

JAPANESE NATIONALISM:

A TRANSNATIONAL CASE STUDY OF PAN-ASIANISM IN CHINA AND VIETNAM,
1931-1945

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THESIS APPROVAL

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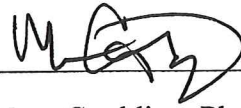
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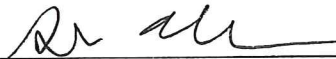
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Introduction

After Japan pragmatized *bushido*, or the samurai code, in the latter nineteenth century, it modernized into a nation-state and sought to extend that same methodology to its East Asian neighbors, China and Vietnam. Despite state-sponsored *bushido*'s success at home and cultural similarities with Asian peoples abroad, Japanese nation-state building failed in China and Vietnam. It was necessary for Wang Jingwei to preserve the nation congruent with Sun Yixian's dreams of Chinese nationhood. Wang Jingwei prioritized rectifying internal strife to oppose both Western and Japanese incursions. Through a transnational lens the reasons for cooperation are unveiled and nationalist, intellectual exchange between Japan, China, and Vietnam recognized. For Wang's China, Japanese partnership presented the most viable channel through which to attain self-determination. As a pragmatist seeking to preserve China's national undertaking, Wang Jingwei adopted Japanese transnational narratives in 1940. Vietnam also adopted similar political, military, economic, and transnationalism models from Japan. Numerous Vietnamese elites like Bao Dai, Cuong De, and Ngo Dinh Diem, were educated in Japan and applied that country's national rhetoric to their own. Vietnamese intellectuals and scholars found commutuality with their Japanese counterparts as educational exchange occurred during the early half of the twentieth century. Additionally, and much like Japan's transnational experiment in China, Vietnamese nationalist groups fractured and not all fully aligned with Pan-Asianism. Educated elites and urbanites like the *Dai Viet* welcomed Japanese aid in severing ties with France. However, the majority rural population of Vietnam stood with Ho Chi Minh's *Viet Minh* and learned military tactics from the Japanese, using them in the subsequent decades. Japanese nationalism and state-building succeeded in Japan but when applied transnationally from 1931-

1945 and despite social, linguistic, and cultural similarities, Pan-Asianism failed in China and Vietnam due to differing historical experiences.

Was Pan-Asianism fully implemented as designed by Japanese architects? What were the repercussions of Pan-Asianism on nationalist movements in East Asia? Previous scholarship addressed these questions unfairly and critiqued Chinese and Vietnamese nationalists, who accepted Japanese aid, as “collaborators” or “traitors.” Additionally, historiography abruptly demarked Pan-Asianism’s demise at Japan’s surrender in 1945. Japanese nationalism and state-building succeeded in Japan but when applied transnationally from 1931-1945 and despite social, linguistic, and cultural similarities, Pan-Asianism failed in China and Vietnam due to differing historical experiences.

This is an intellectual history that comparatively analyzes rhetorical, cultural, political, educational, economic, and military exchange between Japan, China, and Vietnam. Furthermore, it is a new interpretation of Pan-Asian exchange during World War Two that utilizes a transnational lens. It relies on primary sources from Japan, China, Vietnam, Great Britain, France, the United States, and numerous other countries involved from 1931-1945. This does not simply employ sources from various countries but explains scholarly interchange and the formation of national narratives within East Asia. Moreover, secondary source references from previous scholarship establish a background and contribute a more rounded historical narrative.

Despite cultural, linguistic, and social similarities between Japan, China, and Vietnam, Pan-Asianism was not effectively transplanted due to differing historical circumstances. The Japanese nation formed as a military culture and remained isolated from the seventeenth to nineteenth century. Japanese national-formation was juxtaposed to that of China and Vietnam,

both of which were subjected to external incursions, consisted of various ethnic groups, and had different dialects. Despite Japan's failure in implementing Pan-Asianism directly, aspects of it survived World War Two into the Cold War in the form of post-colonial, nationalist movements in East Asia. This significantly contributes to historiography as a new, comparative study and intellectual history through a transnational lens.

Literature Review/Historiography

Previous scholarship on this topic yields varied interpretations of Japanese occupation's significance on China and Vietnam 1931-1945. Scholarly debate on the subject, and more specifically Japanese imperial influence on Chinese and Vietnamese nationalist movements, shifted to numerous foci including politics, nationalism, citizenship, narcotics-trade, tourism in the Empire, racism, ideology, and Confucianism. Prevalent consensus holds that Japanese occupation affected nationalist movements and Asian nationalism was presented a common enemy to unite against. Overall, most scholarship concentrated on the rest of Asia's hatred and opposition to Japan, when in fact, many East Asian nationalists shared indistinguishable beliefs with Japanese intellectuals and politicians. Secondary sources reveal a narrative different from that of Wang's government being labeled as traitors and Japan's supposed flat effect on Vietnam. The concept of collaborationist nationalism for survival adds to the historical interpretation of this period 1931-1945. Vietnamese and Chinese nationalists utilized Japanese methods of national consolidation for pragmatic reasons. Many precepts of Japanese, transnational, Pan-Asianism were mirrored by both Vietnamese and Chinese nationalists. Parallels between Japanese and East Asian transnationalism can be seen in similar rhetoric, whether politically, racially, culturally, or ideologically motivated. Though at odds, East Asian neighbors possessed similar written languages, common socio-ideological beliefs in Confucianism, resistance to a

broader enemy in Western encroachment, racial origins, common ancestry, and shared histories. The Japanese occupation had long-lasting effects on East Asia through all of the above-mentioned commonalities coupled with adoption of Japanese structures. Although there are multitudes of sources available on this topic, none of them present a comprehensive interpretation of exactly how Japanese occupation affected Chinese and Vietnamese nationalism. Secondly, no known works utilize a transnational, case-study methodology to show why modern, Japanese nation-building worked for Japan and not for the rest of East Asia. Most scholarship only addresses separate pieces, i.e. political, social, and military. No mention has been found as to “why” or “how” Japan supported indigenous, Pan-Asian nationalists and why those nationalists collaborated with Japan.

Joseph Yick’s “Self-serving Collaboration: The Political Legacy of Madame Wang in Guangdong Province, 1940-1945,” addresses the political climate under Japanese occupation. Yick shows the close, working relationship between Japanese and Chinese politicians. His article also highlights the role of “Madame Wang” (Chen Bijun, Wang’s wife) and her political acumen within the Reorganized Government.

Continuing with Yick’s article and coinciding with political similarities between the Reorganized Government and the Japanese, Wai Chor So’s “Race, Culture and the Anglo-American Powers: The Views of Chinese Collaborators” analyzed three points, as the title suggests, on race, culture, and Pan-Asianism. The author points to a dialogue from 1938-1940, between certain Chinese nationalists and their Japanese occupiers. Yick continuously indicated the multitude of similarities between Japanese and Chinese intellectuals on the question of nationalism. According to Wai, previously established racial sentiments observed by Chinese

collaborators reflected Japanese Pan-Asianism and that they readily adopted ideas from Japan for their own struggle.¹

Coinciding with race and culture between China and Japan, Kenneth Rouff discusses Japanese tourism within the empire during World War Two in “Japanese Tourism to Mukden, Nanjing, and Qufu, 1938-1943.” Ruoff observes three different Chinese sites in which Japanese citizens toured. He explains the various ways in which educational exchange occurred between Japan and China, despite the ongoing war. Ruoff’s work on tourism illuminates a highly interesting aspect of the nationalist project in both countries. His work expounds on Japan’s preservation of Chinese history in an effort not only to claim as its own, but to renew Chinese nationalist sentiments against Western imperialism.

Several books and monographs show the confluence of Japanese and Chinese nationalisms. *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities* highlights Japanese nationalist intentions within its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. A section of the book, as written and edited by Timothy Brook, concerns political approaches adopted by the Japanese towards war-torn China. In his essay, Brook acknowledges the contradictions between collaboration and nationalism; collaboration being the opposite of nationalism in that it sacrifices sovereignty. However, he later clarifies that pragmatic nationalism “in this twentieth century sense” is constructed entirely in nationalist terms.² Also as Brook explains, “Nationalism was the boldest ideological claim that the collaborators made as to why they were working under Japanese tutelage.”³ As mentioned before, Japan attempted to reify Chinese culture through the

¹ Wai C. So, “Race, Culture, and the Anglo-American Powers: The Views of Chinese Collaborators,” *Modern China*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan. 2011), 82.

² Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, “Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China,” in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 162.

³ Brook and Schmid, 161.

sponsorship of Neo-Confucianism in Asia. As Brook points out, this is seen in Prince Konoe's announcement of the New Order in East Asia which called for equal partnership between Japan and China and the acknowledgement of claims of Asian nationalism.⁴

Philip S. Jowett analyzes the ways in which Wang Jingwei's nationalist army was composed on the Japanese military model. *Rays of the Rising Sun: Armed Forces of Japan's Asian Allies, 1931-1945*, reminiscent of Joyce C. Lebra's work, demonstrates the influence of Japanese military structure on Wang's army.⁵ Jowett explains that Communist sources claimed most of Wang's commanders were anti-communist rather than pro-Japanese. It was said the Japanese would arm the nationalist armies, Wang's and Jiang's, and they would be ready to deal with the Communists after the war.⁶ In this sense, it seems Wang applied the adage "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." It only reiterates China's need for survival and its congruent feelings towards communism, with the Japanese.

The historiographical evolution of Japanese occupation's effect on Vietnamese nationalism progressed in three stages, seemingly shaped by predispositions in relation to geopolitical currents during each phase of scholarship: 1) Vietnamese nationalism was an explicitly indigenous movement with no Japanese inspiration 2) Studies of Vietnamese nationalism switched focus and acknowledged adaptations from the Japanese in military tactics and guerilla warfare 3) Interpretations showed an intricate dynamic between Vietnamese and Japanese brands of nationalism. Through a compilation of secondary sources, varied causes for nationalism's

⁴ Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 177.

⁵ Joyce C. Lebra, "Japanese Trained Armies in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 170. Lebra examines various armies trained by the Japanese which eventually led their countries' national movements.

⁶ Phillip S. Jowett, *Rays of the Rising Sun: Armed Forces of Japan's Asian Allies 1931-1945*, Vol. 1, *China and Manchukuo*, (Lancaster, England: Helion & Company Ltd., 2004.), 2436.

ascent in Southeast Asia is apparent. Each historiographical phase provides a unique version of the rise of nationalism in Vietnam during the Second World War and exemplifies the shift in scholarly debate regarding the topic. A transition is evident as scholarship progressed from World War Two to the present. Scholars writing in the 1940s and directly following Japanese occupation, consisting of mainly Vietnamese authors, attributed nationalism to the organic growth of indigenous groups in search of self-determination. Japanese occupation is not credited as a catalyst for Vietnamese nationalism in early scholarship.⁷ Interpretations immediately following World War Two assume a negative tone when addressing Japan's role in Southeast Asia. Vietnamese writers of Japanese occupation made a consensual effort to victimize Vietnam and villainize Japan. Japan is described as "fascist," imperialistic and brutal. Tran Van Luan, a Vietnamese diplomat, and Tran Duc Thao a Marxist, denies any credit to the Japanese occupation and fomenting nationalist movements. Immediately after gaining independence, Vietnamese scholars did not want to attribute their newly-acquired liberation to the Japanese. As interpretation transitioned to the 1960s and 1970s, Japanese military tactics, strategy, guerilla and jungle warfare, and organization were recognized as inspiring the *Viet Minh* and other Vietnamese nationalist groups. During this period of scholarship, most works on the subject were written in English by American and British academics. When considering scholarship's Western-centric writing during this time, the subsequent focus on military tactics, and the influence of Japanese military administration on Vietnamese nationalists, it is comprehensible that the American experience in Vietnam had a profound effect on historical writing. This coincides with

⁷See Tran Van Luan, "The Vietnam Struggle," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (March, 1949), 41; Tran Duc Thao, "Vietnam and Eastern Asia," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, (August, 1947), 409-410.

the United States' encounter with guerilla and jungle warfare against the North Vietnamese.⁸ This altered course of research can be ascribed to the end of the Vietnam and Cold Wars. As hindsight took the forefront of American scholarship on Vietnam, explanation was needed as to why the United States failed to grasp victory in Vietnam. Becoming further removed from World War Two and coupled with the end of the Vietnam War, scholars in the 1980s-present shifted focus to the significance of Japanese intellectuals working with Vietnamese intellectuals, transplanting Japanese nationalism, and politico-military support for Vietnamese sovereignty.⁹

Through careful interpretation of primary and secondary sources, a complex situation was apparent in Southeast Asia from 1940-1945. Sources vary amongst Americans, French, Vietnamese, British, and Japanese and illustrate a multifaceted historical account of the occupation. Allied perspectives demonstrated prejudices against Japanese war aims, French sources were skewed by the loss of their colonial foothold, Japanese versions paint a righteous portrait as the savior of East Asia, and Vietnamese sources are divided between supporting the Japanese, supporting the Allies, or simply maintaining sovereignty by any means. Multifarious depictions from newspapers, memoirs, official reports, periodicals, academic journals, and first-hand recollections amalgamate into a whole historical narrative and represent multiple subjective truths as to how the Japanese occupation affected Vietnam's national feeling and movements during World War Two.

⁸ See Joyce C. Lebra, "Japanese Trained Armies in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 170; Louis Allen, *War, Conflict, and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific 1941-1952*, (Folkestone, Kent, U.K., Global Oriental: 2011), 285.

⁹ See Huynh K. Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism 1920-1945*, (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press: 1982), 232-237; Kiyoko K. Nitz, "Independence Without Nationalism? The Japanese and Vietnamese Nationalism during the Japanese Period 1940-45," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (March 1984), 110; Tran My-Van, "Japan Through Vietnamese Eyes (1905-1945)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (March 1999), 146; Nguyen The Anh, "The Formulation of the National Discourse in 1940-1945 Vietnam," *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (June 2002), 67. All the above scholars acknowledge the apparent biases of previous scholarship and directly cites the Japanese as the catalyst and propellant of Vietnamese nationalism.

Early Vietnamese scholars, like Tran Duc Thao, discounted Japan's role in Southeast Asia and due to the previously mentioned historiographical trends in the late 1940s, the Japanese were not credited as influential for Vietnam's national movements. "In Vietnam, the Japanese... failed to produce a single movement in favor of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," as stated by Tran Duc Thao.¹⁰ As research has progressed and shown, Tran Duc is simply a biased and inaccurate source. In fact, there were numerous nationalist groups that emerged under Japanese hegemony, forming in retaliation against or in support of the Japanese.

Other scholars immediately after World War Two held similar notions. Tran Van Luan, a Vietnamese diplomat during the Second World War, parrots Tran Duc Thao in his conclusions.¹¹ He argues that Vietnamese nationalism and nationalist movements had no influence or direction from their Japanese occupiers is an outright omission of the complete narrative of this period.

Vo Nguyen Giap, a former history teacher, learned general and tactician, and Ho Chi Minh's right-hand-man in revolution, provides primary evidence that some Japanese Imperial soldiers aided the Vietnamese in their cause. He details encounters with Japanese officers after their defeat in August 1945 and their involvement with the *Viet Minh's* training.

Nguyen The Anh, a professor from the University of Hue, who lived through Japanese occupation, explained in his article "The Formulation of the National Discourse 1940-1945." Nguyen unequivocally cites the Japanese as the stimulus and promoter of Vietnamese nationalism. Nguyen stands in opposition to earlier Vietnamese historians by acknowledging the

¹⁰Tran Duc Tran Duc Thao, "Vietnam and Eastern Asia," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, (Aug. 1947) 410.

¹¹See Tran Van Luan, "The Vietnam Struggle," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (March, 1949), 41. Multiple scholars writing directly after the Second World War hold noticeable biases and omit much of the historical narrative. Tran's Duc Thao and Van Luan in particular proposed that the Japanese occupation had no effect whatsoever on Vietnamese nationalism. If influence did not exist via the Japanese, then at least their actions prompted reactions and fomented Vietnamese national movements.

impact of the Japanese occupation on national feeling. Later Vietnamese scholars, unlike their Marxist predecessors, recognized the significance of the Japanese variety of nationalism on shaping Vietnamese nationalism.

Bui Diem was a Vietnamese student and clandestine member of the *Dai Viet* non-communist, nationalist party during Japanese occupation. During the war he worked alongside Japanese cohorts against the French and coincidentally studied under Vo Nguyen Giap in college while active in the Vietnamese nationalist movement.¹² Bui was molded by and represented the relationship between Japanese and Vietnamese nationalists.

Alan H. Brodrick's *Little China: The Annamese Lands*, is an account of an Englishman questioning Vietnamese locals on their perceptions of Japan's role in liberating East Asia from European colonialism.

Despite only representing a portion of American perceptions, a *New York Times* article titled "Province Sliced from Indochina," revealed that a significant number in the United States acknowledged Japan's appeal in Asia. Numerous other *Times* articles during this period showed similar international perspectives on the situation in Vietnam from 1940-1945. *Contemporary Japan*, a periodical published in 1937, exemplifies the ideology of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in an article titled "The Fundamental Significance of Our Continental Policy." It echoes much of what Japanese nationalists envisioned for their trans-nationalist mission to the rest of East Asia.

Mamoru Shigemitsu provides a substantial account of the goals of the Japanese empire and their subsequent effect on Vietnamese nationalism. From the Manchurian Incident, which historians argue sparked the beginning of World War Two (1931) to Japanese surrender in 1945,

¹²Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History*, (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press: 1999), 13.

Shigemitsu served as foreign ambassador for Japan in multiple capacities throughout the war.¹³ In his memoir of 1958, *Japan and Her Destiny*, he not only pens his thoughts and feelings about Japan during the war but more specifically, its nationalistic goals within the empire.

Colonel Masanobu Tsuji narrates his memoir in *Singapore, The Japanese Version*, having several parallels to Shigemitsu. Tsuji was highly active with nationalist groups throughout Southeast Asia, during World War Two. He was operating in the region until the early 1960s and suspected of assisting the North Vietnamese government, even after Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945.¹⁴ Tsuji characterizes the ends to which Japan facilitated various nationalist groups when he exclaims "With the help of a powerful Japan, the peoples of Asia will work together for independence."

Kiyoko Kurusu Nitz's article "Independence Without Nationalists? The Japanese and Vietnamese Nationalism during the Japanese Period 1940-45," demonstrates the various ways in which the Japanese and Vietnamese bonded before and during World War Two. She depicts Japan's early fascination with Vietnam and the mutual feelings between the two countries.

In her book titled *Japanese Trained Armies in Southeast Asia*, Joyce C. Lebra explains the ways in which Japanese military standards were implemented and influenced the formation of armies in Southeast Asia. Lebra addresses the Indian National Army, Burma National Army, and Vietnamese Army.

From a British perspective, Louis Allen's work *War, Conflict, and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific 1941-1952* expounds on how the Japanese military motivated various Southeast

¹³Xiaobing Li, *The Cold War in East Asia*, (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Young Group, 2018), 25.

¹⁴United States Central Intelligence Agency, Electronic Reading Room, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, *Tsuji Masanobu*, (June 30, 1962, Declassified 2005), File No. 519cd81f993294098d516952, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/519cd81f993294098d516952>.

Asian national armies. Through his work, there is an obvious synthesis between the Japanese and Vietnamese from 1940-1945.

Frederic Roustan, a French scholar emphasized the use of private and government-sponsored Japanese research institutes in the pre-war years and during the war.

