

“BANDIT SUPPRESSION” IN MANCHUKUO (1932-45)

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Abstract

Manchukuo was a state that was established by the Japanese military in Manchuria (Northeast China) in 1932 and collapsed in 1945 with the defeat of Japan. Immediately after its founding, the Japanese Kwantung Army, later joined by the Manchukuo Army, initiated a series of “bandit suppression” (*tōbatsu*; 討伐) campaigns to consolidate the new regime. This dissertation will focus on “bandit suppression” in Manchukuo as a means of illuminating the state’s claims to legitimacy, its ability to mobilize at different levels, and the involvement of “bandit suppression” in other dimensions of state building. By examining how “bandit suppression” was perceived, represented, and practiced in the context of Manchukuo’s state building, I will argue that the perception of the “bandit problem” and the practice of suppression campaigns in Manchukuo embodied the state’s pursuit of legitimacy. Furthermore, the ideological, administrative, and legal construction of the state, as well the widespread mobilization of different groups of people in the “anti-bandit” campaigns also facilitated the state building process of Manchukuo.

Through the lens of “bandit suppression,” I will suggest that the crucial concern of the state was to obtain legitimacy as the foundation of governmental power. Confronted with domestic disorder and the influence of Chinese nationalism, for Manchukuo itself to gain recognition and legitimacy for its continued existence as a state, it had to create a consciousness of its right to govern and the recognition by the governed of that right. Besides, to obtain legitimacy and consolidate state authority also involved “the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing

political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society.” Therefore, the campaigns against “bandits” were often accompanied by the proclamation of the founding ideas of Manchukuo, including the principles of the “Kingly Way” (*ōdō*; 王道), “ethnic harmony,” and bringing peace and order to the people. In this sense, “bandit suppression” embodied “a state historiographic discourse about order, ordering, justice, and freedom.”

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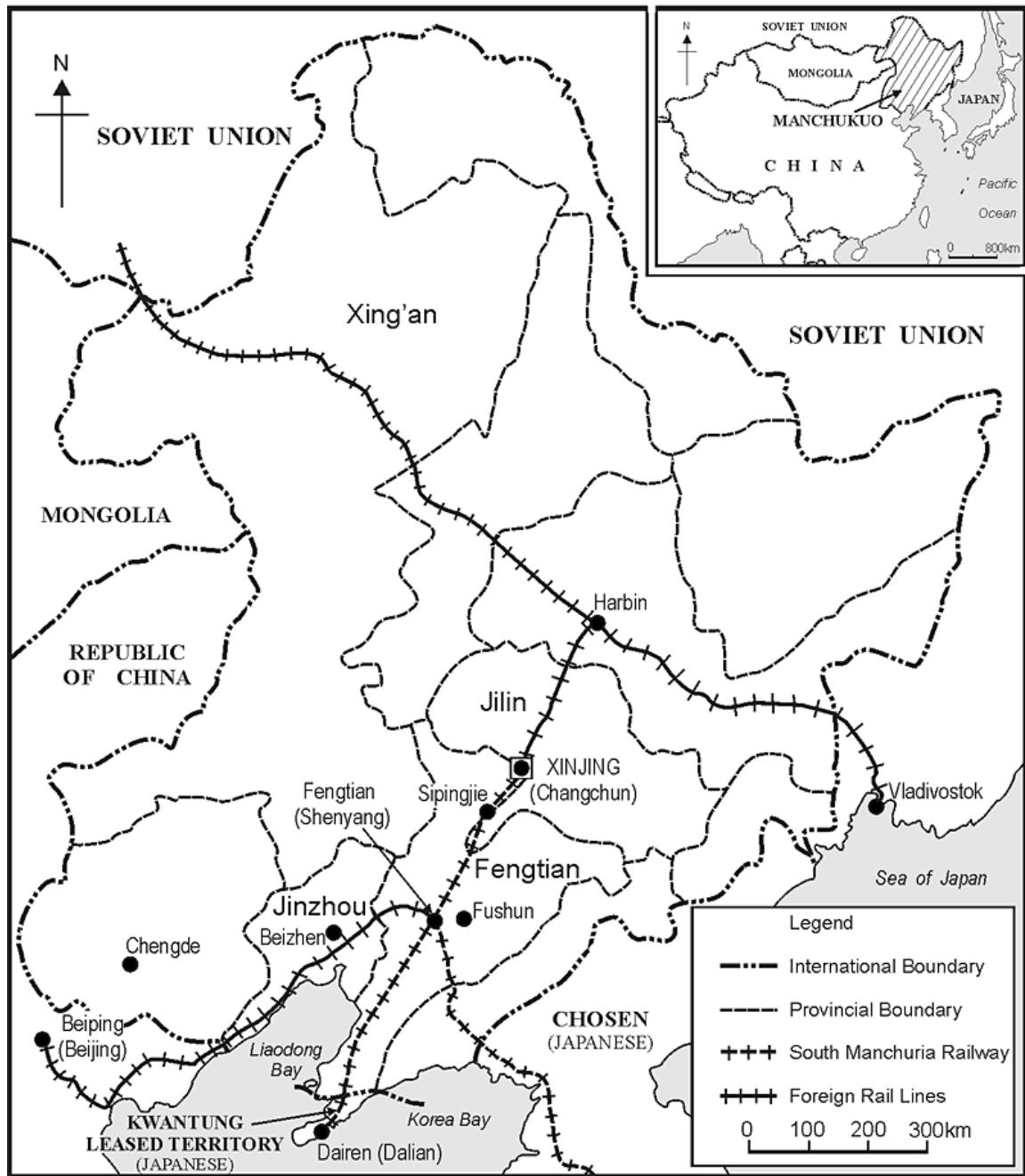
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Fig.1: Manchukuo



Introduction

On June 29, 1935, a resident of Tangbancheng village in Fengcheng county in Andong Province of Manchukuo reported to the village head that his third brother had joined a bandit gang called “China Good” (*zhongguohao*; 中國好) and he was turning in his brother to “prevent his family from being involved” (*bi mian jia lei*; 偿免家累) in punishment. In the same month, another villager also made a report about his son becoming a “bandit.” According to his report, his forty-four-year-old elder son had been engaged in farming since childhood, but had left home and joined a “bandit” gang in the mountains. Although this father didn’t know which gang his son had joined, he dared not conceal the information and therefore made a report in person. These two cases were both confirmed later; the self-defense corps in each village was dispatched to search for and capture these “bandits.”¹

Thumbing through gazettes published by local governments in Manchukuo during this period, we can see a lot of similar reports from different villages. Statistics of bandits’ numbers, criminal cases, and reports of local police searches were the main content of county-level official publications.² Several questions arise when browsing through these records. For instance, at that time in Manchukuo, the so-called “puppet state” of Japan established in 1932, what did the term “*fei*” (bandit; 匪) represent? What was the political, social, and economic context in which some peasants joined “bandit gangs?” How did a political and administrative mechanism function so as to push a

¹ *Fengcheng xian gongshu gongbao* 鳳城縣公署公報 [Gazette of Fengcheng County Government Office] v. 16 (1935): 41.

² See for example, *Andong xianzheng yuekan* 安東縣政月刊 [Andong County Government Monthly] 2:6 (1936): 25-31.

villager to turn in his son? And what happened to these villagers after they became “bandits?” These questions all point to the core of the current study.

Manchuria: A Brief Overview

Before exploring these questions, a brief historical overview of Manchuria and Manchukuo is necessary.³ A sacred homeland of Manchu rulers of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) since the seventeenth century, Manchuria was closed to Han Chinese until the mid-nineteenth century when Russia accelerated its expansion in northern Manchuria. With the opening of Manchuria to Han Chinese from the late nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants mainly from North China poured into this region, especially on a large scale after the downfall of the Qing Dynasty. Despite the establishment of a Republic in 1911, the lack of a powerful central Chinese government had promoted regional autonomy under warlord regimes. In the meantime, Japan had started its encroachment on Manchuria at the turn of the twentieth century. The entanglement of China, Japan, and Russia in this region made Manchuria, in Owen Lattimore’s words, “a cradle of conflict.”⁴

After its victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, Japan set up a garrison troop in 1906, which was renamed the Japanese Kwantung Army in 1919, to defend its newly acquired Kwantung Leased Territory and the district attached to the South

³ Manchuria as a toponym has been mainly used by the West and Japan, especially with an implication of Japanese colonialism since late 19th century in China. See Mark C. Elliott “The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 59 (2000): 604-7. As for the history of Manchuria as a frontier during the Qing period, see Robert H. G. Lee, *The Manchurian Frontier in Ch'ing History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁴ Owen Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict* (New York: AMS Press, 1975).

Manchurian Railway Company (SMR).⁵ At the same time, since the early 1920s, Chinese warlord Zhang Zuolin (1875-1928) had brought Manchuria under his control.⁶ From 1922 to 1931, Zhang Zuolin and his son, the “Young Marshal” Zhang Xueliang (1901-2001) had carried out a series of reforms to promote economic and social modernization.⁷

On September 18, 1931, the Japanese military launched a sudden attack on a Chinese garrison under the pretext that Chinese soldiers had blown up a section of the South Manchurian Railway in northern Fengtian (Shenyang). The so-called Manchurian Incident broke out. Ordered not to resist by the Nanjing Government, the Northeastern Army commanded by Zhang Xueliang gave up and retreated to southern Shanhai Pass. Thus Japanese troops advanced very quickly and took possession of such large cities as Shenyang, Changchun, Jilin, and Qiqihar in succession. In February 1932, with the Japanese occupation of Harbin, the capital city of the northernmost Heilongjiang Province, the Japanese Kwantung Army established its full control over Manchuria. On March 1, 1932, the Manchukuo government was inaugurated, claiming the independence of Manchuria from China.

Manchukuo and “Bandit-Suppression”

Manchukuo was supported by Japan and nominally led by the Chief Executive Puyi 溥儀 (1906-1967), the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty (1908-1911), and his

⁵ About Japanese involvement in Manchuria before 1932, especially the role played by the South Manchurian Railway Company, see Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁶ As for the study of Zhang Zuolin, his rule of Manchuria, and his relations with Japanese, see Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911-1928: China, Japan and the Manchurian Idea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977).

⁷ See Ronald Suleski, *Civil Government in Warlord China: Tradition, Modernization and Manchuria* (New York: P. Lang, 2002); Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 20-71.

Manchu and Chinese followers. As a result, from the first day of its establishment, China and most Western countries designated it a “puppet state” of Japan. While the legitimacy of Manchukuo was denied by the outside world, its domestic rule was seriously threatened as well by a variety of armed forces that were indiscriminately labeled “bandits” 匪 (hi in Japanese; fei in Chinese).

In late imperial China, a variety of terms roughly corresponded to the single English word “bandit.” The penal codes in the Qing Dynasty, for example, had listed entries such as robbers, thieves, and rebels, but there was no such unified term as “banditry” in Chinese that could refer to the challengers who posed a threat to political and social order. From the mid-nineteenth century, especially after the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64), the deepening social, economic, and political crises resulting from the decline of the Qing central government engendered an increased usage of “fei” 匪 (bandit) in official documents to designate armed forces with diverse origins.⁸

With growing poverty and the rise of warlord politics, armed brigands who made a living through robbery and kidnapping became prevalent in Republican China. In 1914, Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916), the president of the Republic at the time, enacted the first “bandit law” to facilitate frequent suppression campaigns.⁹ From 1916, China entered the warlord era following Yuan’s sudden death. Political and social fragmentation spawned new categories of armed forces, such as “soldier bandits.” During the 1920s, China was regarded by foreign media as a “bandit country” when more and more

⁸ One example was the famous “Tao yuefei xi” 討粵匪檄 [A proclamation against the bandits of Guangdong and Guangxi] by Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872) in 1854. See the full translation of the proclamation in Pei-kai Cheng, Michael Lestz, with Jonathan D. Spence eds., *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Norton, 1999), 146-9.

⁹ See Chapter Four.

foreigners became victims in many robbery or kidnapping cases. In these cases, banditry became the most salient feature of China in disorder. In the meanwhile, “bearded bandits” and “mounted bandits” as the major categories of “Manchurian bandits” also caused social and political problems in Manchuria. As a result, the “bandit problem” in China during the 1920s evoked frequent foreign intervention in the name of “maintaining peace and order.” In this sense, “bandit suppression” undertaken by the Japanese military in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident embodied an appropriation of recent history of disorder in China.

After the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, the Japanese Kwantung Army, later joined by the Manchukuo Army initiated a series of “bandit suppression” (*tōbatsu*; 討伐) campaigns to consolidate the newborn regime. It was highly possible that the aforementioned “villagers turned bandits” would have later been found dead in the military operations in 1935 when suppression campaigns against “bandits” reached a crescendo. This dissertation will focus on “bandit suppression” in Manchukuo as a means of illuminating the state’s claims of legitimacy, its ability to mobilize at different levels, and the involvement of “bandit suppression” in other dimensions of state building in Manchukuo. By examining how the “bandit suppression” was perceived, represented, and practiced in the context of Manchukuo’s state building, I will argue that the perception of the “bandit problem” and the practice of suppression campaigns in Manchukuo embodied the state’s pursuit of legitimacy. Furthermore, the ideological, administrative, and legal construction, as well the effort of a widespread mobilization of different groups of people in suppression campaigns facilitated the state building process of Manchukuo.

State of the Field

Previous studies of Manchuria have mainly focused on the economic, political, and military dimensions from the Japanese perspective. In these studies, Manchuria was regarded as a significant part of the Japanese empire,¹⁰ whereas the history of Manchukuo itself was by and large neglected. Manchukuo was usually designated a puppet state of Japan, indicating the strong and heavy Japanese (military) hand and the weak participation of Chinese and other groups. In Chinese historiography, this “puppet” characteristic has been expressed by adding “illegitimate” (*wei 假*) to the state and all its affiliated institutions and organizations in order to deny their legitimacy. A comprehensive history of Manchukuo has been explored in two Chinese academic works that examined political, economic, military, and cultural aspects of Japanese rule since 1931, and the “heroic” history of anti-Japanese resistance by volunteer armies and Communists.¹¹

However, the issue of sovereignty has been brought forth in recent scholarship of Manchukuo. Different from the conventional view of Manchukuo as a puppet state without sovereignty, these studies reexamined Manchukuo sovereignty from new perspectives. In Manchukuo, as Han Suk-jung’s dissertation has suggested, the state-building process was fast and efficient, which engendered a state effect in three directions—to its subjects (domestic order), to the outside world (international

¹⁰ See Peter Duus, Ramon Myers H. and Mark R. Peattie eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) and *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

¹¹ See Jiang Niandong ed., *Wei Manzhouguo shi 假滿洲國史* [History of Manchukuo] (Changchun: Jilin Renmin Chubanshe, 1980); Xie Xueshi, *Wei Manzhouguo shi xinbian 假滿洲國史新編* [Newly edited history of Manchukuo] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1995).

reputation), and to itself (invention of its own traditions and ritualization, for example).¹²

The result of this effect was the appearance of Manchukuo as a sovereign state because it obtained everything required for a “sovereign state”: armies, emperor system, and state rituals and ceremonies. Therefore, Han reckoned this sovereign appearance as “puppet sovereignty.”

On the other hand, Prasenjit Duara’s more recent research on Manchukuo sovereignty has put Manchukuo in the broader context of East Asian history and examined how regional culture, ideas, and practices were appropriated and utilized by the builders of Manchukuo in their pursuit of sovereignty. He has argued that the discourse and representation of “cultural authenticity” embodied in women’s organizations, religious groups, and political society in Manchukuo validated a sovereign form of Manchukuo which to some extent became a spearhead for the client states that appeared in the wake of the Second World War.¹³

In addition to approaching Manchukuo sovereignty from the angles of state-building and cultural authenticity, Thomas David Dubois has also discussed Manchukuo sovereignty from a legal perspective.¹⁴ He suggests that the development of legislation, construction of legal and judicial institutions, and cultivation of legal professionals in Manchukuo not only ensured an effective operation of colonial power, but also was employed as evidence that Manchukuo was a sovereign state.¹⁵ Moreover, the quick development of legal institutions and professionals in Manchukuo, he has argued,

¹² Han Suk-jung. “Puppet Sovereignty: The State Effect of Manchukuo, from 1932 to 1936.” Ph.D. diss. (University of Chicago, 1995), 35.

¹³ Duara, 2003.

¹⁴ Thomas David Dubois, “Rule of Law in a Brave New Empire: Legal Rhetoric and Practice in Manchukuo.” *Law and History Review* 26:2 (2008), pp. 285-317; “Inauthentic Sovereignty: Law and Legal Institutions in Manchukuo,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69 (2010): 749-770.

¹⁵ Dubois, “Rule of Law in a Brave New Empire,” 315.

indicated that “Never fully sovereign in the modern sense, and yet more complex than a simple puppet state, Manchukuo at times exhibited elements of quasi-, nested, and developmental sovereignty.”¹⁶

The aforementioned studies have pointed to different directions and dimensions of Manchukuo sovereignty. Han’s study has mainly focused on the forms and meanings that were constructed in the state-building process, and his discussion of Manchukuo sovereignty is primarily concentrated on “the sovereign effect of the state,”¹⁷ rather than the establishment of state authority as the foundation of state sovereignty at a substantial level; Duara’s research is mainly focused on the construction of “cultural authenticity” as the basis of Manchukuo sovereignty, while the operation of political, economic, and power structure is not his focal point.

With regard to the bandit issue, on the other hand, although a handful of scholars interested in popular culture, peasant revolution, and war have explored the roles of bandits in various political and social contexts, or have specifically focused on bandits and their groups in certain periods,¹⁸ most studies have taken “bandit” as a fixed category. Based on the concept of “social bandits” put forward by Eric Hobsbawm in 1969, Phil Billingsley’s study of bandits in Republican China has suggested that this genre is not applicable to China because social unrest and economic crises during this period left little

¹⁶ Dubois, “Inauthentic Sovereignty,” 749.

¹⁷ Han, “Puppet Sovereignty,” 49.

¹⁸ Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); Frederick Jr. Wakeman, “Rebellion and Revolution: The Study of Popular Movement in Chinese History,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 36:2 (1977): 201-37; Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). Diana Lary, *Warlord Soldiers: Common Chinese Soldiers, 1911-1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); R.G. Tiedemann, “The Persistence of Banditry: Incidents in Border Districts of the North China Plain.” *Modern China* 8, no. 4 (1982): 395-433; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969); Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Xu Youwei and Philip Billingsley, “When Worlds Collide: Chinese Bandits and Their ‘Foreign Tickets.’” *Modern China* 26:1 (2000): 38-78.

room for such heroic figures and most bandits originated from bankrupt peasants. The fragmented warlordism furthermore blurred the boundary between bandits and other drifting groups of people such as disbanded soldiers and vagrants, and gave rise to new genres such as “soldier bandits.” On the other hand, as Xiaoqun Xu’s study of the “bandit law” during the Republican period (1911-49) has suggested, the collapse of state authority made “bandit” as a label a useful and convenient tool of political accusation and military operation, such as the five campaigns launched by the Guomindang (KMT) against the “communist bandits” in the mid-1930s and a continued application of the term “communist bandits” (*gongfei*; 共匪) in Taiwan after 1949.¹⁹

The “bandit suppression” campaigns in Manchukuo had a different context from that of these aforementioned studies. I will suggest that the crucial concern of the state was to obtain legitimacy as the foundation of governmental power. Confronted with domestic disorder and the influence of Chinese nationalism, for Manchukuo itself to gain recognition and legitimacy for its continued existence as a state, it had to create a consciousness of its right to govern and the recognition by the governed of that right. Besides, to obtain legitimacy and consolidate state authority also involved “the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society.”²⁰ Therefore, the campaigns against “bandits” were often accompanied by the proclamation of the founding ideas of

¹⁹ Xiaoqun Xu, “The Rule of Law without Due Process: Punishing Robbers and Bandits in Early-Twentieth-Century China,” *Modern China* 33:2 (2007): 230-57; William Wei, *Counterrevolution in China: The Nationalists in Jiangxi During the Soviet Period* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985); H. Chang, “China as the ‘Communist Bandits’: Evolution of Gongfei in Taiwan’s Identity Politics,” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Suntec City, Singapore Online (2011-06-05) from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p405085_index.html.

²⁰ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 64.

Manchukuo, including the principles of the “Kingly Way” (*ōdō*; 王道), “ethnic harmony,” and bringing peace and order to the people. By examining the “bandit suppression” campaigns, this study will suggest that by labeling internal resistant forces “bandits,” the state tried to assert its state orthodoxy on the one hand and to avoid the challenge of Chinese nationalism on the other. In this sense, “bandit suppression” embodied “a state historiographic discourse about order, ordering, justice, and freedom.”²¹

Sources

A wide variety of sources have been used in this study to trace the history of bandit issues and public security in Manchukuo during the period of 1932-1945. The primary sources in Chinese, Japanese, and English can be roughly divided into four categories. The first category includes government gazettes 政府公報, history books, and yearbooks 年鑑. This type of material contributes to the conceptualization and contextualization of “bandits” and “bandit problem” in the establishment of state legitimacy, ideology, and authority of Manchukuo through the lens of suppression campaigns. These sources provide consecutive official records of decision-making, policies, and measures concerning bandit problems in Manchukuo.

Take *Manchukuo Government Gazette* (Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao; 滿洲國政府公報) as an example. Published from 1932 to 1945 by the Manchukuo government, this *Gazette* not only covered laws, rules, regulations, and official edicts from the central

²¹ Paul Sant Cassia, “‘Better Occasional Murders than Frequent Adulteries’: Discourses on Banditry, Violence, and Sacrifice in the Mediterranean,” In Fernando Coronil and Julie Skurski eds., *States of Violence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 221.

government, but also included reports and events at the county level. By reading it as a record of the discourse of state building, it can provide rich materials on ideological, legal, and administrative constructions related to the conceptualization of “banditry” and “bandit suppression” campaigns in Manchukuo. On the other hand, gazettes and reports from the local government provide detailed progress reports of suppression campaigns, statistics on bandits at the local scale, and the efforts of pacification and propaganda by both Japanese and Chinese. Furthermore, by comparing the two “bandit laws” enacted and published in government gazettes by the Republic of China in 1914 and by the Manchukuo government in 1932, for instance, we can see a historical continuity in the strategies taken by both governments to stabilize their legitimacy and consolidate state authority through the politics of naming.

Official reports by the Manchukuo government also provide most of the inside information on policy-making, enforcement and effects of policies and strategies, and self-evaluations. While relying on histories such as *Manshū Kenkoku Jūnenshi* (Ten-year History of the State Founding of Manchukuo) and *Manchukuo Yearbooks*, we can also see how “bandit suppression” both as a discourse and a practice was written into the history of Manchukuo and was connected to such state ideologies as the “Paradise of the Kingly Way” and “ethnic harmony.” In this sense, the discourse about “bandits” and suppression campaigns in Manchukuo also reflected the self-identity of the new state.

The second type of sources includes newspapers, journals, and magazines published in Chinese, Japanese, and English from the late Qing through the Manchukuo period. Each publication demonstrated its specific concern with bandit issues in some specific historical moments. For example, English reports and review articles in *The*

China Weekly Review published by American journalists in Shanghai in the 1920s provided a foreign perspective on the relationship between “bandit outrages” and the inability of the Chinese government; around the same period, bandit problems discussed in Chinese journals such as *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 (Eastern Miscellany) revealed Chinese intellectuals’ concerns with the diplomatic crisis due to the increasing frequency of bandits’ atrocities committed against foreigners. Therefore, the various perspectives taken by different publications and in different periods help to enrich our understanding of how bandit issues gradually occupied a significant place in the context of the Sino-Japanese relationship and the encroachment of Japanese imperialist power in Manchuria before the establishment of Manchukuo.

With regard to the management of bandit problems during the Manchukuo period, publications in this era embodied the political, social, and administrative considerations of different groups of people. For example, *Hōsō zasshi* 法曹雜誌 (Journal of the Legal Profession) published by legal professionals in Shinkyō (Xinjing; 新京)—the capital of Manchukuo—since 1934 carried many articles on the proclamation and implementation of the bandit and peace preservation laws in Manchukuo; on the other hand, *Manshū hyōron* 滿洲評論 (Manchuria Review) created in 1932 in Dalian with Tachibana Shinaki as the editor was a forum in which Japanese and Chinese intellectuals, researchers from the South Manchurian Railway Company, and officials in the Manchukuo government could present their opinions and suggestions on the management of Manchukuo. Moreover, journals like *Senbu geppō* 宣撫月報 (Propaganda and Pacification Monthly) were in particular dedicated to the fulfillment of military campaigns and the working process of pacification and propaganda. By piecing together these materials, we will have

a better comprehension of bandit suppression campaigns as a way of establishing and consolidating state authority and the corresponding strategies and practice of mobilization in this process.

The third category of sources is individual books published during the Republican and Manchukuo periods. These books include reports, pamphlets, research results, and compilations of materials on certain themes, either in Chinese or Japanese. This type of source provides information and knowledge in certain fields. For example, He Xiya's study of Chinese bandits in the 1920s was one of the most useful guides to the formation of the bandit problem in Republican China; the subjects of books during the Manchukuo period ranged from the construction of the Manchukuo Army to the history of Japanese immigration to Manchuria. Similar to the second type of sources, these sources were mostly composed by official or semi-official organizations or individuals who had a close relationship with the Manchukuo government and therefore represented the standpoint of the state.

The fourth type of sources utilized for this study is personal accounts that took various forms, such as travel notes, memoirs, reports, and confessions in Chinese and Japanese. These sources provide a wealth of insiders' knowledge and perception concerning bandit issues that are sometimes unavailable in official or semi-official records.²² In addition, these materials based on authors' experiences provide many substantial details that were often only sketched in other kind of sources.

²² It is noteworthy that after the Second World War, a large amount of Japanese sources that used to be marked as secret or top secret were compiled and published, and these materials became highly valuable for researchers to approach some significant issues of Japanese wartime history. See for example, *Jūgonen sensō gokuhi shiryōshū* 十五年戦争極秘資料集 [A collection of top secret sources of the fifteen-year war] (Tōkyō: Ryūkei Shosha, 1976-).

One problem with the aforementioned four categories of sources lies in their uncertain level of credibility. However, the nature of Manchukuo as a so-called “puppet state” does not necessarily indicate that its publications are inauthentic. It goes without saying that every state has an intention to beautify and propagate its domestic policies and state ideology and we can see a lot of propaganda about “the Kingly Way” and “racial harmony,” for instance, in many publications during Manchukuo period. But the strategies and practice of propaganda just perfectly reflected the logic of the state in justifying its rule as an independent state. Here, the rhetoric of the state also became a significant part of the official discourse about bandits in Manchukuo. In addition, even such materials as *Manshū Kyōsanhi no kenkyū* 滿洲共產匪の研究 with an obvious political orientation kept a rich and reliable record of economic and social information and statistics on rural society in Manchukuo. Furthermore, for example, one Japanese investigator upon his examination of the construction of collective hamlets recorded a miserable picture of how impoverished people were forced to move into collective hamlets and conveyed his deep sympathy for the peasants.²³ Such materials obviously went beyond a cliché of propaganda for the government and leave with us a useful record of rural society in Manchukuo. In summary, by obtaining and reading as diverse sources as possible and by evaluating them comparatively and critically, this study attempts to recover the political and social landscape in which the conceptualization of bandits and the practice of suppression campaigns were imbedded.

²³ See the section on collective hamlets in Chapter Four.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation contains five more chapters and an Epilogue. Chapter One is a historical review of discourses about bandits in modern China, especially in Manchuria. I investigate the influential representations of Chinese bandits from both Chinese and Western perspectives before 1931. I will argue that the bandit problem originated from political and social unrest and became a symbol of the deficient and corrupt Chinese government. Specifically, Manchuria, a frontier that had enjoyed regional autonomy to a great degree, was characterized by a special category of Manchurian bandits and their violence. Therefore, the powerful discourse of China as a “bandit country” during the 1920s and Manchurian bandits as a regional characteristic were later appropriated by the Japanese as justifications for their military operations in Manchuria in the early 1930s.

Chapter Two focuses on the Japanese construction of the “bandit problem” in Manchuria in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, the efforts undertaken by Japan and later Manchukuo to legitimate an independent Manchuria and the ideological foundations of the Manchukuo state. I will suggest that “bandit problem” as a powerful discourse provided one reasonable justification for Japanese advancement in Manchuria. The Japanese claim of “self-defense” was replaced by the need for “maintaining peace and order” in Manchuria. To legitimate Manchurian independence in front of the international community, banditry, as a “necessary evil,” was employed by Japanese as a clear evidence of the corrupt regimes in Manchuria under the control of previous warlords. In this way, the military confrontation between China and Japan was internalized as a domestic issue of counterinsurgency. Furthermore, the ideology of the “Kingly Way” and “ethnic harmony” was created to support Manchukuo as a benign and

promising regime, which underlined a “good government” rather than a “Chinese government.”

Chapter Three examines how the “bandit problem,” as one of the most formidable challenges in establishing state authority, was perceived in Manchukuo, including the changing categorization of “bandits,” social and political influences of “bandit violence,” and the continuous research efforts by various agents on the “bandit problem” and related issues. For one thing, “bandit violence” called the state’s legitimacy and claim to be a benevolent government into question, especially when Westerners became victims of the violence; for another, the “bandit problem” also became involved with other dimensions of state-building. Therefore, “bandit suppression” had been ranked as the top priority in Manchukuo.

Chapter Four investigates the implementation of “bandit suppression” from administrative, military, and legal perspectives. I will suggest that “bandit suppression” in Manchukuo was a systematic project that went beyond military operations. In targeting and exterminating challenging forces, a variety of strategies were adopted. Furthermore, “bandit suppression” facilitated state-building process and was incorporated into official representations of the “spirit of the state building” (*jianguo jingshen*; 建國精神).

Chapter Five explores social mobilization and propaganda directed by the state toward eradicating the “bandit problem.” Specifically, Koreans and Japanese in Manchukuo were mobilized to take root in rural districts as the fundamental solution to the problem of public security. On the other hand, *Kyōwakai* (Concordia Association), the headquarters of propaganda, played a leading role in organizing and coordinating the work of “pacification and propaganda” (*senbu*; 宣撫). Through the extensive

mobilization of villagers, women, and even children, a widespread network of propaganda was deployed to consolidate rural public security after a series of military operations against “bandits.”

There is no doubt that the state of Manchukuo endeavored to exterminate “bandits” and restore “peace and order” throughout the Manchukuo period. And in the early 1940s, the Manchukuo military announced that “bandits” had been thoroughly pacified in the whole country, a region beset with “bandit” violence since the late nineteenth century. However, after the downfall of Manchukuo with the defeat of Japan in 1945, to resolve the “bandit problem,” according to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), became the precondition for making Manchuria a stronghold that could withstand the Kuomintang (KMT) in the long run. With a class-based perception of the “bandit problem” in Manchuria, the CCP carried out a large scale “bandit suppression” from 1945 to 1949. It was not until the early 1950s when “bandits” were incorporated into such larger categories as “counterrevolutionaries” and “class enemies” that they finally faded into the dark page of history.

Chapter One

Discourses About Banditry: A Historical Review

In June 1923, the editorial of *The China Weekly Review*, an English language journal published by American journalists in Shanghai, bore a bold headline “What of the Future of the Bandit Country?”¹ The editor described China as a world without law, order, and morality because of the rampancy of “bandit outrages” that had affected both Chinese and foreigners. Flipping through this journal and other influential English language publications during the 1920s, such as the *North China Herald*, one would frequently encounter reports, statistics, reviews, and even anecdotes regarding Chinese “bandits.” Western criticism of the Chinese government and appeals for foreign intervention became the stereotype of the representations of the “bandit” issue. In this sense, “banditry” and “bandit outrages,” as Phil Billingsley has suggested, “confirmed the racist and imperialist convictions already held by contemporary advocates of the ‘white man’s burden’ and provided the pretext for constant threats of foreign intervention.”²

This interest in “banditry” and the “bandit problem” was not confined to foreigners. Chinese intellectuals and journalists during this period often treated “banditry” as part of the social problems that had beset China since the late nineteenth century. In 1925, He Xiya, a Chinese scholar, published the first systematic study on the “bandit problem” in modern China, entitled *Zhongguo daofei wenti yanjiu* (A Study of the Bandit

¹ “What of the Future of the Bandit Country?” *The China Weekly Review*, vol. 25, no.4 (June 1923). This journal was initially entitled *Millard's Review* after its founder T·F· Millard in 1917; later, it was renamed *Millard's Review of the Far East* and then *The Far East Weekly Review*. From 1923, it began to bear the title of *The China Weekly Review* until 1953 when it finally ceased publication in China.

² Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 1.

Problem in China). In this study, He revealed the broad historical, social, and economic contexts in which “banditry” was firmly rooted.

Despite these extensive discussions of “banditry” and the “bandit problem” during the Republican period, “bandit” as a unified category that ranged from large armed forces to petty robbers, did not exist until the mid-nineteenth century. How “bandit” as a term and “banditry” as a social problem was formulated as the salient feature of a disorderly China will be the focus of this chapter.

“Bandit” in Political Discourses

The definition of “bandit” in *Oxford English Dictionary* includes "one who is proscribed or outlawed; hence, a lawless desperate marauder, a brigand: usually applied to members of the organized gangs which infest the mountainous districts of Italy, Sicily, Spain, Greece, and Turkey."³ In Chinese, however, there is no such a single and all-encompassing word that corresponds to “bandit” in English. During late imperial China, “*zei* 賊,” “*dao* 盜,” “*kou* 寽,” and their combinations constituted the major categories that were roughly equal to “bandit,” but usages of these Chinese terms really depended on specific contexts. In classical Chinese, both “*zei*” and “*dao*” could refer to people who engage in assassinations; “*zei*” also has the special connotation of rebel.⁴ “*Kou*” as a verb means “taking away things by force;” as a noun, it is the same as “*daozei* 盜賊.”⁵ “*Fei* 匪,” which would be the Chinese counterpart of “bandit” in the twentieth century,

³ See <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15149?rskey=feZbej&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>

⁴ See Wang Li ed. *Wang Li gu hanyu zidian* 王力古漢語字典 [Wang Li dictionary of classical Chinese] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 778.

⁵ Ibid., 223.

however, almost has no relation with violent or criminal activities in classical Chinese; philologically, it is exchangeable with “*fei* (非),” implying “wrong, bad, or negative.”⁶

From the legal perspective, from the seventeenth century, “*zeidao* 賊盜” was the first entry in the penal codes of *Da Qing lüli* 大清律例 and twenty-eight articles were listed under this entry. These articles specified various offences and corresponding punishments. According to William C. Jones, the first three articles—“plotting rebellion and high treason” (*moufan dani*; 謀反大逆), “plotting treason” (*moupan*; 謀叛), and “writing books on sorcery or speaking about sorcery” (*zao yaoshu yaoyan*; 造妖書妖言)—fall into to the category of “*zei*,” one who “exerts a pernicious influence throughout the empire.” By contrast, “*dao*” only refers to theft that targets personal properties and “affects only one person, one family, one place.”⁷ In this sense, “*zei*” has a connotation of political crime and therefore the authorities of every dynasty commonly used it to refer to rebels against or challengers to the regime.⁸ On the other hand, “*fei*” rarely appeared in official documents before the mid-Qing period. There was neither legal definition nor category for “*fei*” until 1914 when “The Regulations on Punishing Robbers and Bandits” (*Chengzhi daofei tiaoli*; 懲治盜匪條例) was enacted by Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) for the first time. Later, the Regulations was revised as “The Law on Punishing Robbers and Bandits” (*Daofei fa*; 盜匪法). In this Law, “*dao*” and “*fei*” were combined together to form a new category of crimes with the most severe punishment.⁹

⁶ Ibid., 1623.

⁷ William C. Jones, *The Great Qing Code* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 237.

⁸ As for the discussions of legal definitions and measurements of punishment concerning each subcategories, see Robert J. Antony, “Scourges on the People: Perceptions of Robbery, Snatching, and Theft in the Mid-Qing Period.” *Late Imperial China*, 16:2 (Dec. 1995): 98-132.

⁹ Xiaoqun Xu, “The Rule of Law without Due Process: Punishing Robbers and Bandits in Early-Twentieth-Century China.” *Modern China*, 33:2 (April 2007): 230-257.

It is noteworthy that since the mid-Qing period, especially during and after the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), “*fei*” was increasingly applied by the Qing court to refer to offenders of two statutes—rebellion and subversion, and desertion, that is, the disloyalty to the state.¹⁰ From the late Daoguang reign (1821-1850) to the end of the Qing Dynasty, various rebels and local gangsters that had endangered the political and social order were designated as “*fei*.” For example, common law-breakers such as robbers and thieves were called “*feifan* 匪犯,” “*feitu* 匪徒,” and “*zeifei* 賊匪.” Rebels in general were designated “*zeifei* 賊匪” and “*nifei* 逆匪.” “Barbarian rebels” were labeled “*yaofei* 猟匪 (minorities in Hunan and Guangdong Provinces),” “*yifei* 夷匪 (minorities in Sichuan Province),” and “*miaofei* 苗匪 (minorities in Guizhou Province).” By examining a wealth of terms related to bandits/*fei*, we can see that on the one hand, these terminologies reflected the strong influence of traditional Chinese political culture—“Winners become kings whereas losers become bandits” (*chengwang baikou*; 成王敗寇). In this sense, by applying the derogative terms to rebels as state challengers, the authorities declared that only their rulership represented orthodoxy and legitimacy. On the other hand, these frequently used terms such as “*fei*,” “*zei*,” and “*dao*” in official documents after the 1800s also implied increasingly severe ruling crises of the Qing government. No matter whether people who were designated as “bandits” were robbers, petty criminals, or rebels, their violent activities connoted political and social disorder, which was gradually difficult to deal with for the imperial government.

¹⁰ See Paul H. Chen, “Disloyalty to the State in Late Imperial China,” in Dieter Eikemeier and Herbert Franke ed. *State and Law in East Asia* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981), 159-83.

In this sense, as long as “bandits” including petty thieves, robbers, and rebels undermined or had the potential of undermining the government, they would become the target of punishment, and more severely, suppression. Accordingly, since the late nineteenth century, the Qing government had frequently publicized its successes accomplished in suppression campaigns against various “bandits.” One aspect was the composition of the imperial history of these pacification and suppression campaigns. From the 1860s to 1890s, the Qing government compiled a series of books regarding measures and strategies adopted in several “bandit suppression” campaigns. These books included *Qinding jiaoping yuefei fanglue* 欽定剿平粵匪方略, *Qinding jiaoping nianfei fanglue* 欽定剿平捻匪方略, *Qinding pingding Yunnan huifei fanglue* 欽定平定雲南回匪方略, *Qinding pingding Guizhou miaofei jilue* 欽定平定貴州苗匪紀略, and *Qinding pingding Shan'gan Xinjiang huifei fanglue* 欽定平定陝甘新疆回匪方略,¹¹ among others. Serving both political and military functions, these official records were supposed to promote imperial orthodoxy by denigrating all the enemies as bandits/*fei* and by inscribing suppression campaigns in the glorious imperial history. Ironically, however, the ever-growing number of such books only verified the fact that the Qing government had been trapped in the enlarging political and social turmoil.

In the meanwhile, some scholar-officials during the late Qing expressed deeper concerns about moral decline and ideological crisis through their representations of “bandits.” In 1854, Zeng Guofan (1811-1872), one of the most famous Han Chinese scholar-officials in the late Qing, promulgated a proclamation to denounce the Taiping

¹¹ Liu Lina, “Wanqing shixue de fazhan yu biange” 晚清史學的發展與變革 [The development and transformation of history in late Qing], in *State and Society in Late Qing* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007), 180.

rebels and call on common people to devote themselves to suppression campaigns. In the proclamation, he stated:

Ever since the times of Yao, Shun, and the Three Dynasties, sages, generation after generation, have upheld the Confucian teachings, stressing proper human relationships, between ruler and minister, father and son, superiors and subordinates, the high and the low, all in their proper place, just as hats and shoes are not interchangeable. The Yüeh [Guangdong and Guangxi] bandits have stolen a few scraps from the foreign barbarians and worship the Christian religion...In a single day several thousand years of Chinese ethical principles and proper human relationships, classical books, social institutions and statutes have been completely swept away. This is not just a crisis for our Ch'ing dynasty, but the most extraordinary crisis of all time for the Confucian teachings, which is why our Confucius and Mencius are weeping bitterly in the nether world. How can any educated person sit idly by without thinking of doing something?¹²

Zeng's criticism of "Yüeh bandits" embodied his commitment to uphold moral values of Confucianism. In this sense, he considered "Yüeh bandits" a great threat to "Confucian teachings," rather than a political crisis for the Qing dynasty alone.

In addition, the Qing literati resorted to literary creations to discuss the differentiations between the loyal and the treacherous. One of the examples is Yu Wanchun 俞萬春 (1794-1849) and his *Dang kou zhi* 蕩寇志 (Chronicle of the Bandits' Quelling). This novel, finished by Yu in 1847, was a sequel of Shi Naian 施耐庵 (1296-1372)'s famous *Water Margin*, a novel about a group of outlaws in Shandong Province in the Northern Song dynasty (960-1172). In Yu's sequel, he intended to dismiss the "evil" influence of another sequel *Hou shui hu* 後水滸 (Later Water Margin) by Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 (1330?-1400?), who had depicted Song Jiang, the leader of the

¹² Zeng Guofan, "Tao yuefei xi" 討粵匪檄 [A proclamation against the bandits of Guangdong and Guangxi], in Pei-kai Cheng, Michael Lestz, with Jonathan D. Spence eds., *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Norton, 1999), 147-8.

outlaws, and his followers as heroes and loyal subjects to the state.¹³ According to Yu, Shi didn't regard Song Jiang as loyal, but had portrayed on many occasions Song's crafty and evil characteristics. Therefore, Yu attempted to "clarify the truth and smash Luo's false opinions in order to make later generations under heaven thoroughly understand that the differentiations between the way of banditry and loyalty could not be disguised at all."¹⁴

Indeed, Yu's literary creation was closely related to his background and early experiences. Yu was born in an official's family in Zhejiang province. Around twenty years old, he followed his father to Guangdong province and participated in suppression campaigns against local Yao minorities during the mid-Jiaqing period (1796-1820). Among captives they had interrogated, there were two Han Chinese who instigated local people by propagating the *Water Margin* legend. In 1827, Yu's father, who was disturbed by the political disorder and moral decline, asked Yu to write the book.¹⁵ Yu himself had also realized the great influence of fiction and light readings because they spread fast and widely among common people. When Yu's relatives and friends contributed prefaces to Yu's book, they repeatedly mentioned the evil effect of such fictional books as Luo's *Later Water Margin* because many rebels had claimed their admiration of the knight-errant spirit of those outlaws in Luo's book.¹⁶ Therefore, Yu's writing of an opposite

¹³ There are different versions and continual debates about the author of *Water Margin*. Here Yu claimed that his sequel was to complete Shi Naian's version of seventy chapters, not including Luo Guanzhong's original creation.

