Modern Asian Studies **53,** 2 (2019) pp. 582–605. © Cambridge University Press 2019
doi:10.1017/S0026749X17000713 First published online 11 January 2019

Chinese Asianism in the Early Republic: Guomindang intellectuals and the brief internationalist turn

CRAIG A. SMITH

University of Melbourne
Email: craig.smith1@unimelb.edu.au

Abstract

Until recent decades, historians of modern East Asia generally considered Asianism to be an imperialistic ideology of militant Japan. Although Japanese expansionists certainly used the term and its concept in this way in the 1930s and 1940s, earlier proponents of Asianism looked upon it as a very real strategy of uniting Asian nations to defend against Western imperialism. Showing that Chinese intellectuals considered different forms of Asianism as viable alternatives in the early days of the Republic of China, this article examines a number of discussions of Asianism immediately following the 1911 Revolution. Concentrating on newspaper articles and speeches by intellectuals Ye Chucang and Sun Yat-sen, I show the international aspirations of the Guomindang elite at this crucial point in the construction of the Chinese nation. Despite the dominance of discourse on the nation state, these intellectuals advocated different Asianist programmes for strategic purposes within the first two years of the Republic, dependent on their very different relationships with Japan.

Introduction

In 2006, China's ambassador to Japan introduced his theory of 'New Asianism' (*xin-Yazhouzhuyi*) to the Chinese public. Appointed foreign minister of the People's Republic of China in 2014, Wang Yi 王毅 rose to success at the Tokyo embassy, where he served as ambassador from 2004 to 2007. During this time, which saw relations with Japan worsen over the Yasukuni Shrine visits, the textbook controversy, and numerous anti-Japanese demonstrations in China, he formulated

his theory of Asian international solidarity, or Asianism,[1] as a plan to strengthen China–Japan ties and provide a terminology for the peaceful future of East Asia based on cultural commonalities. His 2006 article in *Foreign Affairs Review* 外交評論 drew upon late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century conceptions of Asianism to re-imagine the future of Eastern civilization (東方文明 *dongfang wenming*).[2] Wang's return to this concept was driven by his intention to emphasize China's role as Asian leader in its peaceful rise. President Xi Jinping has since repeatedly emphasized this role at the annual conference for the Boao Forum for Asia and in discussions on the One Belt, One Road Initiative. Xi's calls for a 'Community of Common Destiny' (命運共同體 *mingyun gongtongti*) in Asia are not merely rhetoric. Unlike Sun Yat-sen's calls for Asianism in the early twentieth century, today China has begun to follow through with impressive examples, such as the late 2014 formation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank—an institution committed to regional development under Chinese leadership.

Despite sporadic outbursts of nationalism related to territorial issues and sizeable differences in historical memory between China and neighbouring countries, Chinese elite have been making sincere and concerted efforts towards greater international regionalism, and their use of texts from the early Republic to frame current objectives prompts this investigation into the history of Chinese understandings of 'Asianism', particularly the various invocations of the term by modern intellectuals. In the early twentieth century, amidst the surging nationalism of the newly founded Republic of China, there were similar calls for internationalism, but they were short-lived due to both domestic turmoil and rising Japanese imperialism. Then once the Japanese government adopted Asianism as a discourse to justify imperialist militarism, the concept became tainted. Since that time, few studies have acknowledged Chinese intellectual writing on Asian

[1] Here I use the term 'Asianism' to refer to a political belief that emphasized a unifying identity across national borders to include multiple Asian nations. This is a catchall term to indicate what in Chinese has been called 亞洲主義 *Yazhouzhuyi* or 亞細亞主義 *Yaxiyazhuyi*. In Japanese, it is referred to as アジア主義 *Ajiashugi*. The prefixes 凡 (*fan:* pan), 大 (*da:* great), and 新 (*xin*: new) are regularly added to these terms, providing different and often opposing understandings of Asianism.

[2] Wang Yi, 'Sikao ershiyishiji de xinyazhouzhuyi' [Considering Neo-Asianism in the Twenty-First Century], *Waijiao Pinglun* 89 (2006): 6–10. Also, available in English translation by Torsten Weber in Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman (eds), *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 361–369.

internationalism and academic understandings of the construction of Chinese nationalism have failed to identify the influence presented by this tension between concepts of nation and region. However, the recent turn to emphasize Chinese intellectuals' efforts to situate China in a more international sense provides some context for this study.

Rebecca Karl's *Staging the World* has already shown how Chinese intellectuals from the late Qing did not only see themselves in relation to Japan and the West, but also situated China in global spaces of uneven development, with a particular emphasis upon Asia.[3] However, Prasenjit Duara's work to push our research beyond thinking on the nation has provided even more of the intellectual background necessary for this study.[4] In particular, he has examined intellectuals' desire for Asian international cooperation as a 'cultural movement' in the years just prior to my own focus.[5] In this article, I show that the intellectual and cultural trends outlined by Karl and Duara were also articulated in strategic and political writings much earlier than previously imagined.

In Chinese, there are a number of studies of the Asianism of Japanese and Chinese intellectuals, including the work of Sheng Banghe and Wang Ping, which have brought an end to the taboo on this field.[6] And the study of Japanese Asianism (Pan-Asianism) has also expanded to include Chinese Asianism in recent years, particularly in the work of Nakajima Takeshi and Sven Saaler.[7] These studies have greatly expanded the breadth of Japanese Asianism, but repeatedly limit Chinese Asianism to Li Dazhao's 'New Asianism' (新亞細亞主

[3] Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2002).

[4] Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asia Modern* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

[5] Prasenjit Duara, 'Asia Redux: Conceptualizing a Region for Our Times', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69.4 (2010): 963–983, at 969.

[6] Sheng Banghe, '19shiji yu 29shiji zhijiao de Riben Yazhouzhuyi' [Japanese Asianism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century], *Lishi Yanjiu* 3 (2000): 125–135; Wang Ping, *Jindai Riben de Yaxiyazhuyi* [*Modern Japan's Asianism*] (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2004).

[7] Nakajima Takeshi, *Ajia shugi: sono saki no kindai e* [*Pan-Asianism*] (Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 2014); Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann (eds), *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007); Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*.