Correspondent to Nitz's work, Captain Patti Archimedes confirmed the diplomatic and political rapport between Japanese and Vietnamese nationalists. Archimedes was an O.S.S. (American Office of Strategic Services) operative in Vietnam, during World War Two.

Accessible primary sources for this topic were biased as they were based on personal experience or connection to events. Other scholars utilized some of these sources before this work. However, none have looked at the question of Japan's influence on East Asia through a transnational lens, using varied sources from different countries, languages, occupations, and peoples. Secondary sources, most of all previous scholarship, has not addressed Japan's success with its own national mission and failure with its transnational one. Precedent discourse confined itself to only one perspective or attempted to place negative or positive value on events and people. That is not our job as historians. Historical work analyzes a variety of sources, from differing accounts, to portray a nuanced and whole picture. This research builds on previous scholarship and creates a new narrative through a transnational lens.

Chapter Outline

This introduction “unpacks” and clearly defines terms like nationalism, modernity, Pan-Asianism, and use of “collaboration.” It is necessary to delineate contested concepts and terms to aid in interpreting the argument. The introduction also outlines the scope of research and lenses used. This paper does acknowledge the bias of Western scholarship and applications of the term “nationalism” and “modernity” to Eastern history, as the two previously mentioned concepts are

Western constructs themselves. Explanation is also necessary for use of Pan-Asianism or Pan-Asia. “Collaboration” is almost entirely synonymous with Chinese and Vietnamese nationalist groups who sought aid from Japan and this introduction elaborates on it and efforts to change the trajectory of scholarship’s use of such charged monikers. The introduction’s purpose is to help others navigate the research by defining intended use of the aforementioned terms.

Chapter one depicts the foundation of the modern Japanese nation-state. It addresses Japan’s preservation of the “samurai spirit” and *bushido* through the early to mid-twentieth century in order to mold a nation. The first chapter explains how Japan, having adopted Western technology and industrialization, re-branded them as their own and joined them with a re-imagined history. The Japanese state promoted its narrative through universal education, adoration of the samurai, tourism, transnational exchange with Asian neighbors, and through glorification of East-Asian traditions in opposition to the West. Japanese nationalism developed into a transnational mission, or Pan-Asianism, and was dispersed to the rest of Asia either by colonialism or intellectual exchange.

Chapter two demonstrates the various ways in which Wang Jingwei and other Chinese nationalists adopted Japanese nation-state models to fulfill their own national conceptualization. Wang Jingwei’s Reorganized Nationalist Government, Mao Zedong’s Chinese Communist Party, and Jiang Jieshi’s Goumindang are all utilized as a case study. It shows the educational impact of Pan-Asianism on not only Wang, but his nationalist predecessor Sun Yixian and other contemporaries. The second chapter explains that Pan-Asianism and Wang’s acceptance of Japanese aid was both pragmatic and necessary for China’s survival against Western incursions. Pan-Asianism was also propagated by Japan via academics, diplomacy, economics, and even tourism.

Chapter three is a case study of Vietnam's experience with Japanese transnationalism during World War Two 1940-1945. It delves into the Vietnamese-Japanese relations, educational exchange, and occupation from the early twentieth century to the end of the war. More specifically, chapter three addresses the various Vietnamese nationalist factions that organized under Japanese occupation. It also depicts the similarities and differences between their platforms, ideologies, and socio-economic foundations in relation to Japanese influence.

The conclusion accounts for the case studies of Japan, China, and Vietnam and posits that Pan-Asianism ended with the defeat of Japan in World War Two. Japanese nationalism, and Pan-Asianism, were both theoretically and practically successful in forming the modern Japanese state. It was not successful in China and Vietnam as Japan attempted to apply their nationalistic propaganda transnationally. However, its legacy remained during the Cold War and with post-colonial movements throughout East and Southeast Asia. Although Japan successfully formed its own nation-state, it failed to propagate those same practices with their neighbors. Wang Jingwei arguably was not a collaborationist or traitor, but a pragmatist and simply another voice of Chinese nationalism from 1937-1945. Vietnamese nationalist parties, like the *Dai Viet* who accepted aid from Japanese contemporaries, were arguably not traitors. The conclusion also explains the significance of changing the way historiography references these players in writing, while avoiding a Japanese "apologist" stance. The conclusion of this thesis provides a greater historical understanding of not only transnational struggles, but also post-colonial movements after. It proves that yes, Japanese nationalism worked domestically but as it was disseminated across East Asia, it failed. Finally, it provides a new and different transnational perspective by using sources, both primary and secondary, from various nations involved.

Definitions, Language, and Lens

For this work, certain terms and parameters must be clearly defined. Nationalism is influenced by numerous Western scholars on the topic. Study of East Asian nationalism is an arduous task as most of the discourse on nations was established in the West. Despite my research, there is no apparent Asian nationalism outside of Western taxonomies. Therefore, most attempts to classify East Asian nations are distorted by Western definitions and assume an almost Orientalist spirit of which this research attempts to distance itself from. Scholars are left with a limited vocabulary to quantify other nations outside the West.

Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Steven Grosby are scholars on nationalism and have informed late scholarship on it. Possibly the most noted scholar on nations and their origin is Benedict Anderson. His two works *Imagined Communities* and *The Spectre of Comparisons* partially affected arguments made here. Anderson's paradoxical evaluation of the nation as simultaneously tangible and intangible provided a nuanced interpretation for the field. The nation, as defined here, exists in the sense that people believe they are members of the nation but will never encounter most other members and yet sacrifice for those unknown members. Conversely, the nation is physically absent as one cannot simply "bottle" nation-ness. It exists solely in the consciousness of its members and is merely represented by symbols, idols, museums, and memorials, something of which will be later addressed, through tourism of the Greater East Asia Sphere. Universal education, which will be discussed with modernity later, propagates national feeling and pushes a national narrative derived from history and origin stories. Often, history is distorted to fit the national narrative, to imply that the nation has always existed and is still present and that students of the narrative belong to it.¹⁵

¹⁵ For scholarly references on nationalism and modernity see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 2006), 6-7; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006) 1-5. Steven

Modernity is also an unwieldy term used haphazardly in historical writing. The concept itself derives from an upwardly-progressive, linear view of history that imagines itself either as currently “in modernity” or constantly striving for “modernity.” It has been visualized as the future as well as an industrialized, civilized, democratized present. But, what happens when we reach “modernity?” Is modernity enjoyed by everyone or do different groups have varying definitions of modernity? Is modernity mutually exclusive with the nation and does the nation exist without modernity? Specifically, for purposes of this work, Pan-Asia looked to Japan as exemplary of the modern nation-state. To free themselves from their colonial bondage, countries like China and Vietnam looked to adopt modern practices, similar to Japan, in order to achieve self-determination.

This quandary muddled research and poses a problem for conceptualizing Pan-Asianism. It becomes problematic when categorizing East Asian nations, like China, Japan, and Vietnam because not all interpretations of “modernity” apply to them. Like the nation and nationalism, modernity is also a Western construct. Both constructs pose the question: Can we apply Western concepts to interpret East Asian history? This research attempts to do just that and is not an effort to apply Western conceptualization to Eastern history, but an effort to utilize available vocabulary in presenting a uniquely East-Asian brand of nationalism, separate from the West.

Modernity is strictly defined and for purposes here, it is associated with industrialization, urbanization, universal education, a central state structure, and citizenship; Industrialization meaning stream-lined, mass production of commodities for domestic use and exports and technological advancements for the time period in which the thesis is centered (1937-1945);

Grosby, *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 131-163; Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 5-43.

Urbanization meaning at least fifty percent of the population lives in urban centers, apart from rural, agricultural areas; Universal education is available to all citizens of a nation in order to propagate national narratives and in an effort to create productive members of that nation while promoting a degree of upward mobility for a majority of the population; Centralized state structure meaning the power of one entity to govern its citizens and the sole right to violence and enforcement of laws; Citizenship meaning persons within clearly defined, geographical borders, possessing particular qualities that the state and society deem part of the whole, and subjection to a universal education system. These definitions serve to rectify any misconceptions about the use of “modernity” and are only defined as such for purposes of this argument. Modernity here is not constrained within or synonymous with a particular time frame, like the early to mid-twentieth century for example. Modernity here is also not mutually exclusive with nationalism or nations and is not a “zero-sum” requirement for the forming of nations. It is a unique set of circumstances under which some ethnic, linguistic, political, economic, or religious peoples experience.

The use of “nations” and “nationalism” also require delineation. The “nation,” as referenced hereto, is bound by geographical and political borders, and is comprised of citizens with common linguistic ties (derived from Chinese), social ideology (Confucianism), and history (centered around and permeating from China). “Nationalism,” as defined here, is a narrative that joins the “old” with the “new.” In the case of Japan, the infusion of *bushido* (of the old) and the nation-state (the new). Japan showed its continental neighbors that nation-building included fusion of the “old” and the “new.”

Pan-Asianism or Pan-Asia is based on the aforesaid definitions. Pan-Asia does not exist without Western incursions and colonialism. At its center, it took on an anti-West foundation and

sought to free other Asian peoples from Western oppression. It also included shared histories, social orders, and language with the continent's cultural fore-bearer, China. Koreans, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Taiwanese commonly, if not begrudgingly, acknowledge the influence and cultural inheritance from China. Pan-Asianism is structured by Confucianism, relying on intermodal relationships. On a personal level, Confucianism asserts that self-fulfillment emanates from the individual's relationship with other people. This includes the execution of the individual's proper role in relation to another person or performing duties for others. An example would be the relationship between a parent and child wherein certain obligations are expected between the two. Fei Xiaotong equates it to "circles that appear on the surface of a lake when a rock is thrown into it."¹⁶ Within Pan-Asianism, these differential modes of association are applied to nations. Up to the nineteenth century, China was widely considered a "paternal nation" to the rest of East Asia. Japan, in fomenting the idea of Pan-Asia, assumed the paternal role after its own ascension and China's descension.

With this relationship in mind and having established the framework of Pan-Asianism, Wang Jingwei's "collaborative" government was not as history has so simply and bluntly labeled it as. Historiography's consensus on coining Wang's Reorganized Nationalist Government as collaborationist, or himself as a traitor, is rudimentary and lacks nuance. This research contributes to historical writing on this topic and presents another perspective; a transnational perspective that views Chinese and Vietnamese adoption of Japanese nation-building as a "pragmatic" path towards self-determination. As will be discussed throughout, Wang was the rightful heir to Sun Yixian, as himself and others attested. Sun Yixian and Wang Jingwei both studied in Japan and associated with the *Genyosha* society, taking from their education a

¹⁶ Xiaotong Fei, *From the Soil: Foundations of Chinese Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 62.

common cause in Pan-Asianism. Wang and Sun both called on their fellow countrymen to learn from the Japanese state, adopt new, modern methods while still valuing pastoral ways. If then both national leaders used the same rhetoric to mobilize Chinese nationalism, how is it Wang Jingwei was labeled a traitor by history and Sun Yixian hailed as a “George Washingtonesque” figure for Chinese nationalist movements? The answers lay in historical circumstances that Wang Jingwei found himself and his government in, during its tenure and after. Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi both opposed Wang’s government as it accepted Japanese aid. However, just like Japan itself, governments that accepted Japanese aid and entered Pan-Asia crumbled after Japan’s defeat in 1945. Plainly stated, Wang Jingwei lost, and the victor’s historical accounts quickly denounced his nationalist cause. The victory of the Chinese Communist Party over the Guomindang in 1949, further cemented Wang as a traitor to China.¹⁷ Conversely, other historical perspectives will continue to view Wang and other’s actions as treasonous and incongruent with Chinese or Vietnamese nationalism; that is a valid stance and this author does not seek to disprove it. Rather a peripheral goal is to dissuade the use of “collaboration,” “traitor,” or other emotionally-negative connotations when recounting this history.

Iris Chang’s *The Rape of Nanking* placed invaluable focus on Japanese military atrocities, exposing the horrifying and evil side of the Japanese empire. Historians must not ignore the system of “comfort women,” in which hundreds of thousands of women from Japanese colonies were forced into sexual slavery. It is an undeniably terrible disservice for this period in history to glaze over the mass murder, rape, and pillaging of Nanking by the Japanese. It is also impossible to dismiss the use of “comfort women” and the physical and psychological damage to not only

¹⁷ The CCP despised the Japanese, not simply for their invasion of China, but also because the Japanese government was overtly anti-communist. See Mao Zedong, “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party,” [Dec. 1939], *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 2. (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1967).

individual women, but to generations of Japan's neighbors up to present. The objective view of transnational exchange of ideas between Chinese and Japanese nationalists acknowledges atrocious acts committed by the Japanese from 1937-1945. It is not intended to continue the "Second Rape of Nanking" propagated by some Japanese academics recently.¹⁸ This work looks at language, rhetoric, ideas, and nation-state building as Chinese and Vietnamese nationalists pragmatically adopted Japanese methods for their own vision.

¹⁸ Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War Two* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 199. Also see Noburo Kojima, "How Long Must We Apologize?" *New York Times* (November 3, 1991); Robert Orr, "Hashimoto's War Remarks Reflect the Views of Many of His Peers," *Tokyo Keizai* (December 13, 1994).

Chapter One:

Japanese Nation-State, *Bushido*, and Pan-Asianism (1868-1945)

Understanding Japanese nation-building as adopted by China and Vietnam necessitates a background of the modern Japanese state's formation. As Japan modernized during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, other burgeoning nations readily adopted Japanese modes in forming their own tools of the state.¹ During and after the Meiji Restoration 1868, the Japanese state summoned the way of the samurai or *bushido* in every facet of its establishment. On an ethical and philosophical level, *bushido* stems from several sources including Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The samurai code derives its respect for nature and the role of humans within nature from Shintoism. It also emphasizes ancestors, deities, and gods of nature. This translates into respect for one's lord and the natural order of service. Buddhism is also significant in *bushido* with a belief in reincarnation, the pursuit of perfection, and enlightenment. Both Shintoism and Buddhism dovetail with Confucianism that institutes an ordered society in which each person is to fulfill their given task in life and justifies what the West considers social inequality. Conversely, ideological offshoots of Confucianism, like *bushido*, evolved as something not only Japanese, but uniquely East Asian. Japanese military models employed *bushido* as an overarching ideological framework while transforming citizen soldiers into "samurai" as the physical manifestation of a feudal past and national pride. This is the manner in which nations revise narratives, by assembling piecemeal historical artifacts of the past in order to make the people feel as one and identify with the nation.² Juxtaposed to modern Japanese

¹ See Joyce C. Lebra, "Japanese Trained Armies in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 170. Lebra examines various armies trained by the Japanese, eventually led their countries' forceful nationalist movements.

² See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (New York: Verso Books, 1983), 163-187. Anderson asserts that nations are "imagined communities" or the product of social construction based on pastoral narrations.

“samurai,” the samurai class of pre-modern Japan was not made of the peasantry but of upper-middle class, landed, professional warriors.

The samurai class emerged during Japan’s Nara period, starting in 710 CE.³ The samurai’s original duty was fighting off the indigenous Ainu people, in service to the Imperial Court. After establishing a bureaucracy, the emperor granted the defenders parcels of land. Land was a common form of payment and used for rice farming, thus turning a profit and providing subsistence. Eventually landowners who employed samurai became very wealthy and held vast expanses of land. These landowners, also of the samurai class, were known as *daimyo*. Often, *daimyo* waged war against other *daimyo* in pursuit of land and resources. *Daimyo* employed samurai to fight their wars. A hierarchy of vassalship developed and as samurai successfully served their lords, they too gained land. Eventually, conflict between the various lords and families peaked during the Sengoku Period (end of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century).⁴ This century-long civil war saw the use of samurai on a large scale, more so than ever before. Warlords fielded armies of samurai and *bushi* (common soldiers), numbering in the tens of thousands in the pursuit of land, resources, the imperial title of Shogun (supreme military ruler), and unification of Japan.

The Sengoku Period ended in 1603 when Ieyasu Tokugawa defeated and subjugated all other warlords in Japan. It was during the end of this period that the samurai class shifted its focus and skills. As the need for warriors declined, the samurai were forced to apply their skills elsewhere. Many opened businesses and pumped capital into the country which resulted in an economic boom. Others secluded themselves, opening up martial arts academies and reflected on

³ Clive Sinclaire, *Samurai: The Weapons and Spirit of the Japanese Warrior*, (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2001), 11.

⁴ Sinclaire, 13.

the philosophical aspect of the samurai class. During the Tokugawa Shogunate's reign, the codification of *bushido* began with the works of Yamamoto Tsunetomo and Miyamoto Musashi. Treatises like *Hagakure* and the *Book of Five Rings* influenced the Japanese people for generations.⁵ However, a gap existed between post-Sengoku Japan and modern Japan of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Japan industrialized, modernized, and formed a new government, the state required concepts that were essentially Japanese. Thus, numerous works like those of Musashi and Tsunetomo, gained popularity and inspired contemporary authors to publish works on the "mythological warriors of old." *Bushido*, in its modern manifestation, was a distortion of something that never evidently existed. The authentic samurai class ruled Japan for over a millennium, but never tangibly codified a liturgy or ideology. The most significant works on the topic were not by samurai, excluding perhaps Miyamoto Musashi, but by authors belonging to the samurai class. The modern Japanese state borrowed from antiquity a code that held little pragmatic purpose during the high-point of the samurai, which thrived during war. The Japanese state embraced an ideology born not from war, combat, and professional soldiers, but from a sedentary class of people who shifted to purposes other than war; Meaning the ideology on which the modern Japanese state founded itself derived from a samurai class of the post-warring states era, who had no more purpose for war or had not engaged in war during their lifetime.⁶ *Bushido*, as imagined by Japanese national narratives, was a code born between the seventeenth and late nineteenth centuries in a period of peace. The state-adopted ideology of *bushido* had never witnessed war as did the samurai of which it romanticized.

⁵ James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 11-36.

⁶ Karl F. Friday, "Bushido or Bull?: A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition," *The History Teacher*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (May 1994), 343.

Coinciding with the modern Japanese state's distortion of *bushido*, the state's rendering of all Imperial soldiers as "samurai," although symbolically utilitarian for the state, was a historical fallacy. As mentioned before, the samurai were a rich, landed caste in pre-modern (pre-Meiji Restoration, 1868) Japan, far from the conscripted peasants of the modern Japanese military. Reshaping the Japanese nation-state through the military involved a disproportionate application of samurai ethics and distorted the true essence of *bushido*. Modern conscripts carrying the samurai sword into battle would have been cut down by their pre-modern countrymen, as no one other than samurai could carry the sword.⁷ To further explain this, the modern Japanese army was conscripted from the peasantry and lower classes with officers coming from the middle and upper classes. Samurai belonged to a distinct, exclusive class of feudal Japan and were the sole "carriers of two swords." A modern, peasant conscript or middle-class officer carrying the sword, the symbol and life of the samurai, contradicts the historical essence of the Confucian, societal order of Japan-past.

Nonetheless, *bushido* was a tool for the Japanese military and they indoctrinated a strong fighting force at a young age. The seven tenets of *bushido*- justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity, honor, and loyalty- were borrowed by the Japanese government. This is evident in the Ministry of War's 1871 instructions to soldiers as it repeated these same virtues as those of a soldier in service to the emperor.⁸ Militarists like Yamagata Aritomo required the samurai tradition to bolster a sense of nationalism. Youths around the country organized and conducted community service projects to make their emperor proud.⁹ Japan conscripted young

⁷ Karl F. Friday, "Bushido or Bull?: A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition," *The History Teacher*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (May 1994), 343.

⁸ Friday, 343.

