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Japan's Manchukuo Economic Development or Militaristic Seizure

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

JAPAN'S MANCHUKUO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OR MILITARISTIC SEIZURE

THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE HONORS DEPARTMENT
FOR THE COMPLETION OF
THE UNIVERSITY HONORS DEGREE

BY

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LOGAN, UTAH

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PREFACE

Japan has fascinated me for the last eight years. I first experienced Japan as a naive seventeen year-old exchange student living in humid Kokubunji, a suburb west of Tokyo. I returned to Utah and took Japanese classes at USU during my senior year of high school and freshman year of college. The next turn of events had me in Japan again, speaking the language for two years in the snow drifts of Hokkaido for two years. I was hooked.

Having now been to Hong Kong, China and Japan, and having read much about the Far East, the Orient seems to be on my mind almost daily. I was even able to attend conferences in New York and Texas on U.S.-Japanese trade problems. But for all my individual effort on the subject, my greatest advances in studying Japan have come from school work during my junior and senior years in Logan. I credit Ed Glatfelter's class on Chinese history and his team-taught class with Bob Hoover on U.S. foreign policy in the Pacific as the motivation I needed to undertake an honors thesis centered on Japan. Dr. Glatfelter's advice and assistance has been very beneficial on this honors thesis project.

Because of Dr.s Glatfelter and Hoover, my sources for knowledge of Japan expanded from Newsweek and Dan Rather to sources with deep understandings of and interest in Japan--writers like Yoshihashi, Nish, Reischauer, Neu, Young, Prestowitz, Fallows, Morely, Sun, and periodicals like The Far Eastern Economic Review,

The South China Morning Post, The Atlantic Monthly, The Economist, and Fortune. Yet all this study has only led me to the opinion that I am uneducated and have a long way to go. I will continue to study the language and gorge myself with books and newspaper and journal articles on Japan. I hope law school does not take away my thirst for an understanding of Japan. It shouldn't.

I acknowledge my father, Doug Alder, another interested student of Japan, for being a sounding board of ideas, criticism and advice. My wife, Laurel Cannon Alder, has also been a tremendous support for my recent studies.

I only regret not being able to spend more time on the project. I wish I had begun writing two years ago. I have found so much information recently but have been unable to graft it into the document.

Japan, its people and culture, its present-day economic strength, its history, its dynamic future, has excited my intellectual curiosity. And yet, my fervor has not cast me as an advocate or adversary to these Japanese issues. As a result, the following honors thesis reflects objectivity.

N. D. Alder

June 1991

Logan, Utah

JAPAN'S MANCHUKUO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OR MILITARISTIC SEIZURE

Was the founding of the State of Manchukuo an act of independence brought about by the people of Manchuria or a planned take-over by the Japanese military and government? Was Manchukuo a favored trading nation of Japan or just another province in an expanding Japanese empire? Answers to these questions are the motivation for this paper, and aim at the heart of Manchukuo's history.

The title of this paper suggests that Japan established Manchukuo and did so because of economic development or militaristic reasons. At the beginning of the 20th century, Japan sought to influence Manchuria commercially with exports and investment, and as a result of the Treaty of Portsmouth and subsequent agreements with China, Japan established legitimate rights to control Manchuria. In the minds of the Japanese, Manchuria, as well as Korea, Taiwan and small islands in the South Pacific, became vital claims in Japan's hopes for the future. The question this paper addresses centers on the forces that brought about the State of Manchukuo.

Japan had, since the late 1800s, viewed Manchuria as vital to Japan's national security and economic stability. Japan saw

China and Russia, as well as European imperialists, as having competing interests to Japan's in Manchuria. Because Japan's home islands could no longer support the agriculture to feed its rapidly increasing population, calls for expansion, whether commercial or territorial, came from all levels of society. Japan also had a deep desire to equal its status with Western nations, especially after suffering defeats by the Powers that many Japanese thought were racially motivated.

This desire to grow and expand, in terms of Japan's commerce, military strengths, and in the size of its territory, caused, what Bamba Nobuya described as, Japan's diplomatic dilemma.¹ He questioned: should Japan negotiate and offer comity to nations in a modern diplomatic fashion in order to achieve its aims, or trust to its tradition and past, believe in its Imperial Way, put Japan above all other nations and do what is necessary, even if not popular, to secure its "inevitable" growth and power? The answer to this question forms a background framework for this paper.

