizes that the best choice for "White Russians" in Manchukuo is to work in agriculture and thereafter devotes himself to assisting agricultural immigrants into the

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<sup>88</sup> Sugimoto Masako, "Hakkei Rojin wo meguru 'te ku su to': Yoshino Haruo no 'Ivan no ie' to Ishizawa Eitarō no 'Kisō' [Text on White Russian: Yoshino Haruo's 'Ivan's Home' and Ishizawa Eitarō's Competition]," in "*Shōwa*" *bungakushi ni okeru "Manshū" no mondai (san)* [Manchurian Issues in the Literary History of the Shōwa Period, vol. 3], ed. Sugino Yōkichi (Tokyo: Waseda daigaku kyōiku gakubu Sugino Yōkichi kenkyūshitsu, 1996), 61-65.

Sanhe region.<sup>89</sup> Kitamura demonstrated a clear mission to “enlighten” the Japanese emigrants, as he criticized the Japanese settlers, saying “regardless of whether they are settlers in big cities or farmers in farmlands, they cannot adapt to the Manchurian natural environment. Once they have chances, they will return to Japan. They have no love for this land.”<sup>90</sup>

In addition to the “White Russians,” Kitamura also depicts a pair of Chinese brothers, Zhen Zao and Duo Zuo, who commit to Manchukuo’s “national concordance” in divergent ways. The younger brother Zhen Zao follows Ono’s instructions to work on “White Russian” farmlands, while the older brother Duo Zuo, although he remains in Shinkyō, decides to adopt the Japanese lifestyle.<sup>91</sup> At the end of the novel, Duo Zuo receives a letter from Zhen Zao at the Chinese Spring Festival and imagines a prosperous spring at the remote farmland.<sup>92</sup> The romanticism conveyed in Kitamura’s novel is also palpable in Ōuchi’s play *Flowers Bloom in Spring*, in which a young Chinese graduate in Shinkyō eagerly accepts a job in the remote countryside, believing that “as long as it is within Manchukuo, anywhere is the same.”<sup>93</sup> With the influx of Japanese settlers, the Manchukuo government was in great need of young people willing to explore the remote areas of northern Manchuria. Filled with romanticism, the writings of Ōuchi and Kitamura provided the best explanation to “national concordance” in the early 1940s.

Kitamura’s *New Year Scrolls* was highly praised by Kawabata

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<sup>89</sup> Kitamura Kenjirō, “Shunren [New Year Scrolls],” in *Senka Manshū ni agaru* [Wartime Fire Kindled in Manchuria], ed. Agawa Hiroyuki (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1962), 214-304.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>93</sup> Ōuchi Takao, “Yangchunhua kai shi [Flowers Bloom in Spring],” *Xin Manzhou* 3, no. 8 (August 1943), 113.

Yasunari.<sup>94</sup> Kawabata not only actively searched for publishers in Tokyo for Kitamura's piece, but also wrote the preface for it. In his opinion, its success lay in its show of "national concordance." Kitamura claimed that there was no other writing about Japanese interaction with other nations, even within the best of Japanese literature because Japanese writers were unaccustomed to this theme.<sup>95</sup> However, through the portrayal of the Chinese brothers and the "White Russian" family, Kitamura underlined the key point to Manchukuo's legitimacy: the ideology of "national concordance."

As this paper demonstrated earlier, the original emphasis of "national concordance" in the late 1930s lay in "Sino-Japanese cooperation" and "Japan-Manchukuo-China partnership." Yet, when it came to the early 1940s, it also encompassed the "White Russians" even though the Russian population was never really accounted for as a significant component of Manchukuo's early slogan of "concordance of five nations." As Kitamura's *New Year Scrolls* suggests, anti-Japanese military attacks formed a great threat to the Japanese control of Manchuria. The Manchukuo Army launched all sorts of "anti-bandit" operations throughout the 1930s, targeting not only the Northeastern

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<sup>94</sup> Kawabata Yasunari visited Manchukuo twice in 1941, first in April and again in September as a member of the "Pen Platoon" on invitation from the Kwangtung Army. See "Nihon pen butai zaimanchū nittei [The Schedule of the Trip in Manchuria]," *Manshū nichinichi shinbun*, September 8, 1941. The so-called "Pen Platoon" was organized around 1938 by Kikuchi Kan, the founder and editor of *Bungei shunji*. From that point on, writers such as Kawabata, Kobayashi Hideo, and Hayashi Fusao among others were frequently dispatched to various occupied territories to promote Japanese culture and enlist the support of the local intelligentsia. Regarding the imperialist mobilization of literature in metropolitan Japan, see Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 116-120. As demonstrated by Kitamura's case, writers in Manchuria were encouraged to use the metropolitan's publication sources. Ōuchi's translation collections were also published in Tokyo by the Sanwa Publishing House (三和書房).

<sup>95</sup> Yasunari Kawabata, "Manshūkoku no bungaku [Manchukuo's Literature]," in *Kawabata Yasunari zenshū* [Collections of Kawabata Yasunari], vol. 32 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1982), 622.