⁹ Smethurst, Richard J., *The Creation of the Imperial Military Reserve Association in Japan*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4, (Cambridge University Press, 1971), abstract.

males at the age of fifteen years and four months and trained them until they were seventeen years old. During the Sengoku period samurai males of fifteen years received their first steel sword as a rite of passage. The education system was crucial in solidifying samurai tradition for the Japanese people. As militarists gained power in government, the curriculum for students shifted to glorification of the Japanese Empire and exemplary heroes that had fought in its various wars of conquest. As early as the first grade, textbooks contained lessons with content from the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) like this excerpt from a schoolbook referencing a Japanese victory over Russian forces, “Our brave officers and men resolved to repay His Majesty’s benevolence...and finally seized Hill 203.”¹⁰ As the Japanese school curriculum indicated, veneration of samurai *esprit de corps* further cemented that ideology at an early age and produced duty-minded young citizens.

Japanese conscripts were inculcated from a young age and it carried through to military service. Within the Japanese military model, there existed a hierarchy of power, much like that observed respectively between the sartorial ranks *shogun*, *daimyo*, and *samurai*. With a basis in Confucianism, *bushido* as adopted by Japan relied on paternalistic power roles. In modern Japan, the emperor was considered the patriarchal leader of the state and officers in the military fulfilled similar roles amongst their soldiers. Much of the Japanese army and navy codes originate in the *Hagakure*, a philosophical work by Yamamoto Tsunetomo from the early eighteenth century. A samurai himself, Tsunetomo compiled a series of conversations that addressed samurai lifestyle, beliefs, and conduct. As previously noted, this code constituted seven virtues (righteousness, courage, benevolence, respect, honesty, honor, and loyalty).¹¹ “I have found the essence of

¹⁰ Ienaga Saburo, *The Glorification of War in Japanese Education*, *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 3, (MIT Press, 1993-1994), 120.

¹¹ Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure* (Japan, 1716), 13.

Bushido: to die,” was a repeating theme of *Hagakure* as well as the mantra of the Japanese fighting spirit.¹² Service and absolute fealty to one’s lord was prioritized in ancient Japan and subsequently so for the foot-soldier in service to country and the emperor. The relationship of foot-soldier to emperor reified the past; A filial relation that adapted from a samurai’s loyalty to his lord. Yamamoto Tsunetomo’s work was first widely-published in 1906 and according to Minoru Tanaka of Osaka University, “influenced generals and officers in military power.”¹³ Many soldiers rationalized their actions during World War Two based on *Hagakure* and *bushido*. Not only did the Imperial Army summon the spirit of Yamamoto, but so did Japanese pilots carrying out *kamikaze* attacks. Pilots, seamen, and soldiers alike were young men indoctrinated by a school system that emphasized self-sacrifice and devotion to the Japanese nation-state.¹⁴

Additionally, *bushido* as adopted by the modern Japanese state was evident in military training, instruction, operation, and command structure. State *bushido*’s implementation required indoctrinating men at an early age. From the time they were in school and well into basic training, youths were strictly obedient to superiors and officers. Disobedience or insubordination from a soldier resulted in severe punishment or beating. Military policy dictated “calculated brutality” and effective officers were expected to beat their soldiers regularly.¹⁵ Harsh punishment instilled soldiers with fear so they would not think twice when given a mission. Echoing the spirit of *Hagakure*, officers ensured their men awoke each morning as if they were already dead. Fighting to the last man and seppuku cemented soldiers’ unquestioned loyalty to their officers and nation. An excerpt from the 1944 Japanese military handbook, “The

¹² Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure* (Japan, 1716), 13.

¹³ Justin F. Stone, *Bushido: The Way of the Samurai*, (New York: Square One Publishers, 2002), xv.

¹⁴ Stone, xv.

¹⁵ Robert B. Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun: A History of the Japanese Military*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1997), 308.

determination of the Japanese soldier is to fight to the last man or commit suicide, rather than surrender,” reiterates the influence of samurai tradition.¹⁶ Japanese Officers were so relentless towards those under their command that many soldiers feared returning to their officers if a task was not completed. Young soldiers who showed cowardice in service to the emperor not only faced death or serious disciplinary action, but their families also received retribution. Punishing a soldier’s family mirrored a Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1869) policy in which samurai who dishonored their lord were punished along with five generations of their family. Punitive action towards a soldier’s family was also consistent with societal retribution commonly observed in Confucian-based societies; If an individual acted dishonorably, the individual’s differential modes of association, family or friends, were also affected.¹⁷

Ritual suicide, often distorted and romanticized by western scholars, was linked to *bushido* in the Japanese military. *Kamikaze* attacks commenced during the final, desperate stages of World War Two. Exhausted of its resources, manpower, and suffering multiple defeats dealt by the United States, the Japanese employed a despondent tactic. From a utilitarian perspective, these were not intentionally suicide missions, but simply not equipped for a return flight. Logistically, as Japanese resources hemorrhaged, they could not fully fuel and equip all planes for return after a mission.¹⁸ Vice-Admiral Takijiro Onishi was the first to conceive a *kamikaze*-specific fighting force, known as the Special Attack Unit, strictly utilizing the Zero aircraft. The Zero was preferred for its maneuverability, speed, and ability to carry a 500-pound bomb. Faced

¹⁶ *Japanese Military Handbook: TM E30-480*, (War Department, public domain, 1944); See also “Field Service Code,” *Tokyo Gazette*, Vol. 4, No. 9 (Jan. 8, 1941), 1-16.

¹⁷ Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil: Foundations of Chinese Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.), 60. Fei Xiaotong, Chinese anthropologist discusses the importance of differential modes of association in Confucian societies. Each relationship emanates from the center (the individual) and is affected by actions of the individual.

¹⁸ Okumiya, Masatake, Horikoshi, Jiro, *Zero: The Story of Japan’s Air War in the Pacific: 1941-1945*, (New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1956), 239. Written by Japanese pilots who served in World War Two.

with deteriorating circumstances in the latter half of 1944, Onishi effectively implemented “suicide bombings” in desperation. “Even to the pilots who had fought against overwhelming odds, the request for *kamikaze* attacks was not received without shock.”¹⁹ Despite initial shock from the admiral’s request for suicidal missions, all pilots unanimously agreed to carry them out.

Conversely, total dedication to country and emperor was instilled in twentieth century Japanese pilots as it was instilled in sixteenth century samurai warriors. Japanese officers Masatake Okumiya and Jiro Horikoshi’s book *Zero: The Story of Japan’s Air War in the Pacific*, confirms their dedication:

The human element of course contributed much to the final decision. Members of the Army and Navy had been raised in an environment startlingly different from that of our enemies. The time-honored custom and sentiment of the Japanese people would not recognize existence as a prisoner of war; capture by the enemy was to be feared more than death, for such capture was always accompanied by disgrace to one’s family...²⁰

Soldiers did not return without completing a mission. Nor did they surrender as to not bring shame upon their families. Being taken as a prisoner of war was incomprehensible. Japanese soldiers, racially indoctrinated against the West during youth, whole-heartedly believed that if captured, no mercy would be shown them. Under the doctrine of *bushido*, they expected no mercy with surrender and had no respect for the enemy who surrendered to them. The Japanese military’s demeanor and reverence for samurai tradition near war’s end is apparent in *Zero*, “Rather than surrender to the enemy and spend a life in shame...our men naturally considered...means of achieving an honorable and glorious death”²¹

¹⁹ Okumiya, Masatake, Horikoshi, Jiro, *Zero: The Story of Japan’s Air War in the Pacific: 1941-1945*, (New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1956), 245.

²⁰ Okumiya and Horikoshi, 241.

²¹ Okumiya and Horikoshi, 241.

Ritual suicide and kamikaze were not exclusive to the Japanese Air Force. Roughly 100,000 Japanese soldiers defended Japan's last hope in the spring of 1945 as the United States honed in on Okinawa island. The island of Okinawa was crucial for the United States military to launch an invasion of Japan. It provided a closer base of operations from which the American air force could launch bombing raids on mainland Japan. However, the Japanese were defeated when faced with American military might. Despite being holed up inside Shuri Castle, a feudal era fortress, General Mitsuru Ushijima's defensive strategy failed and "...the Japanese commander committed suicide, and so did thousands of his soldiers and the civilians of the island."²² Rather than face dishonorable capture by the enemy, the Japanese soldiers committed suicide.

Samurai traditions were influential from an economic standpoint as well. Beginning in the Meiji period, both the Japanese government and military supported the *Zaibatsu* until the end of World War Two. Former samurai families like Mitsubishi, belonged to a group of manufacturers and industrialists known as the *Zaibatsu*. During World War Two, Mitsubishi produced fighter planes known as "Zeros." These were one of many types of planes used in the attack on Pearl Harbor and throughout the war. Many renowned Japanese motor vehicle companies, like Nissan, Suzuki, Kawasaki, Honda, Toyota, and Mitsubishi originated from *Zaibatsu* monopolies. These companies cornered the Japanese market on mining, chemicals, and metal production and gained exclusive contracts with the government and military. Whereas smaller, private, Japanese companies failed

The planes produced by the Mitsubishi Corporation not only carried a samurai name, but were used in *kamikaze* attacks. Literally translated as "divine wind" kamikaze alluded to an

²² James L. Stokesbury, *A Short History of World War II*, (New York: William and Marrow Co., 1980), 371.

attempted Mongolian invasion of Japan in 1281. As the Mongolian fleet approached the shores of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, typhoons swept across the Sea of Japan and destroyed Kublai Khan's fleet. The small number of samurai that defended the shoreline attributed the good fortune to the gods.²³ Herein lies a mistakenly romanticized connotation with *kamikaze*. The invocation of "divine wind" was an appeal to samurai history and suicide missions were not originally intended by the Japanese military.

Samurai tradition also symbolically affected the Japanese military. The army and navy were immersed in samurai symbolism and nostalgia. The two largest battleships, the *Yamato* and *Musashi*, were respectively named after an ancient samurai family and the greatest swordsman in the world. Military implements like the battleships *Yamato* and *Musashi* did not simply resonate the past but naming them after historically significant figures legitimized the state's power and extended the Japanese national narrative to the minds of all Japanese. Accompanying that, officers displayed samurai swords when in uniform. In numerous photographs, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the strategist behind the Pearl Harbor attack, is accompanied with his officers aboard the battleship *Yamato* and all wore samurai swords, or katana.²⁴ Many officer's swords were handed down from generations of samurai families. The sword acted as more of an aesthetic piece rather than a practical sidearm. Nonetheless it showed traditional influence and a present manifestation of an imagined past. The katana saw significant use during the "Rape of Nanjing" in 1937, when Japanese forces captured the Republic of China's capital and killed an estimated 300,000 Chinese. One account is of two Japanese officers that competed for decapitating the

²³ Clive Sinclair, *Samurai: The Weapons and Spirit of the Japanese Warrior*, (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2001), 13.

²⁴ Fuchida, Mitsuo, Okumiya, Masatake, *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan* (New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1955), 112. Written by officers of the Japanese military, served in World War Two.

most Chinese, with their swords.²⁵ In the latter years of World War Two, *kamikaze* pilots followed rituals before their final mission. This consisted of a large farewell meal, usually of rice, beans, and dried fish. Pilots then wrote a closing letter to their families and took three drinks of sake, bowed in thanks to the emperor, then to their fellow pilots, and finally in the direction of their hometown. With the letters, pilots sent their families ceremonial samurai swords, wrapped in silk, indicating their ultimate sacrifice to Japan.

The modern Japanese state invoked pastoral narratives and merged its feudal history with its present feeling of one-ness. In the conscript's minds, they bravely charged into battle as samurai, in defense of their emperor and homeland. The samurai, once an elite class of Japanese society, became each citizen that served the nation-state in its endeavors. Japanese patriotism rallied national consolidation and was defined by filial service to Emperor, countrymen, and nation. It copied interpretations of the past in *bushido*, distorting historical ideology for present circumstance. Universal, *bushido*-based military education and glorification of the greatness of Japan-past created a modern military structure not seen in East Asia. As Chinese, Vietnamese, and other Asian nationalists flocked to Tokyo in the early twentieth century, so too did they acquire an admiration for Japanese state-building. Conflict between the Guomindang, Chinese Communist Party, and Japanese Imperial Forces alerted Wang's need for a Reorganized National Army and government. Aspects of Wang Jingwei's nationalism by preservation required a strong state and respectively a modernized military. Therefore, the Reorganized Government sought Japan's aid to build its "enforcement arm," in pursuit of Wang Jingwei's nationalist agenda.

²⁵ Yoshida, Takashi, *The Making of the "The Rape of Nanking,"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 64.

Pan-Asianism: Japan's Transnational Mission

As Japan modernized and formed a nation-state, it relied on scholarship to justify imperial expansion across Asia. Pan-Asian concepts became the island nation's ethos for "saving" East Asia and validating its imperial aspirations. Pan-Asianism derived from three factors; Primarily, Pan-Asianism developed in reaction to and in opposition of the West. The West (Great Britain, France, Germany, Netherlands, and the United States) gradually whittled East Asian sovereignty with imperialistic impunity. Japan borrowed Western-style technology, political structures, universal education, military structures, and manufacturing methods and merged them with its own history to form a nation-state. Japan modernized, rivaled Western supremacy, and thereafter imagined the West as an enemy to mobilize against.

Secondarily and concurrent with opposition to the West, Japan perceived the rest of East Asia to be culturally deteriorated. As Western imperialism colonized parts of China and all of Vietnam, so too did they colonize those cultures. Essentially East Asian traditions, like Confucianism, Chinese-based writing systems and languages, scholarship, similar ethnic heritage, and Confucian-based social structures were diluted by Western colonization. As such, Japanese scholars and nationalists professed Japan's duty to preserve East Asian traditions in a paternalistic fashion. This was especially apparent after Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905.²⁶ As the only nation to defeat a Western power and preserve its East Asian traditions, Japanese colonial theorists believed in Japan's obligation to liberate its neighbors from Western domination.²⁷ Japan, like its Western imperial competition, endeavored on a

²⁶ Takekoshi Yosaburo, *Japanese Rule in Formosa* (London, 1907), vii.

²⁷ For Japanese colonial theorists and architects, see Togo Minoru, *Nihon shokuminron* [On Japanese Colonialism] (1906); Inazo Nitobe, *Zenshu* [Collected Works], IV (Iwanami Shoten, 1943); Mochiji Rokusaburo, *Taiwan shokumin seisaku* [Colonial Policy in Taiwan] (Fuzambo, 1912); Takekoshi Yosaburo, *Japanese Rule in Formosa* (London, 1907); Kumamoto Shigekichi, "Dai naru Nihon to doka mondai" [The Great Problem of Assimilation], *Taiwan jiho* (Jan. 1920); Yadao Yanaihara, *Shokumin seisaku kogian* [Lectures on Colonial Policy], (1924), *Shokumin oyobi shokumin seisaku* [Colonization and Colonial Policy], (1926), *Teikokushugika no Taiwan* [Taiwan

“civilizing” mission to separate their neighbors from the barbarians and align them within a Greater East Asia Sphere.

Thirdly, Japan rode on its success as an imperial power and nation-state. Nationalists attributed that success to modernization merged with a reimagined history. Modernization coupled with Japanese state-building was vital to combatting the West. Equally important, Pan-Asianism mandated that the remainder of East Asia followed Japanese patterns to self-determination. Japan introduced universal education, replaced pictographic language systems with alphabetical ones, established infrastructure, invested in indigenous manufacturing, and trained indigenous militaries within Pan-Asia. Its transnational objective was to unite Japan’s neighbors into a semi-homogenous front to preserve East Asian culture, modernize, and expel the West.

Since its conceptualization in 1905, theoretical Pan-Asianism differed from its practice abroad.²⁸ Policy implementation did not always align with ideological aims. Over Pan-Asianism’s discourse, opinions between liberal scholars and conservative militarists varied and distorted this transnational concept. Essentially, Pan-Asianism dissented between its ideas and its implementation.

The Japanese government relied on scholars, academics, and intellectuals to formulate its colonial policy. After gaining control of territories, whether for economic necessity or high-minded reasoning, Japanese officials required justification to present to the world stage. Victorious against Russia in 1905, Japanese colonial theorists presented new ideas on colonial policy and Japan’s mission in East Asia. New founded confidence from the Russo-Japanese War

under Imperialism], (1929), *Manshu mondai* [The Manchurian Problem], (1934), *Nan ’yo gunto no kenkyu* [Studies of the South Sea Islands], (1935), *Teikokushigi kenkyu* [Studies in Imperialism], (1948).

²⁸ Akira Iriye, “Japan’s Policies Towards the United States,” *Japan’s Foreign Policy, 1868-1941, A Research Guide*, James Morley ed., (New York, 1974), 425.

allowed academia free reign to define Japan's new role and shape the minds of the nation, the empire, and the people under their influence. The new objective, which evolved into Pan-Asia, elevated Japan's parity with Western imperial powers.²⁹

From academia, Pan-Asianism aspired to colonial progress instead of assertive braggadocio like that of its Western contemporaries. Inazo Nitobe, professor at Todai University, stressed benevolence and civilized governance of Japan's colonies. A known humanist, Nitobe expresses "If we treat the peoples of these areas harshly; if we are unfair to the whites in commercial rivalry; if, in competing with Chinese labor, we treat the Chinese badly; if, in a word, we neglect humanitarianism, then our great mission will have little success."³⁰ Japan's early policy theorists and architects emphasized compassion and altruism towards the indigenous peoples they colonized as it was crucial to Pan-Asianism. Nitobe continues:

What is vital in any colonial scheme seems to me to be the right answer to this question: Do we govern an unwilling people for their sake or for our own? As to the general unwillingness of any colony to be governed by a power alien to it, there is little doubt. A colonial government has received no consent from the governed. Nor is there much reason to believe that a colonial power... bears the sacrifice simply to better the lot of the people placed in its charge. The history of colonization is the history of national egotism. But even egotism can attain its end by following the simple law of human intercourse—"give and take." Mutual advantage must be the rule.³¹

Inazo Nitobe's works on Japanese colonialism perfectly exemplify policy-makers' visions in formulating Pan-Asianism. Imperial Japan, perceived from Japanese scholars, learned from Western colonization to avoid oppression of indigenous peoples in its transnational efforts. On the policy building side, it was detrimental to the Japanese nation to commit atrocities against

²⁹ Togo Minoru, *Nihon shokuminron* [On Japanese Colonialism] (1906), 358-359.

³⁰ Inazo Nitobe, *Zenshu* [Collected Works], IV (Iwanami Shoten, 1943), 474-478.

³¹ Nitobe, "Japanese Colonization," *Asian Review*, Series 4, Vol. 16 (Jan. 1920), 120-21; See also Mark R. Peattie, "Japanese Attitudes Towards Colonialism 1895-1945," *The Japanese Colonial Empire*, Ramon H. Meyers and Mark R. Peattie eds., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 93.

and totally subjugate the colonized. Ex-bureaucrat Mochiji Rokusaburo characterizes policy-makers colonial fears as he stated, “Those who bear heavy responsibility for public government in the colonies must keep this ever in mind; if they do not, the progress of Japan as a civilized nation will be jeopardized.”³² Despite atrocities committed during the Second World War, the original architects of Pan-Asianism were sincerely apprehensive about colonial goals and desired to hold Japan’s imperial project to a more compassionate standard than their European counterparts.