¹⁴ See Yu Wanchun, *Dang kou zhi* 蕩寇志 [Chronicle of the Bandits' Quelling] (1847) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), "Preface."

¹⁵ Yu Xun, "Xu xu" 續序 [Supplementary preface].

¹⁶ Banyue laoren, "Xu xu" 續序 [Supplementary preface].

sequel was expected to counteract the “pernicious” influence and rescue “the public morals and people’s morality (*shidao renxin*; 世道人心).”¹⁷

Through examining Chinese terms as counterparts of “bandit” in English, and representations of “banditry” in Chinese political discourse from the nineteenth century, we can see that the usages and meanings of these terms are much more complicated and flexible than that of the English word “bandit.” On the one hand, the application of these terms to criminals especially rebels indicated the effort of the imperial government in maintaining its political order and legitimacy; on the other hand, scholar-literati’s perceptions of “banditry” demonstrated their concerns about the maintenance of Confucian principles. However, as Thomas A. Metzger has pointed out, Confucian values often attributed all kinds of crimes to economic misery, injustice, corruption, and military activities, and thus had a sympathetic emotion towards bandits, robbers, and thieves, while neglecting cruelty of these people and damages they did to the society.¹⁸ With the further decline of the Qing central power, “banditry” and the “bandit problem” demonstrated the ever-growing destructive effect on society and became one of the most serious social problems in the early twentieth century.

Banditry as a Social Problem

As a pioneer in the study of banditry, Eric Hobsbawm has put forward the conception of “social bandits” as a yardstick against which the origins, behaviors, and relationships between bandits and rural society have been explored. In general, he has

¹⁷ Xu Peike “Preface.”

¹⁸ Thomas A. Metzger, “Review: Chinese bandits: The Traditional Perception Re-Evaluated.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.33, no.3 (May 1974): 455.

defined bandits as people who “resist obedience, are outside the range of power, are potential exercisers of power themselves, and therefore potential rebels.”¹⁹ In this sense, no matter whether “bandit” is a label used by the authorities for their challengers, or real criminals who endangered common people’s property and life, a common characteristic of these people is that they have potential or actual ability to break down the existing social and power structures. In his study of banditry, Hobsbawm has focused on what he saw as a certain category of “social bandits,” who were derogated by the state as criminals but highly valued in folk culture and supported by the rural society with Robin Hood’s features. He has argued that this kind of “social bandits” existed in most pre-modern societies; these “bandits” originated from peasants, represented the interests of the poor and oppressed, and therefore were practitioners of their own justice against the state or local order. Thus according to Hobsbawm, “social bandits” were different from secret societies, or real criminals who eked out a living by raiding and killing.²⁰ In China, he suggested, the outlaws portrayed in the Chinese novel *Water Margin* exactly represented a heroic and romantic world of “social bandits.”

However, when we examine “social bandits” in the Chinese context, the bandit heroes in *Water Margin* are actually not representative, especially after the 1800s when China’s imperial order began to break up. Although there have been no systematic studies on bandits during imperial China, previous studies on peasants, rebels, and revolutionaries, and their interrelationship have provided images of Chinese bandits in the nineteenth century. For example, in her study of collective violence in Huabei from 1845 to 1945, Elizabeth Perry suggests that the deterioration of ecological conditions

¹⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000) (4th edition), 12.

²⁰ Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, 20.

(famine, flood, and drought, etc) had forced peasants to adopt either predatory or protective strategies to make a living.²¹ In this sense, Chinese bandits often fell into the category of “economic bandits” rather than “social bandits,” that is to say, for “bandits” in modern China, robbery, killing, and kidnapping were necessary ways of living. In Robert J. Antony’s study of larceny during the mid-Qing period, he pointed out that officials and elites in traditional China would attribute crimes and social disorder to such factors as “moral decay, lack of education, poverty, and the evil influence of wicked people.”²² Among these factors, however, poverty became the most influential.

From the mid-Qing period, rising population and limited resources made poverty a more widespread phenomenon and engendered crimes such as robbery and theft, and more seriously, rebellions. In 1793, Hong Liangji (1746-1809), a Qing scholar had foreseen the potentially devastating effect of population pressure on the economy and social order.²³ By the end of the nineteenth century, this viewpoint was held as a consensus among many intellectuals and officials, who had witnessed increasingly widespread wave of crimes. In an 1907 article that discussed origins of widespread “mounted bandits” in Manchuria, for example, the author pointed out that neither punishment of bandits nor moral suasion could prevent crimes because people could not behave honestly without minimum property. In Manchuria, he continued, lands were distributed to bannermen whereas Han immigrants could not obtain land ownership. In this case, tenants often suffered from high rents, taxes, and natural disasters; finally they

²¹ Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980).

²² Antony, Robert J. “Scourges on the People: Perceptions of Robbery, Snatching, and Theft in the Mid-Qing Period.” *Late Imperial China*, 16:2 (1995): 113.

²³ See Hong Liangji, “Zhiping pian” 治平篇 [On governance and the well-beings of the Empire], in *Hong Beijiang Shiwenji* (vol. 1) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1964): 33-4.

were forced to join bandit gangs. Therefore, the author suggested that the basic approach to solve banditry was to endow all people with land and only in this way “bandits” and “thieves” could be transformed into “innocent people (*liangmin*; 良民).”²⁴

On the other hand, although Confucian values have underlined rulers’ benevolence towards their subjects, in the Qing penal codes, the punishment imposed on robbers and rebels was actually draconic. In judicial reforms during the late Qing, the Ministry of Law attempted to make legal practices independent from administration. The reformers considered that resorting to draconic laws and punishment was not the most effective way of coping with banditry; instead, it was through “moral suasion” (*jiaohua*; 教化) and improvement of people’s livelihood that banditry and other kinds of crimes could be rooted out. Therefore, officials in the Ministry of Law insisted on due process in dealing with cases of banditry. Local officials in places ridden with banditry, however, advocated the summary execution that was broadly performed in suppression campaigns after the Taiping Rebellion.²⁵ This tension between legislation and administration actually reflected a contradictory perception of the ruling class towards the rising banditry. On the one hand, bandits including robbers, thieves, and rebels reflected a social, economic, and political crisis that should be solved through reforms rather than military operations alone. On the other hand, the ever-growing cases of banditry had developed to the extent that severe punishment was more expedient and effective.

If “banditry” was taken as the severe challenge to imperial power, then with the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911, “banditry” came to be regarded as a serious

²⁴ “Lun Fengtian san sheng duo mazi zhi yuanyin” 論奉天三省多馬賊之原因 [On the origins of widespread mounted bandits in Fengtian and three provinces], *Shengjing shibao* (Feb 19, 1907).

²⁵ Xu, “The Rule of Law without Due Process,” 235.

social problem in the Republic. In the meanwhile, with the development of publishing, discussions and studies of “banditry” or the “bandit problem” appeared frequently in magazines, newspapers, and even monographs.

The first systematic study of the “bandit problem” during the Republican China was He Xiaya’s *Zhongguo daofei wenti yanjiu* (A Study of the Bandit Problem in China) published in 1925.²⁶ In this pamphlet, He investigated the origins, categories, historical views, organizations and regulations, and living conditions of bandits and bandit gangs, and their geographical distribution in China. In the preface, he first expressed his anxiety over social disorder as a broader context of the “bandit problem” in contemporary China. By using phrases like “bandit disaster” (*feihuo*; 匪禍) and “the extreme of human disasters” (*renhuo zhi ji*; 人禍之極), he viewed bandits as the most serious problem that had inflicted China for a long time. He then listed four general reasons and five special reasons that led to the rise of banditry.²⁷ It is noteworthy that in addition to listing general political and economic turmoil as causes of banditry, he suggested two special factors that had evoked bandit activities. One was the dissemination of old novels, operas, and dramas, and the other was the traditional notion of knight-errantry, which he had criticized severely:

There are such books as *Shuihu zhuan*, *Shigong an*, *Penggong an*, *Qixia wuyi* in old novels, which have vividly described bandits’ lives. As a result, people who read these books get the viewpoint that ‘only bandits are the most adorable and respectful in the world’ and therefore people’s minds are without doubt poisoned by these books. This pernicious viewpoint becomes further widespread and

²⁶ He Xiaya, *Zhongguo daofei wenti yanjiu* 中國盜匪問題研究 [A study of the bandit problem in China] (Shanghai: Taidong tushuju, 1925).

²⁷ The five general reasons include the influence of the internal disorder, economic bankruptcy, natural disasters, and the great disparity between the poor and the rich; the five special reasons are the lure of official amnesty and enlistment, vicious examples of kidnapping, corruptive practices of extravagant lifestyle, evil influence of novels, operas, and dramas, and traditional conceptions of knight-errantry. See He, *Zhongguo daofei wenti yanjiu*, 4-10

influential when these books are adapted into operas and dramas. As for detective movies (as a new form of mass media) that advocate and encourage banditry, their evil effect is even bigger.²⁸

Then he continued to denounce conventional perceptions of knight-errantry:

Bandits have a knight-errant spirit of ‘repressing the strong and helping the weak, and robbing the rich to relieve the poor;’ they also have brave behaviors of ‘pulling out knives to help people while seeing unfair things.’ Isn’t it true that bandits also have their own way (*dao yi you dao*; 盜亦有道)? However, the evil influence of this mode of behavior is far-reaching because people take it as an excuse when they plunder or steal from official granaries and storehouses. Besides, there are also those who fall into banditry in the name of taking their revenge, such as Bailang (“white wolf”) and Lao yangren (“old foreigner”). These people are too many to count.²⁹

From the two points above, we can see that different from conventional discourse that shows sympathy for and admiration of banditry, He Xiya totally denounced the heroic image of bandits and pointed out the unfavorable influence of this discourse on society. Thus he viewed all the rebellious gangs like White Lotus, Tianli, and Eight Diagrams in the Qing as precursors of contemporary brigands. His revulsion for bandits was especially obvious in his portrayal of their lifestyle, in which bandits were extremely vicious and brutal when they tortured their hostages. Bandits disparagingly called people they had kidnapped “flesh tickets” (*roupiao*; 肉票); when they could not get what they wanted from their hostages, they would just “slay tickets” (*sipiao*; 撕票); sometimes, these “tickets” were actually poor people who could not afford the high ransom.

In this sense, He’s study completely denied the existence of “social bandits” in China. His analysis of the “bandit problem” was also corroborated by numerous cases of bandit violence published in newspapers and magazines at the time. In the meanwhile, a common perception of banditry as a serious problem that embodied deficiency and

²⁸ He, *Zhongguo daofei wenti yanjiu*, 4-10

²⁹ Ibid. 10.

corruption of the political system of China became prevalent. Such a perception was constantly reinforced especially when foreigners were involved in a rapidly changing political and social landscape in the 1920s.

Banditry in Foreign Perceptions

Before the twentieth century, the conflicts between Chinese and foreigners were often related to missionary activities in China. Foreign missionaries and their Chinese converts were the targets of many anti-foreign movements. The Boxer Uprising at the turn of the twentieth century was the climax of these movements. Due to the Qing court's severe punishment inflicted on the participants in the uprising, the first ten years of the twentieth century witnessed few attacks on foreigners, especially on missionaries. During the 1910s and 1920s, however, with the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the absence of a powerful central government in China, attacks on foreigners by "local bandits" (*tufei*; 土匪) and "soldier bandits" (*bingfei*; 兵匪) increased, especially during the 1920s when China constantly suffered from warlord fights.

What motivated bandits to attack and kidnap foreigners as "flesh tickets," as Xu Youwei and Billingsley's studies suggest, was not the xenophobic sentiment that had triggered the Boxer uprising, but pragmatic considerations of maximizing their own benefits and minimizing the possible risks.³⁰ For brigands, one consideration was the relatively high value of "foreign tickets" (*yangpiao*; 洋票, meaning foreign hostages); in addition, it was more likely that the Chinese government would agree to terms proposed

³⁰ Xu Youwei and Philip Billingsley, "When Worlds Collide: Chinese Bandits and Their 'Foreign Tickets,'" *Modern China*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan., 2000): 38-78.

by brigands in the negotiation only when foreigners became hostages. For a common Chinese who was kidnapped by bandits for ransom, however, he usually had two choices: to pay the ransom or to die. It was a rare situation that the local government, let alone the central government would intervene and save him. In the memoir of his experience of being kidnapped and living with Manchurian bandits for ten weeks in 1925, Harvey James Howard, a professor of Ophthalmology in Peking Union Medical College, vividly described the bloody scene of a Mr. Chu who was chopped to death by a bandit chief in the night. This Mr. Chu was a comprador who was sent to negotiate with bandits but captured for ransom finally. After being kidnapped for several months and unable to afford the ransom of sixty thousand dollars, this thirty-five year old man paid with his life.³¹

Bandit activities reached a peak during the 1920s when some major cases involving foreigners created a sensation among both Chinese society and international communities. Zhang Qing, a bandit chief in Henan province, with a nickname of Lao Yangren (“The Old Foreigner”), was probably the first bandit leader who targeted foreigners. In 1922, he kidnapped fourteen foreigners and threatened to kill these hostages if the Chinese government failed to pay the ransom and to approve their requirement of being enlisted to the army. Under the pressure of an international commission of investigation, the government agreed to the terms.³²

Lao Yangren’s “success” encouraged the occurrence of similar cases. During the 1920s, many bandit gangs had specifically targeted foreigners.³³ Many of the cases were

³¹ Harvey J. Howard, *Ten Weeks with Chinese Bandits* (New York: Dodd, Mead and company, 1926), 138-38, 196-97.

³² Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 208-9.

³³ Xu and Billingsley, “When Worlds Collide,” 45.

reported in Western publications and these reports evoked a wave of discussion on Chinese bandits in the 1920s. For example, during the nine-week captivity of Rev. Anton Lundeen of the Augustana Synod Mission, he kept a diary, which was partly quoted in the *China Weekly Review*. The diary kept a vivid record of the atrocities committed by Chinese bandits:

...the details [of atrocities] were too revolting to be recorded. The bandits were three days in all in looting Shangtsaihsien, where the city was left in ruins and the loss has been estimated to be in excess of \$5,000,000. Here it was that the Magistrate was shot to death and his refined wife stripped to nudity, tied to a post in a public place and left to the taunts and insults of the sacking horde, finally to perish from the cold while still bound to the post. It was at Shangtsaihsien also that the President of the Chamber of Commerce was carried off. Being an elderly man, he was unable to keep up afoot and was shot to death by the roadside. Another wealthy captive, more than 60 years old, begged that he too be shot rather than endure the fatigue, but the bandits force him by bayonet prods to keep going.³⁴

In this sense, Charles Dailey, a contributor to the *China Weekly Review* commented that “what shocked and angered foreigners was not just the kidnapping activity, but also what the hostages had witnessed during their captivity—the atrocity done by bandits which reflected the most bloody and darkest side of human characters.”³⁵

The most notorious and influential case of “bandit outrage” against foreigners was the Lincheng Incident in 1923. On the early morning of May 6, 1923, an express train from Pukou to Tianjin was attacked by a group of armed forces in Lincheng in Shandong Province. One British passenger was shot to death in the chaos and about two hundred Chinese and thirty foreign passengers were kidnapped as hostages. This incident shocked international communities; they urged the Chinese government to save the foreign hostages as soon as possible. After negotiations of over a month, on June 12, an

³⁴ Charles Dailey, “The Real Significance of Banditry in China,” *The China Weekly Review*, 23:6 (1923), 208

³⁵ Ibid., 208-9.

agreement was reached between the Beijing government and “bandit” gangs. According to the agreement, the government promised to remove its troops away from the “bandit” camp, incorporate the gang into the army, and pay them a sum of money.³⁶ In the meanwhile, a special committee of the diplomatic corps formed by sixteen countries put forward their demands with regard to the personal and property damage their citizens had suffered in the incident. The demands included an indemnity of \$8,500 per person, \$20,000 for the one dead, the punishment of related officials, and reinforcement of railway security.³⁷

The Lincheng Incident then became a representative example of not only “the most bloody and darkest side” of bandits, but also a symbol of a chaotic China and government incompetence. Immediately after foreign communities got the information of the derailing, an editorial essay was published in *The China Weekly Review*. In the editorial, the occurrence of the incident was regarded as a symbol of the humiliation for China because “that which is called a government in China has proved itself woefully lacking; it has not and is not functioning in a manner and to a degree worthy of the name.”³⁸ Furthermore, the author argued that admittedly it was impossible for any country to completely prevent crimes, but “the question of the existence of a government hinges not on whether or not a state of perfection exists but whether or not there is an

³⁶ See Nan Yan, “Lincheng tufei da lue jinpu che” 臨城土匪大掠津浦車[Lincheng bandits raid a train on Jinpu line], *Dongfang zazhi* 20:8 (1923): 2-6; Nan Yan, “Lincheng jieche tufei shoufu chenggong” 臨城劫車土匪收撫成功 [Successful pacification of Lincheng bandits], *Dongfang zazhi* 20:11 (1923): 5-7; and Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 13-14.

³⁷ Nan Yan, “Lincheng jie’an zhong de shiliu guo peichang tongdie tichu le” 臨城劫案中的十六國賠償通牒提出了 [Diplomatic notes are put forward by sixteen countries in the Lincheng Incident], *Dongfang zazhi* 20:14 (1923): 2-4.

³⁸ “China’s Position as Defined by Army of Bandits,” *The China Weekly Review*, 24:11 (1923): 369.

adequate authority that can be exercised to prevent the breach of law or to mete out punishment and thereby prevent recurrence when a crime is committed.”³⁹

By the same token, other English newspapers also expressed a similar stance toward the Incident and the general situation of “bandit outrages” in China during the 1920s. the *North China Herald* (*NCH* below), one of the most influential newspapers in China since the late nineteenth century, had reported many kidnapping cases by bandits before the Incident. Most cases that frequently appeared in the newspaper were about priests and missionaries who were murdered or kidnapped by Chinese brigands in Hubei, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Anhui Provinces, among other inland provinces.⁴⁰ In an article entitled “China in 1922” on the front page of the newspaper, “bandit outrages” was portrayed as a salient feature of China:

It would be necessary to go back for many years to find a parallel to the activities of Chinese bandits during 1922. Not one province can be said to have been free from their visitations and in Honan, Anhui, Kueichow and Kuangsi the year seems destined to become historic. The practice of carrying off foreigners in order to embroil Peking, via the provincial authorities, with the foreign Powers, and thereby extort concessions for the captors, has become deplorably popular.⁴¹

When the Lincheng Incident happened in 1923, therefore, an editorial essay on the front page was immediately issued. The editorial pointed out that it was not only the foreign captives but also a larger number of common Chinese people who suffered from vicious bandits and soldiers as well as irresponsible officials. Republican China, it went on, had lost its ability to maintain peace and order, and failed to be a civilized country. In this

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See *North China Herald* (*NCH* below), “Murder of a Priest: Roman Catholic Father Slain by bandits” (1922.1.28); “Priest Kidnapped by Bandits” (Feb. 11, 1922); “Bandit Outrage in Yunnan” (Feb. 25 1922); “Sack of Yingchowfu by Brigands” (Jan. 27, 1923).

⁴¹ “China in 1922,” *NCH* (Feb. 3, 1923).

sense, it was “impossibly chaotic and divided, [and] politically no better than the brigand states of South America.”⁴²

In addition to English newspapers and journals published in China, publications outside China also had consecutive reports and review essays concerning the Incident and its influence. In America, for example, several major newspapers and journals, such as the *New York Times*, the *New York Tribune*, the *New York Globe*, *Jersey City Journal*, and the *Chicago Tribune* all followed closely the development of the negotiation between the Chinese government and bandit gangs, and the information on the hostages.⁴³ These newspapers and journals furthermore provided a platform on which Americans’ diverse opinions on China through the lens of the Incident were expressed. Some Americans thought that the Incident indicated that the Chinese people could not be trusted.⁴⁴ An editorial of the *Chicago Tribune* even used a very sensational title of “The Recessional of the White Civilization.” The editorial called attention to the “deplorable situation” now existing in China as disclosed by the Incident. It went on:

It is not merely a question of the lives of these particular victims, though they ought to be precious to us, but it is a question of protection for missionaries, traders, agents, travelers, officials of white civilization in all semi-civilized or barbarous lands. It means a moral defeat for white civilization and its effects will not be slow in appearing.⁴⁵

Ironically, when both Chinese and foreign media attributed the occurrence of the Incident to the inability of the Chinese government, the chief leader of the brigand also defended himself by criticizing the government. The proclamation by Sun Meiyao, the commander in chief of the bandits, was translated into English and published in *The*

⁴² “The Peking Express Outrage,” *NCH* (May 12, 1923).

⁴³ “Bandit Rule in China,” *The China Weekly Review*, 25:2 (1923): 35-36.

⁴⁴ “What Do the American People Think of China,” *The China Weekly Review*, 25:6 (1923): 169.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

China Weekly Review. In the statement, Sun justified their actions by denouncing the decay of the Chinese government:

This is to notify the facts that we have hitherto been lawabiding citizens, and that we have no desire to become robbers; but in this troubled era of unreliable government we find ourselves compelled to take risks in order to obtain redress for our grievances.⁴⁶

Then he claimed that he and his followers were reluctant to be disbanded by “the militarist party.” Furthermore, when they retired to their hometown to “take up peaceful work,” “evil-minded landlords” falsely accused them of being “bandits.” As a result, he and his followers had no choice but to take the risk of attacking the train. Then he continued that because the foreigners were more reliable than the Chinese government and troops, they decided to derail the train and took foreigners as hostages to request fair treatment.⁴⁷

In this case, what was severely damaged was not just the international reputation of China as the result of the outrage. Practically, moreover, the Incident provided an opportunity for the Powers to get involved in Chinese political and economic affairs in the name of preventing the recurrence of similar cases. In August 1923, three months after the Incident, the special committee of the Diplomatic Corps in Peking put forward a draft proposal concerning the railway administration. The proposal suggested establishing a railway defense administrative bureau under the leadership of a foreign officer and setting up railway defense offices managed by foreign officers. The committee also proposed to appoint foreign accountants and superintendents of railway affairs to ensure the expenses of the railway standing guards.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Charles Dailey, “Bandit Soldiers Bandit Still,” *The China Weekly Review*, 25:8 (1923): 245.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Policing and Financial Control of the Chinese Railways,” *The China Weekly Review*, 25:13 (1923).

Although the Beijing government finally declined the proposal for railway protection, as a response to the diplomatic pressure, it decided to carry out “bandit suppression” campaigns to avoid foreign intervention of railway affairs in China. At the end of August of 1923, Wu Peifu held a “bandit suppression” conference in Luoyang in Henan province, with representatives from Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu, and Anhui provinces. He claimed that “the fundamental problem was not to protect railways, but to wipe out bandits.”⁴⁹ In the meanwhile, police power was also reinforced to assist railway protection nationwide. The Incident, therefore, came to a conclusion.

The Lincheng Incident partly exposed the origin of the widespread “bandit outrages” during the first two decades of the twentieth century, that is, the warlord politics. The political fragmentation under various warlord regimes gave rise to a large number of soldiers, who were disbursed at different levels of military organizations.⁵⁰ Once a warlord was defeated in the battlefield or encountered financial difficulties, soldiers in local armies or other irregular units would be disbanded. As a result, dismissed soldiers who lost military payment often turned into bandits to make a living. Some of them, like Sun Meiyao, attempted to get back to the military organization by kidnapping foreigners. In this sense, the distinction between soldiers and bandits was quite unclear. Therefore, as Diana Lary has elucidated,

In the political vacuum that followed the end of the Qing, legitimacy came to be defined principally in military terms; men who had military power conferred legitimacy on themselves and their followers. They called themselves generals,

⁴⁹ Nan Yan, “Tielu gongguan sheng zhong de daju jiaofei” 鐵路共管聲中的大舉剿匪 [Large-scale bandit suppression operations in the clamor of joint management of railways], *Dongfang zazhi* 20:17 (1923): 4.

⁵⁰ It was estimated that in the mid-1920s, the regular armies in China had maintained a total force of around 1,500,000 men. This estimation does not contain other military organizations, such as petty armies, militias, and irregular units, etc. See Diana Lary, *Warlord Soldiers: Chinese Common Soldiers, 1911-1937*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3.

and their enemies bandits. In the process they seemed to make the distinction between soldiers and bandits meaningless...For civilians there was no semantic problem; they knew the distinction had gone, and that soldiers and bandits were indistinguishable (*bingfei bufen*; 兵匪不分). They called soldiers “official bandits” (*guanfei*; 官匪). They knew it as the victims of armed men; it made little difference whether their oppressors were legitimate or illegitimate.⁵¹

Therefore, no matter whether actors in the Incident or in other cases were real bandits or not, for Chinese civilians and foreigners, there was no difference between bandits, soldiers, and armed peasants, and China therefore was regarded as a “bandit country.”⁵²

Conclusion

In the legal and political discourses of the Qing dynasty, there was no such as unified category as “bandit” to refer to various armed forces that had endangered the imperial order. In Chinese, “*zei*,” “*dao*,” “*kou*” and their combinations were frequently used to designate criminals that had ranged from petty thieves to rebels. It was until the mid-nineteenth century when the Taiping Rebellion and other mid-century uprisings had undermined the ruling power and brought political and social turmoil that bandit/“*fei*” became prevalent in both official documents and as a social reality. On the one hand, the Qing court attached “bandit/*fei*” to diverse groups of state-challengers, especially rebels, to underline the state orthodoxy and reinforce state authority; on the other hand, through their criticism of “banditry” and analysis of “bandit problems,” pro-state scholar-literati also showed their concerns for preservation of Confucian values.

From the late nineteenth century, “banditry” was increasingly perceived as a serious problem originating in social dislocation and economic crisis. In this sense, the category of “social bandits,” who pursued social justice and represented the interests of

⁵¹ Lary, *Warlord Soldiers*, 59.

⁵² “What of the Future of the Bandit Country?” *The China Weekly Review*, 25:4 (1923).

the oppressed, was to a large extent a romanticized image in the Chinese context. Especially after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, political disorder in the early Republic and the ensuing warlord politics stimulated a trend of “banditization.”⁵³ As a result, the distinction between bandits and other armed forces such as disbanded soldiers, bankrupt peasants, and local militias became increasingly indistinguishable.

Moreover, when a growing number of foreigners were murdered or kidnapped in “bandit violence,” foreign observers tended to attribute “bandit outrages” to the Chinese government’s deficiency and inability, and thus they called for more foreign intervention in order to protect their citizens in China. In this case, “bandits,” either as victims, like Sun Meiyao had claimed, or as victimizers, were taken as the distorted product of a militarized and chaotic China. To eradicate “banditry” and restore peace and order became a consensus among foreign powers. On the other hand, however, the “bandit problem” as well provided opportunities to expand their military and political influence in China. As we will see in the next chapter, Japan seized just this opportunity in Manchuria.

⁵³ Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 20.

Chapter Two

The “Bandit Problem” and the Claim of Manchukuo Legitimacy

In 1906, a Japanese critic Inagaki Shintarō discussed urgent tasks for the development of Manchuria in an article published in *Shengjing shibao* (Shengjing Times). In his opinion, political disorder, moral corruption, commercial depression, and people's impoverishment had reflected the “cumulative weakness” of Manchuria. He then proposed five fundamental measures—reforming the political system, promoting education, improving transportation, and defending against bandits—as the most urgent five tasks for the development of Manchuria. Among these five tasks, the top priority was given to the eradication of bandits, without which other dimensions could not be accomplished.¹

Indeed, Japanese interests in and concerns about the “bandit problem” in Manchuria were accompanied with its growing encroachment in this region after the Russo-Japanese war (1904-5). With the development of its sphere of influence in Manchuria, by the late 1920s, Japan on the one hand criticized “banditry” as a serious problem that had embodied the incompetence and corruption of the warlord regimes. In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the image of Japan in Manchuria as both the patron and victim was furthermore propagated by Japan to counter Western criticisms of its military expansion. This chapter will examine in detail how the historical existence of “mounted bandits” and “bearded bandits,” as well as Japan’s perceptions of the “bandit problem” were employed to facilitate and justify Japanese military expansion in Manchuria between 1931 to 1933. In this process, Japan’s exposure and criticism of

¹ Inagaki Shintarō, “Manzhou jiwu wutiao” 滿洲急務五條 [Five urgent tasks in Manchuria], *Shengjing shibao*, (September 23, 1906).

“banditry” in Manchuria became a significant part of its attempt of delegitimizing previous political entities in China/Manchuria.

Manchurian Bandits: A Category

Some scholars have suggested that the history of Manchurian bandits could be traced back to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), but it was not until the later half of the nineteenth century that the activity of Manchurian bandits became frequent and devastating as a social problem.² From the early Qing until the 1850s, Qing authorities intentionally separated Manchuria as the “holy birthplace of imperial ancestors” from Han Chinese except in cases of exiles. During this period, due to sparse population and large-scale fertile soils, it was relatively easy to make a living and thus banditry was only occasional. There were only such illegal activities as private ginseng collection and gold mining. However, this “peace” was rapidly destroyed with the advent of the Western powers after 1840. In 1858, Heilongjiang General Yi Shan gave up to Russia the districts of northern Heilongjiang River and south of Outer Xingan Mountain by signing the Treaty of Aigun. In this case, Russia greatly expanded its territory and power in the Far East. In order to consolidate its rule in frontier regions, the Qing government decided to open Manchuria and encouraged Chinese immigrants to cultivate large-scale wild lands. This increasingly large population with complicated backgrounds gradually gave rise to administrative problems, one of which was the bandit problem.

The group of people who had actively participated in violent activities against either the government or common people constituted part of what Phil Billingsley has

² See Tao Yanlin and Li Xiulian, “Qian xi qingdai dongbei mazi wei huan de shehui yuanyin” 漢析清代東北馬賊為患的社會原因 [A brief analysis of the social origin of why the Northeast China was afflicted with “mounted bandits” during the Qing era], *Heihe xuekan* 4 (2001): 73-74.

described as the “bandits’ world.”³ His generalization about the causes of Republican bandits such as natural disasters, social poverty, and decline of central power can be applied to the situation in Manchuria; however, it was the specific geographic, ecological, political, and social background that made some aspects of Manchurian bandits different from their counterparts in China Proper. And these differences should be investigated in the special historical context of Manchuria.

In pioneering work based on his personal experiences, Owen Lattimore has defined Manchurian bandits as “frontier” bandits in the backdrop of the colonization of Manchuria by China, the West, and Russia before 1931.⁴ Patrick Fuliang Shan in his study of banditry in Heilongjiang province from 1900 to 1931 has analyzed in detail the frontier characteristics that engendered the “bandit problem.” According to him, the formation of Manchurian bandits was different from and more complicated than Billingsley’s generalization. He suggests that “factors such as ecological habitat, regional military traditions, loose political control, rapid social changes, sex ratio imbalances, natural disasters, immigrant bandit elements, resistance of ethnic minorities to abrupt changes of living patterns, foreign invasion, and even violence on the other side of the border all promoted banditry.”⁵ Compared with Billingsley who focuses on bandits’ origins, organizations, and culture, Shan emphasizes more on the special soil that had given birth to and sustained the existence of bandits as a frontier phenomenon. In this sense, although Fu’s case study is concerned with Heilongjiang province (the frontier of a

³ Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 19-20.

⁴ Owen Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), 225.

⁵ Patrick Fuliang Shan, “Insecurity, Outlawry and Social Order: Banditry in China’s Heilongjiang Frontier Region, 1900-1931,” *Journal of Social History* 40:1 (2006): 31.

frontier), it is representative in understanding banditry in whole Manchuria as a larger frontier of China.

In fact, the changing categories of bandits in Manchuria also reflected the interplay of frontier characteristics and the broader context of political and social transformations in modern China. In Zhao Zhongfu's systematic study of Manchurian bandits in the modern period, he has divided Manchurian bandits into five categories based on their backgrounds and organizations: the first included illegal participants in woodcutting, ginseng collection, and gold mining, and sometimes these outlaws even formed an independent sphere of influence beyond Qing administration; the second was secret societies such as the Red Spears (*hongqianghui*; 紅槍會) that fought against and robbed the local government in the name of oracles; the third contained people who claimed to be village militias but participated in robbery; the fourth type included Mongolian nobility, to whom Russians would provide money and weapons to pursue local autonomy; and the fifth was bankrupt immigrants, merchants, criminals, military deserters, and kidnappers, etc.⁶

Generally speaking, in Qing official documents, the categories above were put under a variety of names according to their characteristics, such as “gold bandits” (*jinfei* 金匪), “sect bandits” (*huifei*; 會匪), “Mongolian bandits” (*mengfei*; 蒙匪), “bearded bandits” (*hufei*; 鬍匪), and “mounted bandits” (*mazei*; 馬賊). By the early twentieth century, all these designations were reduced to the general name of “bearded bandits” or “mounted bandits” that indicated the transformation of Manchuria from an undeveloped

⁶ Zhao Zhongfu, “Jindai dongsansheng hufei wenti zhi tantao” 近代東三省胡匪問題之探討 [A discussion of the problem of “bearded bandits” in Three Northeastern Provinces in the modern era], in *Zhongyang yanjiu yuan jindai shi yanjiu suo jikan* 7 (1978), 515.

immigrant and agricultural frontier to a political and economic center. Such traditional categories as “gold bandits” and “sect bandits” gradually disappeared with the establishment of a formal administrative system in 1907 and later Zhang Zuolin’s management of Manchuria during the 1920s. In this sense, Manchurian bandits, in name and in reality, were an interactive result of the long-time absence of normal administration during the Qing period and the rapid social and political changes since the Late Qing. In the meanwhile, the involvement of the foreign powers including the West, Russia, and Japan made the issue of “bandits” a focal point in Sino-foreign relationships.

If bandits in traditional society posed a challenge to the imperial rule and order in the form of disturbances or rebellions, then since the 1850s, their violent activities had become the origin of Sino-foreign conflicts, and engendered diplomatic crises for the Qing government. Especially in the districts in the treaty ports, leased territories, and railway zones, to cope with bandits’ violence often became the justification of foreign intervention in Chinese administration. Therefore the Qing government was very careful in dealing with such cases.

At the turn of the twentieth century, both Russia and Japan struggled to expand their spheres of influence in Manchuria. During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, Russia had organized “mounted bandits” into armies to fight against Japanese.⁷ After the Japanese victory, the Kwantung Leased territory and districts attached to the South Manchurian Railway were under Japanese jurisdiction. Accordingly, the Japanese army was dispatched to maintain security in these areas. With Japan and Russia’s deeper involvement in political and administrative affairs in Manchuria, the “bandit” issue

⁷ “Mazei qi guo wei e yong hu” 馬賊其果為俄用乎[Are mounted bandits really exploited by Russia], *Dalu* vol. 1 (1904): 83-4.

became the focus of Sino-foreign relationships. In 1910, Japanese consuls in Manchuria claimed that the South Manchurian Railway lines and surrounding areas were constantly disturbed by “bearded bandits” thus Japan attempted to protect its railway lines and other properties in Manchuria themselves. As a response, Xi Liang (1853-1917), the governor-general of the Three Northeastern Provinces dispatched Chinese troops to “co-suppress” (*xiejiao*; 協剿) bandits together with Japanese armies to prevent Japan from stirring up conflicts. In addition, he also instructed Chinese officials that they should treat with caution bandit cases due to the entanglement of “imperial sovereignty (*guoquan*; 國權).”⁸

As for the Russian side, although Russian power in Manchuria declined with its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, since the northern borderline between China and Russia (the northern side of the Songhua River) and Chinese Eastern Railway were under Russian jurisdiction, the frequent bandits’ attack against Russians provided a justification for Russia to extend its rights beyond its jurisdiction. Therefore, Russian diplomats had claimed that for all the Russians residing or staying in Manchuria, whenever they were jeopardized (by bandits), Russian officials in various places could send soldiers to Chinese territory and perform suppression. In one case, for example, a Russian merchant’s lumberyard near the Apple Station along the Chinese Eastern Railway line was robbed and burnt down by Chinese “bearded bandits” several times. The Chinese Eastern Railway Company in Harbin criticized Chinese officials’ inability to carry out suppression campaigns and thus dispatched Russian soldiers to take responsibility. Since the local Chinese government could not eradicate bandit gangs, Russian communities in

⁸ “Dong san sheng hufei jinzhuang” 東三省胡匪近狀 [Recent situation about bearded bandits in the Three Eastern Provinces], *Dongfang zazhi*, 7:11 (1910): 342-44.

Harbin even speculated that it was the Chinese government that intentionally tolerated these “bearded bandits” and utilized them against foreign powers.⁹

In this sense, by the early twentieth century, banditry in Manchuria, as in China Proper, not only endangered the imperial order of the Qing dynasty, but also became the focus of Sino-foreign conflicts. On the one hand, the openness of treaty ports and leased territories and the construction of railways provided new arenas for bandits’ activities, for they no longer just hid in mountainous areas. On the other hand, no matter whether these armed forces were real bandits or not, their existence and violent activities could be easily labeled as “bandits” and became pretexts for foreign intervention in Chinese administration. The Qing government, in order to protect its sovereignty, often had to undertake “co-suppression” with both Japanese and Russians.

Japanese Perspectives Before 1931

In Japanese, Manchurian bandits were called “*bazoku*” (馬賊). According to Tanaka Masahiro’s study, “*bazoku*” as the Japanese conceptualization of Manchurian bandits could be traced back to 1876 when the name had been used by a group of Japanese “China experts.”¹⁰ It was around the first Sino-Japanese war in 1894-5 that Japanese adventurers in Manchuria started to collect information and knowledge about Manchurian bandits for military and political purposes.¹¹ During the late nineteenth and

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Tanaka Masahiro, “Kindai nihon ni okeru “bazoku” kan no seiritu” 近代日本に於ける「馬賊」觀の成立 [The formation of the views on “Manchurian bandits” in modern Japan], *Tochigi shigaku*, v. 19 (2005): 48.

¹¹ A representative example was Fukushima Yasumasa (1852-1919), an expert of military intelligence. During his journey in Manchuria in 1892, Fukushima kept a detailed record of Manchurian bandits entitled “Manshū meibutu no bazoku” 滿州名物の馬賊 (Mounted bandits as the famous product of Manchuria). In

early twentieth century, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan preserved a large number of documents related to “mounted bandits” in Manchuria, including the reports of damages caused from banditry, statistics on bandit cases, negotiations between the Kwantung Governor-general and the Qing government, and intelligence about organizations and numbers of bandits, their geographic distributions and their weaponry.¹²

In addition to the investigation carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, the Kwantung Governor-general, the Kwantung Army, and research institutions of the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR) also paid close attention to Manchurian bandits and collected a large amount of information, which came to be categorized as “*bazoku jōhō*” (information on mounted bandits; 馬賊情報) before 1931. Especially during the 1920s and early 1930s, when other areas of China constantly suffered from warlord fighting and bandits’ violence, Japan claimed that Manchuria was the only district with peace and order because Japanese military forces had played a significant role in maintaining local security. As it had stated in an English report in 1930:

...After the Russo-Japanese war, a period of tranquility set in throughout the Far East. As regards Manchuria, enduring peace and order were maintained for almost a quarter of a century except for sporadic outbreaks, while revolutions, civil wars, or other political disturbances were unfortunately as frequent in China proper, after the establishment of the Republican regime, as at any time in the past. Indeed, Manchuria was the only region in the whole vast area of China which offered the benefits of peace and order to the calamity-stricken people of Shantung, Chihli, and Honan, who were driven out by the famine, warfare, and extortionate taxation which prevailed especially during the civil war of 1926-8, and again during the frequent civil wars of 1929-30. Order in Manchuria has thus

the record, he described how severe punishment and indiscriminate arrest had forced innocent people into banditry. See Tanaka Masahiro, “Kindai nihon ni okeru ‘bazoku’ kan no seiritu,” 43.

¹² Tanaka Masahiro, *Gaimushō kiroku ni miru kindai nicchū kankei to hizoku ni kansuru sōgōteki kenkyū* 外務省記録にみる近代日中関係と匪賊に関する総合的研究 [A comprehensive study on modern Sino-Japanese relations and bandits seen in documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] (2003-2005, 2006): 5-7.

been preserved since the Russo-Japanese war, without serious interruption, despite the frequent forays of Manchurian bandits upon isolated settlements. This has been achieved partly with the aid of the Japanese troops, which, though stationed in the limited areas of the Leased Territory and the Railway Zone, exercised a moral weight in the preservation of order in Manchuria in general, while the military authorities of the Three Eastern Provinces also played an important part in the maintenance of peaceful conditions.¹³

Despite relatively “peaceful conditions,” in the same report, banditry was still regarded as a severe challenge for both Japanese and Chinese governments in Manchuria. The report indicated that the persistence of “mounted bandits” in Manchuria only exposed the inability of Chinese authorities in eradicating the evil. Since the Russo-Japanese War, bandit raids were much more frequent in areas under Chinese jurisdictions because Japanese and Russian guards held better equipments in their respective territories and railway zones. According to the report, a continuous influx of population from Shandong and other northern provinces also became the source of bandits. In addition, constant wars among Chinese warlords exasperated the problem because disbanded soldiers usually turned into bandits. Therefore, by 1931, these “lawless bandits” were estimated at about 50,000, among which 17,000 were in Mukden Province, and over 10,000 in Kirin, Amur and Jehol Provinces respectively. While these statistics were not available in the records of the Chinese and Russian jurisdictions, Japanese officials in the SMR were proud of their accomplishment of taking a successive record of raid numbers within the railway zone since 1906. And based on the statistics, the number of “bandit raids” increased from 9 in 1906 to 368 in 1929. Furthermore, there were detailed records of the number of bandit raids, cases of damages and injuries to different nationals, and losses of Japanese army and police in bandits’ attacks¹⁴:

¹³ *Report on Progress in Manchuria To 1930* (Dairen: The South Manchuria Railway, 1931), 2.

¹⁴ Ibid., 18.