義 1919) and Sun Yat-sen's 'Great Asianism' (大亞洲注意 1924).[8] Although these were certainly the most influential of Chinese texts on Asianism, this discourse was much more widespread and minor intellectuals and general discourse need to be better represented to show the breadth of Asianism during this time. Also, the prevalence of Asianist beliefs throughout the Guomindang (GMD) during this time needs to be discussed and connected with 1930s wartime developments to show the continuities of thought that are related to collaboration. Therefore, this article takes steps towards this by investigating Chinese writings on Asianism in early 1913, about one year after the 1911 Revolution. Due to very different relationships with Japan, Sun Yat-sen and the Guomindang propagandist Ye Chucang 葉楚傖 had very different approaches to Asianism. While acknowledging Sun Yat-sen's influence, and paying close attention to his speeches and writings, I dispute the great man history approach that posits Sun as an originator of the concept.

This article is about the convoluted relationship between international regionalism and the desire for a modern nation state. It questions the standard narrative of empire to nation state by exposing early twentieth-century discussions of international political possibilities. Below, I examine some of the first recorded uses of the term 'Asianism' in the early Republic, arguing that, even at this moment of the ascendancy of nationalism, Asianism was an overlapping discourse that provided strategies of liberation and it was indeed a strategy discussed by Chinese intellectuals shortly following the 1911 Revolution, before the hegemony of statism became fully entrenched. Below, I first discuss the historical turn to Asianism as a response to imperialist discourse, before examining Chinese proposals for Sino-Japanese cooperation and greater Asian cooperation in 1913. If early twentieth-century Asianism really is 'a precursor of contemporary Asian regionalism', as researcher of Japanese Pan-Asianism Sven Saaler understands it, we need to give further attention to its early beginnings in Chinese intellectual thought.[9]

[8] Li Dazhao, *Li Dazhao quanji* [*The Complete Works of Li Dazhao*] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2006); Sun Yat-sen, *China and Japan: Natural Friends—Unnatural Enemies: A Guide for China's Foreign Policy* (Foreword by Wang Jingwei and edited by T'ang Leangli) (Shanghai: China United Press, 1941).

[9] Saaler and Koschmann, *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japan*, 1.

The turn to Asianism in a time of nationalism

The Sinocentric worldview of Chinese culturalism did not simply give way to modern nationalism after the 1911 Revolution, but instead survived through a period of ambiguity and accommodation. This section introduces the term 'Asianism' and examines a process of appropriation as Chinese intellectuals re-imagined the possibilities for Asianism as print and elite nationalism began to take hold across urban China.

Various keywords to indicate Sino-Japanese cooperation or alliance had entered common usage before the revolution, and often through Japanese. These included popular phrases such as 'same script, same race' and the state-solidarity idiom 'if the lips perish, the teeth will freeze', as well as many others.[10] According to Sven Saaler and Christopher Szpilman, the term 'Asianism' first appeared in Japan in 1913 as 'pan-Asianism' (*han-Ajiashugi* 汎アジア主義) and 'all-Asianism' (*zen-Ajiashugi* 全アジア主義). Japanese newspaper editors used the terms in response to an article in *The Times* of London that questioned whether Japan wished to 'present herself as aloof from other Asiatic races, or as the avowed champion of Pan-Asiatic ideals'.[11]

Outside of Japan, the term 'Asianism' had a longer history than this. It was occasionally employed as a term to indicate polar opposition with Europeanism or Americanism. Racist politicians and journalists used the term to defend anti-Asian policies, such as American senator John H. Mitchell's use of Asianism in a senate speech as early as 1886:

> The conflict that is waged on this subject of the Asiatic occupation of this country is as irrepressible as the conflict that resulted in the overthrow of human slavery. It is a conflict for supremacy on American soil between intelligent, enlightened and honest American labor, and the cheap and degraded labor of the lowest order of the Mongol; a conflict between morality and vice, order and anarchy, Americanism and Asianism.[12]

[10] Same script, same race (*Ch/Ja: tongwen, tongzhong/dōbun, dōshu* 同文同種), if the lips perish, the teeth will freeze (*chunwangchihan* 唇亡齒寒), raise Asia (*Ch/Ja: xingya/kōa* 興亞), Great Eastern Federation (*dadongbanghe/daitō gappō* 大東合邦), Japan–China cooperation (*Ri-Zhong tixie/Nicchū teikei* 日中提攜), Asian union (*Yazhou liandai/Yaxiya rentai* 亞洲連帶), Japan–China alliance (*Ri-Zhong tongmeng/Nicchū dōmei* 日中同盟), East Asia alliance (*dongya lianmeng/tōa renmei* 東亞聯盟).

[11] 'The American Attitude Towards Japan', *The Times* (23 June 1913), 9. Also quoted in Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 16.

[12] John H. Mitchell, quoted in 'The Chinese Treaty', *The Milwaukee Sentinel* (27 February 1886), 1.

Through the use of opposing terms, Mitchell posits Asia and Asianism as the ultimate danger to the West, declaring his frustration that the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was not sufficient, as the Chinese immigrants continued 'extending eastward like a cloud of wrath [as] the evil imperilled labor, prosperity, peace, even life itself'.[13] An article in *The Guardian* from 1901 that reviewed Meredith Townsend's (1831–1911) *Asia and Europe*—a racist and paranoid collection of essays on the relationship between Asia and Europe—indicated a similar usage across the Atlantic:

> Mr Townsend believes in a fundamental solidarity of Asia based upon a common attitude towards life that is eternally antagonistic to European rule and ideas. Wherein this Asianism consists, he cannot exactly explain to himself or to us, but he is convinced of its existence and is dismally prophetic of its future working.[14]

Although Townsend himself did not use the term in his book, the Asianism that *The Guardian* refers to is a united Asia, from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, standing in opposition to Europe. As will be seen below, this extension of the Yellow Peril that Westerners feared at the turn of the century was appropriated and inverted by East Asian intellectuals in the 1910s, partly in reaction to racist immigration policies.

In late 1912 and early 1913, the American government—as well as the governments of a number of individual states—were involved in very public discussion of restrictions to be imposed upon newly arrived foreigners that would bar them from owning land. The only foreigners to be affected by this new law were those deemed ineligible for citizenship, specifically Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian immigrants. According to a 9 February *New York Times* article, the reasons for the prolonged debate were partly due to fears that 'it would give grave offense to China and Japan'. However, despite repeated appeals by the Japanese government, these discussions were finalized with the Alien Land Law of 1913, largely set in place to stop Chinese and Japanese from buying or cultivating land in California. As the discussion of these restrictions moved into the Japanese media in June of 1913, the term 'Asianism' entered the Japanese language through translation.[15] The term had been used to criticize Japan in the Western media and was not accepted in a positive manner by most

[13] Ibid.
[14] *The Manchester Guardian* (6 September 1901), 5.
[15] Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 16.