Army, but also communist guerrilla groups.<sup>96</sup> The Su Bingwen attack portrayed by Kitamura was only one of those numerous military conflicts, and, therefore, the Japanese were in desperate need of any possible manpower to consolidate its Manchurian borders. As a result, the “White Russians” in Manchuria were mobilized. They were first recruited in the early 1930s to protect the railways, important roads, and the gold fields.<sup>97</sup> From 1939 onwards, and especially during the period of 1940-1941, they were recruited into the army and trained in covert warfare to sabotage the Soviet Union.<sup>98</sup> In the 1940s, there was official hope that the Russian émigrés could even play a role as the sixth national group other than the Manchu, Han Chinese, Mongol, Korean, and Japanese peoples in Manchukuo.<sup>99</sup> Beginning with Su Bingwen’s military attack and concluding with “White Russian” farmlands, Kitamura’s *New Year Scrolls* clearly demonstrates the Russian peoples’ mission in Manchuria.

Kitamura’s writing and Kawabata’s preface were written during a time when “national concordance” was critical, not only for Manchukuo, but also for the future of the entire Japanese empire. By 1942, Japan had already conquered Singapore, and acquired territories in Southeast Asia where national and racial components were extremely complicated. Manchukuo served as a space for the realization of romantic ideals that were unattainable in metropolitan Japan, and more importantly, it was set as the example for the occupied territories in Southeast Asia.<sup>100</sup> As Kawabata has disclosed in his preface:

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<sup>96</sup> Regarding the military conflicts and “bandit problem” see Philip S. Jowett, *Rays of the Rising Sun: Armed Forces of Japan’s Asian Allies 1931-45*, vol. 1, China and Manchukuo (Solihull, UK: Helion and Company Ltd, 2004), 18-24.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>99</sup> Koshiro, *Imperial Eclipse*, 74.

<sup>100</sup> Culver, *Glorify the Empire*, 171.

Japan has now even progressed southwards in its war, yet there is no other country but Manchukuo that constructs its state and develops its culture with other nations. Pan-Asian ideals will be first realized in Manchuria because if they are not attained here, then it might be assumed that they cannot be attained anywhere, and we are working on them with the Han Chinese people. [...] The day may eventually come when Japanese writers migrate to the countries in the South and develop literature together with other nations.<sup>101</sup>

In the early 1940s, Manchukuo's cultural consolidation functioned as a model for the vast Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, and the rhetoric of "national concordance" was supposed to resound within the empire. The inclusion of Russian emigrants in the rhetoric of "concordance of five nations" after 1940 layered the original pan-Asianism with additional universalism and cosmopolitanism, helping it to develop in the direction of Eurasianism.<sup>102</sup> Different from Chinese writers' use of the "White Russians" as a surrogate protagonist in their writings, Japanese attention towards the Russian community was directed by the urgency to promote Japanese migration into Manchuria and to mobilize possible resources to combat the Soviet Union.

## Conclusion

In the course of this paper, an attempt has been made to briefly outline the development of Chinese literature promoted by the Manchukuo government in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In this process, literature

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<sup>101</sup>Kawabata Yasunari, "Manshūkoku kakuminzoku sōsakushu daiikan senja no kotoba [Editors' Words to the First Volume of Anthology of Literature of Each Nation in Manchukuo]," in *Kawabata Yasunari zenshū* [Collections of Kawabata Yasunari], vol. 33 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1982), 101.

<sup>102</sup>Koshiro, *Imperial Eclipse*, 73.

and translation were no longer purely an aesthetic issue, but became a part of colonial governance through which the colonial power managed to keep the colonial society functioning. The present paper's analysis demonstrates that rather than exclusively question the legitimacy and sovereignty of Manchukuo, an equally effective way to study the history of Manchukuo is to direct more attention to the question of *how* Manchukuo's control and legitimacy were retained through the disposition and placement of what Foucault calls *things*, which not only concerns the placement of populations, that is the Japanese and Russian migrants, but also their ways of living, means of substance, habits, customs, modes of production, and relations with other nations within the colonial society.<sup>103</sup> The ideological and spiritual status of the colonized was also under colonial supervision. The colonial power was no longer to rely on a single form of negation or killing, nor did it have all-pervasive control over its population. As the Chinese writings and Ōuchi's Japanese translation show, it was through state sponsorship that Chinese writers had a chance to generate a form of counter-politics whose effects appeared even more evident due to the contrasting existence of Japanese translation.

When discussing Joseph Conrad's novel *Nostromo*, Edward Said suggests that Conrad was both anti-imperialist and imperialist, and at the same time progressive, while also deeply reactionary. He could see the imperialism of the British and American owners of the San Tomé silver mine doomed by their own pretentious and impossible ambitions, but he could not see an alternative to this cruel tautology.<sup>104</sup> This apparent paradox could also be applied to Japanese pan-Asianists and former leftists that constituted the "novelty" of the intelligentsia in Manchukuo. They may have felt the need to reform the colonized society, yet were

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<sup>103</sup>Foucault, "Governmentality," 93.

<sup>104</sup>Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

unable to imagine an alternative to the deployment of colonial power. A space of literary exchange between Manchukuo's different nations in Manchukuo, underpinned by Ōuchi, Kitamura, Yoshino, and Kawabata, sustained in turn the colonial discourse of "national concordance" and colonial identity, despite the gap that existed between political rhetoric and reality.

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