

Japanese Cultural Thrust by ‘Xinminhui’ in Northern China

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Introduction

This article will examine the cultural policy in northern China under the Japanese Occupation, in particular how elements characterized by “Japaneseness,” such as the Japanese language, Japanese studies or what it meant to be Japanese-like, influenced policy making. During the occupation, “culture” was looked upon as an aspect of politics, especially as a tool “for internal mobilization” on an individual-by-individual basis. The discussion will focus on in what ways the content of culture in the foreign regions, which were incorporated into Japan’s mobilization system, was regulated and implemented under specific policy measures. People in the colonies were encouraged to become “imperial subjects” by learning Japanese and “acting like Japanese” by for example attending Shinto shrines.

However pro-Japanese political regimes were, of course, not the same as colonies. They were part of the so-called “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere,” which was ideologically juxtaposed against Western imperialism, struggling under Japan’s leadership to liberate the peoples of the region from Western control and help them achieve national independence. What this meant in terms of political reality was that the member states of the sphere were puppet governments with foreign diplomatic status. The cultural mobilization of such foreign states therefore took on the appearance of cultural exchange. Speaking and acting Japanese was also considered important of course, but as “independent” states, their citizens were considered to be foreign nationals.

And as such, on at least an institutional level, a guise of equality was maintained. Moreover, such formalities became the basis on which Japanese nationals in the colonies would stop any natural spread of the cultural logic shared within Japan. Therefore, cultural exchange within the “Co-Prosperity Sphere” is related to the Japanese self image and how Japan chose to project that self image among its Asian neighbors.¹

The backdrop to this article in what context “Japan” was placed and functioned within a situation of keeping the region at arms length by maintaining its heterogeneity as a foreign state, while at the same time subjecting it to close, coercive scrutiny and control. Previous studies on the limits to which the entity called “Japan” could be stretched and remain “Japan” (i.e., its topology) has been explored in the recent work of Komagome Takeshi,² who begins with the assumption that the teaching of Japanese is closely related to spreading a Japanese mentality. Komagome then attempts to describe not only a Japan pushing for the universalization of a specific “Japaneseness,” but also showing the contradictions and frustrations resulting from such efforts. By approaching the problem from the viewpoint of the history of education, Komagome shows the differences in attitude that existed among the Ministry of Education, the East Asia Development Board (Kōain), the military and people in the occupied regions, differences in language textbook writing and teaching agencies, and differences in teaching methods, in order create an image of nationalism embodied in Japanese language as Japanese mentality and analyze how Japan failed in its efforts to educate the outside world. This article, while drawing many insights from Komagome’s research, will focus on elements outside of the Ministry of Education like the New People Association

¹ For a basic study on Japan’s international cultural policy, see Shibasaki Atsushi, *Kindai Nippon to kokusai bunka kōryū: Kokusai Bunka Shinkō-kai no sōsetsu to tenkai* [International cultural exchange and modern Japan: The founding and development of the Association for the Promotion of International Culture], Tokyo: Yūshindō Kōbunsha, 1999.

² Komagome Takeshi, “Kahoku senryōchi: Nihongo kyōeiken kōsō no hōkai katei [Northern China occupied by Japan: The collapsing process of the concept of “Co-Prosperity Sphere” on Japanese language],” ch. 6 of *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no bunka tōgō* [Cultural integration of the Japanese colonial empire], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996.

(Shinmin-Kai; hereafter SMK) and foreign students.³

Another topological study of Japan has been done by Igarashi Masako and Mio Yūko, focusing on the process of decolonization following the Pacific War.⁴ Here, the authors show a complex image of Japan within the decolonization process and reveal the diversity of “Japanization” within that process. Much of the discussion to date along these lines concentrates geographically on the colonies themselves, while this article will deal with the little discussed relations between Japan and pro-Japanese “foreign states.” Here, the “Japanese” topology will be considered based on an analysis of cultural policy implemented in northern China under the Japanese Occupation between 1937 and 1945, but controlled by Japan only indirectly. The focus will be on the activities of the SMK. The task is to find where “Japan” stood within this “foreign territory,” which had achieved “an extremely high” level of culture.⁵

³ Like as, Seki Go’s research (Seki Go, *Nihon shokuminchi gengo seisaku kenkyū* [A study of the policy of language education in Japanese colonial empire], Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2005.), some previous studies argue the policies of language education, however they don’t discuss about “Japaneseness” on which Komagome’s research and this article focus. Very little interest has been shown by historians of Japan and Japanese education in China about research and education policy during the occupation, for example, in Manchuria and under the Wang regime. By overemphasizing the prewar Chinese image of Japan as “the enemy,” the research to date tends to overlook research about Japan that was conducted under the Guomindang (GMD) nationalist regime.

Concerning the characteristic features of pro-Japanese regimes, see: Son Ansuk, “Senzen Chūgoku ni okeru Nihon, Nihon-go kenkyū ni kansuru shiryō no chōsa hōkoku [Survey report on source materials related to research on Japan and Japanese language in prewar China],” in *Kanagawa Daigaku Gengo Kenkyū*, No. 25 (March 2003), pp. 299–315.

Furthermore, in northern China, Chinese residents were not the only ethnic group targeted for Japanese education. At the Fareast Academy(Kyokutō Gakuin), about 10,000 Russian Caucasians were taught Japanese and indoctrinated in Japanese mentality. (“Kyokutō Gakuin [The Fareast Academy],” *Hokushi*, 2nd Month Issue, 1940 (Shōwa 15).)

⁴ Igarashi Masako and Mio Yūko, *Sengo Taiwan ni okeru ‘Nihon’ shokuminchi no renzoku, henbō, riyō* [The “Japanese” colonial experience in postwar Taiwan: Continuity, change and exploitation], Tokyo: Fūkyōsha, 2006.

⁵ The research to date on these organizations begins with the work of Yamaki Yoshiko, represented by her 1975 paper entitled “The Origins and Early Activities of the Shinminkai in Nationalist China” (in Fujii Shōzō, ed., *1930 nendai no Chūgoku* [China during the 1930s], Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies (Japan External Trade

Organization), 1975), in which she utilized sources related to the northern Chinese army dated 1937 and 1938. It was a time when sources materials on the subject were in very short supply, limited to military records describing the organizational form, founding and early activities of NCAs.

Then during the 1980s, a two-volume document collection, including the memoirs of former members, was edited and published by Okada Haruo as *Shinmin-kai gaishi: Kōdo ni teishin shita hitotachi no rekishi* [An unofficial history of Shinminkai: An account of the people who threw themselves into the Loess] (2 vols., Tokyo: Goryō Shuppansha, 1986). In China, as well, the Beijing Metropolitan Archives (Beijingshi Dang'an guan) compiled its holdings related to NCAs as *Riwei Beijing Xinminhui* [Japanese Psuedo-Shinminkai] (Beijing: Guangming Ribao Chubanshe, 1989).