Japanese newspapers, editors at the *Asahi* declaring 'Considering the difficulties of falsely uniting under one nation, the idea of all-Asianism is a fantasy'.[16] However, these reactions were not only found in Japan. Chinese periodicals were also paying close attention to the discussions in Japan and the United States of America.

Between 1910 and 1914, Chinese journalists wrote or translated dozens of articles concerning anti-Asian immigration policies in South Africa, the United States of America, Canada, and New Zealand.[17] As in Japan, the policies in the United States of America garnered the most attention. In a particularly long January 1913 article, Xu Jiaqing 許家慶 detailed Japan's various efforts to engage with the United States of America's officials over these laws before explaining that the laws were also of grave concern to Chinese citizens, who were greatly discriminated against in California. He then chastised his compatriots: 'However, our country has shown no interest in official involvement. Our country's citizens act as though they neither see nor hear anything until there is nothing at all to be done. Looking at Japan, they are so distant from us.'[18] It was while these discussions were underway that Chinese intellectuals first mentioned the concept of Asianism.

The term 'Asianism' (亞細亞主義 *yaxiyazhuyi*) was employed in Chinese political journals in 1912, shortly after the revolution—a momentous occasion for intellectuals in East Asia that brought about a plethora of new possibilities for East Asia's future. This term too brought about new possibilities for cooperation, as well as ambiguities in identity. The extent of the cooperation indicated by Asianism was often not clear. Although many used it to refer to the territory of the traditional cultural Sinosphere, some referred to all of Asia, as will be seen below.

The People's Journal (1910–13)—an official newspaper of the Tongmenghui and then the Guomindang—ran a series of articles on Asian unity and Sino-Japanese cooperation during the first year

[16] *Asahi* (28 June 1913).

[17] For example: 'Mei zhi paiYa' [American Opposition to Asians], *Waijiao Bao* 10.29 (1910): 28; 'PaiYa sixiang zhi guchui' [The Promotion of Anti-Asian Thought], *Guofeng Bao* 1.26 (1910): 108; 'Nanfeizhou paichi Yazhouren zhi yimin faan' [South Africa's Anti-Asian Immigration Policy], *Dongfang Zazhi* 9.1 (1912): 18; 'Meiren duiyu Dongfang yimin zhi yanlun' [American Discussions on Immigration from the Orient], *Zhongguo Shiye Zazhi* 4.7 (1913); 'Huaqiao ru Kan zhi kukuang' [The Horrible Circumstances of Overseas Chinese Going to Canada], *Zhongguo Shiye Zazhi* 5.7 (1914).

[18] Xu Jiaqing, 'Meiguo Jialifoniya-zhou zhi paiRi wenti' [The Issue of Anti-Japanese Policy in California], *Dongfang Zazhi* 10.1 (1913): 36–49 at, 49.

of the republic. The first mention that I have found of Great Asianism or Pan-Asianism (大亞細亞主義) was made by the Japanese diplomat and China hand Ibuka Hikosaburō in a special to *The People's Journal*. In this short article, he openly called for an Asian Monroe Doctrine, in which Japan would lead China. Citing race and religion as commonalities, and with humanitarianism (人道主義 *rendaozhuyi*) and republicanism as bases, he argued that all Asian nations should unite to stop encroachments from other continents. He asserted that Great Asianism was the only way for countries to maintain their independence and avoid the clash of the races.[19] But the nationalist editors at *The People's Journal* would not accept promotion of Japanese leadership in Asia. Only a few days later, in response to a translation of Japanese Prime Minister Ōkuma Shigenobu's call for a Japan-centred 'Great Asian Empire 亞細亞大帝國 in order to oppose Euro-American civilization', Xu Xue'er appended a short postscript: 'The Chinese nation has 400 million people. We believe that an Asian Republic 亞細亞共和國 should be established with China as its centre.'[20] Nor was this the end of discussion of Asianism in *The People's Journal*.

Asianism was used in various ways during this time. Therefore, I loosely define it as the belief in a united 'East' based upon racial and/or civilizational commonalities in contrast to a perceived 'West'. Even in these early days, the term was ambiguous, as Ibuka used it to refer to Sino-Japanese cooperation in the face of Russian imperialism, while others, such as Ye Chucang, employed it to refer to the entirety of Asia, which he believed could peacefully unite based upon a shared victimization by the West.[21] Just as in the English usage explained above, these different Chinese invocations of the term accepted an essentialized Asia in opposition to the West. However, in the East Asian context, Asianism was conceived of as a tool to be employed against imperialism, and therefore had an overlapping and amplifying relationship with nationalism. Suisheng Zhao has explained that 'Chinese nationalism was born in the wreckage of culturalism and

[19] *The People's Journal* lists the Japanese politician as Ibuka Hikotarō 井深彦太郎. I have been unable to find such a person. However, there was a Diet member called Ibuka Hikosaburō 井深彦三郎 active at this time; Ibuka Hikotarō, 'Da Yaxiyazhuyi lun' 大亞細亞主義論, in *Minli Bao* 民立報 (*People's Journal*, hereafter, *MLB*), 752 (7 October 1912), 2.

[20] Ōkuma Shigenobu, 'Dawei Bo zhi shishi tan' [Count Ōkuma Discusses Current Events] (translated by Xi Yuan, postscript by Xu Xue'er), *MLB* 755 (10 October 1912), 2.

[21] 'Da Yaxiyazhuyi' [Great Asianism], *MLB* (15 March 1913).

nurtured on imperialism's threat to China's territorial, cultural, and, in the opinion of some, even racial survival'.[22] While state nationalism tilted towards support for a modern nation state in the Westphalian sense, Asianism tilted towards culturalism, the belief in and emphasis of a Sinocentric civilization.

This relationship between nationalism and Asianism became abundantly clear in 1913. The Xinhai Revolution of 1911 had been a muddled mix of Han nationalists fighting against the Manchu, as well as revolutionaries opposed to Western influence.[23] It resulted in the rise of the Han Chinese as the modern leaders of a poorly defined union of five nations. A new political elite struggled to accommodate the pseudo-scientific concepts of nation and race with the newly created republic, which the government believed could extend much beyond a Han nation state to the entire territory of the former dynasty. This also overlapped with what Frank Dikötter has called 'racial nationalism'. Dikötter argues that GMD political activists shared a worldview 'dominated by the idea of a confrontation between the yellow and the white races' in the early 1910s.[24] While these new concepts of race and nation were gaining ground, political intellectuals briefly considered layered identity-based alliances that were reliant upon nation and race, but constructed upon a shared victim consciousness. As shown below, racist policies put in place by Western countries during this time contributed to the formation of this consciousness.