These conflicting methods of diplomacy defined the two camps that struggled for control throughout the Manchurian Crisis and through World War II. Bamba's comparison of "traditionalist" genro (samurai-descendent military leaders) and "modernist" diplomats helps one to conclude, as this paper does, that Tokyo foreign ministers (Tanaka in his last years, and Shidehara) and other heads of government were committed to long term economic development in Manchuria and modern diplomacy with China and the

world, but were ineffectual in controlling radical surges within the military. Thus, radical "traditionalists" in the Kwangtung Army ignored Tokyo, gaining leverage and self-assurance, and usurped Manchuria from the Chinese for the Imperial Way. In short, the Mukden Incident surprised many, yet when one considers the loosening grip of Tokyo's governing ability and Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang's effort to hinder the Kwangtung Army's holdings in Manchuria, Mukden may not be such a surprise.

Tradition vs. Modernity

Before Meiji Japan, clans of samurai fought for and ruled much of the island nation. This tradition was not eliminated with political reforms during Meiji. A "genro" class of elite military figures, beginning from the Meiji Restoration until the end of WWII, influenced and advised the emperor and government policy makers. This genro class was an obstacle to those who wanted to relate to nations of the world in a modern diplomatic and peaceful fashion. In opposition to the genro, the "modernists" were interested in economic development, particularly industrialization, trade and commerce, and foreign capital infusions.

An example of a leader who was influenced by the genro philosophies was Tanaka Giichi, Prime Minister. He elected to forgo public education (a Meiji reform) in order to study at a samurai-influenced, clan school. He later joined the army and fought in the Russo-Japanese War.²

Arthur Tiedmann, writing the introduction to James W. Morely's edited collection Japan Erupts: The London Naval Conference and the Manchurian Crisis, offered an example of the Hamaguchi cabinet's effort to "check" the military in order to obtain certain economic "goals." The cabinet wanted success at the London Naval Conference not only because Japan's expenditures on armaments would decrease, but because the "good will thus generated would predispose the Westerners to aid in Japan's fundamental economic problems."³

For such a victory, though, Japan had to overrule the Navy's military objectives. This power play did not pay off for the "modernists" because the military eventually won popular support; the Japanese feared the loss of their stake in China. Tiedmann concluded:

If larger events (economic hardship, world depression) had not supervened, this gamble might have been carried off. To this boiling domestic social discontent was added a growing concern that Shidehara's China policy was a failure and would cost Japan its economic interests in China (Manchuria). In this atmosphere the Navy General Staff's charges against the Hamaguchi cabinet gained currency and became the central element in the great spurt in growth of ultranational organizations and propaganda that occurred in 1930.⁴

This dilemma, whether to rely on traditional approaches to policy or trust in a new world order, was personally characterized by Tanaka and Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijuro.

General Tanaka Giichi, as characterized by historian Ian Nish, was a man who believed strongly in 'positive action' as opposed to 'weak-kneed action', a trait he associated with the foreign minister he succeeded, Shidehara Kijuro.⁵ Although

Tanaka dominated Japan's foreign relations for only two years, was forced to resign and was replaced by Shidehara, his influence, and those who had shaped his thinking, left a shadow that "fell across the Mukden incident and the catastrophic events that followed it."⁶

A pillar in many Tokyo governments, Shidehara's advocacy of modern and civil diplomacy gained him respect abroad but mixed results at home. The genro feared Shidehara because of his conciliatory position on China. Shidehara viewed China as a necessary partner in Japan's expansionist desires. He wrote in 1924: "to secure overseas markets...can only be done by diplomacy. If we try to cure our economic problems by territorial expansion, we will merely destroy international cooperation..."⁷ Bamba's "Traditionalist vs. Modernist" thesis and the Tanaka-Shidehara comparison offer an interpretation that shows Japan's split-thinking when it came to expansion--militaristic expansion or simple economic expansion.

Tanaka advocated a strong arm. He was an army man who had fought in the Russo-Japanese War and wanted "to enhance Japan's position in the world at large."⁸ Worried that China's internal instability would destroy Japanese hopes in Manchuria, Tanaka favored Chang Tso-lin as the best Chinese leader with whom Japan could work. Tanaka's willingness to intervene in China's civil war, by sending troops to prevent China from moving closer to Manchuria, eventually backfired. China's hate for Japan as an aggressor grew and the Chinese effectively boycotted Japan's

goods.⁹

Shidehara faced the same dilemma as Tanaka but pushed for a softer line, always consulting with Nanking on issues. Shidehara took into consideration the negative aspects of intervention and strong arm tactics.