Other policy-makers and scholars debated the extent to which two different cultures could coexist under one government. For many early Pan-Asianists, differing historical experiences were considered when forming policy. Coincidentally, transnational harmony required a sort of one-ness; One language, one race, one belief, one emperor. As such, Japanese think-tanks and academia stressed assimilation of indigenous populations into the empire. Much of this was racially based and rhetorically pitted “Pan-Asians” against Westerners. A Japanese educator in Taiwan, Kumamoto Shigekichi, stressed the importance of unified loyalty to the Emperor and to Pan-Asianism. According to Mark R. Peattie’s interpretation of Kumamoto:

Pan-Asianism must be the assimilation by Japan of the peoples within its colonial empire in language, customs, and outlook. To accomplish this, Kumamoto urged redoubled efforts to provide a common education, particularly through diffusion the diffusion of the Japanese language, the abolition of discriminatory practices, the establishment of museums and libraries to foster the idea of a common cultural heritage, and above all a commitment to the idea of assimilation by Japanese colonists, whom he called upon to work more closely and generously with their Taiwanese neighbors in establishing a common loyalty.³³

³² Mochiji Rokusaburo, *Taiwan shokumin seisaku* [Colonial Policy in Taiwan] (Fuzambo, 1912), 407.

³³ Mark R. Peattie, “Japanese Attitudes Towards Colonialism 1895-1945,” *The Japanese Colonial Empire*, Ramon H. Meyers and Mark R. Peattie eds., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 103.

Kumamoto called for assimilation of the colonized under Japanese customs, language, and loyalty.³⁴ His assertions represented a shift in Pan-Asianism's policy from humanitarianism to assimilation, which was similar to Japan's international, colonial competitors. Contradictions between colonial theorists made difficult the real policy implementation on the "front lines" of colonial administration.

Pan-Asian policy shifted with Togo Minoru who applied internationally-popular racial concepts to colonial theory. He differentiated various races and their "inherent" tendencies and created a sort of racial taxonomy. Although Togo did not completely refute humanitarian or assimilationist colonization policy, his racial categorizations certainly paralleled those adopted by European colonizers and Pan-Asian unification troublesome. Japan remained uni-racial throughout its history as an island. However, its East Asian neighbors, colonized subjects, and potential entrants into Pan-Asia were not uni-racial. Vietnam and China, in particular, were ethnically diverse and thus racial colonial theory conflicted with previously espoused equal education, governance, and treatment within Pan-Asia.³⁵

Pan-Asianism's architects debated for forty years (1905-1945) of the Japanese empire. The concept was nebulous and difficult to unpack for policy formulation. Even more difficult was enacted Pan-Asianism and its implementation in the colonies. Lack of a cogent, codified, and common understanding of Pan-Asianism and Japan's imperial mission to save East Asia, distorted the idea from the action. Humanitarian, assimilation, and race-based theorization did not translate into what Pan-Asianism's thinkers conceptualized. To the military governors and troops stationed in Japan's colonies it resulted in reactionary and harsh treatment of indigenous

³⁴ Kumamoto Shigekichi, "Dai naru Nihon to doka mondai" [The Great Problem of Assimilation], *Taiwan jiho* (Jan. 1920), 55-63.

³⁵ Togo Minoru, *Shokumin seisaku to minzoku shinri* [Colonial Policy and Racial Consciousness] (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1937), 56-58.

peoples. A disconnect existed between Japanese intellectuals and the military, domestically and throughout East Asia.³⁶

Military colonial governors considered Pan-Asian assimilationist policy as license to exact total control over their colonial subjects. Military governors implemented ideological, economic, and political supremacy over the empire, contradicting the intended mission of Pan-Asianism. While Japanese scholars and other intellectuals found commonalities in Pan-Asianism and nationalist thought with their East Asian contemporaries, the Japanese army and navy did not. As the Asia-Pacific War ignited in 1931 with Japan's expansion into North China, Japan's economic and military situation exacerbated the disconnect between theoretical Pan-Asianism and its real applications. War and a deteriorated geo-political climate during the early 1930s forced a shift in Pan-Asianism objectives to those more expedient for the military. The later form of Pan-Asianism manifested in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere and focused on Japan's economic and military expansion. Efforts doubled to create "one Asia for all Asians" under the auspices of the Japanese empire. While Japanese, Vietnamese, and Chinese intellectuals engaged on the university level in creating national narratives, the Japanese military's dominion over its subjects, with its undeniable origins in *bushido*, governed analogously to the feudal Tokugawa shogunate.³⁷

³⁶ Komori Tokuji, *Akashi Motojiro*, II (Hara Shobo), 60.

³⁷ Mark R. Peattie, "Japanese Attitudes Towards Colonialism 1895-1945," *The Japanese Colonial Empire*, Ramon H. Meyers and Mark R. Peattie eds., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 125.

Chapter Two:

China, Wang Jingwei, and Pan-Asianism (1931-1945)

Two, more widely known nationalist movements from 1937-1945, were the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Zedong and the Guomindang under Jiang Jieshi. Both were contemporaries of Wang Jingwei and the Reorganized National Government. Despite their alliance during the Asia Pacific War (1937-1945), the two factions were engaged in civil war, before and after 1945. After the 1911 Revolution and the end of the Warlord Era (1916-1928) both the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and GMD (Guomindang) vied for power. However, their visions of a Chinese nation differed in some instances.

The leader of the CCP, Mao Zedong, attempted to unify the Chinese people from the “bottom-up;” Meaning, he and other Communist Party leaders believed that revolution and eventual unification would arise from the peasantry. Like Leninism, where revolution required use of the working-class proletariat, Mao’s idea of revolution required participation from the rural, agrarian and working classes. The CCP adopted from Soviet communism to modernize China and form a nation-state completely severed from its imperial past. Later, continuous revolution by Party planners tried to erase all of China’s cultural history, including Confucianism. Also, of note, the Chinese Communist Party not only opposed the Guomindang, but vehemently hated the Japanese invaders as they were severely anti-communist. Mao Zedong’s nationalism centered around re-inventing the Chinese narrative, separate from its history, and looking to reclaim China’s former, regional esteem.

Jiang Jieshi was President of the Guomindang’s Executive Yuan (executive branch) after the death of Sun Yixian in 1925. Like Wang and Sun, Jiang had studied alongside Japanese nationalists of the *Genyosha* Society in Tokyo, during the early twentieth century. The GMD

derived support from the urban populations, primarily middle-upper class educated Chinese. Therefore, Jiang's idea of a Chinese nation-state began at the top and trickled down to the bottom of society, opposite of Mao's revolutionary view. Jiang also looked to the West for support against the Japanese and later in the civil war against the Communists. Like Wang, Jiang Jieshi believed he was the successor to Sun Yixian's legacy.

Wang Jingwei, born Chao-Ming, 1883, in Guangzhou, came from a scholarly family. As a youth, Wang "began to lose faith in the Manchu Dynasty... who had brought ineffaceable disgrace upon the Chinese people."¹ Since Wang's earliest days, he believed in realizing China's national self-determination and return to international prominence, free from feudal or colonial bonds. The Manchu Dynasty governed China for nearly three centuries and was not of Han descent, or *Hanren*. Many early Chinese nationalists alluded to an ethnic disconnect between the government in power and the Chinese people themselves. Wang's comrade and friend Tang Leangli recalled Wang's sense of nationalism sprouting at the height of Japanese modernization:

The following year, 1903, a special examination was organized by the Kwangtung Provincial Government... to select promising students for study abroad... at the age of twenty he went to Japan as a Government scholar. He joined the revolutionary movement under Dr. Sun Yixian when the Party leader arrived in Japan. It gave him an awakened sense of patriotism and [Wang] was the guardian of revolutionary heritage and the embodiment of the national-revolutionary spirit.²

After studying in Japan with Dr. Sun Yixian and other Asian nationalists, Wang Jingwei continued his revolutionary work in China. The death of Sun on March 25, 1925 forced Wang into official leadership of the Nationalist Revolution.³ Wang Jingwei inherited the legacy of Sun Yixian after his death and was described as "champion of the people and the bitterest enemy of

¹ Tang Leangli, "Wang Jingwei: A Biographical Sketch," In Wang Jingwei's *China's Problem and Their Solution*, (Shanghai: China United Press, 1934), xii.

² Tang, ix-xii.

³ Tang, xix.

predatory militarism...however threatening the foreign menace may be, China must first put all her house in order and find her salvation within herself.”⁴ Sentiments as described by Wang and his friend provide reasoning for Wang’s decision to seek Japanese aid during conflict between the Guomindang and Chinese Communist Party.

The Marco Polo Bridge Incident, or *Lugouqiao*, on July 7th, 1937, commenced not only the Asia-Pacific War, but arguably initiated World War Two. The empire of Japan methodically annexed the majority of Asia within its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, including China and Vietnam. Japan gained territory and influence on the Korean peninsula and in Manchuria, after emerging victorious in the Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905. Later, in 1911, the Chinese Revolution deposed Qing imperial rule, leaving China vulnerable to external threats and Chinese nationalists sought assistance from their Japanese neighbors. Because of the Treaty of Versailles 1919-1920, Germany forfeited possessions in Tsingtao over to Japan, an Allied power during the First World War. Subsequently, Japan engaged in economic and geographic speculation and established business firms, railroad companies, and colonies on the mainland. In 1931, the Mukden Incident solidified Japan’s continental foothold as they seized Manchuria. The following year, the state of Manchu (*Manchukuo*) formed with Qing emperor Pu Yi at its head and support from the Japanese empire.

During Japan’s systematic invasion, the Guomindang under Jiang Jieshi and the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Zedong vied for control of China from 1927-1937. The Guomindang continued Sun Yixian’s (Sun Yatsen, considered the father of Chinese nationalism) legacy, attempted to expel communism from China, and strived for national unification.

⁴ Tang Leangli, “Wang Jingwei: A Biographical Sketch,” In Wang Jingwei’s *China’s Problem and Their Solution*, (Shanghai: China United Press, 1934), xx.

However, Mao Zedong's CCP provided an alternative route to nationhood and subsequent civil war proceeded. Until 1937, Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) unsuccessfully pursued Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) on a long, communist-hunting expedition. Faced with daunting external enemies, imminent invasion, and after heated deliberation with his staff, Jiang Jieshi agreed to ally with the CCP and expel the Japanese intruders.⁵ The GMD/CCP allied after Japanese soldiers demanded entrance to Guomindang-held Wanping in North China. GMD troops denied Japanese entry and Japanese forces responded by forcefully taking the city. Thus, combined Chinese factions vowed Japanese expulsion from the mainland.

As the War Against Japanese Aggression raged, a rift within Guomindang leadership developed between two of Sun Yixian's protégés, Jiang Jieshi and Wang Jingwei (Wang Chingwei). Jiang chose to gain support from the Chinese population through total retaliation against Japanese incursions. Wang, with his political acumen, desired a diplomatic path to halt Japanese advances. Despite being two key figures within the same Chinese nationalist circles, Jiang and Wang were opposed strategically on the Japanese problem. General Jiang headed the Whampoa Military Academy and Wang was Sun Yixian's, Japanese educated, political right-hand man. Both clashed on how to lead China out of the darkness caused by immanent occupation. While Jiang Jieshi responded militarily, Japanese forces swiftly occupied Chinese cities and provinces. Beijing, Tianjin, and Nanjing all fell to Imperial forces by December 1937.⁶ Chinese forces were continuously defeated and Wang Jingwei believed it imperative that Chinese nationalists cooperate with Japan. According to Wang, the only way Chinese sovereignty remained intact was through accepting advisement and diplomatic engagement with their neighbors. By October

⁵ Compilation of the ROC History, *A Pictorial History of the Republic of China*, (Taipei, Taiwan: Modern China Press, 1981), 1: 443.

⁶ Xiaobing Li, *The Cold War in East Asia*, (New York: Routledge Group, 2018), 29.

1938, Jiang's capital at Nanjing fell to Japanese forces and compelled the Guomindang's relocation to Chongqing. Wang Jingwei followed the GMD government to Chongqing, but after word reached Jiang that he conducted peace-talks with Japanese officials, several attempts were made on his life and others like him. Wang attempted to release official correspondence between Jiang and Japanese officials, from the outset of the war, that discussed an armistice. As such, Jiang Jieshi attempted to silence Wang Jingwei and did not accept his last pleas for peaceful negotiation with Japan. Before his temporary exodus to Hanoi, Wang Jingwei published an expository article titled "*Yandian*," and argued for peaceful cooperation with the Japanese government. After Wang published his article, he was stripped of all governmental positions, dismissed from the GMD, and subsequently fled to Vietnam.⁷

On March 30, 1940, with assistance from Japanese advisors, Wang Jingwei established the Reorganized Nationalist Government of China in Nanjing. Kagesa Sadaaki, of Japanese special services agency, Chen Bijun, Wang's wife and political partner, and General Yazaki aided Wang Jingwei in government operations.⁸ The Reorganized Government enjoyed valuable political, economic, and military support from Japan. Japan viewed Wang's government as the true embodiment of Chinese nationalism and fostered indigenous movements throughout the Greater East Asia Sphere.⁹ Official Japanese policy under the Konoe Cabinet supported indigenous nationalist movements and allowed them self-governance, within the Greater East Asia Sphere. Just as Wang's government received aid from Japan, so did they adopt modern

⁷ "Wang Pursues Peace Aim, Attacks Former Reds," *China Weekly Review*, (Jan. 14, 1939).

⁸ J.K.S. Yick, "Self-serving Collaboration: The Political Legacy of Madame Wang in Guangdong Province, 1940-1945," *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (October 2014), 221-223. Kagesa Sadaaki of the *Nakano School* of Japanese military intelligence.

⁹ Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny: My Struggle for Peace*, (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1958), 330.

Japanese methods in adherence to East Asian tradition. The military is not only a symbol of the state's monopoly on violence and enforcement, but also a symbol of modernity.¹⁰ Wang Jingwei formed the new Reorganized National Army with Japanese tutelage and influence. Historically deemed as a “puppet” state, the Reorganized National Government existed as an antithesis to prevalent Chinese governments of the period, i.e. the Guomindang and Chinese Communist Party. While Mao and Jiang resisted, Wang labored to preserve China through cooperation. Japanese policy, starting with the Kono cabinet (1937-1939), called for self-governance or “Chinese governing Chinese.”¹¹ Provisions for self-governance within occupied territories prevented logistical overload for Japanese officials as they expanded and engaged on numerous fronts in the Pacific.

At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Japanese and Chinese intellectuals enjoyed an amiable rapport in the concept of Pan-Asianism. The concept derived from shared cultural, racial, ideological, and ethno-linguistic ties between the majority of Asian countries which were benefactors of ancient Chinese civilization. To fully grasp the origins of modern Japanese, Pan-Asian nationalism, a brief exposition is necessary. Nationalism was the life-blood of the modern Japanese state after the Meiji Restoration and industrialization. Patriotic indoctrination was crucial in creating obedient citizens of the state and began with education. In the following excerpt from an “Imperial Rescript on Education, 1890,” the importance of morality as derived from Confucianism is asserted against dangerous ideals from the West: “Ye, our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and

¹⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 3.

¹¹ J.K.S. Yick, “Self-serving Collaboration: The Political Legacy of Madame Wang in Guangdong Province, 1940-1945,” *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (October 2014), 221.

wives be harmonious, as friends true, bear yourselves in modesty and moderation...for the public good and promote common interests.”¹² The “Imperial Rescript on Education” characterizes a basis in Confucianism, of an ordered society searching for harmony, which Japanese nationalism reified. As stated before, Japanese educational patterns were universal and compulsory in order to mold efficient and obedient citizens for a strong state structure.¹³ Nationalism and nations seek to establish their roots in history, mythologized or not, and attempt to “connect historically actual societies to a perceived order of the universe. These myths contribute to the formation of the image of a bounded nation.”¹⁴ Other facets of the past utilized by the Japanese state were revival of Shintoism, reverence to shrines related to antiquity, myths, traditions, and *bushido* (way of the samurai). The progressive movement of modernization was accompanied by a strong appeal to the past.¹⁵

Japanese nationalist concepts developed with an anti-West element and it spread throughout Asia.¹⁶ Due to contemporary circumstances at the time, China was subordinated to Western powers and Japanese nationalism echoed sentiments from Chinese nationalists. Chinese and Japanese nationalism reacted against and with each other in symbiosis. Early appeal for Japanese branded Pan-Asianism is evident in the early twentieth century. The *Genyosha* Society of Japan harbored numerous Asian nationalists from the early to mid-twentieth century, including Dr. Sun Yixian and Wang Jingwei.¹⁷ A certain *Genyosha*'s home in Tokyo, Toyoma Mitsuru “became the focal point for rebels and would-be rebels from China, India, Annam, and

¹² J. Kennedy, *Asian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), 125.

¹³ Kennedy, 89.

¹⁴ Steven Grosby, *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60.

¹⁵ Kennedy, 79-80.

¹⁶ Kennedy, 79.

¹⁷ See Hugh Borton, *Japan Since 1931: Its Political and Social Developments* (New York: International Secretariat Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), 32. Borton points out that the *Genyosha* society was a Japanese ultra-nationalist group formed in 1881 by Toyoma Mitsuru. Its purpose was to develop Japan's continental policy.

the Phillipines...the Chinese who were plotting to overthrow the Manchu dynasty; a link was forged between ultra-nationalism in Japan and revolutionary nationalism in China.”¹⁸ Numerous occasions show that Pan-Asian nationalism in the twentieth century was concurrent with that of Japan. The Japanese aim was to assist the formation of a Chinese government in tandem with the ideals of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. “With the help of a powerful Japan, the peoples of Asia will work together for independence. The aim of the present war [World War Two] is the realization of His Majesty’s august will and ideal that the peoples of the world should each be granted possession of their rightful homelands.”¹⁹ Wang Jingwei thus set up a Chinese government, one of which the Japanese believed to be the true voice of Chinese nationalism and that of Sun Yixian.

Much of the relationship between Chinese and Japanese nationalists formed prior to 1937. One way in which it initiated was through “Sinology” or the study of China by Japanese academics and intellectuals. It was a common conception by Japanese scholars of the time that Japan was a poor country, poor in traditional culture as well as natural resources. China however was rich in both.²⁰ Bound by racial, cultural, and linguistic ties, Japanese intellectuals linked Japan’s survival to advancement of Pan-Asianism onto the continent. One account from Naito Konan, a journalist and professor in the early to mid-twentieth century, expresses that, “the general assumption that all of mankind participates in the creation of ideals for a world civilization. These ideals sought the perfection of truth; truth in the sense that Japan would arouse knowledge of Asia; goodness in Japan’s unshakeable commitment to oppose imperialist

¹⁸ J. Kennedy, *Asian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1968), 19.

¹⁹ Masanobu Tsuji, *Singapore: The Japanese Version*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1961), 197.

²⁰ Joshua A. Fogel, *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naito Konan (1866-1934)*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 48.

oppression in East Asia from the West.”²¹ Konan, in forming nationalist discourse in Japan, utilizes Confucian rhetoric in forming a civilization on truth. He also recognizes, like many other Asian nationalists, the important role of shared history and cultural heritage in arousing knowledge of the past to coincide with the present. Inherent in Pan-Asian nationalism and Sinology is the refutation that Asian civilization was substandard and backwards in comparison to Western civilization, a tool often used by Western colonizers.²² Naito continued to call for scholarly ventures into China in an effort to rival similar Western endeavors. His mission, and the mission of all Asian nationalists, was to mobilize and stir 500 million East Asians.²³ Baba Haruyoshi of a Greater East Asia educational exchange program established a school in Jinan to provide educational opportunities to lower-class Chinese. This was paired with the reification of the Confucius School in Qufu and directed to expelling Western ideals that had combatted Confucianism. Revival of ancient Chinese culture and vicariously that of Confucian ideology and Japanese culture was supported by Wang Jingwei and the Reformed Government in its aspirations for peace and Asian nationalism.²⁴ Behind Japanese scholars’ and intellectuals’ national discourse lay an earlier version of the “domino theory.” Japan could participate in the reform of China with proper comprehension of Chinese history. Naito linked Japan’s contemporary fate to that of China; Japan had to help China or both would collapse before the Western onslaught.²⁵

²¹ Joshua A. Fogel, *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naito Konan (1866-1934)*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 49.