The 1990s saw Horii Kōichiro's "Shinmin-kai to Kahoku senryō seisaku [The Shinminkai and the occupation of Northern China]," in *Chūgoku Kenkyū Geppō*, vol. 47, no. 1-3, January-March 1993, which utilized sources made public during the previous decade and Aoe Shunjirō's, *Dai nihongun senbu kan: Aru seishun no kiroku* [A Japanese military appeasement officer: The story one youth spent], Tokyo: Fuyō Shobō, 1970, in an attempt to view the whole organization over two periods demarcated by the outbreak of the Pacific War. Here, the early ideals of the SMK are described as fading in the midst of its integration into the Northern China Expeditionary Force and the policy decision to "Sinify" the organization.

The 2000s then saw number of studies done by Wang Qiang, who criticized the research to date as "relatively simplistic and superficial" and set out to write an overall history of the SMK. His "Nicchū sensō ki no Kahoku Shinmin-kai [The SMK in Northern China during 2nd Sino-Japanese War]" (in *Gendai Shakai-Bunka Kenkyū*, no. 20 (March, 2001)) is not only more concise than Horii's work, but also more detailed through the addition of new source materials. In "Nicchū sensō ki ni okeru Shinmin-kai no kōsē katsudō o megutte [Welfare activities of the SMK during the 2nd Sino-Japanese War]" (in *Gendai Shakai-Bunka Kenkyū*, no. 25 (November, 2002)), Wang uses articles appearing in yearly SMK reports to paint a different picture than Horii, stating, "The welfare-related operations... after Ando Kisaburō's assumption of de facto leadership on the occasion of central chairman Miao Bin's resignation from the post of central vice-chairman to participate in Wang Zhaoming's Nanjing regime, the SMK became more realistic, as its 'propaganda intensification program' was geared directly to the actual daily lives of the people."

The above review shows that the research to date remains at the stage of accumulating empirical study, of which the present article is a part of. The position taken here is that both Horii and Wang present persuasive arguments, which will be examined in depth at another time.

However, in my opinion that the SMK's "true posture" is somewhat different from what either Horii or Wang suggest, and that if the true character of Sino-Japanese co-operation during the early stages is taken into account, the true character of the SMK's activities during that time will be revealed, and if the true character of "incursion" is taken into account during the later stages, the true character of the SMK's activities

1. “Japaneseness” and Fostering Collaborators

The term “collaborator,” which is often understood in terms of anti- vs. pro-Japanese, was under the wartime conditions of the time considered to be spontaneous approval of Japan by the masses. Wang Guohua describes collaboration as the “womb in which a monster made up of the invader and its slaves is gestated,” meaning that collaborators were enslaved by Japan, by virtue of internalizing the occupation “spontaneously.”⁶ In either case, training collaborators is no easy task, which is why propaganda and appeasement appealing to the inner self is always emphasized in the process;⁷ why “culture” closely related to personal likes and dislikes, as well as spontaneous activity is important.

The desire for spontaneity in the process of mobilization may also help in overcoming existing problems related to social stratification and gender, and for allowing oppressed people to find a place in society. On the other hand, the act of participating in wartime mobilization is not necessarily coerced, but may also be seen as functioning with the consensus of the masses.⁸ It is a question of whether people mobilized under fascist systems should be considered victims or agents. However, most of the discussion regarding this point has revolved

during that time will be revealed. Also, after the merger of the SMK and the Military Propaganda Unity on 1 March 1940, the statement by Ozawa Kaisaku, entitled “The Character and Calling of the SMK,” decries the depths to which perceptions held about the organization had plunged and emphasizes the need to act in unison with the new Chinese government formed by Wang Zhaoming.

⁶ Wang Guohua, “Guanyu riwei Xinminhui [On the pseudo-Shinminkai],” in *Riwei Beijing Xinminhui*, *op. cit.*

⁷ Kawashima Shin, “Teikoku to rajio: Manshūkoku ni oite ‘seiji o seikatsu suru koto’ [Imperialism and the Program ‘Politics in Daily Life’ Broadcast Over Radio Manchukuo],” in *Media no nakano ‘Teikoku’* [Imperialism in the media] (vol. 4 of *Iwanami kōza ‘Teikoku’ Nihon no gakuchi* [Iwanami lectures on imperialism: Japanese scholarship]), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006.

⁸ See, for example, Lin Ji-hyun, “Kyōsei to dōi ‘taishū dokusai’ no hikaku kenkyū: Seika to kadai [Coercion and consent: A comparative study of ‘dictatorship of the masses’],” *Quadrante*, no. 6, March 2004.

Concerning the gender issues, see Ueno Chizuko, *Nashonarizumu to jendā* [Gender and nationalism], Tokyo: Seidosha, 1998.

around either Japan proper or Japanese colonies, and has yet to be extended to pro-Japanese political regimes in Japanese occupied territories. Since the colonies were territorially annexed as part of Japan, were deprived of political autonomy---in spite of the rhetoric about “a war of liberation against the West”--- and their people treated as subjects of the empire, “Japanese-speaking peoples” were identified simultaneously as foreigners and Japanese, and so mobilized. What about the mobilization of people governed under pro-Japanese governments constituting the Co-Prosperity Sphere?

To begin with, the people governed by the Republic of China (the government of Wang Zhaoming) and the State of Manchuria, which were recognized by Japan as foreign nations and members of the Co-Prosperity Sphere, were expected to participate in that sphere. As to how these foreign peoples were to participate, first, in the case of northern China, it was necessary to eliminate any obstacles that threatened to block participation, including demands that any preexisting image of Japan be erased and returned to *tabula rasa*.

Images of Japan as “a frightening country,” “a cruel invader,” “a barbarous nation devoid of human feeling,” “a warmongering nation,” etc. had be erased and replaced with a more artistic, humane image. “The first step was to turn to the airwaves with the purpose of eliminating any mistaken ideas and presenting the true Japan, whose culture was dedicated to peace, humanity and the arts.”⁹

In addition to the obvious task of ridding the Co-Prosperity Sphere of education and textbooks that colored Japan in an undesirable light, it was also necessary to foster a group of pro-Japanese supporters sporting images of Japan that could never be construed as belligerent or aggressive. At that time, a majority of foreign people who could speak Japanese and/or had studied abroad in Japan had done so during the last years of the Qing Dynasty, or the late Meiji Era in Japan, which is why there was a strong tendency to convey that image

⁹ Murata Shirō, “Taishi bunka kōsaku to hōdō hōsō [Broadcasting and cultural operations in northern China],” in Kokumuin Kōhōjō ed., *Senbu geppō (Hōsō tokushū gō)* [Propaganda Monthly (Special Edition on Broadcasting)], vol. 4, no. 8, Kangde 6th (September 1939).

in tact during the 1930s. The idea was to revise the Japanese people as confident about ringing in a new era.