Table 1: Number of Bandit Raids in the South Manchuria Railway Zone (based on the size of bandit gangs)

Year	Raids by Groups less than 10	By Groups more than 10	More than 30	More than 50	More than 100	Total
1919	82	22	2	-	-	106
1920	147	34	2	-	-	183
1921	105	45	2	-	-	152
1922	88	13	3	-	-	104
1923	115	14	2	-	-	131
1924	219	24	3	-	-	246
1925	190	16	-	-	-	206
1926	171	35	4	3	-	213
1927	282	6	5	3	-	296
1928	315	11	14	11	1	352
1929	356	5	4	2	1	368

Table 2: Cases of Damage and Injury to Different Nationals in the South Manchuria Railway Zone

Year	Cases of Damage	No. of Victims (Excluding Japanese Army and Police)							
		Japanese		Chinese		Foreigners		Total	
		Dead	Wounded	Dead	Wounded	Dead	Wounded	Dead	Wounded
1926	236	1	4	21	29	-	3	22	26
1927	197	9	10	8	23	-	2	17	35
1928	256	6	4	8	22	-	1	14	27
1929	254	9	15	14	26	1	3	24	44

Table 3: Losses of Japanese Army and Police in Bandit Attacks

Year	Number of Engagements	Japanese Army Railway Guards			Japanese Police		
		Dead	Wounded	Total	Dead	Wounded	Total
1926	10	1	5	6	6	9	15
1927	7	-	6	6	7	12	19
1928	9	-	3	3	6	8	14
1929	8	2	2	4	4	24	16

The information implied in these statistics pointed to several aspects. First, among the total number of 50,000 “bandits” in Manchuria, only a small portion of “bandit gangs” was active in the Railway Zone, and this indicated that the public security in districts under Japanese jurisdiction was much better than in other areas of Manchuria. Second, it was Chinese nationals who suffered the most in bandits’ attacks. Third, Japanese military and police had been very valiant when engaging with bandits and they had sacrificed not only for Japanese, but also for Chinese and other foreigners. In this sense, no matter whether these statistics were real or not, by demonstrating these statistics to the international community, Japan attempted to prove that only it was qualified to maintain “peace and order” in Manchuria.

Therefore, in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the need to pacify Manchurian bandits and disbanded Chinese soldiers was employed by the Japanese Kwantung Army to justify its military expansion in the whole of Manchuria. In November 1931, two months after the Manchurian Incident, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Dairen published a Japanese pamphlet under the title of *Tōsanshō ni okeru kanhei hizoku bōkyo jitsurei* (Examples of Soldiers’ and Bandits’ Violence in the Three Eastern Provinces).¹⁵ It recorded cases of slaughter, robbery, and kidnapping inflicted by Chinese military commanders, soldiers and bandits on ordinary Chinese, Japanese, and Korean peasants day by day from September 19th to November 15th, 1931. There were a total of 165 cases listed with vivid details that depicted post-incident Manchuria as a “bandit world.” The pamphlet also described how the Japanese army fought against “bandits” and attempted to maintain order and protect local people.

¹⁵ Dairen shōkō kaigyō, *Tōsanshō ni okeru kanhei hizoku bōkyo jitsurei* 東三省に於ける官兵匪賊暴挙実例 [Examples of soldiers’ and bandits’ violence in the Three Eastern Provinces] (1931).

The records in this pamphlet, however, were by no means unbiased. But they did reflect total chaos in the wake of the Manchurian Incident. For example, *Zhongyang ribao* on October 9, 1931 reported that Shenyang had become a “bandit region” due to the reckless depredation of Japanese soldiers and “bearded bandits.”¹⁶ While both Chinese and Japanese authorities accused each other of committing atrocities in Manchuria, there was no doubt that “bearded bandits” were regarded by both sides as the great evil.

With Japanese military advancement into Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, “self-defense” as Japan’s pretext for causing the incident was gradually replaced by the rhetoric of maintaining peace and order. In this process, the Japanese military relegated all the anti-Japanese forces to “bandits.” Asserting that “all bandits are soldiers and therefore all soldiers are bandits,” Japan endowed itself with the responsibility of restoring public security and protecting Chinese, Japanese, and other foreign residents in Manchuria. Just as Louise Young has pointed out:

To justify military measures against the new threat, the [Japanese] army began to speak of “preserving the peace” (chian o kakushin), using the term self-defense (jiei senso) less and less often over the course of 1932. The revised goal of military action was to “wipe out” (soto), “pacify” (chinbu), or “suppress” (tobatsu) banditry...Used in the Manchurian context, the new terminology transformed the Manchurian Incident from a battle between two national armies to a matter of internal police work. The underlying message was unmistakable: the whole of Manchuria was Japanese territory.¹⁷

The Lytton Commission

After the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the Nationalist Government of China led by Chiang Kai-shek attempted to resort to the League of Nations to solve the crisis. However, with Japan expanding its military operations in Manchuria, the League’s

¹⁶ *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 [Central Daily] (October 9, 1931).

¹⁷ Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 143-144.

proposal for Sino-Japanese negotiations based on the retreat of Japanese troops seemed to be unrealistic. In December 1931, three months after the Incident, a Commission of Enquiry led by Lord Lytton was dispatched by the League of Nations to carry out an investigation in Manchuria and China Proper. After an on-spot examination in China for six months, on October 2, 1932, a report, known as the Lytton Report, was issued. The report analyzed historical entanglement between Japan and China in Manchuria and examined the origin of the Manchurian Incident and later the establishment of Manchukuo. More importantly, the Commission refused to accept Japan's explanation of its activities in Manchuria and denied the legitimacy of Manchukuo in the report. Finally, the report laid down ten principles as basis for the peaceful settlement of the Sino-Japanese conflict.¹⁸

The report pointed out the weakness of the Chinese government in general and the deteriorated political and social situations in Manchuria before and after the Incident. According to the Commission, China had been ridden with problems and facing many difficulties. Specifically, lack of communication, warlords and banditry, and the emerging threat of Communism were taken as the main obstacles for China's reconstruction. Despite this revelation of Chinese deficiency, it did arrive at the conclusion that Japanese military activities during and after the Manchurian Incident could not be taken as "self-defense." Moreover, it attempted to deny the legitimacy of Manchukuo by arguing that:

...this so-called State was not an example of a spontaneous desire for independence among the people or a genuine case of self-determination, but was in fact a Japanese creation, and indistinguishable from a Japanese protectorate. The opinions of the population, so far as we were able to gather them, were

¹⁸ See Tyler Dennett, "The Lytton Report," *The American Political Science Review* 26:6 (Dec. 1932): 1148-1151; "Memorandum on the Report of the Lytton Commission," *Memorandum* 1:19 (Oct. 7, 1932): 4.

almost without exception indifferent or hostile to the new regime; not entirely without exception, because there were certain minority communities—Koreans, Manchus, and Mongols—some of who expressed genuine appreciation of the new regime. The population of Manchuria is predominantly Chinese and apart from the ministers we heard no favorable opinions among the Chinese population.¹⁹

Although the Commission and the League of Nations in the report clearly demonstrated their standpoint concerning the Sino-Japanese conflict, in reality, a feasible solution had never been provided. The Commission only proposed ten principles for reconciliation among all parties. “Manchurian Autonomy,” as one of the principles was put forward to secure “the sovereignty and administrative integrity of China” on the one hand and to “meet the local conditions and special characteristics of the Three Provinces” on the other. Moreover, the new regime established on this autonomy should conform to “the essential requirements of good government.”²⁰ Nevertheless, there was no concrete plan for setting up this kind of regime.

Therefore, the Lytton Report, though filled with “facts” from investigations and interviews, did not provide any practical solution to the crisis. Meanwhile in China, the Manchurian Incident, the subsequent Japanese occupation of Liaoning and Jilin Provinces, and finally Japan’s attack on Shanghai in 1932 stimulated a series of anti-Japanese movements. Despite the Nationalist Government’s policy of nonresistance, Chinese response in the form of newspaper and journal articles, student demonstrations, distribution of anti-Japanese flyers, official pamphlets, and boycott of Japanese commodities implied that “anti-Japanese,” “salvation,” and “resistance” became the keywords for China from 1931 to 1933.²¹

¹⁹ Earl of Lytton, “The Problem of Manchuria,” *International Affairs* 11:6 (Nov., 1932): 740-741.

²⁰ “Memorandum on the Report of the Lytton Commission,” 4.

²¹ To what extent the resistance discourse had a nationwide influence is really a question. In fact, editorial essays, reviews, and articles on the Manchurian crisis in mainstream newspapers and journals put

Japanese Responses

Japan's response towards the investigation of the League of Nations and the surge of Chinese nationalism could be perceived from Japanese propaganda about its standpoint on the Manchurian problem. From 1931 to 1933, Japan published a series of English-language books and pamphlets concerning the Manchurian problem in hope of winning sympathy and support from Western societies. These publications reflected Japan's "struggle with internationalism" and the logic it had presented to legitimize its activities in Manchuria.²² In the meanwhile, Japan's changing strategies in managing Manchuria could be perceived from the changing focuses of its propaganda.

In the wake of the Manchurian Incident, Japan on the one hand, claimed its military actions as "self defense" against Chinese troops; on the other hand, it continued to emphasize its contribution to the political stabilization and economic development of Manchuria. Motosada Zumoto (1862-1943), a well-known Japanese propagandist and journalist at the time, had written a series of articles to foster a positive image of Japan in

more stress on analyzing domestic and international circumstances at the time. Suggestions put forward in these articles were strategical rather than provocative. See, for example, Wu Ling, "Dongsheng shijian de guoji guan" 東省事件的國際觀 [International viewpoint on the Northeastern incident], *Dongfang zazhi* 28:21 (1931): 1-2; "Duiyu rikou dongbei zhi yulun yiban" 對於日寇東北之輿論一斑 [On part of public opinion concerning the Japanese invasion of Northeast China], *Dongfang zazhi* 28:23 (1931): 27-35; Zhu Xie, "Riben qiangzhan Liaoji zai Oumei zhi fanxiang" 日本強佔遼吉在歐美之反響 [Reactions to Japan's seizure of Liaoning and Jilin Provinces in Europe and America], *Dongfang zazhi* 28:24 (1931): 21-29; Ping Ming, "Guolian diaocha tuan baogao shu zhi yanjiu" 國聯調查團報告書之研究 [Research on the Lytton Report], *Dongfang zazhi* 29:6 (1932): 29-35. In addition, Rana Mitter has pointed out a new dimension of discourse of Chinese nationalism. He suggests that the northeastern exiles after the Manchurian Incident had contributed to the construction of a discourse of resistance. This discourse was broadly spread to the whole nation through the propaganda of the heroic anti-Japanese resistance in Manchuria, with Ma Zhanshan as a representative, though the true resistance effort was more ambiguous and complicated. See Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Chapter 5&6.

²² See Peter O'Connor ed. *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings Series 2: Pamphlets, 1891-1939 Vol.4: The struggle with internationalism, 1931-33* (Kent: Global Oriental; Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2005). This series of collections includes ten volumes and reflect different agendas of Japanese propaganda from 1891 to 1939. Volume four and five are mainly concerned with Manchuria and China during the 1930s and 1940s.

Western society. In one article entitled “Japan in Manchuria and Mongolia,” he represented Japan as the patron in Manchuria:

The war with Russia cost Japan 200,000 lives and 2,000,000,000 yen of gold. This colossal outlay has since been followed by vast investments for economic purposes. The South Manchurian Railway Company forms both the nucleus and the mainspring of Japan’s economic activities throughout Manchuria and Mongolia. That company has invested an amount of 900,000,000 yen in these countries. In addition to this, the investments made there by the Japanese Government and individuals roughly amount to 700,000,000 yen. In other words, Japan’s total capital investment reaches 1,600,000,000 yen. Moreover, if account is taken of the public and private Japanese property not included in the above figures, it will be found, according to reliable authority, that the total Japanese investment in Manchuria foots up to 2,147,000,000 yen. During the past twenty-five years Japan has consistently followed a policy of peaceful economic development, to the sole end of promoting the prosperity and well-being of both her own and Chinese peoples.²³

Not only did Japanese investment promote the economic development of Manchuria and Mongolia, he went on to argue that the military guards along the railway stations had also ensured the maintenance of peace and order in Manchuria; and the district thus became “the only peaceful part in whole China.” Furthermore, as a “heaven of peace and safety” under the jurisdiction of Japan’s “orderly government,” Manchuria had attracted immigrants up to one million a year. At the end, he asked, “Can there be a more eloquent testimony to Japan’s successful work in Manchuria?”²⁴

While underlining Japan’s contribution to the development of Manchuria with substantial statistics, Japan’s image as a victim of Chinese nationalism was also reinforced. For example, in another English-language pamphlet written in 1932, Itō Takeo, a staff member of the SMR, he enumerated several cases and various incidents in which Japanese legitimate rights and privileges guaranteed by Sino-Japanese treaties and

²³ *Japan in Manchuria and Mongolia: The Herald of Asia Library of Contemporary History No.1* (Tokyo: The Herald Press, 1931.11) in *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings Series 2: Pamphlets, 1891-1939 Vol.4: The struggle with internationalism, 1931-33*, 11-12.

²⁴ Ibid., 12-13.

agreements were seriously breached before the Manchurian Incident. By presenting statistics and investigation results, he attempted to justify the Manchurian Incident as Japanese self-defense against “frenetic” Chinese nationalism.²⁵

From late 1931 to early 1932, various peace preservation committees were set up by Chinese local elites with the support of the Kwantung Army.²⁶ Following political developments in Manchuria, the emphasis of Japanese propaganda thus changed from “self defense” in the Manchurian Incident to “maintenance of peace and order” by launching further military operations.²⁷ In January 1932, a clash broke out between the Jilin army led by pro-Japanese General Xi Xia 熙洽 (1883-1950) and anti-Jilin troops. In the Japanese record, the anti-Jilin troops, which belonged to Zhang Xueliang’s remnant forces, were depicted no better than “bandits” because of the “atrocities” they had committed including plundering Harbin and neighboring districts, raiding Korean dwellings, attacking Japanese newspaper agencies, and kidnapping Japanese civilians. Finally, a detachment of the Kwantung Army was sent to “guard the peace and protect Japanese residents.”²⁸ Consequently, factional struggles among Chinese military cliques paved way for an autonomous Manchuria as a transition. At this point, Manchurian independence was claimed to be “the logical outcome of the peculiar situation resulting from China’s miserable failure to function as an efficient and responsible political entity...”

²⁵ Takeo Itō, *China's Challenge in Manchuria: Anti-Japanese Activities in Manchuria Prior to the Mukden Incident* (Dairen: South Manchuria Railway Company, January 1932), 5. Takeo Itō, as one member of the Research Department in the SMR, wrote a memoir in 1988 to record the development of the SMR especially its Research Department. The memoir provided an inside perspective with regard to the background of a large number of staff members in the Research Department and the fissure between the SMR and the Kwantung Army. See *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway: The Memoirs of Ito Takeo* (New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 1988).

²⁶ See Tong Dong ed. *Zhongguo Dongbei shi* 中國東北史 [History of Northeast China] (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1987), 384-9.

²⁷ Motosada Zumoto, “Further Military Operations,” in *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings Series 2*, vol.4, 121-184.

²⁸ Ibid., 168.

[The independent Republic of Manchuria] may or may not prove a success, but it is at least an experiment worth trying.”²⁹

On March 1, 1932 when the Lytton Commission was still carrying out investigations in China, the Manchukuo government was formally inaugurated. The regime, being designated as “puppet state” from the moment of its establishment, made every effort to announce the legitimacy of its independence in front of the international audience. Although most of the countries in the world took a non-recognition stance toward Manchukuo, certain groups of Westerners did express curiosity and sympathy for the new regime; these Westerners also served as agents of Japanese propaganda. On October 14, 1932, George Bronson Rea (1869-1936),³⁰ an American journalist who served as the counselor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Manchukuo, delivered an address at Geneva.³¹ In the speech, he portrayed the promising future proffered by the newly founded Manchukuo government to “one quarter of the world’s population,” who were “oppressed, harassed, outraged and held in slavery by a so-called system of government more callous of human rights and more contemptuous of world opinion than any recorded in modern history.”³² As for Commission’s conclusion that Manchukuo was not supported by local Chinese people, he pointed out, Chinese people had become victims of consistent terrors and the slaves of warlords in the past

²⁹ Ibid., 121-2.

³⁰ He was also an active lobbyist, publicist, and diplomat. In 1904, he produced a journal *Far Eastern Review* in Manila. During the 1910s, he served as an advisor to Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese Nationalist Party. In the early 1930s, he became the advisor to the newly established Manchukuo government. See his detailed biography in Spencer C. Tucker ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (vol. 1) (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 535.

³¹ George Bronson Rea, *Manchukuo. Back to First Principles!* (Genève: Kundig, October 1932). It was an address delivered before an assembly in the Hall of the Athénée at Geneva, on October 14, 1932. See Peter O’Connor ed. *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings Series 2: Pamphlets, 1891-1939 Vol.5: The Birth of a Nation, 1931-34* (Kent: Global Oriental; Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2005), 57-98.

³² Ibid., 59-60.

several years, and they were mostly threatened by a “bandit oligarchy” to which they had no power to resist. Then, he asked:

How then was it possible to ascertain the will of these 30,000,000 people who knew nothing and cared less about politics, whose only desire was to live in peace and be permitted to enjoy the fruits of their labor? Why, these people are ignorant even of their rights as human beings, let alone their rights and duties as citizens of a republic? How was it possible after a two months superficial investigation to declare off-hand that the people of Manchuria are opposed to the overthrow of a system which held them in abject slavery?³³

By throwing out these questions, he intended to emphasize the misery of Chinese people under previous Chinese regimes, which were against principles of human rights and human nature; and therefore “the sentiment of nationality or the ties of race” was no more than a cliché!³⁴ Finally, he expressed his agreement on one point in the Lytton Report, that is, China was and would still be “a menace to world peace and contributory cause of world economic depression” if the chaotic and anarchical situation continued in the future.³⁵

Among the materials employed by Japanese to support the agenda of Manchurian independence, nothing was more “eloquent” than “the voice of the people” in Manchukuo. In order to refute the international views of Manchukuo as a “puppet state” of Japan, in December 1932, the Bureau of Information and Publicity Department of Foreign Affairs of Manchukuo compiled and published an English pamphlet, which contains a collection of letters addressed to the League of Nations from various groups of people together with their signatures.³⁶ According to the pamphlet, the people of

³³ Ibid., 69-70.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 93.

³⁶ See Bureau of Information and Publicity Department of Foreign Affairs, *The Voice of the People of Manchukuo* (Hsinking, 1932), in *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings Series 2: Pamphlets, 1891-1939 Vol.5: The Birth of a Nation, 1931-34*, 99-144.

Manchukuo, ranging from Manchus to Russians and including school children, had demonstrated their willingness to support Manchukuo: on the one hand they “supported the new regime wholeheartedly from the beginning because of its benevolent administration;” on the other hand, they were strongly opposed to the reinstatement of the old military government, which was marked by tyranny, oppression and exaction. Therefore, the “full and zealous support of the great majority of the people” was taken by Manchukuo as the foundation of its claim of legitimacy.³⁷

Another dimension of propaganda about Manchukuo legitimacy was focused on the active participation of local elites in the state-building project. George Gorman, another pro-Japanese journalist, stated in an English booklet published in 1933 that based on his close contact with developments in Manchuria since September 1931, that Manchukuo was “definitely not a puppet” because it was desired and planned by Chinese and Manchu political leaders and “was an outgrowth of the monarchist movement.”³⁸ Among political leaders who supported the new state, he especially mentioned Zheng Xiaoxu 鄭孝胥 (1860-1938), the Premier and Minister of Education of the Manchukuo Government. According to Gorman, Zheng’s virtues to a great degree had ensured a good government of Manchukuo:

I never have met a man who so quickly aroused the deepest respect, merely by his appearance. Honesty and straightforwardness shine in his face and expression. The idea that this man could agree to a surrender of Manchuria to alien domination is ludicrous. He is a scholar, a gentleman, an enthusiast for the rehabilitation of his country, one of the hardest workers in the new government despite his advanced age, and inspiration to every one of his countrymen. Chinese and Japanese scholars actually venerate him. His poetical and philosophic works are everywhere read and deeply admired by the discerning. His conception of the

³⁷ Ibid., 101-10.

³⁸ George Gorman, *Freedom—Manchuria's Plea for Independence* [Mukden: Manchu hsieh-ho hui (Manchuria Concordia Association), 1933], in *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings Series 2: Pamphlets, 1891-1939 Vol.5: The birth of a nation, 1931-34*, 162.

way to govern a country would be a lesson for premiers everywhere. For he contends no government can live unless its officials submerge self for the popular benefit.³⁹

Gorman furthermore pointed out that the military opposition against Japan and Manchukuo at the time primarily came from “bandits.” The whole population in Manchuria, he argued, actually had no interest in politics and what they wanted was “peace” because they had suffered enough from the previous warlord rule and “bandit” violence.” Therefore, it did not matter at all who gave them peace and “the quickest way to normalcy and prosperity.”⁴⁰ By emphasizing political nonchalance of Manchurian populace and by relegating all anti-Japanese forces to “bandits,” Gorman attempted to prove that the establishment of Manchukuo at least represented a promising starting point, from which a new Manchuria could be expected.

Overall, these publications from 1931 to 1933 reflected the great effort taken by Japan and later the Manchukuo government to convince an international audience of the legitimacy of Manchurian independence. These pamphlets mostly argued against the criticism of Japanese militarism and the denial of Manchukuo in the Lytton Report. From the Japanese perspective, the warlord rule and rampant “bandit” violence in Manchuria since the late 1920s represented the malfunction of Chinese administration under Zhang Zuolin and Zhang Xueliang’s warlord rule. Thus the lack of effective administration and a good government was taken by Japan as the origin of the Manchurian Incident; afterwards, the continuous “social disorder” under Chinese jurisdiction stimulated the people of Manchuria to seek independence; the establishment of Manchukuo in this sense was the most logical and natural result of the people’s will, and therefore deserved

³⁹ Ibid., 174.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 177-8.

recognition and respect. On the other hand, many Western journalists and observers, who were supposed to be detached from the conflict and thus be impartial in expressing their opinions, had written a series of articles, pamphlets, and books to introduce the changing situations in Manchuria during early 1930s, with a pro-Japanese stance. As Peter O'Connor has suggested, these western Writers who were employed by Japan and Manchukuo as spokesman “could therefore claim greater veracity by offering an ‘inside’ view of the situation.”⁴¹

In fact, despite Western criticism of Japanese military expansion in Manchuria and their non-recognition of Manchukuo, in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, a few Western media still showed their sympathy for the Japanese contribution to a flourishing Manchuria in past decades. Moreover, for major Western powers, as Christopher Thorne has pointed out, the crisis in the Far East was not regarded as a real threat to their own interests and therefore they did not make any serious military interventions to keep Japanese militarism in check.⁴²

Manchurian Independence

Four days after the Manchurian Incident, on September 22, 1931, Japan’s original strategy of military occupation had given way to the establishment of an independent regime, over which the Kwantung Army could dominate. Two significant concerns, according to Yamamuro Shin’ichi, determined Japan’s policy regarding the management of Manchuria: one was Japan’s preparation for the total war against the United States; the

⁴¹ Peter O’Connor, “General Introduction: Japanese Propaganda Pamphlets in the Modern Period: the Struggle for Influence in East Asia,” in *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings Series 2: Pamphlets, 1891-1939* (Vol. 1), 6.

⁴² Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: the West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1933* (London, Hamilton, 1972), 214.

other was to lessen the impact of communism from the Soviet Union. Both concerns necessitated the future position of Manchuria as a “strategical base,” rather than a colony.⁴³ Therefore, this change in Manchuria ushered in Japan’s practice of a new imperialism that Prasenjit Duara has described as follows:

The new imperialism reflected a strategic conception of the periphery as part of an organic formation designed to attain global supremacy for the imperial power... Whether the new imperialists maintained ultimate control of their dependencies or clients through military subordination, they often created or maintained legally sovereign nation-states with political and economic structures that resembled their own. The new imperialists espoused anticolonial ideologies and emphasized cultural or ideological similarities; they made considerable economic investments, even while exploiting these regions, and attended to the modernization of institutions and identities.⁴⁴

In this sense, in order to “attain global supremacy,” Japan attempted to foster an independent Manchuria that could satisfy its long-term demand for resources and manpower.

Once Japan determined to set up an independent regime, state building, a far more complicated project than a direct military occupation, became the primary concern of the Kwantung Army. The initial efforts were directed toward two aspects: one was to get support from Chinese elites in Manchuria to secure administrative and political power; the other was to create a state ideology upon which different cliques could agree and which, moreover, could justify the independent movement itself. In this process, Chinese and Manchu elites with political influence and military power played significant roles.

In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, a power vacuum was created by the retreat of the main force of Zhang Xueliang’s armies. On the one hand, the Kwantung

⁴³ Yamamuro Shin’ichi, *Manchuria Under Japanese Dominion*. Joshua A. Fogel trans. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 17.

⁴⁴ Prasenjit Duara, “Nationalism, Imperialism, Federalism, and the Example of Manchukuo: A Response to Anthony Pagden.” in *Symposium: Imperial Trauma*, Part 3, *Common Knowledge* 2006 (12:1): 48.

Army controlled most of the crucial districts in Liaoning Province and kept advancing its army toward Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces; on the other hand, in this transitional period, many autonomous units were organized by local elites to maintain local order and people's livelihood with support from the Japanese military. Many of these Chinese elites used to be high-ranking officials in Zhang Zuolin and Zhang Xueliang's warlord governments, and now chose to stay and wait for their opportunities rather than following Zhang Xueliang's evacuation. Xi Xia 熙洽 (1883-1950), for instance, a Manchu bannerman who claimed allegiance to the vanquished Qing dynasty was one of them. Therefore, although the Kwantung army had played a leading role in promoting Manchurian independence, as Yamamuro has suggested, "considerations of the inherent geographical conditions of China's northeast, the foreign and historical background, and the political forces at the time were all at work."⁴⁵

In promoting Manchurian independence, Yu Chonghan 于沖漢 (1871-1932) was a crucial figure. Born as a Liaoyang native in Liaoning province and educated in Japan, he had been intimate with the SMR for a long time. During the Russo-Japanese war, he joined the Japanese Army and later served as a civil official under the warlord regime of Zhang Zuolin.⁴⁶ In the 1920s, he had actively promoted the "*baojing anmin*" 保境安民 (secure the borders and pacify the populace) campaign initiated by Zhang Zuolin and later Zhang Xueliang to consolidate their rule in Manchuria. Therefore, when the Kwangtung Army sought Chinese collaborators to facilitate Manchurian independence, Yu's regionalism-oriented political ideas were appreciated by the Kwantung Army and

⁴⁵ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Manchuria Under Japanese Dominion*, 47.

⁴⁶ See Wang Tianping and Rong Hongqing, "Yu Chonghan he mantie" 于沖漢和滿鐵 [Yu Chonghan and the SMR], *Lantai shijie*, 2000 (5): 38-9; Ronald Suleski, *Civil Government in Warlord China: Tradition, Modernization and Manchuria* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 17-20.

later became the cornerstone of the Manchukuo state ideology. Yamamuro has summarized Yu's ideas as follows:

1. Bringing an end to warlord politics, abolishing unreasonable taxes, and cultivating the strength of the people.
2. Improving wages and quality of the officials.
3. Establishing a budget inspection bureau.
4. Reforming the police system.
5. Developing transportation and industry.
6. Gradually perfecting self-governing institutions by taking into consideration such concerns as local history, people's feelings, and customs.⁴⁷

Yu's suggestions on the improvement of the political system, administration, and people's livelihood were very concrete and pragmatic, representing his personal expectations of achievement that the new regime could accomplish in the future.

To some extent, the Kwantung Army probably genuinely appreciated Yu's ideas and would have liked to fulfill them. But at the time, the urgency lay in how to develop these ideas into a coherent ideological system that could be proclaimed to the international community, as well as to people living in Manchuria. On March 1, 1932, "The Declaration of Manchukuo Statehood,"⁴⁸ composed by Zheng Xiaoxu 鄭孝胥 (1860-1938), the first Prime Minister of the Manchukuo government, was published in the first issue of *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao* 滿洲國政府公報 (Manchukuo Government Gazette). The declaration not only formally announced the establishment of Manchukuo as an independent state, but also illuminated the internal logic of its state-building project and envisioned a magnificent spectacle in the future. At the beginning of the Declaration, Zheng briefly reviewed the history of Manchuria since the 1911 Revolution and severely criticized the "violent and selfish" nature of the warlord regime,

⁴⁷ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Manchuria Under Japanese Dominion*, 57.

⁴⁸ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 1:1 (1932): 1-2.

which was the “evil root” of “chaos and dislocation” of “thirty million people in Manchuria and Mongolia.” This period of warlord rule was characterized as filled with disorder, poverty, and immorality. To overthrow warlord rule, therefore, became the first agenda after Manchurian independence. Then, the criticism was directed at the Nationalist government in China proper. The KMT’s party politics was regarded as authoritarian and diametrically opposite to its own ideal of “what is under heaven is for all” (*tianxia wei gong*; 天下為公) because the rule of one-party system had led to such disastrous results as the rampancy of the “communist bandits.”

In this sense, Manchukuo, by getting rid of both warlordism and partisan politics, claimed to represent a refreshing and promising direction of political ideas in East Asia and even in the whole world. The Declaration explicated how Manchukuo would practice its own political ideas including obeying heaven and pacifying the populace, practicing administration in accordance with the people’s will, and upholding the principle of equality among all ethnic groups. With regard to the concrete measures of promoting the development of Manchukuo and improving people’s livelihood, the new regime would follow suggestions previously proposed by Yu Chonghan by eradicating the “bandit disaster” as the first step. The Declaration finally announced that the new state would practice the principle of the “Kingly Way” (*wangdao*; 王道), preserve the “eternal honor and glory of East Asia,” and act as “a model for world politics.”⁴⁹

As the state ideology of Manchukuo, the “Kingly Way” was deeply imbedded in Confucian political philosophy, which contained a set of interrelated ideals. In general, it emphasized that it was a ruler’s virtue, especially benevolence and moral consciousnesses,

⁴⁹ Ibid.

that brought about the perfection of a polity. The “Kingly Way,” by fulfilling the destiny of heaven and following the people’s will on earth, would finally arrive at the state of the “Great Unity” 大同 (*datong*), which was also adopted as the reign-name between 1932 and 1933.

Not only should the “Kingly Way” be understood in a chain of the Confucian ideals, furthermore, it was important to pay attention to what the state ideology of Manchukuo, centered on the “Kingly Way,” was fighting against more than what it was fighting for. As a Japanese propagandist had proclaimed:

Wangtao is the antidote to the republicanism and the nationalism which have plunged China into chaos and have brought her to the verge of disintegration...*Wangtao* is the only effective preventive of the inroads of Communism.⁵⁰

Since Manchukuo was established upon the criticism of both warlordism and the Nationalist Government in China, it was crucial for the new regime to demonstrate its complete difference from and absolute superiority to the rule of previous warlords in Manchuria and the KMT in China proper. At the outset of the state-building process, this could only be realized by envisioning a new political ideology.

The spirit of anti-militarism and anti-nationalism embodied in the “Kingly Way” could be perceived from Zheng Xiaoxu’s illumination of the “Kingly Way.” From 1932 to 1938, Zheng was a significant promoter of the ideology. In his opinion, the first step of practicing the “Kingly Way” was to “eliminate the military/troops” 邪兵 (*mibing*). The logic, according to him, was that in the contemporary world, every country attempted to make profit by employing violence, and therefore, the military became an indispensable instrument of fulfilling selfish goals. As a result, common people were overtaxed and

⁵⁰ K. K. Kawakami, *Manchoukuo: Child of Conflict* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 104.

forced to labor; the whole country was filled with brutality while moral consciousness was lost. These problems would one day destroy the country.⁵¹ The violent activities, he furthermore pointed out, originated in another enemy of the “Kingly Way”—nationalism, that is, “being patriotic in a narrow way”:

Isn’t it called patriotism that was employed by the Powers in the contemporary world to mold their people’s mind? Isn’t it called a militarized national education that was used by the Powers to foster citizens’ ability? The reason why every country drills their people lies in their fear of falling behind...All of these are derived from the ambition of advancing their power and acquiring hegemony.⁵² Therefore, world war has already been incubated in this practice.

Then he suggested that only by practicing the “Kingly Way” could this disastrous result be avoided; and this practice should be focused on eradicating ideas of patriotism, promoting the spirit of philanthropy, and reinforcing the education of “rites and morality.”⁵³

As political rhetoric, the “Kingly Way” was utilized to cover Japanese militarism in Manchuria on the one hand, and to propagate Manchukuo legitimacy on the other. As a political ideal, the “Kingly Way” at the best represented a utopian vision without any practicability. Just as Naitō Konan once pointed out:

...from antiquity on, it [the “Kingly Way”] has been no more than a moral precept conveying an ideal. Furthermore, this ideal itself is perfectly fine and there is no difference of opinion on this. But many times in history we have seen how results contrary to the ideals are produced based upon the vagaries of those who implement them.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Zheng Xiaoxu, *Manshūkoku ōdō no henrin* 滿州国王道の片鱗 [A glimpse of the “Kingly Way” in Manchukuo] (Tōkyō: Gokoku Dōjinsha, 1936), 94.

⁵² Ibid., 1-4.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Naitō Konan *zenshū*, vol. 5, 182. Quoted from Yamamuro Shin’ich, 92.

In this sense, the significance of the “Kingly Way” as an ideology lay in its representation of a political and cultural orthodoxy embodied in Confucian teachings. Thus, any threatening forces in front of the “Kingly Way” would automatically lose their legitimacy. In this way, the “Kingly way,” provided a legitimate foundation for the concomitant suppression campaigns against various armed forces whom the government had designated “bandits.” From this perspective, the conceptual vagueness of the “Kingly Way” and its abstractness as a political ideal was appropriated to justify the employment of a military (and violent) measures in pacification campaigns because resorting to violence temporarily, according to the state, was for the purpose of realizing the “Kingly Way” eternally in the future.

Conclusion

From the early twentieth century, Manchurian bandits as a special genre had been active not only in the social arena but also had become the focus of Sino-foreign conflict. During the 1910s and 1920s, within the Kwantung Leased territory and railway zone of the SMR, Japan had made enormous efforts to eradicate “mounted bandits” and “bearded bandits” to consolidate its administrative power. In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the Japanese military, on the one hand justified its further military operations in Manchuria as self-defense against disbanded soldiers and “bearded bandits”; on the other hand, confronted with international criticism of its militarism and the investigations of the Lytton Commission, Japan attempted to propagate its image as both patron and victim in Manchuria, in order to win the sympathy and support of Western society. To a certain extent, this propaganda was effective because despite their

non-recognition of Manchukuo, there was no real military intervention from the Western powers. However, Japan's pursuit of international recognition of Manchukuo ended in failure with its retreat from the League of Nations in March 1933.

While Japan and Manchukuo failed to win the legitimacy of an independent Manchuria from the international audience, a much more urgent task for the newly established regime was to consolidate its state authority over its subjects. In "The Declaration of Manchukuo Statehood," it had proclaimed:

...the new state will reject the policies adopted in the dark days of the past. It will revise laws and enforce local autonomy, draft able men into the service of the government and elevate the officials deserving promotion, encourage industry, unify the currency system, open up the natural resources of the country, endeavor to maintain a good standard of living for the people, adjust and regulate the administration of the police, eliminate banditry...⁵⁵

Among these tasks of the state building, top priority was given to the elimination of banditry, just as Inagaki Shintarō had proposed twenty-six years before.

⁵⁵ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 1:1 (1932): 1-2.

Chapter Three

The “Bandit Problem” in Manchukuo

In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the Japanese Kwantung Army initiated military operations against disbanded soldiers, who previously were under the commandership of Zhang Xueliang, and other armed forces in Manchuria. These operations were continuously carried out after the establishment of Manchukuo in March 1932. From January to July 1932, for instance, “suppression” (*tōbatsu*; 討伐) campaigns were mainly concentrated on North Manchuria, western Liaoning Province, and several railway lines such as the Jingfeng, Fengshan, and Anfeng lines. Within two hundred and thirteen days, troops of the Kwantung Army were dispatched more than four hundred times to various districts in Manchuria.¹ The intensity of the military operations indicated the instability of Manchukuo as a newly founded regime.

In addition, confronted with threatening forces from the Soviet Union, Chinese nationalists, Communists, and other kinds of domestic violent forces, consolidating public security and state authority became urgent priorities of the Manchukuo state. As Charles Tilly has put it: “War makes states...Banditry, piracy, gangland rivalry, policing, and war-making all belong on the same continuum...”² It was in this war-making process

¹ Rikugunshō Chōsahan, *Kantōgun katsudō jōkyō gaiyō: Shōwa 7-nen 1-gatsu yori Shōwa 7-nen 7-gatsu ni itaru* 關東軍活動狀況概要: 自昭和 7年 1月至昭和 7年 7月 [The outline of the Kwantung Army’s activity: from January 1932 to July 1932] (1932), preface.

² Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 170.

in a general sense that Manchukuo undertook one dimension of its state-building project—“eliminating or neutralizing” its rivals in the territory—and claimed its legitimacy against all its external and internal challengers.

Therefore throughout the lifespan of Manchukuo from 1932 to 1945, the endeavor of establishing the state authority was frequently accompanied by conceptualizations and executions of “suppression” (*tōbatsu*; 討伐), “pacification” (*senbu*; 宣撫), and “enforcement of public security” (*jian shukusei*; 治安肅正). How to maintain peace and order within the borders of Manchukuo was one of the greatest concerns of the new regime. In a book compiled in 1937 by the Kwantung Army to review the progress of public security, suppression campaigns and “sacrifices” by the Japanese and Manchukuo army after 1931 were highly valued as an indispensable component of the “glorious history” of Manchukuo. And public security was endowed with great significance:

Public security (*jian*; 治安) is the cornerstone of a country. Where public security is not settled, there is no national defense, no development of industry, no culture, nor can the ideal of the politics of the “Kingly Way” be performed.³

Therefore, the Manchukuo state reinforced the “principle of public security first” (*jian daiichi shugi*; 治安第一主義) as a national policy.

What types of state challengers were designated as “bandits?” In what way did the “bandit problem” jeopardize the claimed legitimacy of Manchukuo? And how was the “bandit problem” conceptualized and perceived by various groups that participated in the management of Manchukuo? By probing these questions, this chapter attempts to

³ Kandōkun sanbōbu, *Saikin ni okeru manshūkoku no jian* 最近に於ける満州国の治安 [Recent condition of public security in Manchukuo] (1937), 1.

investigate the significance of solving the “bandit problem” in the broader context of the state-building project in Manchukuo.

“Bandits” in Manchukuo: A Categorization

After 1932, the designations of “bearded bandits” and “mounted bandits” as the most common two categories in Manchuria gradually disappeared in official documents in Manchukuo. In the meanwhile, “bandit” as a label was attached to a variety of armed forces. In Alvin Coox’s study of the development and operations of the Kwantung Army, he has loosely defined “bandits” in the context of nation building in Manchukuo. From the perspective of the Kwantung Army, “bandits” included:

Actual or potential threats to that security emanated from Nationalist China and Soviet Russia, externally; and from what the Japanese termed ‘bandits,’ internally. The latter was a motley and dispersed force of professional brigands, opium smugglers, patriotic or ideological adherents of the Kuomintang and the Communists, warlords’ followers, unemployed ex-soldiers, vagrants, displaced railway workers, and distressed farmers (called bandits of despair).⁴

This categorization of “bandits” was useful in the sense of its vagueness and flexibility in targeting any real or potential enemies of the state as long as needed.

In practice, however, this flexibility did not affect military perceptions of the distinction between real bandits and other categories. In the aforementioned record of military operations of the Kwantung Army from January to July 1932, for example, a nuanced differentiation of various violent groups was remarkable. The six-month military operation was primarily targeted on “soldier bandits” (*heihi*; 兵匪). In the meanwhile,

⁴ Alvin D. Coox, "The Kwantung Army Dimension," in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989), 412.

such armed forces as “mounted bandits” (*bazoku*; 馬賊), “remnants of soldiers” (*haizanhei*; 敗殘兵), “Chinese soldiers” (*shinahei*; 支那兵) “anti-Japanese self-defense corps” (*hannichi jieidan*; 反日自衛團), and “volunteer corps” (*giyūdan*; 義勇團) were also listed as objects of pacification.⁵

Fig. 2: A Manchukuo Military Pictorial⁶



The first two years after the establishment of Manchukuo were extremely chaotic. In October and November of 1932, when H.G.W. Woodhead, the editor of *The China Year Book*, paid his visit to the newly established Manchukuo, through his interviews

⁵ Rikugunshō Chōsahan, *Kantōgun katsudō jōkyō gaiyō*, 7-25.

⁶ Manshūkoku gunseibu, *Manshūkoku gunji gahō* 滿州国軍事画報 [Military pictorials of Manchukuo], vol. 1 (1932).

with leading Manchukuo and Japanese officials, he found that the “bandit problem,” according to the Japanese, was the main obstacle of consolidating Manchukuo’s state power. According to his observation, “bandits” in Manchukuo ranged from “anti-Japanese and anti-Manchukuo forces” to “mere predatory criminals.”⁷

In the *Manchukuo Yearbook* published in 1934, the Manchukuo Government had divided “bandits” into five categories:

1. The so-called political bandits formerly under command of notorious leaders, such as Ma Zhan, Ding Chao and Su Bingwen;
2. Professional bandits who are the traditional outlaws of Manchuria;
3. Civilian bandits who have been forced to take up banditry because of the economic necessity to get a livelihood;
4. Religious bandits who ravage the interior districts from religious motives because of their affiliation with such native religious bodies as the *Dadaohui* (Big Sword League) and *Hongqianghui* (Red Spear League);
5. Minor and insignificant groups which consist of farmers or workers in abject poverty.⁸

Among these five categories, the first two were regarded by the Manchukuo military as the most threatening to the stability of the new regime at the time, and therefore became the main target of military operations. “Political bandits” referred to armed forces that adhered to anti-Japanese and anti-Manchukuo principles. Some of them, such as Ma Zhanshan and Ding Chao used to be military commanders of the Northeast Army led by Zhang Xueliang, and their troops came from remnant forces of the Northeast Army. Others, such as Wang Fengge and his Liaoning Self-defense Army came from local militias and civilians, who advocated the Nationalist government. In addition, “political

⁷ H.G.W. Woodhead, *A Visit to Manchukuo: A Series of Articles Contributed to the Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury* (Shanghai: The Mercury Press, 1932), 65-66.

⁸ Toa-Keizai Chosakyoku, *The Manchoukuo Year Book* (Tokyo: Kyoku, 1934), 114.

bandits” also included communists who became the main force of anti-Japanese movement after 1935.⁹

On the other hand, “professional bandits” primarily consisted of “bearded bandits” and “mounted bandits,” who had been the major types of Manchurian bandits since the late nineteenth century and been the main targets of military suppressions by the Qing government, Zhang’s warlord regime, and now the Manchukuo government. For the military of Manchukuo, to differentiate the motives and compositions of various groups of armed forces was significant for making corresponding strategies in suppression campaigns. It was believed, for instance, that “professional bandits” could be pacified by promising them money, ammunitions, and military posts, while it was very difficult to subjugate “political bandits,” especially communists, in the same way.¹⁰

“Communist Bandits”

From 1934, “Communist bandits” (*Kyōsanhi*; 共產匪) were regarded by the Manchukuo government as the most powerful anti-Japanese and anti-Manchukuo force. As one category of the “political bandits” (*seijihi*; 政治匪), “Communist bandits” was taken as the “biggest cancer” (*saidai gan*; 最大癌) of public security of Manchukuo due to its anti-Japanese and Communist agendas.¹¹

⁹ Gunseibu komonbu, *Tōhi iken* 「討匪」意見 [Opinions on “bandit suppression”] (1936), 1-2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gunseibu Gunji Chōsabu ed., *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* (v. 2) 滿洲共產匪の研究 [Research of Manchurian Communist Bandits] (Shinkyō: Gunseibu Komonbu, 1937), preface.

