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Ethnos (*minzoku*) and Ethnology (*minzokushugi*) in Manchukuo

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Ethnos and Ethnology in Manchukuo*

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of nationality or *minzoku* which was central to the ideology of Japan's wartime empire, was developed most fully in Manchukuo. Manchukuo has the notorious distinction of being the first full-blown instance of a new turn in imperialism that continues to this day. The goal of this new imperialism was not to produce and re-produce the difference between colonizer and colonized as in most nineteenth-century European colonialism, nor was it to assimilate the colonized. Rather, the new imperialists sought to create or maintain formally sovereign *nation-states* and nationalities with political and economic structures that resembled their own. This project signified a transformation in the strategic conception of the periphery as part of an organic formation designed to attain global supremacy for the imperial power. The goal was to utilize the peripheral states as dependencies and client states through military control and other forms of subordination. Japan, the Soviet Union, the US and to some extent, inter-war Germany, represented the new imperialists.

This imperialism tended to form a *regional* or (geographically dispersed) *bloc* type formation promoting economic autarky as a means for the imperialist power to gain global supremacy or advantage. In this formation, while benefit to the metropole continues to be the rationale for domination and economic exploitation, benefit does not necessarily derive from transferring primary wealth to it, but often entails the industrialization of the puppet or client-state. Indeed, it is not necessarily in the interest of the imperial center to have these states economically or institutionally backward. Thus in several ways, the new imperialism tended to be related to the principle of nationalism or federated nationalism which extends the benefits and pains of creating an integrated, competitive entity, *but unevenly*, over the whole. By the same token, the imperial formation is often ripped apart by enduring nationalist

* Essay prepared for Japanese publication, "*Manshu ni okeru minzoku to minzokugaku*" (Ethnos and Ethnology in Manchukuo, trans. Uchida Jun) in Narita Ryuichi et al, ed. *Shihai to Boryoku Ajia Taihei Senso* (vol. 7 on Domination and Violence in the series, Asia Pacific War) Iwanami Shoten, 2006.

prejudices fostered by earlier and simultaneous processes of nation-building, especially within the imperialist society.

The new imperialists also espoused anti-colonial ideologies and emphasized cultural or ideological similarities with the dependent populations. The ideologies, such as socialism or capitalist democracy, served as the basis of “alliance” within the bloc formation. In Manchukuo, Pan-Asianism built allegedly around Okakura Tenshin’s notion of “Asia is One” served as the ideological framework around which to develop the new empire. During the Pacific War, this ideal was extended to the notion of the East Asian League and the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere. At the core of inter-war Pan-Asianism was the idea of the alliance of nationalities or *minzoku* in Asia. I will explore the role of *minzoku* and *minzokugaku* in the ideology and practice of Pan-Asianism in Manchukuo.

The category *minzoku* or nationality is a keyword of the twentieth century and like many other such keywords, the more important its social role, the more capacious and laden it becomes with contrary meanings. I will try to identify the contradictory configuration of its meanings in the middle decades of the twentieth century in Manchukuo. In the English language there is no necessary association between anthropology and nationality, although the close association between anthropology and empire is well known. In East Asia, by contrast, and in considerable part because of the Soviet influence, the two terms became closely associated and anthropology came to play a major role in the production of knowledge about nationality.

MANCHURIA AND MANCHUKUO

From the acquisition of rights after the Russo-Japanese war until the late 1920s, Japan dominated the northeast region of China. Relying on its dominant power which was secured through unequal treaties such as the “21 Demands”, Japanese economic interests in the region expanded rapidly. Although the bulk of the Japanese population and military power in Manchuria was concentrated in the Kwantung peninsula and the railway zone,¹ the establishment of railroads linking the southern port of Newchwang to regions as far north as

¹ Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904–1932* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 414.

Harbin—and the opening of several ports in the first decade of the twentieth century led to rapid economic growth and Japanese interests. By 1927, 85% of Japanese foreign investment was in China, and of its Chinese investment 80% was invested in Manchuria. Its investment in the South Manchurian Railway Company in 1920 alone was 440 million yen. By 1932, Japan's share of the total industrial capital in Manchuria was 64%, while the Chinese share was 28%.²

Japanese dominance was, however, heavily dependent on the alliance with the apex warlord of the region, Zhang Zuolin. While Zhang did not represent nationalist forces, he had imperial ambitions in Beijing which made him ultimately unreliable. His various military adventures and misadventures on the mainland alienated both his Japanese supporters and the civilian politicians (his campaigns tended to bankrupt the provincial treasuries). Regional Chinese resistance to his campaigns to entangle Manchuria in affairs south of the Great Wall led to the movement known as the *baojing anmin* (“preserve the borders and secure the people”). This was a movement for regional autonomy, but the Japanese interpreted it as opposition to union with China. Zhang was murdered by a Japanese officer in 1928. But his death merely exacerbated the political situation, because his son Zhang Xueliang—surrounded by a group of nationalist intellectuals and bureaucrats—was even less interested in the Japanese and expressed his allegiance to the Kuomintang. This was when the officers of the Kwantung army precipitated the Manchurian Incident of 9/18/1931.

Meanwhile, during the 1920s, leaders of the SMR and the Kwantung army were developing new approaches to Japanese imperialism in the area. Military analysts like Major Koiso Kuniaki, who would later become chief of staff of the Kwantung army, became convinced during the course of WW I that any struggle for military and economic supremacy would involve a long drawn out struggle and it would be imperative to develop a zone of self-sufficiency. Thus was born the idea of “strategic autarky” in which resource mobilization was conceived within a regional rather than merely national framework. For Koiso, the idea of autarky implied an alliance: the Chinese would supply land, resources, and labor, and the Japanese would furnish technology and capital. He was mindful that a genuine autarky would involve some sacrifice of Japanese interests for the sake of the whole.³

² Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911–1928: China, Japan, and the Manchurian Idea* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1977), 7-8.

³ Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *Making of Japanese Manchuria*, 214–23.

From a more strictly economic perspective, Matsuoka Yosuke, who argued the Japanese case for the independence of Manchukuo from China at the League of Nations in 1933, best exemplified the strategy of the new imperialism. In the 1920s, when he served on the board of directors of the South Manchurian Railroad Company, he developed the idea of autarky by creating a relationship of dependent alliance with Zhang Zuolin; and Matsuoka's ideas were embraced at the time by the Kwantung army. Through a series of loans for railroad construction and other projects, Matsuoka sought to transform Zhang's administration into a client-state. At the same time, according to Tak Matsusaka, Matsuoka's vision transcended the old imperialist game of dealing with native allies merely to gain concessions and privileges. Rather Matsuoka's goal was first to bring the regional government, principally through financial ties, firmly under Japanese control and then subsequently to pursue economic policies for developing Manchuria as a whole. Development was to take place not by excluding Chinese and others but by encouraging them to contribute to the prosperity of the region. The Japanese (who were presumed to be the principal actors and natural leaders of this effort), could only benefit from this general development.⁴

When the officers of the Kwantung army precipitated the Manchurian Incident, they may not have been fully cognizant of these new strategies and trends. Key figures like Ishiwara Kanji were influenced by a militant ideology developed by Okawa Shumei and others which combined Japanese nationalism with the idea of the inevitable confrontation between the East and the West. The cooperation of China and Manchuria under Japanese leadership was necessary for success in this holy war or righteous duty (*seigi*), but Ishiwara did not necessarily conceive of the relationship in other than nationalist terms.⁵ It was representatives of the Japanese settler communities in the Kwantung peninsula who played a crucial role in transforming his views.⁶ Buddhist thinkers such as Kasagi Ryōmei of the Daiyūhōkai and the Manchurian Youth League (*Manshū Seinen Renmei*), a para-military outfit, were particularly sensitive to the rise of Chinese nationalism. These groups were painfully aware that Japanese interests in Manchuria were doomed without some kind of compact with the Chinese

⁴ Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *Making of Japanese Manchuria*, 285.