Considering the split in policy thinking, Seki Hiroharu explained why the military was willing to risk failure and seize Manchuria. He asserted that officers in the Kwangtung Army viewed Manchuria as "a holy land" because it was "consecrated by the sacrifice of one hundred thousand brothers who shed their blood in the war led by the great Meiji emperor."¹⁰ Officers viewed Manchuria as a vital area because of the "inevitable" war with the United States. The Kwangtung's Lieutenant-Colonel Ishiwara Kanji, one of the officers who eventually planned the Manchurian Incident, said in a written report: "...if we are to prepare for war with the United States, we should not hesitate to seize political control in Manchuria and Mongolia at once." Ishiwara also believed that Japan's take-over of Manchuria would "extinguish anti-Japanese agitation in China."¹¹

The beliefs of the Kwangtung Army, and often the views of the military and genro class, conflicted directly with "modernist" diplomats who desired comity and friendly relations as a means to Japan's nation-building. It was this conflict, and non-resolution of this conflict, that brought about the Manchurian Incident.

Economic Development

Japan's interest in Manchuria focused on relief, the type of comfort a frontier offered to a crowded, economically dependent, and strategically anxious island nation.

Emigration Interests: After being "opened" to Western commerce and finding themselves far behind Western technology, Japan reacted quickly to gain equal status with the world's more powerful nations. Yet, for a society based on agriculture, the transition was difficult. Japan was forced to urbanize, industrialize and limit its increasing population in order to compete with the West. Considering Japan's increasing birth rate in the 1800's and its population doubling in the 1900's, Commodore Perry's visit, at least to the Japanese, seems to have been poorly timed.

Japan in East Asia, a book printed in 1939 in England for private distribution, outlined the desperate circumstances that confronted Japanese society since its industrialization. It stated:

Japan is a country small in area, even smaller than the single state of Texas, and yet she possesses a vast population of nearly one hundred million, which is steadily expanding at the rate of almost one million a year. The population of Japan proper has doubled in the last sixty years. The density of population per square mile of arable land in Japan in 1930 was 2490, which is twice as great as that of Belgium, the most densely populated country in Europe, and over four times that of England.¹²

This report confirmed Japan's prolific birth rate in the 1930's, even though it was not as high as the Soviet Union's.

The demand created by so many Japanese, given few natural resources, forced Japan to look to other areas of the world to either buy its goods or accept its people, thus relieving some of its population burden. The dilemma was not easily solved and racial discrimination against Japanese in the U.S. and Great Britain complicated Tokyo's efforts in finding a solution. In the 1930's just over 30 million people lived in Manchuria (one-third the population of Japan), a combination of mainly Manchu and Han Chinese, but including Koreans, Japanese and Russians. Manchuria's land size, almost three times that of Japan's, was of obvious interest to Tokyo.¹³ W. R. Crocker, in a 1932 publication The Japanese Population Problem, stated the case for Japanese emigration, an attitude the Japanese had taken to decades earlier. He wrote:

Not only do the Japanese show a capacity for emigrating, but emigration can reduce the pressure of numbers in Japan because the birth-rate is falling and the conception of the standard of life is rising. Since she will be greatly needing some such temporary relief, emigration clearly must become a serious matter for her statesmen.¹⁴

Crocker concluded, after a case-by-case analysis of possible emigration destinations, that four areas were most suitable for the Japanese--North Eastern Asia, Borneo, the South Pacific Islands, and Brazil.¹⁵ The need for emigration along with the advantages of developing Manchuria into a Japanese economic link directed much of Tokyo's attention to Manchuria.

Economic Interest: Marius B. Jansen claimed that Manchuria "was Japan's only frontier."¹⁶ Manchuria was a land ready to

absorb Japan's gusto of money, army, people and machinery. Chao Kang's study, The Economic Development of Manchuria: The Rise of a Frontier Economy, detailed and graphed the investment and production Manchuria experienced in the early 1900's, in a large part because of the Japanese.

The notion of frontier is one that also occupied the minds of American citizens in the 1800's as well as British colonial pioneers. Like England (in gaining India, South Africa, etc.) and America (the Louisiana Purchase and Alaska), Japan could actually gain more land by acquiring Manchuria.

In Manchuria, resources were "exploitable" and ready for Japan's development. Many industries and investments increased in value and gave profitable returns. For example, in Chao's study of soya bean production, the export value of soya beans from Manchuria (in constant 1934 yuan) in 1891 was 25 million, in 1915, 107 million, and in 1929 it was 255 million. This is one of many examples in Chao's study which showed the influence of Japan's effort to increase production and return.