From the perspective of political culture, the designation of “Communist bandits” was not an invention by the Manchukuo government, but taken from the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT). In 1927, with the end of the collaborative relationship between the KMT and CCP in the Northern Expedition, Chiang Kai-shek ordered to use “Communist bandits” (*gongfei*; 共匪) to refer to the Communists. As a strategy of suppression, the first step was to negate the legitimacy of Communists in name. As Michael V. Bhatia’s study of the terms for violent actors within the framework of the politics of naming has pointed out:

...names are core areas of dispute in armed conflict. In this competition over the legitimacy of violent acts, these groups seek to refute or even appropriate the words and names used against them in order to win the hearts, minds and support (either tacit or active) of the population...Discourse is thus a tool for armed movements and a battleground and contested space in contemporary conflicts. The politics of naming is about this contest...An occupation's or empire's designation of an internal resistance as “bandits” serves to demonstrate their control over territory and deny their opponent legitimacy, indicating that “economic” interests and desires (greed and plunder) are the dominant purpose for armed action.¹²

Therefore, from this point of view, the attachment of “bandit” to the Communists was an attempt “to construct the Chinese Communists as wicked, savage, malicious, and irredeemable,” and “to repudiate the CCP's legitimacy in ruling the mainland.”¹³ Besides,

¹² Michael V. Bhatia, “Fighting Words: Naming Terrorists, Bandits, Rebels and Other Violent Actors,” *The Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No.1 The Politics of Naming: Rebels, Terrorists, Criminals, Bandits and Subversives (2005): 6-7, 14.

¹³ Hui-ching Chang, “China as the ‘Communist Bandits’: Evolution of *Gongfei* in Taiwan’s Identity Politics,” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Suntec City, Singapore Online, from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p405085_index. In this paper, the author discussed the continuous application of “Communist bandits” by the KMT after Chiang retreated to Taiwan in 1949. The KMT’s

a string of derogative terms was applied to the communists and their activities. For

example, a headline of *Zhongyang ribao* on February 5, 1928 stated:

The Communist disaster (*gonghuo*; 共禍) in Jiangxi province was not over...

Yongfeng county has been stealthily occupied (*qiezhan*; 竊佔) by the Communist bandits (*gongfei*; 共匪).

With a combined application of such words as *huo* and *qie*, together with *fei*, to the Communists, the KMT attempted to relegate Chinese Communists to the status of rebels, an identity of heterodoxy.

The Manchukuo government also adopted this usage and developed its own framework of terminology. In addition to “Communist bandits,” there were also a variety of names connected with Communist movement, such as “Korean bandits” (*senhi*; 鮮匪), “red bandits” (*akahi*; 赤匪), and “Red Army bandits” (*akagunhi*; 紅軍匪). Furthermore, in order to facilitate suppression campaigns against the Communists, in 1937, the Ministry of Military Administration compiled a two-volume research book on the historical development of the “Communist bandits” in Manchuria, and proposed strategies of eradication. Specifically, one chapter in this book was devoted to Chiang Kai-shek’s suppression campaigns against the Chinese Communists. It briefly traced the history of the KMT’s suppression campaigns, and investigated in detail the strategies taken and special organizations established by the Nationalist government in these campaigns. The chapter also analyzed the factors accounting for the failure of Chiang’s

self-identification of orthodoxy made “Communist bandits” and a series of terminologies such as “Maofei” (毛匪) and “spy bandits” (*feidie*; 匪諜) collective memories that persisted in personal accounts and private life in Taiwan even after the abolition of these words in official documents and newspapers in 1980s when the usage of these designations served as a “public mockery for the KMT’s friendly stance toward the CCP.”

first three and the last suppression campaigns. By examining the Nationalist government's struggle against the Chinese Communists, the book finally reflected upon its own suppression work and especially emphasized the importance of "undertaking a permanent cure" (*jipon*; 治本) through such measures as "propaganda and pacification" (*senbu*; 宣撫).¹⁴

The application of "bandit" to the CCP and its activities in Manchuria was a political stigmatization. But the name also reflected, to some extent, the complicated composition of the CCP in Manchuria, especially after the establishment of the anti-Japanese United Front led by the CCP in 1935. It also partly indicated the influence of two different lines with regard to the development of the Manchurian Communist Party after the setup of the Manchurian branch between 1921 and 1922. At the outset, the Communist movement in Manchuria was led by both the Comintern and the CCP's headquarters in China proper. On the one hand, intending to protect the interests of the Soviet Union, the Comintern instructed the Manchurian Communist branch to cooperate with all anti-Japanese groups regardless their class backgrounds in order to follow an anti-Japanese agenda and to restrict Japan's expansion in Northeast Asia. On the other hand, central leaders of the CCP in Jiangxi Province gave the top priority to the anti-KMT agenda and directed the Manchurian Communists to focus on the implementation of class struggle and land reform. With the overwhelming influence from the central committee, during the 1920s and early 1930s, Communists in Manchuria mainly engaged

¹⁴ Gunseibu Gunji Chōsabu ed., *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* (v. 2), 521.

in organizing labor unions and mobilizing labor movements in railways, mills, and docks.

Due to the central leaders' low estimation of revolutionary potential in Manchuria and their unfamiliarity with the region, the Communist movement did not make too much progress. Even a temporary Manchurian Provincial Committee as a local institutional branch of the CCP was nonexistent until 1927.¹⁵ In addition, a general indifference to the Communist movement prevailed among Chinese populace. As an American consul had observed in Dalian in September 1927,

In fact, the Chinese in the Kwantung Territory have generally given the appearance of being indifferent toward Communism. Their living conditions, compared with other [parts of] China, are good, and the administration of the Territory by the Japanese gives them small cause for complaint regarding their individual fortunes. It is in fact common to hear travelers observe that the Chinese residents of the Kwantung Leased Territory appear to be considerably more prosperous than those in other provinces.¹⁶

As a result, by 1927 there were only 173 CCP members in Manchuria, mostly coming from intellectuals and workers but not peasants. Moreover, many members were unfamiliar with the ideology and organization of the Party, and "some [even] could not distinguish the CCP from the KMT."¹⁷

Under the circumstances, in the late 1920s, the Manchurian cadres of the CCP attempted to absorb armed forces from the Big Sword Society and "bearded bandits" to expand their revolutionary movement in Manchuria. Compared to local cadres' optimistic

¹⁵ Chong-sik Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria: Chinese Communism and Soviet Interest, 1922-1945* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1983), 58-60.

¹⁶ Consul Leo D. Sturgron to the Secretary of State, September 3, 1927, USNA893.00B/402, from Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 52.

¹⁷ Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 65.

expectations about these groups, the central committee had a very low estimation of revolutionary initiatives of secret societies and brigands:

We can clearly see from this that the Red Beards and Big Swords in Manchuria in no way differ from ordinary bandits. We cannot hang high hopes on them. Particularly, it is impossible to dream of using the Red Beards to seize political power...The danger in using the bandits would be that of failing in the intended purpose and being used by the bandits...the policy toward the bandits should be to destroy—that is, disband—the them.¹⁸

After the Manchurian Incident, the central committee's suspicion was still cast on volunteer armies, which were composed of various armed forces and thus difficult to control. According to Anthony Googan's study of the anti-Japanese united front in Northeast China,

...volunteer armies were raised by local gentry, junior army officers, police, and intellectuals. They recruited from a variety of social backgrounds, including workers, peasants, and members of the Red Spears and Big Swords societies. Some were bandits or *shanlin*, that is, small units, generally mounted, which used some of the skills of bandits both in combat and in living off the land. Estimates of the number of volunteers vary but are rarely below three hundred thousand.¹⁹

However, considering the superiority of non-communist groups in ammunition and their large number, from 1933, the Manchurian Committee began to adjust its policy by following the Comintern's directives of collaborating with any possible anti-Japanese forces rather than the central committee's suggestions of a narrower "united front from below." In 1935, the anti-Japanese united front was formally established and led by the Manchurian Committee of the CCP. The united front greatly strengthened anti-Japanese

¹⁸ "Letter of the Central Headquarters to the Manchurian Temporary Committee, dated May 1, 1928, *Chung-yang cheng-chih t'ung-hsun*, no. 30 (July 3, 1928), from Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 82.

¹⁹ Anthony Googan, "Northeast China and the Origins of the Anti-Japanese United Front," *Modern China*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Jul., 1994): 285.

power by “streamlining of command structure among the armed groups” and “improving relations between the armed groups and the general population.”²⁰

Table 4: Increase and decrease of anti-Japanese forces in Manchuria (1931-1940)²¹

Year	Local bandits	Remnant forces of old Manchurian Army	Communist bandits
1931	46,000		
1931	49,500	170,000	500
1932	69,150	100,000	850
1933	36,080	25,000	2,220
1934	20,800	12,000	3,200
1935	13,650	7,900	9,200
1936	13,550	5,800	6,800
1937	6,400	2,000	6,500
1938	1,350		4,400
1939	640		2,400
1940	450		1,480

When the anti-Japanese united front made great progress due to the congregation of a variety of groups, a problem gradually loomed large, that is, the disciplinary problem among armed forces that originated in brigands or secret societies; many of these armed forces kept previous habits of indiscriminate plunder. Zuo Zhizhong, the commander of the anti-Japanese independent army, also criticized this problem in an announcement to commanders and soldiers of anti-Japanese armies and the populace in 1936:

²⁰ Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 243.

²¹ This form, compiled by the Headquarter of the Kwantung Army, reflected the change in anti-Japanese forces within ten years from 1931-1940 in Manchukuo. Zhongyang dang'an guan etc. eds., *Dongbei dataofa* 東北大討伐 [The great suppression in the Northeast] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 33-34.

But among the guerrilla revolutionary armies, some small units have plundered the people and otherwise inflicted damage upon the people. Remembering these actions, some of the people thought evil of the anti-Japanese armies; not only did they not establish good relationships with us, but on the contrary, they opposed us. This has produced immeasurable obstacles to the future of our anti-Japanese armies. The leaders and troops of anti-Japanese armies must understand this fact well. If the armies and the people unite and bring into being an [truly united] anti-Japanese army, and if the army loves and protects the people, the future progress of the anti-Japanese army can be great. But if not, political and military relationships among various anti-Japanese units [and between the army and the people] will fall into disorder and the support for the armed units will be gravely affected. Many weak units are absorbed with the problem of strengthening armaments in their sector and are inflicting damage on the people.²²

This problem, together with CCP's suspicious attitude towards non-Communist forces throughout 1930s made it difficult to unify the armed forces under a single commander in chief and the goal of an anti-Japanese government was never realized either. Furthermore, the environment for its activities and survival was becoming more severe with the implementation of the policy of "collective hamlets" by the Manchukuo government as "a permanent cure." (See Chapter Four)

Targeting Foreigners

From a Chinese nationalistic perspective, the designation of "bandits" by the Manchukuo government was a denigration of Chinese civilians or military forces with an anti-Japanese agenda. To the Manchukuo government, however, the incessant unrest that originated from "bandit" violence not only challenged state authority, but also made its

²² Gunseibu Gunji Chōsabu ed., *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* (vol. 1), 781-782.

claim of constructing a “paradise” based on the “Kingly Way” unconvincing, especially when foreigners became the target of this violence.

The unfavorable impact of “bandit” violence could be perceived from two notorious kidnapping cases in 1932 and 1933. On September 7, 1932, Tinko Pawley, a nineteen-year-old British girl who was born in Newchuang in 1913 and whose father was an ophthalmologist there, was kidnapped together with other two British young boys by “bearded bandits.” She was not released until six weeks later; on March 29, 1933, Clifford Johnson, an English chief officer in the steamer *Nanchang*, were captured by “Manchurian pirates” and spent five months with them before being rescued.²³ Both cases, as the Lincheng Incident in 1923, aroused extensive attention from international communities and many newspapers had follow-up reports during the negotiations between the government and “bandit gangs.” Actually, during this period, there were several other kidnapping cases focused on foreigners other than Russians or Japanese in Manchukuo. When aforementioned Woodhead visited Manchukuo, he had kept a close eye on such cases, and according to his observation, Harbin was especially “in a reign of terror.”²⁴ In fact, these cases put the Manchukuo government in an awkward position. When Woodhead interviewed Manchukuo officials, even Zheng Xiaoxu, the Premier of Manchukuo, willingly or not, admitted that banditry was the most serious problem

²³ Both victims published books on their experiences after release. See Tinko Pawley, *My Bandit Hosts*, (London: Stanley Paul & Co. LTD, 1935); Clifford Johnson, *Pirate Junk: Five Months Captivity with Manchurian Bandits* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934).

²⁴ Woodhead, *A Visit to Manchukuo*, 47.

confronting the new state, despite his confidence in the final settlement of the problem.

On the other hand, a Mr. Shih Lu-pen, the commissioner for foreign affairs in Manchukuo in the interview told him, “Harbin had never been so peaceful as it was today.” Later, when Woodhead read the news that a Mrs. Woodruff was murdered in broad daylight on a street in Harbin, he sarcastically commented: “Perhaps now Mr. Shih Lu-pen will admit that the new paradise which he tried to depict to me at our interview is a phantasy of his own creation.”²⁵

If the “bandit problem” before the foundation of the state was represented as a symbol of the deficiency and corruption of the Chinese government, and thus was used by Japanese to justify the establishment of a new promising one, then after the establishment of Manchukuo, the hot potato was handed over to the new state. On the one hand, the increasing frequency of kidnapping cases severely damaged Manchukuo’s endeavor of winning international recognition based on its claims of “Kingly Way,” “Paradise,” and “Ethnic Harmony;” on the other hand, the violent activities were claimed by “bandits” and interpreted by Chinese as representations of anti-Japanese nationalism and thus challenged the legitimacy of the new regime. As Clifford Johnson had commented in 1934:

In the south of China abduction of foreigners can be attributed almost as much to dislike of foreigners as to the business instinct of the Chinese, but in Manchukuo this is not the case. Many of the kidnapping outrages are intended as a gesture to

²⁵ Ibid.

other nations that Japan's occupation of Manchuria, instead of ridding the country of bandits, has rather intensified their menace.²⁶

In this sense, as a “gesture,” the “bandit gang” that had kidnapped Tinko Pawley attached the condition of Japan’s evacuation from Manchuria within one week to their demand of “\$1,300,000 for two hostages, 100 rifles, 30,000 bullets, 200 ozs. of the best quality opium, 50 yds of black satin, 100 gold rings, 30 gold wrist watches, 2 heavy machine-guns, 50,000 rounds of ammunition, 6 light automatics, 4 mausers, 120 rifles all with ammunition.”²⁷ Nevertheless, the request of Japanese evacuation, as Tinko suggested, was not an expression of patriotism; rather, their real intention was to elude Japanese military and police hunting that was more powerful and effective and therefore more threatening than that under previous regimes.

“How I hate them, how I hate them!”

Bandit violence as a social reality has persisted in Manchuria for a long time. Despite the various origins and motives of bandit groups, it was the common people who suffered the most. From 1918 to 1924, for example, Linjiang County had reported to Fengtian province as many as thousands of bandit cases.²⁸ As a newspaper report analyzed in 1931, due to the vast mountainous areas covered with forests, “bearded bandits” and “mounted bandits” usually hid in these remote districts and plundered

²⁶ Johnson, *Pirate Junk*, 20.

²⁷ Pawley, *My Bandit Hosts*, 168.

²⁸ Gu Zhengming and Pan Mingxun, “Changbaishan tufei” 長白山土匪 [Bandits in Changbai Mountain], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu* (Beijing: Qunzhong Chubanshe, 1992), 89.

merchants and local villagers. Due to the poor protection by local administration, many merchants had to hire armed escort to get protection along their commercial routes.²⁹

Small groups of “bearded bandits” often looted and kidnapped families of middle or lower class. Therefore, many villages in Manchuria had organized their own joint-defense teams or employed village-protection corps.³⁰

In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the political and social disorder exasperated bandit violence in Manchuria. Various news and reports published in the *Shengjing shibao* (Shengjing Times; 盛京時報) during this period partly reflected the severity of bandit violence as a social problem. An extreme example was in Shulan prefecture in Jilin Province. It was reported that after the Manchurian Incident, some female residents in Shulan Prefecture were constantly harassed by “soldier bandits.” Suffered from being plundered and raped by either soldiers or bandits, around three hundred women were forced to organize and equip themselves with guns, knives, and horses for self-defense.³¹

Kidnapped by “bearded bandits” in Manchukuo, Tinko Pawley found that “the peasants fear the bandits even more than they dread the horrors of war, famine and pestilence.”³² Once an old woman who guarded her complained:

²⁹ *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 [Central daily] (Feb.10, 1931).

³⁰ Cao Baoming, “Dongbei tufei” 東北土匪 [Bandits in Northeast China], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 50.

³¹ *Shengjing Shibao* 盛京時報 [Shengjing Times] (May 24, 1932).

³² Pawley, *My Bandit Hosts*, 30.

Ai ya, how I hate them, how I hate them! I should like to wring their necks!
...They kill our pigs and ducks and hens, and they steal our clothes and fuel and bedding. By day we poor folk shiver and go hungry, and at night, while the Hunghutze snore on our beds, we lie on the floor in the cold with nothing but an old straw mat to cover our bodies. And when these fellows go, and we begin once more with hoarding our food and fuel, another band sweeps upon us, and again we are left to starve or freeze when the cold weather comes!³³

Therefore, despite the anti-Japanese agenda of many armed forces, violence was also inflicted upon ordinary Chinese people especially peasants. In this sense, it was possible, as Woodhead pointed out, that peasants, especially at a lower level, were indifferent to the struggle between China, Japan, and Manchukuo at the time and “they only want to be left in peace to pursue their lawful avocations.”³⁴

In fact, during the early 1930s, it was difficult to differentiate between “political bandits” and “professional bandits.” For one thing, many “bearded bandits,” taking advantage of political and administrative instability in Manchuria, proclaimed themselves to be anti-Japanese volunteer armies, but indiscriminately looted and kidnapped Japanese, Westerners, and Chinese; for another, the practice that disbanded soldiers often joined bandit gangs and bandits were enlisted in armies obscured the distinction between the anti-Japanese resistance and criminal violence. During this period, disbanded soldiers and “bearded bandits,” despite their anti-Japanese claims, not only attacked Japanese, but also plundered and kidnapped common Chinese people. In September 1932, thirteen-year old Liu Qingxiang, together with his six-year old nephew, were kidnapped by a group of bandits, who claimed themselves “anti-Japanese army.” It was Liu’s second experience

³³ Ibid., 95.

³⁴ Woodhead, *A Visit to Manchukuo*, 89.

of being kidnapped since November 1931 when a large group of “bearded bandits” and disbanded soldiers attacked and looted Yitong County in Jilin Province.³⁵ In the tide of disorder, villages under poor administrative and military protection suffered a lot. From 1932 to 1936, many villages and hamlets were often ransacked and villagers kidnapped by various bandit gangs. In some districts, bandits violence called forth more hatred than Japanese did.³⁶

“Bandit Attacks” and Railways

In addition to plundering and kidnapping, which were conventional practices of “bearded bandits” and “mounted bandits” in Manchuria, another typical form of “bandit violence” was embodied in the attack on railways. By the time of Manchukuo’s establishment in 1932, Manchurian railways had already developed into the most efficient transportation network under the management of the SMR. If the railway system was regarded as an instrument of Japanese encroachment in Manchuria and therefore a representation of “railway imperialism” since 1906,³⁷ then after Manchurian independence, the development and maintenance of railways were even more significant because the management of Manchukuo still heavily relied on “the military applications

³⁵ Liu Qingxiang, “Wo liangci bei bangpiao de jingli” 我兩次被綁票的經歷 [My experiences of being kidnapped twice], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 235, 241.

³⁶ See Wang Zhichao, “Feixue yusheng” 匪穴餘生 [Survival in bandits’ den], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 215-220; Cui Youren, “Tufei shenghuo mudu ji” 土匪生活目睹記 [An eyewitness record of bandits’ lives], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 223-230.

³⁷ On the concept of “railway imperialism,” see Clarence B. Davis etc. eds., *Railway Imperialism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 1-7.

of railway technology” and “economic uses” of railway system, the two components of the “railway power.”³⁸ As one staff member of the SMRC pointed out:

The construction of national railways in Manchukuo is the first step of realizing the so-called “Paradise of the Kingly Way; needless to say, this is a significant national policy. The completion of railways is indeed the pioneer of all cultural construction.³⁹

Indeed, by 1931, the SMR owned railway lines of 1,129.1 km in total, with two main lines from Dalian to Changchun and from Fengtian to Andong, and four spur lines.

Besides, the railway zone covered 233 sq. km and 105 cities were connected by railway lines or located in the railway zone. After an eight-year development, the railway system was extended to 10,000 km by 1939 and became a significant part of an increasingly expanded transportation system in Manchukuo.⁴⁰

While railways, together with public roads and waterways, played a crucial role in maintaining public order and promoting industrial development, they also became a weak link in public security due to their vulnerability to “bandit attacks” (*hishū*; 匪襲).

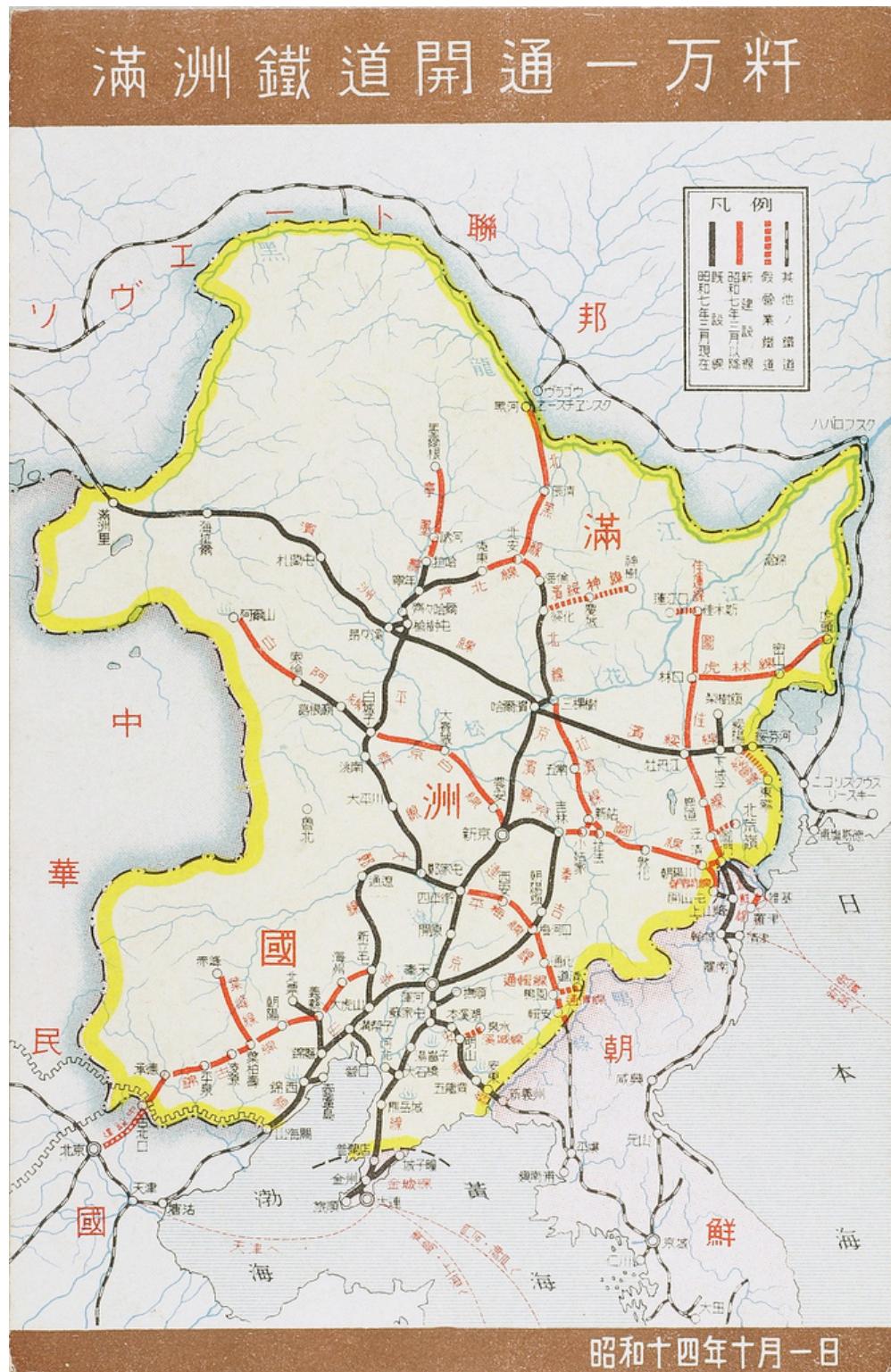
Actually, since the first railway line was constructed in China in 1875, railways became a primary target of destruction by bandits, especially during the Republican period. Bandits

³⁸ Bruce A. Elleman and Stephen Kotkin eds., *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China*, xxv.

³⁹ Hara Hiro, *Manshūkoku tetsuto kensetsu hiwa* 滿洲国鉄道建設秘話 [Secret stories of railway construction in Manchukuo] (Mantetsu Shainkai, 1940), 405.

⁴⁰ Ramon H. Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria,” 109-110; As for a general review of the development of Manchurian railway and its contribution in areal development, see Norton S. Ginsburg, “Manchurian Railway Development,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 8:4 (1949), 398-411. In addition to railways, other modes of transportation were developed as well. For example, by 1939, the construction of 20,000 km of public roads and 5,000 km of waterways had been accomplished. See *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron* 滿洲国史·各論 [History of Manchukuo: detailed discussions] (Tōkyō: Manmō dōbō engokai, 1971), 846.

Fig.3: “10,000 km of railways are open in Manchuria”⁴¹



⁴¹ A poster of Manchukuo railway system, 1939.

made economic profit from plundering and kidnapping passengers on the one hand, and vented their anti-foreign emotions by wrecking foreign-owned railways or kidnapping foreign passengers on the other. So were the cases in Manchukuo. When the SMR set about large-scale railway construction from 1906, the accidents of railway destruction were frequently reported and cast a shadow on safety and swiftness of transportation. In December 1930, attacks on the Siyao and Jinchao lines by “mounted bandits” led to a large-scale damage of railway lines. Among two hundred passengers, eighty were killed, twenty seriously injured, and thirty kidnapped. Due to the severity of the consequences, this incident was regarded as the Second Lincheng Incident.⁴²

In the first two years of Manchukuo, railway police power was almost nonexistent because police in many railway bureaus had been disbanded in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident. Therefore, the Kwantung Army had to dispatch troops to guard important stations and lines that were frequently damaged by “bandits.” During the most chaotic period, the Jihai line even had to stop running at night.⁴³ And attacks on trains were often launched in this way:

Most attacks on trains take place at night, and only rarely in daylight. Derailing is accomplished by destruction of rails, by the placement of objects on rails, or by the insertion of steel pieces between rails. When the train stops, it is attacked from both sides. Daylight attacks on trains take place in gorges or on steep slopes.

⁴² “Hizoku no tetsudō bōgai” 匪賊の鉄道妨害 [Bandits’ obstruction of railways], *Manmō jijō* 113 (1931): 69-71.

⁴³ Zhongyang dang'an guan etc. eds., *Wei Man xianjing tong zhi* 假滿憲警統治 [The rule of the military and police in Manchukuo] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), 810.

Trains are attacked either from both sides or from one side. Attacks are most frequent in forest areas.⁴⁴

Furthermore, not only railway operations were seriously disturbed, the progress of new railway constructions was severely delayed due to “bandit attacks.” Especially in the remote mountainous areas, “bandits” often disguised as common people and took advantage of their familiarity with local terrain to launch surprise attacks on staff of the SMRC. Besides, Chinese labors hired by the SMRC to build railroads were often dispersed by “bandit” gangs from the construction sites. Thus, these frequent “bandit attacks” had caused serious economic and manpower losses to the SMR.

Table 5: “Bandit attacks” and actual numbers of injuries (February 1931-April 1939)⁴⁵

Category Year	Number of bandit attacks				Actual number of injuries			
	Mantetsu connected	Contractor connected	Other	Total	Mantetsu connected	Contractor connected	Other	Total
1931	2	3		5	2	3		5
1932	12	20	38	70	9	18	24	51
1933	72	95	61	228	36	74	30	140
1934	110	168	164	442	52	141	122	315
1935	43	123	157	323	24	111	109	244
1936	29	62	63	154	21	60	42	123
1937	16	18	87	121	3	18	62	83
1938	13	23	89	125	5	22	60	87
1939			6	6			4	4
Total	298	512	665	1,475	152	447	453	1,052

⁴⁴ Okamoto Goichi, “Manshū ni okeru chūgoku kyōsantō to kyosanhi” 滿州に於ける中国共産党と共に匪 [The Chinese Communist Party and the Communist bandits in Manchuria], in *Manshū ni okeru kyōsan undō* (Kyōto: Tōyō Bunkasha, 1973), 61.

⁴⁵ *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 855

In spite of the destructive influence of frequent “bandit attacks” on railway development, in the official record of the SMR, the suffering of its employees was represented as a legend of sacrifice, perseverance, and wisdom;⁴⁶ and the heroic image became one facet of Manchukuo’s state-building spirit and was taken as indispensable in the pursuit of the ideal of “Paradise of the Kingly Way.” In 1940, the SMR compiled a book recording various cases of “bandit attacks” on railway lines and construction sites and its employees’ experiences in these incidents, in order to glorify and encourage its employees’ devotion to railway construction.⁴⁷ Most of these stories had detailed descriptions of how every event happened, how “bandits” killed, kidnapped and mistreated workers, and how military and police powers were engaged in tracking down and fighting against “bandits.” As a Japanese engineer had recalled:

[We were] threatened by bandits every day during the period of construction. After we have finished daily work and come back to the dorm, we will feel relieved: “Well, there was no bandit attack today...” But we cannot predict the fate tomorrow. Many times when we experienced bandit attacks, [we felt that] so-called human beings were those who had nerves of steel and created new outlooks on life.⁴⁸

The intention of compiling this book, however, was not just to demonstrate “bandit violence” and the SMR employees’ misery and sacrifice; more importantly, these “secret stories” were represented as a discourse of “anti-bandit” spirit that added a cheering and

⁴⁶ It was estimated that by 1945 when the SMR was dissolved, the total number of the employees was 200,000, including Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Russians, and Mongols, and among them, 140,000 were Japanese. See Itō, *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway*, 3-4.

⁴⁷ Hara Hiro, *Manshūkoku tetsuto kensetsu hiwa* 滿州国鉄道建設秘話 [Secret stories of railway construction in Manchukuo] (Mantetsu shainkai, 1940).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 457.

encouraging significance to the long-term “bandit suppression” campaigns in

Manchukuo:

This kind of situation was exposed; the construction work at every place was continuously carried out in the worst situations like this. The sacrifice of the SMR, of course, lay in the bleak painstaking and sacrifice paid by various groups of contractors who were entrusted with the work of construction. All of these legends truly unfolded many enraged and extraordinary sad stories and extremely heroic and impressive tales.⁴⁹

In this way, these experiences of cruelty were transformed into a page of a grand epic of state building.

The SMR

Partly due to frequent “bandit attacks” on railway lines and construction sites, the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR) since its establishment had paid special attention on collecting “bandit” information and played a significant, if not direct or obvious, role in “bandit suppression” campaigns. Established in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War, the SMR was more than an economic enterprise; it also existed in Manchuria as an administrative and cultural entity. In the long history of its research activities since 1907, its well-developed and ever expanding research institution had produced a large amount of documents that provided significant intelligence support as well as research analysis for decision and policy making by the Kwantung Army and the Manchukuo government.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 407.

Although the research organ was reorganized and renamed several times in nearly forty years,⁵⁰ the core principle of its research work had been unchanged from the outset. When the research department was firstly set up in 1907 under the reign of the first president Gotō Shinpei 後藤新平, “*bunsō teki bubi*” (文裝的武備; military preparedness in civil garb) was put forward as the guiding doctrine. Therefore, as Joshua Fogel has pointed out, “This mix of scholarship and colonial policy...became the main research tradition at the SMR [and] research organs were not established for the sake of scholarship, but to facilitate the management of Manchuria and the operation of the SMR.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, not all the members of the department embraced a unified belief in promoting Japanese imperialistic expansion by means of research work. In fact, as Itō Takeo has recalled, the atmosphere in the SMR research department was to a great extent “liberal and antimilitary.”⁵² People who participated into the research department had varied political ideals. For example, Itō himself embraced liberalism; Ōkawa Shūmei promoted Pan-Asianism; and Miyazaki Masayoshi who emphasized that researchers should serve the military supported Japanese military expansion in Manchuria.

⁵⁰ See Huang Fuqing, “jiuyiba shibian hou mantie diaocha jigou de zuzhi tixi (1932-1943)” 九一八事變後滿鐵調查機構的組織體系 (1932-1943) [The organizational framework of the SMR research institutions after the Manchurian Incident (1932-1943)], *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan*, vol. 24 (June 1995): 367-409.

⁵¹ Joshua A. Fogel, “Introduction: Itō Takeo and the Research Work of the South Manchurian Railway Company,” in Itō Takeo, *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway: The Memoirs of Itō Takeo*, trans. Joshua A. Fogel (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 1988), ix.

⁵² Ibid., xii.

In what way had the research department of the SMR assisted Japanese expansion in Manchuria and the rule of the state of Manchukuo? In terms of information and research on public security in Manchuria, the SMR had published annual reports of progress in Manchuria including administrative problems related to the activity of “mounted bandits.” Before the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the SMR not only published research reports on the “bandit problem,” but also paid close attention to collecting daily information on “bandits” activities along railway lines and in the Kwantung Leased Territory. In April 1927, in order to differentiate the intelligence operation from the research work, the Information Section was founded in the SMR with a concentration on intelligence. This information section was independent of the research organs and intimately worked with the military.⁵³

To a certain extent, the research and intelligence work before the Manchurian Incident was primarily supposed to facilitate the administration in and the management of the railway zone and the Kwantung Leased Territory. After the Incident and especially after the foundation of Manchukuo, the research work was more oriented toward providing strategical preparedness for the development of Manchukuo as a base for an expanding Japanese empire. This transformation of the research focus was also embodied in institutional changes in the department. In January 1932, the Economic Research Association was set up to replace the research department to embark on a large-scale

⁵³ Itō, *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway*, 117.

village investigation throughout Manchuria. The project was supposed “to obtain policy materials, and to understand accurately these newly seized objects for exploitation.”⁵⁴

The project of the rural investigation was embedded in a broad political and military context at the outset of the foundation of Manchukuo. As mentioned above, the Japanese military intended to reinforce the military and economic power of Manchuria in the form of an independent state to make preparation for Japan’s total war. Therefore, its primary concern was the “strategic equipment” of Manchukuo. Besides, in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, anti-Japanese resistance from the Chinese side was stimulated unprecedentedly. In order to suppress Chinese resistant forces, military investigation and consolidation was the first step. As a result, research on the strategic needs of the army was carried out, together with related investigations on six aspects: the general economy, agriculture, timber, livestock, marine produce, and transport. From the very beginning research on these six dimensions was largely dependent on the SMR.⁵⁵ In the process, 101 staff members had participated in the investigation and the total expenditure amounted to 263,604 yen.⁵⁶

This collective investigation and research work conducted by the Kwantung Army and the SMR confronted great difficulties, one of which was the threat of “banditry.”

⁵⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁵ Hara Kakuten, *Gendai Ajia kenkyū seiritsu shiron: Mantetsu Chōsabu, Tōa Kenkyūjo, IPR no kenkyū* 現代アジア研究成立史論: 満鉄調査部・東亜研究所・IPR の研究 [The history of the formation of the study of modern Asia: A study of the Research Department of the SMR, East Asian Research Institute, and IPR] (Tōkyō: Keisō Shobō, 1984), 672.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 681.

What the researchers had experienced during their investigations only proved that Manchukuo was anything but stabilized and that the ideal of “the founding of Manchukuo” (*Manshū kenkoku*; 滿洲建国) still had a long way to go. The researchers of the SMR often had to conduct their investigations under the military protection. For example, an investigation brigade dispatched by the Kwantung Army to undertake forest investigation in Dongning and Wangqing counties in Jilin province consisted of four hundred members, most of whom acted as security guards rather than researchers.⁵⁷ As for researchers of the SMR, to choose which village to visit was restricted by the condition of the local public security. When they went to visit even a small village, researchers often had to be accompanied by at least seven to eight, sometimes more than ten soldiers, and then they could proceed to each household to carry out their investigation.⁵⁸

The “bandit problem” was not only one of the obstacles that thwarted investigation work in rural areas; according to most investigation reports on rural society, it also exacerbated the serious economic depression after 1931. As an economic investigation carried out in Suifenhe district exposed, on the one hand peasants suffered from the disastrous plundering and other disturbances by “bandits.”⁵⁹ On the other hand, the contemporary situation of rural poverty and depression could also “lead to banditry or

⁵⁷ Ibid., 673.

⁵⁸ Imura Tetsuo, *Mantetsu Chōsabu: kankeisha no shōgen* 滿鐵調査部：関係者の証言 [Witnesses of the research department of the South Manchurian Railway Company] (Tōkyō: Ajia keizai kenkyūjo 1996), 48.

⁵⁹ Hara Kakuten, *Gendai Ajia kenkyū seiritsu shiron*, 679.

rebellion, code words for anti-Japanese or Communist uprisings. The implication clearly was that unless conditions were improved, the Japanese Army would have monumental problems on its hands.”⁶⁰

Manshū Hyōron

In Manchukuo, the “bandit problem” attracted great attention from participants in the state building project. And their different views on “bandits” could be perceived in *Manshū hyōron* (Manchurian Review; 滿洲評論), a Japanese journal published in Manchuria in August 1931, around one month before the Manchurian Incident. This journal mainly focused on political, social, and economic reviews and a variety of contemporary news concerning China and specifically Manchuria. As a journal that had accompanied and witnessed the vicissitudes of Manchukuo, it once served as a significant forum in which various groups of Japanese intellectuals had expressed their opinions. Based on this journal here I attempt to examine perceptions of the “bandit problem” by those Japanese intellectuals, whose deep considerations of how Manchukuo should be managed will be illuminated through the lens of their concerns about “banditry.” To a great extent, the “bandit problem” was often regarded as being connected with more significant issues that went beyond the urgency of temporarily maintaining the stability of the state. Also, by contextualizing the “bandit problem” in a broader and more

⁶⁰ Joshua A. Fogel, “Introduction: Itō Takeo and the Research Work of the South Manchurian Railway Company,” xiv.

complicated social and political landscape in Manchukuo, we can see how the significance of “bandit problem” and “bandit suppression” in Manchukuo differed at each stage, and then we can get a better sense of how the priorities of the state building changed accordingly.

In the opening issue of 1931, it was announced that the journal was independent from any political partisanship and in pursuit of a “correct understanding of Chinese and Manchurian problems.”⁶¹ Following this principle, the content of the journal included four aspects: first, scientific and impartial comments on and criticism of phenomena in China; second, commentary on political, economic, and political events; third, compilations of sources necessary for judging the trends of development in China and Manchuria; and fourth, scientific and practical news. Accordingly, at the outset, the journal consisted of four columns: “contemporary events” (which later became the intelligence column) ranged over diverse information and news in China and Manchuria; “individuals and organizations” touched upon many important political figures and organizations; “commentary” dealt with reviews and criticisms of the contemporary political situation and other significant issues; and finally “letters” included descriptions of the activities and resolutions of the Manchurian Youth League.⁶² It was not until 1934

⁶¹ Yamamoto Hideo, “*Manshū hyōron*” kaidai sōmokujī (Tōkyō: Fuji Shuppan, 1982), 12.

⁶² “*Hyōron hachinen no kaiko*” 評論八年の回顧 [Looking back on eight years of Review], *Manshū hyōron* 17: 8 (1939): 26-27. The Manchurian Youth League was an organization set up in 1928 in Dalian with the support of the SMR. It advocated the ideology of Manchurian autonomy. See *Manshū Seinen Renmei Shi Kankō Iinkai*, *Manshū Seinen Renmei shi* 滿洲青年連盟史 [The history of the Manchurian

that three columns of “commentary,” “intelligence,” and “miscellaneous compilation” were finally fixed.

The creation of the journal was not possible without support from the Kwantung Army and the SMR. However, in order to maintain its claimed spirit of independence from any interest group, it attempted to keep them at an equal distance. Nevertheless, considering the broader context of its existence, it was not possible to be detached from political influence and Japanese imperialistic ambitions. For instance, after the Manchurian Incident in 1931, its editorial board claimed that they had decided to “remove all obstacles to the military operations of the Japanese armed forces and to share a common fate with Manchukuo.”⁶³ In this sense, the journal could not transcend Japan’s imperialistic interests per se; at best it provided a platform for different groups of Japanese in Manchuria to put forward their own perceptions and suggestions on various affairs in Manchukuo. For example, Koyama Sadatomo 小山貞知,⁶⁴ one of the directors of the Manchurian Youth League, utilized the journal as an instrument of propaganda for the League; the Kwantung Army also had their own representatives of their ideas and intentions. According to Lincoln Li’s research, the contributors to the journal could be divided into three factions: the intellectual faction (also called *Manshū hyōron* faction)

Youth League] (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1968); Lincoln Li, *The China Factor in Modern Japanese Thought: The Case of Tachibana Shiraki, 1881-1945* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 54.

⁶³ “Hyōron hachinen no kaiko,” 24.

⁶⁴ Koyama Sadatomo was one of the main contributors to *Manshū hyōron*. He also actively participated in construction of the Manchurian Youth League and the Concordia Society. See Koyama Noboru ed., *Koyama Sadatomo to Manshūkoku* 小山貞知と満洲国 [Koyama Sadatomo and Manchukuo] (Tōkyō: Shinzansha, 1996).

led by Tachibana Shiraki, the military faction controlled by the Kwantung Army, and the bureaucratic faction that represented the Manchukuo government. These three factions might not share quite the same opinions sometimes, but their fundamental principle was to consolidate Japan's interest in Manchuria and to maintain the stability and promote the development of Manchukuo.⁶⁵

In this journal, discussions and information on the “bandit problem” in Manchukuo can be roughly divided into three categories, among which a great portion was concentrated on intelligence directly related to “bandit” activities and suppression campaigns. The information and intelligence ranged over many topics including statistics on gangs and their geographic distribution, diaries telling how common people suffered from “bandit outrages,” reports of casualties of the Manchukuo military and the “bandits,” administrative policies, and even anecdotes about bandits’ submission.⁶⁶ To some extent, these sources provided fragmented pictures of the progress of the military operations against “bandits” undertaken by the Kwantung Army and the Manchukuo Army; in the meanwhile, they also reflected the pragmatic concerns of eradicating “bandits” and restoring social order in an expedient way.