²² Fogel, 49.

²³ Fogel, 50.

²⁴ Kenneth Ruoff, “Japanese Tourism to Mukden, Nanjing, and Qufu, 1938-1943,” *Japan Review*, No. 27, (2014), 189.

²⁵ Fogel, 54.

Tourism, as clarified by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, is a hallmark of the state's continuation of the "national project." Museums, battle sites, and destinations of the like all further an origin narrative; in this case the similarities of Japanese and Chinese culture, and serve to impress upon the citizenry a sense of national pride.²⁶ Japan preserved heritage landscapes that defined the history of Asian civilization and cites it deemed as quintessentially "Asian." The significance of locations like Mukden located in Manchuria and Nanjing located in Central China, resided in the battles that were fought and won by the Japanese. Conversely, Qufu's significance is established as the origin of Confucianism, the ideology behind the majority of Asian political, social, and legal structures. Okakura Tenshin of a Japanese travel bureau termed his country (Japan) as the "museum of Asian civilization."²⁷ From Japanese Travel Bureau representatives to intellectuals, historic sites in China were just as Pan-Asian as the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, commemorating the Japanese fallen in battle. The goal of Japanese tourism, in service of not only Japanese nationalism but the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, was to portray Japanese aims as righteous.²⁸ The preservation of sites in Nanjing like the breakthrough of Japanese forces in 1937, Ming mausoleums, and Sun Yixian's grave, all pre-eminent symbols of Chinese nationalism, were used in a melding with Japan's Pan-Asiatic movement.²⁹ Japan's transnationalist approach to Pan-Asia sought to sustain historical inheritances of the past, like Ming sites and Qufu, to show its Asian neighbors where it came from, to build upon mythologized origins, and feed from national narratives for indigenous movements against the West. Clearly, there existed support from Japanese intellectuals for

²⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (New York: Verso Books, 1983), 163-187. Benedict Anderson is a prominent scholar on nationalism and nations and their formation as "imagined communities" or social constructs.

²⁷ Kenneth Ruoff, "Japanese Tourism to Mukden, Nanjing, and Qufu, 1938-1943," *Japan Review*, No. 27, (2014), 180.

²⁸ Ruoff, 184.

²⁹ Ruoff, 185.

certain Chinese nationalists who were willing to enter into the Greater East Asia Sphere Project. Through tourism, museums, and battle sites, nationalism maintains relevance through time and space, thereby latching onto a history that is continuous and ever-present for posterity.

The discourse of Japanese nationalism viewed the reform of China as a duty to all of Asia to maintain their cultural integrity. China had failed to sustain the seed of Asian civilization and Japan would answer the call. Many nationalists believed that they owed China a substantial cultural debt as a child would owe their parents for a good upbringing. The over-arching, all-encompassing, ideological themes of Pan-Asian nationalism transcended geographical and political boundaries. Tachibana Shiraki, a Japanese nationalist, and Sun Yixian both preached concepts of harmonious cohesion among Asian neighbors.³⁰ Parroting the words of Sun Yixian, Naito Konan stated that “knowledge had to lead towards action in the contemporary world.”³¹ This knowledge existed as a common historical experience, common culture, common ethnolinguistics, and common reliance on Confucianism between fellow Asians.

Other Japanese perspectives came from those directly involved with initiating Pan-Asianism nationalism and forming the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.³² Mamoru Shigemitsu, in his post-war memoirs, characterizes feelings of many Japanese government officials when he states “my contention was that Japan’s war-aim was to liberate the Orient.”³³ With that, Japan acknowledged other nations rights to sovereignty and self-determination.

³⁰ Joshua A. Fogel, *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naito Konan (1866-1934)*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 252.

³¹ Fogel, 265.

³² Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1958), 283. Japanese foreign minister Shigemitsu described the Greater East Asia Ministry’s policy. Foreign relations were divided into two parts: 1) East Asia and 2) the rest of the world. The head of the Greater East Asia Ministry was Kazuo Aoki, who had been advisor to Wang Jingwei’s government; See also James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 470. McClain explains the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere included Japan, Manchukuo, China, Korea, and Vietnam and was a politico-economic entity.

³³ Shigemitsu, 291.

Japan's desire for the self-governance of its neighbors is in contrast to the desires of European hegemony. European colonial reactions were always violent towards indigenous movements and halted their formation with an iron fist. Thus Asian nationalists flocked to Japan and overall, the Second World War gave impetus to post-colonial nationalist movements in East Asia.³⁴ Western powers would once again encounter such nationalist movements, ignited by Japanese occupation, during the hot part of the Cold War. In the French Indochina War (1946-1954), Vietnam War (1964-1975), Malaysia, former Dutch East Indies, the Korean War (1950-present), and various encounters with China from the 1950s to 1970s, the West bore the effects of Pan-Asian nationalism.

Transitioning from the Japanese perspective looking at China, the Chinese perspective looking towards Japan is also of great importance. China after all, was the recipient of this nationalistic inheritance. A common stance from Chinese nationalists was one of yearning. A yearning that looked at Japan adopting Western methods of modernization and industrialization, branded them in their own Asian style, and turned it against the West and in defense of East Asia. Early Chinese nationalists such as Sun Yixian studied in Japan and witnessed firsthand the swift stimulus of Pan-Asian nationalism taking hold of a neighboring country and mobilizing for liberation from Western tyranny. Through adoption of Western methods of industrialization, “there arose amongst the Japanese people a patriotic movement in favor of expulsion of the ‘aliens’.”³⁵ An air of comparison was obvious in the works of Sun Yixian as he constantly compared the present situation in China with that of Japan. Reforms in Japan appeared as brilliant successes and affairs in China were otherwise. As referenced by early Japanese

³⁴ Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1958), 330.

³⁵ Sun Yixian, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary: A Program for National Reconstruction for China*, (London: Forgotten Books & Co., Ltd., 2017), 103.

nationalists like Naito, Japan was weak before its reforms and after it emerged as one of the great powers; power that China aspired to rightfully reclaim as its own, releasing itself from encroaching European hegemony.

Sun Yixian never realized his ambitions for Chinese nationalism and sovereignty. However, his successor Wang Jingwei attempted to carry on his true legacy for the self-determination of China and the vestiges of securing for China a status of equality and unqualified independence in the family of nations.³⁶ Japanese influence on Wang Jingwei is manifest in his time spent with Sun Yixian in Japan. “These years of study in Japan had decisive influence on the young scholar...awakened in Wang a sense of patriotism.”³⁷ Wang Jingwei no doubt implemented the tenets of Pan-Asianism acquired in Japan in his own nationalist government in China. Unlike his contemporaries, Wang did not believe the issue facing China was resisting Japan, but rather preserving China as a nation. The so-called “collaborationist” government strove to preserve China against Western aggression rather than against occupation by their fellow Asian neighbors. In an excerpt from his work, Wang summarizes his nationalist views in:

Advocating the policy of “co-existence” of China and Japan. In order that the voice of these liberals may gain ascendancy in Japan, it is necessary that not only Japanese, but Chinese also, should exert themselves towards this end. If this policy of coexistence of China and Japan be realized through combined efforts of two peoples. To reach the goal of national salvation we must therefore put up the most determined resistance against Communist banditry and foreign aggression.³⁸

Anti-communism and anti-West sentiments were shared by both Chinese and Japanese nationalists. If Pan-Asianism was congruent with Confucian ideology, then communism

³⁶ Wang Jingwei, *China's Problems and Their Solutions*, (Shanghai: China United Press, 1934), 107.

³⁷ Wang, xiii.

³⁸ Wang, 61&150.

disrupted the natural order of society and did not lead to harmonious interaction between Asian countries and peoples.

In continuing with a Chinese perspective looking abroad to Japan, Chinese nationalists perceived Japan to be the model which all Asians could aspire and repel Western incursions. Sovereignty was a key goal for Wang Jingwei and his government, sovereignty of which had been wrested by Great Britain, Germany, France, and the United States since the nineteenth century. Therefore, with Wang, a recharged sovereign state, in the style of Meiji Japan came to be regarded as essential for fending off colonial attempts from the Occident.³⁹ Also, internal Chinese opposition was an issue for Wang's Reorganized Government. Jiang Jieshi branded Wang and his "collaborationist" government as traitors, banning them from the Guomindang. Claiming legitimacy over the Guomindang was an effort that the Reorganized Government struggled with in representing the Chinese nation. Unlike Jiang Jieshi's government which relied on urban elites, Wang's nationalism provided Chinese peasants in the rural areas the type of nationalism that mixed intense anti-Western sentiment with imported cosmopolitan ideology of equal states within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. Japan's invasion, coupled with long-term Western oppression, charged the political environment of late colonial China with sufficient energy to generate the degree of sentiment needed for twentieth century Chinese nationalism to attain mass allegiance.⁴⁰ Whether reactionary or cooperative, Japan's presence in China stimulated and energized the sleeping giant that was Chinese nationalism. Wang's perceptions of the Japanese policy towards Asian neighbors were confirmed on the Japanese side. The Japanese government created an official ideology of anti-colonial liberation for its

³⁹ Brook, Timothy and Andre Schmid, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 164.

⁴⁰ Brook and Schmid, 169.

empire. Additionally, it was not a salutation of Japanese imperialism, but an affirmation of East Asian liberation. Thus, Pan-Asian ideology acknowledged indigenous nationalism by depicting the future of Asia as reliant on the strength of anti-colonial movements for self-determination and celebrating the Asian nation and submerging it into a loftier Asian identity.⁴¹ Sun Yixian, in his nationalist work *Three Principles of the People*, affirmed ideals of Japanese Pan-Asianism as letting the people “live in peace and take pleasure in their occupations” while relying on East Asian morality and intensifying a sense of conflict with Western powers in an effort to concentrate ideological work. Wang Jingwei affirmed Sun’s sentiment while indicating Chinese achievements through the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: “1) Revoking colonial status and restoring Chinese sovereignty 2) Restoring East Asian values and culture 3) Asserting full racial equality between yellow and white races.”⁴² By reifying the thoughts of Sun Yixian, Wang’s National Government allied itself with Japan’s East Asian vision while accentuating Pan-Asian tenets.

On the topic of politics, the Reorganized Chinese Government under Wang Jingwei utilized various Japanese political outlets in promoting their marque of nationalism. From the Japanese side, the strategy of using “Chinese to control Chinese” was implemented at every opportunity, especially with the collaborationists.⁴³ “Dismembering of the Chinese nation was not something that the Japanese government either wanted or intended.”⁴⁴ Despite war and aggression displayed by Japan, its political intent was not to destroy China’s national feeling, but

⁴¹ Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, “Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China,” in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 169.

⁴² Wang Jingwei, *China’s Problems and Their Solutions*, (Shanghai: China United Press, 1934), 183.

⁴³ J.K.S. Yick, “Self-serving Collaboration: The Political Legacy of Madame Wang in Guangdong Province, 1940-1945,” *American Journal of Chinese Studies* Vol. 21, No. 2 (October 2014), 221. Colonel Nakano of Japanese special services.

⁴⁴ Brook and Schmid, 159.

to harmoniously incorporate it into the project of Pan-Asianism. The Japanese were to force a new form of collaborationist nationalism that could dovetail with the legacy of Sun Yixian, of whom Japanese intellectuals and nationalists themselves admired.⁴⁵ Japan attempted to do so by accentuating commonalities like Chinese-derived linguistics, common history, and similar socio-ideological origins through Confucianism, between itself and other Asian neighbors. Wang Jingwei and his wife Madame Wang, who was politically involved in the Reorganized Government, operated with Japanese military officials and politicians to further their goals of peace and Pan-Asianism. Kagesa Sadaaki, head of Japanese Special Services Agency, was indispensable to Wang Jingwei and played an important role in establishing Wang's state on March 30, 1940. Sadaaki served as the first Japanese military advisor to the Wang government.⁴⁶ Another General Yazaki served in the same capacity from 1944-1945.⁴⁷ Many of the political sentiments held by Wang's government were shared with Japanese politicians as well. While governing over Guangdong Province, Madame Wang shared a belief with her husband that there could be no peace without anti-communism.⁴⁸ Certainly anti-communism was not only a belief held by Japanese politicians, but also by the Reorganized Government's nationalist rival, Jiang Jieshi.

Wang also promoted Japanese propaganda. Provincial authorities of Wang's government, including his wife, propagandized Japanese ideas of Pan-Asianism and the idea of "same culture, same race."⁴⁹ The Japanese permitted the spread of Neo-Confucianism and other aspects of

⁴⁵ Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 179.

⁴⁶ J.K.S. Yick, "Self-serving Collaboration: The Political Legacy of Madame Wang in Guangdong Province, 1940-1945," *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (October 2014), 222.

⁴⁷ Yick, 223.

⁴⁸ Yick, 225.

⁴⁹ Yick, 230.

Chinese traditional culture in an effort to garrison nationalist sentiment behind the Reorganized Government.⁵⁰ With Japanese support for the revitalization of Chinese culture, there existed a political and social congruity in that Japanese rhetoricians used historical narratives of China's past to legitimate not only the Reorganized Government's position, but that of their own Pan-Asian aims. The reifying of Asian traditions, rooted in the origins of Confucianism, was used throughout Asia by the Japanese empire to justify uniting against intrusions by the West, thereby sowing the seeds of nationalist fervor over the continent.

Wang Jingwei's major aim "was to seek a settlement with Japan to end the Sino-Japanese War and steer China...to identify with Japan's New Order in East Asia."⁵¹ Many founding members of Chinese nationalism, including Sun Yixian and Wang Jingwei, recognized Pan-Asianism, with its racial and cultural concomitants, as integral to not only Japanese, but Chinese intellectual tradition.⁵² Much of this is evident in congruent feelings of both Chinese and Japanese intellectuals of the period, that Western aggression should be stopped.⁵³ The continuity of race, common culture, and hegemony by Euro-American powers bound nationalist, Chinese collaborators to Pan-Asian, Japanese ideology. previously established racial sentiments observed by Chinese collaborators were reflective of Japanese Pan-Asianism and that they readily adopted ideas from Japan for their own struggle.⁵⁴ The struggle was peace, homogeneity of Asian peoples, and national self-determination for China. Decades before the war against Japanese aggression, Sun Yixian, the progenitor of Chinese nationalism, acknowledged the Japanese idea

⁵⁰ J.K.S. Yick, "Self-serving Collaboration: The Political Legacy of Madame Wang in Guangdong Province, 1940-1945," *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (October 2014), 230.

⁵¹ Wai C. So, "Race, Culture, and the Anglo-American Powers: The Views of Chinese Collaborators," *Modern China*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (January 2011), 70.

⁵² So, 70.

⁵³ So, 72.

⁵⁴ So, 82.

of Pan-Asianism.⁵⁵ Many of these sentiments were shared by other Chinese nationalist groups, including those within the Chinese Communist Party and the Goumindang.

Wang Jingwei also sought to reform his military based on Japanese models and “in 1938, Wang sent an envoy to the Japanese and received an agreement that if he joined them, they would assist him.”⁵⁶ In support of Wang’s nationalist government, Japan sent military instructors and advisors in addition to weapons and ammunition. This was clearly a backing of Wang’s nationalist movement and their desire to preserve Chinese nationalism against the resistance forces of the Chinese Communist Party and Guomintang. Wang wanted to create a truly politically motivated army that would fight side by side with the Japanese against the illegitimate movements of Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong.⁵⁷ As such, the Japanese agreed to equip and establish the Reorganized Government’s army and “promote Wang’s government as the true disciples of Sun Yixian.”⁵⁸ The Japanese military structure, just as in Burma, Vietnam, and Indonesia, affected Chinese nationalist movements after the war ended and China resumed its civil war. Wang took to the adage “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” It only reiterates the need for survival of Chinese nationalism and their congruent feelings towards communism with the Japanese.

American perspectives on the war in East Asia were initially passive and detached. Until the late 1930s, the United States held a more amiable relationship with the Far East in comparison to their European counterparts. American interest in the region had not actively pursued territorial interests or exhibited colonial aspirations like Great Britain, France, and

⁵⁵ Wai C. So, “Race, Culture, and the Anglo-American Powers: The Views of Chinese Collaborators,” *Modern China*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan. 2011), 78.

⁵⁶ Philip S. Jowett, *Rays of the Rising Sun: Armed Forces of Japan’s Asian Allies, 1931-1945, Vol. 1: China and Manchukuo*, (Lancaster, England: Helion & Company, Ltd., 2004), 2301.

⁵⁷ Jowett, 2314.

⁵⁸ Jowett, 2314.

Germany.⁵⁹ Joseph C. Grew served as the American Ambassador to Japan from 1931-1941 and became acquainted with Japanese nationalism and Pan-Asian ideology during his tenure there. They are representative of the American perspective leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. His accounts exemplified the ebbs and flows of American-Japanese diplomacy as Japan began to expand its empire uncomfortably close to American economic and business interests in Asia. Ambassador Grew was stationed in Japan from 1931 to 1941 and his memoirs expressed an inevitable disintegration of U.S.- Japanese relations. In citing American interest in Japanese affairs in East Asia, Grew said “The American Government and people understand what is meant by the ‘new order in East Asia’ precisely as clearly as it is understood in Japan. The ‘new order in East Asia’ has been officially defined in Japan as an order of security, stability, and progress.”⁶⁰ Before the gradual devolution of diplomacy between the United States and Japan, an air of understanding and sympathy was exhibited by Americans towards Japan’s position while simultaneously perceiving Japanese ambitions from a non-Asian lens. In one diary entry Grew outlines American thoughts on Japanese Pan-Asianism:

The New Order in East Asia envisages permanent Japanese control of Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, and North China. Wang Jingwei’s subserviency to Japanese interests is being done to bring permanent peace to China...prevent the spread of communism in to Japan proper. It was Prince Konoe and other Government members’ determination that should Japan should not oppress, exploit, or interfere with other countries’ integrity.⁶¹

There existed between American and Japanese diplomats a healthy rapport on the topic of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, one side attempting to comprehend the other in a

⁵⁹ Eric J. Dolin, *When America First Met China: An Exotic History of Tea, Drugs, and Money in the Age of Sail* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 2012), 262.

⁶⁰ Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944), 292.

⁶¹ Grew, 302- 303, 331.

constant dialogue. Grew recorded his exchange with Ambassador Matsuoka as the latter explained why Japan joined the Axis on October 5, 1940:

The construction of a new order in East Asia means the construction of a new order in which Japan establishes the relationship of common existence and mutual prosperity with the peoples of each and every land in East Asia. . . In a position of equality with every other country, Japan may freely carry on enterprises, trade, and emigration in and to each and every land in Greater East Asia.⁶²

Grew recognized Matsuoka and the Konoe Cabinets' implementation of a sphere of mutual prosperity and endeavoring to abolish restrictions on the free activities of mankind.⁶³ Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro (in office 1937-39 and 1940-41) was a Pan-Asianist from a young age and believed that the West had actively kept the East down in international politics. He was the main force behind the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and believed it was Japan's duty cooperate and protect its neighbors.⁶⁴ In relation to the Japanese occupation of China, this translated to severing the colonial grips of European powers and allowing the Chinese nation to enjoy all the rights of sovereignty as granted by the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and paradoxically Wilson's "Fourteen Points" and President Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms."⁶⁵ In a private conversation concerning Roosevelt's fears of Japanese dictatorship in China, Grew records a senior Japanese statesmen and in an attempt to understand what the President had in mind, the statesmen retorts "Japan was at least not under a dictatorship; and then he had got it; why of course he was referring to Jiang Jieshi, the perfect dictator. . . he could not imagine any country less democratic than Jiang Jieshi's China."⁶⁶ Not only did Wang Jingwei perceive his own government to be the rightful embodiment of Sun Yixian's legacy and Jiang Jieshi's

⁶² Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944), 341.