As might be expected of a frontier economy, Manchuria required much capital to develop its industries, especially its rail system. Naturally, Japan supplied much of Manchuria's demand and because of its interest in developing the area, most of the trade surplus was reinvested in Manchuria.¹⁷ This practice was intensified with the founding of Manchukuo.

After 1931 economic development took on a new perspective, one that fitted the military's objective. G. C. Allen, writing in

A Short Economic History of Modern Japan, reasoned this as well:

The industries that were introduced into Manchukuo, or were extended after the establishment of that State, were chiefly branches of the metallurgical and chemical industries--the war industries--and all forms of industrial investment in that country were strictly controlled and were supplied up to 1937 by or through the South Manchuria Railway Company or companies in which the Manchukuo and Japanese Governments held a large part of the capital.¹⁸

In anticipation of war, the Japanese put out a five year plan in 1937 which showed Manchukuo's integral role in their empire. The plan called for Tokyo to invest 2.5 billion yen in Manchukuo and 6 billion in the home islands on various defense projects, one of which was to increase the number of its airplanes to 10,000.¹⁹ Manchukuo's emphasis after 1935 was to, in Allen's words, "try to build up her equipment rapidly in preparation for war."²⁰

Strategic and Ideologic Interests: W. R. Crocker stated the importance of Manchuria to an aspiring power in the Far East:

Lying, as it does, at the point where the territories of Russia, China, and Japan converge, it has an obvious strategical importance. Lying, too, between Japan and China, an unfilled land of rich resources, as large in area as three Japans, between the crowded populations of the two first Oriental Powers, its economic importance is no less obvious. The strategic and economic incitements to possess it, or to prevent a rival from possessing it, have been dangerously exacerbated by the ambiguities of its juridical status.²¹

Japan did "possess" Manchuria finally, or at least win war concessions and special rights from China and Russia in order to control it. Subsequent to the signing of treaties, Japan invested quickly and ambitiously in Manchuria. Non-zaibatsu

companies like Nissan gained their first real profits from the frontier land. Japan's control of the South Manchuria Railway (SMR) became a catalyst for Japanese economic development.

Author A. Morgan Young, in 1938, described the SMR's rail construction, reaching nearly every part of Manchuria, as "continually putting out fresh tentacles."²² This investment in the SMR, the industries it reached and the manufactures and agriculture it transported, became quite personal to the proud Japanese. Young stated:

...it was always "the blood and treasure poured out on the plains of Manchuria" that was invoked, creating Japan's infeasible claims to whatever she might require in that region. Invested capital riveted her position, but sentimental claim always came first.²³

Strategically, Manchuria became the buffer zone that kept Russia and China further (especially after 1931) from the Japanese home islands, but more importantly Manchuria became an idea held in the public image, an ideological claim vital to Japan's hope for the future.²⁴ In this sense, Japan looked to Manchuria, and later Manchukuo, not only as a vital strategic area, but as its own "blood and treasure."

Until the Mukden Incident and the Lytton Commission Report for the League of Nations, the U.S. was willing to allow Japan considerable freedom in Manchuria. The Washington Conference's limitations on naval build-up and Secretary of State Stimpson's "non recognition" letter of Manchukuo changed that stance. Yet, at the turn of the century, President Theodore Roosevelt, burdened by racial discrimination against Japanese in the U.S.,

emphasized the tight-rope America walked with Japan concerning East Asia:

The vital interest of Japan on the other hand, is in Manchuria and Korea. It is therefore peculiarly our interest not to take any steps as regards Manchuria which will give the Japanese cause to feel, with or without reason, that we are hostile to them, or a menace in however slight a degree, to their interests...²⁵

To summarize Japan's interest in Manchuria, no one does it better than the propagandists themselves, as Young recounted their arguments here:

Manchuria is a No Man's Land and never was part of China.

Strategically, Manchuria in the hands of a potential enemy threatens Japan's existence.

Economically, Manchuria is necessary to Japan's existence.

Only by Japan's action was Manchuria saved from annexation by Russia.

Japan's sacrifices of blood and treasure give her rights in controlling the destinies of Manchuria such as no other country possesses.

Japan's economic interests and investments in Manchuria cannot be allowed to be jeopardized by her own inaction or her neighbors' hostility.²⁶

From 1905 on, the Japanese dreamed of a Manchuria that would save the home islands. Manchuria offered a frontier in which to emigrate, invest, produce, export, and buffer Japan's adversaries. In 1927 Japan looked to Manchuria clearly as its own; it was willing to defend Manchuria if civil unrest unseated the stability Japan desired. Even when considering the strong role Japan played in Manchuria in protecting its interests and special rights, Japan never went so far as to annex Manchuria by means of engaging China in war. Yet in 1931, Manchuria, which then included the Jehol province, would separate itself from the

Chinese Nationalist government. This act of independence was not brought about by Chang Hsueh-liang but by the Kwangtung Army.