⁶⁵ Li, *The China Factor in Modern Japanese Thought*, 49.

⁶⁶ See for example, “Zenman hizoku jōkyō” 全満匪賊狀況 [Bandit conditions all over Manchuria], *Manshū hyōron* 12:1 (1939): 27; “Acheng junan ki” 阿城受難記 [A record of suffering in Acheng], *Manshū hyōron* 3:3 (1932): 46-47; “Hokō seido no fukkatsu” 保甲制度の復活 [Restoration of the Baojia system], *Manshū hyōron* 5:12 (1933): 23; “Hizoku no tegami” 匪賊の手紙 [Letters from bandits], *Manshū hyōron* 2:4 (1932): 17.

Different from the military views of the Kwantung Army, intellectuals often attempted to focus on a social analysis of the formation of “bandits” and the corresponding strategies to deal with them. Tachibana Shiraki 橘樸, one of the most significant representatives of the “intellectual faction” as well as one of the founders of the journal, once expressed a great interest in “mounted bandits.” His interest was deeply imbedded in his ideal of promoting local autonomy and agriculturalism in Manchuria. In a review essay published in November 1931, Tachibana regarded the control and utilization of “mounted bandits” in Manchuria as the premise for realizing self-governance in northeast China.⁶⁷ It should be noted that at that time, it was only two months after the Manchurian Incident and the idea of establishing an independent state in Manchuria was still brewing. At the provincial level, a self-governance council had been set up to fulfill the administrative function that was previously undertaken by the provincial government.

Tachibana himself at that moment also began to consider the possibility of local self-governance in all of Manchuria as a way of Japanese domination. In the article, he pointed out that the elimination of the “bandit problem,” which was one of the biggest obstacles to restoring local order, was the precondition for self-government in Manchuria. Two methods could be used: one was to rely on military suppression and the other was to try making “bandit” gangs stabilized. Military operations were supposed to be the most

⁶⁷ Tachibana Shiraki, “Tōhoku jichi undō no zentei jōken” 東北自治運動の前提条件 [The preconditions for the movement toward self-government in Northeast China], *Manshū hyōron* 1:13 (1931): 2-5.

effective and appropriate. At the time, however, military measures were not reliable, especially considering the insufficient manpower of both Chinese and Japanese troops, let alone the poor quality of the Chinese armies. Therefore, according to Tachibana, the only way was to stabilize “bandit” gangs. In other words, he proposed that Japan should utilize “mounted bandits” to maintain order at the local level by allowing these gangs to consolidate their rule in their respective territories. He suggested that most gangs with certain domains would like to secure their own bases. He furthermore referred to the investigation by a Japanese “mounted bandit expert” (*bazokutsū*; 馬賊通), who had characterized the administration within a bandit domain as “bandit governance” (*zokujī*; 賊治). According to this expert, after the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5, the territories under the control of the various “mounted bandits” had formed a network that covered the whole of Manchuria. In this sense, bandits’ domains had comprised an alternative administrative map in addition to the one based on official jurisdictions, and this form of administration within bandits’ territories was called “bandit governance.”⁶⁸

In Tachibana’s view, “bandit governance” could be employed as the basis of self-government in Manchuria. Furthermore, he suggested that based on an agreement between Chinese and Japanese in Manchuria, several powerful bandit gangs could be selected and then entrusted to govern vast territories with material support from both Japanese and Chinese. Besides, to ensure that bandit gangs had reliable and legitimate sources of income, leaders of bandit gangs and of other industries such as agriculture and

⁶⁸ Tachibana Shiraki, “Tōhoku jichi undō no zentei jōken,” 3.

commerce could arrive at an agreement in which bandit gangs would provide the necessary protection for these industries and receive their payments. In this way, the reciprocal relationship could on the one hand promote economic development in both cities and rural areas and on the other hand provide a peaceful and stable life for bandit gangs.⁶⁹

Tachibana's idea of exploiting "mounted bandits" to maintain local order to a great extent reflected the urgency of restoring public security especially in rural areas. In the meanwhile, it also revealed a kind of idealism that neglected the influence of the Chinese nationalism after the Manchurian Incident in 1931. Furthermore, with the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, to make use of "bandit governance" as the basis of local autonomy conflicted with the claim and pursuit of a sovereign state and a centralized government of the new regime. Here we can perceive that Tachibana's view of banditry in China and Manchuria was more concerned with social and economic analyses rather than a political one.

His socio-economic approach was more obvious in his other research on Manchurian bandits. In another article about the origin of "local bandits" (*dohi*; 土匪),⁷⁰ he suggested that it was almost an eternal phenomenon in China that "local bandits" were illegally entrenched in rural areas; banditry was also one of the lifestyles for the lumpen proletarians due to the rural depression. In order to eradicate banditry, according to him,

⁶⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁷⁰ Tachibana Shiraki, "Dohi to giyangu" 土匪とギャング (Local bandits and gangs), *Manshū hyōron* 2:19 (1932), 2-10.

one way was to perfect the legal system and promote economic recovery in the rural areas; the other way was to rely on the prosperity of the capitalist economy in urban districts. In another article that discussed the relationship between recovery of public security and social policies, Tachibana still emphasized, apart from military operations, the significance of social and economic polices in maintaining local stability. He indicated that banditry was the product of social and economic backwardness; thus military suppression alone could not eliminate it completely. He further made the conclusion that policies and strategies that did not take social and economic factors into account would be in vain. In the meanwhile, other contributors to the journal shared similar concerns as well.⁷¹ For example, Sakurai Kōsan in an article underlined the importance of carrying out social and economic reforms for rural recovery after military operations.

In general, this socio-economic approach to analysis neglected the potential influence of Chinese nationalism and overlooked political dimension that would stimulate more insurgency in the future. Nevertheless, it did provide the theoretical basis for the Manchukuo government to deal with restoring social order especially in rural districts. For example, soon after the establishment of the new state, one of the rural policies taken by the government was to provide relief funds and grain for peasants in order to

⁷¹ Sakurai Kōsan, “Sōhigo no nōson kairyō kikaku” 剿匪後の農村改良規畫 [Plans of reform in rural area after bandit suppression], *Manshū hyōron* 3:19 (1932):16-19.

consolidate rural security and prevent the trend of “banditization” among impoverished peasants.⁷²

Moreover, in a commentary published in May 1932, Koyama Sadatomo pointed out that in order to win support of the common people in Manchukuo, there were many more invisible “bandits” that should be exterminated. In his opinion, “bandit” as a label went beyond such common categories as “mounted bandits” and “communist bandits.” He investigated three different types of bandits: “money bandits” (*zenhi*; 錢匪), “official bandits” (*rihi*; 吏匪), and “police bandits” (*keihi*; 警匪).⁷³ *Zenhi* referred to cadres in the Association of Agriculture and Commerce; *lihi* referred to officials in the government, and *keihi* referred to police. These three groups of “bandits” colluded with one another and made profit by issuing worthless currency and loaning it to peasants. In this sense, “bandit” as a metaphor implied abuses of powers by entrepreneurs, officials, and police who only cared about their own benefits and were even more harmful than “mounted bandits.” Therefore, “bandit” was used to indicate the political corruption and moral deficiencies of the old regimes in Manchuria, while the new regime of Manchukuo, according to Koyama, would practice “good government” (*zensei*; 善政).⁷⁴

From 1934 on, with the rise of “Communist bandits” in Manchukuo, more articles in the journal were concerned with concrete strategies that could restrain the Communist

⁷² *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 5:98 (1933): 5.

⁷³ Koyama Sadatomo, “Senhi to rihi to keihi” 錢匪と吏匪と警匪 [Money bandits, official bandits, and police bandits], *Manshū hyōron*, 2:18 (1932), 3-4.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

influence specifically.⁷⁵ In the meanwhile, many articles also paid close attention to the Nationalist government's endeavor in its encirclement campaigns against "Communist bandits" in China proper.⁷⁶ A transnational experience in dealing with communist insurgence seemed to be shared between Nationalist China and Manchukuo. In fact, the effort of suppression and pacification in the process of campaigns against "bandits" in Manchukuo had employed transracial and transnational mobilization beyond multiple boundaries.

Conclusion

If the "bandit problem" in Manchuria used to be the symbol of China in disorder and thus justified the necessity of the new regime of Manchukuo as an alternative, then after 1932, "banditry" became a substantial challenge posed to the state building of Manchukuo. From the military and official perspectives, "bandits" in Manchukuo could be divided into two major categories: "professional bandits" and "political bandits"—the former referred to the continued existence of traditional types of brigands in Manchuria, such as "bearded bandits" and "mounted bandits," while the latter represented official discourses about politically motivated armed forces such as Communists and anti-Japanese and anti-Manchukuo volunteer armies. Together, "bandit violence" including

⁷⁵ See for example, Mizuo, "Hishitu no akka to sono shyōrai" 匪質の悪化とその将来 [The deterioration of bandits and the future], *Manshū hyōron*, 9:6 (1935): 8-10.

⁷⁶ Manshū kyōhi no gensei to jian taisaku no hōkō 滿洲共匪の現勢と治安対策の方向 [The current condition of Communist bandits in Manchuria and the direction of public security measures], *Manshū hyōron*, 10:9 (1936): 293-5.

indiscriminate plundering and kidnapping and attacks on railways, was thus represented as a serious challenge to the political legitimacy, social stability, and economic development of the new state.

In this sense, the different types of “bandit violence” in existence shaped perceptions of the “bandit problem” among those who participated in the management of Manchukuo and made “bandit suppression” the top priority in state building. On the other hand, views on the “bandit problem” furthermore influenced the policymaking regarding “bandit suppression.” As a result, the eradication of the “bandit problem” in Manchukuo required a long-term endeavor rather than temporary and intensive military operations such as those taken against criminal brigands or rebels in conventional sense. From this perspective, the implementation of “bandit suppression” facilitated as well as became a crucial part of the state-building project.

Chapter Four

The Practice of “Bandit Suppression”

From 1932 to 1945, the consolidation of public security in the form of suppression campaigns in Manchukuo experienced five phases, with varied targets and strategies. The first phase was from 1932 to 1934 when intensive military operations were initiated by the Kwantung Army to suppress the “big group bandits” (*dai shūdanhi*; 大集團匪), most of whom were “soldier bandits,” “bearded bandits,” and “mounted bandits;” the second, third, and fourth phases from 1934 to 1939 witnessed the rise and development of the “Communist bandits” (*kyōsanhi*; 共產匪); the final phase was between 1939 and 1945 when several large-scale military operations were gradually completed and the preparation for Japan’s “total war” was initiated.¹

Given the changing situation in Manchukuo, “bandits” and “group bandits” (*hidan*; 匪團) varied accordingly and strategies taken to eradicate them differed as well. In addition to resorting to military operations as the primary way of eradicating “bandit groups” physically, the practice of “bandit suppression” also necessitated as well as facilitated other dimensions of state building. And this chapter will examine how the practice of “bandit suppression” in terms of military, administrative, and legal constructions contributed to the development of state building in Manchukuo and how “bandit suppression” was evaluated in the broader social and political landscape of Manchukuo.

¹ Okabe Zenshū, *Manshūkoku jian shōshi* 滿州国治安小史 [A concise history of public security in Manchukuo] (1944), 19-20.

The Manchukuo Army

At the outset of Manchukuo's foundation, it was claimed that there were 300,000 "bandits," mostly "soldier bandits" and "bearded bandits." Confronted with the situation, to have a powerful military force was indispensable in establishing the state authority and social order. In 1932, the Manchukuo Army 滿洲國軍 was constructed under the guidance of the Kwantung Army. As Suk-jung Han has suggested, the necessity of building a Manchukuo Army was twofold: one is "colonizers need collaborators for this bloody job" of suppressing anti-colonial resistance and the other is "the 'sovereign Manchukuo' was supposed to have its own national army."² But a more significant reason was that the Kwantung Army did not possess sufficient manpower to undertake suppression by itself. According to Alvin D. Coox, by 1931, the Kwantung Army controlled military manpower of 10,400 men at the most, and there was as well a shortage of materials, trucks, and engineers.³ To build a Manchukuo Army, in this sense, was urgent.

In March 1932, the Ministry of Military Administration was set up, announcing the establishment of a central institution of the Manchukuo Army. On April 15, the Ministry enacted the "Ordinance of the Army and Navy" (*Luhaijun tiaoli*; 陸海軍條例) and clarified that the responsibility of the Manchukuo Army was to "guard domestic order and borders, rivers and seas."⁴ The new Manchukuo Army was organized out of surrendered troops from the previous Northeastern Army under Zhang Xueliang's

² Suk-jung Han, "*Puppet Sovereignty*: The State Effect of Manchukuo, from 1932 to 1936," PhD dissertation (University of Chicago, 1995), 62.

³ See Alvin D. Coox, "The Kwantung Army Dimension," in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, 408. The Kwantung Army developed quickly since 1932. In 1936, it had expanded to 200,000 men and by 1943, the troops had increased to as many as 763,000. See Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 1052-53.

⁴ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 1:2 (1932): 5.

command. Before the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the total size of the Northeastern Army was 265,000, and the informal armed forces such as police and self-defense corps were around 180,000. After the Incident, the Kwantung Army reorganized armies commanded by collaborating Chinese, including Xi Xia 熙洽 (1883-1950) in Jilin Province, Zhang Haipeng 張海鵬 (1868-1949) and Yu Zhishan 于芷山 (1879-1951) in Fengtian Province, Ma Zhanshan 馬占山 (1885-1950) and Zhang Jinghui 張景惠 (1871-1959) in Heilongjiang Province, and some guerrilla troops. The total number of this army was around 150,000. At this time, the Manchukuo Army was trained as the backup force in “maintaining public order.”⁵

As a national army, however, the Manchukuo Army seemed to be a name only. At the outset of its establishment, many a soldier still kept a lifestyle like a “bandit.” During Tinko Pawley’s captivity in 1932, she observed that a bandit she named Sulky Sydney “was a brutal and bullying Manchukuo soldier” who often disappeared together with his best friend “The Orderly.” When they came back, they were always delighted and brought back fresh opium and cigarettes. After getting to know that they went to draw their military pay from headquarters, Pawley sighed, “How he managed to be a bandit and a soldier simultaneously is a mystery we did not solve!”⁶ What Pawley had seen roughly corresponded with Woodhead’s impression during his visit to Manchukuo in 1932:

The Manchukuo troops—as was demonstrated in the Sino-Russian conflict of 1929—are of very poor quality, and extremely unreliable. Recent recruits,

⁵ See *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 234-235; Yamada Akira, “Gunji shihai” 軍事支配 [Military domination], in Asada Kyōji and Kobayashi Hideo eds, *Nihon teikoku shugi no Manshū shihai: 15-nen sensōki o chūshin ni* 日本帝國主義の満洲支配 [The domination of Manchuria by Japanese imperialism] (Tōkyō: Jichōsha, 1986), 168.

⁶ Pawley, *My Bandit Host*, 96-97.

according to information I received from a Chinese source are little better. In fact, it was suggested that one of their motives in enlisting is to secure munitions which they can hand over to hostile units.⁷

Moreover, a lack of consciousness of discipline and efficiency was prevalent among soldiers in the Army:

Chinese resentment of discipline and opposition to efficiency are evidenced by the difficulties now being experienced in reorganizing the Manchukuo army. One would have expected increased pay, regularly given, to have won a measure of loyalty among the military units that have accepted service under the new government. But higher and more regular pay does not appear to be regarded as compensation for the stricter discipline to which the units are subjected. And Japanese and Manchukuo authorities both confess that military reorganization is a problem of extreme difficulty which it may take years to carry through.⁸

In addition, not a few soldiers were addicted to opium and they barely had any military training. Therefore, they were incapable of carrying out “bandit suppression” campaigns, and the Kwantung Army had to undertake all the military operations at the outset.⁹

Under the circumstances, the Ministry of Military Administration embarked on a rearrangement of dispersed troops in each province by providing ammunition and provisions. In the meanwhile, the Kwantung Army also dispatched Japanese military instructors to each province to supervise the military reorganization. Besides, in June 1932, the size of the Manchukuo Army was cut to the “necessary minimum” of 60,000. Soldiers who were dismissed were mostly those who were poorly qualified or addicted to opium.¹⁰ This large-scale dismissal could be seen as the first step of implementing the national policy of “Guidelines for Improving the Manchukuo Army” (滿洲國軍整備要綱), which included:

⁷ Woodhead, *A Visit to Manchukuo*, 70.

⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁹ Lao Zude ed., *Zheng Xiaoxu riji* 鄭孝胥日記 [The diary of Zheng Xiaoxu] (vol. 5) (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), 2408.

¹⁰ Yamada Akira, “Gunji shihai,” 168.

1. Prevent soldiers' unrest and ensure the stability of the national army.
2. Make it into a national army that is capable of bandit suppression by itself.
3. Make it into a national army in name and in reality.¹¹

Correspondingly, the construction of the Manchukuo Army experienced three phases. The first phase was the “army building period” (建軍期) from 1932 to 1934 when the basic organization of the Army was formed, while the Kwantung Army was the leading force in suppression campaigns. Then from 1934 to 1937 was the second phase of the “army rectification period” (整軍期). In this phase, the Manchukuo Army was further reorganized and soldiers trained and disciplined in the Japanese way. In this process, not only soldiers were dismissed on a large scale, so were military officers of the middle and lower echelons.¹² Meanwhile, with the changing strategies of the Kwantung Army, the Manchukuo Army was endowed with more responsibilities in maintaining domestic order. From 1937 on until 1940, it was the “army perfection period” (精軍期), which was marked by the promulgation of the “Law of National Soldiers” (國兵法) in 1940.¹³ By 1941, the total number in the army was reduced to 59,800.

The most fundamental way of stabilizing the Manchukuo Army relied on the improvement of the conscription system. At the outset in Manchukuo, there was no unified conscription system. Before 1934, each military unit was permitted to recruit new soldiers at any time and any place. As a result, many ex-bandits and vagrants without any military training were enlisted into the army and their combat effectiveness was very poor. Besides, this random conscription system without central control made orders from

¹¹ *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 238.

¹² Fu Dazhong, *Wei Manzhouguo junjian shi* 偽滿洲國軍簡史 [A brief History of the false Manchukuo Army] (Changchun: Jinlin Wenshi Chubanshe, 1999), 218-9.

¹³ Nagashima Shingi, *Manshūkokugun no kensetsu to kokuhēihō* 滿州國軍の建設と國兵法 [The construction of the Manchukuo Army and the Law of National Soldiers] (Manshū tekoku kyōikukai, 1941), 48-60.

the central government unable to reach each military unit and in the meanwhile the government had to provide not a few provisions and ammunition to equip the poorly qualified army.

Therefore, from 1934, it was regulated by the Ministry of Military Administration that new recruits could not be enlisted into the Manchukuo Army without permission from the central government. Considering the poor performance of the Manchukuo Army in the battle of Nomanhan in 1939 when a large number of Manchukuo soldiers were defeated by the Soviet Union and escaped, the Kwantung Army decided to speed up the reform of the Manchukuo Army and consolidate its control of the Army.¹⁴ Finally in

1940, the “Law of National Soldiers” (國兵法) was promulgated and carried out.

According to the Law, candidates should be males between eighteen and twenty-three years old. Furthermore, recruits must be educated, physically qualified, and earning a livelihood by a legitimate way. In this sense, it actually narrowed the scale of enlistment to those who had some education and property, making a differentiation from previous recruiting of vagrants.¹⁵

In practice, the Manchukuo Army had participated in many military operations since its establishment in 1932.¹⁶ From October 1936 to March 1937, the Manchukuo Army carried out a great suppression campaign against “communist bandits” in Dongbiandao district. Different from previous military operations, this was the first time

¹⁴ Yamada Akira, “Gunji shihai,” 172; *Wei Manzhouguo jun jian shi*, pp. 247-48. As for Japanese military operation against the Soviet Union in Nomanhan, see Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

¹⁵ Nagashima Shingi, *Manshūkokugun no kensetu to kokuhēihō* 滿洲國軍の建設と國兵法 [The construction of the Manchukuo Army and the Law of National Soldiers] (Manshūteikoku kyōikukai, 1941), 68-72.

¹⁶ As for a complete list of the military operations of the Manchukuo Army in the early period, see *Dongbei da tao fa*, 26-32.

that the Manchukuo Army undertook suppression independently. From then on, the Manchukuo Army was mainly responsible for suppression of any anti-Japanese forces, but especially the anti-Japanese United Front led by the Communist Party. After the large-scale military suppression of 1937-1938 in Sanjiang district and the joint mop-up of 1938-1941 in Jilin, Tonghua, and Jiandao provinces, the anti-Japanese allied forces suffered seriously and the remnant army was forced to retreat to the Soviet Union.¹⁷

These different stages actually reflected the changing roles of the Manchukuo Army in the broader domestic and international context envisioned by the Kwantung Army. As Yamada Akira has suggested, military affairs in Manchukuo concerned two dimensions: one was to maintain domestic order and the other was to preserve military power against the outsiders (mainly referring to the Soviet Union and China). Generally, a national army of one country would undertake both dimensions. The situation in Manchukuo, however, was complicated. Originally, the Manchukuo Army was supposed to be responsible for domestic security, but in the first several years of Manchukuo, the Manchukuo Army was too weak to be entrusted with the task and therefore, it was the Kwantung Army that played a major role in suppression campaigns. After Sasaki Tōichi became the supreme counselor of the Minister of Military Administration in December 1934, he changed the previous strategy and proposed that Japanese troops should not be preoccupied by suppression campaigns and that the task of maintaining domestic order should be completely entrusted to the Manchukuo Army. As the military construction of the Manchukuo Army continued, the Kwantung Army gradually transferred military responsibility to the Manchukuo Army.¹⁸

¹⁷ Fu Dazhong, *Wei Manzhouguo junjian shi*, 227, 248.

¹⁸ Yamada Akira, “Gunji shihai,” 165, 171.

In the construction of the Manchukuo Army, military education was another significant dimension. In April 1933, the Central Office of Training of the Manchukuo Army (滿洲國中央陸軍訓練處) was founded in Shenyang. As a leading institute of military education, this Office was responsible for training Chinese military officers and molding their thoughts. Since the Manchukuo Army was supposed to undertake suppression campaigns from 1934, in addition to ordinary military trainings, the research bureau also compiled a special textbook on “tactics of bandit suppression.” In practice, military students who had participated in suppression campaigns would be asked to introduce their experiences to the new students.¹⁹

As mentioned above, stability was one of the most important goals in constructing the Manchukuo Army because a large portion of soldiers were Chinese and believed to be susceptible to Chinese nationalistic propaganda. In December 1933, the Ministry of Military Administration enacted the “Oath of Manchukuo Soldiers,” which could be regarded as spiritual guidelines of the Manchukuo Army:

The founding spirit of Manchukuo lies in spreading the Kingly Way, constructing a peaceful paradise, and realizing racial harmony to pursue health and peace for tens of thousands of people. The Manchukuo Army is directly under the command of the Chief Executive of the state. Internally, it is responsible for protecting domestic order; externally, it has to promote national strength and prestige. Those who are organized into the Army should scrupulously conduct sublime missions...without violating their duties as military men.²⁰

Then eight regulations were listed underneath, indicating the various qualities that a soldier should cultivate and rules he should obey. Finally, after swearing the oath, every soldier had to sign on the oath. In order to further strengthen the “state building spirit,” “pagodas for the loyal dead” (*chūreitō*; 忠靈塔) in memory of both Japanese and

¹⁹ Fu Dazhong, *Wei Manzhouguo jun jian shi*, 180, 186.

²⁰ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 10:295 (1933): 1-2.

Manchukuo military commanders and soldiers who had lost their lives on the battlefield, and monuments to military achievements were widely built throughout Manchukuo. By 1939, there were 176 pagodas and monuments in Manchukuo.²¹

Fig.4: Pagoda for the loyal dead (spring, Fengtian)²²



The Political and Administrative Structures

In addition to military construction, “bandit suppression” in Manchukuo also necessitated efficient political and administrative structures at both the central and local

²¹ Takagi Masami, *Manshū senseki junrei* 滿洲戰績巡礼 [The pilgrimage to the military achievements in Manchuria] (Shinkyo: Chūrei kenshūkai, 1939).

²² Manshū jijō annaijo, *Manshūkoku shashinshū: dainikai tōroku* 滿洲國寫真集：第二回登録 [A photo album of Manchukuo: the second record] (Shinkyo: Manshūjijō annaijo, 1942).

levels. From 1932 to 1945, the Manchukuo government had constantly carried out reforms and reorganizations of the political and administrative structures in order to meet the new demands of suppression and pacification campaigns.

At the central level, the political structure of Manchukuo was premised on a system of centralized authority. At the top of the structure was Puyi as the Chief Executive,²³ later enthroned as the emperor in 1934. On March 9, 1932, Manchukuo enacted the “Organizational Law of Government” (*Zhengfu zuzhifa*; 政府組織法), which laid the foundation for the construction of the central government. According to the law, the Legislative Yuan (*lifa yuan*; 立法院), the State Council, and the Supervisory Council, and seven ministries were put under the leadership of the Chief Executive.²⁴ Chinese officials were appointed as chief leaders of these departments whereas deputy positions were almost all held by Japanese.²⁵ Although the State Council was in charge of all

²³ On the issue of what kind of rule form Manchukuo should take, there were different viewpoints at the time. Puyi and Xi Xia as representatives of previous Manchu nobles, together with Luo Zhenyu and Zheng Xiaoxu, who had been high-ranking officials of the Qing court, advocated a monarchy. On the other hand, Zhang Jinghui and Ma Zhanshan, who represented military groups and held real power in Manchuria, proposed a republican form of government. In the end, the predominant Kwantung Army decided to take the system of chief executive as a compromise. See *Zhongyang dang'anguan* etc. eds., *Weiman kuilei zhengquan* 偽滿傀儡政權 [The puppet regime of Manchukuo] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1994), 147; *Zhongyang dang'an guan* ed., *Wei Manzhouguo de tongzhi yu neimu: Weiman guanyuan gongshu* 偽滿洲國的統治與內幕—偽滿官員供述 [The rule and the internal facts of the puppet state of Manchukuo: statements from officials of the puppet Manchukuo] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2000), 10-12. About this form of rule, Yamamuro Shin'ichi has evaluated: “The position of chief executive, then, emerged as a strangely jumbled product of three important items: the site for the restoration of the Qing dynasty, opposition to the Republic of China with its system of constitutional republicanism, and the fiction of the collective will of the thirty million residents of Manchuria and Mongolia.” Yamamuro Shinichi, *Manchuria under Japanese Dominion*. trans. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 105.

²⁴ Jiang Niandong etc., *Wei Manzhouguo shi* 偽滿洲國史 [History of puppet Manchukuo] (Changchun: Jilin Renmin Chubanshe, 1980), 168.

²⁵ Most high-ranking Japanese officials in the Manchukuo government came from the SMR, the Kwantung Governor-general, and the Japanese government. By 1935, over fifty percent of posts in the central government of Manchukuo had been held by Japanese. In the department of railway management, for example, the ratio was as high as ninety percent. See Xie Xueshi, *Wei manzhou guo shi xinbian* 偽滿洲國史新編 [Newly edited history of puppet Manchukuo] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1995), 222-3; *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 438.

administrative affairs, the General Affairs Department (*zongwu ting*; 總務廳), which was totally controlled by Japanese officials, held the real decision-making power.²⁶

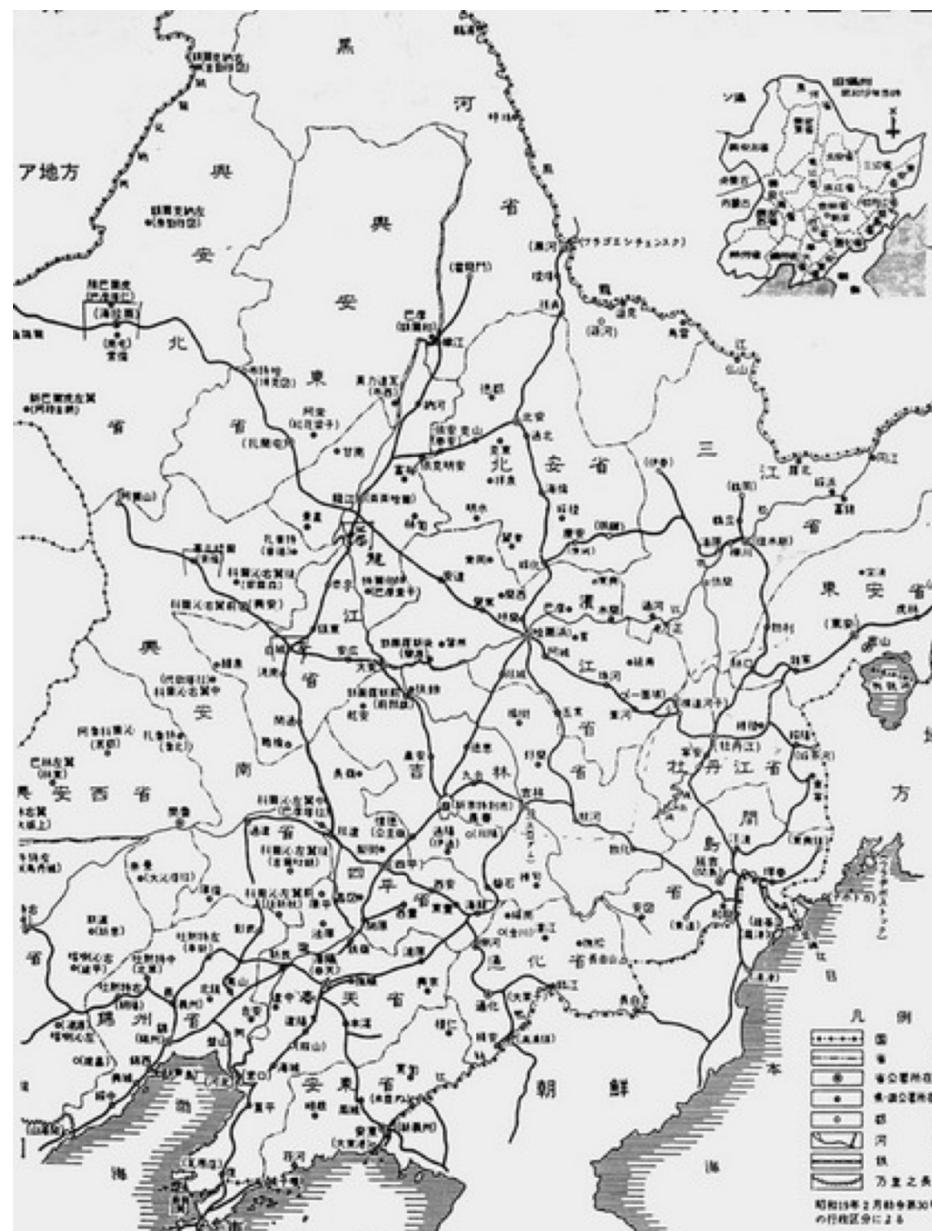
With regard to the military department, the Ministry of Military Administration (*junzheng bu*; 軍政部) founded in 1932 was mainly focused on exterminating anti-Japanese and anti-Manchukuo military forces, and in the meanwhile organizing the Manchukuo Army based on various armed forces in Manchukuo. In the reform of the central government in 1937, the Ministry of Military Administration was reorganized as the Ministry of Public Security (*zhi'an bu*; 治安部), into which the police administration was incorporated. The reorganization marked the beginning of the cooperation between military and police power in the ensuing large-scale suppression campaigns against “Communist bandits.” The final reform took place in 1942 when the Ministry of Public Security was changed into the Ministry of Military Affairs (*junshi bu*; 軍事部). During this period, the major task of the Ministry was concentrated on eradicating the Eighth Route Army inside and outside Rehe Province, and on making preparations for the war against the Soviet Union.²⁷

At the local level, four provinces (Fengtian, Jilin, Heilongjiang, and Rehe) and one municipality (Xinjing) were set up at the outset of the establishment of Manchukuo. Due to the overly broad territories of each province, it was difficult to exert political and administrative power from the central government. In 1934, therefore, a re-demarcation of provincial territories was carried out. In the reform, Fengtian Province was divided into three provinces (Fengtian, Andong, and Jinzhou), Jilin Province into four (Jilin,

²⁶ *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 309; *Wei Manzhouguo de tongzhi yu neimu*, 793-810.

²⁷ *Wei Manzhouguo de tongzhi yu neimu*, 476; *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 384-98.

Fig.5: Administrative map of Manchukuo in 1944



Binjiang, Sanjiang, and Jiandao), and Heilongjiang Province into two (Longjiang and Heihe). In addition, two special municipalities (Xinjing and Harbin) and a Special District of Eastern Province (which included thirteen administrative districts along the Chinese Eastern Railway) were set up. After the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, these ten provinces were demarcated again. By 1941, there were nineteen

provinces and one municipality in total.²⁸ By dividing the Manchukuo territory into smaller provincial units, military and police power could be concentrated on such “bandit-infested” areas as Sanjiang and Binjiang Provinces; in the meanwhile more resources could be put into the construction of collective hamlets as a significant strategy of eradicating “communist bandits” in these districts.²⁹

At the lower administrative level, counties were the foundation of local administration in Manchukuo. The jurisdictions and administrations of many counties in the first two years of Manchukuo were in disorder due to insufficient manpower and resources. For example, in July 1932, Duan Yaoxian, the magistrate in Suihua County in Heilongjiang Province deserted his post and absconded from the county. Similar cases in the first several months after the foundation of Manchukuo temporarily brought local society into troubled waters.³⁰ In order to restore local administration, the Manchukuo government carried out bureaucratic reforms at the county level. According to the new official system, counties should be responsible for consolidating public security, improving the financial system, and educating the masses.³¹ As for local leadership, Chinese officials usually occupied the post of the magistrate in each county while Japanese often served as counselors. From 1932, the Ministry of Civil Affairs began to dispatch to many counties Japanese counselors, who had played crucial and decisive roles in managing local administration. Many Japanese counselors also acted as military leaders in local-scale suppression campaigns against “soldier bandits” and “bearded

²⁸ *Wei Manzhouguo de tongzhi yu neimu*, 93; Jiang Niandong, *Wei Manzhouguo shi*, 180-1.

²⁹ Gunseibu Gunji Chōsabu ed.. *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* 滿洲共產匪の研究 [Research on Manchurian Communist Bandits] (vol. 2) (Shinkyō: Gunseibu Komonbu, 1937), 27-94. As for the collective hamlets as a specific administrative measure against “communist bandits,” see below.

³⁰ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao* 2:30 (1932), 16.

³¹ *Manshūkoku gensei* 滿洲國現勢 [Current situation in Manchukuo] (Shinkyō: Manshūkoku Tsūshinsha, 1937), 447.

bandits.” By July 1933, there had been 224 Japanese counselors in Manchukuo.³² In addition, provincial governments promulgated ordinances for compiling county gazetteers in order to wield the political, economic, and cultural influence of the new regime.³³

At the outset of the establishment of Manchukuo, local administration was mainly focused on suppression campaigns especially against “bearded bandits.”³⁴ Accordingly, Clear the Countryside Committees (*qingxiang weiyuanhui*; 清鄉委員會) and Clear the Countryside Bureaus (*qingxiang ju*; 清鄉局) were set up in each county to coordinate with the military operations of the Kwantung Army and to consolidate local order after the military campaigns were finished.³⁵ Take the Committee of Panshan county in Fengtian Province for instance. Its major work included taking statistics of local residents, investigating and confiscating privately owned firearms, and dealing with submitted “bandits.”³⁶ In June 1933, the Association for Maintaining Public Security (*zhian weichihui*; 治安維持會) replaced Clear the Countryside Committee and became the primary institution for maintaining local security.

Many administrative institutions in the first several years of Manchukuo inherited the constructions from late Qing and Republican China. The restoration of such organizations as the Clear the Countryside Bureau and local defense corps in Manchukuo

³² *Wei Manzhouguo de tongzhi yu neimu*, 89; Xie Xueshi, *Wei manzhou guo shi xinbian*, 227-8.

³³ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 7:130 (1933), 14.

³⁴ *Manzhou guozheng zhidao zonglan* 滿洲國政指導綜覽 [A general survey of statecraft in Manchukuo] (1944), in *Wei manzhouguo shiliao* 偽滿史料叢書 [Series of puppet Manchukuo historical materials] (vol. 2) (Changchun: Jilin Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 117.

³⁵ Asada Kyōji and Kobayashi Hideo eds., *Nihon teikoku shugi no Manshūshihai: 15-nen sensōki o chūshin ni* 日本帝國主義の満州支配——十五年戦争期を中心に [Japanese imperialistic domination in Manchuria: centering on fifteen-year war] (Tōkyō: Jichōsha, 1986), 261.

³⁶ Panshan xian *qingxiang weiyuanhui* ed., *Panshan xian zanbian qingxiang guicheng* 盤山縣暫編清鄉規程 [Provisional regulations of Clear the Countryside in Panshan County] (April 1933), 1-4.

was aimed at employing the conventional strength of local self-defense and self-government since the late Qing.³⁷ After the Manchurian Incident in 1931, there emerged a variety of local militia organizations, such as able-bodied corps, self-defense corps, and local defense corps. To strengthen state control of these organizations and unify local defense authorities, in early 1933, the Manchukuo government enacted the Provisional Law of the Baojia System (*zanxing baojia fa*; 暫行保甲法) and accordingly made *baojia* the basic unit of carrying out local administration and consolidating rural security.³⁸ The *baojia* system, which relied on collective liability among every ten households as a unit, was a mechanism of local self-defense and self-government in traditional China. The leaders of *bao* and *jia* usually came from rural elites who were familiar with local affairs and could exert their political and economic influence on local residents, and therefore could ensure the execution of state policies, laws, and regulations issued from the central government.

In addition to routine affairs such as tax collection, one of the most significant functions of the *baojia* system was rural defense by organizing self-defense corps (*ziweituan*; 自衛團).³⁹ According to the Provisional Law of the Baojia System, all males who were between eighteen and forty and had lived in a *jia* unit for over one year were required to join the corps, except for civil servants and the disabled. Around thirty to forty members constituted one corps; the county government had to distribute arms to the corps; rich households were required to donate either arms or money. Corps members had uniforms and were required to register their names, addresses, ages, and professions.

³⁷ *Hōtenshō, Kiturinshō ni okeru keisatu, hoeidan, gōson seido* 奉天省、吉林省に於ける警察、保衛団, 鄉村制度 [Police, defense corps, and the rural system in Fengtian and Jilin Provinces] (1927), 11-14.

³⁸ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 10:296 (1933), 1-3; 11:312 (1933), 1-2.

³⁹ *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* (vol. 2), 344.

Apart from protecting local society against attacks from “bandits,” these self-defense corps were also responsible for providing assistance to the Army; sometimes they directly participated in suppression campaigns. By the end of 1934, there had been 9,861 corps with 1,774,000 members.⁴⁰

In this sense, the functions and responsibilities of the *baojia* system were similar to that of the previous Clear the Countryside Committees. Both systems were primarily focused on consolidating the result of military operations and maintaining local security, rather than on promoting economic development.⁴¹ Therefore, with the improvement of the political and social environment, the inadequate functioning of the *baojia* system could not meet the demands of economic and social development. From 1937, the Provisional System of Towns and Villages (*zaxing jiecun zhi*; 暫行街村制) was established to replace the *baojia* system. In the new system, a *jie* was a district based on cities and towns and *cun* was a unit of several combined rural villages, and both of them were the lowest level of administrative units.⁴² In the meanwhile, although the self-defense corps were still preserved and affiliated with the *jiecun* system, their military nature gradually faded out, changing from paid and compulsory organizations to voluntary ones. Furthermore, the corps became organs of promoting the development of the youth and social education.⁴³

In summary, the construction and reform of the administrative structure in Manchukuo witnessed the encroachment of state power on the one hand, and reflected the changing priorities of the state building progress on the other. In the first several years of

⁴⁰ *Manshūkoku gensei* (1936), 500.

⁴¹ Chūō Keisatsu Gakkō, *Manshū hokō seido* 滿洲保甲制度 [The Baojia system in Manchuria] (1936), 3.

⁴² *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 501-3.

⁴³ *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* (vol. 2), 345.

Manchukuo, suppression and pacification campaigns against various “bandit” groups were endowed with great significance. Therefore, from the re-demarcation of provincial territories to the restoration of the *baojia* system, administrative reforms were aimed at consolidating public security as the first priority. After many large armed forces were exterminated by military operations, the emphasis of state building was directed at economic and social development as the “permanent cure” for maintaining social security and winning over support from the masses. Especially after the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese war in 1937, extensive mobilization of local manpower and resources to support the war became the focus of local administration. In addition, the eradication of “communist bandits” relied more on propaganda than on military operations. Despite different strategies taken in suppression and pacification campaigns, the construction of ideological, legal, and administrative structures in Manchukuo in this way had provided basic, if not solid, foundations for the suppression campaigns. In the meanwhile, reforms and adjustments of these structures precisely reflected the changing situation in the management of Manchukuo.

Collective Hamlets

Among all the dimensions in the administrative construction, the project of building “collective hamlets” (*shūdan buraku*; 集团部落) was especially significant. Collective hamlets had been in existence during the Republican period in China. In 1926, several scattered households in Qian'an County of Jilin province had gathered together

and formed a hamlet to defend against bandit attacks.⁴⁴ In addition, the Nationalist government had also implemented a similar “fortress” (砦堡) policy during its encirclement and suppression campaigns against Chinese Communists.⁴⁵

In the Manchukuo era, collective hamlets were firstly set up in Jiandao Province by the Korean Government General in 1933 for the purpose of settling Korean refugees in the area and eradicating “bandits” of military, Communist, and other backgrounds and origins. By 1934, the total number of collective hamlets in Jiandao province had reached thirty-six. Encouraged by their good effect on restoring administration, at the end of 1934, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Manchukuo enacted an edict of promoting the construction of collective hamlets in Fengtian, Jilin, Longjiang, Andong, Jinzhou, Binjiang, Jiandao, Sanjiang, Heihe, and Rehe provinces as a national policy.⁴⁶ As the edict proclaimed:

...Our country has a vast territory and households in those underdeveloped and remote areas are scattered like stars; therefore, facilities in the country are inadequate and it is difficult for the villages to perform their autonomous functions. In the course of time, half the number of villages in the whole country will permanently adopt a primitive lifestyle without any improvement. In such a case, neither the people can be blessed by the state nor can national security be perfected. In order to rectify this malady, there are of course many ways, but the most appropriate one is organizing scattered households and making them into collective hamlets with communication with one another...⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Chianbu Keimushi, *Manshūkoku keisatsu gaiyō* 滿洲国警察概要 [Overview of police in Manchukuo] (Shinkyō, 1938), 109.

