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Cover illustration Takabatake Kashō, “My skin was like Jade when I left my country”; Yamauchi Hideo, young hero of the “Song of the Mounted Bandit.” Reproduced with permission of Yayoi Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

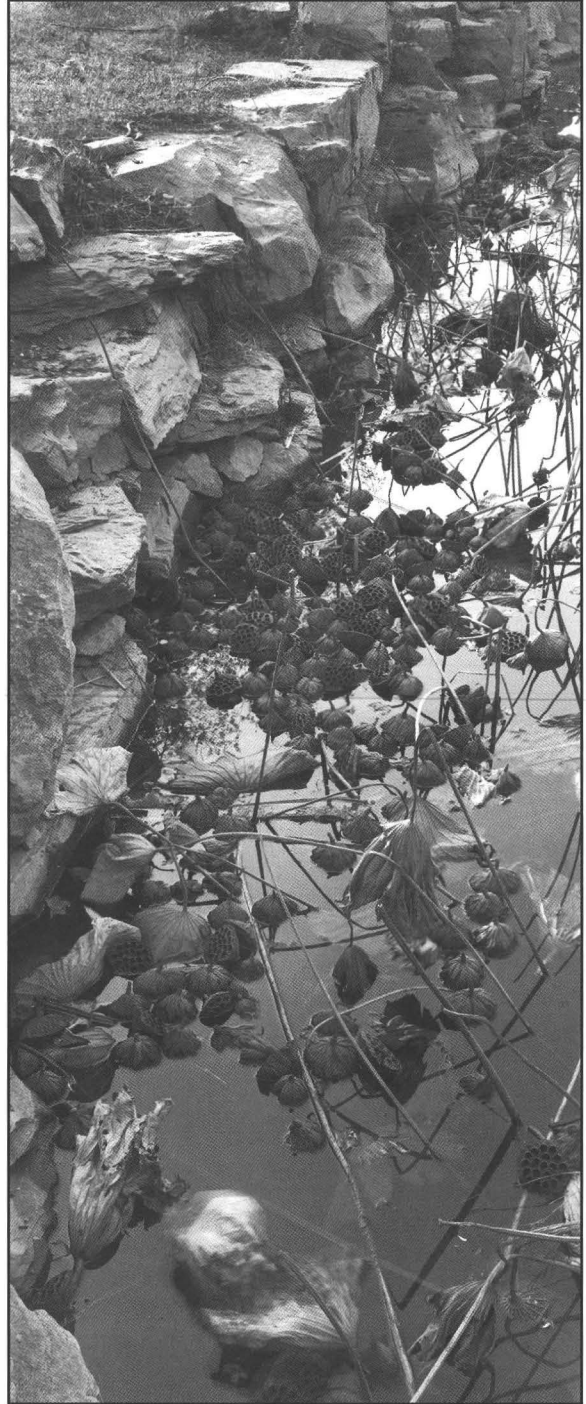
**Errata** In recent issues Yan Zhenqing’s 顏真卿 name was mistakenly given as 顏偵卿 due to a change of fonts. We apologise for this error.

In the previous issue of *East Asian History* (No.29), in the article “In Search of Smokers” by Xavier Paulès, the caption on Figure 4, page 120, should read “Occupation of the population of Cantonese adult males in 1928.”

The editor and editorial board of *East Asian History* would like to acknowledge the contribution that two colleagues have made to the creation and evolution of our journal over the years.


Professor Mark Elvin, who took up a position as Professor of Chinese History at The Australian National University in February 1990, was the inspiration behind and instigator of *East Asian History* in its present form. With his encouragement and support we redesigned *Papers on Far Eastern History* and re-launched it as *East Asian History* in 1991. Mark retired from the department in December 2005.

Helen Lo, who began work with us in September 1987, was the designer and editorial assistant of *East Asian History* from its inception until her retirement in June 2005. She was the artist behind the style of the journal and her contribution is sorely missed.



Lotus at the Garden of Perfect Brightness,  
*Lois Conner, 1998*

# MANCHURIA AS A BORDERLAND: HISTORY, CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN EAST ASIA

 *Shao Dan and Ronald Suleski*

As a historical borderland, Manchuria (Northeast China) invites attention to cross-border and transcultural perspectives as well as to individual and experiential boundary transformations. The essays here address such topics as nation building, empire construction and destruction, the colonial imagination, emigration and immigration, as well as the effects of these larger processes upon individual reconfigurations of ethnic and national identity. Contributors also bring a sharper focus to the particular problems affecting work on a region that has changed from borderland to bordered land and still bears many signs of its transnational past.