Between the 1911 Revolution and the Second Revolution of 1913, there were very different discussions representing different directions for Asianism. Previous studies of Chinese Asianism have concentrated upon Li Dazhao's 李大釗 1919 'New Asianism' and Sun Yat-sen's 1924 'Great Asianism', both of which stress their opposition to Japanese militarism.[25] However, these early 1913 texts show a more complicated picture that was not in opposition to Japan, but was tightly linked to expressions of Chinese nationalism.

[22] Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 49.

[23] Henrietta Harrison, *China: Inventing the Nation* (New York: Hodder Arnold, 2001), 132.

[24] Note that Frank Dikötter translated *minzuzhuyi* as 'racial nationalism'. Although the term is now usually translated as 'ethnic nationalism', in the first decades of the twentieth century, *minzuzhuyi* often referred to race, indicating the fluid ambiguity of concepts of race and nation during this time; see Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 108.

[25] Li Dazhao, *Li Dazhao quanji*; Sun Yat-sen, *China and Japan*.

The push for Sino-Japanese cooperation in practice and discourse

Suisheng Zhao follows Joseph Levenson's lead in defining this period by its 'elite nationalism', as GMD intellectual and political leaders defined Chinese nationalism and propagated it through publications under their control.[26] In agreement with this analysis, this section concentrates upon official GMD efforts towards Sino-Japanese cooperation, as well as the discussions by Chinese intellectuals on the merits of further alliance or cooperation with Japan in 1913, as found in party journals and newspapers.

In February and March, leaders took practical steps towards Sino-Japanese cooperation. Also, Chinese journalists wrote articles and translated Japanese texts on Sino-Japanese cooperation. Articles explaining the necessity for the two countries to form an alliance of mutual assistance appeared almost immediately after the Japanese versions were published.[27] Young intellectuals cautiously engaged with two ambiguous and overlapping concepts: Sino-Japanese mutual assistance *Zhong-Ri tixie lun* 中日提攜論 and a Sino-Japanese alliance *Zhong-Ri lianmeng* 中日聯盟. Although Chinese elite had raised the prospect of an alliance as early as the reforms of 1898, the idea was largely within the realm of political rhetoric with little action taken.

In early 1913, Chinese intellectuals began to consider Asia's future in response to Japanese calls for Asianism and the continued threat of Western imperialism. Throughout February, a number of articles discussing the importance of cooperation with Japan appeared in the newspaper: one of these was 'Preparations for the China-Japan Association' 中日協會之籌備 on a meeting in Nanjing to discuss a China-Japan alliance (中日同盟) that would bring together the people and the governments. The initial Chinese members of this association are listed as: Li Zhaofu 李肇甫, who had been Sun's secretary in 1912; Wang Yinchuan 王印川, politician and *The People's Journal* editor; Zhu Qi 朱淇, who had aided Sun in a number of early revolutionary activities; Lin Changmin 林長民, who held a great number of posts in the first republican government; and the journalist Huang Yuanyong

[26] Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction*, 80–81.

[27] Henmi Kōzan 逸見甲山, translation by Qiu Hao 邱灝, 'Zhong-Ri tixie lun' [On Sino-Japanese Cooperation], *Minli Bao* (*The People's Journal*) (27 and 30 March 1913).

黃遠庸.[28] In 1913, the China-Japan Association was greatly expanded and looked promising for the brief window that appeared before Yuan Shikai's Empire of China. In an opening speech for the association in Nanjing, Tang Hualong 湯化龍, the newly elected chairman of the legislative assembly, stated: 'The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may have been the time of the white peoples, but the twentieth century is the age of East Asians as China and Japan's friendship is a relationship between brothers.'[29] As in the cases described above, these intellectuals saw working with Japan as the key to saving China.

Perhaps the largest organization to come out of this—the China-Japan Citizens' Association 中日國民大會—was first assembled in Beijing just before the Second Revolution. Despite Song Jiaoren's death on 22 March, the association gathered on the afternoon of 23 March, with Chen Jiading (陳家鼎 1876–1928), a close friend of Song, giving the opening address.[30] Chen discussed the history of Sino-Japanese relations, announcing that 'from this day on we can forecast that this will be a period of Sino-Japanese Alliance 中日同盟' to 'thunderous applause'.[31] As the Chinese representatives were all GMD politicians, many of whom escaped to Japan after the Second Revolution, the association was short-lived. However, these associations were accompanied by numerous editorials discussing the merits of working with Japan, offering us an idea of non-GMD intellectuals' opinions of an alliance during this window.

As print media expanded at a dramatic pace during the first decades of the twentieth century, intellectuals working beyond the political centre entered into this discourse and commented on the possibility of China and Japan working together. Cautious optimism can be seen in the words of the Beijing artist Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡 (1892–1962):

> How odd! Japan can be strange! The meaning behind Japan's recent activities are difficult to fathom. Japan wishes to form an alliance 聯盟 with China. I was

[28] 'Zhong-Ri xiehui zhi choubei' [Preparations for the China-Japan Association], *Minli Bao* (*People's Journal*) (3 November 1913).

[29] Feng Ziyou 馮自由 and many others were added to the list of members in this publication; unknown author, 'Zhong-Ri xiehui zhi jinxing' [The Establishment of the China-Japan Association], *Guohui congbao* [*Journal of the National Assembly*] 1, p. *waijiao* 4–5.

[30] Chen Jiading studied at Waseda University in the late Qing dynasty. He joined the Xingzhong Hui while studying in Japan. After the failure of the Second Revolution, he returned to Japan.

[31] 'Zhong-Ri guomin dahui' [China-Japan Citizens' Association], *Minli Bao* [*The People's Journal*] (29 March 1913), 8.

quite doubtful when first I heard this, but seeing is believing. Considering the various relations between Japan and China, there is a necessity for friendly relations. It is admirable that the Japanese were early to be aware of this.[32]

In his article on Sino-Japanese alliance, Hu did not employ the realpolitik of contemporary politicians, but instead expressed the idealism of his generation. He saw the benefit of nations from the 'same continent and of the same race' working together, but only as a step towards political *datong*, the final unity of all nations. In a burst of idealist pacifism, he ended the article with the hope that Yuan Shikai could lead an alliance with the Taisho Emperor, and then another with Woodrow Wilson.[33] An alliance with Japan was not the only option. Many intellectuals proposed cooperation with the United States of America, Germany, and Great Britain in 1913, indicating that, for many, any alliance was about politics and Asianism was often merely rhetoric towards that end.