⁴⁵ Mantetsu keizai chōsakai, *Manchū shūdan buraku no ichirei—banjiakuken ni okeru shūdan buraku* 滿洲集団部落の一例——盤石県に於ける集団部落 [One case of collective hamlets in Manchuria—collective hamlets in Panshi county] (1936), 11.

⁴⁶ Administrative division in Manchukuo had experienced several changes from 1934 to 1941. There were fourteen provinces from 1934 to 1937; sixteen from 1937 to 1938; eighteen in 1939; and nineteen by July 1941. See *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 486-489.

⁴⁷ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao* 15:237 (1934): 110.

While this official edict seemed vague and hollow, another Japanese document accurately announced the significance of constructing collective hamlets in terms of maintaining domestic order:

It is obvious that public security cannot be attained through military measures alone; it also requires coordinated efforts in the political and economic spheres. Collective hamlets are particularly significant in this respect because all these functions are concentrated in them...From the political and economic point of view, the purpose of the collective hamlets is to improve the economic, spiritual, and cultural lives of the farmers.⁴⁸

Despite the supposed multiple functions of the collective hamlets, the major function was to separate the populace from “bandits” and endow common people with ability of self-defense. In Manchukuo, especially in north Manchuria, most villages were composed of no more than ten households scattered across wide mountainous areas where “bandits” were also very active due to insufficient administration. For example, it was estimated that the abandoned cultivated land in Heihe Province was more than 44,900 *shang* by 1935 as a result of underpopulation and “bandit rampancy.”⁴⁹ Even in districts near railways and cities and towns, there were also dozens of scattered households that lacked sufficient defensive power and meanwhile difficult to manage.⁵⁰ Consequently, according to the government, residents in these remote districts would suffer from “bandits violence” and coercion and thus would be forced to work for “bandits.” Therefore, when choosing localities for constructing the hamlets, two goals were considered: one was to improve people’s livelihood and the other was to secure

⁴⁸ Chong-Sik Lee, *Counterinsurgency in Manchuria: The Japanese Experience, 1931-1940* (Rand Corporation: Memorandum RM-5012-ARPA, 1967), 159. The second part of this book is a collection of English translations of chapters from *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* (v. 2) and eight documents pertaining to Manchukuo, all written in Japanese.

⁴⁹ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao* 21:527 (1935): 89. *Shang* was a unit of measurement of land in north China. One *shang* roughly equals to ten thousand sq. meters.

⁵⁰ *Dongbei da taofa*, 183.

public order.⁵¹ However, in order to fundamentally accomplish the second goal, the best way was to construct big collective hamlets, even though it would result in several disadvantages for peasants, such as decreased arable land and a long commute between the hamlets and fields. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the government, the significance of securing public order outweighed that of advancing the people's living standard.

How exactly was a collective hamlet constructed and how did it play its defensive role against "bandit" attacks? In a document compiled by the Kwantung Army, basic rules were regulated. For instance, the best period of construction was suggested to be from mid-September to mid-November every year, considering the busy farm work during spring and summer and severe cold weather in winter. Usually, one hamlet was supposed to be able to accommodate eighty to one hundred households (around four to five hundred people) and each household was allocated four to six *shang* land. Besides, a collective hamlet was best located in districts with frequent "bandit" activities or along the routes for material supplies, or with abundant economic resources and convenient water supply. In order to play its role of maintaining public security, the contour of a collective hamlet was usually a square or rectangle, fenced around with wires, earth walls, or ditches.⁵²

Villagers living in a collective hamlet were regimented. Take the peasants of Taipingchuan village of Tangyuan County in Heilongjiang Province as an example. In 1936, about one hundred and fifty households in Taipingchuan village and other neighboring twelve other villages were combined together to form a new Taipingchuan

⁵¹ Ibid, 170.

⁵² Dongbei da taofa, 184-5.

collective hamlet. High walls and nine forts were built around and in the hamlet. The *baojia* system and “collective punishment” were enforced in the hamlet. Villagers, horses, and other vehicles that went in and out of the hamlet were thoroughly searched by a group of soldiers in case provisions and other materials were being secretly transported to “bandits.” In addition, all villagers must go out to labor in the morning and come back before sunset all together. Every villager more than twelve years old had to carry certificates, which were examined strictly everyday.⁵³

In spite of its supposed purpose of improving peasants’ livelihood, the enforcement of construction and relocation jeopardized rather than protected peasants’ interests. As an investigation of collective hamlets in Jiandao Province indicated, these disadvantages included:

1. Reduction in the scale of farming and increased primitiveness of farming methods, as exemplified in the reduction of the area of agricultural cultivation and the decrease in farm equipment and draft animals.
2. Reduction in land owned by the farmers, and increase in rented land and the number of tenant farmers.
3. Longer distance to the farms.
4. Increase in village expenditures and compulsory labor.
5. Increase in debts.
6. Increased poverty of the farmers.⁵⁴

Therefore, many villagers were reluctant to move into the hamlets and according to one investigation, some of them even complained that it was not their but the government’s responsibility to exterminate “bandits” and maintain public security, rather than compel peasants to abandon their original residence and relocate in collective hamlets.⁵⁵ As a result, in a report from a gendarmerie captain in Mudanjiang Province to Tōjō Hideki, the commander of the Kwantung Army in 1936, resistance from residents of Dongning

⁵³ *Dongbei da taofa*, 191-3.

⁵⁴ Lee, *Counterinsurgency in Manchuria*, 129.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 130.

County was mentioned specifically. According to the report, twenty-three collective hamlets were planned to be constructed in Dongning county and villagers in remote areas were supposed to move into the hamlets by the end of April 1936. However, it turned out that many residents of mountainous areas were either reluctant or asked for an extension because they thought life in the hamlets was dangerous and harmful to agricultural production. In order to counteract the state's mobilization, rich residents moved to other counties and poor ones stayed in the county by laboring in road construction, lumbering, or the building industry.⁵⁶ Among various strategies of resisting relocation, some peasants resorted to petitions and attempted to employ the state ideology of the "Kingly Way" and benevolent rule as their own weapons:

We beg a thousand pardons for tearfully filing a petition, for feeling only small pains, while we farmers have been rescued from numerous difficulties and are receiving the heavenly blessings and extolling the graceful virtues of a government like that of the emperors Yao and Shun. And yet we sincerely wish that you would provide us with immense benevolence.

With embarrassment we point out that the whole area of Huluxiangwei is the place of our residence and that we have four hundred to five hundred *shang* of cultivated land; we support our parents and children with the income from this land. About fifteen days ago, Wu Changqing, the acting assistant chief of the village, suddenly forwarded the order for us to move into the collective hamlet at Nuanquanzigou. We were surprised to learn about it for the first time; all the villagers began to cry like children who were taken away from the mother's breast.

There is a saying that the year's plan begins in the spring. If we should move into the collective hamlet and should spend our time building houses and reclaiming wasteland in this season of sowing, there would be no means for us to support our aged parents and children. We pray that you will take our pitiful situation into consideration, and kindly postpone our migration until this coming August. We pledge that we will move to the designated place without fail at that time. We submit our petition in the hope that you will extend your benevolent hand.

Dated 1936
People of Huluwei, Dongning County, Binjiang Province⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Dongbei da taofa*, 201.

⁵⁷ *Manshū kyōsanhi no kenkyū* (v. 2), 60-61. Here I have adopted Lee's translation. See Lee, *Counterinsurgency in Manchuria*, 130-1.

In fact, even some Japanese officials expressed a strong sympathy for peasants' suffering. As Itagaki Teiji, the Vice-governor of Huanren prefecture, had pointed out in his personal reflections:

The construction of the defense hamlets must be enforced—with tears. We issue small subsidy funds and severe orders [to the farmers], telling them to move to a designated location by such and such a date and that this is the last order. But it is too miserable [to watch] the farmers destroying their accustomed houses, and [to see] little innocent babies wrapped in rags and smiling on carts that are carrying their household goods away. A few days ago, a girl of sixteen or seventeen made me weep by coming to my office at the prefectural government and kneeling down to beg me to spare her house. She said, "Do we really have to tear down our house, councilor?" She had walked a long way to town thinking, "If I asked the councilor, something could be done." Watching the bony back of the little girl who was quietly led out by the office boy, I closed my eyes and told myself, "You will go to hell." At the forefront, the hardship of the Japanese police officers who have to guide the coercive operation directly was beyond imagination. I was told many times while I was on my inspection tours of the front, "I cannot go on with this kind of wretched work. I will quit and go home." These words, uttered [as we sat] around a lamp sipping kaoliang gin, sounded as though someone was spitting blood. In each case we had to console and keep telling each other that this was the last hill we needed to conquer. The program was forced through mercilessly, inhumanely, without emotion—as if driving a horse. As a result, more than 100 defense hamlets were constructed throughout the prefecture. These were built with blood, tears, and sweat.⁵⁸

Despite "blood, tears, and sweat" and various difficulties in the process of constructing collective hamlets, from 1934 to the end of 1938, it was reported that the construction work had made a steady progress and played a significant role in "bandit suppression." The number of "bandits" was reduced and the incidents in which peasants assisted or turned into "bandits" decreased as well. Therefore, from 1938 on, considering that the primary goal of constructing collective hamlets—securing public order—had been achieved to a great extent, it was decided by the government that the construction work could gradually cease in those pacified areas. As for the collective hamlets that had

⁵⁸ Itagaki Teiji, "Pacification Activities in the Communist Bandit Area (Personal Reflections)," *Senbu geppo* 4:4 (1939), from Chong-sik Lee, *Counterinsurgency in Manchuria*, 219-220.

already been constructed, they would be divided into smaller villages. As a result, the number of collective hamlets constructed in 1939 was reduced to eighty-eight. The total number of collective hamlets constructed from 1934 to 1939 amounted to 13,450. In this process, about one million households and five million people were mobilized and relocated. The population of collective hamlets accounted for over fourteen percent of total population of Manchukuo.⁵⁹

Table 6: The Construction of Collective Hamlets⁶⁰

	Before 1935	1936	1937	Total	Planned for 1938
Jilin Province	760	892	663	2,315	78
Longjiang Province	13	910	187	1,110	46
Heihe Province			7	7	38
Sanjiang Province		60	115	175	215
Mudanjiang Province			404	404	1,018
Binjiang Province	246	971	2,167	3,384	299
Jiandao Province	70	29	39	138	24
Tonghua Province			103	103	76
Andong Province	49	134	44	227	15
Fengtian Province	39	364	211	614	199
Jinzhou Province			23	23	28
Rehe Province					38
Western Xing'an Province	7	279	511	797	216
Southern Xing'an Province	345	556	344	1,245	165
Eastern Xing'an Province					
Northern Xing'an Province			104	104	76
Total	1,529	4,195	4,922	10,646	2,531

⁵⁹ See *Dongbei da taofa*, 172; Li Shujuan, “Cong jituan buluo kan riwei tongzhi xia de dongbei nongmin” 從集團部落看日偽統治下的東北農民 [An overview of the peasants in the Northeast of China under the rule of the Japanese puppet regime from the perspective of the collective hamlets], *Shixue yuekan* vol. 6 (2005): 51.

⁶⁰ *Dongbei da taofa*, 173.

The “Bandit law”

While the practice of “bandit suppression” had facilitated military, political, and administrative aspects of state building in Manchukuo, the promulgation of the “bandit law” reflected the concern of Manchukuo about how to claim legitimacy in the effort of consolidating state authority. In the meanwhile, the “bandit law” as part of legal and judicial constructions in Manchukuo was deeply embedded in political culture and legal developments from the late Qing to Republican China, and as well the experiences of ruling colonial Taiwan.

“Bandit Law” as a legal concept did not exist in the Qing penal code, in which the similar entry was “*zeidao*” 賊盜. Although this entry seemed to be very vague, its twenty-eight sub-entries clearly pointed out the differentiation of crimes and corresponding punishments. The most severe crimes included treason, rebellion, and theft of state property such as official seals and documents, and military weapons; the petty ones were theft of private property such as cows and millet. Therefore, when brought to the judiciary, it was relatively easy to categorize different crimes according to the lists.⁶¹ In this sense, *zeidao* represented a legal and ideological rhetoric more than a narrow legal definition, especially when it was connected with political crimes, since in Chinese political culture, usurping state power was a kind of theft which endangered the state orthodoxy and social order.

From the early nineteenth century, “bandit” (*fei*; 匪) as a term that referred to violent criminals was more frequently used in official documents such as imperial edicts and memorials due to the increased violent activities by religious groups (*jiaofei*; 教匪)

⁶¹ Jones, *The Great Qing Code*, 237.

and secret societies (*huifei*; 會匪), among other armed forces.⁶² From the Jiaqing reign (1796-1820), it was increasingly difficult to differentiate between political crimes and common ones. Sometimes, larceny cases that aimed at people and society could escalate into political crises.⁶³ Especially after the Taiping Rebellion, social unrest gave rise to a more severe dislocation of people and led to a trend of “banditization” throughout the end of the Qing Dynasty.⁶⁴ Despite the fact that there was no legal code against “banditry” as a special crime throughout the Qing Dynasty, rules and regulations on the punishment of “bandits” were enacted as a response to the increasing cases of various “bandit” violence especially in such places as Manchuria, the northern provinces, and the southwestern regions of Yunnan and Guizhou Provinces since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁵ These rules and regulations, however, emphasized social and military strategies to prevent the occurrence of violent crimes and local disturbances that had gradually undermined the basis of the Qing authority.

⁶² He, *Zhongguo daofei wenti yanjiu*, 3; Wang Zhiming, “diao jian dao zei fei—dui *Qing shilu zhong minzhong chengwei huayu de jiliang fenxi*” 刑奸盜賊匪——對清實錄中民眾成為話語的計量研究 [Rabble, villains, robbers, thieves, and bandits—a quantitative analysis of designations of people in the Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty], *Heilongjiang shizhi*, 24 (2008): 46-47.

⁶³ According to Robert Antony, larceny included robbery, snatching, and theft, which were more against property rather than political power. But since the early 19th century, robbery cases were punished severely by the Qing government due to their tendency of becoming social disturbances and rebellions. See Robert J. Antony, “Scourges on the People: Perceptions of Robbery, Snatching, and Theft in the Mid-Qing Period.” *Late Imperial China*, 16:2 (1995: Dec.): 104.

⁶⁴ In Phil Billingsley’s study of bandits in Republican China, “banditization” is a term used to indicate an overwhelming social trend in which a large number of people chose to join bandit gangs in order to make a living. According to him, there was an “evolution of twentieth-century banditry from the rebellion of Bai Lang in 1912-14 through the rise of the “soldier-bandits” of the 1920’s to the all-out ‘banditization’ of the province [of Henan] in the 1930’s. By the latter period, joining a bandit gang had come to be regarded as almost the only available form of ‘life insurance.’” See Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, xv. Billingsley has used this term to refer to a social phenomenon in Republican period, while here I suggest that “banditization” as an official discourse could be traced back to the mid-Qing era.

⁶⁵ Li Hongzhang, “Zou wei nahuo xiaofei tufei deng fan qing zhaozhang jiudi chengban shi” 奏為拿獲梟匪土匪馬賊等犯請照章就地懲辦事 [A memorial on issuing summary executions in accordance with regulations to capture “smuggler bandits,” “local bandits,” and “mounted bandits”] (the sixteenth day of the sixth month of the thirteenth year of the Tong reign)

<http://catalog.digitalarchives.tw/Exhibition/Detail.jsp?OID=414119>

In the meanwhile, the wave of “banditization” since the aftermath of the Taiping Rebellion also made a clear legislative definition and measurement for punishments of “bandits” a necessity because military campaigns alone could no longer prevent bandit violence that originated in social unrest as well as political upheaval. Although the legal reform at the end of the Qing Dynasty was aimed at realizing judicial independence from administrative power,⁶⁶ the tension between due process and “summary execution” still persisted until Yuan Shikai enacted the first “bandit law”—“The Regulations on Punishing Robbers and Bandits” (*Chengzhi daofei tiaoli*; 懲治盜匪條例)—in 1914 in the context of a large-scale judicial reform of the Beiyang Government.⁶⁷ To some extent, Yuan’s “bandit law” seemed more like a martial law because it focused on identifying offences to which the death penalty could be applied,⁶⁸ rather than the legal definition of bandit as a category. For instance, it said that the death penalty would be applied to “sect bandits,” “deserters,” “bearded bandits,” and “mounted bandits,” without providing appropriate legal definitions of these groups. Furthermore, this “bandit law” measured punishment only according to the potential threat of violent activities rather than the motives and degrees of violence. For example, it simply stated that those who carried

⁶⁶ About the legal reform during the late Qing, see Zhang Jinfan, *Zhongguo falü de chuantong yu jindai zhuanxing* 中國法律的傳統與近代轉型 [The tradition of Chinese law and its modern transformation] (Beijing: Falü Chubanshe, 1997), 457-71.

⁶⁷ Under the official authorization of the Qing government in 1853, all provinces could perform summary execution to suppress “local bandits,” who were stimulated in the chaotic milieu of the Taiping Rebellion. See Xiaoqun Xu, “The Rule of Law without Due Process: Punishing Robbers and Bandits in Early-Twentieth-Century China,” *Modern China*, 33:2 (April 2007): 235.

⁶⁸ The death penalty was applied to offences in nine categories: armed robbery in a group of three or more of a home or residential place, no matter whether it caused people’s injuries or not; robbery in a group of three or more on the road; robbery on the sea (piracy); offences that resulted in death or severe injury or that hurt two or more people; rape during a robbery; murder during a robbery; sect bandits (*huifei*), deserters, bearded bandits (*hufei*), and mounted bandits (*mazei*); arson, attacking prisons, plundering warehouses, and assembling a group of one hundred and more; carrying explosives. See “*Chengzhi daofei tiaoli*” 懲治盜匪條例 [Regulations on punishing robbers and bandits], *Zhengfu gongbao*, no. 775 (1914): 4; About judicial reform during the period of the Beiyang Government, see Han Xiutao, *Sifa duli yu jindai zhongguo* 司法獨立與近代中國 [Judicial independence and modern China] (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 2003), 221-30.

explosives would be sentenced to death.⁶⁹ In this sense, the purpose of the law was both punitive and preventive.

The creation of the “bandit law” as a legal category to a great extent reflected the political and social environment during the early half of the twentieth century in China. As expounded previously, the bandit problem had been in existence as social reality in China at the time. Warlordism and political rivalries furthermore exacerbated and complicated existing social unrest. Therefore, Yuan’s “bandit law,” on the one hand, was a legal response to the trend of “banditization” from the late Qing that had characterized China as a “bandit country” from the foreign perspective; on the other hand, the catchall articles in the “bandit law” brought a variety of offenses into the unified category of “bandits,” including political ones. In this sense, the “bandit law” had played both instrumental and rhetorical roles in maintaining order and legitimacy for Yuan’s regime. Therefore, the Nationalist government later adopted this expedient and enacted its own “bandit law”—“Provisional Regulations on Punishing Robbers and Bandits” (*chengzhi daofei zanxing tiaoli*; 懲治盜匪暫行條例) in 1927. Furthermore, the Nationalist Government also enacted several other regulations in order to define crimes with more clear-cut features, such as the “Regulations on Punishing Kidnappers” (*chengzhi bangfei tiaoli*; 懲治綁匪條例), to differentiate the “bandit law” from other similar criminal categories.⁷⁰

Although the “bandit law” enacted since 1914 was aimed at eradicating various violent activities, especially in such “bandit-stricken” districts as Henan, Shandong, and Manchuria, it did not alleviate the “bandit problem” fundamentally, as the occurrence of

⁶⁹ “Chengzhi daofei tiaoli,” 4.

⁷⁰ Xiaoqun Xu, “The Rule of Law without Due Process,” 239-250.

the infamous Lincheng Incident in 1923 had indicated. By the time Manchukuo was established, the number of “bandits” in Manchuria, according to the statistics of the Manchukuo government, had increased from 20,000 in 1924 to 360,000 in 1932.⁷¹ The situation made the promulgation of Manchukuo’s own “bandit law” a necessity because it could provide legitimacy for the new regime as well as expediency in military operations against all resistant forces.

In September 1932, the Ministry of Justice in Manchukuo enacted the “Provisional Law of Punishing Robbers and Bandits” (*zaxing chengzhi daofei fa*; 暫行懲治盜匪法). According to this law, “bandits” were defined as those who assembled with an intention to take other peoples’ property in a violent or intimidating way. The punishment varied with the role one had played in the group: leaders and planners were sentenced to death or life imprisonment; others to imprisonment of ten years or more; those who worked for or followed “bandits” to imprisonment of seven years or less. Moreover, the death penalty would be applied if “bandits” had committed crimes of imperiling the public, homicide, robbery and piracy, rape, intimidation, and prison break. No bandit cases were allowed to appeal.⁷²

In addition to these severe punishments, this “bandit law” also gave military commanders and police in the upper echelon almost unlimited power of “summary execution” (*linzhen gesha*; 臨陣格殺) and decision-making concerning the punishment of “bandits” when they carried out suppression campaigns. In this sense, the “bandit law”

⁷¹ It should be noted that many disbanded Chinese soldiers were counted as “soldier bandits” in 1932 and that is why the number in this year increased so remarkably; the number was only 40,000 in 1931. Manshū jijō annaijo, *Manshū shina no kessha to hito* 滿州支那の結社と匪徒 [Societies and bandits in Manchuria and China] (1941), 165.

⁷² *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 3:44 (1932): 2-4.

was just a seemingly legitimate cloak with a draconic nature underneath. The aforementioned tension between “principles of the rule of law, judicial independence, and due process” emphasized by legal professionals and the “administrative demands of ‘quick justice’” stressed by the military was remarkable as well in Manchukuo “bandit law.” In practice, the need of quick justice frequently overwhelmed the requirements of due process, especially in dealing with armed brigands in large numbers. Sometimes when investigations of common offenses were conducted, the police would often bypass the judicial process and execute punishment on the spot by resorting to this “bandit law.”⁷³

The vagueness, contradictions, and harshness of the law made judicial institutions and legal professionals propose revisions to it. In September 1933, Fengtian Superior Court made a suggestion to the Ministry of Justice regarding the time limit for investigations of bandit cases. According to the law, it should take no more than ten days to examine and verify one bandit case before the sentence was announced. But Fengtian Superior Court requested a time extension because some complicated cases required obtaining substantial evidence and a hasty investigation could result in legal injustice. As a response, the Ministry publicized a proclamation, stating that the “infestation of bandits” in the whole country necessitated prompt management when dealing with bandit cases. In addition, the capacity of accommodating criminals was also restricted. The request for more time, therefore, was against the spirit of “quick investigation” (*shencha xunsu*; 審查迅速) and was finally denied.⁷⁴

⁷³ Wu Hsin-che, “The Legal System of Manchukuo under Japanese Colonialism, 1932-45” (M.A. thesis, National Chengchi University, Department of Law, 2004), 117.

⁷⁴ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 9: 227 (1933): 9.

Although some of the articles in the “bandit law” were revised later,⁷⁵ several core notions and definitions were still vague and thus jurists at various levels put forward their opinions and suggestions in order to ensure accuracy in the practice of law. For instance, the official explanation of the “bandit law” stated that bandits were “criminal gangs with two or more members.” However, according to Zhang Kun, the criminal judge of the Supreme Court, the number should be three or more because if there were only two people, there would be no differentiation between leaders, planners, and followers. Furthermore, he suggested, before the “bandit law” was enacted, robbers and bandits with two members were tried according to common penal codes, and these criminals were usually sentenced to three-to-ten-year imprisonment. Even gangs with more than three members were only sentenced to imprisonment of ten years or more. The current “bandit law,” however, indiscriminately applied the death penalty to bandits in a group of two or more, among whom responsibility could not be judged accurately, and therefore, it was against the spirit of legal justice.⁷⁶

Furthermore, the original article in the “bandit law” denied criminals the right to appeal and the later revision added that only cases with a verdict of not guilty could appeal. Accordingly, Zhang pointed out that the right to appeal was one of the public rights endowed by the state to its citizens. Considering the political and social unrest accompanying the establishment of Manchukuo, according to him, it was reasonable to make some restrictions. However, he pointed out that even in the “Provisional

⁷⁵ Two articles were revised in 1933. One was to specify that the prosecuting attorney could only appeal when the verdict was not guilty; the other was that the Ministry of Justice could ask for a re-investigation of the bandit cases applying the death penalty when it was absolutely necessary. See *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 9: 220 (1933): 1.

⁷⁶ Zhang Kun, “Xiugai zanxing chengzhi daofei fa zhi jianyi” 修改暫行懲治盜匪法之建議 [Suggestions on revising the Provisional Law of Punishing Robbers and Bandits], *Hōsō zasshi*, 2:1 (1935): 41.

Regulations on Punishing Robbers and Bandits” of Republican China, only criminals sentenced to death were deprived of appellate rights. In the “bandit law” of Manchukuo, to deny appellate rights to all bandit cases, no matter whether they were sentenced to death or not, seemed to go to extremes and was against the spirit of the “Kingly Way” promoted by the new state. Therefore, he suggested that all bandit cases could appeal except for those with death penalties.⁷⁷

No matter what kind of suggestions were put forward by judicial professionals and officials,⁷⁸ after the promulgation of the “bandit law” in 1932, there were no big changes, only some trivial revisions. From the perspective of legislation, the law was supposed to justify suppression campaigns by the army and police against potential “enemies of the state.” In practice, the army and police could almost freely charge anyone as a bandit if they thought it necessary, and they could implement summary execution or make any other decisions. Moreover, although judicial institutions were formally divided according to three levels—Supreme Court, High Court of Justice, and Local Courts, at the outset, the informal district judicial institutions from the Republican period were mostly preserved. In addition to district courts, many county bureaus and incomplete judicial bureaus also took judicial responsibilities.⁷⁹ Due to the lack of professionals and the imperfection of the judicial system, these lower-level institutions often had to abide

⁷⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁸ These discussions mainly focused on appellant rights of charged bandits, the relationship between the “bandit law” as one of the special laws and common penal codes, and the measurements of punishments. See Wei Heling, “Duiyu zanxing chengzhi daofei fa di san tiao zhi yijian” 對於暫行懲治盜匪法第三條之意見 [On opinions about the third article in the Provisional Law of Punishing Robbers and Bandits], *Hōsō zasshi*, 2:11 (1935): 72-73; Zhang Wenqin, “Guanyu daofei sixing anjian you jiancha guan jinxing jianjuan songbu zhi wo jian” 關於盜匪死刑案件由檢察官徑行檢卷送部之我見 [My opinions on prosecutors’ direct submission of bandit cases with death penalties to the Ministry of Justice], *Hōsō zasshi*, 3:2 (1936): 58-59.

⁷⁹ Zhang Kun, “Xiugai zanxing chengzhi daofei fa zhi jianyi,” 42. Also see Wu Hsin-che, “The Legal System of Manchukuo under Japanese Colonialism, 1932-45,” 86.

by administrative priorities at the cost of judicial independence. Many bandit cases were processed with haste and carelessness on the one hand; and the rule that no bandit cases could be appealed exasperated judicial injustice on the other. To solve the problem that resulted from the abuse of the “bandit law” and “summary execution,” a special system of the Public Security Court (*jian tei*; 治安庭) was put into practice from 1938 in order to deal with all cases involved with public security in a professional way.

In addition to the “bandit law,” other related laws and regulations that aimed at restoring political and social order included the “Provisional Law of Punishing Traitors” (*Zanxing chengzhi pantu fa*; 暫行懲治叛徒法), “Opium Law” (*Apian fa*; 阿片法), “Regulations of Banning Guns and Artillery” (*Paochong qudi fa*; 炮銃取締法), and “Regulations of the Baojia System” (*Baojia tiaoli*; 保甲條例). Specifically, the “Bandit Law” and “Traitor Law” belonged to the category of Special Laws (*tebie fa*; 特別法) that emphasized expediency and quick justice.

Japan’s early experience in colonial Taiwan could also be perceived in the management of public security of Manchukuo. The strategies taken to eradicate the “bandit problem” in Taiwan in the first eight years from 1895 to 1902 were partly applied to bandit suppression in Manchukuo. When Japan obtained Taiwan through its victory over the Qing Empire in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, it immediately confronted the most severe resistance from Taiwanese upon the arrival of its armies and officials on the island. From 1898 to 1903, resistance from the so-called “local bandits” in Taiwan went to an extreme and made Japan put most of its forces on suppression campaigns. The period of military administration from 1895 to 1902, therefore, was characterized by a

large-scale pacification of “local bandits.”⁸⁰ From 1895 to 1902, the “bandit suppression” campaigns lasted for eight years. Although the Governor-General of Taiwan enacted the “Bandit Punishment Law” (*Hito keibatsurei*; 匪徒刑罰令) in 1898 and different levels of punishment were specified in the law, due process was almost impossible since frequent military operations made “summary execution” a priority under the system of “three-section security” (*sandan keibi*; 三段警備).⁸¹

From the perspective of legislation, the “bandit law” in Manchukuo had indicated a developmental characteristic compared with the “Bandit Punishment Law” in Taiwan and in Republican China. The “bandit law” in Taiwan, to a large degree, had served as a justification for the Japanese army’s violent response to Taiwanese opposition in the first decade of Japan’s colonial rule in Taiwan.⁸² The first article stipulated that “regardless of their aim, those who band themselves in groups and resort to violence or threat of violence to achieve their aim shall be considered as bandits and be dealt with.”⁸³ In this way, all offences could be punished as bandit cases as long as they were related to (potential) violence.⁸⁴ Besides, the law did not specify occasions on which “summary

⁸⁰ In addition to resistance from Chinese armies led by Liu Yongfu, the main violent opposition that Japanese confronted after they set foot on the island came from “local bandits” 土匪 (*tufei*) and “uncivilized bandits” 蕃匪 (*fanfei*; that is, minorities). See Taiwan sōtokuju, *Taiwan tōchi sōran* 台灣統治總覽 [A general survey of rule in Taiwan] (1908): 85-94.

⁸¹ “Three-section Security” refers to the measure of maintaining public order based on different terrain. The military would take responsibility in mountainous areas; police force would be in charge of the plains and urban districts; the military and the police would cooperate to secure the rest. Later on, the measure was abolished due to a lack of clear-cut division of responsibilities between the military and the police. See *Taiwan tōchi sōran*, 119-120.

⁸² Specifically, the Yunlin massacre in 1896 called forth criticism from the British press. In view of this, the fourth Governor-General, Kodama Gentarō, enacted a “Bandit Punishment Law” in 1898 to bring pacification into the judicial process. Tay-sheng Wang, *Legal Reform in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1895-1945* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2000), 107-108.

⁸³ Ibid., 196.

⁸⁴ According to Daniel V. Botsman, by the time Japan occupied Taiwan in 1896, there were only 120 prisoners in some temporary prisons transformed from garrisons and warehouses. However, the number had increased to 1,200 as a result of the promulgation of the “Bandit Punishment Law.” See Daniel V.

execution” could be “legally” carried out. In order to eradicate the resistant forces as soon as possible, the law even prescribed that “the punishment of anyone who committed the offenses punishable in this law and who surrenders himself before the official shall be reduced or remitted depending on the individual situation; anyone whose punishment has been remitted shall be kept under surveillance for not more than five years.”⁸⁵ It implied that the urgency of restoring order had overwhelmed due process and it can be assumed that for Japan, legitimacy was not the most serious concern in its rule of colonial Taiwan; rather, how to establish the colonial authority was the first priority.⁸⁶

As the first colony obtained since the Meiji Restoration, Japan’s management of Taiwan demonstrated a feature of cruelty and harshness that was common in other colonies ruled by the Western powers at the time. The direct way of dealing with resistance, therefore, was military suppression on a large scale. For Japan, legitimacy was never a problem and that is why the “Bandit Punishment Law” was enacted after three-year pacification. Manchukuo, as a self-claimed independent state, however, had to resort to many ways to legitimatize its rule, and the legal construction was one of them.⁸⁷

Therefore, the “bandit law” in Manchukuo was supposed to function both rhetorically

Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 206.

⁸⁵ Wang, *Legal Reform in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule*, 197.

⁸⁶ After 1902, the “bandit problem” was almost solved and how to deal with common criminals became a new problem. Therefore, the “Bandit Punishment Law” ceased to be implemented due to the decrease of bandit cases. Wang, *Legal Reform in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule*, 119.

⁸⁷ About legal and judicial construction in Manchukuo, see Thomas David Dubois, “Rule of Law in a Brave New Empire: Legal Rhetoric and Practice in Manchukuo,” *Law and History Review*, 26:2 (2008): 285-317; and “Inauthentic Sovereignty: Law and Legal Institutions in Manchukuo,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 69 (2010): 749-770.

and practically. In this respect, Manchukuo was not so different from other modern nation-states or regimes.⁸⁸

From a broad perspective, as Thomas David Dubois has argued through his investigation of legal system in Manchukuo:

Never fully sovereign in the modern sense, and yet more complex than a simple puppet state, Manchukuo at times exhibited elements of quasi-, nested, and developmental sovereignty. In the same manner, Japanese control of the judiciary represented something more subtle and specific than the political theater of show trials and sham justice.⁸⁹

And the enactment of “bandit law,” I will suggest, was one product of this complexity. The necessity of establishing the state authority through suppression of dissent and resistance severely contradicted the political ideal of “Kingly Way” and “Paradise.” The creation of the “bandit law,” in this sense, became a way out of this dilemma. On the one hand, it relegated all state-challengers to a morally and legally inferior category by labeling them bandits, whether real or not; on the other hand, the concrete articles in the law provided as much expediency as possible to perform effective suppression and pacification. The undiscriminating application of “summary execution,” however, finally caused the abuse of the law and promoted the emergence of the “public security court” as an alternative.

The Public Security Court

In December 1937, an announcement was issued by the Kwantung gendarmerie (關東憲兵隊) to the military and police forces of Manchukuo. It claimed:

⁸⁸ In addition to the “bandit law” enacted by Yuan Shikai in 1914 and later the Nationalist Government in 1939, the Chinese Communist Party also promulgated a “Regulation for Punishing Bandits and Robbers” in the wartime period in the Shan-Gan-Ning border area. This seemed to be the first bandit regulation enacted by the CCP. See Wu Yanping and Liu Genju, *Xingshi susong faxue cankao ziliao huibian* 刑事訴訟法學參考資料彙編 [Compiled references for the study of criminal procedures] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2005), 134.

⁸⁹ Dubois, “Inauthentic Sovereignty,” 2.

...Given the special characteristics of public security in Manchukuo, the power [of executing severe punishment] endowed by the policy has received wide publicity due to the practical situation. At present, however, extraterritoriality has been abolished and judicial and administrative systems are being perfected gradually; therefore, it is inappropriate to handle cases with policies issued previously. Accordingly, before carrying out severe punishment, one should file an application for approval from the commander and put it on record.⁹⁰

Indeed, this announcement was aimed at imposing restrictions on abusive use of “the power of severe punishment,” which referred to summary execution and other severe punishments applied during suppression campaigns. One article of the “bandit law” in Manchukuo had endowed armies and police forces with the power to make decisions on the spot. Since 1932, therefore, despite other penal codes or special ordinances such as “Provisional Law of Punishing Traitors” and “Opium Law,” the “bandit law” was frequently applied in various suppression and pacification campaigns and it allowed a large number of people to be indiscriminately labeled “bandits” and to receive severe punishment without any formal judicial procedures. In order to restrict the abuse of the “bandit law” and the military power of “summary execution,” this announcement decreed that the power of severe punishment could only be applied on limited occasions. In special districts, for example, it could be applied in cases of homicide, arson, plunder, rape, robbery, and other violent activities, but not to those who had repented previous mistakes and had made a law-abiding living; it was also applicable to those who collected military information, provided ammunition, money, and provisions for the aforementioned criminals, and to those who assisted “communist bandits” in propaganda and other activities, but not those who were forced to cooperate with “bandits” due to insufficient protection from the weak military and police power of Manchukuo.⁹¹

⁹⁰ *Weiman xianjing tongzhi*, 197.

⁹¹ Ibid., 197-198.

This announcement, to some extent, was aimed at modifying coercive policies taken by the military and police in maintaining domestic order in the past five years. Before long, the Kwantung Army distributed another notice about how to “appropriately” execute the power of severe punishment. Different from the first announcement, this notice was more concerned with the strategic management of public security in the new situation and the long-run stability of Manchukuo:

Even ignorant bandits have close relatives and good friends. If we mistakenly practice the power of severe punishment, not only will their relatives and friends face unnecessary threats, but even their offspring will generate antipathetic and vengeful emotions; then they will doubt [our] sincerity for building a “paradise of the Kingly Way.” The practice of severe punishment will furthermore exert harmful influence domestically and internationally. On the other hand, it [severe punishment] will as well interfere with the progress of the gradually perfected judicial work in Manchukuo... Overall, severe punishment should be restricted by absolute necessity and kept to the minimum.⁹²

It was remarkable that in both notices, the abolition of extraterritoriality was specifically emphasized, and therefore became a significant background of setting up the Public Security Court (*jianwei*; 治安庭).

In fact, the previous policy of severe punishment or summary execution was indispensable for rapidly and effectively consolidating domestic order at the outset of Manchukuo’s establishment. On the other hand, legal and judicial systems were still under construction at the time. Many judicial officials in district courts and police bureaus were largely working in cities rather than the hinterland. From the perspective of the military and police, it took a long time to submit case information and evidence to the court for investigation and trial from the first trial to the final judgment. Therefore, it was more effective to get around judicial procedures for the sake of promptness.⁹³

⁹² Ibid., 199-201.

⁹³ *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 402.

With Japan's extraterritoriality in Manchukuo abolished by the end of 1937, Manchukuo claimed a complete independence and meanwhile it was supposed to promote the “rule of law” as a modern state. In this sense, how to bring suppression and pacification campaigns into a more professional and practical legal system was a new concern. In May 1938, an edict setting up the Public Security Court was enacted by the government. According to the edict, this Court was put under the Supreme Court and High Courts, and was responsible for the first trial of criminal cases. Besides, new crimes were put under the jurisdiction of High Courts, such as Crime of Imperiling Diplomatic Relations and Provisional Law of Punishing Traitors. The Public Security Court was supposed to manage criminals in an effective and prompt way through the judicial channel.⁹⁴

Moreover, in August 1941, Special Public Security Courts were set up to manage cases that involved a large number of people. In the special courts, the first trial would be enough for the final judgment. This practice further enhanced the flexibility of the judicial system. The Courts could be created on the spot and judicial officials be dispatched by the High Courts to the locality. In this way, all cases were solved very quickly, the procedure of sending criminals under escort was avoided, and the risk of prison breaks was reduced as well.⁹⁵

In practice, the establishment of the Special Public Security Court was also a response to the Chinese Eighth Route Army's attack on Rehe Province in 1941. At the time, how to punish ordinary people who had assisted Chinese Armies and how to restore

⁹⁴ Sugihara Issaku, “Zhiating zhi shezhi yu sixiangke zhi xinshe” 治安庭之設置與思想科之新設 [The establishment of the Public Security Court and the setup of the Thought Division], *Hōsō zasshi*, 5:9 (1938): 1542-3.

⁹⁵ *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 403.

public order in Rehe as quickly as possible became major problems; and to set up Special Public Security Courts was a countermeasure to deal with such a situation. All the judges were Japanese professionals. According to the post-war confession of a Japanese judicial official, by entrusting the cases to the professional court system rather than relying on military law, the Japanese believed that mistakes during trials would be reduced and the public could be reassured.⁹⁶ From 1942 to 1945 in Rehe Province, among 10,656 Chinese arrested by the military and police, 3,600 were sentenced by Rehe Special Public Security Court. In the end, 980 were sentenced to death and 2,600 were imprisoned.⁹⁷

Therefore, to a certain extent, the emergence of Public Security Court indicated a development and professionalization of the legal and judicial system of Manchukuo. It was also a strategy to cope with the increasing contradiction between administrative priorities and the urgency of “due process of law.” On the one hand, with the abolition of Japanese extraterritoriality, Manchukuo further attempted to demonstrate its image as a completely independent and sovereign state by professionalizing the legal and judicial system and promoting the spirit of “rule of law” in every aspect of domestic affairs. On the other hand, after several large-scale military operations from 1932 to 1938, main resistant forces had been defeated and even forced to flee to the Soviet Union. After 1938, the main target of suppression and pacification was not armed forces but people’s thoughts, and the previous bloody and draconic measures could not be employed as fundamental ways of winning over people’s support. In this sense, the emergence of the Public Security Court was a compromise solution to the problem, especially compared with the summary execution and indiscriminate severe punishment. Due process of law,

⁹⁶ *Dongbei da taofa*, 735-36.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 144.

despite its hastiness and the doctrine of “the first trial being the final trial,” guaranteed proportionate punishment to a great extent. Take the Special Public Security Court under the Jingzhou High Court as an example, from May 1943 to April 1944, it sentenced 1,770 people, among whom 292 were sentenced to the death penalty, 1,139 to a limited term of imprisonment or life imprisonment, and 339 not clear.⁹⁸ From this perspective, the special court system effectively restricted abusive employment of severe punishment (mostly summary execution) taken by the military and police power previously.

The Effect of Suppression Campaigns

From 1932 to 1945, the military campaigns of “bandit suppression” experienced three phases. The first one was the transitional period from 1931 to 1933 when the campaigns were focused on “mounted bandits,” “bearded bandits,” and “soldier bandits.” In this period, since an independent Manchukuo Army was not yet completely organized, the Japanese Kwantung Army played a leading role in suppression campaigns. The second period began in 1934 and the campaigns were aimed at the Chinese Volunteer Army (*yiyong jun*; 義勇軍) based on “bearded bandits” and hostile local troops that had been loosely organized by the CCP in Manchuria. During this “mop-up” phase, the new Manchukuo Army was trained and deployed to cooperate with Japanese troops, and administration was reinforced especially in rural areas with frequent “bandits” activities. After 1936, with the construction of a Northeastern Anti-Japanese United Front under the leadership of the CCP in Manchuria, the third period began with the state’s concentration on these “Communist bandits.” According to the report of the Department of Security in

⁹⁸ Ibid., 771.

Manchukuo, the number of “bandits” had been reduced from 300,000 in 1932 to 10,000 in 1938. By 1941, the last military operation was finished and the government claimed its “success” against all the brigands.

During the first phase, the suppression campaigns had encountered great difficulties partly due to the inefficiency of the newly established Manchukuo Army. Moreover, what the Manchukuo armies confronted were not outlaws in a general sense. Most “bandit gangs” were very familiar with local terrain, climate, and environment, and this familiarity made them easier to avoid military searches. For example, one of the most convenient covers that “bandit” gangs would employ was sorghum, one of the main crops in northern China and usually with a height of eight to ten feet, forming a natural cover for “bandits.”⁹⁹ Therefore, in June 1932, Jilin Provincial governor Xi Xia enacted an edict to prohibit the planting of corn and sorghum within five hundred meters along railway lines and public roads. Besides, peasants were ordered to uproot crops that were already planted.¹⁰⁰ In addition, these “bandit” gangs’ long-standing authority among local people, whether positive or negative, had prevented local residents from turning them in. Therefore, intensive military operations could only restore public order in a place temporarily.