⁵ Yamamuro Shinichi, *Kimera: Manshūkoku no shōzō* (Chimera: A Portrait of Manzhouguo) (Tokyo: Chūō koronsha, 1993), 42–48.

⁶ Komagome Takeshi, *Shokuminchi Teikoku Nihon no Bunka Tōgō* (The Cultural Integration of the Japanese Colonial Empire) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 236–37.

communities or a framework of Sino-Japanese co-existence. Under the leadership of Yamaguchi Jūji, the League developed the idea of kyōwa or co-operation between minzoku or nationalities of East Asia and the rejection of colonialist attitudes. This idea would ultimately incarnate in a fascistic mass organization in Manchukuo known as Kyōwakai or Xiehehui and translated into English as the Concordia Society.

These groups and perhaps most of all, Tachibana Shiraki who served as a point of contact between the settlers and the Kwantung army persuaded Ishiwara and his associates, Itagaki Seishiro and Doihara Kenji, that in order to attain their goals and create an industrial-resource base in Manchuria, the military had to develop an alliance with key groups among the Chinese. Pan-Asianism thus came to serve as the basis of this alliance and “economic bloc.” Ishiwara allegedly became a convert to the pan-Asianist idea of the formal equality of Asian nations. He found no contradiction between viewing the alliance as representing the supposed difference between Asian ideals and Western imperialism or viewing it as a means in a final war for global dominance.⁷

The idea of an autarkic Japan-Manchuria bloc was influenced by models of regional autarky in fascist Europe but was understood within the civilization discourse of pan-Asianism. By the mid-1930s the bloc idea had helped to produce the East Asian League (*Tōa renmei*) and the East Asian Community (*Tōa kyōdōtai*), and still later the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere (*Dai-Tōa Kyōeiken*). Indeed, figures associated with the propagation of these institutions were critical of Nazi theories of racial superiority and emphasized cooperation with the Chinese in a regional alliance under Japanese leadership.⁸ Of course, commitment to the idea of an alliance—and even to the notion that Japan should renounce extraterritoriality in Asian countries—hardly meant that the Japanese did not think themselves intrinsically superior or that these Asian nations need not accept the leadership of Japan.

⁷ Mark R. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 167, 281, 335. For Tachibana see Lincoln Li, *The China Factor in Modern Japanese Thought: The Case of Tachibana Shiraki, 1991-1945*. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1996, 51.

⁸ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Reinventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 97–101.

Indeed, once Manchukuo was established, the superiority of Japanese power was steadfastly maintained. To note a few examples: although Chinese and others may have occupied high political office, they were always supervised by a Japanese official and the chain of command ended up in the Kwantung Army. The Manchukuo government and Japanese houses which controlled 72% of total invested capital, made it hard for Chinese capital to penetrate the modern sector. The wage differential between Chinese and Japanese workers in factories in 1939, for instance, was 29 yuan to 100 yuan respectively and 19% of the land given to Japanese agricultural settlers was virtually seized from Chinese cultivators.⁹

Nonetheless, the “alliance” formed with Chinese groups --which was, of course, always subject to the military sword hanging over its head—was underpinned by two institutions. One of these was the large number of redemptive societies (*kyūsei*) which expressed popular and syncretic Chinese religiosity and ranged from deeply esoteric sects to modernizing Confucian moralists. We will not have much opportunity to explore these groups in this paper but it is important to note that these groups --whose numbers in China as a whole encompassed perhaps several tens of millions--had suffered persecution especially under the Qing and KMT rule and welcomed the pan-Asian traditions rhetoric of the early Manchukuo regime such as “*wangdao*” and “*letu*”. The regime quickly realized the value of these groups and sought to bring them into the public sphere and convert them into civic organizations closely supervised by the puppet state. A group like the Morality Society (or the Daodehui which once had Kang Youwei as its President) expanded rapidly in Manchukuo during the 1930s and counted about eight million followers which represented close to one-fourth of the population.

The second and more official institution was the Concordia Association which as we have seen, emerged from the pan-Asian ideas of the Manchurian Youth League. The Association made the rather outrageous claim that the new state represented not merely a nation, but one in advance of most in the world. As a new type of multi-national Asian state, Manchukuo was not only supposed to reject exploitation and the reproduction of difference between ruler and ruled, but it was also designed to counter the homogenization of differences produced by nationalism itself which had led to insoluble conflicts in the early twentieth century. By allegedly granting different peoples or nationalities their rights and self-respect under a state

⁹ Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern*, 2003, 67-70.

structure, it saw itself as a nation in the mode of the Soviet union of nationalities or today's multi-cultural nations. In Tachibana's original plan for a national assembly, the apportionment of seats was to follow the ratio: Han 7, Manchu 3, Korean 2, Muslim 2, Mongol 2, Japanese 7, and Russian 1. Although the Kwantung army never permitted the national assembly to materialize, a general principle of representation was maintained within the bureaucracy and for mobilization purposes.¹⁰

Several political analysts in Manchukuo drew their ideas of nationality from the Soviet model. Tominaga Tadashi, the author of *Manshu no minzoku*, who surveyed the different modes of political control notes that the early Soviet policy towards national self-determination was a very successful one. It was a policy that fulfilled the goals of federalism and protected minority rights, while at the same time it strengthened the power of the Soviet state and the military particularly with regards to separatism in the old Tsarist empire and British influence in Afghanistan, Persia and Turkey. Thus, he notes admiringly, nationalism was not suppressed but utilized positively for the goals of the socialist state.¹¹

By the mid-30s, the Concordia Association was purged of its original leadership and made into a fascistic mass organization of the army and government.¹² It became less the means of ethno-national, cultural or occupational representation but rather of their surveillance and mobilization. Although it enrolled a majority of the population through its various related associations and the distribution of rations during the Pacific War, ideologically, it came to command little or no allegiance by this time. Nonetheless, both the theory of nationality and the organization of people by nationality remained central to the political process in Manchukuo and this doctrine was extended to other parts of Asia during the war.

THE CONCEPTION OF MINZOKU

Japanese ideas of ethnography in the late 19th century were influenced by German and Russian conceptions related to the eastern expansion of the Tsarist empire into Siberia. The notion of a "people" or "nationality" that would later feed into the political discourse of

¹⁰ See for instance the authorless and limited circulation publication entitled "*Soren no minzoku seisaku*" (*Soviet nationality Policy*). See also Komagome, *Shokuminchi Teikoku Nippon no Bunka Tōgō*, 262)

¹¹ Tominaga Tadashi, *Manshūkoku no minzoku mondai* Shinkyō, 1943, 43-45.