Optimism towards Japan was largely limited to the years immediately following the 1911 Revolution and before Yuan Shikai's dominance of the media later in 1913. Even before Ōkuma Shigenobu ended his superficial support of China by issuing the Twenty-One Demands in January 1915, the rise of Japanese militarism was destroying any optimism towards an alliance. Dai Zhengcheng 戴正誠, a minor politician from Sichuan, dismissed the prospect of a racial alliance to defeat the 'white peril' in the *Honest News* 讜報 1914: 'I fear that if we form an alliance with Japan to defend against the white peril, it will not be enough to stop the white peril and the Japanese peril will be that much greater.'[34] This distrust of Japan grew rapidly in 1914 in reaction to Japanese assertions over Manchuria.[35] However, these sentiments were not as prominent in official Guomindang publications.

The People's Journal also ran prominent Pan-Asianist Uchida's Ryōhei's critique of Japanese government policy in an article entitled 'To Cut Up or to Protect', in which he details his distrust of Russia and the need to support China. Uchida, who supported the GMD and the revolution with his organization, the Kokuryūkai 黑龍會, had just

[32] Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡, 'Zhong-Ri lianmeng ganyan' [My Feelings on a Sino-Japanese Alliance], *Min Yi [People's Friend]* 5 (1913): 1–3, at 1.
[33] Ibid., 3.
[34] Dai Zheng cheng 戴正誠, 'Quan-Yaxiyazhuyi zhi tanyi' [An Inquiry into Pan-Asianism], *Dang Bao*.
[35] Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction*, 82.

been hired by Sun Yat-sen as an adviser on foreign policy.[36] In the pages of *The People's Journal*, he argued that 'Asia is the territory of the Asians, so China should be the territory of the Chinese'.

At the end of the month, Xu Xue'er wrote a rather positive article arguing that the Japanese may be coming to their senses and, although the hawkish (*yexin* 野心) attitude still existed, China and Japan use the 'same script', are of the 'same race', and are just like 'lips and teeth'.[37] At the exact same time, Sun Yat-sen was visiting Japan as the Republic of China's Minister of Railways. His many speeches during this visit show a remarkably similar discourse and vocabulary to that found in *The People's Journal*.

Sun's Asianist speeches: alliance under Japanese leadership

Between the 1890s and his death in 1925, Sun Yat-sen made numerous calls for Sino-Japanese cooperation, and often made reference to what he called 'Great Asianism' 大亞洲主義. By 1924, Sun had a fully fleshed-out theory of Great Asianism expressed in a carefully prepared speech in Kobe, in which he detailed distinct civilizational differences between the East, based on benevolent rule (*wangdao* 王道), and the West, based on hegemonic rule (*badao* 霸道).[38] Although Sun was highly critical of Japanese hegemony in 1924, his pro-Asian unity speeches of 1913 instead concentrated upon economic and strategic demands backed by a belief in racial solidarity.

The most blatant examples of Sun's calls for Asian unity were in the series of speeches he made in February and March of 1913 in various cities across Japan. Although Sun visited Japan for research in his role as minister of railways, it is evident that Sun had other plans for his travels across Japan. Sun stressed commonalities by peppering these speeches with popular slogans used by Japanese

[36] Only two years after this, Uchida lost faith in the republic and his position on China became much more militant as he argued for Japanese domination in order to save China. Uchida was the founder of the Kokuryūkai—an association dedicated to removing Westerners from all areas south of the Heilong River and reputed 'as the pan-Asianist organization par excellence'; Uchida Ryōhei 分割乎保全乎, *Minli Bao* (*People's Journal*) (13 and 14 February 1914) (from Taiyou 19.3); see Saaler, *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 123, 124.

[37] Xu Xue'er 徐血兒, 'Japan's Awakening' Riben zhi juewu 日本之覺悟, *Minli Bao* (*People's Journal*) (24 February 1914).

[38] Sun Yat-sen, 'Da Yazhouzhuyi' [Great Asianism], *Guofu quanji* [*The Complete Works of the Father of the Nation*] (Taipei: Jindai Zhongguo chubanshe, 1989), I: 508–516.

Asianists, including the race-solidarity slogan 'same script, same race', the Japanese Monroist slogan 'Asia for the Asians', and the classical state-solidarity idiom 'If the lips perish, the teeth will freeze'.[39]

Sun was looking to gather widespread support from the Chinese in Japan as well as from high-ranking Japanese politicians and elite. When he spoke to a Chinese audience, he urged them to enhance relations with Japanese and work towards solidarity. He saw the Western powers as the danger to Chinese as well as Japanese interests:

> If there was no Japan, then there would be no talk of future prospects for China. In East Asia, the revolution accomplished by my generation was due to Japan's strength. For the victory of China's revolution, we must thank Japan. Japan and China share the same gain and losses. To protect Japanese interests, they must protect the interests of all China.[40]

In this speech to Chinese students assembled in Tokyo, Sun called for students to use brotherly love to correct Japanese false impressions of Chinese people. It was their responsibility to work towards China–Japan unity for China and the world. Sun repeatedly stressed that this unity was for China's national interests, but he then related his country's interests to those of Asia and of the 'yellow' race:

> Asia's population amounts to two thirds of the world, yet today part of the continent remains subjugated under the might of the Europeans. Were China and Japan to cooperate in their development then our power would be greatly expanded and we could easily create a Great Asia revitalizing the past glories of history. We could bring peace to the world, bring *datong* to humanity with rights of equality and freedom for all. The happiness of the world could be achieved by the 500 million of the yellow race.[41]

The redemptive power of Asia to right the world and achieve harmony was a concept frequently returned to by proponents of Asianism. Not unlike the traditional Sinosphere, concentric circles of nation and race—which indicated the 500 million people of China, Japan, and Korea—extended outwards to the entire world, which could look forward to the Confucian utopia of *datong*. Asia's 'past glories of history' referred to not merely economic power or world standing, but the righteousness of governance under traditional Confucian society. It is in his 1913 speeches, however, that the issue of Japanese leadership is made clear.

[39] Ibid., 136–139, 144.
[40] Ibid., 144–145.
[41] Ibid., 145.