One example of this is “Ōoka Yasuzō, who taught at Tokyo Imperial University and who was put to work building a Japanese language program for northern China and upon his return to Japan in 1940 was appointed head of the new Ministry of Education Japanese Language Department. At a panel discussion in 1941, the following exchange occurred between Ōoka, Kugimoto Hisaharu and Okuno Shintarō.

Ōoka: The average contemporary Japanese knows almost nothing about China since the end of Qing Dynasty, but rather imagines China at the time of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894–95 and the Boxer Rebellion. In China, as well, among many people in leadership positions, Japanese are seen through the eyes of foreign students who studied in Japan after the Russo-Japanese War, as still living the life lived during the first decade of this century, and have no idea of the progress that we have made over the past three decades. In other words, people in China and Japan only know each other as they existed some thirty years ago. [Such ignorance] could be the major cause of future incidents...

Kugimoto: Professor Ōoka stated previously that the lack of mutual knowledge on the part of Japanese and Chinese people today about each others’ contemporary situations may lead to animosity between them. Professor Okuno, in your opinion, what aspects of Japanese culture and history are young people in China most interested in? The Meiji Restoration?

Okuno: It seems that they are interested in the reasons behind Japan’s development, but are probably not going to study them in any great depth. As you may expect, they have been drawn to Japan’s post-Meiji Restoration advance into a world power in the process of two important military victories.¹⁰

The above conversation demonstrates Japan’s reluctance to accept the fact that it was being perceived in terms of how it existed three decades previous and that Japan’s leading intellectuals were dissatisfied

¹⁰ “Zadan kai ‘Nihongo to Nihonbunka’ [Panel discussion ‘Japanese and Japanese culture’],” in *Nihongo*, vol. 1, no. 4, July 1941.

with how their country was being perceived in China.

Let us turn to another panel discussion held between two leading China experts in Japan, Ichimura Sanjiro and Shiratori Kurakichi, on the subject of “Chinese who are ignorant of Japan,” at which Ichimura, speaking about his trip to China in 1892, commented;

We went on sightseeing tours of Shanghai, then Nanjing... While we were strolling around Nanjing, we were caught sight of by a large group of local people who called out “Kaori, Kaori,” thinking that we were Koreans. It was probably our attire that gave such an impression. Our Chinese companions told them that we were not Koreans, but from Japan, to which they inquired, “Where?” (Laughter) We explained that Japan lay east of “Kaori,” to which they replied “Does it belong to China?” (More laughter) That was more or less the situation everywhere in China at that time... After that strange encounter, I understood why up until that time Japan and China had not been unable to work together and became convinced about the necessity for the Chinese people to be better informed about Japan...

In order to overcome such a situation, Shiratori suggested, “Something extraordinary on our part has to done to put the Chinese at a loss for words.” Then Wada Sei, Japan’s leading scholar in Manchurian and Mongolian History, chimed in, “In any case, the Chinese are impressed about Japan’s advances into Western science, as proven by their sending foreign students here with their hats in their hands... After all, if it weren’t for our superiority in Western scholarship, these young Chinese students would have never come.”¹¹

¹¹ “Zadan kai ‘Shina gakusha jikyoku o ureu zadankai’ [Panel discussion ‘China scholars decry the present situation’],” in *Bungei Shunjū*, January 1939.

Although Wada based his argument about Japan’s superiority on its adoption and practice of Western scientific methodology, the editor of the article tagged this portion with a subtitle that read “China Needs to Be Educated through *Japanese Learning!*” As a matter of fact, “Japanese learning” was at the time being widely used in that same context.

Moreover, the question of whether Japan’s superiority was a unique or universal attribute was also an important theme for intellectual discussion at the time. See for example, the discussion between Kada Tetsuji and Tateno Nobuyuki, “Senji ka no bunka ni tsuite [On culture in wartime],” in *Kōa*, no. 47, May 1943.

However, there was little agreement about the specific details of Japan's superiority. Shiratori's "putting [people] at a loss for words" and Wada's "advances in Western scholarship" were both problematic, not only for the Co-Prosperity Sphere to accept and embrace Japan's superiority, but also to explain why Japan needed to be singled out from the rest. The aspect of Japan as a developed country in terms of Western science and technology combined with the idea of unique Japanese mentality was being emphasized, but at the same the two aspects were being kept apart, while being bankrupted by the wartime regime.

On the other hand, although Japanese mentality was being emphasized as worthy of admiration, of what exactly it consisted and how it should be presented were left ambiguous. On this point, Komagome suggests that there was the idea of some "stairway to becoming Japanese," something ambiguous, which was climbed in the process of "contact with Japan," while maintaining one's own language and customs. One important point of contact was thought to be learning Japanese. Granted, every ethnic group has its own culture, but East Asian culture would consist of 1) a horizontal axis representing the indigenous cultures of ethnic groups composing the Co-Prosperity Sphere and 2) a vertical axis representing the mentality of co-prosperity. And it was Japanese by which this new culture would be understood and practiced.

"If Japanese were to be utilized to the same degree as English, it would not only be easier to conduct our political, economic and cultural intelligence operations, but also contribute tremendously to uplifting the peoples of the Co-Prosperity Sphere."¹²

The diverse languages and customs that existed within the East Asian cultural sphere would be imbued with the co-prosperity mentality, which would be put into practice through a mutual understanding of Japanese. Despite such hopes for Japanese as a universal language, on the ground, the diffusion of Japanese language education in China was deplorably behind schedule.

While the dissemination of Japanese skills was emphasized, it

¹² Matsumiya Kazuya, "Kyōeiken bunka no kakujū to Nihongo [Japanese and the spread of a co-prosperity sphere culture]," in *Nihongo*, vol. 2, no. 5, May 1942.

was also necessary to avoid the loss of indigenous languages. Here is an interview with Japanese linguist, Fujimura Tsukuru concerning the spread of Japanese skills in northern China that appeared in the November 1943 issue of the journal *Nihongo*.

Nihongo (editor): What about thinking of Japanese as the common means of verbal communication throughout East Asia instead of just another foreign language?

Fujimura: I heard one school principal say to his students, “What Japan is saying by wanting to make Japanese the common language of East Asia is that everybody else’s languages will become obsolete. You saying ‘learn Japanese’ is greeted with resistance and lack of enthusiasm.” I replied that Japanese is a foreign language. To this comes the retort, “We agree, but thought that we could not say so.” Such is the misunderstanding that exists.

Nihongo: Is it not true that Japan’s policy is to respect each group’s mother tongue and teach Japanese as a second language?