Despite these disadvantages at the outset, with the increasingly developed military organization, police power, and administrative structures, “bandit” forces gradually lost their advantages. As Mr. Woodhead had predicted during his visit in Manchukuo in 1932:

...the power of resistance of the anti-Manchukuo forces seems destined from now onward steadily to diminish. They have no source of supply for arms, munitions, or clothing other than the capture of these necessities from their enemies. Failing supplies of weapons and munitions from the Soviet, which are unlikely, they must

⁹⁹ *A Visit to Manchukuo*, 66.

¹⁰⁰ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 4:20 (1932), 15.

soon be driven to desperate straits. Guerilla warfare will become more and more difficult to carry on, as the months go by.¹⁰¹

Woodhead's outlook was verified several years later, especially with the state of Manchukuo adopting such strategies as the “*baojia*” system, railroad-protection corps, and collective hamlets. These strategies as “permanent cures” were very effective especially after 1935 when the anti-Japanese united army was formed under the leadership of the “Communist bandits.” The construction of collective hamlets and stringent application of the *baojia* system gradually played their roles in cutting off material supplies for anti-Japanese and anti-Manchukuo forces in rural districts. In this sense, the anti-Japanese united army suffered from serious shortages of food and other materials. In the suppression campaign against anti-Japanese united armies in Dongbiandao district from late 1939 to early 1940, Yang Jingyu, the major leader of the CCP in Manchuria and commander of the united army, was killed and several other commanders were captured. Specifically, when Yang's body was dissected, not even a single grain was found in his stomach.¹⁰² After this campaign, due to the extreme lack of ammunitions and provisions, most military forces led by the CCP in Manchukuo were forced to hide in the border area between Manchukuo and the Soviet Union and it was very difficult for them to continue the guerrilla war thereafter.

The Kwantung Army and Manchukuo had also used statistics to indicate the accomplishments of suppression campaigns from 1924 to 1941 (see Table 7). From the following table, we can see that the number of “bandits” had fluctuated seriously with changing political and social conditions in Manchuria from 1924. In 1932 when Manchukuo was established, the number of “bandits” reached a peak. In fact, most of the

¹⁰¹ *A Visit to Manchukuo*, 103.

¹⁰² *Dongbei da taofa*, 547, 572.

“bandits” in this year were remnant anti-Japanese troops of previous Northeastern Army, which the Kwantung Army had designated “soldier bandits.” From 1934 on, with the implementation of collective hamlets, the number quickly decreased to 9,600 in September 1937 but suddenly rebounded to 12,660 in the aftermath of the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War. The number was finally reduced to only 200 in 1941.

Table 7: The Decrease of the Number of “Bandits”¹⁰³

Year and Month	Total Number
1924	20,000
1925	20,000
1926	28,000
1927	50,000
1928	50,000
1929	58,000
1930	47,000
1931 (The Manchurian Incident)	40,000
1932 (The establishment of Manchukuo)	360,000
1933	52,000
1934	40,000
1935	21,000
1936	12,660
September 1937	9,600
November 1937	12,275
September 1938	8,766
December 1939	3,271
March 1940	1,917
As from November 1941	200

Indeed, it is difficult to evaluate “bandit suppression” as a “success” judging only from the decreasing number of “bandits.” But if we combine the statistics with the changing strategies in Manchukuo after 1938, we can perceive that “bandit suppression” was no longer a priority of the Manchukuo state. For one thing, the project of

¹⁰³ *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 302-3.

constructing collective hamlets gradually ceased after 1938, considering that it had played an effective role in separating “bandits” from populace and in facilitating military operations; for another, in the same year, the system of the “public security court” was established to partly replace cruel military measures and more importantly, to restore state’s legitimacy by resorting to a legal measure. Meanwhile, the “bandit law” was also abolished due to its harshness after 1941. All of these changes implied that the situation of domestic order in Manchukuo had been improved to a certain extent since 1938.

Conclusion

From 1932, “bandit suppression” in Manchukuo had promoted various dimensions of the state building project. At first, the construction of the Manchukuo Army as the national army attempted to claim the military independence of the new state from Japan; in reality, the building of the national army in a real sense took a long time. With the suppression campaigns proceeding, the Manchukuo Army also experienced reorganization and gradually undertook the responsibility for military operations against “bandits.” However, “bandit suppression” in Manchukuo was a systematic project that went beyond military operations. In targeting and exterminating different challenging forces, a variety of strategies were adopted. Political and administrative structures were also reformed to facilitate suppression campaigns. In this process, the construction of collective hamlets became one of the most significant measures against “Communist bandits” after 1934. Furthermore, a “bandit law” was created to justify military operations against all state challengers. By relegating all the violent forces in Manchukuo to a legally inferior category of “bandits,” this law provided much expediency for the

Manchukuo military to perform effective suppression. Nevertheless, the undiscriminating application of the article of “summary execution” finally led to the abuse of the law and promoted the emergence of the “public security court” as an alternative. And the transformation from the “bandit law” to the system of the “public security court” to a certain extent reflected a legal and judicial development.

Relying on military, administrative, and legal constructions, by late 1930s the Manchukuo government claimed that public security in Manchukuo had been greatly improved. However, this “improvement” was built on the suffering of common Chinese people, especially those who were mobilized to relocate in the collective hamlets. Furthermore, in order to implement such projects as organizing railroad protection corps and fundamentally consolidating rural security, coercion was far from enough, especially considering that these strategies were mostly taken in “bandit-infested” areas; how to secure public order in general and in a fundamental way relied heavily on social mobilization and propaganda, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Social Mobilization and Propaganda

This Chapter explores social mobilization and propaganda by the state in order to fundamentally consolidate domestic security in Manchukuo. In addition to Chinese people who had been mobilized in military, administrative, and legal constructions in Manchukuo, Japanese and Koreans as two of the five ethnic groups in Manchukuo were endowed with the responsibility of maintaining peace and order as well. On the one hand, as early as the 1910s and 1920s, a group of Japanese adventurers had joined Chinese “bandit gangs” and acted as informants for Japanese military intelligence. These Japanese “bandits” as part of a civilian agency in Japan’s expansion in Manchuria during the 1920s, continued to play their special roles in maintaining security in Manchukuo after 1932. On the other hand, Japanese and Korean immigrants were also mobilized to take root in rural districts in Manchukuo as the fundamental solution to the problems of Manchukuo security.

In the extensive mobilization of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, the *Kyōwakai* (Concordia Association; 協和会), one of the most significant mass organizations and the headquarters of propaganda in Manchukuo, had played a leading role in imbuing the state ideology of “harmony” (*kyōwa*; 協和) among different ethnic groups in an attempt to counteract the influence of Communism and Chinese nationalism in the form of “bandit violence.” In the meanwhile, the *Kyōwakai* also participated in pacification campaigns by organizing various corps to coordinate with military operations. By investigating the roles played by ethnic groups and mass organizations in stabilizing Manchukuo, this chapter

will reveal the extent to which the “bandit suppression” was deeply imbedded in the larger political and social landscape of Manchukuo.

Military Intelligence

Any kind of decision-making and implementation of military and administrative policies with regard to “bandit suppression” necessitated a comprehensive and accurate grasp of information about the identification and activities of enemies. Especially in Manchuria where the long history of bandit activities had been intertwined with political upheavals and foreign invasions since the late Qing, it was even more significant as well as difficult to obtain information in an efficient and prompt way. Therefore, it was crucial to have an intelligence system in order to identify, locate, and investigate different types of “bandits” and their activities. In this sense, intelligence was supposed to provide “knowledge and analysis designed to assist action.”¹

Generally, Japanese intelligence could be traced back to 1896 when the Second Department of Intelligence was first set up in the General Staff and was organized based on geography: Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria. In addition, the Second Department “had its own ‘eyes and ears’ on the mainland in the form of Special Service Organs.”² Specifically, Japanese military intelligence in Manchuria had developed a systematic network to assist the Kwantung Army’s operations, which “included agent networks, a reporting system, an operational tradition, and a body of specialists experienced in making the system work” before the Manchurian Incident in 1931. The Kwantung Army

¹ Ernest R. May ed., *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before The Two World Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 3.

² Michael A. Barnhart, “Japanese Intelligence Before the Second World War: ‘Best Case’ Analysis,” in *Knowing One's Enemies*, 428; James Weland, “Misguided Intelligence: Japanese Military Intelligence Officers in the Manchurian Incident, September 1931,” *The Journal of Military History* 58:3 (1994): 449.

had also established local units in such main cities as Mukden, Harbin, Kirin, and Dalian in Manchuria to consolidate its information network for “both overt and covert operations.”³

It was remarkable that while military intelligence functioned through a formal and official agency, civilian and informal intelligence activities also contributed to the expansion of the Japanese empire. According to Hilary Conroy, there were two patterns in the process of Japanese imperialism since the Meiji Restoration. One was concerned with “government policy” and the other with “the third party movement.”⁴ The latter included “China experts,” individual adventurers, and patriotic societies.⁵ The characteristic of “the third party movement” was depicted as follows:

The ‘Asia’ emphasis of the third party movement is apparent in activity as well as ideas. While ‘the government’ was arguing its program in London or Washington or Paris or Geneva the patriots were busy learning and teaching Asiatic languages, traveling widely in East and Central Asia, making maps, collecting intelligence, fomenting unrest wherever they could, expanding every ‘incident’ to fullest proportion, and at home, whether by propaganda, threat, or assassination, trying to prevent the government from ‘shrinking’ from the mission of Japan.⁶

As to Japanese expansion in Manchuria and later the establishment of Manchukuo, such “patriotic societies” as *Genyosha* and *Kokuryukai* had played important roles in realizing the “continental dream” of Japan, and represented the power of civilian agency.

Japan’s “continental dream” was deeply imbedded in its ambition of overseas expansion at the turn of the twentieth century; it was also reflected in a popular slogan of

³ Weland, “Misguided Intelligence,” 448.

⁴ Hilary Conroy, “Government versus ‘Patriot’: The Background of Japan’s Asiatic Expansion,” *Pacific Historical Review* 20:1 (Feb., 1951): 31.

⁵ Kitaoka Shin’ichi defined “China experts” as people who had “experience in or with China as expertise on China.” See Kitaoka Shin’ichi, “China Experts in the Army,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 330.

⁶ Hilary Conroy, “Government versus ‘Patriot’: The Background of Japan’s Asiatic Expansion,” 40.

“*kaigai yūhi* (海外雄飛),” which literally meant “launching out abroad.”⁷ According to a book published by an educational institute in Japan in 1918, young Japanese were all supposed to bear in mind and realize this ambition. As the book suggested, Japan since the twentieth century had confronted a series of crises such as overpopulation, decrease of arable land, social corruption, and rural depression. But all of these crises could be attributed to the pressure of overpopulation. Therefore, it was crucial for nationals, especially the young people, to develop their overseas careers as a way out.⁸

South Manchuria, among other destinations of overseas expansion, became seen as an ideal location for young people to realize the “continental dream” because it was regarded by Japanese as the lifeline of Japan after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05. Besides, its underdeveloped situation cultivated a romantic imagination of an adventurous world, which was popularized by the publication of “hot-blooded” novels. This sentiment of romanticism about overseas adventure had fostered a heroic discourse of *bazoku* (Manchurian mounted bandits) represented through literary creations during the first three decades of the twentieth century in Japan.

Song of the “*bazoku*”

In the Japanese language, Manchurian bandits were often addressed as “*bazoku* (馬賊),” a transliteration of Chinese term “mounted bandits.” As Kawakubo Teirō has suggested in his study of Manchurian bandits during the late Qing, for Japanese people at the time, Manchuria as a geographic concept had special connotations and was often

⁷ See Makiko Nakano, *Makiko's Diary: A Merchant Wife in 1910 Kyoto* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995): 21

⁸ Nihon seinen kyōikukai, *Kaigai yūhi* 海外雄飛 [Launching out abroad] (Tokyo: Nihon seinen kyōikukai, 1918), 1-5.

related to the image of *bazoku*.⁹ In fact, Japanese recognition of Manchuria and Manchurian bandits during the first two decades of the twentieth century was influenced by the interplay of domestic and international developments.

Ever since the Meiji Restoration, two competing discourses of masculinity appeared in Japan with the rise of nationalism and imperialism. One was a “feminized” or genteel form of masculinity represented by Japanese gentlemen in the government, who usually wore the high collars and admired Western civilization. The opposing expression was a masculinized one, which criticized Western material culture and “sought to erase femininity by validating the authentic, primitive, and spiritual.”¹⁰ People with these features were called *sōshi* (壯士), and were young political activists outside the government. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, Japan was stimulated by expansionist ambitions and many young activists were employed by individual politicians as “continental adventurers” or members of radical societies such as the *Genyōsha* (The Dark Ocean Society; 玄洋社) and *Kokuryukai* (The Amur River Society; 黒龍社).

On the other hand, the above development was also accompanied by Japan’s growing interest in Manchuria after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, which was the starting point of Japanese “Manchuria illusion” (*manshū genzō*; 滿州幻想) that Japan would foster and develop throughout the next half a century.¹¹ Roughly speaking, Japanese recognition and study of Manchuria can be divided into three phases: First was

⁹ Kawakubo Teirō, “Zoku manshū bazoku kō” 続滿洲馬賊考 [Sequel to the investigation of Manchurian bandits], in *Egami Namio Kyōju koki kinren ronshū* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1977), 493.

¹⁰ Jason G. Karlin, “The Gender of Nationalism: Competing Masculinities in Meiji Japan,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 28:1 (2002): 42.

¹¹ See Jan Kūshī, “Manshū gensō no seiritsu katei—nichiro senzen no nihonjin to manshū,” 滿州幻想の成立過程——日露戦前日本人と満洲 [The formation of illusions about Manchuria—Japanese and Manchuria before the Russo-Japanese War], in *Okayama Daigaku Bungakubu kiyō*, 45(2006): 17-30.

from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 to the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident in 1931; the second period covered a span of time from 1931 to the end of the Second World War in 1945; and the post-war period was the third phase. Although such scholars as Naka Michiyo (1851-1908) and Naitō Konan (1866-1934) had conducted some research on Manchuria before the Russo-Japanese War, their focus was mostly on geographical or historical developments in the context of a general Chinese history. In other words, these researches stemmed from academic interests rather than pragmatic considerations.¹²

It was after the Russo-Japanese War especially with the establishment of the *Mantetsu chōsaka* (Investigation Department of the South Manchuria Railway Company) in 1906 that researches about Manchuria became more concentrated on collecting contemporary geographic, social, commercial, agricultural, cartographical, and political information. By the 1910s, Manchuria as Japan's "lifeline" became a consensus for Japanese people and the subsequent problem was how to secure and utilize it for Japan's purposes.¹³ Throughout the 1920s, the flourishing of popular culture, such as cinema, broadcast, and literature, further promoted expansionist ambitions in Japan. The romantic "mounted bandits" (*bazoku*) of Manchuria as a literary creation appealed to lots of Japanese youth, who on the one hand longed for individual freedom and success, and on the other hand, dreamed of contributing to the expansion of the Japanese empire.

During the 1910s and 1920s, several Japanese writers and editors had created many novels advocating the romantic image of outlaws including *bazoku*. For example, in 1916, Arimoto Hōsui 有本芳水(1886-1976), the chief editor of magazine *Nihon*

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 14.

Shōnen (Japan Boys), wrote a serialized novel “Knight-errant Novel—Son of Bazoku,” telling the story of a Japanese orphan who was raised by a leader of *Genyōsha*; when he grew up, he went to China with the chief of a *bazoku* group and participated in various activities for the benefit of Japan.¹⁴ In 1925, another writer Ikeda Kikan 池田亀鑑 (1896-1956) produced the novel “Song of the Bazoku,” also serially published in *Nihon Shōnen*. In addition, another children’s magazine *Shōnen Kurabu* (Boys’ Club; 少年クラブ) became influential as well. From 1923 to 1924, Miyazaki Ichiu 宮崎一雨, famous for the production of “hot-blooded novels,” published “Bazoku King” in *Shōnen Kurabu*. This novel also told a romantic and heroic story of a Japanese boy who went to Manchuria stealthily to investigate and collect information before the Russo-Japanese War. In Manchuria, he made the acquaintance of a Chinese *bazoku* leader by chance and then joined the gang; later he assisted Japanese military forces in the war against Russia by commanding Manchurian “mounted bandits.” The novel attained great popularity among young readers immediately upon its serialization.¹⁵ In addition to the novel, in 1922, a Japanese lyric writer Miyajima Ikuhō 宮島郁芳 (1894-1970) composed a popular song “Song of the *Bazoku*,” encouraging young Japanese to pursue an adventurous life as a *bazoku* in China and to devote themselves to Japan’s further expansion.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ueda Nobumichi, “Arimoto Hōsui no Shōnen shōsetu” 有本芳水の少年小説 [Arimoto Hōsui’s juvenile novels], *Jidō bungaku kenkyū*, no. 33 (2000): 1-13.

¹⁵ “Bazoku no uta: monogatari o kageru bazoku,” *Hoshō gekkan*, no. 8 (July 2002).
http://nob.internet.ne.jp/note/note_23.html.

¹⁶ Umehara Teikō, “Bazoku no o uta: Taishū bungaku no gaishi ni yosete” 馬賊の唄：大衆文学の外史によせて [Song of the “mounted bandits”: through the unofficial history of mass literature], in Ikeda Hiroshi ed., *“Taishū” no tōjō: hirō to dokushano 20-30 nendai* (Tōkyō: Inpakuto Shuppankai, 1998), 170-94.

Civilian Agencies

As a result, the heroic stories of *bazoku* not only nourished the continental dream of young Japanese, but also encouraged them to fulfill their dreams of adventure. Encouraged by the spirit of the *bazoku*, one of the most active groups of Japanese in China was the so-called “*rōnin*” (浪人), who had facilitated Japanese expansion in Manchuria since the Russo-Japanese War. Originating in the samurai class of the Tokugawa period, these people were gradually deprived of political and economic privileges in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration. In order to improve their livelihood and realize repressed political ambitions, many *rōnin* devoted themselves to gathering information or directly participating in adventurous activities in Manchuria on behalf of the Japanese empire. As Miyazaki Tōten 宮崎滔天 (1870-1922), a well-known intellectual as well as an activist sympathetic to the Chinese revolution led by Sun Yat-sen, had illustrated, *rōnin* represented a pioneering spirit, no matter whether for truth, science, or the benefit of the people and the nation. Therefore, according to him, the true *rōnin* would like to “become outlaws instead of retreating as recluses in mountains and forests.”¹⁷

In reality, as Andrew Gordon has suggested, “In China, hundreds of Japanese adventurers called ‘China *rōnin*’ combined profiteering with political maneuvers nominally in support of Asian liberation. By the late 1920s, a growing network of Japanese nationalist political groups linked these civilian expansionists at home and

¹⁷ Miyazaki Tōten, “Rōnin seikatsu” 浪人生活 [Rōnin’s life], in *Miyazaki Tōten zenshū*, (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1971-1976), 398-400.

abroad with young, action-oriented military men.”¹⁸ Among those “China *rōnin*,” many joined “mounted bandits” in Manchuria and acted as informants for Japanese military organizations. Most *rōnin* were affiliated with one or another civilian nationalistic or patriotic society.

In Manchuria, the aforementioned *Genyōsha* and later the *Kokuryukai* played leading roles in organizing and sometimes harboring Japanese adventurers. *Genyōsha* was founded in 1881 in Fukuoka and its leaders included Hiraoka Kōtarō 平岡浩太郎 and Tōyama Mitsuru 頭山満, and the latter also became one of the founders of *Kokuryukai* in 1901. Both societies had been aware of the significance of developing intelligence and good relationships with the Japanese military. On the one hand, these societies made every effort to establish an unofficial intelligence service by dispatching young people overseas to collect a variety of information that would promote Japan’s economic and political expansion abroad.¹⁹ On the other hand, at an early phase of its foundation, *Genyōsha* had established an intimate relationship with the General Staff. Besides, such semi-official institutes as the SMR also provided financial support for *Genyōsha* and *Kokuryukai*. Therefore, these societies became “the cement which holds together the whole edifice of Japanese aggression—the army, big business and the key sections of the bureaucracy.”²⁰ Of course, these civilian societies had their own goals and interests that sometimes were incompatible with the official and military ones. But sometimes, especially during the war period, they often assisted military operations in their own way. For example, they had provided interpreters and guides for the army in

¹⁸ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Time to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 179-180.

¹⁹ E. Herbert Norman, “The Genyosha: A Study in the Origin of Japanese Imperialism,” *Pacific Affairs* 17 (1944): 278.

²⁰ Ibid., 283.

the first Sino-Japanese War in 1894-95 and had organized Manchurian “mounted bandits” into guerrilla units during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Reciprocally, the military would provide these societies with financial and other kinds of support to reinforce their cooperation in the future.²¹

Under the protection of these societies, many *rōnin* became the vanguard of Japanese oversea expansion. Especially after the Russo-Japanese War, Japanese young people were encouraged to go to China. Not a few *rōnin* went to Manchuria and North China in the guise of “mounted bandits.” With support from the aforementioned societies and the Japanese Army, they quickly became leaders in various bandit groups or advisors for bandit gangs and warlords. With the expansion of their influence, many Japanese bandits were also involved in warlord fighting during the 1920s and acted as secret agents by employing their covert identities as bandits and their connections with Chinese bandit gangs. In this sense, they played unusual roles in agitating political struggles from which Japan benefited.

One of the well-known Japanese *bazoku* among others in Manchuria at the time was Kohinata Hakurō 小日向白朗, whose experiences as a leading *bazoku* in Manchuria for as long as nearly twenty years was representative.²² Born in 1900 and growing up in an era when the sentiment for overseas expansion was stimulated in the wake of Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905, Kohinata went to Manchuria at the age of sixteen. Four years later, when he was financed by the Japanese Army and went to Mongolia to collect military information, he was captured by a group of Chinese bandits on the way and then

²¹ Weland, “Misguided Intelligence,” 450.

²² Kuchiki Kanzō, *Xiao bailong chuanqi: yige riben langren zai zhongguo dalu de jingli* 小白龍傳奇——一個日本浪人在中國大陸的經歷 [The legend of the “Little White Dragon”: the experience of a Japanese *rōnin* in mainland China], trans. Yuan Shaoying (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1991).

he joined their gang. Due to his personal courage and insight, in 1921, he became the leader of that bandit gang and adopted a Chinese name Shang Xudong (尚旭東). Meanwhile, his Chinese nickname Little White Dragon (小白龍) also became widely known among bandit gangs in Manchuria. During the mid-1920s, he furthermore collaborated with Chinese warlords such as Zhang Zongchang and Zhang Zuolin. Meanwhile, he also collected various political and economic information for the Japanese military forces and the *zaibatsu*. In 1928, he even attempted to seize Fengtian city to prevent Zhang Xueliang's reunification with the Nanjing government, but failed and was repatriated by the Japanese military back to Japan.²³

However, Kohinata's life of adventure did not end at this point. Three years later, in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, he secretly went back to Manchuria and quickly restored his power among Chinese bandit gangs with the support of the Kwantung Army. Actually, the Kwantung Army's utilization of bandits, either Japanese or Chinese, had become a military strategy for its covert military operations in the chaotic period after the Manchurian Incident. Therefore, when the Kwantung Army criticized rampant Chinese "soldier bandits" and "local bandits" to justify its military advances and later Manchurian independence, it also exploited bandits for its own benefit. Therefore, in the propaganda war concerning the Lytton Committee's investigation of the Manchurian Incident and the establishment of Manchukuo from 1931 to 1933, Chinese patriotic societies also published pamphlets to uncover Japanese military schemes for occupying Manchuria by employing "bandit outrages" at the time.²⁴

²³ Ibid., 6-8.

²⁴ See Northeastern Affairs Research Institute, *Japan and Banditry: An Authentic Record Showing How Japan Makes Use of the Bandit-Chieftain Lian Yin-Ching to Create Disturbances in the North-Eastern Provinces* (Peking: Northeastern Affairs Research Institute, 1932).

After the establishment of the Manchukuo government in 1932, as we have seen in Chapter Four, to restore public order became the primary concern of the Kwantung Army and the government. Under the circumstances, Japanese bandits' role was also transformed from creating incidents to assisting with the maintenance of public security. In 1932, the kidnapping case concerning British girl Tinko Pawley provoked strong criticism from the international community. When the military and official endeavor turned out to be a dead end, Kohinata became to the rescue. Depending on his prestige previously accumulated among Chinese bandit gangs, he successfully saved the hostage by negotiating between the government and the Chinese bandit gang involved.²⁵

Moreover, after the Manchurian Incident, Chinese "mounted bandits" organized an Anti-Japanese Volunteer Army. From 1931 to 1932, this army was very active in fighting against the Kwantung Army and derailing the railroads. Becoming the main leader of this army in 1932, Kohinata started to plan the disbandment of the army and attempted to transfer these "mounted bandits" out of Manchuria. As a result, in the spring of 1933, such well-known leaders of "mounted bandit" gangs as Kao Tian, Lao Beifeng, Liu Jingwen, and Qing Shan, commanded their subordinates to move to Beijing. Before long, around seventy thousand "mounted bandits" including their families were transferred to Beijing and surrounding areas, where some of them engaged in agriculture or other kinds of business and others resumed their bandit life in north China. In this way, a potential threat to the security of Manchukuo was extinguished with little military effort.²⁶

²⁵ Zhao Honglian, "Mazei—Riben qinhua zhanzheng cemian shi" 马贼——日本侵华战争侧面史 [Mounted bandits: A lateral history of the second Sino-Japanese War], *Heihe Xuekan* 4 (2002), 96.

²⁶ Ibid., 96; Kuchiki Kanzō, *Xiao bailong chuanqi*, 7-8.

Japanese Immigrants

In addition to Japanese adventurers, another group of Japanese who were mobilized to serve as pioneers in Japan's expansion and later to consolidate the regime of Manchukuo was Japanese agricultural immigrants. The project of Japanese immigration to Manchuria was initiated in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 when Japan obtained the Kwantung Leased territory and the right of railway construction in South Manchuria. During the first decade of the twentieth century, most immigrants were employees of the SMR, merchants, and small entrepreneurs, who mainly settled in the districts under Japanese political and administrative influence.²⁷ During the 1910s and 1920s, South Manchuria was not yet an ideal place for agricultural immigrants to relieve the pressure of overpopulation in Japan. As Sandra Wilson has suggested, many intellectuals and agricultural professionals actually preferred South America to Manchuria considering such factors as climate and political environment.²⁸ From the late 1920s, however, the intensified economic crisis especially rural depression in Japan to some extent stimulated the Kwantung Army's political ambitions in Manchuria. After the establishment of Manchukuo, the encouragement of Japanese immigration became on the one hand an outlet for population pressure and on the other hand a new tactic for consolidating the newly established Manchukuo as the "lifeline" of Japan.

Therefore, from 1932, the Japanese government, the Kwantung Army, and the Manchukuo government started the "machine of migration." In Louise Young's research on the cultural history of Japanese empire building in Manchuria, she illustrates how

²⁷ Manshūkoku Tsūshinsha, *Manshū kaitaku nenkan* 滿州開拓年鑑 (Yearbook of colonization in Manchuria) (1944) (Tōkyō: Hōwa Shuppan, 1986, reprint), 36.

²⁸ Sandra Wilson, "The 'New Paradise': Japanese Emigration to Manchuria in the 1930s and 1940s," *The International History Review* 17:2 (1995): 254-255.

Japan at both national and local levels had attempted to mobilize millions of Japanese people to go to Manchuria as a response to economic depression.²⁹ Sandra Wilson's study reveals how intellectuals in Japan since the 1910s had debated about immigration to Manchuria, how Japanese peasants were attracted by the propaganda of Manchukuo as a "new paradise," and how the ruthless reality led to their disillusionment and suffering in the end. Ronald Suleski has focused on a special group of Japanese immigrants in Manchuria—the Manchurian Youth Corps (*Manshū kaitaku seishōnen giyūgun*; 滿洲開拓青少年義勇軍) and examined how these young Japanese as defenders of the northern border of Manchukuo had exploited, bullied, and even looted local Chinese peasants in the process of their colonization. And then he argued that the Youth Corps was just another instrument of Japanese imperialism.³⁰ Here I attempt to examine the relationship between Japanese immigration and the endeavor of maintaining public security in Manchukuo. To what extent had Japanese immigrants been mobilized to function, or been supposed to function, as civil assistance to suppression and pacification campaigns against "bandits?" What was the effect of this mobilization effort?

Generally, the practice of Japanese immigration can be divided into two phases: the first was from 1932 to 1936 when the project of "armed immigration" (*busō imin*; 武装移民) or "trial immigration" was implemented; the second phase ranged from 1937 to 1945 when the so-called "millions to Manchuria" program was initiated. On the one hand, the main purpose of immigration was to solve the contradiction between land and a

²⁹ See Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), Chapter 8 "The migration machine: Manchurian colonization and state growth."

³⁰ Ibid.; Sandra Wilson, 1995; Ronald Suleski, "Northeast China under Japanese Control: The Role of the Manchurian Youth Corps, 1934-1945," *Modern China* 7:3 (1981): 351-377.

growing population; thus the propaganda of Manchukuo as a “new paradise” with abundant land resources had been the most attractive to impoverished Japanese peasants. On the other hand, from the perspective of the Kwantung Army and bureaucratic institutions of Manchukuo, Japanese immigrants were also supposed to undertake the military and social responsibilities of securing domestic order in Manchukuo.

In 1932, the first group of 493 Japanese “armed immigrants” was settled in Yongfeng town in Huachuan prefecture of Jilin Province; in 1933 the second group of three hundred people was settled in Yilan prefecture of Jilin Province. These first two groups were completely composed of discharged Japanese soldiers armed with weapons. From 1934 to 1936, another three groups of discharged soldiers and peasants were settled in Heilongjiang Province, with a total number of 1,710 people.³¹

According to the Colonial Ministry of Japan, Japanese immigration to Manchuria was supposed to mainly undertake agricultural production, promote the economic development of Manchukuo, and improve the immigrants’ own livelihood. For the Kwantung Army, however, the vision was different. The first five groups of “armed immigrants” were specifically settled in districts where public security and administration were seriously endangered by “bandit violence.” In order to successfully mobilize Japanese immigrants and to ensure a smooth immigration, the Kwantung Army concealed the severity of the “bandit problem” and even denied the existence of “bandits” in Manchuria. Two months before the first group of armed immigrants was settled in Yongfeng town in Jilin province, Yamazaki Masao, who would be the leader of the first group, was dispatched by the Colonial Ministry to investigate the local situation in Yongfeng in August 1932. When he met in Yilan prefecture of Jilin Province with

³¹ *Manshū kaitaku nenkan*, 38-39;

Tomiya Kaneo, the main advocate of armed immigration in the Kwantung Army, Tomiya told him to report to the Ministry that there were no bandits at all in Manchuria. When executing the immigration programs in the following several years, the Kwantung Army still insisted that no bandits or anti-Japanese resistant forces existed in Manchuria when they filed reports to the Colonial Ministry.³²

Ironically, the organization of first two groups of immigrants, who were equipped with military weapons and regulated by the military rules, and revealed little agricultural background actually exposed the fact that Manchuria was by no means a paradise of peace and order at the time. In this sense, as a Chinese scholar at the time had commented, it was not the pressure of overpopulation that drove the plan of Japanese immigration; rather the program of training and settling tens of thousands of discharged soldiers to Manchuria was “tantamount to stationing 100 thousand troops in Northeast China” in order to consolidate the security of Manchukuo.³³

Even though fully armed, in October 1932, upon their arrival at Yongfeng county, which was the foothold of the Big Sword Society and the Red Spears Society, the first group of immigrants met with attacks from these so-called “sect bandits”; similar attacks persisted for several months until the spring of 1933 when these “bandits” were finally driven back.³⁴ While Japanese immigrants frequently suffered from “bandit” attacks, the bitter climate and their unfamiliarity with agricultural skills in the new land led to

³² Setsurō Kuwajima, *Manshū busō imin* 滿州武装移民 [Armed Immigrants to Manchuria] (Tōkyō: Kyōikusha, 1979), 133-134.

³³ Wang Jian, “Dongsansheng riben yimin de guoqu he jianglai” 東三省日本移民的過去和將來 [The past and future of Japanese migrants in the Three Northeastern Provinces], *Dongfang zazhi* 30:17 (1933): 47.

³⁴ *Manshū busō imin*, 131; Nagao Sakurō, Hashimoto Denzaemon, and Katō Kanji, *Manshū nōgyō imin jikkō* 滿洲農業移民十講 [Ten lectures on Manchurian agricultural immigration] (Tōkyō: Chijin Shokan, 1938), 11.

starvation and depression. Threatened by these disadvantages, among the 492 members of first group of immigrants, twenty-five died in battles against “bandits,” twenty-eight died from diseases, and one hundred and ninety-eight withdrew from the group.³⁵

Under the circumstances, it was very difficult for the immigrants to undertake self-defense and agricultural production at the same time. As a Japanese professor in Tōkyō Imperial University commented at the time, the idea of armed immigration was unrealistic. According to him, the fundamental principle of immigration should be promoting agricultural production rather than serving as military backup for suppression campaigns. When the immigrants had to concentrate on self-defense against “bandits,” he continued, how could they effectively engage in agriculture that was restricted by the seasons?³⁶ As a result, the overemphasis on quasi-military responsibilities undertaken by the immigrants led to the failure of the first two immigrations.

On the other hand, when the armed immigrants suffered from frequent attacks, their existence and activities in Manchukuo local society caused new problems. The immigrants’ grievances about hunger and the constant battles against “bandits” were directed at local Chinese peasants. Many immigrants began to steal and even rob food and poultry from local peasants; some even openly looted and killed Chinese. Such atrocities by Japanese immigrants deepened the conflict with local Chinese who were so resentful that they designated immigrant groups as “stationed bandits” (*tonhi*; 屯匪).³⁷ Furthermore, a land policy stating that Japanese immigrants could purchase the land from

³⁵ *Manshū busō imin*, 246.

³⁶ Uchigasaki jirō, “Manshū nōgyō imin seisaku no shomondai” 滿州農業移民政策の諸問題 [Various problems in policies of agricultural migration to Manchuria], *Manshū hyōron* 12:10 (1937):19; *Manshū busō imin*, 154.

³⁷ *Manshū busō imin*, 140-3, 168.

Chinese peasants at a low price finally provoked a serious revolt by Chinese landlords and peasants in the Tulongshan Incident of 1934.

In 1934, when the first two groups of armed immigrants settled in the area of Jamusi and Yilan prefectures in Jilin Province, instead of reclaiming wasteland, they all purchased cultivated land through the Manchukuo government from local peasants. The land policy that favored Japanese immigrants exacerbated popular discontent among local Chinese who had already been forced to hand over their firearms and weapons to the government after 1933.³⁸ In March 1934, Xie Wendong, a landlord and village head as well as the leader of the self-defense corps of the third district of Yilan prefecture organized seven hundred people and then rose up against the Japanese in Tulongshan, proclaiming his army as the “Northeast People’s Self-defense Army” (*Dongbei minzhong ziweijun*; 東北民眾自衛軍); before long, he had attracted three thousand followers around Tulongshang district. This army, aimed at dispelling Japanese immigrants, became a very active anti-Japanese guerrilla troop in Yilan and Huachuan districts. In the following five years, Xie Wendong and his army became the main target of several suppression campaigns before March 1939 when the main force of his army was finally exterminated and Xie himself ended up surrendering to the government.³⁹

From the Tulongshan Incident, we can perceive how Chinese resistance was aroused by such economic concerns as landed property, especially considering the fact that over eighty percent of the population in Manchukuo was peasants. For millions of Chinese peasants, to take land forcibly from them was no different from cutting off their

³⁸ In May 1933, the Manchukuo government enacted “Provisional Regulations on Banning Firearms” (*Zanxing paochong qudi guize*; 暫行炮銃取締規則) in case they were utilized by “bandits.” See *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 7:137 (1933): 1-2.

³⁹ *Manshūkoku shi: Sōron*, 429, 433.

lifeline. Even if they were indifferent to the political turmoil and cared little about who ruled Manchukuo, the economic crisis and the rural poverty, together with the loss of their land to Japanese immigrants could easily result in their revolt in various forms. Actually, the Kwantung Army and the Manchukuo government had already noticed the disastrous result of the rural depression and peasant impoverishment since the early 1930s and had correspondingly taken several relief measures to improve peasant livelihood and prevent the trend toward “banditization” among peasants.⁴⁰

From 1937, a larger immigration program of “Millions to Manchuria” was launched. On the one hand, by 1937, a series of suppression and pacification campaigns had been finished and public security in Manchukuo was consolidated to a great extent. On the other hand, the priority of the state building in Manchukuo was gradually changed from maintaining security to economic development. In this sense, the immigration project was also supposed to encourage economic prosperity and to win over support from native Chinese by transplanting Japanese into local society and finally realizing true “ethnic harmony.” In this way, the second phase of migration was to settle Japanese peasants in agricultural districts rather than in regions of military and administrative significance alone. Therefore, the location of the settlements was expanded to the whole of Manchukuo.⁴¹

In addition to stabilizing rural society in a general sense, the Japanese immigrants were also mobilized to participate, together with Chinese, in some specific programs of

⁴⁰ About the rural depression, poverty, and relief measures taken by the government, see for example, “Tōhendō nōmin no sanjyō iyo iyo hanahadashi” 東邊道農民の慘状愈々甚だし [The disastrous situation of peasants in Dongbiandao is increasingly serious], *Manshū hyōron* 8:5 (1935): 22-23; “Okuchi sennō no kyūbō shinka” 奥地鮮農の窮乏深化 [The deepening poverty of inland Korean peasants], *Manshū hyōron* 8:8 (1935): 21; “Banjaku ken nōson no kyūsaisaku” 盤石県農村の救済策 [Rural relief policies in Panshi prefecture], *Manshū hyōron* 8:12 (1935): 20.

⁴¹ *Dongbei jingji lueduo*, 639.

consolidating Manchukuo security. The project of railway protection was one of these. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the railway police had been set up to supplement military power in coping with “bandit attacks” on railway lines and construction sites. However, the utilization of military and police forces was only a temporary solution to “bandit attacks” and related problems along the railway lines. A more fundamental way, according to the government, was to set up a security network by mobilizing the common people. This mobilization took three forms: railroad-protection villages, railroad self-defense villages, and railroad-protection corps.

The project of railroad protection was firstly initiated in Fengtian in April 1933 with support from the Kwantung Army. It was planned that residents in villages within a five-kilometer distance on each side of national railroads (public roads and waterways included) would be trained to take responsibility for collecting “bandit” information, coordinating with mop-up campaigns, and providing assistance in case of emergencies (such as train fires or derailments). By 1936, the number of railroad-protection villages amounted to 4,058 with a population of 8.4 million in total.⁴²

The project of railroad-protection villages was supposed to play its role in maintaining railroad security by employing villages that were already in existence around railway lines, and the people who were mobilized were mainly Chinese residents. The self-defense villages, however, were completely constituted by Japanese immigrants who were primarily military veterans from Japan.⁴³ The first group of such Japanese immigrants arrived in 1935, with ten households being settled in Nuerhe (女兒河) village on the Fengshan line. By 1944, twenty-three villages were established with a total

⁴² *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 849.

⁴³ See Sun Tong, “Mantie yu Riben de Zhongguo Dongbei yimin” 滿鐵與日本的中國東北移民 [The SMR and Japanese immigration in Northeast China], *Waiguo wenti yanjiu* (2009:2), 50.

population of 1,698.⁴⁴ Immigrants to these self-defense villages were entrusted with twofold responsibilities: railway security and agricultural development along the railway lines. In fact, the requirements for self-defense villagers were stricter than for other ordinary Japanese immigrants. According to the regulations on enlistment, the applicants had to be educated veterans, have served in the military in Manchukuo, have agricultural experience, be physically and psychologically strong, and be less than thirty-five years old.⁴⁵ And therefore the Japanese immigrants of the self-defense villages also constituted part of the so-called “armed immigrants”.

Koreans in Manchukuo

“Ethnic Harmony” (民族協和) was espoused and promoted in Manchukuo as one of its significant ideological constructions, in addition to the “Kingly Way of Paradise” (王道樂土). Among the five ethnic groups of Han Chinese, Manchus, Mongolians, Japanese, and Koreans, the first three comprised the so-called Manchurians (滿洲人) who accounted for 94.57 percent of the total population of Manchukuo by 1940. This largest group of population, made up especially of Han Chinese, became the principal source of the anti-Japanese resistant forces. In the meanwhile, Koreans who mainly resided in Eastern Manchuria had posed another visible or potential threat to the public

⁴⁴ “Tetsudō jikei mura” 鉄道自警村 [Railroad self-defense villages], *Kyōwa* no. 168 (1936): 6-7; *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 849.

⁴⁵ See *Tetsudō jikeiin no soshitsu: tokushu jōken ni tatsu shūdan imin no kata ni tusite* 鉄道自警員の素質——特殊条件に立つ集団移民の型に就いて [Railroad self-defense villagers’ qualities: on types of group immigrants in special conditions] (Mantetsu Tōkyō shisha, 1938), 11.

security of Manchukuo. By 1940, the total number of Koreans had mounted to about 1.45 million, of whom more than half were in Jiandao Province.⁴⁶

Table 8: Population distribution of Korean immigrants in Manchuria (by June 1935)⁴⁷

Province	Household	Population	Percentage of overall Korean Population
Jiandao	80,167	453,345	56.4%
Fengtian	20,817	108,097	11.4%
Andong	16,754	88,635	11.0%
Binjiang	16,278	75,046	9.3%
Jilin	111,40	50,107	6.2%
Sanjiang	4,144	17,482	2.2%
Longjiang	1,413	4,996	0.6%
Xing'an	1,003	3,750	0.5%
Jinzhou	414	1,530	0.2%
Heihe	233	826	0.1%
Rehe	190	734	0.1%
Total	152,553	804,566	100%

The history of Korean immigration to the border area of Manchuria can be traced back to at least the early Qing; many border-crossing incidents (from the Korean side to Manchuria) took place between the Choson and the Qing dynasties between the seventeenth and early twentieth century.⁴⁸ Since the 1880s and especially after 1910 when Korea was finally reduced to Japan's protectorate, the eastern border area of Manchuria between Korea and China became an arena in which Japan, Korea, and China attempted to claim their respective national interests. Furthermore, as André Schmid has suggested, "with the advent of notions of territorial sovereignty in the late nineteenth century, the tolerance of porous boundaries rapidly declined, and the effective control of

⁴⁶ Kangde qinian linshi guoshi diaocha baogao 康德七年臨時國事調查報告 [A temporary survey of national conditions in the seventh year of the Kangde reign] (1940), 3.