Unlike Liang Qichao, Li Dazhao, Ye Chucang, and many other Chinese intellectuals, Sun Yat-sen was quite clear in his calls for Japanese leadership. For Sun, Japanese leadership was certainly not meant as dominance, but as guidance: 'Japan's restoration came long before China's revolution and the country has already experienced so much. The people of my country will still be looking to Japan for guidance for a long time.'[42] National autonomy was assumed. However, his speeches to Japanese Asianists at the Tōa Dōbunkai, Japan's foremost Asianist society, were surprisingly upfront in their demands for Japanese leadership—perhaps so much that some of the elite at these speeches wondered whether Sun was inviting empire:

> Asians have a duty to maintain the peace in Asia. However, China is currently lacking in the power to maintain peace. Therefore, Japan's responsibility is great! I hope that Japan will work hard to take care of China and engage in mutual support with China. This is not only my hope, but this is what all of the Chinese people eagerly look forward to![43]

In his speeches to Chinese citizens, he also made calls for Japanese leadership, remaining at odds with those who saw Japan as the greatest threat. Sun was always wary of Japanese imperialism, but he made it clear that the European empires were the greater threat. He occasionally mentioned the United States of America in a positive light but always made it clear that he believed the Western powers would not assist China if it was not in their own interests:

> Throughout history, Chinese people have misunderstood and looked down upon Japan. But from the beginning of the revolution, those cadres who held positions in the revolutionary parties all studied in Japan. And many Japanese men of high morals offered great assistance during the revolution. Some of us advocate turning to the United States for help with China's future, but can Monroist America become the country that China will rely on? Can the power of the United States be entwined with China's fate? I am convinced that no matter what, it can only be Japan that can share China's doom or survival.[44]

Yet Sun was not in opposition to the Monroe Doctrine, which the United States of America implemented as a policy demanding that Europeans no longer attempt to hold influence in the Americas. In fact, he was not at all opposed to such geographic-based paradigms

[42] Ibid., 138.
[43] Ibid., 158; also see 137, 149.
[44] Ibid., 158.

of international domination. A few years later, he clarified his position on the Monroe Doctrine and hinted at the possibility of its application in East Asia in a short book in which he wrote: 'Under the principle of Pan-Asianism, Japan and China can together develop the natural resources in the West of the Pacific, while under the Monroe Doctrine the United States can unify authority in the East of that ocean.'[45]

Although American politicians posited the Monroe Doctrine as an anti-imperialist doctrine, as Bruce Jentleson explains, 'There was little altruism in this policy, or even straightforward good neighborliness; it represented much more the self-interest of a regional power seeking to preserve its dominant position against outside challenges'.[46] Sun was aware of the imperialist reality of the Monroe Doctrine, but he continued to remain optimistic about the possibility of China's quick rise to power and Japan's benevolence.

Ostensibly, Sun's reasons for going to Japan in 1913 were related to his new position as minister of railways and to visit old friends. However, from his speeches, it is clear that he was spending much of his time garnering Japanese support, and his activities and speeches both expose a growing desperation. Marie-Claire Bergère notes that, between these Asianist speeches, Sun met with industrial tycoon Shibusawa Eichi (1840–1931) to discuss the creation of the Industrial Company of China in order to bring Japanese *zaibatsu* to China to help with development and resource exploitation.[47] There were other meetings that are more revealing of Sun's work in 1913.

For example, John C. H. Wu argues that the most important event during the 1913 tour of Japan was Sun's meeting with Katsura Tarō 桂太郎, who had just fallen from power and lost his position of prime minister through a no-confidence vote earlier that month.[48] Katsura was frustrated with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which he himself had been instrumental in establishing years before, and was now interested in establishing a Sino-Japanese alliance. Sun was excited about the prospects of furthering relations with Japan, but he was openly critical of Japan's actions in Korea. He purportedly said to Katusura:

[45] Sun, *China and Japan*, 116.

[46] Bruce W. Jentleson, *American Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of Choice in the 21st Century* (3rd edition) (New York and London: Norton and Company, 2007), 77.

[47] Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, translated by Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 238–239.

[48] John C. H. Wu, *Sun Yat-sen: The Man and His Ideas* (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1971), 159.

The doctrine of Greater Asia [大亞細亞主義] must be based on the principle of equality and fraternity. Now, before the Russo-Japanese War, China was in full sympathy with Japan; but not after the war. The reason is that Japan, riding on the tide of victory, went ahead to annex Korea.[49]

Due to the construction of these sources years after the event, whether Sun actually used the term 'Asianism' at this point cannot be confirmed. In the above translation of Sun's conversation with Katsura, John Wu worked with the *Guofu Nianpu*, which was based upon an article by Hu Hanmin published in 1936.[50] Assuming Hu may not have been writing this article from notes of their conversation, he based his writing on memory of an event 23 years prior. In 1936, Great Asianism was already a common phrase and there is certainly the possibility that Hu, either purposefully or unintentionally, made an alteration to the original conversation between Katsura and Sun to support his own belief in Asianism.

However, Sun certainly did mention *Da-Yazhou zhi zhuyi* 大亞洲之主義, a term similar to 'Asianism' at a speech in Shanghai a few weeks later, and this speech was immediately published in *The People's Journal* on 29 March 1913.[51] Whether or not Sun also used such a term in his meeting with Katsura, the spirit of their conversation is most likely accurately portrayed by Hu Hanmin. According to Hu, Katsura promised Sun he would work towards righting these wrongs and won his support. However, Katsura passed away a few months later in October of 1913, and these plans for a Sino-Japanese alliance disappeared. Hu Hanmin would later remark that there were few Japanese like Katsura remaining, and that the principles of Asianism had therefore become skewed.[52] However, based on Sun's other actions in 1913, it is clear that Asianism had not yet become skewed towards militarism.

A few days after this meeting, Sun Yat-sen had to hurry back to China due to the assassination of GMD prime minister-designate Song Jiaoren 宋教仁. The Guomindang was in crisis. On 29 March 1913, Sun's speech at the GMD Transportation Ministry was published

[49] Ibid., 193–194.

[50] Hu Hanmin, 'Great Asianism and Opposing Japan' 大亞細亞主義與抗日, *Hu Hanmin xiansheng wenji* 胡漢民先生文集, v.4, 38-541 (Taipei: Dangshi weiyuanhui, 1978); Luo Jialun 羅家倫 (ed.), *Guofu nianpu* 國父年譜 (Taipei: Dangshishiliao weiyuanhui, 1965), 495–497.

[51] This speech is also collected in GFQJ III: 159.

[52] Hu Hanmin, 'Da-Yaxiyazhuyi yu kang-Ri' [Great Asianism and Opposing Japan], *Hu Hanmin xiansheng wenji* 4: 38–541 (Taipei: Dangshi weiyuanhui, [1936] 1978), 540.

in *The People's Journal*, expressing his great hope for China–Japan cooperation. In the speech, he refers to Japan's goodwill towards the Asian continent as a kind of 'Doctrine for Greater Asia' or a 'Great Asian-ism' (大亞洲之主義). Although slightly different from the standard expression, this is Sun Yat-sen's first recorded use of the term 'Great Asianism'.