Fujimura: We are experiencing a lot of difficulty all over China. People in Shanghai don’t understand, and in Guangdong even more. Even the language spoken by leaders like Wang Zhaoming is not understood by a portion of his own people. It will probably become necessary to substitute English for Japanese as the common language.¹³

It seems clear that even in Japanese occupied territories governed by pro-Japanese regimes Japanese was not promoted as the official language, but rather as a second language. While there were, of course, differing opinions as to what the relationship between foreign and native languages should be, with the establishment of Japanese as a foreign language, various versions began to appear, like “pigeon Japanese,” accompanied by efforts to standardize it. As Komagome has pointed out, there was also a debate over how Japanese should be taught: for example, should classes be conducted directly in Japanese? or indirectly narrated in the native language? In the above interview,

¹³“Zadankai, ‘Hokushi ni okeru Nihongo kyōiku no shin dankai’ [Panel discussion, ‘A new stage for Japanese education in Northern China’],” in *Nihongo*, vol. 3, no. 11, November 1943.

it seems that the editorial staff of *Nihongo* was in favor of the former, while Fujimura supported the later.

In either case, however, all agreed that those able to teach Japanese and transmit the Japanese way of life would have to be Japanese. Because it was necessary to teach “Japanese equipped with the correct Japanese mentality and with a solid Japanese cultural background,” “it goes without saying that first and foremost teachers have to Japanese,” and “although there may be non-Japanese people who can teach Japanese, this is not my idea of how Japanese should be disseminated.” Here there was no consideration of the possibility that Japanese was not necessarily related to the promotion and spread of Japanese mentality and culture, but mere taken for granted. The question of whether or not a non-Japanese could teach Japanese and the Japanese way of life was an issue to be dealt with in the future, when Japanese began spreading in earnest as a universal means of communication. This opinion was shared by proponents of both the direct and indirect methods of classroom teaching. In either case, everybody involved embraced the ideal that Japanese should be learned naturally and spread naturally. *Nihongo* also conducted interview with Tōkō Takezō, the head of political affairs in the Eastan Asia Ministry, in 1944 that is indicative of this point.

“In other words, as soon as Japan gets on track in steadily realizing the Co-Prosperity Sphere, a field of Japanese studies will naturally appear, including the study of the Japanese language... interest in Japanese studies will necessitate learning Japanese. Without a proper Japanese language education, it would be impossible to study Japan. That is why only the best teachers will be sought after.”¹⁴

Teachers with the knowledge of standard Japanese acquired through the inculcation of Japanese culture and mentality would therefore have to be native Japanese. It was this precondition of Japanese education built on the transmission of Japanese mentality, exclusively conducted

¹⁴ Tōkō Takezō, “Zadankai, ‘Nihongo kyōiku no konpon mondai’ [Panel discussion, ‘Basic issues in teaching Japanese’],” in *Nihongo*, vol. 4, no. 1, January 1944.

by Japanese instructors, that posed a serious barrier to dissemination, particularly for the purists who feared that not teaching classes in Japanese would lead to confusion and corruption of the language. However, spontaneity in the form of “natural” and “obvious” unfolding was accepted by all. All concerned hoped that the people governed under pro-Japanese regimes would spontaneously want to participate through the medium of Japanese.

Next let us consider what was the “Japan” to be transmitted by the Japanese spoken by Japanese teachers. Under the assumption that “conventional Western ideas were on the verge of failure as national or international standards,” and “anything international is not necessarily distinct from what is Japanese, and things Japanese are not necessarily predefined. Therefore the integration of Japanese mentality into the contemporary world constitutes true world culture.” “In this way world culture can be said to be an internal part of Japanese culture.”¹⁵ In other words, the attempt was being made to show the universal nature of Japanese culture, which Abe Hirozumi points out formed the theoretical structure supporting the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.¹⁶

It was in this same sense that Japanese studies were thought to be important. In actuality, a large number of periodicals dealing with Japanese studies had been published in China up through the 1930s,¹⁷ most of which aimed at either “knowing the enemy,” or trying to come to some mutually agreeable arrangement with it. One peak in interest about Japan occurred at the time when it was becoming clearer and clearer that Japan was indeed an enemy of China. While the research on Japan that was done in Chongqing after the opening of hostilities is still in need of further study, in the Japanese occupied territories and pro-Japanese states in the region, understanding and research on Japan was encouraged (under government censorship) and resulted in the translation of acceptable Japanese works, visiting lectures and performances by Japanese scholars and artists. The objective was to get the

¹⁵ Funayama Shin’ichi, “Shin sekai bunka to Nihon bunka: Ronri no mondai o chūshin to shite [New world culture and Japan: A theoretical approach],” in *Kokusai Bunka*, October 1941.

¹⁶ Abe Hirozumi, *Nihon no fashizumu ron* [Fascism theory in Japan], Tokyo: Kage Shobō, 1996.

¹⁷ See Son Ansuk, “Senzen Chūgoku ni okeru Nihon, Nihon-go kenkyū ni kansuru shiryō no chōsa hōkoku,” *op. cit.*

word out to “culturally advanced” northern China about contemporary Japan, not only directly but also indirectly through Chinese media. While the choice of language in teaching Japanese was being debated, in the appeasement business of the world of mass media, all languages and mentalities were employed in targeting specific demographic groups and regions. This point regarding propaganda is different from what Komagome argues regarding language education.

2. SMK's Cultural Operations

The war of ideas and culture waged on the Chinese, which had begun before the outbreak of military hostilities, took on a “new look” under wartime conditions. The prewar measures taken by the Foreign Ministry to promote cultural exchange between the two countries were critically reexamined and replaced with a nationwide effort to culturally revive China itself and rebuild its ideational system under a program to remake East Asia in Japan’s image. The first task was to enlarge and solidify the historical and cultural significance of the events leading up to the outbreak of hostilities for the intellectual and cultural rebirth of China and the unification of East Asia.

It is necessary to know why there has been a radical transformation of the Foreign Ministry’s liberal cultural programs... Therefore, operations from hereon...will be conducted by all strata of society working together. Moreover, these operations will not be limited merely to China proper and its people, but will also inculcate all cultural and intellectual activity in Japan with the significance of the programs in China.¹⁸

Cultural operations in northern China were conducted by a number of different organizations, one of which was the SMK, which was equivalent to the Kyōwakai political action committee in Manchuria (“kyōwa” meaning mutual understanding and friendship). The SMK

¹⁸ Nakatani Takeya, “Taishi bunka kōsaku no shomondai: Shinmin undō ni tsukusu [Several Issues on Cultural Operations in China: Dedicating Oneself to the Shinmin Movement],” in *Bungei Shunjū*, March 1938.

national leadership was officially founded on 1 March 1938 out of reflection over the experience of governing Manchuria. That is to say, in Manchuria cooperation between local people and the Japanese had ended up being controlled by the latter, but in northern China, where indigenous Han Chinese culture dominated, stronger mutual cooperation was needed to avoid what had happened in Manchuria. From their own testimony, the organizers active in northern China were dissatisfied with the activities of the Kyōwakai and the governance of the state of Manchuria. Yamaguchi Jūji, who had been removed from leadership of the Kyōwakai along with Ozawa Kaisaku in August 1934,¹⁹ states as much in his memoir about the founding of the SMK, explaining that with the cooperation of Ozawa and the advice of Ishihara Kanji he set out to found a Kyōwakai from northern China based on combination of the strategy of the Japanese Army and the demands of local Chinese (in particular, Zhang Yanqing).²⁰ Yamamoto goes on to say that such an

¹⁹ Okada Haruo, ed. *Shinmin-kai gaishi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–3.