¹² Peattie 171, 174

minzoku, emerged in the academic field of ethnology under the circumstances of state-building. The ethnography of the small groups and tribes was driven not only by the urge to describe them, but also to control and tax them.¹³

The founders of Japanese ethnography such as Tsuboi Shōgorō and Torii Ryūzō were influenced by, among others, Russian ethnographers who tended to view the different Siberian groups as “ethnic groups” (“Volker” in German, “narody” or “natsional’nosti” in Russian) bound together by ties of blood, language and custom. Thus, the multiply connected and incompletely determinate ties (or soft boundaries) of various Siberian groups were, based upon the new categories of linguistics and culture, re-drawn, homogenized and re-produced as ethnological wholes. As Tessa Morris-Suzuki has observed, this was none other than the vision that “lay at the heart of nineteenth century European nationalism.”¹⁴

As George Stocking has shown, this Herderian notion of culture was never really distinct from a racial understanding of culture. There was never a direct transition from civilization to culture as a relativist, de-racialized notion. When nineteenth century anthropologists depicted peoples as different, they were irremediably and irredeemably so. It was ironically the evolutionist view of civilization which perhaps represented a more progressive vision because it spelt out a view of humanity as a unified species whose parts occupied different stages of development, but were capable of education and transformation.¹⁵

The evolution of anthropology in Japan at the turn of the 19th century reflected these trends and developed some novel paths from them. Originally, *jinruigaku*, for Tsuboi Shōgorō was the study of a fundamentally indivisible humanity even if it was evolutionist. Backward customs existed both outside the nation and within it: among the Ainu, Okinawans, the *burakumin* and different regions and levels of Japanese society as much as elsewhere; and,

¹³ Han F. Vermeulen "Anthropology in Colonial Contexts: The Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733-1743) and the Danish-German Arabia Expedition (1761-1767)," in Jan van Bremen and Akitoshi Shimizu, eds. *Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia and Oceania*, Grant Evans, general editor. Anthropology of Asia Series. Richmond Surrey, U.K: Curzon Press, 1999. 29.

¹⁴ Tessa Morris-Suzuki. "Through Ethnographic Eyes." 14-15.

¹⁵ See Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* Routledge, Oxon, 1995. 43-47. The later twentieth century obscuring of race in the notion of culture or *jinshu* or *minzoku* appears to have been common in Japan as well. See Michael Weiner, "The Invention of Identity: Race and Nation in Pre-war Japan" in Frank Dikotter ed., *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1997, 98.

fundamentally, this backwardness could be overcome. Tsuboi was critical of Western anthropologists' identification of whole peoples and races (*jinshū* and *minzoku*) as destined to be forever different and backward; it reflected an effort to impose their superiority over the people they colonized.¹⁶

However, with the surge of nationalist pride after the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, Tsuboi became more favorably disposed to *jinshugaku* and *minzokugaku* as the study of peoples and nationalities. A re-figuration of anthropology began to take place towards the end of the Meiji period. Tsuboi's successor, Torii Ryūzō, declared the separation of (anthropology) *jinruigaku* from (ethnology) *jinshugaku* or *minzokugaku* and proposed the field of *Tōyō jinshugaku* or *Tōyō minzokugaku* referring to the ethnology of the Eastern or Oriental races. While anthropology was the study of the human species in its natural or biological dimension, ethnology was the study of the genealogy of a race (*jinshū no keizu*) and the history of a nationality (*minzoku no rekishi*). In other words, ethnology covered both the record of a nationality and the wider roots of the race. Torii's concern with the wider roots becomes apparent a few paragraphs down when he warns his compatriots that by neglecting ethnology they leave the field of East Asia (*Tōyō*) to the Europeans at their peril. For instance, the recent European archaeological discoveries in Chinese Turkestan which suggest that the early peoples there may have been of Persian stock would encourage Europeans to extend their research of the Indo-German race to East Asia. It would be a short step for them to move into regions such as Tibet, Mongolia and Manchuria. Torii therefore urges his fellow ethnologists to study the regions surrounding Japan under a single system of East Asian ethnology and archaeology.¹⁷

Indeed, the interest in East Asian nationalities was closely tied to the spread of the Japanese empire and to the theory of the mixed origins of the Japanese people. According to the basic tenets of this theory—which had several variants-- the superiority of the Japanese race derived not from its purity and singular origins within the archipelago, but its history of assimilating and mixing with different racial groups. Tsuboi had laid the foundations of this theory. Following the Russo-Japanese war, he famously declared that the superiority of the

¹⁶ Sakano Toru “Kojikano seijigaku—Tsuboi Shogoro to Meiji jinruigaku no kiseki” (Amateur Politics—Traces of Tsuboi Shogoro and Meiji Anthropology) *Shisō* 907: 167.

¹⁷ Torii, Ryūzō (1975) “Jinruigaku to jinshūgaku (aruiwa minzokugaku) o bunri subeshi” Anthropology and Ethnology Should be Separate” *Torii Ryūzō Zenshū* (Collective Works of Torii Ryūzō vol.1. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha. (p480-483).

Japanese race over the Russian was founded, not upon the purity of the Japanese race, but upon its mixed character.¹⁸

At the same time, as ethnology became increasingly concerned with the wider roots of the Japanese, Tsuboi, Torii and others also began to support the distinction between a native ethnography (*minzoku, kyōdo kenkyū*) identified with the study of Japanese folklore and rural studies and the study of non-Japanese peoples as ethnology (*minzokugaku* and *jinshugaku*). The development of native ethnography is of course most prominently identified with Yangita Kunio's native place and folklore movement in which Tsuboi, Shiratori and Torii all participated. Thus as the distinction between a native ethnography (*minzoku*) and the study of outsiders congealed, anthropology as the study of an indivisible humanity finally fell away.¹⁹

A third, new conception of *minzoku* emerged globally towards the end of World War I. With the Soviet revolution, Woodrow Wilson's call for national self-determination, the emergence of the League of Nations and other multi-national organizations, the idea of "nationality" began to shed some of its racist baggage. The idea took hold that the entire globe was divisible into different nationalities and the nation's people were the *agents of their history*. Histories of nationalities came to symbolize the growing self-awareness of an originary or holistic people and the realization of their destiny in a modern future. The national narrative of a self-aware subject or agent of history laid claims to rights that derived from a discourse of nationality rights in the French Revolution. Soviet ideas of nationality further sought to de-racialize it and give it a radical anti-imperialist and emancipatory character with claims, if not to outright sovereignty, at least to self-governance.

Professional anthropologists were slower than other sectors of society to deploy the new Japanese discourse of *minzoku* as nationality rights. Radicals, reformers, colonial bureaucrats, Mantetsu researchers and popular discourse of pan-Asianism were much quicker to adopt it into their political vision and strategies. We see an early version of this conception in the little-known vision of a utopian state of Koryo in the Manchurian-Korean border region around 1920. Conceived as an alliance with disaffected Korean elites, Japanese Asianists such as Uchida Ryohei and Suenaga Misao formed the Isshinkai to create a polity combining

¹⁸ Oguma, Eiji, *A Genealogy of 'Japanese' Self-images* (Tr. of Tan'itsu *Minzoku Shinwa no Kigen*) Translated by David Askew Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002. 13, 53, 63.