Radical Militarism and the Mukden Incident

Threats to the interests Japan fervently held in Manchuria, considering the Kwangtung Army's presence there, obviously caught the attention of Roosevelt and Chang Tso-lin, as well as his son, the Young Marshall. Japan viewed Manchuria as a vital economic possession. Japan was willing to protect its investment in Manchuria, especially considering unstable Chinese politics. These were the feelings in Tokyo. The feelings were even stronger, and more radically held in Manchuria. Threats to the Kwangtung Army's influence in Manchuria were greatly feared among its officers. The Kwangtung still feared a Russian advance, but more so, a strong Manchu warlord.

Yoshihashi Takehiko, in his book Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military, presented an excellent, in-depth narrative of events which led to the Mukden Incident, 18 September 1931. Where Yoshihashi takes 150 pages to trace the events that culminated in the Incident, let me present a short summary analysis based on his account. Seki Hiroharu, in Morely's Japan Erupts, also presented a detailed analysis of the events leading up to the Manchurian Incident.

China had fallen into regional factions dominated by warlords when the Manchu Dynasty fell in 1911. The Manchurian warlord, Chang Tso-lin eventually controlled Peking (renamed

Pei-ping when Nanking became the capital) as well as Manchuria's three Eastern Provinces. Chang had left soldiers in Manchuria but Japan was well established there as well.

Japan's influence in North China became firmly grounded after defeating Russia in 1904 and gaining Russia's rights to economic activity, military support and important railway lines. While Chang was in Pei-ping, Tokyo honored him as the leader of Manchuria and was successfully negotiating with him to build new rail lines. Tokyo also negotiated with Chiang Kai-shek in Nanking. When Marshall Chang was forced out of Pei-ping the Kwangtung acted on its own, disregarding Tokyo's recognition of Chang. A year earlier, sensing potential conflict, military commanders moved Japanese military headquarters from Port Arthur inland to Mukden.

Premier Tanaka made two statements in 1927, one legitimizing the use of force in Manchuria and the other suggesting that Tokyo will always recognize Chang Tso-lin's rule in North China. To the Army these statements may have presented a contradiction; they saw Chang Tso-lin, and later Chang Hsueh-liang as threats to Japan's interest in Manchuria. At the end of the Second Eastern Regions Conference Tanaka outlined eight points to Japan's position in Manchuria, here are the last four:

5. It is clear that lawless elements in China will from time to time disrupt the peace, causing unfortunate international incidents. It is expected that the Chinese regime and the awakened people will suppress these rebellious elements and restore peace and order. However, Japan will have no choice other than to resort to measures of self-defense should Japan's rights and interests or the life and property

of the Japanese residents be jeopardized.

Moreover, in order to impress on the Chinese the nature of Japan's rights, Japan must act against those elements who wantonly instigate anti-Japanese campaigns and the boycott of Japanese goods by spreading false rumors.

6. Since Manchuria and Mongolia and particularly the Three Eastern Provinces (Heilungkiang, Kirin, and Liaoning) affect in the gravest way Japan's existence as a nation, Japan feels responsible for the maintenance of peace and the economic development of these areas.

7. Japan must count on the efforts of the people of these three provinces for the maintenance of peace and order there. She will support any regime deemed capable of fostering political stability, which would also respect Japan's special interests.

8. Should the spreading of the civil war into Manchuria and Mongolia jeopardize Japan's special rights and privileges, Japan must be ready to deal swiftly with any faction threatening her rights so that these regions may be maintained as safe and suitable areas for development by local and foreign residents.²⁷

One month later he offered this:

...I say that deciding on a rigid course of action vis-a-vis a nation such as China whose domestic situation is constantly in a state of flux is simply not feasible. Our government is taking the position that we negotiate with Chang Tso-lin so long as he prevails in the north and likewise with Chiang Kai-shek so long as he is in control of the south.²⁸

Communication gaps, let alone differences in philosophy, between Tokyo and Mukden may have been cause enough for radicals in the Kwangtung to seek their own solutions to strategic threats. Premier Tanaka sent little solace to his troops in Manchuria concerning Chang's imminent return. Theoretically, Chang had been the ruler of Manchuria while he was in Pei-ping and Tokyo was prepared to recognize him as the ruler in Mukden. But to Kwangtung officers, especially men like General Muraoka, Colonel Komoto, Major Tomiya, Colonel Itagaki and Lt. Colonel