²⁰ Yamaguchi Jūji, “The Fall of Japanese Imperialism: Sino-Japanese Hostilities and the Evolvement of the Shinminkai,” in *Manchuria and the Japanese People*, no. 2 (January 1975).

However, such an idea was by no means limited to the Army or pro-Japanese collaborators. In December 1937, Morishima Morito, an councilor to the Japanese embassy in Beijing, sent the following message to Foreign Minister Hirota Kōki:

“I think that cultural operations in northern China should be rapidly improved by merging them with military operations... cultural operations in the region should in all cases be carried out under full Sino-Japanese cooperation, with ostensible Chinese-sponsored projects assisted and guided by Japanese advisors. If not, we cannot expect talented Chinese to get involved and fulfill our expectations. On this point, projects like the Manchuria Medical University are being conducted based on a completely different way of thinking.”

(Telegram from Morishima to Hiroda, 22 October 1942, Nihon Gaimushō hozon kiroku [Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] H.7.2.0.4-5. (The Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs))

While the same trend is evident in the emphasis put on local communities, Morishima continues, “In order to effectively implement such programs it is pertinent to train Chinese leaders as quickly as possible, which means the opening of a university for that purpose at the earliest possible opportunity is a priority.” Morishima’s opinion is fundamentally the same as Osawa, Yamaguchi and Nemoto Hiroshi on the failure of operations to date and the resistance to Japanese propaganda programs by both the GMD and CCP.

overlapping of interests had been the essential ideal behind the founding of the Kyōwakai, but that “ethnic harmony” had broken down into outright colonialism. In predominately Chinese northern China in its struggle against Jiang Jieshi’s Guomindang (GMD) nationalist regime, the Japanese thought best not to intervene in government affairs, which should be under Chinese leadership, and rather come up with an alternative to Jiang’s tri-polar ideology of national liberation, democracy and populism. The new ideological organization to replace the GMD was based on the concept of the “new citizen” (*shinmin*) embracing the political ideals of Mencius and Daoism.²¹

In actuality, Japanese were not involved *per se* in the pro-Japanese governments of northern China, but were involved in the SMK, a political action group, not a government agency. Since the group emphasized the direct promotion of Chinese autonomy and building rural society by encouraging Chinese spontaneity and participation, the SMK wanted its majority to be consisting of a pro-Japanese Chinese majority. In this sense, the SMK was designed to bring together existing collaborators and train more of them. The training aspect was the third objective listed in the 20 March 1938 proclamation declaring the founding of the SMK’s capital headquarters.

“The capital, being the center of Chinese culture, will be where SMK members will be educated. The quality of the ideas of the nation’s youth, the quality of learning, is directly related to whether its future course will be stable or chaotic. Therefore, the SMK’s Capital Region Headquarters will, in principle, strongly promote improvements in the intellectual environment and scientific research for the youth movement from the standpoint of supplementing the human resource training going on at existing educational institutions, and offer economic assistance to unemployed youth, in order to enable them to build a new China.”²²

²¹ Okada Haruo, *Shinmin-kai gaishi*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 28–29, 31.

On interesting aspect, SMK also attached greater importance to the policy toward local communities and adopted “San-zi Policy [three “self” policy: self protection, self government and self sufficiency],” which Bai Chongxi had adopted in Guangxi, under Movement of New Life [Xin shenghuo yundong] and Movement of Village Construction [Xiangcun jianshi yundong] by GMD Government.

²² “Shoudi zhidaobu chengli xuanyan [Declaration of the establishment of a capital headquarters],” 20 March 1938, *Riwei Beijing Xinminhui*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–14.

In the process of training, the image of “Japan” would become clearer and much more concrete. According to the agenda concerning with implementation, the proclamation states, “members will be able to understand the true meaning of the outbreak of hostilities between China and Japan,” and “Japan’s holy war is ‘*diaoming fazui* [to punish criminals and protect the people]’ in order to eliminate violence in China.”²³ The phrase *diaoming fazui* attributed to the king of the ancient Zhou Dynasty in his legendary war of justice against the despot of the Yin kingdom, was designed to legitimate Japan’s war effort in a similar light. The study of the past, in the form of “A Concise History of Sino-Japanese Cooperation,” was also included in the SMK’s educational program.²⁴

On the other hand, Japanese was targeted for extensive dissemination by the SMK, in keeping with previous attempts carried out in northern China.²⁵ The characteristic features of such attempts are rep-

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–24.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26–28.

²⁵ The research to date on the history of Japanese education in the region includes: Kawakami Naoe, “Senryō ka no Chūgoku Kahoku chihō ni okeru Nihongo kyōin yōsei kikan no yakuwari: Shō, tokubetsu shiritsu shihan gakkō sotugyōsha no shinro to shakai deno Nihongo juyō kara [The role of Japanese instructor training in occupied Northern China: The careers of graduates from special normal colleges and the social demand for Japanese language skills],” in *Nihongo Kyōiku*, no. 125, April 2005; *idem*, “Senryō ka no Chūgoku Kahoku chihō ni okeru Nihongo kyōiku: Nihonjin Nihongo kyōshi to Chūgokujin Nihongo kyōshi o megutte [Japanese education in occupied Northern China: The affiliation between Japanese and Chinese instructors],” in *Kotoba to Bunka*, no. 5, March 2004; Ishida Hiroshi, “Dai niji sekaitaisen ki Pekin ni okeru jinbun shakai keizai kei kōtō kyōiku oyobi Nihongo kyōiku no tenkai katei: Nakanome Akira (inchō, shochō) o chūshin ni (2) [Curricula and Japanese education in humanities and social science high school education in Beijing during World War II: The experience of school principals (2)],” *Fukuyama Daigaku Jinbun-Kagakubu Kiyō*, no. 5, March 2005; Nakamura Shigeo, “Senbu kōsaku to shiten Nihongo kyōiku ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: Moto senbu kan eno shomen chōsa kara [On Japanese language education as a propaganda tool: A bibliographical survey of appeasement officials],” in *Nihongo Kyōiku*, no. 120, January 2004; *idem*, “(Chōsa hōkoku) Dai Nihon gun senbu han to *Nihongo Kaiwa Dokuhon*: Nicchū 15 nen sensō ki Kahoku ni okeru Nihongo kyōiku no ichi danmen [Survey report on the Japanese military propaganda unit and *Nihongo Kaiwa Dokuhon*: One aspect of Japanese education in occupied Northern China],” in *Nihongo Kyōiku*, no. 115,

resented in the frequently cited August 1941 report of the East Asia Development Board's northern China liaison office.²⁶

The popularization of Japanese will linguistically give rise to a sense of intimacy with Japan in addition to helping Chinese in all walks of life to better understand Japanese mentality and national sentiment. What will result is a spirit of cooperation in building a new East Asian order and developing Eastern culture. Japanese will be promoted as the compulsory language of the new East Asian order.