¹⁹ Sakano, 2000, 169-172.

ancient Confucian ideals with contemporary ideas of equality of citizenship among Koreans, Japanese, Chinese, and Asian Russians. Given the strong nationalism of the Japanese groups, one cannot but also see it as an expression of Japanese expansion. But in several ways it prefigured some of the theoretically radical ideas of Manchukuo (1932–1945) such as the Concordia.²⁰

However, the concept of *minzoku* as nationality rights continued to retain the holistic and exclusionary dimension that it had earlier developed even outside the German context where it was explicitly identified with race. According to Michael Weiner, while the term *minzoku* tended to replace *jinshu* from the 1920s, the concept of *minzoku* itself had a significant physiological component through the early post-war era, expressed in the triumvirate of common culture, common history and *common blood*.²¹

The relationship between culture and historical affiliation versus racial or other forms of exclusionism in the notion of nationality or *minzoku* is a complex one that needs to be understood not only historically, but theoretically. The fundamental form of nationality is the “self-other” distinction. While this is a distinction common to many types of societies, it becomes particularly salient in a competitive global economy where mobilizing nation-states are major actors in this competition. During much of the twentieth century, the modern nation-state required the nation’s people—as the agent of history – to be constantly renovated and mobilized for its domestic and globally competitive projects. National identity reflected the interiorized contract of citizenship: the promise of rights and rewards for duties, but typically in a competitive framework with the Other. Mobilization in modern states turned upon integrating interest and coercion with identity—as holistic and exclusive.*

²⁰ Hasegawa Yūichi. “Taishō chūki tairiku kokka e no imeiji—’Daikōraikoku’ (Dagaoli, Koryo) kōsō to sono shūhen” (The image of a mainland nation in the mid-Taishō era—the conception of the “Great Koryo nation” and the area around it). *Kokusai Seiji* 71 (1982), 95.

²¹ Weiner, 1977, 98-99.

* For a fuller explication see my *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* Rowman and Littlefield, 2003. For a more recent comparison of Japanese imperialism with Western ones, see my “Nationalism, Imperialism, Federalism and the Case of Manchukuo: A Response to Anthony Pagden” in *Common Knowledge* 12.1 (Winter 2006), pub. Dec 2005.

To sum up: Japanese *minzoku* discourse developed a complex structure which came to distinguish three levels that were separate but mutually dependent. One of these was native ethnology of the Yamato *minzoku* or folklore, the second was *tōyō minzokugaku* including Koreans and the groups in northeast and southeast Asia. The third was the later notion of *minzoku* as nationality rights. While the first level became significantly appropriated by the imperial ideology of the family-state and formed a hard core of racist nationalism, the other two became tied to the Japanese empire, adapting to its different and changing needs. Oguma Eiji has shown the mixed origins doctrine--with which the anthropology profession was closely connected-- had an imperialist goal, but this ethnology of empire was based upon a rhetorical or theoretical identification with the colonized. As is well known, this peculiarity had to do with the historical ties with the very East Asian peoples that the Japanese sought to colonize and to the Japanese self-image as victims of Western imperialism. While those who advocated the mixed origins doctrine were frequently opposed to the ancestral purity argument of the Yamato race, it was the institutionalized separation of nativist ethnology from *tōyō minzokugaku* that sustained the imperialist character of the discourse.

Just as the construction of the Yamato *minzoku* was significant for mobilization of Japanese nationalism, the other two conceptions of *minzoku* were also deployed —much more ambivalently--to develop some measure of identity and mobilization within the Japanese empire. The rhetoric of Japanese imperial formation increasingly emphasized similarities rather than differences between the imperial power and the ruled *also* because mobilization of the empire's population and resources became a vital part of the arsenal and strategy of global competition. Precisely, what kinds of formal relations among nationalities would prevail in the colonies and in the puppet states of the wartime empire would be debated till the end. But all the different projects would be undermined by the hardening militarism of the racist Yamato nationalism.

ASIAN NATIONALITIES AND THE NATION-STATE IN MANCHUKUO

As noted, the Concordia Association deployed the theory of nationality for purposes of the new state. But in practice, nationality was neither easy to mobilize nor contain. The Concordia Association closely resembled contemporary “totalitarian parties” in Europe. The leaders refrained from calling it a party precisely because such an appellation smacked of too much partisanship. It enrolled all officials and government functionaries, including teachers,

as well as important figures in society. All youth between 16 and 19 were compulsorily enrolled from 1937; and by 1943, it counted about 10% of the population (compared to 5% for the CCP). Members often wore uniforms and served as propaganda agents whether through film, youth training or organizing meetings while also undertaking lower level administrative functions, such as surveillance and even labor mobilization during the Pacific War.²²

Like its fascist counterparts, the Concordia Association was corporatist, anti-communist, anti-capitalist, and sought to overcome class divisions by organizing people through ethnic nationalities as well as occupational communities, while promoting a *dirigiste* economy. But the association was distinctive in representing Asian nationalities—Mongols, Manchus, Hui Muslims, Koreans (who together with the Japanese and white Russians accounted for about 10% of the population), as well as the majority Chinese—and their traditions. Many ethnographic and historical studies of these nationalities were conducted through the research wing of the Association and the government such as the Ministry of Education and Culture (*wenjiaobu*), the Security Bureau (*zhianbu tiaochake*), the Minshengbu and Jianguo University.

The commitment to nationality often meant supporting the religious leadership among these peoples: Mongol lamas, Manchu and Daur shamans, Muslim *ahongs*, Buddhist monks, and Confucian moralists. The regime's control of local society was enhanced by the work of association units established within, for example, Manchu villages, Hui mosques, and the Chinese community self-surveillance system (*baojia*). Thus the nationality policy came to play an important role in maintaining both the corporatist, fascistic character of the regime and its claim to legitimacy based upon adherence to the “kingly way.”

At the same time, the Concordia Association had been founded to realize the modern goals of *jianguo* and there was a powerful constituency within it composed of intellectuals and technocrats among Chinese and the settler Japanese community as well as the younger generation from the ethnic communities. In practice the very different programs and interests pursued by the two different groups led to many tensions and conflicts that leave us with a view of Manchukuo as a schizophrenic society polarized rather than harmonized by the twin

²² McCormack 1991: 105-124.

imperatives to modernize and proclaim its essential Asianism. Mongol youth demanded modern education and the elimination of the power of the lamas; Chinese supporters were fiercely divided between those who wanted the restoration of the emperor and those who opposed it. Wartime propaganda activists in the Association were frustrated by their inability to mobilize redemptive societies for wartime work. The contradiction reflected in particular the tensions of an artificial nation-state dominated by an imperial power. The inability to construct a truly independent nation-state led it to cling to constituencies that would have to be gradually overcome in the process of national modernization.

A second problem with nationalism related to the problem of irredentism, or what Rogers Brubaker has called the bond between homeland nationalism and a minority in another nation. This was a central problem in German nationalism as it sought to spread into the *Grossraum* (or wider area) and later, Hitler's *Lebensraum*, and became a trigger for German expansion.²³ The theorists in Manchukuo were keen to distance their conceptions, however, from Nazi ideas. Tominaga Tadashi acknowledged that a new basis for an international order required a strong state in a region and proudly cited Carl Schmitt's reference to Germany and Japan as such leading states. However, the exclusivist nationalism of Germany had to be appreciated in the exceptional circumstances of its suppression by the Treaty of Versailles, whereas, in Manchukuo and Asia in general, nationalism was a positive and anti-Western force that the Japanese simply could not afford to alienate.²⁴

Encouraging the nationalities in Manchukuo, however, could provoke irredentism and lead to anti-Japanese nationalism. Tominaga is most concerned about Chinese and Korean nationalism. He points in particular to the contradiction towards Koreans between Japanese colonial policy which advocated assimilation and the Manchukuo policy of independent nationality. Regarding the Chinese, he is particularly attentive to how the pro-tradition dimension of Chinese nationalism among intellectuals was, unlike for instance Indian or Arab nationalism, quite weak. He was concerned that the strategy of appealing to traditionalists would not work. Writing in 1943, Tominaga asserts repeatedly that alienating nationalist movements in Asia will doom the Japanese project.