Ishihara, the threat of Chang in Mukden was enough to force his death. Seiichi Teiichi, an army assistant, wrote this: "We knew that the execution of the plan called for circumspection and finesse, since it was obvious that no minister in Tanaka's cabinet would support such a plan."²⁹

Despite Chang's train from Pei-ping being heavily guarded and Chinese rail patrols having been alerted, Major Tomiya successfully bombed Chang's train at a bridge between the Shenyang and Huangkutun stations on June 4, 1928.³⁰ (A map charting the train route and bombing site follows this document as Appendix A.)³¹ News reached Tokyo and eventually Premier Tanaka was persuaded to the truth--that the Kwangtung had initiated and carried out Chang's assassination. After much debate, Tanaka decided to hold a trial by court-martial. Dissenters urged the Premier to retain Japan's legitimacy in world regard and not admit guilt but the Emperor's insistence on justice quieted the issue. The trial was controversial; the military was filled with unrest. Yoshihashi described the breaking point of the trial:

...at the second meeting of the "Special Committee to Investigate the Death of Chang Tso-lin," Oba, an administrative official of the Kwangtung Territorial Government, testified that Ito Kenjiro and Staff Officer Komoto were the principal offenders. The meeting was thrown into such turmoil that Mori suspended it for the day. Even more alarming was the growing resentment of the general populace against the holding of the trial. Tension reached a point so critical that some feared outbreaks of violence.

Tanaka was left with no choice but to bow to public sentiment and accept the formula suggested by the Minister of War, who proposed that the offenders be punished by administrative action. General Muraoka and Colonel Komoto were now charged with dereliction of duty, the specific charge being failure to post rail-

road guards at a zone requiring protection.³²

This was a turning point for the Kwangtung Army. Of all the events in Kwangtung Army history, this convinced the Army that it could take matters into its own hands and disregard Tokyo. The Kwangtung Army had successfully pulled the cover over the eyes of Tokyo and escaped discipline. The Manchurian radicals had outsmarted an Emperor and a Premier.

Coup attempts and assassinations followed Chang's Death. The March Plot and the Cherry Society (Sakura kai) kept Tokyo running scared. Extremism gained momentum, not only in the army, but throughout the nation. Despite Chang Hsueh-liang's occasional recognition of Tokyo, his efforts to build independent rail lines caused the Kwangtung to fear him even more. While the Young Marshall was in Pei-ping the army staged its most daring event.

At this point the story differs. Manchukuo: The Founding of a New Nation, published in 1933 by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in New York, offered only one explanation for the Kwangtung Army's take over after the rail bombing. It stated:

On September 18, 1931, the Japanese Army in the South Manchurian Railway Zone, stationed there in accordance with the Treaty of Portsmouth and the Sino-Japanese Treaty of 1905, was forced to protect the railroad after Chinese troops attempted to blow it up. This led, during the following day, to a complete disintegration of the existent Chinese Government. Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang, then actually responsible for the peace of Manchuria, was in Peiping, where he had been joined by many of the most important officials of the Three Eastern Provinces. Many officials, his and low, disappeared overnight, so that the Japanese Army had to take control to avoid complete anarchy. But the Japanese authorities immediately made it known

that they had no intention of assuming governmental authority in Manchuria and they called upon local Chinese to organize themselves and to take over the responsibilities of maintaining order.³³

Yoshihashi tells the story differently. Two events in the summer of 1931 prompted Kwangtung officers to act independently of Tokyo and Chang Hsueh-liang.

One hundred Korean farmers were attacked by hundreds of rioting Chinese farmers, enraged over the issue of irrigation and land rights. Chinese authorities sided with the Chinese farmers. Japanese consulate officials became irate and the Japanese consular police stepped up their presence in the area, only to China's dislike.³⁴ This skirmish with the Chinese embittered the Japanese.