Dissemination would proceed along three lines: school education, mass education and “other” forms. The first involved the compilation of a Japanese textbook by the Northern China Board of Education, and the dispatch of teachers from Japan to train Chinese instructors. The second involved setting up a Japanese competency test and a system of rewarding those who passed it. Other measures included setting up the Japanese Association as the principle agency for dissemination operating a central Japanese academy, which would form a Japanese research institute in northern China for training local instructors and direct teaching. In practice, such a system was very limited in both implementation, scope and effectiveness. However, efforts to utilize such institutions as schools did progress mainly at the hands of Japanese activists through the cooperation of grass roots organizations.

The Kōa Liaison Office also drew up an education agenda for the

October 2002; Fukagawa Harumichi, “Tenri-kyō no Nihongo kyōiku shi (5): Kahoku no Nihongo gakkō ni tsuite [History of Japanese education conducted by the Tenri Sect (5): The Japanese school in Northern China],” in *Tenri Daigaku Oyasato Kenkyūjo Nenpō*, no 9, 2002; Shiga Mikio, “Nicchū sensō jī no Pekin ni okeru Nihongo jugyō kenkyū: Kahoku Nihongo kyōiku kenkyūjo no katsudō [Japanese language education in Beijing during the 2nd Sino-Japanese War: The activities of the North China Japanese educationr research institute],” in *Nihongo Kyōiku*, March 1995; Saitō Shūichi, “Pekin Daigaku shozō Nihon Kyōiku shi kankei shomoku (shiryō) [Sources Cited in *History of Japanese Education* in the Archives of Beijing University],” in *Nihongo to Nihongo Kyōiku*, no. 15, Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Kokusai Sentā [International Center of Keio University], 1986.

²⁶Kōain Kahoku Renrakubu, *Hokushi ni okeru bunkyōno genjō* [Education in Northern China], July 1941, pp. 80–103.

region:²⁷

Eliminating the remnants of pro-communist, anti-Japanese indoctrination and completely correcting the ill effects of Western influences are essentially accomplished by promoting better understanding of the new East Asian situation and recognition of the inevitability and necessity of peaceful coexistence among the nations of the region, together with making Japanese mentality the nucleus of Eastern morality. The firm adoption of and belief in the idea that such a new order is the only way by which China and its people will be rescued from their present troubles and by which East Asia as a whole will achieve lasting peace and prosperity is the key to our efforts.

[Japanese teachers] are to instill in their students complete trust in Japanese scholarship and scholars through their own pursuit of intellectual and academic worth, in order to illicit respect and aspiration.

[Mixed gender curricula are to be replaced in order to] foster traditional Asian feminine morality, the noblest calling of women to concentrate on being good wives and wise mothers.

Local conditions were to ever be kept in mind, and even Kokubu Tanetake, who had expressed doubts about direct aural-oral teaching methods, stated in November 1942, “Japanese is the expression of Japanese ideas... the purity and gentility expressed in Japanese is the key to unity [in Asia]... Japanese should be made the core curriculum for the radical reform of education in northern China.”²⁸

Together with introducing Japanese at all levels of school education, it was also introduced in all forms of local community activity. For the 50,000 primary school students of Beijing, “Before the outbreak of hostilities, they were being indoctrinated with anti-Japanese

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Kokubu Tanetake, “Daitōa Sensō isshū nen kinen o mukaete [Coming up to the first anniversary of the Great East Asian War],” in *Kahoku Nihongo*, vol. 1, no. 12, December 1942.

textbooks, but today they are learning Japanese in the classroom for at least six hours per week.” According to a July 1939 educational plan for youth job training centers in the west and north, academic sessions were to be held once a month, the July session included instruction in Japanese military duties and health, and the October and November sessions included Japanese language instruction.²⁹ There were of course Japanese lessons broadcast on the radio: a daily half-hour program in the morning for beginners, a half-hour of advanced lessons in the evening.³⁰

While radio broadcasting and out-of-school Japanese education at the regional community level was aimed at the adult masses of China, in fact, it targeted mainly the “upper classes” of society. One has to merely consider which strata of Japanese society today are the most fluent in Western languages. Although for the people of northern China learning Japanese was not as difficult as it may seem, one certainly cannot claim that it was widely spoken among the intellectual or upper classes there.³¹ What is meant by “targeted” here is the concentrated efforts made to train “the literati classes” for study abroad in Japan.³² It was hoped that study in Japan would lead to fluency in Japanese and a level of Japanization that produced a group of spokespeople, even government officials, able to communicate Japan’s hopes to their con-

²⁹ “Shina no shōgakusei [Chinese primary school students],” in *Hokushi*, 6th Month Issue, Shōwa 15 (1945); “Xijiao beijiao qingnian xunliansuo jiaoyu jihuaan [Proposed Plan (by Northern Beijing Police Headquarters) for youth training programs in Western and Northern suburbs],” July 1939, Beijing Metropolitan Library Archive: J181-7-119.

³⁰ “Diyi guangbo jiemu [Broadcast schedule],” 8 January 1943, Beijing Metropolitan Library Archive: J70.2-8.

³¹ Ōta Yoshikazu, “Kahoku ni okeru Nihongo no hin’i [The prestige of Japanese language skills in Northern China],” in *Nihongo*, vol. 3, no. 7, July 1943.

³² It has been estimated that during the war, approximately 7,000 foreign students from the “Co-Prosperity Sphere” studied in Japan, but this figure and the subject in general need more study. The pioneering work in the field is Kawaji Yuka, et. al, *Senji taisei ka no nōgyō kyōiku to Chūgoku jin ryūgakusei* [Agricultural education and Chinese foreign students in wartime Japan], Tokyo: Nōrin Tōkei Kyōkai, 2003. A review of the research to date on the subject can be found in Ōsato Hiroaki and Son Ansuk ed., *Chūgoku jin Nihon ryūgaku shi kenkyū no gendankai* [The present stage of research on the history of Chinese foreign students in Japan], Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 2002.

stituencies in northern China.