²³ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1996. See especially 107-134.

²⁴ Tominaga, 1943, 47-48.

Both problems—of traditionalism and irredentism—suggested that nationality policy created as many difficulties as it solved for the state. Tominaga suggested somewhat weakly that it was theoretically possible to sustain cultural nationalism without letting it become political (rather reminiscent of ethnicity), but conceded that it would be difficult. Inevitably, these tensions led to the growing power of the state over the nationalities and the rhetoric of *kenkoku* began to eclipse that of *minzoku kyowa*. The problem was justified philosophically by anonymous Hegelian dialecticians in the flagship Jianguo University who grappled with this relationship in discussing the relevance of the Soviet model of nationalities to Manchukuo.

“All nationalities in their life-worlds (*seken seikatsu*) must progress from the simple to the complex, from the unenlightened to the enlightened. The organizations, institutions, and culture of the various people express the spirit of universal citizenship (*read, state*) in form; but it is the special national character that determines the content. The objective existence of spirit is not exhausted (by this content); but it is external and moves from the outside to the inside. In the process, the institutions, organizations, and culture accept spirit, and national culture becomes the basis for the realization of spirit.”²⁵

Although it is well-known that the Manchukuo experiment with nationality deeply influenced the ideas of Co-prosperity, the latter were not identical to those of Tominaga and Manchukuo theorists generally. In the Nationality Research Institute (*Minzoku Kenkyūjō*), which was set up in the early 1940s and employed a large number of ethnologists working on different parts of the Japanese wartime empire, the professional view of nationality did seek to distinguish itself from racial or biological conceptions. Nonetheless, Nazi ideas of ethnic nationality and organic totality were particularly influential upon its leaders such as Takata Yasuma and Oka Masao, who argued for the creation of a single ethnic East Asian nation as the basis of Japan’s New Order. This view was closer to Ozaki Hotsumi’s notion of the East Asia League which also sought to create a *Gemeinschaft* communal body, than it was to Ishiwara’s *Tōa renmei* or Tominaga’s union of nationalities. Indeed, Nakano Seiichi, the successor to Takata

25. *Soren no minzoku seisaku*, 1–2.

rejected the Soviet principle of ethnic national self-determination, which Tominaga cherished as having been the most successful in integrating the needs of the state with that of alliance.²⁶

THE SUPPLEMENT OF RACE IN MINZOKU

To be sure, cultural nationalisms—under a strong state leadership—were not the only expression of *minzoku* in Manchukuo either. The older racial theory of mixed origins of the Japanese played a role as well, but it had a specific function in the puppet state. The Soviet influenced nationality rights policies of the state were designed, in part, to neutralize the Han Chinese. Negatively, they gave minority nationalities a theoretically equivalent status to the Han majority; and positively, by showcasing Chinese moral and spiritual traditions such as Confucianism and redemptive religions as the emblems of this state, they were designed to incorporate the Han Chinese as a junior partner in a multi-national state. There was also a concurrent—or supplementary-- tendency to deny or pre-empt Chinese sovereignty claims to the region and indirectly lay the Japanese claim to it. It was ethnology as discourse--in its academic and non-academic forms--that played a major role in the development of this narrative. It came to be expressed in the theory of Ural-Altai peoples.

The Ural Altaic hypothesis, popular first in Europe and Russia in the 19th century and in Japan by the turn of the century, became paradigmatic of Japanese ethnological discourse in the early 20th century. Fragments of language and religious practices were systematized into a theory of common racial origins of a vast group of peoples including the Turks, the Mongols and the Tungus. Torii and Shiratori appealed to the "Ural-Altai hypothesis" in the 1890s to demonstrate Japan's roots in northeast Asia even while constructing Japan's superiority over other members of this family.²⁷ *

²⁶ Kevin M. Doak, "Building National Identity through Ethnicity: Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 27,1(Winter 2001): 27. 28. For the Manchurian anthropological profession, see Nakao Katsumi, "Shokuminchi no minzokugaku--Manshu minzokugakkai no katsudo" (Colonial ethnology--the activities of the Ethnological Association of Manchuria) in *Heremesu* 1994. 12 vol 52 135-143.

²⁷ Ōtsuka Kazuyoshi. "Shiberia—Nihon ni okeru minzoku kenkyu," in *Nihon minzokugaku no genzai*, ed. Joseph Kriner (Tokyo: Shin'yosha, 1996); Kawamura Minato. "*Daitoa minzokugaku*" no kyojitsu (The truths and falsehoods of "Great East Asian folklore") (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996), 76; Hyung-il Pai. "Japanese Anthropology and the Discovery of Pre-historic 'Korea'," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* (Essays in Honor of K.C. Chang) 1 (1999), 366; and Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 84-93. Tanaka, Stefan. *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993: 88, 92.

In Manchukuo, the "Ural-Altai hypothesis" led to the notion of a Tungusic or pan-North Asian people, as a great Asiatic people constructed in the mirror image of the Indo-European people. The notion of a common or closely related family and social structures among the Tungusic peoples was frequently invoked to suggest a unified cultural foundation for Manchukuo. Writer after writer, and not only those writing in an official or semi-official capacity, stressed the commonality of the Tungusic race and the place of Manchuria as the original homeland of the Tungusic peoples.²⁸ In the Japanese ethnic classifications prevalent in Manchuria, the Japanese and Koreans represented the Southern Tungus; the original Shandong peoples, the Yellow River Tungus, the Daur and Solons, represented the Mongol Tungus; the Manchus, Goldi (the Fishskin Tartars), the Manchurian Tungus, and Oroqen, represented the Siberian Tungus.²⁹

Given that the Japanese regarded themselves as the southern branch of the Tungusic peoples, the obvious effect of this argument was, by means of a racial logic, to give Japanese rule an anthropogenetic claim in Manchuria. The discursive landscape in which Japanese ethnographers elaborated their depictions of peoples in Manchuria called for the imbrication of race and culture. Where the racial principle could not be stretched adequately to frame the community, an allegedly common culture was invoked as a supplement to race. The various non-Han peoples were classified as Tungusic and their cultural practices were compared not only with each other, showing various degrees of relationship, but also with the Japanese themselves. Thus, for instance, the Koreans were said to be linguistically and culturally very close to the Japanese, especially to the "ancient Japanese culture", and although the Chinese influence on the elite was very strong, the ordinary people had strong Tungusic traditions in their family structure and traditions.³⁰

* For details of the "Ural-Altai hypothesis" in the 19th and early 20th century and a devastating critique of its assumed relationships between linguistic and racial origins, see Shirokogoroff, 1936. Shirokogoroff makes the telling suggestion that it is remarkable how the centrality of this whole discussion in Japan diverted attention from another source of the Japanese lexicon, the Chinese language (389). It is evident that Japanese researchers in Manchuria who so admired Shirokogoroff were ignorant of, or chose to ignore, this piece. Unconnected to these exposures, Shiratori himself renounced the Ural Altaic and Tungus theory of the mixed nation soon after the annexation of Korea. After the Manchurian Incident, he opposed the idea that the unity of Japan, Korea and Manchuria lay in this theory of common origins (Oguma 241, 257).

²⁸ Tomonaga, 1943, 60-65.

²⁹ Nagata Uzumaro. *Manshu ni okeru Oronjun no kenkyu* (Studies of the Elunchun in Manchuria), vol. 1. Xinjing: Zhianbu sanmouji tiaochake (Investigative Division of the Security Bureau of the General Staff), 1939, 4.