Previous studies on Manchuria focus more on military, political, and economic questions. Japanese scholars have long been fascinated by Manchuria, the vast, fecund and untamed region of northeast China. Their scholarship has examined the ancient and recent history of the region, and they have compiled much information on its twentieth-century incarnation. Unfortunately, in the past one hundred years, as Japanese scholars are now willing to acknowledge, the Japanese study of Manchuria was determined by Japan's economic and military involvement in the region. Chinese-language scholarship on the Northeast, "The Three Eastern Provinces" as the region was known for most of the twentieth century, was likewise often pre-determined by the imperatives of fending off threats to the region from its surrounding international powers. Because of the subtexts that underlay Japanese and Chinese-language research, some aspects of modern Manchuria have been intensively studied, such as the growth in economic performance prior to 1945 (by Japanese researchers), or the spread of Chinese Communist Party influence in the 1940s (by Chinese

This issue of *East Asian History* began with a workshop on twentieth-century Manchuria organized by Shao Dan and Mark C. Elliott, and sponsored by Harvard's Fairbank Center for East Asian Research and the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, held from 30 April to 1 May 2004. The articles included in it expand on the original presentations and this volume also includes papers that were not presented at the workshop. Workshop panelists and discussants were: Christopher P. Atwood (Indiana), Prasenjit Duara (Chicago), Suk-Jung Han (Dong-A University), Faye Yuan Kleeman (Colorado), Y. Tak Matsusaka (Wellesley), Gavan McCormack (The Australian National University), Rana Mitter (Oxford), David Uva (Osaka University of Foreign Studies) as a representative of Shigeo Nishimura (Osaka University of Foreign Studies), Atsuko Sakaki (Toronto), David Tucker (Iowa), Hyun Ok Park (NYU), Thomas Gottschang (Holy Cross), Ronald Suleski (Fairbank Center) and Shao Dan (Illinois, Urbana-Champaign). We wish to thank the Fairbank Center, its staff and director, Wilt Idema, for their support.

<sup>1</sup> Michiel Baud, and Willem Van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8.2 (1997): 211–42.

researchers). Many other topics of potentially fruitful enquiry, however, were largely ignored.

In recent years, the study of Manchuria has been enjoying a heightened interest among scholars publishing in English. These scholars bring their own analytical approaches to the subject, and they often do so by investigating topics defined in ways quite different from the previous Japanese or Chinese-language works. That is one reason we are so pleased to have compiled this collection of some of the most recent and most challenging English-language research about Manchuria in modern times. The topics of these papers and their interpretive methods, introduced below, give a picture of the current state of English-language work on modern Manchuria and the multifarious insights produced by scholars. The scholars being published here do not all share English as their native language, but by deciding to allow their papers to appear in English, they have joined together as part of the new wave of English-language scholarship about Manchuria.

Contributors focus more on the stories of how Manchuria was perceived within the ever-shifting frameworks of imperial, national and colonial regimes, and of how people living in the region saw themselves within and beyond shifting borderlines. By focusing on these questions, contributors try to remedy an obvious gap in the scholarly literature, a gap that exists largely due to post-war taboos that have forbidden discussion of what Manchuria really meant to people apart from the strictly nationalistic interpretations in which the well-accepted periodization markers such as 1911 or 1945 had salience. Although the existing literature has contributed much to our understanding of the region, the acceptance of contemporary national borders as defining the proper limits of scholarly inquiry seriously hampers our understanding of the cultural and political processes that had such a profound impact on the region. Overdetermined nation-centered narratives, we feel, simply do not do justice to the complicated cultural situation in Manchuria, a place which Han Chinese, Manchus, as well as Japanese, Mongols, Koreans, Russians and Poles all claimed as "home." In this connection, we also hope to advance a conceptualization of Manchuria as a historical "borderland." This, we believe, will permit more powerful analyses of Manchuria's pasts and present, and will provide a way for broader comparative thinking.<sup>1</sup>

The essays in this special issue examine early twentieth-century Manchuria from various disciplines to consider issues affecting the region in ways that cross national boundaries and bridge typical periodizations. The dates of 1911 and 1949 in Chinese studies, or of 1945 in Japanese and Korean studies, are to be seen only as useful markers, not as in any way limiting or confining the topics under consideration. Contributors analyze various kinds of materials from and about Manchuria, with particular emphasis

on how literary and historical sources provide different representations of political transitions and changing definitions of individual identity from the late Qing empire to the present.