There is a district in Guangdong, northern China [sic] called Shōrei (Jiaoling in Chinese), which is very safe and secure... As to why Shōrei is such a peaceful community is due to the role of education in keeping it safe and secure... This shows just what the power of education and a newly appointed governor with an excellent grasp of Japan can do. Here is something that I have discussed with several people, including the counselor in charge of foreign students at Kyoto University. If we could train just one foreign student sent by the new regime with the character of that governor, who after one or two years would be appointed, or if the present regime would just appoint governors that refrain from exploiting their citizens, we would have more successes like Shōrei. From the place where I now reside, we have sent 250 students to Japan over the past few years. I can't speak for all of northern China, but with the proper training, there must be at least a hundred of such students who could be appointed to govern among the 131 districts of Hebei Province, which would result in 2 or 3 times improvement in the public safety that exists today, making it much easier to trade. This is why it is so important that you train these foreign students one by one with the care of a Japanese swordsmith and send them back to us.³³

In order to increase the number of “safe districts,” the number of Chinese foreign students were increased and a scholarship fund created to accommodate them. The fund provided for 25 students from Beijing recommended by the Japanese Foreign Ministry through the China Education Bureau and five students from Hebei.³⁴ Eleven of the Beijing

³³ Ogura Yoshio (Koa Education Association Chairman), “Zadan kai ‘Tairiku senryoku ka to bunkyō no kadai’ [Panel discussion ‘The war effort on the continent and the issue of education],” in *Nihongo*, vol. 4, no. 2, November 1941. Describing Guangdong as “North China” is somewhat farfetched. Shōrei (Jiaoling) is well-known Hakka neighborhood in Meixian. The so-called “enlightened” governor mentioned here was a native of Taiwan. The role of Taiwanese colonials as social intermediaries between Chinese and Japanese and what social status they enjoyed on the continent are issues that have yet to be studied.

³⁴ “Xuanba furi xuesheng [Students selected for study to Japan]” in *Xinmin bao*, 12 September 1939.

students were to be from schools run by the Bureau, one each from the middle school under the two Teachers Academies, the Physical Education Academy, the public upper middle schools, the Metropolitan Teachers College, and Upper Polytechnic Schools, totaling another 11, and the remaining three were left open to discretion.³⁵ Privately funded foreign students, which totaled seven as of September 1939, were also processed through the Education Bureau and issued permits.³⁶

Programs in northern China involving Japanese education and promoting a better understanding of Japan assumed Japanese guidance accompanied by Chinese collaboration. Such requirements by no means coincided with the idea that the spread of a Japanese mentality could only be conducted by native Japanese. Occupation and integration required the training of collaborators who spoke a different language and practiced different customs. One means for them to approach Japan and fully experience it up close was foreign study.

Notwithstanding, was it not also necessary for Japanese occupiers to come to some understanding of Chinese language and customs? The “one language only” idea was addressed by Ōki Ichirō, who thought that while Chinese was necessary to facilitate exchange on location in China, but there was also the danger that allowing Chinese only would result in the loss of Japan’s unique mentality and may result in a situation that had continuously occurred in China conquered by foreign peoples such as the Jurchen’s Jin Dynasty, Mongol’s Yuan Dynasty and Manchu’s Qing Dynasty.³⁷

3. Foreign Students’ Experience of Studing Abroad in Japan

A “see for yourself” approach to better understanding Japan better was experienced not only by students, but also Chinese teachers, scholars, rural leaders and everyday people, men and women alike. The proceedings of panel discussions that were held for returning students published in *Kōa* were filled with comments which Japanese

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9 September 1939.

³⁶ “Zifei liuri xue sheng, jiaobu guiding tujian fa [Privately funded foreign students: Recommendation guidelines],” in *Xinmin bao*, 17 September 1939.

³⁷ Ōki Ichirō, “Tango hitsuyō ron [The necessity of vocabulary],” in *Kōa*, no. 53, November 1943.

readers wanted to hear, like that of a returning school principal who described Japanese culture as “a moral system imbued with science” (No. 13, July 1940).

In contrast to short inspection tours of Japan as a means of promoting better understanding, prolonged periods of foreign study were designed to instill Japan’s mentality in students. The SMK incorporated the latter into its training programs, as related by the following memoir of a member by the name of Guo Yong.

I was requested to train as a teacher to help implement the enslavement curriculum for school children. On 1 April 1938, the SMK opened its central middle school teacher training center in Beiping (Beijing), catered mainly to university students in enrollments of about one hundred per term. A scholarship fund was also set up to finance inspection tours of Japan for nearly two-thirds of each graduating class, after which a few of the “honor students” would be chosen to attend the Tokyo Normal Academy for two or three years, funded by the government. It was one of the incentives they created for us to compete over who could be the most loyal slaves of Japan. Upon graduation, we were dispersed all over Hebei, Henan and Shandong Provinces to teach at local primary and middle schools.³⁸

A point worthily of paying special attention to is that “all students competed,” which indicates the implementing of programs in which applicants would spontaneously and voluntarily strove to get accepted.

The SMK was not the only Japanese organization to incorporate

³⁸ Guo Yong, “Kahoku senryōku no Shiminkai [The SMK in occupied Northern China],” in Pekin-shi Seikyo Bunshi Shiryō Kenkyū Linkai [Beijing shi zhengxie wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui] ed., Ōnuma Masahiro tra., Kojima Shinji intr., *Pekin no hinomaru: Taikensha ga tsuzuru senryōka no hitobito* [The rising sun over Beijing: Eyewitness reports of the Japanese occupation], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991, p. 44.

For more about the reconstruction of Japanese cultural operations in northern China through the eyes of its local residents, see Beijing shi zhengxie wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui ed., *Riwei tongzhixia de Beiping* [Beijing under so-called “Japanese governance”], Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 1987, and Qi Hongshen ed., *Riben duihua jiaoyu qinlüe* [Japan’s educational strategy for China], Beijing: Kunlun Chubanshe, 2005. However, more research needs to be done.

study abroad into its training programs. Persons with foreign study experience were regarded as important figures in occupied northern China, as they organized an alumni association in March 1938,³⁹ conversed in Japanese, and were expected, as local experts on Japan, to play a leading role in human resource development and get involved in the Foreign Ministry's cultural exchange programs.⁴⁰ The alumni association was an important victory in the effort to disseminate the use of the Japanese language and better understanding Japan itself, although members also included those who had experienced only short term inspection tours of Japan. A growing membership was promoted by the government through job offerings, financial assistance for study abroad, and improved public safety campaigns. The association became a center for not only Japanese language programs, but also for Japanese language contests and competency tests. In addition to the headquarters in Beijing, branches were set up in Tianjin, Kaifeng, Qingdao, Jinan, Baoding and Taiyuan. The association was designed to represent tangible proof of how study abroad, use of Japanese and respect for the Japanese way of life were stepping stones to success in occupied China.

One especially noteworthy educational program implemented by the alumni association was its founding and operation of the Kōa Upper Middle School.⁴¹ One of the school's planners, Kokubu Tanetake, who had previously been deeply involved in Japanese language education on Taiwan, was instrumental in solving a number of problems encountered by foreign students who wanted to study in Japan,

³⁹ “Liuri tongxuehui: Chenglihui chengxu ji benniandu gongzuo jihua [Plan for the Organization of a Foreign Student Alumni Association and first year of activities],” in *Xinmin bao*, 13 March 1938.