³⁰ Tomonaga 1943, 58-60.

Some scholars, such as Oyama Hiko'ichi, a professor of Jianguo University in Xinjing, focused on the *gemeinschaft* character of Manchu families based upon the authority structure of the lineage, its collective traditions, and most importantly, shamanism. Above all, shamanism emerged as the symbol of racial-cultural unity transcending language roots and physical type. Many studies, often accompanied by detailed photographs, devoted thousands of pages to this practice in Manchuria. They depicted such forms as Siberian shamanism, Mongol Lamaist shamanism, Manchu family shamans, professional shamans, high and primitive shamanism, female shamans, and others. This great variety of shamanism reflected the different levels of cultural evolution of the different peoples, but at the same time shamanism also represented the distinctiveness of the culture of Northeast Asia. Indeed, the culture of Manmo (Manchuria and Mongolia) was said to serve as the point of contact between the culture of North Asia (Japan and Korea) and that of China and Southeast Asia.³¹

Thus, even as the radical *minzoku* narrative was being promoted as the basis of an alliance among the peoples of East Asia, the Ural-Altai/Tungus thesis of common origins generated an ethnological claim for Japanese imperialism that excluded Chinese sovereignty. The ethnological thesis became embedded in a spatial narrative of the distinctiveness and autonomy of the Manchurian region. This narrative portrayed a land with three thousand years of history developing outside (Chinese) agricultural civilization and around grasslands and primeval forests and mountains. In the Japanese popular imagination, Manchuria in this period emerged as a romance of “the endless sky canopying a land inhabited by bandits, horse thieves, rebels and mysterious heroes”, a land of danger and opportunity like the wild West.³² Japanese *ronin* wandered this land, aiding bands of revolutionaries in 1911, or leading bandit gangs who fought the Chinese settlers.³³

³¹ Akamatsu et al, *Manmo no minzoku to shyūkyō*, 22-40; Oyama Hikoichi. *Samankyo to Manshuzoku no kazoku seido* (Xinjing: Jianguo daxue yanjiuyuan, 1942), 3-4; Nagata, *Manshu ni okeru Oronjun no kenkyu*, 61-64.

³² Faye Yuan Kleeman. “Mysticism and Corporeality: Re-envisioning Manchuria in a Postcolonial Japan.” Paper presented at conference on Contemporary Japanese Popular and Mass Culture, Montreal, Canada, 1999, 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

In Manchukuo, Japanese visual or literary depictions of the land and people tend to erase or marginalize the role of agriculture and the Han agricultural population. The vigorous film industry (Man'ei), the hundreds of picture-books, and other propaganda materials that its many institutions churned out in several languages portrayed the grasslands and herdsmen, aboriginals and the forest, the variety of ethnic communities, including Japanese agricultural settlers, traditions and religions, modern cities and industrial power. But the innocent observer might hardly be aware that over eighty percent of the population consisted of Chinese agriculturists.³⁴

As an institutional condensation of the historical and spatial nation, the National Manchukuo Central Museum (*Manshūkoku kokuritsu chuo hakubustukan*) revealed a vision consistent with the marginalization of the Chinese. Established in 1938, the museum coordinated the activities of all museums in the country and housed a major collection. It was recognized as the pioneer of the 'new museum' and subsequently became the model for post-war Japanese museums. Designed not simply for viewing, it engaged in research and extension activities including teaching, performances, film viewing, special exhibitions, friendship societies of science education, etc. The museum reflected a split vision of the nation and the world: on the one hand, the collections, publications and programs of the museum and its branches were concerned with the natural resources, indigenous peoples, and the historical kingdoms of Manchuria; on the other, the artifacts and materials linked Manchukuo to a pan-Asian civilization, deriving particularly from non-Han sources of Chinese empires, such as the Mongols, or Turfan in the Tang Dynasty.³⁵ As a new type of museum, it sought to integrate this vision with the public and society to a much greater degree than previously. Thus, the museum was not only a simulacrum of civilization guiding recognition and self-location, but sought to be an active force in the re-making of society according to a wartime vision of pan-Asianism.

The driving force and spirit behind the museum was its prolific Deputy Director, Fujiyama Kazuo. Fujiyama was among the more visionary of Manchukuo bureaucrats who sought to reconcile his original adherence to Shingon Buddhism with his adoption of Christianity. As a

³⁴ The representation was consistent with the active policy of the Manchukuo government to discourage Chinese rural immigration. (Jones, *Manchuria since 1931*, 167-9)

³⁵ Nagoyashi hakubustkan, ed. Shin Hakubutsukan Taisei: Manshūkoku no hakubutsukan ga sengō Nihon ni tsutaeteiru koto. Nagoya: Nagoyashi hakubustkan, 1995 (SHT), 63-67, 90-91, 114-115.

public figure and museum official, Fujiyama sought to initiate several campaigns, particularly for the greening of Manchuria. His ideas and advocacy of a rational forest management policy reflected both his religious sentiments as well as awareness of the currents of environmental thinking in the West. As environmental policy and critique of the lumber industry, his ideas were perfectly consonant with progressive thought.³⁶

However, the narrative and rhetorical dimensions of his environmental policy reveal its political implications; they tell a story about the production of a landscape in which the forest has far greater value and visibility than the farm. It is a story that pits not merely the Chinese farmer, but a whole culture that is allegedly grossly insensitive to the natural environment and its treasure, the forest, against both the aboriginal and the civilized modern nation (read Germany and Japan). Fujiyama warns that Manchuria is rapidly on its way to suffer the same fate as the loess belt of the North China whose dry plains and bare hills, he claims, were covered by dense forests less than a thousand years ago. Unless the forest and the ways of the indigenous people who live in it are protected, Manchukuo will be overtaken by the Gobi desert which is creeping in from the West. In this way, even while the SMR and other Japanese interests were practically involved in its destruction, the receding forest hovered at the center of the moral landscape of Manchukuo ideology.

OROQEN

The special role of the Tungus and the culture of the forest come together in the study of the Oroqen, a tiny hunting tribe that lived in the Xing'an mountains and whose numbers had declined to about 3000 in the 1930s. Despite their small numbers, the known Japanese studies of the Oroqen numbered over 20 by the 1940s. This testifies to the central role the Oroqen played in the ethnological discourse of the Tungus in Manchuria.

Turning specifically to the Oroqen, the much cited and well-respected scholarly work was that of S.M. Shirokogoroff (1966), *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* first published in 1933 and translated into Japanese. It was the major inspiration for the

³⁶ Early in Manchukuo, Fujiyama ran afoul of the military government because he objected to the Japanese settler policies of the government. He also advocated that the Japanese settlers learn methods of production and land use from the Russians and the aboriginal population on Manchuria. He was transferred for his views. (*SHT*, 83-84).

ethnographic work of Akamatsu Chijō and Akiba Takashi known as *Manmo no minzoku to shūkyō* (The peoples and religion of Manmo). Akamatsu and Akiba were at Seoul Imperial University and had been active in the research of folk religion and shamanism in Korea.³⁷ In turn, the work of these two ethnographers became the most important reference work for writers in Manchukuo. The actual field work on the Oroqen was done by Akiba Takashi in 1935 and it is instructive to pause for a moment on the narrative structure through which he presents his materials. The diary form of Akiba's account dramatizes his travel to the Oroqen camps: it is a dangerous and awe-filled journey into a different timespace—the depths of the primeval Xing'an forests—in search of the primitive, indeed, primeval, Oroqen, the living ancestors of the Tungus peoples. The first vision of the Oroqen appears as in a dream when he sees their campfire in the dim light of dawn. The mixture of awe and terror remains with the narrative as he describes the blood-stained clothes and the game of a hunter who was reputed to have also killed seven men. Everywhere he is attentive to the exotic details of Oroqen mythology, customs and personality. The romance of a journey of discovery highlights the exotic quality of primitivity.