⁶³ Grew, 341.

⁶⁴ James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 452.

⁶⁵ James L. Stokely, *A Short History of World War Two* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1980), 119-121.

⁶⁶ Grew, 375.

government to be leading China to a path of devolved dictatorship, Japan also held a similar understanding of the Guomindang's oppressive regime.

Through American Ambassador Joseph C. Grew, an external perspective nonetheless, Japan's intentions for China were made evident. Ambassador Grew's careful, first-hand documentation of his experience with Japan provides a transnational lens. His accounts finished before the outbreak of the United States entrance into the war and are not distorted by a victor's historical account. Wang Jingwei's nationalist China desired cooperation with Japan for the attainment of sovereignty, peace, and preservation of the nation. Japan stood stoic for all Pan-Asian nationalism and as a catalyst for which to realize not only nationhood, but freedom from oppression by the West. Through the ideological understanding of Pan-Asian nationalism, countries cooperated within the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and united against imperial forays from the Occident. Ambassador Grew makes this apparent when he recalls the words of Waseda University's president on February 26, 1941, "as stressed in the Konoe statement made some time ago, Japan's purpose in the present conflict is not a petty territorial acquisition...It is rather to safeguard China's independence, and, respecting her sovereignty, to establish a New Order in East Asia."⁶⁷ In tandem with the Konoe cabinet, the Japanese concept of *hakko ichiu* (universal peace) meant no conquest, no oppression, and no exploitation of any peoples.⁶⁸ Grew also makes it clear that Japanese aspirations for China were overall peaceful in intent and cooperative in nature and included the desire for neighborly friendship, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, cooperative defense between the two countries, and fusion of Chinese nationalists into one government.⁶⁹ To enact the ideologies of the Greater East Asian

⁶⁷ Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944), 376.

⁶⁸ Grew, 384, Matsuoka reports to the Black Dragon Society, April 25, 1941.

⁶⁹ Grew, 434.

Co-Prosperty Sphere, Japan and Wang Jingwei sought to modernize and nationalize China from above by uniting behind one strain of Pan-Asian nationalism- Sun Yixian's nationalism of harmonious cooperation of Asia- the various groups vying for the sympathies of the people. Synchronized with Confucianism, Pan-Asianism strived for sovereign nations while not upsetting social order. Pan-Asianism as attempted by Wang and Japanese advisors strived for modernization while maintaining a "natural order" as prescribed by Confucianism. Intellectuals and academics, through education, politics, the military, and economics, were the intended tools for disseminating the Pan-Asian narrative and Wang's pragmatic nationalism.

In analyzing the sources, the question of whether and to what extent Japanese occupation affected Chinese nationalism must be answered. Based on the aforementioned evidence, Japanese and Chinese nationalists shared similar beliefs as to how to unite the people behind the state and to expel the West. However, Wang Jingwei's government was labeled by the victors of World War Two, namely Chinese Communists and the Guomindang, as treacherous and demonized for cooperating with Japan, during the war and for generations after. The historiographical evolution has shown that use of this label in narration has changed. As Timothy Brook pointed out, nationalism as exemplified by Jiang Jieshi in reaction to Japanese aggression ran counter to Wang Jingwei's construal of nationalism by cooperation and inclusion into a Greater Asian community. Nationalism by so-labeled "collaboration" was simply a differing interpretation of Chinese nation-ness and yet more congruent with Sun Yixian's contribution to China's national discourse. Gaining and preserving sovereignty, not futile resistance against a fellow Asian nation, was the cornerstone of Wang's nationalism. Bearing the brunt of Japanese advance into China proved to be the beginning of the end for Jiang Jieshi's nationalists as Mao Zedong prepared for a protracted revolution.

Conversely, Japanese nationalism aligned with the nationalist inheritance of Sun Yixian and Wang Jingwei. As such, Wang remained an outlier by accepting the precepts of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere in the subsequent narratives written by opposing Chinese nationalists and Allied powers. Arguably, Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi both ceded some degree of sovereignty to Western powers by accepting aid. For purposes of winning World War Two, the Allied powers utilized the Guomindang and Chinese Communists to combat Japan in the Pacific Theater. Following that, the People's Republic of China was subordinated to the greater cause of international communist revolution led by Moscow and Jiang Jieshi's government was driven to Taiwan only to be a pawn in the grander chess game of the Cold War. That, however, is to be expounded on in another work.

It is the re-interpretation of this work to alter the use of "collaboration," "collaborationists," and Wang Jingwei as a traitor when describing this particular breed of nationalism. Collaboration holds an air of unconstructiveness and pointed language used by the authors of history-the victors. Historical interpretation is relative and based on experience and personal bias. Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi experienced Japanese occupation from different vantages and Wang Jingwei from his. One side of Chinese nationalist discourse selected resistance and the other, cooperation. Popular use of the term collaboration robs the Reorganized Nationalist Government of its historical agency and establishes a poor attempt for objectivity. Wang Jingwei's Reorganized Government did not abandon the nation's absolute claim that it has a right to exist.⁷⁰ As opposed to resistance against Japan, like the position taken by Jiang Jieshi, Wang Jingwei envisaged China finding peace with its neighbor and working within East Asia to preserve Asian nationalism and culture. Wang Jingwei's government was a legitimate

⁷⁰ Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 162.

intimation of nationalist feeling in China because it in fact preserved sovereignty through cooperation with the Japanese empire. In terms of the Reorganized Government's Minister of Education, Gu Cheng, the issue facing China was how to survive national extinction and collaboration was the only realistic means for survival.⁷¹ Binaries of "good" and "bad" have no place in proper historical parlance. There are simply alternate interpretations by groups unbounded by politically-charged historical narrative.

Wang Jingwei's interpretation of Chinese nationalism should not be discredited by the dominant historical lens of his rivals. As stated before, cooperative nationalism with the Japanese spoke only in terms of the nation; patriotism, reclaiming a magnificent Chinese history, speaking in the mother-tongue of all Asia, realizing a degree of ethnic homogeneity, and common cultural ties in Confucianism. All of these shared interests resulted in a dialectic of preserving China as a nation through forming bonds with Japanese nationalists-the alternate dialectic of Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong culminated in resistance and eventually seized its stage of history.

Additionally, Chinese nationalists were substantially influenced and arguably envious of not only Japanese state nationalism, but their subsequent brand of Pan-Asian nationalism. From Sun Yixian's tenure in Japan, frequenting *Genyosha* meeting places, to Wang Jingwei's understanding of what China needed, Japan existed as the model for its Asian contemporaries prior to, during, and after World War Two. Although it is not covered here, the Burma National Army, Indian National Army, Indonesian, Malaysian, and Vietnamese were either modeled after or constructed along the Japanese example, often with aid from Japanese officers. As such, China's Reorganized National Army was abetted by the Japanese, instructed by Japanese officers, and equipped by Japan. Armies are symbolic of the state's power and the state is

⁷¹ Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 160.

arguably connected to the nation. Therefore, in just this one example of Japan influencing Asian nationalists, the military was exemplar of Japanese influence throughout East Asia.

Along with that, much of the language of Chinese nationalists, as expounded earlier, was also the language of their Japanese counterparts. Leading up to World War Two, Japanese intellectuals served as natural associates to Chinese intellectuals. As evidenced by other examples of nationalism, nation-ness and its story is propagated by intellectuals and scholars. Both interpret and narrate history of the nation and thus have power over knowledge of the nation. Conversely, the narrative is presented to the people of the nation in national terms of common interests, shared feelings of “one-ness,” and tied together by the same language, ethnic background, and origin myths. With Pan-Asian nationalism, national feeling was not contained within political boundaries, but spread trans-nationally in reaction to Western ideals.

Scholars, historians, and intellectuals like Naito controlled the narrative of how Chinese viewed their country internally and Japanese looking in at China. Tourism is integral in forming this narrative. Cites at Mukden, Qufu, and Nanjing were all exemplary of Pan-Asian nationalism and the influence of Japanese leadership in that project. Epitaphs of battles and military victories served to glorify the mission of the nation such as at Mukden. Cultural and originary myths, symbols, and literary works were intended to portray ideological and mythical continuity, like the Japanese renovation of Qufu, Confucius’ birthplace. Confucianism stood as a cornerstone of a harmonious and structured society in Pan-Asian nationalism; embodying the seed of East Asian civilization through Confucianism’s rationalized structure in the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, with Japan as the head of the new order and subsequent neighbors following suit in a cooperative manner. This concept was exemplified by the cooperative government of Wang Jingwei in preserving China and taking its proper role in the family of transnational Asia.

Finally, the tourism of Nanjing was also utilized by intellectuals and scholars in the formation of a nationalist narrative. The Japanese influence was apparent in not only adopting it as a shining example of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere, but also demonstrated the modernizing effect of nationalism and national reconstruction. Japanese tourism to Nanjing as the epitome of a modern China was certainly the embodiment of Sun Yixian's call for national reconstruction and restoring China to its rightful glory. Not only did Nanjing personify modern China, but it was also the capital of Wang Jingwei's government. The seat of the Chinese nation-state existed within one of its most modern cities.

Another way in which Japanese occupation of China influenced the national discourse was the redirection of its focus. In the early to mid-twentieth century, Chinese nationalist movements were focused internally. This resulted in decades of turmoil as local warlords vied for scraps of residual power left by the crumbling Qing dynasty. With this, Western nations found an opportunity to capitalize, economically and strategically, on the Chinese civil war by wresting territory and sovereignty from China as well as Japan. Coupled with a healthy rapport between Chinese and Japanese nationalists, cooperation with Japanese occupation refocused Chinese nationalist discourse from an internal struggle to the external threat looming from the West. In transferring Chinese nationalist foci from internal bickering to external dangers, the Japanese occupation was highly significant in uniting China as a nation.

The Sino-Japanese relationship also affected nationalist discourse. Prior to the outbreak of war, Japanese intellectuals and scholars had looked to China as the "parental" example of nationalism and eventually Pan-Asianism. It found in China, as seen by Naito and Japanese tourism to Mukden, Qufu, and Nanjing, inspiration for unifying its own nation. State sponsored Shintoism, similar language and writing, cultural origins, and Confucianism were distilled from

China and adopted by Japan. As a result of Japan's search in China for original inspiration as an Asian nation, Japan inspired the attention of Chinese nationalists as well. Japan, in sculpting its nation-state, interacted with Chinese contemporaries. These natural counter-parts in nationalist thought exchanged ideas and formed nationalist narratives in which China thus looked to Japan for inspiration. That is one reason for Chinese nationalists like Sun Yixian and Wang Jingwei to study in Tokyo. Interaction between Asian neighbors formed a symbiotic and synchronized Pan-Asian nationalism in reaction to Western ideological incursions.

Chapter Three:

Vietnam and Pan-Asianism (1940-1945)

As the Japanese invaded China and began the Second World War, similar events unfolded in Southeast Asia. Nazi Germany defeated France in 1940 and the Vichy collaborationist government assumed power. With that, the Vichy regime acquired French colonial assets in Africa and Southeast Asia. Vietnam, on the periphery of World War Two, was amongst French colonial possessions. With authorization from the Vichy government and concurrent to an alliance with the Axis powers, Italy and Germany, Japanese forces invaded Vietnam in September of 1940. After Japanese forces moved into Vietnam, the Vichy government and Japanese military mutually administered Vietnam. In order to feed its military-industrial power, Japan bolstered acquisitions of Southeast Asian rubber, oil, tin, and other resources. Coinciding with economic and material necessity, Japan expanded the influence of its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, an ideological and political justification for imperialism in Asia. Determined to seize power for Asians from European oppressors, numerous Vietnamese leaders welcomed Japan's dual governance with Vichy France. Japanese governance of Vietnam placed pro-Japanese, Vietnamese officials to govern their own people while the Japanese military administered from behind. However, due to Japan's similarly oppressive rule after taking full control from the French in 1945, Vietnamese nationalist groups intervened to free their country. Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Viet Minh, worked closely with the American O.S.S. (Office of Strategic Services) and the Chinese to undermine Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia. The self-determined Vietnamese nationalists claimed independence for Vietnam as the Japanese empire fell in August 1945.

Events in Vietnam from 1940-1945 hold a crucial, macro-historical significance and are more imperative than the brief independence won by the *Viet Minh* in September of 1945. Numerous factions became involved afterwards including China, the United States, France, and various Vietnamese nationalist groups. The interaction of such parties resulted in a series of events that would shape Southeast Asia for the proceeding three decades. The origin of Vietnamese nationalist groups will provide a more cogent and well-rounded historical interpretation. It will also show the extent of Japan's effect on Vietnamese nationalism. Japanese ideology, nationalism, and military methods, as this study conceives, inspired Vietnamese liberation movements into the post-colonial period as witnessed by American-European powers in their involvement during the Cold War.

Despite the lack of clear and straightforward adaptations taken from the Japanese, formation of the *Viet Minh* and actions taken by Ho Chi Minh were in reaction to the dual colonial structure of Japanese-occupied Vietnam. In order to stay the tide of Allied victories in the Pacific Theater, Japanese aims within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere required tapping the sources of Vietnamese nationalism; Japan simultaneously signed their own demise by tapping such sources. Japanese occupation had a marked effect on the socio-political climate of Vietnam and subsequently determined the course of history for the next thirty years.

According to Tran Duc Thao, a Marxist-Vietnamese philosopher, "Japan was at the head of renewal for Asia...and took the aggressive form of a new imperialism."¹ Japan had imposed its will upon Vietnam politically, economically, and culturally until 1945. Being that they were subjugated by the Japanese empire, it can be inferred that some structures influenced the Vietnamese.

¹ Tran Duc Thao, "Vietnam and Eastern Asia," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, (Aug. 1947), 409-410.

Many Asians believed that the Japanese, in the early years preceding occupation, would deliver the oppressed people from under European hegemony. “Some nationalists had looked for help ever since its [Japan’s] victory over Russia in 1905. The Vietnamese patriot Phan Boi Chau, who encouraged a number of Vietnamese students to go to Japan, had taught earlier in the century that Japan would be the savior who would free Vietnam from the yoke of French imperialism.”² This was true even for members of the Vietnamese royal family, including the future nationalist figure Prince Cuong De who was considered for the throne of Vietnam by the Japanese occupation administration. While studying in Japan, Cuong De called on his fellow countrymen to rise up against the French.³ Previous to and during occupation, a long-standing relationship is evident between Vietnam and Japan. Japanese intellectuals and nationalists were the obvious counterpart to Vietnamese intellectuals and nationalists. After centuries of Western dominance of Asia, Japan, a modernized Asian empire in the mirror image of Western industrial might and technology, branded Pan-Asian nationalism as their own and posed as the catalyst for other Asian nationalists to retaliate against European imperialism. This is depicted in Brodrick’s *Little China: The Annamese Lands*, by an account of an Englishman questioning Vietnamese locals: “In speaking about Japanese ships off the coast of Vietnam, ‘these are built by men like ourselves and they say these ships are as good as Europeans, and they belong here.’” Hope and positivity characterized Vietnamese moods towards the Japanese. Vietnam considered necessary its own self-determination like that of Japan, after a century of French rule. Japan, through Vietnamese eyes, was the conduit through which independence could be achieved.

² Ellen J. Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina, 1940-1955*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1955), 45.

³ Hammer, 45.

Vietnamese confidence in Japan was recognized internationally. It was understood worldwide that Asian nationalists found in Japan a champion against Western domination. In a *New York Times* article titled “Province Sliced from Indochina,” it is revealed that even the United States acknowledged the appeal that Japan had in Asia. The article expresses:

Japan assists Annam [Vietnam] to become independent and will strive completely for her expansion as an independent nation and will simultaneously strive to attain results in co-existence and co-prosperity as a member nation of Greater East Asia in accordance of the purpose of the Japanese joint declaration. The Empire of Annam, for purposes of attaining these aims, will have faith in the Imperial Government of Japan and will cooperate with them.⁴

The *Times* article shows the determination of Vietnam to become independent and the Japanese government’s commitment to “Asia for Asians.” Conversely, much of the language used in Vietnamese and Japanese nationalist circles was similar to Franklin D. Roosevelt’s rhetorical “Four Freedoms” in that all nations have a right to self-determination and “freedom from tyranny.”⁵ Considering American depictions of the war and their dehumanizing narrative of their enemy in the Pacific, the similarities in rhetorical tools used by both sides is ironic.

In accordance with early twentieth century Vietnamese perspectives on the Japanese, Japanese sources depict goals of facilitating independence for Asian countries under the auspices of the empire. The Japanese crusade was clear-cut support for separation of Southeast Asia from the clutches of France, Europe, and the Western powers, whether for strategic necessity or high-minded reasons. *Contemporary Japan*, a periodical published in 1937, exemplifies the ideology of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in an article titled “The Fundamental Significance of Our Continental Policy” when it articulates “the creation of an ideal international relationship

⁴ “Province Is Sliced From Indochina,” *New York Times*, (Mar. 12, 1945; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times), 6.

⁵ James L. Stokesbury, *A Short History of World War Two* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1980), 119.

for the co-existence and common prosperity for all nations.”⁶ Even though this article was in reference to the Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945), language like “co-existence” and “common prosperity” no doubt foreshadowed policy for all Asian nations under the influence of the Japanese empire and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Mamoru Shigemitsu provides a substantial account of the goals of the Japanese empire and their subsequent effect on Vietnamese nationalism. From the Manchurian Incident, which historians argue sparked the beginning of World War Two (1931) to Japanese surrender in 1945, Shigemitsu served as foreign ambassador for Japan in multiple capacities throughout the war.⁷ In his memoir of 1958, *Japan and Her Destiny*, he not only pens his thoughts and feelings about Japan during the war but more specifically, its nationalistic goals within the empire. “My contention was that Japan’s war aim was to liberate the Orient.”⁸ From a Japanese source, the objective of the empire was liberation of all Asian nations, particularly severing the stranglehold of France from Vietnam. “Japan decided to recognize the sovereignty of nations that had not yet achieved independence.”⁹ By facilitating patriotism and national-feeling within said nations, Japan recognized the autonomy of Asia. Japan acknowledged the self-determination of like-minded, racially similar, linguistically connected people under the dominion of Western imperialism.

As aforementioned, many Vietnamese nationalists looked to Japan for inspiration and tutelage. Shigemitsu continues by saying “From Annam [Vietnam] patriots had flocked to Japan. These enlightened leaders were zealous to rescue their people from colonial status.”¹⁰ Bao Dai

⁶ “The Fundamental Significance of Our Continental Policy,” *Contemporary Japan*, Vol. VI, (1937), 493.

⁷ Xiaobing Li, *The Cold War in East Asia* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Young Group, 2018), 25.

⁸ Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1958), 291.

⁹ Shigemitsu, 291.