The requirement for membership was some kind of study in Japan, university or otherwise. Other alumni associations were formed according to university, like the Meiji and Waseda University Alumni Associations.

⁴⁰ “Pekin Dōgakukai Gogakkō Nichigohan josei kankei ikken [On subsidizing the Japanese program at Beijing Dogakukai Language School],” in Nihon Gaimushō honzon kiroku [Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] H.6.2.0.3. (The Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

⁴¹ Kokubu Tanetake, “Pekin Kōa Kōkyū Chūgakkō gaikyō [The situation in Upper Kōa Middle Schools in Beijing],” in *Chugoku Ryūnichi Dōgakkai Kikan*, no. 3, March 1943, pp. 149–154.

resulting in a program that prepared Japan for catering to the needs of foreign students. The Kōa Middle School enrolled 30 graduates of Chinese lower middle schools for two and a half years in a curriculum comparable to the Chinese system, but teaching Japanese, with the goal of sending students to high schools and polytechnic institutes in Japan.⁴² The reason for the extra half year stemmed from the gap between Japanese and Chinese educational requirements. Graduates of the Kōa program who completed their study abroad could expect to be employed in such occupations as civil servants helping the Japanese govern northern China. According to Kokubu,

The objective is to prepare students for study in Japan through Japanese and natural science courses. Japanese preparatory course: 26 hours per week; main course 12 hours per week. The preparatory course will teach students to read primary through middle school textbooks and the newspaper, and to comprehend and answer questions in Japanese... The course will continue for the first half year following entrance, at which time the main course will begin, in which the required subjects will be taught in Japanese. The whole curriculum is designed to enable students to study at schools in Japan.⁴³

On the other hand, Kokubu did not support the existing Japanese educational system's treatment of Japanese and foreign students on an equal level and sought special consideration for the latter. He campaigned for the introduction of a system especially geared to foreign students in order to train Chinese leaders in the shortest period of time. On the other hand, the fact that such an artificial system was sought after attests to a definite institutional insufficiency in China and the existence of serious limitations to the Japanese hope of being only in-

⁴² Before this development, Chinese foreign students first studied Japanese at the Kōa Academy in downtown Tokyo, then went on to local high schools and polytechnic colleges. See Zhang Jintu, “Senzen no Nihon ni okeru Chūgokujin ryūgakusei ni taisuru Nihongo kyōiku no rekisiteki kenkyū: Tōa gakkō o chūshin ni [A historical study of Japanese language education for Chinese foreign students in Prewar Japan: The case of the Toa Academy],” in *Nihongo Kyōiku*, July 1995.

⁴³ Kokubu Tanetake, “Pekin Kōa Kōkyū Chūgakkō gaikyō,” *op. cit.*, p. 149.

directly involved in the governance of the region.

Moreover, the day-to-day operations of the Kōa Academy were also called into question, beginning with a memo from the foreign minister. “According to what I have heard, the Chinese teachers at the school are not well regarded, and the applicants are both lacking in numbers and credentials...”⁴⁴ Another important aspect is that despite the SMK being attached to the Northern Chinese Expeditionary Forces, it continued to emphasize foreign study as the best means for training collaborators. No change occurred in the SMK’s belief that mere Japanese language and culture studies or cultural contact were not sufficient to become a collaborator who was expected to acquire “things Japanese” and internalize them; study in Japan was the most important key. However, it is doubtful whether study or living abroad *per se* would enable the internalization of foreign culture, for either Chinese studying in Japan or Japanese residing in China. The idea that coming to Japan and acquiring a sense of “Japanese-ness” seems to stem from the perception of a concentric Co-Prosperity Sphere with Japan at the center, which is identical to the traditional Chinese world view that those who come into contact with a superior culture will be naturally drawn to it.

Conclusion

The present article focused on the subject of cultural policy in Japanese occupied northern China with a special attention brought to the political action group called the Shinminkai (SMK) to investigate its topology, especially in terms of attempts to introduce “Japanese-ness” into the region through such means as Japanese language, cultural study and programs for studying abroad in Japan, and to what limits “Japanese-ness” could be stretched without irreparably changing it.

⁴⁴ Arita daijin yori zai Pekin Fujii sanjikan ate, Kōa Kōkyū Chūgaku sotsugyōsha no senbatsu ryūgakusei ni saiyō no ken [Draft of a letter from Foreign Affairs Minister Arita to Beijing Embassy Counselor Fujii], 13 May 1945, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, Ref. Code B05015477400; Nihon Gaimushō honzon kiroku [Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] B-H-05-02-00-01-01-00-02 (The Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Under these wartime conditions and in the attempt to form a co-prosperity sphere in East Asia, Japanese policymakers were determined to oppose not only Western cultural imperialism, but also the ideals upheld by both the Chinese nationalist (GMD) regime in Chongqing and the communist (CCP) regime in Yan'an concerning how the people should be governed. In lieu of these ideologies, Japan offered its own “Japanese-ness.” Such idea of “Japanese-ness” was presented not as indigenous culture, but rather as universal attributes that could be adopted by non-Japanese peoples. Nevertheless, the idea that Japanese indigenous culture and mentality reigned supreme never wavered, as proven by the idea that first native Japanese should teach foreigners their ways, then those foreigners who so adopted Japanese attributes could then teach them to their own people. On the other hand, there was the notion that foreigners who adopted Japanese ways would not consequently become identical to Japanese but rather become situated somewhere “in between” indigenous Japanese and indigenous local society. However, trying to communicate such a difficult idea was approached through promoting the use of Japanese and the adoption of Japanese mental attributes in the hope that those who did speak, act and think Japanese could be organized into a system of collaborators working to implement Japanese policy. What occurred as a result was a meritocracy that equated success with the degree to which a person had been “Japanized.”

The emphasis laid on speaking Japanese stemmed from the idea that an understanding of Japan’s language would be the first step in understanding other things Japanese. This is why many Japanese language academies were set up as vehicles enabling the best students to ultimately study other Japanese subjects in Japan, where they would internalize them and help the Japanese build the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere around a Japanese core. The human resource training programs and the joint cooperation shown by their graduates were intended to visibly show the region how Japan’s plan for co-prosperity was supposed to work.⁴⁵ However, there were serious barriers to successfully implement such a model; and even if it were implemented, the number of collaborators trained in Japan and working at the local level would be extremely limited.

⁴⁵ Kokubu Tanetake, “Pekin Kōa Kōkyū Chūgakkō gaikyō,” *op. cit.*

The discussion offered in this article will hopefully lead to further study on the methodological question of whether or not the situation in the north was comparable to the rest of China, the obvious question not dealt with here of how did Chinese society react to the ideology of a “Japanese dream,” and the historical question of whether the attitudes in China about studying Japanese language and culture prior to the War were continued, criticized, or merely forgotten after the end of the War in 1945.