Chris Atwood, an expert on Mongol history, discusses “Ethnicity and State Service, Lineage and Locality in Hulun Buir.” In the eighteenth century, the Manchu Qing dynasty settled the Hulun Buir area of northwest Manchuria (now in the northeastern Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region) with bannermen of diverse ethnic origins: Daur, New and Old Barga Mongols, Solon Ewenkis, Orochen, and “Öölöd” (Züinghar) Mongols. Paradoxically, the Qing underwrote both this great ethnic diversity and the strong local identity of Hulun Buir as the dynasty’s favored guardians of a rich land. Histories and local gazetteers of Hulun Buir, written from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, reflect the tensions and changes resulting from the fall of the Qing and the growing superimposition of mainstream Mongolian nationalism, with its heavily genealogical narrative.

In her article “Borderlanders between Empire and Nation: Banner People in Early Twentieth-century Manchuria,” Shao Dan documents the policies towards, and the experiences of, banner people in Manchuria from the late Qing to the early Republic of China, as Manchuria was transformed from remote Manchu homeland to contested borderland. The article considers how changing conceptions of place amid territorial contestations over borderlands interact with individual identity formation.

Faye Yuan Kleeman, in “Inscribing Manchuria: Gender, Ideology and Popular Imagination,” examines how popular cultural media shaped and sustained the image of Manchuria during the interwar era. Specifically, she looks at two types of visual and textual representations: heroic adventure tales for teenage boys and the earth mother-like image of pioneer women. In the popular media of the time, pioneer women were portrayed so as to blend gender desire and imperial optimism into the ideology of empire building.

Ronald Suleski, in his article “Reconstructing Life in the Youth Corps Camps of Manchuria, 1938–45: Resistance to Conformity,” examines daily life for the teenage boys mobilized by the Japanese authorities to guard the borders of northern Manchuria. He argues that the boys were dismayed by the disparities between the glorious images of empire-building fed to them by adults and the realities of life in borderland Manchuria. They resisted many of the imposed adult values as best they could, sometimes with unsettling violence.

In his paper “From Pusan to Fengtian: the Nexus between Korea and Manchukuo in the 1930s,” Suk-Jung Han, a sociologist of Korea, makes an inquiry into the close relationship between Korea and Manchukuo during the modern colonial period. Many Japanese, after all, passed through the



<sup>2</sup> In this issue, the name of the political regime established by the Japanese colonial authority under the rhetoric of “Manchuria for Manchurians” in Northeast China from 1932 to 1945 has different romanized forms, depending on each author’s choice. The most often used forms are Manzhouguo in *pinyin* and Manshūkoku in Japanese, as well as Manchukuo or Manchoukuo from the wartime era.

Korean peninsula on their way to Manchuria, yet this is a connection that has long been ignored in Asian and Western historiography. The work of Han, including the article published here, is infusing a new vitality into the field.

In “Community and Identity in Northeast Asia: the 1930s and Today,” Gavan McCormack notes that the US design for a “peaceful, just, cooperative” order in contemporary Northeast Asia shares similarities with Japan’s plan for a new order in the region earlier in the twentieth century. By comparing international power structures, diplomatic strategies and the nationalistic rhetoric of Japan in the Manchukuo era with those in recent years, McCormack reveals similar contradictions between the differing nationalisms of East Asian countries, similar disparities between ideas about how the world should be and how it really is, and similar tensions between the drive for imperial dominance and the resultant local resistance.<sup>2</sup> McCormack believes that for the sake of the future, Japan today needs to reconsider its role and identity within Asia.

Contributors to this issue owe an intellectual debt to other scholars who have published influential studies about modern Manchuria. Each of us has benefited from the work of these scholars, our seniors and our contemporaries: Owen Lattimore, Inaba Iwakichi, Torii Ryūzō, Robert Lee, Michael Hunt, Zhao Zhongfu, Nishimura Shigeo, Xie Xueshi, Mariko Asano Tamanoi, Prasenjit Duara, Tak Matsusaka, Yamamoto Yūzō, Hirano Ken’ichirō, Louise Young, Shibata Yūri, Yamane Yukio and Rana Mitter.

We also wish to express gratitude to the editors of *East Asian History* for their continuing support in the creation of this issue, as well as to Adam Cathcart who helped with proofreading.

*Shao Dan*      *Ronald Suleski*

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