¹⁰ Shigemitsu, 292.

who was supported by the Japanese and will later be discussed and Prince Cuong De who since the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 had studied in Japan, were among those “enlightened leaders” of Vietnam. These national leaders ignited the flames of nationalism on their return to Vietnam, with Japanese guidance. “Japan gave approval to Annam for initiation of their independence.”¹¹ Seeking refuge in the support of Japan and its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Prince Cuong De and other national figures regarded Japan as the savior of Asia from Western hegemony.

The Japanese victory over Russia inspired many Asian countries and subsequent, infantile nationalist movements, after a century of European control. As a result and as mentioned before, Prince Cuong De journeyed to Japan along with many other Vietnamese;¹² under Japanese administration, Cuong De was considered for the throne of Vietnam.¹³ This is congruent with Japanese imperial policy of allowing indigenous leaders to govern their own people; a significant change from previous occupiers who installed French colonial administrators in lieu of Vietnamese officials. Japanese official acknowledged the need for Vietnamese to govern themselves and promoted local participation in the formation of national feeling. This national feeling was one shared by multitudes of Asians who found in common an Asian culture, mostly-homogenous race, ideologically bound by Confucianism and the structure of society, similar language, and mutual goal of rejected Western incursions.

On a parallel trajectory, the Japanese also empathized with Vietnam intellectually and politically. Tokyo believed independence could be achieved through the maturation of

¹¹ Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1958), 298.

¹² Kiyoko K. Nitz, “Independence Without Nationalism? The Japanese and Vietnamese Nationalism during the Japanese Period 1940-45,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (Mar. 1984), 110.

¹³ Nitz, 128.

Vietnamese politics i.e. nationalist activities.¹⁴ Essentially, the official Japanese position towards the Vietnamese was one of indirect facilitation. This was accomplished through bonds between young Japanese diplomats and Vietnamese nationalists in retaliation against European power.¹⁵ Komatsu Kiyoshi, an author in Vietnam, was among these young intellectuals and diplomats. Sympathizing with their drive for independence, Komatsu did much to support the efforts of various Vietnamese nationalists.¹⁶ Japanese intellectuals, like Komatsu, were the natural counterparts to Vietnamese intellectuals.¹⁷ During the post-French administration, other Japanese entities like *Kenkyujo* (Economic Research Center) were known to assist Vietnamese nationalist efforts to establish economic infrastructure.¹⁸ *Kenkyujo* provided places in which nationalists could meet safely and often included a Japanese intermediary, like Komatsu, to maintain a dialogue with the Japanese military.¹⁹ The Vietnamese received invaluable aid from Japanese intellectuals and diplomats alike creating a symbiosis in which the two nations interacted politically, diplomatically, and economically. The Japanese also enabled Vietnamese nationalism on a military level.

The empire's occupation of Southeast Asia and more specifically Vietnam saw the application of military structures, tactics, strategy, and organization on the Japanese model. As stated, Japanese policy was to liberate colonized Asians from European colonizers and gain local groups as allies. This is the case with liberating Vietnam from French oppression. Lebra indicates "Guerilla tactics are a legacy attributed to Japanese instruction of Southeast Asian

¹⁴ Kiyoko K. Nitz, "Independence Without Nationalism? The Japanese and Vietnamese Nationalism during the Japanese Period 1940-45," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (March 1984), 111.

¹⁵ Nitz, 112.

¹⁶ Nitz, 115.

¹⁷ Nitz, 117.

¹⁸ Nitz, 117.

¹⁹ Nitz, 119.

officers.”²⁰ One of the standard tactics utilized by the Japanese was in fact guerilla warfare and its application in jungles.²¹ Coupled with guerilla and jungle warfare, the Japanese inculcated the armies of Southeast Asia with a “fighting spirit.”²² The *bushido* code or “way of the samurai” saturated Japanese nationalist rhetoric of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and its values were instilled into the liberated populations of Southeast Asia, Korea, and China.²³

Evidence of the Japanese military structure influencing Vietnamese nationalist armies is irrefutable. The Japanese military clearly supported Vietnamese liberation fronts during the occupation. General Tsuchihashi supported the *Viet Minh* and their efforts to overthrow the French colonial government as it fit the overall strategy of Japanese *Sittang Meigo Sakusen*, or coup to overthrow, before Vietnam fell to de Gaulle’s Allied French forces.²⁴ As it dovetailed with the overarching Japanese strategy to wrest Vietnam from the grips of France, Tsuchihashi’s cooperation with the *Viet Minh* demonstrated Japanese support for Vietnamese nationalism.

Another account from a Colonel Saito in command of a Japanese detachment, called back from Burma to capture deserters in Vietnam, revealed that the deserters he was looking for instead joined the *Viet Minh*.²⁵ Japanese soldiers abandoning their posts for the cause of Vietnam became a trend by war’s end. Rather than surrender, Japanese troops, defeated and ashamed, joined the Vietnamese in their fight for independence.²⁶ Throughout Japanese tenure in Vietnam, the military arm of the empire not only carried out the war, but also served as political

²⁰ Joyce C. Lebra, “Japanese Trained Armies in Southeast Asia,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 170.

²¹ Louis Allen, *War, Conflict, and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific 1941-1952* (Folkestone, Kent, U.K.: Global Oriental, 2011), 285. Louis Allen served as a British intelligence officer operating in Southeast Asia during World War Two. He also had a strong command of the Japanese language as it served him in his later years as a scholar.

²² Lebra, 170.

²³ James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 494.

²⁴ Allen, 41.

²⁵ Allen, 13.

²⁶ Allen, 31-40.

administrators. In order to carry out Tokyo's policy of "Asia governed by Asians," a coup to throw out the French was necessary. Thus, Vietnamese nationalists were the appropriate tool in fulfilling the obligations of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Colonel Fuchida, outlined requirements for the coup's success in an address to Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo in early 1945: "1) It is necessary to bring a pro-Japanese stance to Vietnam 2) It would be difficult to do so without a promise of independence for the people 3) The coup will be a 'just cause' in the name of the Greater East Asian Community."²⁷ Fuchida's wire to Tokyo indicates Japanese support for Vietnamese nationalism. Whether the caveat of a coup was intended to check the Allied advancement or for the annexation of Vietnam into the Greater East Asia Sphere, the Japanese occupation was a catalyst and mobilizer of nationalism in Vietnam. Strategic goals of the Japanese empire can also be found with the accounts of Major-General Kawamura of the Imperial General Headquarters. For incorporation into the empire and for preparation of independence in Vietnam, he ordered a study be undertaken of the popular movements within the country.²⁸ Kawamura's version was substantiated by a French scholar, Frederic Roustan. His research emphasizes the use of private and government-sponsored Japanese research institutes in the pre-war years and during the war. *Dainan Koshi*, a private think-tank, was contracted for the development of Japanese commercial interests.²⁹ The Japanese government also sponsored research into other Asian countries, thereby forming the East Asia Common Culture Society. "Members studied a specific topic...for research and data collection... then distributed to the Ministries of Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, and the army high

²⁷ Louis Allen, *War, Conflict, and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific 1941-1952* (Folkestone, Kent, U.K.: Global Oriental, 2011), 51-52.

²⁸ Allen, 58.

²⁹ Frederic Roustan, "From Oriental Studies to South Pacific Studies: The Multiple Origins of Vietnamese Studies in Japan, 1881-1951," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Winter 2011), 9-10.

command.”³⁰ Clearly, in order to perpetuate Pan-Asianism, the Japanese investigated every detailed aspect in rallying Asia for Asians. In other words Asia, Vietnam specifically, needed a means by which to realize their “nation-ness.” Resentment towards Western hegemony existed, but how would nationalists mobilize Vietnam into the physical and mental nation? As stated before, independence from European colonial power was a driving force in Southeast Asian nationalists support for the Japanese strategy. Prior to World War Two, the Vietnamese studied the Japanese and during the war, the Japanese studied to what extent their brand of Asian nationalism effected Vietnam. Japan was the means to an end for nationalism in Vietnam.

Correspondent to Nitz’s work, Captain Patti Archimedes confirmed the diplomatic and political rapport between Japanese and Vietnamese nationalists. Archimedes was an O.S.S. (American Office of Strategic Services) operative in Vietnam, during World War Two. “In anticipation of the August 1940 takeover of the Vichy government, Tokyo sent ambassador Yokoyama, assisted by Komaki Omiya and a Mr. Komatsu.”³¹ Leading up to the war and during its height, Yokoyama was involved in the Japanese research groups entrenched in Vietnam and he also served as an advisor to Emperor Bao Dai. Omiya was an official of the *Nippon Bunka Kaikan* (Japanese Cultural Center). Both men had worked through organs sponsored by the Japanese government known to cooperate and facilitate Vietnamese nationalist meetings.³² The third person, “Mr. Komatsu” is in fact the Japanese *literati* as alluded to earlier who sympathized and aided various Vietnamese nationalists. “Yokoyama’s program was oriented to advancing Japanese culture and support for the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere,” and connections

³⁰ Frederic Roustan, “From Oriental Studies to South Pacific Studies: The Multiple Origins of Vietnamese Studies in Japan, 1881-1951,” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Winter 2011), 10.

³¹ Archimedes, Patti L. *Why Vietnam? Prelude to America’s Albatross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 304.

³² Kiyoko, K. Nitz, “Japanese Military Policy Towards French Indochina during the Second World War: The Road to the ‘Meigo Sakusen’ (Mar. 9, 1945),” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Sep., 1983), table 2.

to Japanese programs like these fomented a cordial camaraderie with the Vietnamese people.³³ The O.S.S. agent Archimedes' account verified that pro-Japanese Vietnamese were inspired to take back their "Asian-ness" and all the corresponding cultural accoutrement while revolting against their European hegemons.³⁴ "As we uncovered complex commercial, political, and intelligence apparatus of the Japanese in Indochina, I found cadres in the Phuc Quoc and Dai Viet pursuing pro-Japanese programs."³⁵ There existed a diverse and deep network in which the Japanese and Vietnamese interacted to fulfill nationalist goals under the umbrella of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and for the self-determination of all Asian nations.

There also existed a cause and effect in that Japanese actions propelled Vietnamese reaction. By creating a political and military vacuum in Vietnam and humiliating French colonialism, the Japanese psychologically motivated Vietnamese nationalism.³⁶ The Japanese freed Asia from the vice-grip of European powers as French capitulation raised morale within Vietnamese groups. The Japanese "dismantled the French colonial apparatus" and simultaneously suppressed anti-communists which allowed easier recruitment for nationalist groups.³⁷ By destroying the French colonial hold and spreading Pan-Asianism, Japan laid the foundation for independence movements in Vietnam.

Other nationalist factions in Vietnam, the *Cao Dai* and *Hoa Hao* in the Southern half of the country, were ideologically inspired by tenets of Catholicism and Buddhism, respectively. Unlike other nationalist groups, *Cao Dai* and *Hoa Hao* did not possess popular support in that

³³ Archimedes, Patti L. *Why Vietnam? Prelude to America's Albatross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 304.

³⁴ Archimedes, 306.

³⁵ Archimedes, 305.

³⁶ Mark P. Bradley, "Vietnamese Revolutionary Nationalism and the First Vietnam War," *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 104.

³⁷ Bradley, 104.

neither appealed to intellectual sensibilities of the urban proletariat.³⁸ Other groups, like the *Francophiles* were large landowners, urban elites, wealthy, and urged collaboration with the French.³⁹ As one can deduce, Vietnamese urban working-class and rural peasants were not won over by the *Francophiles*. Enter Ho Chi Minh and the *Viet Minh*, from which Japanese occupation prompted perhaps the most significant nationalist reaction. Ho promoted an “all-class” struggle and relied on patriotism to unify Vietnam against French and Japanese imperialism.⁴⁰ The *Viet Minh* were the only nationalist group to have a solution for their starving countrymen after Japanese troops confiscated rice crops in 1944 for the Greater East Asian Empire.⁴¹ The formation of the *Viet Minh* and the emergence of Ho Chi Minh were a result of the dual-colonial structure of Japanese-Vichy France Vietnam. Occupation by the Japanese had a marked effect on the people of Vietnam and as such national feeling materialized. Not all Vietnamese nationalists were against the French and hopeful of the Japanese. Some, like the *Viet Minh*, were opposed to anyone not of the Vietnamese nation.

Colonel Masanobu Tsuji narrates his memoir in *Singapore, The Japanese Version*, having several parallels to Shigemitsu. Tsuji was highly active with nationalist groups throughout Southeast Asia, during World War Two. He was operating in the region until the early 1960s and suspected of assisting the North Vietnamese government, even after Japan’s surrender on August 15, 1945.⁴² Tsuji characterizes the ends to which Japan facilitated various nationalist groups when he exclaims “With the help of a powerful Japan, the peoples of Asia will

³⁸ Mark P. Bradley, “Vietnamese Revolutionary Nationalism and the First Vietnam War,” *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 104.

³⁹ Bradley, 104.

⁴⁰ Bradley, 105.

⁴¹ Bradley, 106.

⁴² United States Central Intelligence Agency, Electronic Reading Room, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, *Tsuji Masanobu*, (June 30, 1962, Declassified 2005), File No. 519cd81f993294098d516952, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/519cd81f993294098d516952>.

work together for independence.”⁴³ In support of self-determination for all Asians, Tsuji referenced “a powerful Japan” to oppose the powerful West and its colonial holdings. He continued “The aim of the present war is the realization, first in the Far East, of His Majesty’s [Emperor Hirohito] august will and ideal that the peoples of the world should each be granted possession of their rightful homelands.”⁴⁴ Rallying against European imperialism and reclaiming a homeland represents an appealing and shared feeling for post-colonial, Asian nationalists.

Even after Japan’s loss in the Second World War, the Japanese abetted Vietnamese nationalism. The case of Masanobu Tsuji is not a singular one. It is estimated that anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand Japanese soldiers, after surrender and having long-term emotional and physical ties (families) to Vietnam, stayed and joined various Vietnamese nationalist groups. Having been occupiers in the region for no less than five years, Japanese troops cohabitated with the indigenous people, had wives and children, and most of all, sympathized with Vietnam’s struggle for independence.⁴⁵ Coincidentally, accounts from Vo Nguyen Giap, a former history teacher, learned general and tactician, and Ho Chi Minh’s right-hand-man in revolution, provides primary evidence that some Japanese Imperial soldiers aided the Vietnamese in their cause. Speaking about events during the First Indochina War (1946-1954), General Giap remembered “an old Japanese officer came to our ranks suggesting that we set up three lines of defense around Hanoi.”⁴⁶ This is but one instance of Japanese officers training and consulting Vietnamese revolutionaries. Other nationalist groups enjoyed explicit guidance from Japanese officers on fighting for home and hearth, including the *Dai Viet*.

⁴³ Masanobu Tsuji, *Singapore, The Japanese Version* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1961), 304.

⁴⁴ Tsuji, 305.

⁴⁵ Louis Allen, *War, Conflict, and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific 1941-1952* (Folkestone, Kent, U.K.: Global Oriental, 2011), 42.

⁴⁶ Vo Nguyen Giap, “Fight in the Ring,” *General Memoirs*, <http://www.vnmilitaryhistory.net/index.php?topic=30183.0>

Vietnamese accounts confirm Japanese aid to the cause of national self-determination. “The Japanese sponsored the unification of Dai Viet formations in Vietnam and created the Tan Viet Nam Dang (New Vietnam Party) in Central Vietnam.”⁴⁷ “Japanese occupation helped revitalize various anti-French movements in Vietnam...[the] Japanese encouraged all political groups.”⁴⁸ Later Vietnamese scholars, unlike their ultra-Marxist predecessors, recognized the significance of the Japanese variety of nationalism on shaping Vietnamese nationalism.

Bui Diem was a Vietnamese student and clandestine member of the *Dai Viet* non-communist, nationalist party during Japanese occupation. During the war he worked alongside Japanese cohorts against the French and coincidentally studied under Vo Nguyen Giap in college while active in the Vietnamese nationalist movement.⁴⁹ Bui was molded by and represented the relationship between Japanese and Vietnamese nationalists. “The Dai Viet party I had joined had close ties to the Japanese.”⁵⁰ A fellow Japanese student, Yamaguchi, was a known Japanese operative and a frequent visitor to Bui’s uncle, Tran Trong Kim.⁵¹ Tran Trong Kim was later chosen as Prime Minister to Bao Dai, the Japanese-endorsed emperor of Vietnam. Bui speaks about students involved with the *Dai Viet* party as “most of them knew Yamaguchi at least slightly, he had been enrolled at the university for years and had been so active on the Japan-Vietnam friendship front.”⁵² Yamaguchi was likely involved with research and cultural groups sponsored by the Japanese government and also a potential *Nakano* agent. Digressing from Bui, the *Nakano* School was within the purview of the military and a secret intelligence organization.

⁴⁷ Nguyen The Anh, “The Formulation of the National Discourse in 1940-1945 Vietnam,” *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jun. 2002), 67.

⁴⁸ Nguyen, 59.

⁴⁹ Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 13.

⁵⁰ Bui, 23.

⁵¹ Bui, 26.

⁵² Bui, 27.

It was founded in July of 1938 for espionage purposes against the Soviet Union.⁵³ In order to train the populace in military tactics, particularly in guerilla warfare and subversion, graduates of the *Nakano* School were planted within Greater East Asian countries.⁵⁴ Embedded in Vietnam during the Second World War, Captain Kaneko, a *Nakano* graduate, was charged with implementing Japanese strategy to undermine French rule via Vietnamese nationalist groups. His mission included releasing Bao Dai from incarceration from French authorities. Later, as the Japanese mission was a success, Bao Dai was selected by the military administration as emperor to the newly liberated Vietnamese nation.⁵⁵ This is but one example of a *Nakano* agent aiding indigenous nationalists in overthrowing their Western tormentors.

Accounts like Yamaguchi and Kaneko are congruent with the many ways in which Vietnamese nationalists maintained open communication and collaboration with Japanese counterparts. In *The Jaws of History*, Bui addresses indigenous celebrations of ancestors in Vietnam. Due to their incitement of patriotism, cultural celebrations were banned by the French government. Bui recollects that there was no “explicit prohibition from the Japanese and the student association [*Dai Viet*] went all out.”⁵⁶ Unlike French colonialism, the Japanese occupation did not censure patriotic feeling or culturally significant events, but in fact encouraged them.

As stated before, there were several national, Japanese-educated, Vietnamese figures that were groomed and supported by the Japanese government. They were placed in power due to their sympathies towards Japanese guidance and enjoyed the direct sponsorship of Japanese

⁵³ Louis Allen, *War, Conflict, and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific 1941-1952* (Folkestone, Kent, U.K.: Global Oriental, 2011), 285.

⁵⁴ Allen, 287.

⁵⁵ Allen, 73.

⁵⁶ Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 28.

officials. Previously alluded to, Bao Dai was the recipient of such support from the Japanese in his pursuit for independence of Vietnam. Tran Trong Kim, as Bui learned from Yamaguchi, was given asylum in Singapore by the Japanese and returned to Vietnam because “Bao Dai, Vietnam’s Emperor, had asked him to form a new government.”⁵⁷ Various nationalist figures of importance had been protected by the Japanese from French detainment. Coinciding with Tokyo’s policy of allowing Asia to be governed by Asians, Vietnamese leaders were key in promoting nationalism and self-determination within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. “Emperor Bao Dai, encouraged by the Japanese, declared Vietnam independent and formed a national government.”⁵⁸ Bui’s uncle, Tran Trong Kim was inevitably appointed Prime Minister to the Bao Dai government.⁵⁹ In an interview with *Le Monde*, after World War Two, Bao Dai was questioned by French journalists. Through the course of the interview, Bao Dai affirmed “they [Japanese] gave us our independence which was the first thing.”⁶⁰ Coming directly from a key source, it is explicitly evident that the Japanese expedited the emancipation of Vietnam from French colonialism.