But, in addition to the exotic, Akiba also presents us with a complex account of their contemporary situation, their material life, and relations with outsiders. As he himself declares, “While we may think of the Xing'an mountains as an enchanted fairyland, cut off from the human world, it is a place where many peoples have come into contact and a composite culture has emerged. Now the Oroqen are in the process of losing their primitivity. What will be the shape of their non-primitivity in the future is a major question facing all of the peoples of Manmo.”³⁸ Thus in addition to the exotic quality of Oroqen primitivism, Akiba is particularly attentive to the question of this composite culture—to the way in which details of Oroqen culture, especially shamanism, are related to a wider culture of various Tungus communities. The names and functions of the gods are related to the Mongol's and especially the Korean's gods; the clothes of the shaman (*mukunda*) are like the Daur's, his drums and bells like the Manchus', the presence of the community deity in the house of the shaman is as in the house of the Korean *madang*; the structure of the tent with the divinity in it is like the

³⁷ Shimizu, “Colonialism and the Development of Modern Anthropology in Japan,” 136-7.

³⁸ Akamatsu et al, *Manmo no minzoku to shūkyō*, 126.

Japanese *jinja*, and the great shamanic ceremony to the Protector of Horses every three to five years resembles the Japanese communal fox prayer.³⁹

To be sure, Akamatsu and Akiba's preoccupation with shamanism signaled something wider than the political, and they engaged the topic in scholarly terms which were too wide to accommodate an overt political agenda. For instance, in their view, shamanism was also prevalent among the Han peoples in the northeast and thus it transcended the purely racial. But on closer reading it is apparent that Han shamanism was considered to be a Manchu influence on the Han which appeared first among the Han bannermen or Hanjun.⁴⁰ The authors were torn between two separate conclusions: to the extent that they were influenced by Japanese imperialist discourse, they concluded that shamanism was distinctive to the race and culture of northeast Asia; attending to global, especially Russian, scholarship, they were forced to conclude that shamanism could hardly be so confined by race or area. They resolved their dilemma thus, "Shamanism has both a specific, local meaning among the North Asian peoples, but also a wider scientific meaning that incorporates the cultures of other Asian and non-Asian peoples."⁴¹

Another influential ethnography of the Oroqen was, however, much more clearly subordinated to the political imperatives of the state. As Chief Investigator of the Security Bureau of the Manchukuo General Staff, Nagata's researches of the Oroqen, conducted from 1937 to 1938, dealt, of course, with administrative and security issues. But they also went far beyond these topics to include a full-fledged ethnography which was embedded within the ethnological discourse we have alluded to above. In addition to the administrative history and current social and medical problems, the ethnography includes detailed analysis of physical type, psychological nature, social structure, customs and ceremonies, and not least, shamanism. Shamanism reflects their primitivity, but is also among their most distinctive Tungusic feature. Indeed, he cites recent Japanese research to the effect that the very word "shaman" derives not from the alleged Sanskrit etymology, "sramana", but from the Tungus language. He also elaborates on their extraordinarily strong primitive sense of community co-

³⁹ Ibid., 103-111.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 367.

⁴¹ Ibid., 22-29.

operation (*kyōdōteki*), egalitarianism, and respect for elders, which ironically and amazingly make them resemble the civilized peoples—doubtless the Japanese.⁴²

At various points, Nagata draws attention to the practices among the Oroqen which resemble those of the Japanese: the role of the women in the management of the home where the division of labor is very strict,⁴³ their family structure, respect for elders, the absolute power of the family head,⁴⁴ and a strong sense of individual honor combined with their co-operative spirit.⁴⁵ And yet, of course, this urge to see the self in the primitive other is countered and contained by the dominant narrative of evolutionism in which Oroqen family life is regarded to have been frozen for over two thousand years (this despite considerable discussion of historical change). He writes, “we can see the true form of the life of the Tungus race only among the Oroqen and we can imagine the lives of the ancestors of the Japanese from this.”⁴⁶ Japanese evolutionist discourse had mastered the trope whereby one could be advanced, but still claim the privilege of primordality.

Nagata’s ethnology is closely tied to the Japanese state program for the Oroqen. He justifies the state policy of separating and isolating the Oroqen as a special people, the ban on their practice of agriculture, the prohibition of opium, and the rejection of a “life of dependence” (on commercialized Han society) in favor of a “self-sufficient, independent life.”⁴⁷ In addition to recounting the history of their exploitation by outsiders, he invokes the incompatibility of modern laws with their customs and ways. He cites the case of a quarrel between two Oroqen youth over a mere *mantou* (steamed bread roll) which led to a brawl in which one youth killed the other. The surviving youth casually returned home and the families and lineage concluded the matter among themselves. But the police, exercising the law of the state, arrested the youth and charged him with murder. According to Nagata, this law of civilized society, which left the family of the killer without its bread-winner, was viewed as terrifying by the Oroqen. Isolating the Oroqen was a means of protecting them from the ravages of modernity.

⁴² Nagata, *Manshu ni okeru Oronjun no kenkyu*, 61-65.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 64-66.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

Nagata also urges isolation and the return to self-sufficiency as a way to reverse the decline in the numbers of the Oroqen. As the forest disappears and they come increasingly into contact with others, opium and new civilized (*bunmeiteki*) diseases, particularly eye and venereal infections, have afflicted the entire population. “Earlier the Oroqen were proud of their health and boasted that they lived in heaven. They hated the city and complained of headaches and nausea whenever they went there. Now the civilized and cultured diseases are attacking their virgin lands (*shojochidai*) with its germs”⁴⁸ and they have few alternatives. Finally, Nagata reports a decline in school attendance since the establishment of Manchukuo. Before 1931, there were 80 students enrolled in primary school and 20 in high school. Now there were only 27 students. But Nagata does not apologize for this decline. He believes that the schools were ineffective and the youth learnt much more from their homes in the forest environment where the elders taught the youth under a very strict regimen.⁴⁹

Nagata’s strategy for returning the Oroqen to the forest—their virgin lands—recalls the spatial representation of the forest in Manchuria. Fujiyama Kazuo had staked the Japanese duty to preserve the forest upon a non-Chinese history of the region. The historical kingdoms and empires of Manchuria, such as the Koguryo, Bohai, Khitan, Jurchen, and Manchu, ruled communities for whom the forest was their cradle, grave, and soul. But the agricultural Chinese population had, in a short period, torched the primeval forests and violently forced the aboriginal peoples off their lands.⁵⁰ Fujiyama derived his logic of the deep physical and spiritual influence of forests upon a nation from German romanticism, particularly Goethe, finding the strength of German character in the resilience and resources of the natural environment and German attitudes to it. He claimed to be able to identify similar links between indigenous and aboriginal religion and the forest in Manchuria. Manchu shrines and gravesites are surrounded by pine groves; Lamaist temples are enveloped by thick forests. He attributes the Manchu interdiction on the felling of trees to a spiritual basis (ignoring the economic and political dimensions of this ban).⁵¹ Among his practical projects, he advocated re-forestation, botanical research, and tree planting festivals to take place during regular

⁴⁸ Ibid., 57-8.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁵⁰ Fujiyama Kazuo. *Manshū no shinrin to bunka* (Shinkyō: Tōhō Kokumin Bunshō, 1937), 32-33.