One other incident would finally tip the scales. Yoshihashi again stated:

As the culmination of a long series of altercations between two nations, no other incident (than Nakamura's death) gave the military and ultranationalists in Japan a more persuasive argument in favor of using force to settle once and for all the outstanding issues pertaining to Manchuria.³⁵

Nakamura Shintaro, a captain in the Kwangtung Army, was arrested by Chinese officers on 27 June 1931, alleged for spying. A week later, he and his group were executed, then cremated. A number of investigations were undertaken but the Army was outraged; secret plans, like unto Chang Tso-lin's assassination, were formulated within the higher ranks of the Kwangtung Army.³⁶

Trouble loomed over Manchuria. By 12 September large military supplies were being transported to and readied in

certain locations.³⁷ Tokyo caught wind of a mounting crisis and dispatched messages advocating temperance and patience.³⁸ Yet in secret meetings officials were staging the event. Even when Tokyo's General Tatekawa Yoshitsugu wired Mukden telling of his arrival the next morning, the 18th, plans were not reconsidered. Lt. Colonel Ishihara emphasized this resolve: "In view of the decision reached at Mukden last night (to carry out the coup), we cannot well back out now (because of Tatekawa's arrival). We will have to go through with it."³⁹ And that they did.

A bomb exploded on the railway in Japan's territorial zone and the army mobilized. (A map showing the army's mobilization follows this document as Appendix B.)⁴⁰ Yoshihashi described Colonel Itagaki's call for force:

Itagaki told Morishima that the army had been mobilized because an important Japanese right relating to the South Manchurian Railway had been violated, and asked him for the cooperation of the Consulate General. Morishima asked who had issued the mobilization order. Itagaki replied, "Since it was an emergency situation and the commanding officer was in Port Arthur, I issued the order in his behalf." Morishima repeatedly emphasized the necessity of seeking a peaceful solution by means of diplomatic negotiations. Itagaki became provoked and retorted harshly, "Does the Consulate General wish to interfere with the prerogative of the Imperial Command after it has been invoked?" Realizing the futility of arguing with army officers in such a high state of excitement, Morishima returned to the Consulate General and reported the entire affair to the Consulate General.⁴¹

In the days and months following the initial explosion, Manchuria was seized by the Kwangtung Army. Nanking sought a policy of non-aggression.

Recognizing the Kwangtung's intensity and independence,

Minister of War Minami stated: "Solutions of problems pertaining to Manchuria should be sought at the local level and not between Nanking and Tokyo."⁴² Foreign Minister Shidehara and other Tokyo officials were outraged at Minami's counter to diplomatic measures.

Diplomacy was about to fail. Shidehara desperately tried to localize the crisis in Manchuria and salvage relations with China, but to no avail. China appealed to the League; Japan's offer for private negotiations with Nanking, in order to avoid global outrage against Japan, was declined. By November 16 the League demanded a Japanese withdrawal. Yet overpowered by the radicalism that swept the entire military, Shidehara was forced to ease his demands (in order to avoid a coup) and gave up insisting that the Kwangtung Army "comply with the League resolution and retreat within the railway zone."⁴³ On 21 December 1931, a provisional government was established in Manchuria. In February, 1932, Manchurian independence was declared and by the first of March, Manchukuo was established. One week later Henry Pu-yi was inaugurated as Chief Executive of the new nation.

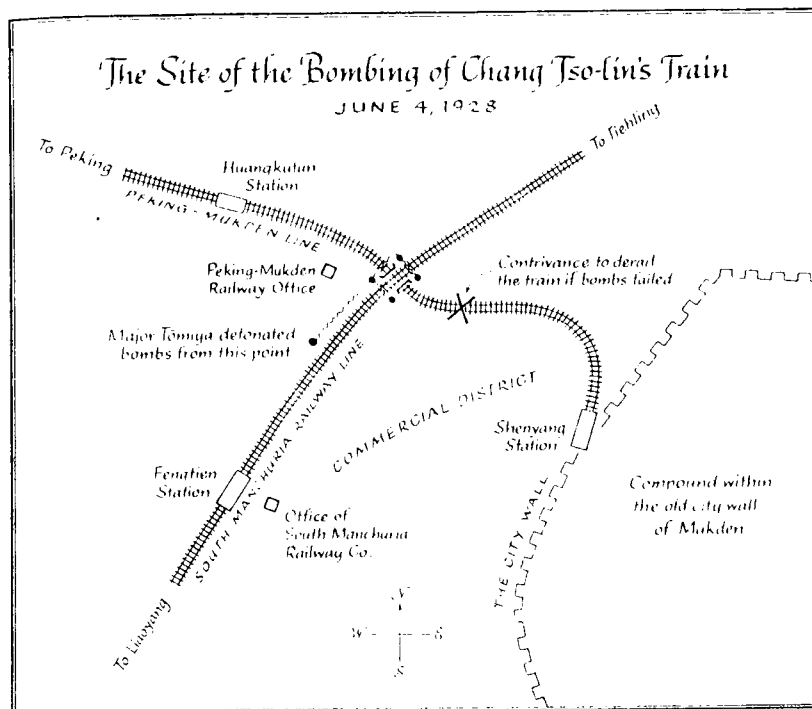
Manchuria's story may end here. Questions posed at the beginning of the paper now have answers.