Back in China, he immediately began to work towards opening up the Chinese economy to Japanese capital, offering Japanese banks control over Chinese mines and railways, and preparing to sell Manchuria for currency and military supplies.[53] Sun's goal was to overthrow Yuan with Japanese power, but Yuan was already far too powerful and Sun could gain neither Japanese nor Chinese support. The rebellion was crushed in a few short weeks and Sun returned to Japan, where he would remain until Yuan's death. Back in Japan, Sun's desperation led him to make even more extreme offers to the Japanese government, going as far as to write to Prime Minister Ōkuma that Japan could use China for profit much like Great Britain used India.[54]

As Dai Jitao would remark later: 'He naturally believed that the rise or fall of the nation and the survival of the country was greatly related to the possibility of alliance (*lianmeng* 聯盟) with Japan.'[55] Sun certainly believed in the cooperation of China and Japan but, even at this early stage, capitalist desires appropriated anti-imperialist Asianist ambitions, and Sun's words and actions contributed to these desires, possibly even influencing Ōkuma's drafting of the Twenty-One Demands one year later with the above-mentioned letter.

There were, however, other Chinese voices calling for Asianism in 1913, but without the emphasis upon Japan as leader. As mentioned above, *The People's Journal* ran numerous articles on Asianism. The most detailed of these was a short series of articles that offered an Asianism in stark contrast to the pro-Japanese trend that Sun Yat-sen and others were considering at the time. Ye Chucang took an approach that widely disregarded Japan and utilized the term 'Great Asianism' to discuss a plan for a militarily and economically united Asia that would stretch across the entire continent. These 1913 discussions

[53] Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, 242.

[54] Although many questioned the existence of this letter, the original letter surfaced decades ago and is now available in the Ōkuma Archives at Waseda Library (http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/i14/i14_b0269_4/. Accessed on 10 June 2013); Sun, *China and Japan*, 3–4.

[55] Dai Jitao, *Riben lun* [*On Japan*] (Taipei: Guxiang chubanshe, [1928] 1987), 108, 109.

of Asianism in China both contextualize Sun's talks in Japan and show an alternative internationalist possibility. They show that his internationalist regional thinking was as much a part of the historical zeitgeist as it was of his individual perspective, and also further complicates the surprising consideration given to possibilities for international cooperation in conjunction with the rise of nationalism in China.

Ye Chucang's strategic Asianism

Although he would become Chief of Propaganda for a short period in the 1920s, Guomindang revolutionary, veteran journalist and newspaper editor Ye Chucang was a relatively minor intellectual in the GMD when he wrote about Asianism in 1913.[56] However, as an editor for *The People's Journal*, as well as other GMD publications, he was acutely aware of party developments and his infrequent writings display significant insight into GMD thought in this period. His articles, simply entitled 'Great Asianism' (Da Yaxiyazhuyi), were serialized in the 15, 16 and 21 March editions of *The People's Journal*. These articles limn a thoughtful, if simplistic, regional system with details on both the internal machinations and the relationship between a regionalized Asia and the outside world. Although the articles were leading editorials and widely read by GMD supporters at the time, they have been ignored or gone unnoticed by scholars in both Chinese and English scholarship until now.

Ye's articles were very different from the pro-Japanese speeches made by Sun in March of 1913. While Sun's speeches were made to a Japanese audience, and were the work of a politician with a good command of realpolitik rhetoric, Ye wrote to a domestic audience and

[56] Very little has been written on Ye Chucang. Most of the biographical information available on him comes from his son's 'Yi xianfu Ye Chucang' [Remembering My Late Father, Ye Chucang], which has been summarized and added to in the biographies by Zhang Yongjiu. These short biographies reveal very little of Ye's political and intellectual thinking: 'Ye Chucang de bense' [The Character of Ye Chucang], *Shu Wu v9* (2010), 33–37; and the very similar: Zhang Yongjiu, 'Guanren yuanlai shi shusheng' [The Official Was Originally a Scholar], *Changjiang wenyi* v.2 (2013), 120–127; John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 29; also mentioned in Chen Jianyun, 'Ye Chucang de banbao jingli ji jingli fenge' [Ye Chucang's Newspaper Publicist Experience and Editorial Style], *Xinwen chuanbo* [*News Dissemination*] (December 2012), 199–200.

appeared to be presenting a plan based upon his honest ideals for China's future. Ye rarely made direct mention of Japan in his articles and instead concentrated on all of Asia, describing his theory in terms of its application to world peace. Unlike the 'cultural Asianism' of Zhang Taiyan that Duara has written about, the spatial production of Ye's Asia was defined by the political and economic, rather than the religious and cultural.[57] Ye believed that world peace had to be based upon 'the equitable distribution of food services, as well as the harmony and happiness of citizens', which could only be achieved through the integration of allied states across a region.[58] In the first article, Ye outlined four rather general goals for his Asianism:

1. Protect and further the common interests of Asia through integration by treaty.
2. Support the independence of all Asian states through morality and justice.
3. Cooperate on Asia's necessary overseas development.
4. Intervene in or mediate international conflicts outside of Asia.[59]

These four goals do not clearly describe what path Ye's Asianism might take, but they do make it evident that he envisioned an alliance of independent states that would cooperate based on treaties. This was a very different plan than the dreams of a consolidated East Asia that arose in the late nineteenth century and is the first time that a Chinese intellectual proposed the uniting of all the states of Asia, from Turkey to Japan.

Ye's first article made these general arguments and declared that Asianism was a movement for world peace and should not bring about Western fears of the 'Yellow Peril'. However, his second and third articles took much more specific approaches, and examined the need for military cooperation and economic integration, respectively.