⁵¹ Fujiyama, *Manshū no shinrin to bunka*, 88-89.

memorial services to the war dead around monuments, shrines and graves of loyal soldiers and heroes. In this way, Fujiyama sought to develop a cult of the forest with the state as guardian of its true spirit.

The representation of the sacred forest and the ethnological discourse of a common Tungusic race and culture come together in the life of the Oroqen. The Oroqen represented a useful reference-point in the mixed nation theory that allowed the Japanese in Manchuria to stake a claim in the land and culture. But to put it in such stark terms is to ignore both the way in which Oroqen life was ravaged as well as the symbolic process through which this ideology became something like identity for the Japanese. The Oroqen came to embody a “primitive authenticity” in which the colonizer yearned to see his true self in the primitive through a glass darkly. As such, “primitive authenticity” was a technique of the self that linked the self to the primitive even while it distanced it-self in the security of civilized status.. This technique is different from the detached gaze of the 19th century colonialist and grants the colonizer a different kind of right, a right to make a claim on the basis of shared race and culture.

This technique of the self was consistent with the decline of imperialist justifications of alien rule and with the new technologies to encapsulate alien territories and communities. The Oroqen were no longer the primitive as anachronism to be done away with; rather they represented a valued part of *our* lost selves to be protected and preserved. The technique grants *us* the charge to protect and preserve in reservations. As Nakao Katsumi and others have shown, this administrative device did little to alleviate the exploitation of the Oroqen during Manchukuo. Indeed, their status as authentic primitives forced a radical re-organization of their society and a forced uprooting of the people. Moreover, the reservation policy also enabled the settlement of Japanese agriculturists on nearby lands, restricted activity on mineral-rich territories, and facilitated Japanese military activities on the northern borders with the Soviet Union. Ethnological discourse in the era of nationalism enabled the state to make claims on alien peoples and territories by producing the latter as primordial objects of care-taking even while it utilized them for the instrumental purposes of the state.

CONCLUSION

In the post-WWI era, the idea of nationality or *minzoku* became the carrier of Enlightenment ideals over much of the world and enjoyed the theoretical status of a rights-bearing community. This was not necessarily the status it enjoyed during the high-tide of social Darwinism before the war, when it was often associated with racial destiny. Both conceptions, however, shared a holistic and bounded delineation of community that, I have suggested, was important for the mobilizing drive of competitive states. To be sure, nationality cannot be understood in terms of mobilization alone and nor was mobilization implemented only through identity. Rather, the idea of nationality came to enjoy symbolic and instrumental values that states frequently manipulated to enhance control and resource mobilization.

Minzokugaku in the post-WWI Japanese empire, and Manchukuo in particular--understood more as ethnological discourse than the discipline of anthropology per se-- became one of the most important means of creating and manipulating the idea and practice of *minzoku*. Shaped by distinctive historical circumstances, Japanese ethnological discourse elaborated several different approaches to *minzoku*. The first was the production of the racially exclusive Yamato *minzoku*; a second was the wider idea of a Japanese *minzoku* based also on a racial, but assimilative, thesis of mixed nations. The third was the idea of an alliance of different nationalities under a common state structure that was developed in Manchukuo. Note that we also see the older racialist idea of mixed origins in Manchukuo as expressed in the Ural Altaic/Tungus thesis. This was a heavily symbolized nationalistic narrative that became instrumental in denying Chinese claims to the land and culture.

The three approaches to nationality came to be used in different combinations and with contradictory effects to achieve the two goals of the Japanese nation-state in a competitive global system: to develop nationalism and to create an imperialistic regional sphere to enable it to achieve global supremacy. The imperial region of the post-WW 1 era, conceived first in Manchukuo, displayed a novel type of political economic formation in which military dependencies and client states took the form of nominally sovereign and even modernizing nation-states. Such formations also appeared in German, Soviet and, with qualifications, in US imperialism.

Of the three approaches, the mixed origins thesis straddled both goals: it was part of Japanese nationalism but also a means of creating an imperial region through a pre-emptive narrative of assimilation. While in Manchuria, this thesis served to create the basis of alliance between Japan, Korea and Manchuria, by the time of the war in Asia, it was expressed in the policy of *kominka* in the colonies where it worked towards assimilation into a rights-less, but duty-filled conception of Japanese nationality (Oguma, 257, 325). The idea of *minzoku kyowa* in Manchuria, however imperialistic, was the most radical formulation. The imperial region might have eventuated into a kind of federated nation which distributes the costs and benefits of development unevenly through the system as a whole.

But from the start such a scenario was much too optimistic. Once Japanese, and in particular Yamato, nationalism had been created and intensified, it became the much more powerful force and negated the “federation” in both obvious and subtle ways. We have observed how the theory of nationality developed in the *Minzoku Kenkyujo* of 1943 represented the subversion of the idea of an alliance of nationalities by seeking to create a new ethnicity which would probably have represented a kind of *kominka*. Within Manchukuo, while the Ural Altaic thesis may have created an atmosphere (among Japanese) for the unity of the Japanese, Koreans and Manchurian Tungus as three siblings, it functioned mainly to deny Chinese claims.

With the outbreak of the China war and still more, the Pacific war, the imperialist control over Manchukuo intensified and Japanese racism became even more apparent. The language of the Japanese as the naturally superior “leading race or nationality” demanding co-operation from other races or nationalities became common. In most cases, inter-racial marriages were discouraged, but even when in 1942, Kanesaki Ken advocated inter-racial marriages, he did so to produce Manchukuo nationals who would be inferior to Japanese but superior to the other races.⁵² When food had to be rationed, Japanese eating at the same table as Chinese ate rice while the latter was forced to eat *gaoliang* under the rationale that this was the diet of the nationality.⁵³ Quite apart from legal restrictions, it was the social dimensions of racism that did not simply give the lie to the theory of the harmony of five nationalities; it also enabled

⁵² See Mariko Tamanoi, , *Remembering Japanese Manchuria: Emigration, Colonization, Repatriation and Nostalgia*. Manuscript in preparation 127-129.

⁵³ Yamamuro Shinichi. *Kimera: Manshōkoku no shōzo* (Chimera: A Portrait of Manzhouguo) (Tokyo: Chuo koronsha, 1993), 279-80.

the brutality executed on the bodies and minds of people from these “harmonious races”, as exemplified in the activities of Unit 731. The radical thesis of the alliance of nationalities in Manchukuo could not survive the doctrine of nationalism as the superiority of a Self, albeit itself formed quite recently.

But the thesis itself did not die with 1945 in East Asia. It had emerged from the historical circumstances in northeast Asia and the circulation of global ideas together with historical, regional ones. The alliance of nationalities reflected not only the Soviet model of nationality but also Chinese ideas. Most proximately, it mimicked the Chinese Republic of the Five Nationalities (*wuzu gonghe*) which in turn echoed Manchu notions of what Owen Lattimore called the “federated polity” of the Qing empire. Soon after the establishment of Manchukuo, Chinese anthropologists—as well as historians and geographers-- also turned to ideas of minority nationality groups and their historical (and racial) links to Han Chinese to reclaim the Qing lands controlled by imperialists. And it is hardly surprising that the Chinese Communists have built the nation-state upon the idea of an alliance of nationalities.