In relation to Bao Dai and Tran Trong Kim’s appointment by the Japanese, other leaders were also favored by their occupiers. Anyone who is familiar with the American Vietnam War knows the name Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem was held on retainer by the Japanese for purposes similar to Tran Trong Kim and Bao Dai. Bui Diem continues: “It was a surprise to a real politician [Ngo Dinh Diem] who had kept himself close to the Japanese all along. Shortly before the coup against the French [*Meigo Sittang Sakusen*], the Japanese had flown Kim from

⁵⁷ Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 28.

⁵⁸ Bui, 29.

⁵⁹ Bui, 29.

⁶⁰ “Interview with Bao Dai,” *Le Monde*, (February 23, 1946).

Singapore to Saigon. Ngo Dinh Diem was also in Saigon and both kept constant contact with the Japanese.”⁶¹

By protecting and inserting nationalist leaders after power was wrested from the French, the Japanese counted on these leaders to perpetuate the common national feeling between Japan and Vietnam. “The Japanese had been keeping both men available [Kim and Diem] pending their reading of the situation.”⁶² Catering to perceptions of the urban elite class, both Diem and Kim were believed to be the best representation of the Vietnamese people and harbored the most support from the Japanese. To fit their strategy of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and to ensure Vietnamese independence, the Japanese backed notables like Kim, Bao Dai, and Diem.

Similar to Vo Nguyen Giap’s account of Japanese officers training the *Viet Minh*, Bui also revealed that “the military instructors at this camp turned out to be Japanese.”⁶³ Just as Japanese officers trained guerillas of the *Viet Minh*, so too did they educate the ranks of Bui’s *Dai Viet* party. As discussed by scholars like Lebra, Allen, and Nitz, many Vietnamese guerillas and soldiers gleaned fighting methods and tactics from the Japanese military model.

Additionally, jungle warfare was a specialty and of particular focus by graduates of the *Nakano* School, of which many agents divulged to the Vietnamese their knowledge. Primary sources like Bui and Giap confirm that the Japanese, through its military training, assisted and molded Vietnamese freedom-fighters during World War Two. As such, scores of Japanese soldiers worked for the nationalist parties.⁶⁴ More specifically, a Japanese colonel, who had taken a

⁶¹ Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 31.

⁶² Bui, 31.

⁶³ Bui, 31.

⁶⁴ Bui, 41.

Vietnamese name, “Hung,” stated to a group of *Dai Viet* recruits “with our help [Japanese], you will become Vietnamese samurai.”⁶⁵ Politically, socially, intellectually, militarily, ideologically, the Japanese occupation of Vietnam served as the catalyst for nationalism, so much so that after surrender, the Japanese joined their Vietnamese counterparts in the struggle for nationhood. “Colonel Hung’s” words to his Vietnamese students embody the entirety of the Japanese mission in Asia.

In conclusion, Japanese ideology and Pan-Asian nationalism shaped, improved, and instructed Vietnamese nationalism in conjunction with previously existing, indigenous patriotism. Vietnamese nationalism found cohesion and direction in the struggle against French oppression and for the liberation of its people through various research institutes implanted by the Japanese. Japan’s occupation provided a framework for the Vietnamese to see themselves as a nation and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere offered a channel for which self-determination of the Vietnamese people could be realized. Asian nationalism, including that of Vietnam, looked to Japan as a beacon of hope, ever since their victory over Russia in 1905. Japanese nationalism formed a unified vision of an Asian continent governed by Asians and inspired by the patriotic words of the Emperor. Japan encouraged the political development and evolution of nationalist parties by protecting Vietnamese leaders from French incarceration. Bao Dai’s sponsorship and elevation to the throne symbolized Japanese support for Vietnam governed by Vietnamese. Militarily, the French (1946-1954) and Americans (1964-1973) witnessed the guerilla tactics adopted by Vietnamese soldiers. Vietnamese armies inherited a military structure influenced by the principals of the *bushido* code (justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity, honor, and loyalty) and jungle warfare tactics from the *Nakano*

⁶⁵ Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 41.

School. Ideologically, liberation from Western dominance was expressed through ardent patriotism that Japanese and Vietnamese exhibited in common. The historical significance of the Japanese occupation 1940-1945 is valuable in that it depicts an obscure and often ignored narrative of World War Two. It also sets the stage for the next three decades of international geopolitics in Southeast Asia.

Conclusion:

Pan-Asianism's Failure and Legacy After 1945

Japanese nation-building worked for Japan. Under the Tokugawa shogunate and hegemony of the samurai class over Japanese society, the “nation” of Japan did not really exist. Pre-modern Japan culminated into a group of provinces independently ruled by warlords from the eighth century to the mid-nineteenth century. Essentially landowners claimed individual sovereignty over all they acquired via conquest of other landowners. Additionally, *daimyo* employed *samurai* to fight for them against neighboring *daimyo*; With that, *samurai* were not conscripted, citizen soldiers belonging to a centralized state. During Japan's feudal era, no iteration of nation-ness existed as we know in Western scholarship. Unlike modern Japan, pre-modern Japan was governed by both the emperor and *shogun* and no centralized power controlled the citizens. The emperor presided over social, religious, and ceremonial affairs and the *shogun* administered the military, various *daimyo*, and collected taxes. Coincidentally, there were no citizens that identified as Japanese but merely politically associated with their domicile province or lord under which they served. The people knew that they belonged to the land on which they farmed or conducted business. However, socially, linguistically, ethnically, and religiously the Japanese people were connected. Social customs, derived from Confucianism, were commonly accepted. Being an island country, there was little variation of dialects within their language, like in China. Ethnically, most Japanese were, and still are, descendent from Chinese and Korean immigrants to the island, mixed with some of the indigenous Ainu people. Also, on a religious and descendance note, most Japanese people believed the emperor descended from the Shinto sun-goddess Amaterasu. From this, pre-modern Japan required a

centralized state to become a nation. Many of the parts, as we reference in Western taxonomy of nations, were present. But national characteristics were needed.

Beginning with the Meiji Restoration, Japan, like no other East Asian country, was forced to open its borders for trade with the West in 1858. With that, it also adopted Western methods of industrialization, economics, centralized government, and education systems. Adoption of these methods catalyzed the Japanese nation. It provided for a strong, centralized state to administer its citizens. Industrialization provided opportunities for society to shift from rural to urban as jobs went from agriculture to machinery. The migration of people from rural to urban areas created a notion of one-ness. Economically, standards of living rose simultaneously with industrialization. Basic education became universal and was used as the state's tool to "produce" like-minded citizens for perpetuity and to ensure the burgeoning, national narrative. By educating obedient citizens, the state also created a population from which to conscript soldiers. Modernity spelled the end of the samurai class as ordinary citizens became wealthy, educated, conscripted, and upwardly-mobile.

However, the samurai, certainly the reimagined form, remained useful for the Japanese state's purposes. The newly formed nation was propagated on "old" structures. With modernity, every Japanese was enabled to become a samurai. As previously addressed, the state reified history to mobilize the Japanese nation economically, politically, socially, religiously, linguistically, and militarily. Japanese companies, particularly those associated with the *Zaibatsu*, bore samurai names. Japanese politicians demanded undying loyalty and governed as *daimyo*. Despite Western-style democratization, Confucian society still required an ordered society. In modern Japan, the emperor was still revered as the descendant of Amaterasu on earth. Linguistically and rhetorically, the seven tenets of *bushido* were utilized in every facet of

Japanese life. Militarily, Japanese battleships were monikered by ancient samurai names, officers carried *katana*, and surrender meant death and shame for conscripted soldiers. Japan mimicked Western models, but in so doing invented their own national form. All ingredients presented themselves as Japan joined the “old” with the “new.”

Japan assumed a leadership role in East Asia and as a Confucian-based society, its nationalizing mission turned towards its neighbors. It transferred its social basis onto a national one and viewed other countries as existing within their differential circle of associations. For a moment, engage this example: China was the centralized power of Asia for millennia, a sort of socio-cultural parent or elder. Newly-modernized Japan considered itself as an offspring of China. As China grew old and was “picked” apart by Western powers, it lost its sense of heritage and social origin. Being a Confucian nation also and believing it to be China’s offspring, Japan endeavored to assist its aging elder through educational exchange, preservation of fundamentally East Asian origins, like Qufu and Nanjing, and re-introducing it to China through transnational means. Japanese nationalism spawned Pan-Asianism as it attempted to reinterpret deeply-rooted East Asian traditions within a modern context. However, it proved impossible for Japanese nationalism and Pan-Asianism to succeed in other Asian countries. The atrocities committed by the Japanese in China and Vietnam can not be overlooked. Slaughtering 300,000 Chinese, just in Nanjing, and starving millions of Vietnamese through seizure of rice supplies did not convince Japan’s Asian neighbors to align with their transnational mission.

Assessment of Wang Jingwei’s government, its adoption and acceptance of Japanese Pan-Asianism, is historically significant to the field. It provides a case study for the Pan-Asian movement. First, this work provides analysis from a transnational lens by employing sources from numerous and varied nations. Instead of a single perspective, it examines the topic from

multiple facets, not only Japanese or Chinese, but American, British, and French. Moreover, this analysis is generations removed from the events in which it addresses and is not subject to immediate biases that previous scholarship exhibited. From a transnational lens, this is an objective interpretation of Wang Jingwei and the Reorganized National Government's role and various Vietnamese parties during the Asia-Pacific War 1937-1945.

Secondly important is the obscurity of Wang Jingwei in historical accounts. The nationalist movements of Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi dominated scholarly narration. This is attributable to the continuation of the Chinese civil war after 1945 and the importance of Cold War (1947-1991) geo-politics. The CCP's victory in 1949 over the Guomindang garnered more attention by historians than did Wang Jingwei's failed government. In Chinese accounts, from both the CCP and Guomindang, the Reorganized National Government is labeled as treasonous and as collaborators. However, over seventy years later, interpretations change. Value and moral judgement of historical accounts is less probable the further it is removed from the event. As mentioned before, this work attempts to shift the historiographical trajectory of Wang Jingwei's government and Pan-Asianism, not in an effort of apology towards Japan, but to provide a more "rounded" depiction of events. Often, history is written by the "victors" and this is true in this instance.

Japanese transnationalism failed in China for multiple reasons. Simply stated, forces conflicted in a dialectic that divided Chinese nationalists during World War Two. Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi resisted Japanese occupation; Wang Jingwei and Japan tried to revitalize China within the Greater East Asia Sphere. Two sides held different aspirations for China's direction. To specify Japan's failed transnational endeavors, one must address similarities and differences

with China. The latter was the cultural forebearer of Japan and East Asia. Both societies were rooted in Confucianism.

Nonetheless, China and Japan experienced different historical developments which made supplanted Pan-Asianism unattainable. Geographically, China is much larger than the Japanese islands and had a significantly larger population. The expanse of China and volume of people alone made any nationalist dialogue impossible. For argument's sake, any re-imagining of a Chinese past for nationalist purposes was unachievable because "Chinese-ness" was defined differently in the north than it was in the south. Unifying economic, political, social, religious, linguistic, or ethnic factors were disconcerted throughout the various regions of China. No matter the extent to which Japanese intellectuals portrayed Pan-Asia as uniform, China was too large, in differing historical circumstances, and too internally diverse to fall within a Greater East Asian Sphere.

Economically and infrastructurally, China differed from Japan as well. As the twentieth century commenced, Japan was industrialized, urban, and modernized. China remained under Qing feudal rule, was rural, and not yet industrialized. Nationalist narratives spread via an educated populace and obedient citizens who believe they belong to the same "thing." Without an industrial base, universal education, centralized state, commonly accepted religion, and commonly understood language, China could not have entered the Pan-Asian fold. Wang Jingwei was Japanese educated, politically prominent, and an urban elite. Most of China was uneducated, illiterate, and rural farmers. Any form of nationalism, unless backed by totalitarian force, could not have unified China under such circumstances. Despite Chinese Communism's victory in 1949, the power structure that it imposed was not so different from the oppression of Qing rule. Wang Jingwei's Japanese-backed government, pragmatic as it was, could not have

accomplished Chinese national consolidation. With that, the same historical circumstances that were present in mid-nineteenth century Japan were not present in mid-twentieth century China. Japanese nationalism worked in Japan, but as Japan attempted to spread its brand of state-building, transnationally, it was not entirely effective.

There is a similar case in Vietnam in which Communists and other nationalist movements collided to unite a nation under the thumb of colonialism. Vietnam was also occupied by Japan, beginning in 1940. Until March 1945, Japan co-governed with Vichy France. However, in the name of Pan-Asianism and liberating Asian peoples from Western colonialism, Japanese forces usurped total control of Vietnam. As mentioned before, Japan engaged its neighbors in educational exchange and an amiable relationship between Japanese and Vietnamese nationalists emerged. Vietnamese nationalist groups like the *Dai Viet* party enjoyed support from Japanese advisors, much like Wang Jingwei. Even *Viet Minh* guerilla forces received training from Japanese officers before and after war's end.¹ After taking control of the country, Japan placed Bao Dai as emperor of Vietnam with Ngo Dinh Diem in his cabinet. Both admired Japan for its modern nation-state and the Japanese believed them to be aligned with Pan-Asianism and the liberation of Asians from Western colonialism.² The *Viet Minh* eventually gained the Vietnamese people's support and control of the country, after Japan was defeated.

Vietnam also experienced different historical circumstances than Japan, despite cultural, religious, ideological, and social similarities. For one thousand years, Vietnam and Southeast Asia struggled with colonialism from China to the North, India from the West, Japan from the

¹ Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 23-31. Bui Diem, former South Vietnamese diplomat to the U.S. recounts engaging with Japanese officials during WWII. He also adds that they worked closely with the *Dai Viet* and *Viet Minh*.

² Bui, 26.

East, and finally France beginning in the seventeenth century. Vietnam's history was wrought with intrusive powers attempting to change its culture, people, language, and beliefs. However, leading up to the 1940s, Japanese and Vietnamese intellectuals and social elites found commonalities in Confucian social structures, religious beliefs, and rhetoric through educational exchange. Like many other East Asian countries during the early twentieth century, Vietnam looked to Japan as the arbiter of modernity, post-colonialism, and state-building. Conversely and despite material desires in Southeast Asia, Japan looked to Vietnam as a member Pan-Asia that coincided with its transnational crusade against the West.

Despite cultural-educational exchange and seemingly parallel beliefs between the two countries, Japan and Vietnam only had an enemy, the West, in common. As previously mentioned, Vietnam underwent numerous foreign incursions that changed its national landscape. Japan had no contact with the world from 1603 to 1856 which allowed for an organic, national, homogenization. Given Vietnam's foreign intrusions, its people were dynamic and its feeling of "one-ness" never formed like in isolated Japan. Vietnam's component within Pan-Asia existed only in the minds of intellectuals; an urban, educated, social elite that constituted a minority in the country. The *Dai Viet* did not represent the majority of Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh exploited this. Ho's *Viet Minh* aroused Vietnam's majority rural population. His tool was communism, but his motive was national self-determination. Because of Vietnam's varied history, it could not have conformed to Japan's transnational Pan-Asia without continued oppression from foreign powers. Additionally, like Japanese atrocities committed in China, Japanese forces confiscated rice supplies from the Vietnamese population, leaving millions to starve. Ho Chi Minh gained support after recovering stolen rice and distributing it to the Vietnamese people. After the Second World War, France and the United States both faced strong nationalist fronts from 1946-

1954 and 1964-1973 respectively. Despite the Greater East Asia Sphere's failure, the *Viet Minh* adopted Pan-Asianism's liberation aspect and combatted Western incursions.

Pan-Asianism ultimately failed and "died" with Japan's defeat in 1945. Nonetheless, the legacy of the Pan-Asian narrative remained well after World War Two and affected a multitude of Asian nations colonized by Western oppressors. Pan-Asianism did not survive as Japanese architects formulated, but in the form of post-colonial movements. There were numerous wars between Western powers and Asian colonies, seeking self-determination. During the Cold War, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States all encountered significant nationalist resistance where ever they had a colonial presence or foothold. The "hottest" conflicts of the Cold War were waged over former colonies seeking independence. The Korean War (1950-1953) involved two nationalist movements at odds, between North and South. After decades of Japanese colonialism (1910-1945), Koreans were undoubtedly influenced by Japanese nationalism and Pan-Asianism. Syngman Rhee, president of South Korea (1948-1960) was educated in Japan. High ranking generals in the South Korean military were trained at Japanese military academies. Influential South Korean political and military leaders alike admired the construction of the Japanese nation-state, and partially borrowed from and admired Pan-Asian concepts.³

These few cases exemplify a lingering legacy that Japanese Pan-Asianism affected. Although Japan and its cohorts failed, ideas of East Asian self-determination succeeded. Japanese influence initiated irreversible movements against Western power. It fostered a

³ See Sygman Rhee, *The Spirit of Independence: A Primer of Korean Modernization and Reform* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000). Rhee shows admiration for Japanese modernization and blames Korea's shortfalls on Koreans themselves and expresses that Koreans should learn from the Japanese state.

dialogue of indigenous nationalism and for Asian peoples to embrace their past while joining with modernity. Japan showed its East Asian neighbors that nations could be formed by combining the “old” with the “new.” Since Japan emerged victorious over a European power in the Russo-Japanese War (1905), Asian nations including Vietnam, China, Korea, Malaysia, and India looked to Japan as a beacon of hope. Subsequently, during the Second World War, in order to fulfill their long-term strategic goals of opposition against the West, Japan formed a cohesive vision of an Asian continent governed by Asians and inspired by the nationalistic words of the Emperor. Japanese ideology and Pan-Asian nationalism shaped, improved, and instructed Asian nationalist movements in conjunction with previously existing, indigenous patriotism. Pan-Asianism found cohesion and direction in the struggle against Western oppression and for the liberation of its people through various research institutes implanted by the Japanese. Japan’s occupation provided a framework for their neighbors to see themselves as a nation and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere offered a channel for which self-determination of Asian peoples could be realized. Japan encouraged the political development and evolution of nationalist parties by protecting indigenous leaders from Western incarceration. East Asian national armies inherited a military structure influenced by the principals of the *bushido* code (justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity, honor, and loyalty) and jungle warfare tactics from Japanese officers.⁴

In conclusion, Japan acted as the channel through which Pan-Asian nationalism took root and was realized in a post-colonial world. From a functional standpoint, Japan established schools, infrastructure, manufacturing, banking, and militaries wherever it colonized. This

⁴ Bui Diem, *In the Jaws of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 41. Account of Japanese colonel remaining in Vietnam after WWII. “With our help [Japanese officers] you will become Vietnamese samurai [to trainees of the *Viet Minh*].”

allowed the colonized the means to mobilize for their own national movements. Japan's ignition of the nationalist "cannon" was witnessed during the Cold War as Western powers bore the brunt of Pan-Asian nationalism in their futile attempts to grasp their depleting colonial holdings in East Asia. The Japanese occupation of China and Vietnam affected many aspects of nationalism. Military, cultural, societal, intellectual, and ideological models from Japan all served to instruct China and Vietnam on Pan-Asian nationalism and unify against the West. Those same models were residual and evident well after Japanese troops withdrew from their occupied territories. The Japanese occupation of East Asia set into motion a nationalist trend, one unique to East Asia and different from Western forms of nationalism, for the duration of the twentieth century.

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