Despite *The People's Journal*'s distrust of militarism, Ye argued that military strength was a necessity. Although he conceded that a united Asia would still not have the power to attack Europe, he believed military cooperation and integration would result in a situation in which Asia was able to defend itself from foreign attacks and ensure the independence of all Asian states. In another short list, Ye Chucang noted four points or goals that explained the importance

[57] Duara, 'Asia Redux'.
[58] *MLB* (15 March 1913).
[59] Ibid.

that integrated military strength would have in the implementation of Asianism:

1. We will mutually implement and plan the stability of Asianism through the military power of all the states.
2. Through the same method, we shall guarantee the safety of Asia's internal stability militarily.
3. We only wish to protect ourselves with this military force and have no desire to interfere in the peace and stability of the world's people.
4. We shall establish strong military defenses at the borders of Asian states and territories.[60]

Ye reiterated his assertions that 'this is not a plan to bring about conflict with the world powers through our military might', but is rather to defend Asia from the powers and maintain the independence of each country inside Asia.[61] Ye outlined an integrated Asian military, or what can be called the centrifugal force of Asian unity in his theory, the force of which would repel outsiders and keep Asia safe. In his third article, he turned to the internal advantages of Asian unity, and concentrated upon the economic manifestations of Asianism: 'For Great Asianism to prosper, the first step must be the integration of the international system on the Asian mainland. And before this integration is complete, there must be a more rudimentary integration ... a trade alliance.'[62]

This idea of a trade alliance was Ye's vision for the first step on the path to a more integrated Asia free from European imperialism. Ignoring the issues of leadership and intra-Asian competition or hegemony, Ye saw Asian nations cooperating with each other to build modern and integrated economies. His frequent use of the term 'Asian mainland' (亞陸 *yalu*) and his rare mention of Japan almost may lead one to believe that his Asianism excluded Japan. Yet this was not the case at all. Ye simply saw all Asian nations integrating into this system on an equal basis. Unlike Asianists from the nineteenth century, Ye completely assumed the validity of the Westphalian system of nation states, and envisioned these states integrating under what he called the 'international system' (國際制度 *guoji zhidu*). The independence of each state was clearly stressed and led Ye to his conclusion that only

[60] *MLB* (16 March 1913).
[61] Ibid.
[62] *MLB* (21 March 1913).

states that were independent should enter into these unions in their initial stage:

> ... so the success of the Asian trade alliance must be achieved by way of a germinal form .... In the view of this reporter, for the alliance to have hopes of success, only the Chinese, Japanese, Turkish and Siamese markets should be integrated. Therefore, the first step of Great Asianism must be to expend our efforts upon the markets of these four countries.[63]

Ye's Asianism revolved around two concepts: for the external issues related to internationalism, the relationships that the region had to create with other regions and states, Ye described the military integration of Asia; for the internal issues related to internationalism, the relationships between regionalized states, Ye described economic possibilities and specifically recommended market integration. In this purely materialist description, no effort was made to consider culture or other aspects of the region and no explanation was offered for why such historically and culturally disparate states as Turkey and Japan should integrate, other than the fact that they both reside in the imagined continent of Asia. But Ye's theorizing of Asianism was left unfinished. He published his third and last article on Asianism while Sun Yat-sen was returning from Japan, where he had been discussing his own form of Asianism with Chinese living in Japan as well as his Japanese supporters. Ye Chucang ended his third article with the words 'to be continued', but a fourth article never appeared, leaving readers with no idea of what Ye might have planned for the other countries of Asia, or how the very different and distant countries of China, Japan, Turkey (then the Ottoman empire), and Thailand (then Siam) could possibly hope to establish and maintain any form of market integration.

Over these few months, two very different Asianist discourses were put forth by GMD intellectuals. Ye Chucang's idea was for an all-Asia alliance based on economic and military integration that could hold back imperialism from outside of Asia. Sun Yat-sen, however, favoured a closer relationship with Japan, utilizing Japan's military and economic might to protect China from Western imperialists, as well as from Yuan Shikai. The primary difference between these two ideas was the belief in the need for leadership. While Sun supported Japanese leadership, Ye was opposed to any leadership.

[63] Ibid.

Yet, before either vision could be brought closer to implementation, two threats internal to Asia took precedence for China—neither related to the Western powers that Asianism was designed to protect China from. The first was Yuan Shikai's consolidation of power, and the second the increasingly imperialistic words and actions from Japan. In the short term, it was Yuan's seizing of power and specifically the assassination of Song Jiaoren that disrupted both Sun's pro-Japan efforts and Ye's Asianist writings. Song was shot on 20 March, the day before publication of Ye's third article. Beginning on 22 March, the day of Song's death in hospital, *The People's Journal* was inundated with photographs, reports, and eulogies related to Song Jiaoren, stretching from corner to corner on most pages. Ye himself took to compiling these reports, as well as those from other major newspapers, and published them in an edited volume.[64] Sun Yat-sen ended his trip to Japan and hurried back to China to help relieve party chaos after the assassination and to embark on a mission to promote integration with Japan. Yet the GMD conflict with Yuan Shikai would soon dominate Sun's time, even as the 1915 Twenty-One Demands unequivocally displayed Japan's imperialist desire. For both of these reasons, neither Sun's nor Ye's plans were advanced, yet the fact that two nationalist Guomindang leaders were advocating these proposals in early 1913 shows that the elite harboured yearnings for international integration immediately after the nationalist revolution.

Conclusion

What constituted 'Asia' in the above-mentioned 'Asianism' was momentarily defined by a shared victim consciousness. For all intellectuals that promoted this consciousness, ideas of Asian brotherly love, racial or cultural commodities, and the route to the utopia of *datong* were used to frame and justify efforts towards internationalism. However, whether or not Asianists believed these things, practical economic and strategic concerns prompted their writings and dominated their words and actions. As it became clearer that an alliance with Japan would not be to their economic and political advantage, Chinese intellectuals became less and less interested in such discourse. They saw that, inevitably, issues of hegemony that

[64] Ye Chucang, *Song Yufu* (Taipei: Wenxing shudian, [1913] 1962).

would create problems for nation states would be even greater for international political formations.

The idea of the nation 民族 (*minzu*) was fully accepted by Guomindang intellectuals, and the primacy of the nation state was never questioned in these discussions of Asianism. Rather, Asianism was an attempt to articulate another possibility for liberation from Western imperialism. Both Ye and Sun were proposing these plans of international integration based on strategic needs for China. Especially in Sun Yat-sen's case, this opened the door to exploitation. Although Sun later clarified his understanding of Asianism in 1924 as undeniably opposed to Japanese imperialism, his words were easily manipulated in the 1930s and 1940s, encouraging many Chinese to support Japan and inevitably lengthening the war. This drift from a liberating internationalism to a militant imperialism debilitated the development of Asianism in the twentieth century and still continues to hamper discussions of East Asian unity today. Just as a modern Chinese Asianism was developing, Japan's imperialist intentions were made clear and further talk of unity was inevitably seen as masking hegemony.

This use of Asianism as a tool of Japanese hegemony has clouded and confused the memory of this concept. However, it is clear that Asianism was a concept utilized by Chinese intellectuals, who also imbricated the concept in nationalism. Asianism was primarily utilized to produce a discourse that opposed the dominance of the West and encouraged both nationalism and international cooperation. These goals are shared by China's leaders in the twenty-first century. Today, too, rhetoric of unity is driven by strategic and geopolitical interests, and local actors watch closely to see which way Chinese regional leadership will sway.