The citizens of Manchuria slept through the night on 18 September 1931. A few probably heard occasional gunshots as the Japanese Kwangtung Army invaded China's North Barracks outside Mukden and set the Chinese on the run.⁴⁴ By February and March

of 1932, they were persuaded though, and some quite anxious, to help the Japanese stabilize the area by forming a new government, Manchukuo.

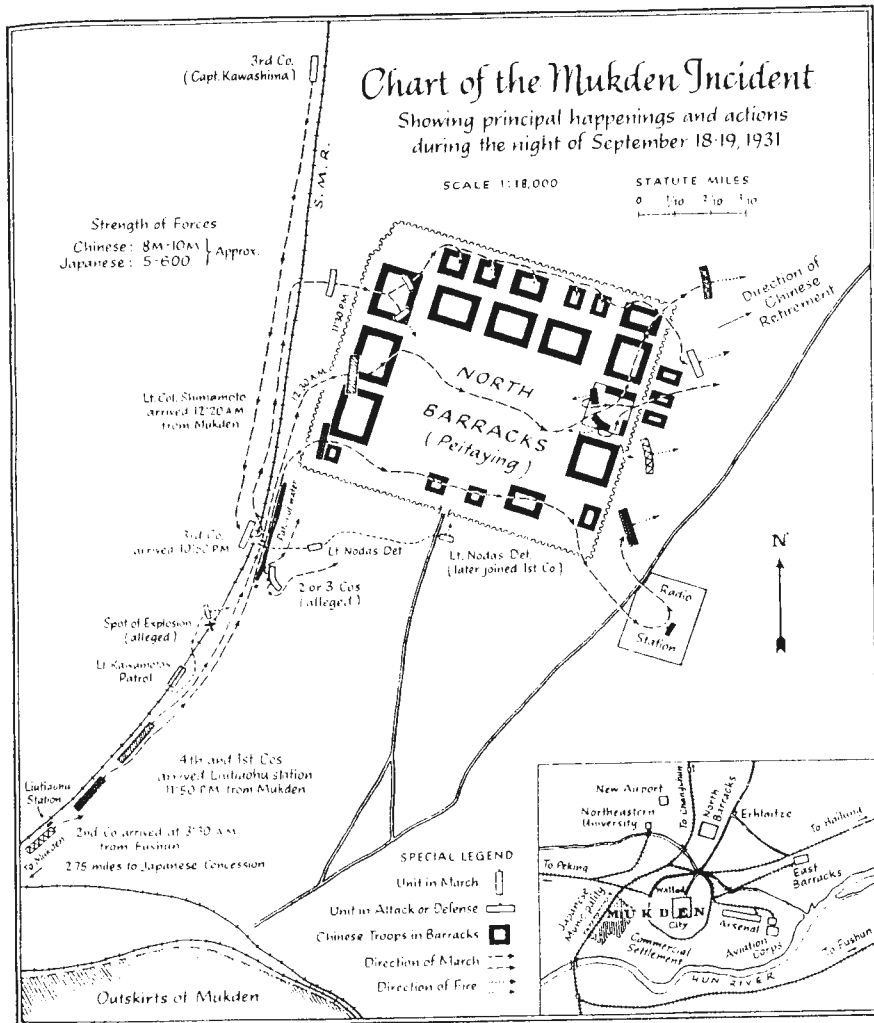
And yes, Japan benefitted from Manchukuo's (and Manchuria's) resources, its railways, its productivity, its strategic location, its frontier, but this issue split the nation on the decision of how to go about "influencing" Manchuria. Eventually, to the Japanese, Manchuria became more than a favored trading nation, rather it became a "holy land," a hope, a security. Manchuria, and then Manchukuo, was the "blood and treasure" of Japan, and an integral part of Japan's expanding empire.

Appendix A



Note: The approximate location from which Major Tōmiya detonated the bomb is based on a diagram in Ozaki, *Rikugun o Ugokashita Hitobito*, p. 107. For a variant version, see Asahi, *Taiheiyō*, I, 307, where the location of the lever to actuate the bomb appears on the Commercial District side of the tracks approximately 200 yards from the point at which the Peking-Mukden Railway goes under the tracks of the South Manchuria Railway.

Appendix B



Replica of Map No. 6, Lytton Report.

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