⁴⁷ Mantetsu sangyōbu, Zaiman chōsenjin no jitsujō 在滿朝鮮人の実情 [Real conditions of Koreans in Manchukuo] (1937): 15-16.

⁴⁸ On research of this issue, see for example, Bernard Vincent Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993); Andre Schmid, "Looking North toward Manchuria," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99:1 (2000): 219-240.

territory became one of the criteria for judging nations' abilities.”⁴⁹ Therefore, from the late nineteenth century, ethnic issues and related problems had been provoked in this border area in the context of the complicated triangular relationship among Japan, Korea, and China.⁵⁰

In 1909, with the signing of the Jiandao Treaty between Japan and the Qing government, the conflict between Japan and China over their respective claims to jurisdictional sovereignty over the Jiandao area was finally settled.⁵¹ In Hyun Ok Park's research on the social life of Korean immigrants and their historical entanglement with Japanese imperialism, Chinese nationalism, and Communism in Manchuria, she depicted Japanese encouragement of Korean migration to Manchuria as “the politics of osmosis,” in which Korean immigrants, mainly peasants, became the moveable incarnation of Japanese expansion; therefore the Treaty supplied Japan with two instruments of osmotic expansion—Korean landownership and extraterritoriality.⁵²

On the other hand, from the 1910s on, Korean forces in exile, Chinese “mounted bandits,” and the rise of Communism in Eastern Manchuria posed an increasingly visible

⁴⁹ Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 214.

⁵⁰ About historical documents concerning this relationship and border incidents during the late Qing, see Guo Tingyi & Li Yushu ed., *Qing Ji Zhong Ri Han guanxi shiliao* 清季中日韓關係史料 [Historical materials on the relationship among China, Japan, and Korea during the late Qing period] (11 v.) (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1972). This collection of materials included a record in chronological order of official documents such as memorials and correspondence concerning border issues and the consequent negotiations and policymaking of the Qing government.

⁵¹ Jiandao (Gando in Korean and Kandō in Japanese) now is Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture of People's Republic of China. In 1907, Japan made a claim that the southern part of Jilin Province in Northeast China was part of Korea, which was under Japanese colonial control at that time. Japan had used this so-called "Jiandao/Gando" issue to expand its control in China and extract more concessions from the Qing Dynasty, which was on the verge of collapse. As a result of this treaty, Japan thereafter attained greater control in Northeast China, and China kept its own land from being taken away by the Japanese claim. After the defeat of Japan in 1945, both Koreas have used "Jian Dao/Gaodo" issue to prop up Korean nationalism.

⁵² Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 97-8.

threat to the social order in the district. Furthermore, with the surge of Chinese nationalism against Japanese imperialism in the aftermath of the May Thirtieth Movement in 1925 and the Northern Expedition in 1927, Koreans were regarded as the agents and vanguard of Japanese expansion in Manchuria. In 1920, the Hunchun Incident in which Manchurian bandits killed and looted a large number of Korean and Chinese local residents resulted in brutal suppression campaigns by Japanese consular police; two years later, similar violence occurred in a place called Toudaogou in Jilin Province; local Koreans residents who were regarded as pro-Japanese were severely attacked by Chinese “mounted bandits.” In this sense, many Korean peasants became the victims of both Japanese imperialism and Chinese nationalism. Correspondingly, both Japan and local administration of the Zhang Zuolin regime attempted to restrain the disturbances and restore peace and order.⁵³ In this process, the Japanese consular police and the Kwantung Army seized the opportunity to expand their military power in the name of protecting Koreans from “bandit attacks.”⁵⁴

As a result, in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the image of Korean peasants as victims of Chinese “bandits” and corrupt regimes was promoted and propagated by the Kwantung Army to justify its further military operations. In the first several years after the establishment of Manchukuo, the government still often attributed the impoverishment of Korean peasants to historical factors such as the oppression from

⁵³ Erik W. Esselstrom, “Rethinking the Colonial Conquest of Manchuria: The Japanese Consular Police in Jiandao, 1909-1937,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2005): 44-49.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 42.

Chinese warlords and officials, exorbitant taxes, and persecution from both “bandits” and “lawless Koreans” (*futei senjin*; 不逞鮮人).⁵⁵

Actually, the economic depression suffered by Korean peasants and the continued resistance from “lawless Koreans” seriously endangered public security of Manchukuo. And the influence of both Korean and Chinese communists since the 1920s made the whole picture more complicated. In 1930, the Korean Communist Party was ordered by the Comintern to join the Chinese Communist Party. By September of that year, there were 3,800 Korean and 150 Chinese party members in the Jiandao area.⁵⁶ As for why so many Koreans wanted to join the CCP, Chong-Sik Lee has concluded:

...Unlike the Chinese masses, whose natural sympathy inclined toward Chang Hsueh-liang rather than the Russians—the Koreans found it easy to accept the CCP’s anti-warlord slogans, and the slogans against imperialism also appealed to their nationalist sentiment against Japan. Further, the radical economic slogans of the CCP would have appealed to the Koreans in Chientao in view of the fact that a majority lived in poverty under landlords. The Korean community in Chientao and elsewhere in Manchuria thus presented what could be characterized as a revolutionary situation.⁵⁷

Therefore, when military operations were undertaken against various “bandit” groups from 1932 to 1934, collective hamlets were initiated firstly in Jiandao region to improve the livelihood of Korean peasants and meanwhile terminated Communist activities by cutting off their connections with peasants. With both military and administrative policies strangling material supplies and emotional support from both Chinese and Korean peasants, a feeling of desperation stimulated the outbreak of the Minshengtuan Incident.

The Minshengtuan Incident, in summary, was a purge performed by Chinese Communists toward their Korean counterparts within the CCP’s organization from 1933-

⁵⁵ Mantetsu sangyōbu, *Zaiman chōsenjin no jitsujō* 在滿朝鮮人の実情 [Real conditions of Koreans in Manchukuo] (1937), 19-28.

⁵⁶ Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 111-113.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 123.

1936. As a result, a large number of Korean Communists were eliminated from the CCP because they were under suspicion of being members of Minshengtuan (People's Livelihood Corps), which was regarded by the CCP as a pro-Japanese organization established in 1931.⁵⁸ The witch-hunt against Minshengtuan had a destructive influence on the CCP's revolutionary capacity in Manchuria in general. It went without saying that the workings of Japanese intelligence and brutal military operations initiated the occurrence of the Incident and thus according to Chong-Sik Lee, Korean communists became a scapegoat for the impasse of Communist revolution under the suppression and pacification campaigns in Manchukuo. The power struggle between Korean Communists and Chinese Communists could also be taken into account. However, if we also take into account the historical conflict between local Chinese and Korean immigrants in their struggle for land ownership and their ethnic difference in terms of social status, culture, and lifestyle, then it seems ironic that the "ethnic disharmony" between Korean and Chinese among both Communists and rural population contributed to the consolidation of the power structure of Manchukuo.

The Kyōwakai (協和会) and Senbu (宣撫)

The *Kyōwakai* (Concordia Association; 協和会) was established in July 1932 in Xingjing (Changchun).⁵⁹ Its honorary president was Puyi and honorary consultants Honjō

⁵⁸ About the development and influence of this Incident, see Chong-Sik Lee, "Witch Hunt among the Guerrillas: The Min-sheng-T'uan Incident," *The China Quarterly*, no. 26 (1966): 107-117.

⁵⁹ In the very initial phase, *Kyōwakai* was planned by the Kwantung Army to be organized in the form of a party, called *Kyōwatō* (Concordia Party; 協和党); later, this idea of being a party was aborted due to the objection from Puyi. To get rid of the partisan connotation, the organization was finally designated as *Kyōwakai*. See *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 560; as for the course of development from *Kyōwatō* to *Kyōwakai*, see David G. Egler, "Japanese Mass Organization in Manchuria, 1928–1945: The Ideology of Racial Harmony" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1977), 267-282.

Shigeru and Zheng Xiaoxu. Although the Association experienced several reorganizations in the thirteen years of its existence, its ideological foundation never changed from the very beginning. As the proclamation announced in 1932, the goal of the Association was to fulfill the “Kingly Way” and “eliminate the pernicious influence of warlord despotism”; its economic policy was to “promote agriculture and reform industry in order to secure people’s livelihood” and to “exclude the Communist destruction and the Capitalist monopoly.” In the meanwhile, the Association also attempted to “promote Confucian ethics, accordance with the mandate of Heaven, and to seek to achieve ethnic harmony and international peace and order.”⁶⁰

Based on the ideals claimed above, the primary function of *Kyōwakai* was supposed to act as a relatively detached and independent organization to assist with the management of Manchukuo. As introductory materials submitted by the Bureau of Military Affairs of Japan to the Diet had illustrated in 1937:

At present, among Japanese people in Manchuria, there are around 500,000 to 600,000 inland Japanese and 1.2 million Koreans. In addition, there are Han Chinese, Manchus, and Mongols. Whether we can govern these ethnic groups very well by means of the military and administration alone is a problem, which must be carefully examined. In fact, so far, Manchus and Han Chinese fear officials very much. In China, the so-called politics of the “Kingly Way” always remains on their lips and the true “Kingly Way” has never been realized. Then what kind of strategies should we take to deal with current conditions? Once there is an emergency, are we capable of maintaining internal order in Manchuria? For the above-mentioned problems, at present, it is necessary to create an organization that combines the military, officials, and civilians together as a unit, truly understands the spirit of the state foundation, and becomes the flesh and blood [of Manchukuo]. And the premise of this organization is “ethnic harmony.” It needs to combine together Japanese, Koreans, Manchus, Han Chinese, and Mongols closely; this is the essence of *Kyōwakai*.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 562-3.

⁶¹ “Guanyu manzhou diguo xieheshui” 關於滿洲帝國協和會 [On the Concordia Association in imperial Manchukuo] (1937), in *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 599.

From the statement, we can perceive that the formation of *Kyōwakai* was to solve problems of domestic security that could not be eradicated through military campaigns and administrative measures alone. While “ethnic harmony” was regarded as the “premise” for realizing the true “Kingly Way,” the practical purpose was completely eliminating all real and potential anti-Japanese and anti-Manchukuo forces, at both military and ideological levels. In this sense, *Kyōwakai* was supposed to “effect a permanent cure” by developing a mass organization at central, provincial, and prefecture levels. By September 1943, *Kyōwakai* had established 5,185 branches with 4,285,414 members in Manchukuo.⁶²

In order to consolidate the effect of military campaigns, and furthermore to fundamentally root out potential threats, *Kyōwakai* had specifically concentrated on *senbu* (propaganda and pacification; 宣撫) work and the youth mobilization. As early as April and May of 1932, when the Kwantung Army was carrying out military campaigns against the disbanded Northeastern Army led by Ma Zhanshan, Ding Chao, and Li Du in north and east Manchuria, *Kyōwakai*, supported by the Kwantung Army, initiated *senbu* plans and organizations, and the first pioneer groups were dispatched to Fengtian on May 16. During 1932 and 1933, “propaganda and pacification” were aimed at collecting intelligence for the Kwantung Army, propagating the spirit of state-foundation and the “Kingly Way” to the populace in “bandit-infested” areas, and pacifying the social unrest following the military operations.⁶³ Actually, the role of propaganda in military operations had been highly valued by the Kwantung Army since the 1920s in China. For example, in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident of 1931, the Kwantung Army

⁶² *Manchū nenkan* (1944), 631.

⁶³ Wei Qingjie, “Rijun zai dongbei de ‘taofa’ he ‘xuanfu’” 日軍在東北的“討伐”和“宣撫”[Japanese pacification and propaganda in Northeast China], *Lantai shijie* 1 (2001): 44-5.

immediately took over the Shenyang radio station on October 6, reestablishing it as the Mukden radio station under the military control to serve for military propaganda.⁶⁴

In a larger context, the work of propaganda and pacification by *Kyōwakai* was one of the significant links and instruments in the so-called “ideological war” (*shisōsen*; 思想戦). As a Japanese director of the headquarters of *Kyōwakai* pointed out, the “ideological war” targeted any ideas or thoughts such as individualism, utilitarianism, materialism, liberalism, and communism that went against the spirit of state foundation. And specifically, “to fight against Communism and conquer ‘Communist bandits’ is a precondition for the state building of Manchukuo...The warfare against ‘Communist bandits’ is substantially a war of ideology and a war of winning over the populace.”⁶⁵ As a result, this “ideological war” was immediately launched with the founding of Manchukuo. For example, in December 1932, the local office of *Kyōwakai* in Panshi prefecture began to carry out the investigation of “Communist bandits” and other kinds of “bandits.” In the meanwhile, this local branch of *Kyōwakai* also performed the work of anti-Communist propaganda by distributing 23,000 flyers, delivering lectures, and showing movies to the populace.⁶⁶

When the effort was made by *Kyōwakai* to assist military operations against “Communist bandits,” the implementation of “collective hamlets” on a large scale as a fundamental way of cutting off the connection between the populace and “Communist bandits” necessitated the mobilization of a large number of people, many of whom

⁶⁴ Yamamoto Taketoshi, “Manshū ni okeru nihon no rajo senryaku” 満州における日本のラジオ戦略 [The Japanese Army’s radio strategy in Manchuria], *Intelligence*, no. 4 (2004): 12-13.

⁶⁵ *Manzhou guozheng zhidao zonglan* 滿洲國政指導綜覽 [A general survey of guidance of statecraft of Manchukuo] (1944), in *Wei manzhouguo shiliao* 偽滿史料叢書 [Series of Manchukuo historical materials] (vol. 2) (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1993), 624.

⁶⁶ *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 650-1.

refused to leave their home villages and be relocated in collective hamlets. Under the circumstances, *Kyōwakai* was supposed to play its role of propaganda and persuasion. For example, according to the confession of a Chinese official working in a branch of *Kyōwakai* in Rehe Province in 1943, in order to persuade people to move down from mountainous areas, the provincial headquarters of *Kyōwakai* drew up concrete plans by relying on officials and members of *Kyōwakai* in each village branch. These local officials, together with local residents of renown and with influence, directly or indirectly exerted pressure on peasants through a policy of the carrot and the stick. By offering such materials as foodstuffs, clothes, and houses to peasants as well as threatening to confiscate their arable land, the local branch finally accomplished the task of relocation. Moreover, officials of *Kyōwakai* also attempted to persuade the “bandits” to give up their weapons and pledge allegiance to the state by promising the security for their lives, properties, and occupations after they voluntarily turned themselves in. As a result, not a few people submitted and the overall work of propaganda and pacification by *Kyōwakai* greatly contributed to the military campaigns in Rehe Province.⁶⁷

In order to effectively carry out the work of propaganda and pacification, and finally to win over support from common people in the “ideological war,” *Kyōwakai* put specific emphasis on youth cultivation and education as the strongest backbone in realizing the ideal of “ethnic harmony.” Actually, the work of organizing young children had been initiated by the government in September 1932 when the Manchurian Children’s Corps (童子團) was set up. By 1936, there were already 216 Children’s Corps

⁶⁷ “Hao Xi’an bigong” 郝席庵筆供 [Hao Xian’s written confession] (1945), in *Weiman kuilei zhengquan*, 655-656.

with 24,000 members.⁶⁸ In 1937, following the joint directives from the Ministry of Military Administration, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Ministry of Mongolian Affairs, *Kyōwakai* set up a youth training center in the headquarters of Xinjing, and later erected forty-eight centers in all of Manchuria to cultivate and train young people in the state ideology and military skills. In 1939, *Kyōwakai* reorganized various youth corps and juvenile corps affiliated with different organizations into a united Concordia Youth Corps (協和青年団) and Concordia Juvenile Corps (協和少年団). The Youth and Juvenile Corps were furthermore established in schools at national, provincial, and county levels. Generally, the Concordia Youth Corps was composed of young males aged from sixteen to nineteen, and young boys between ten and fifteen constituted the Juvenile Corps. By November 1941, there were 3,128 Youth Corps with 655,000 members and 3,707 Juvenile Corps with 747,500 members.⁶⁹

With the reorganization of young people in Manchuria on a large scale, the youth movement was initiated to provide forces to assist with public security of Manchukuo. For example, in the large-scale suppression campaigns focused on Jilin, Mudanjiang, Jiandao, and Tonghua Provinces from October 1937 to March 1940, a Youth Action Team was first set up in Linjiang prefecture of Tonghua Province in November 1939. This Team was composed of forty young people selected from graduates of the youth training center of *Kyōwakai*. In addition to regular works such as collecting intelligence and making propaganda, this team was also supposed to solve various problems engendered during and after military campaigns. Such problems included the increasing burden imposed on peasants in military operations, the decrease of arable land due to the

⁶⁸ *Manzhou guozheng zhidao zonglan*, 641.

⁶⁹ *Weiman Kuilei zhengquan*, 614; *Manshūkoku shi: Kakuron*, 138.

implementation of “collective hamlets,” the over-exploitation of manpower in the projects of road construction and transportation, the increase in taxes and fees, and the unjust accusations against peasants of being “bandits.” All these problems resulted in social unrest and panic among local residents, and as a result, many people escaped to other places. In some extreme cases, a whole village migrated to north Manchuria and many villages were deserted. Under the circumstances, the main task of the Youth Action Team was to help to improve the livelihood in the regions of suppression campaigns, propagandize against the evil of “Communist bandits” and for the necessity of suppression, and stabilize local society.⁷⁰

In addition, *Kyōwakai* also cooperated with other institutes in organizing youth corps to participate in some specific security projects. For example, from 1934, the branch of *Kyōwakai* in the SMR set up a railroad-protection youth corps by mobilizing young people eleven to twenty-five years old. Through the regular military training and educational projects focused on railroad security, Japanese language, and knowledge of agricultural and animal products, these young people were expected to coordinate with railway-protection and self-defense villages. They were also engaged in the propaganda of railroad protection against “bandit attacks.” For example, their slogans included: “Youth corps are patriotic pioneers; Railroad-protection should be taken as the herald of constructing the Kingly Way; and those who know railroad protection know ways of patriotism.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ *Manshūkokushi: sōron*, 129-131.

⁷¹ *Airo seishōnen undō no gaiyō* 愛路青少年運動の概要 [Overview of the railroad-protection movement], (1944), 2-12.

Table 9: Current Situation of Railroad-protection Youth Corps (by September 1943)⁷²

Railway Bureaus	Number of Corps	Number of Corps Members
Fengtian	122	11,900
Jinzhou	123	9,546
Jilin	140	8,919
Mudanjiang	241	7,827
Harbin	300	30,768
Qiqihar	25	1,474
Total	951	70,524

“Talking with ‘Submitted Bandits’ (*Kijunhi*; 帰順匪)”

In fact, not only Japanese immigrants, Koreans, and common Chinese peasants were mobilized in suppression campaigns, even “bandits” themselves were taken as the target of mobilization and propaganda. In August 1934, Mr. T., a Japanese employee of the civil engineering group in the SMR was kidnapped by a group of “bandits,” whose leader was named “Da Sansheng” (a nick name, meaning “attacking three provinces”). For sixty-five days, Mr. T. lived with more than three hundred bandits and made every effort to persuade them to “submit and pledge allegiance” (*kijun*; 帰順) to the state. After Mr. T. was released, he recorded his experiences in an article that was later published in *Kyōwa*, the SMR employees’ magazine. He specifically recorded how he attempted to persuade these “professional bandits” who had been driven by poverty to submit to the state and live a normal life. Mr. T. also tried to explain to “bandits” how Manchukuo represented a better choice for the people in Manchuria, especially when compared with

⁷² Ibid., 15.

previous warlord regimes.⁷³ Three months after Mr. T.’s release, most of this group of “bandits” led by Da Sansheng “submitted and pledged allegiance.” Later they were employed as laborers in a construction project of which Mr. T. was in charge. These ex-bandits were said to be very obedient and respectful to him.

The submission of “bandits” in Mr. T.’s story was not a single case. In fact, immediately after the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, measures that relied on persuasion rather than military operations were taken to pacify “bandits,” especially those who were driven by poverty or forced to join the gangs during political turmoil. For example, in November 1932, the Fengtian provincial government promulgated an edict to the counties about how to deal with “submitted bandits.” It was claimed in the edict that since many people in the “ignorant populace” had been “forced” to join the “bearded bandits” in the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, the new government of Manchukuo should give these commoners opportunities to be reformed so that they could return to their villages as farmers, rather than indiscriminately suppressing all of them.⁷⁴ In East Xing’an Province, it was ordered that after investigation anyone who had “repented and turned over a new leaf” would be issued an official “certificate” (證明書) to prove that they had reformed and could lead a new life like other “innocent people” (良民). Otherwise, the government would dispatch military troops to carry out suppression without mercy.⁷⁵ Moreover, in some districts, temporary asylums were set up to

⁷³ Hara Hiro, *Manshūkoku tetsuto kensetsu hiwa*, 449-452. Although the story was written in Japanese, the conversation between Mr. T. and “bandits” was carried on in Chinese.

⁷⁴ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 4: 69 (1932): 8-9.

⁷⁵ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 5: 114 (1933): 7.

accommodate “bandits” who had submitted before they were allowed to return to their home villages.⁷⁶

The aforementioned policies undertaken by the Manchukuo government at the outset were mainly applied to two categories of “bandits.” One was “civilian bandits who have been forced to take up banditry because of the economic necessity of getting a livelihood” and the other was “minor and insignificant groups which consist of farmers or workers in abject poverty.”⁷⁷ By providing these groups of “bandits” the opportunity to submit and ensuring the improvement of their livelihood, the new state attempted to practice the benevolent rule embodied in its political ideal of the “Kingly Way.” It was in this sense that relief work was also carried out especially in rural areas simultaneously.⁷⁸

Pragmatic concerns also promoted the strategy of incorporating surrendered “bandits” who had been defeated on the battlefield into the military organizations of Manchukuo. Since “professional bandits” such as “bearded bandits” and “mounted bandits” had been active in Manchuria for a long time, they were very familiar with the complex topography of mountainous areas. Therefore, the Japanese Kwantung Army often reorganized these surrendered “bandits” and employed them as guides in suppression campaigns against “political bandits.”⁷⁹ In this sense, “bandits” who had surrendered were mobilized, whether actively or passively, as collaborators in military operations. However, the Manchukuo military was very cautious with “submitted bandits,” who were forced to surrender after being defeated and thus would frequently shift sides. In June 1933, after receiving twenty dollars, one pistol, and about fifty bullets per person

⁷⁶ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 10:292 (1933): 8.

⁷⁷ Toa-Keizai Chosakyoku, *The Manchoukuo Year Book* (Tokyo: Kyoku, 1934), 114.

⁷⁸ *Manzhouguo zhengfu gongbao*, 5:102 (1932): 12.

⁷⁹ Cao Baoming, “Dongbei tufei,” 58-9.

from the Manchukuo military, around 6,000 former “bearded bandits” in Shenyang launched a sudden counterattack on Shenyang city and railway stations, and caused great chaos.⁸⁰

Correspondingly, the rules and regulations for dealing with surrendered “bandits” were constantly revised with the progress of military operations. According to “The Main Points for Handling Surrendered Bandits” enacted by the Ministry of Military Administration of Manchukuo in 1938, the major policy toward “professional bandits” and “political bandits” was still military extermination and it was absolutely forbidden to elicit “bandits’ allegiance” through persuasion; when “bandits” submitted to the Manchukuo military, either because of the pressure of military operations or their “belief in and admiration of politics of the Kingly Way” in Manchukuo, those who had committed a felony previously with no hope of improvement, and those who had surrendered several times were not accepted. In practice, after the Manchukuo military and police had accepted their submission, the ex-bandits would be tattooed with a “::” mark on the inner side of their elbows, and their fingerprints and photos would be registered on the books. Then these ex-bandits would be either sent back to their families or birthplaces or driven out of Manchukuo. Those who returned to rural life as peasants would be awarded a ten-dollar subsidy and then would be supervised by the police in their respective *baojia* villages.⁸¹

The success of persuading “bandits” to submit by promising them a secure life, money, and official posts, on the one hand, pragmatically reduced military operations that required the support of materials and manpower. On the other hand, the propaganda

⁸⁰ *Zhongyang ribao*, June 1, 1933.

⁸¹ *Dongbei dataofa*, pp. 19-21.

about bandits' choice of submission and their supposed enjoyment of a new life in Manchukuo, symbolized the successful practice of the "Kingly Way." For example, in August 1936, a meeting was held by the Jilin Railway Bureau in Hunchun County in Jiandao province. The participants in the discussion included Japanese counselors and representative villagers from the neighboring counties, SMR employees, and several "ex-bandits" who had recently submitted and pledged their loyalty to the Manchukuo state. According to the record of the meeting, these "ex-bandits" mostly originated in disbanded soldiers after the Manchurian Incident. Some of them were common people who happened to have helped the Communists. After this group of "bandits" with fifty men submitted, it was arranged for them to be laborers in a nearby gold mine. In the record, a Chinese village head in one of the railroad-protection villages in Hunchun County was praised specifically by the local government and the railway bureau because he had acted as the mediator and volunteer in persuading these "bandits" to submit.⁸²

As pointed out in the preface of the record, the meeting was held to enrich the information and knowledge about "bandits," and the publication of the record thus would help the populace to differentiate between "common bandits" and "Communist bandits." Moreover, the record was supposed by the government to play a role in propaganda as well. As claimed in the preface, these "ex-bandits" were "fortunate" to be covered by the "twilight of the politics of the Kingly Way." In addition, these "ex-bandits" were also asked to talk about how they became bandits, their experiences among the brigands, and their impressions of Manchukuo, etc. Their appreciation of a new life in Manchukuo compared with the unstable "bandit life" previously, was recorded and published to

⁸² *Kijunhi to kataru 帰順匪と語る* [Talking with submitted bandits] (1936), 1-35.

propagate and strengthen the state orthodoxy. It was for this purpose that public ceremonies were often held following the submission. In these ceremonies, “submitted bandits” were required to pledge their allegiance to Manchukuo; photos taken in such ceremonies would also be used as materials for propaganda.⁸³

A representative example of a “bandit” who had changed sides was Xie Wendong. In the Tulongshang Incident in March 1934, Xie organized an armed force and attacked the police bureau in Tulongshan and killed a Japanese commander.⁸⁴ Later, Xie expanded his military forces under the name of People’s National Salvation Army (*Minzhong jiuguo jun*; 民眾救國軍) by incorporating local militias from the neighboring counties. In 1936, he joined the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army led by the CCP and became the commander of the Eighth Army.⁸⁵

From the initial outbreak of the Tulongshan Incident, the Manchukuo military attempted to suppress and pacify Xie’s armed forces, but failed several times. In the meanwhile, the Kwantung Army never gave up its effort of negotiating with Xie and persuading him to surrender. After a series of intensive military operations from 1934 to 1939, Xie’s main force was defeated. In the meanwhile, several major commanders in his army surrendered to the Manchukuo military due to the serious shortage of food and other materials. In a kind of desperation, Xie finally chose to surrender in March 1939.⁸⁶ Thereafter, the Kwantung Army attempted to use Xie’s surrender for political propaganda;

⁸³ Zhang Zhiqiang ed. *Wei Manzhouguo de “zhaopian neican”* 假滿洲國的“照片內參” [“Photographs for internal reference” in Manchukuo] (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2004), 104.

⁸⁴ “‘Doryūsan jiken’ ha Sha Buntō hi no gyakusenden” 土竜山事件は謝文東の逆宣伝 [“Tulongshan Incident” is the bandit Xie Wendong’s counterpropaganda], *Manshū nippō* 滿洲日報 [The Manchurian daily] (November 24, 1934).

⁸⁵ Jiang Niandong, *Wei Manzhouguo shi*, 480-1.

⁸⁶ “Baitu Wulang bigong” 白土五郎筆供 [Written confession of Shirato Gorō] (September 15, 1954), in *Dongbei da taofa*, 415-9.

from April 1939, Xie was sent to visit Xinjing, the capital city of Manchukuo, and then Tokyo, where he was received by many high-ranking officials and celebrities. Meanwhile, his journey was made into a film and played in both Manchukuo and Japan.⁸⁷

In this sense, not only did “bandits’ submission” reduce the difficulties for military operations, moreover, the testimony of “ex-bandits,” their surrender ceremonies, and the special preferential treatment enjoyed by some surrendered “bandit” leaders were also employed as symbols and evidence of a legitimate and benevolent state. In this process, “submitted bandits” also served as a footnote in the writing of a “splendid” history of state building in Manchukuo.

Conclusion

Previous studies on the Japanese Wartime Empire have pointed out that Japanese military power in Manchuria was limited to big cities and railways and therefore colonial rule in the form of the state of Manchukuo “had only a weak grasp over the countryside.”⁸⁸ From the studies of various mass organizations such as immigrants and *Kyōwakai*, we can see that by relying on social groups to stabilize rural society, especially in those districts with active “bandit” activities, the state also tried to look for assistance in maintaining and consolidating a legitimate authority. Despite various conflicts between Japanese and Korean immigrants and Chinese peasants, a united armed force among peasants never took form. Just as a Chinese intellectual had commented in

⁸⁷ Yu Sheng, “Feixiao Xie Wendong de xingmie” 匪梟謝文東的興滅 [The rise and fall of the bandit leader Xie Wendong], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 178-9.

⁸⁸ Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie ed., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), xxxvii.

1935 when the large-scale Japanese immigration project was initiated. By comparing the effort taken by Japan with that by previous regimes in Northeast China, he stated:

...despite the fact that Northeast China was put under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government for centuries, and that the effort of immigration in and opening up of the Northeast has been made over several decades, once there was turmoil, peasants who accounted for more than eighty percent of the overall population seldom felt the significance of the nation-state and thus hardly rose up to defend and fight for the land.⁸⁹

On the other hand, in “bandit suppression” campaigns, mobilization was also directed towards “bandits,” who were supposed to be in the “enemy camp.” By promising them rewards such as official posts and material supplies, many armed forces that had joined anti-Japanese activities surrendered after being defeated; most of them were sent back to their home villages, and some others later on revolted against the government again. In this sense, the “bandit suppression” provided a platform for game playing between the state and its opponents. For the state, either “pacified bandits” or “submitted bandits” could be represented as symbols of a successful regime in maintaining peace and order for its subjects; for the bandits, their concern was probably a simple choice of life or death. Therefore, by frequently shifting their ground and taking advantage of the policy toward “submitted bandits,” many “professional gangs” survived a series of suppressions during the Manchukuo period and then regained their power and influence in Northeast China after the downfall of Manchukuo in 1945.

⁸⁹ Ju Mingzhou, “Riben yimin jijin zhong de dongbei nongmin wenti” 日本移民急進中的東北農民問題 [Peasants’ problems in Northeast China during the rapid Japanese migration], *Dongfang zazhi* 32:19 (1935): 71.

Epilogue: The Chinese Communist Party's "Bandit Suppression" in Post-war Northeast China

After the defeat of Japan and the downfall of Manchukuo in August 1945, a temporary power vacuum provided opportunities for the rise of various armed forces in Northeast China, especially in rural districts.¹ When the Japanese Kwantung Army hastily retreated from Northeast China, a large number of materials and weapons were left behind. In the areas where Japanese immigrants congregated, weapons, bullets, horses, clothing, and provisions were scattered everywhere. Therefore, Chinese residents who lived near Japanese garrisons and immigrant villages took over these materials and equipped themselves for self-defense.² Besides, in some districts, local Chinese officials and elites under the previous Manchukuo regime set up temporary "Committees of Maintaining Public Security" and organized local militias with the names "Peace Preservation Corps," "Recovery Army," etc.³ In the meanwhile, ex-bandits, new brigands, and disbanded soldiers of the Manchukuo Army also brought disruption to Manchuria. For example, between early 1946 to 1948 in Linjiang, Fusong, Jingyu, and Changbai counties along the Changbai Mountain, the total number of "bandit gangs" reached 183.⁴

By the time of Japan's unconditional surrender, both the CCP and the Guomingdang (KMT) attempted to send troops to the Northeast and dominate this

¹ As for a comprehensive study of the Civil War, see for example, Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle 1945-1949* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), and Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: the Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

² Yu Sheng, "Feixiao Xie Wendong de xingmie," in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 181; Steven I. Leven, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 141.

³ Zhu Jingrong and Sun Ke, "Lindian feihuan yu jiaofei douzheng" 林甸匪患與剿匪鬥爭 [The evil of banditry and the bandit-suppression struggle in Lindian], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 316.

⁴ Jiang Huijun, "Dongbei Changbaishan lu de jiaofei" 東北長白山麓的剿匪 [Bandit suppression in the foothills of the Changbai Mountain in Northeast], in *Jindai Zhongguo tufei shilu*, 385.

strategically important district. On September 14, 1945, the CCP decided to set up the Northeast Bureau of the Central Committee (NEB) in Shenyang and appointed Peng Zhen the leader.⁵ Since the Soviet Union had already occupied many large cities and major railways, and obtained military equipment from the defeated Kwantung Army and Manchukuo since late August 1945, the CCP planned to take over the Northeast directly from the Soviet Union and then defeat the KMT's main force in the decisive mobile war.

However, from the mid-November 1945, the KMT troops crossed Shanhai Pass, occupied Jinzhou, and kept advancing into north and south Manchuria. In the meanwhile, military forces of the CCP were still in an initial phase of organization and they also encountered the problem of unfamiliarity with local conditions. Furthermore, based on the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance signed by the Nationalist government and the Soviet Union on August 14, 1945, the Nationalist government attempted to put diplomatic pressures on the Soviet Union, requiring that the latter transfer administrative power only to the Nationalist government. Under the circumstances, the Central Committee of the CCP put forward a new strategy of "giving up the main road and occupying the two sides" (*rangkai dalu zhanling liangxiang*; 讓開大路佔領兩廂).⁶ In November 1945, the Central Committee issued a directive to control rural districts and medium-and-small cities, rather than large cities and major railways. As a result, the headquarters of the NEB also retreated from Shenyang to Benxi. On December 28, 1945, Mao Zedong issued another directive of "Establishing Consolidated Base Areas in the

⁵ Ding Xiaochun, Ge Fulu, and Wang Shiying eds., *Dongbei jiefang zhanzheng dashiji* 東北解放戰爭大事記 [Events in the war of liberation in Northeast China] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi ziliao chubanshe, 1987), 9.

⁶ Ibid., 23-6, 33.

Northeast” and specified that these base areas were to be the vast rural districts and “cities far from the centers of Nationalist occupation.”⁷

By the time when the CCP decided to build base areas in rural districts in late 1945 and early 1946, their biggest challenge came from various militarized local groups. In this process, all the armed forces that opposed the CCP were now categorized as “bandits” and all the “bandits” were taken as highly politicized advocates of the KMT. As stated in a work report regarding suppression campaigns, these “bandits,” different from previous “bearded bandits” since they were believed to be intimately connected to the KMT, were also “political bandits.” Therefore, any real and potentially pro-KMT forces and groups such as “self-defense corps” organized by local landlords, spies, ex-soldiers of Manchukuo, and of course “bearded bandits,” were all designated as “bandits.” According to the CCP’s estimate, by the end of 1945, there were over 100,000 “bandits” in the Northeast and two-thirds of the counties in North Manchuria were controlled by “stubborn bandits.”⁸ Under the circumstances, to eradicate these “bandits” and take over the districts where they were entrenched became the premise of building base areas.

However, it was not until the end of 1945 that the CCP finally determined to completely exterminate bandit forces militarily. Upon their first arrival at the Northeast from North China in late August 1945, the military forces of the CCP were outnumbered by various local armed forces.⁹ In order to take full advantage of well-equipped civilian

⁷ Mao Zedong, “Jianli gonggu de dongbei genjudi” 建立鞏固的東北根據地 [Establish consolidated base areas in the Northeast], in Heilongjiang sheng dang’anguan ed., *Jiaofei douzheng* 剷匪鬥爭 [The bandit-suppression struggle] (Harbin: Heilongjiang sheng dang’anguan, 1982), 1-4.

⁸ “Dongbei jiaofei gongzuo baogao” 東北剿匪工作報告 [The work report on bandit suppression in the Northeast] (April, 1947), in *Jiaofei douzheng*, 136-8.

⁹ By the end of August 1945, the number of armed forces sent to Manchuria was only around 13,000. See Victor Shiu Chiang Chen, “Imagining China’s Madrid in Manchuria: The Communist Military Strategy at the Onset of the Chinese Civil War, 1945-46,” *Modern China* 31:1 (2005): 78.

forces and coordinate with its strategy of defeating the KMT and completely occupying the Northeast, the CCP attempted to mobilize and incorporate these forces into its formal military organizations. With the KMT's occupation of Shanhai Pass and Jinzhou and with more KMT troops being transported to the Northeast on a large scale, however, many informal armies defected to the KMT.¹⁰ By late December of 1945, the number of deserters from CCP troops reached 33,200; in the meanwhile, 154 Communist cadres were killed in these mutinies.¹¹

With a series of setbacks encountered in the process of military incorporation, the CCP formed its insight into the special characteristics of the “bandit problem” in the Northeast:

Bandit attacks are targeting [our] armed forces in rural districts. They [bandits] have massacred our local cadres, intercepted transportation routes, destroyed railway traffics, struck at our troops, organized [and instigated] military mutinies, disrupted our local troops, and conducted propaganda and spread rumors [for the KMT]. In this way, they have swayed people's minds and caused social unrest by coordinating with the frontal attacks from the KMT troops. Therefore, to eradicate this type of bandit is not an easy task, but an extremely complicated and hard struggle. It is only through the complete extermination of such bandits that we can initiate and consolidate the building of base areas, and can transfer more troops to reinforce the main force and strengthen our frontal battlefield.¹²

Between late November and early December of 1945, the Central Committee and the NEB thus adopted a policy of complete eradication of bandits and traitors in Manchuria. In January 1946, the CCP renamed the Northeast People's Autonomous Army (*Dongbei renmin zizhijun*; 東北人民自治軍) as the Northeast Democratic Allied Army (*Dongbei minzhu lianjun*; 東北民主聯軍). By mid-1946, the CCP's military forces were strengthened greatly. The Northeast Democratic Allied Army led by Lin Biao contained a

¹⁰ *Dongbei jiefang zhazheng dashiji*, 29.

¹¹ “*Dongbei jiaofei gongzuo baogao*,” 138.

¹² *Ibid.*, 140.

total number of 300,000 men.¹³ Meanwhile, the CCP divided the Northeast into four military regions; military operations against bandits were launched on a large scale.

From late 1945 to early 1949, the CCP's "bandit suppression" campaigns in Northeast China experienced three phases. Between December 1945 and April 1946, the first step was to purge "bad elements" from the newly organized troops and then enlist reliable peasants in the army. In the meanwhile, relying on the old solid troops sent to Manchuria, military operations were carried out. In this process, many large "bandit troops" were suppressed and dispersed to East and North Manchuria.¹⁴ However, following its defeat in the defensive Siping Campaign by the KMT in May 1946, the main force of the Northeast Democratic Allied Army led by Lin Biao was forced to retreat from Siping and Changchun. Subsequently, military mutinies and the congregation of various brigands gave rise to a new wave of insurgency. And bandit suppression went into the second period.

With the establishment of the base areas in North Manchuria after mid-1946, the CCP started to combine military operations with mobilization of the masses. By early 1947, several major notorious gangs had been defeated and their leaders captured, including Xie Wendong, who was publicly executed in December 1946.¹⁵ From spring 1947, remnant forces of "bandits" were furthermore directed and mobilized by the KMT in the Civil War. Correspondingly, the CCP intensified its military operations as well as

¹³ Pepper, *Civil War in China*, 202.

¹⁴ Wang Yuannian, *Dongbei jiefang zhanzheng chujian jiaofei shi* 東北解放戰爭鉗奸剿匪史 [History of traitor elimination and bandit suppression in the war of liberation in the Northeast] (Harbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1989), 226.

¹⁵ "Qingzhu jiaofei shengli, qiangjue Xie Wendong" 慶祝剿匪勝利，槍決謝文東 [Celebrate the victory of bandit suppression, execute Xie Wendong by shooting], *Dongbei ribao* (December 14, 1946).

mobilization of the masses especially in the newly liberated areas until the establishment of the People's Republic of China.¹⁶

Despite continual suppression and pacification since late 1945, the extermination of bandits as an “extremely complicated and hard struggle” was not finished until the early 1950s. On the one hand, some small groups of bandits were still active until 1951 in rural areas where administrative and police force was not well established; on the other hand, “digging out” extremely vicious ex-bandits and bandits who hid themselves in the masses became one part of “The Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries” after March 1950.¹⁷

As a significant dimension of establishing the party-state authority and penetrating into local society, “bandit” suppression launched by the CCP in the Northeast shared many similarities with that by the previous Manchukuo state. A loosely defined and all-encompassing category of “bandits” was applied to a wide spectrum of challengers; both realized that the so-called “political bandits” could only be eradicated by military operations. Like the Manchukuo government, the CCP also heavily relied on propaganda and mobilization in suppression campaigns to establish and consolidate its local power. Moreover, it was as well through “bandit suppression” campaigns that the CCP attempted to legitimize its regimes in newly liberated areas and finally in the entire country.

However, the scale of the CCP’s mobilization in suppression campaigns went far beyond that during the Manchukuo period. When the Manchukuo state primarily relied on its coercive power to mobilize the populace in such projects as building “collective

¹⁶ Wang Yuannian, *Dongbei jiefang zhazheng chujian jiaofei shi*, 41-4.

¹⁷ Ibid., 328-30.

hamlets,” the CCP combined “bandit suppression” with the implementation of a series of political and economic policies such as land reform and the “Campaign to Reduce Rent for Land and Interest on Loans” in rural districts.¹⁸ With assistance of the local populace who had benefited from these reforms and movements, many hidden brigands and their leaders were exposed and rooted out.¹⁹ Moreover, while Japan in Manchuria attempted to internalize the nationalistic conflict between Japan and China and turned it into a domestic movement of counterinsurgency against “bandits,” the CCP sought to transform “bandit suppression” into class struggle.

After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, when the state confronted more difficulties in the management of the newly liberated territories and a more complicated domestic and international political situation, “counterrevolutionaries” including “bandits” became a widely used label to classify state enemies in “The Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries” from 1950.²⁰ Furthermore, with incessant waves of political movements from 1950s to 1970s, landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements, and rightists—the so-called “five black categories” (*hei wu lei*; 黑五類)—marked the formation of new political identities as party-state challengers in the rigidly settled framework of class struggle. As a result, it was under the CCP regime that “bandits” as a discourse and social existence, were finally thrown into the dustbin of history.

¹⁸ Tong Dong, *Zhongguo Dongbei shi* (vol. 6), 757-61.

¹⁹ “Wa feigen de diandi jingyan” 挖匪根的點滴經驗 [A bit of experience in rooting out bandits], *Dongbei ribao* (June 10, 1947).

²⁰ Julia C. Strauss, “Paternalist Terror: The Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries and Regime Consolidation in the People’s Republic of China, 1950-1953,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44:1 (Jan., 2002): 80-105.

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