Translating the Occupation

The Japanese Invasion of China, 1931–45

Edited by Jonathan Henshaw,
Craig A. Smith, and Norman Smith

UBCPress · Vancouver · Toronto

Contents

Introduction

Discarding Binaries and Embracing Heteroglossia

JONATHAN HENSHAW, CRAIG A. SMITH,
and NORMAN SMITH

Twenty years after Jiang Wen's 2000 film *Guizi laile!* (Devils on the doorstep!) captured the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival, his tragic but sympathetic portrayal of those living in Japanese-occupied Hebei may no longer seem very surprising. At the time, however, Jiang's depiction of the assistance given to a Japanese soldier and this translator by Chinese villagers was not only controversial, it was banned by Chinese censors who were not able to look beyond the national narrative of a collaboration/resistance dichotomy.[1] Both historical memories and political directives have long held that narrative firmly in place. This national narrative delineates the rise of the Chinese nation through righteous battle and marginalizes alternative understandings of that era's history. In the 1930s, when the Japanese military began occupying large swathes of Chinese territory, China was in a state of disunity, with local elites presiding over a vast patchwork in which people lived different lives, spoke different languages, and encountered different experiences. While China today is by no means monolithic, the forces that shape historical memories have long emphasized the standard narrative that the occupation, and the greater war, galvanized the Chinese people as one in resistance to a common enemy – captured in the slogan *kangRi* (Resist Japan).[2] The enormity and simplicity of this narrative has shaped subsequent perceptions of the occupation, polarized understandings of the actions of the occupied, and homogenized an unequivocally heterogeneous cacophony of voices.

To excavate these voices, this volume introduces, contextualizes, and translates a broad range of primary sources written by a variety of men and women across China. The texts have been selected in order to deepen understandings of the myriad tensions, transformations, and continuities that persisted, seemingly heedless of monumental historical events during the Japanese occupation of China. Despite the enduring importance of that

occupation to world history and contemporary East Asia, this is the first English-language volume to offer sources in such a way. Specialists on wartime history from institutions in six different countries were selected to provide expertise on a range of disciplines and subjects, and to translate sources from Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Each scholar has provided a translation accompanied by a short, explanatory essay to contextualize the translation, speak to its importance, and place the occupation within a broader social, political, and cultural context.

This volume offers multifaceted views of the occupation that enrich knowledge of the period and encourage further much-needed comparative analysis. A dearth of English-language materials has resulted in the persistence of Eurocentric analyses of the Second World War in history and historical memories, just as nationalist realities have simplified and polarized discourses in East Asia. Despite its epochal importance and enduring influence in contemporary Asia, Japan's occupation of vast regions of China remains inadequately understood, both in the context of modern Asian history and the broader history of the Second World War. Indeed, it was only in 2013 that a history of the war that narrated events from Chongqing, Yan'an, and Nanjing was published in English, while such a work fully incorporating Manchukuo has yet to be written.[3]

In the decades immediately following the occupation, academic inquiries on the period were frequently shaped or stymied by shifting political agendas, with many scholars focusing on the rise of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the revolutions it launched to transform the nation. In China, at popular levels and in overarching master narratives, portrayals of the war were seldom allowed to venture beyond nationalistic narratives of patriotic Chinese resistance or traitorous collaboration, amid horrific Japanese atrocities. Accordingly, by working to deepen understandings of how the war unfolded and to introduce previously marginalized voices, this volume is an effort to develop more complex comprehensions of China's twentieth-century history that go beyond the dominant national narratives.

In 1972, American historian Gerald Bunker gave voice to the lingering international contempt that obscured the occupation period in his assessment of texts produced by the 1940 to 1945 Reorganized National Government of the Republic of China under Wang Jingwei (1883–1944), dismissing them as "nothing more than the most mindless and trivial sort of propaganda with little historical value."[4] More recently, however, scholars have begun to engage more seriously with these texts in a way that places them within the complex moral landscape of wartime occupation.

In China, Japan, and across the English-speaking world, linguistic barriers, restrictions on access to source materials, and the fuelling of highly politicized nationalist narratives have left little room for developing a history of the war that is transnational, nuanced, and less bound by nationalist myth-making or Eurocentrism. In China, historical memory of the wartime era has been reemphasized from the 1980s onward to form a cultural trauma of occupation that is continually relived and reinforced through popular media; according to cultural critic Zhu Dake: "War stories make up about 70 percent of drama on Chinese television."[5] The CCP continues to manipulate that history as a fount of bitter nationalism, enabled in part by the Japanese government's failure to fully accept responsibility for the very real atrocities perpetrated by its military on Chinese neighbours. Following the CCP lead, many Chinese-language studies have tended to focus on perspectives that promote nationalist narratives and avoid moral complexity, dismissing those who served in Japan's various occupation states as "traitors to the Chinese" (*Hanjian*) and viewing those who lived in occupied territory with suspicion.

However, in academic discourse, there have been efforts to complicate these narratives, and such work has accelerated in the twenty-first century. Yang Kuisong has related the surge of studies to the great release of source materials and published collections that has been ongoing since the reform and greater openness of the 1980s.[6] Even taking into account recent restrictions on access to primary sources in China, historians have more material to work with than ever before and have risen to the challenges on offer. Yang Kuisong is certainly not the only historian to investigate these issues. Take, for example, popular Hui scholar Zhang Chengzhi's moving discussion of Japanese Asianists who devoted their lives to the betterment of minorities in China's borderlands.[7] Han Chinese intellectuals in the 1930s inevitably interpreted these actions as acts of empire.[8] Indeed, whether well-intentioned or not, such actions contributed to the growing hegemony of the Japanese Empire (1879–1945), just as similar actions supported American hegemony in Afghanistan and, today, function for the Chinese state in Tibet, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and elsewhere at its periphery. In terms of Japanese imperialism, literary scholar and historian Zhang Quan has recently argued that Chinese experiences of occupation differed by region, and that those differences must be critically examined – through Sinicizing Western methodologies and localizing Chinese research methods.[9]

In Japan, as in many post-imperial states, memories of the country's imperialist past have created fissures in today's society, fuelling controversies

and continuing to influence the political realm and national identities.[10] Some Japanese textbooks tend toward nationalist narratives that shift blame away from even the most complicit individuals or organizations, but, as in China, the occupation is a popular (if fraught) subject for academic study and is profoundly political. Due to the sickening level of well-documented violence, the Nanjing Massacre of 1937–38 remains at the centre of divisive discourse on the war and the occupation. A litmus test of political perspective, particularly since the proliferation of historical studies in the 1980s, the Nanjing Massacre continues to divide what Takashi Yoshida labels as progressive and revisionist voices.[11] Revisionists such as Higashinakano Shudo continue to deny the massacre. A few historians, such as Kasahara Tokushi, fiercely oppose the revisionists with evidence of war crimes, while popular "centrists" such as Hata Ikuhito attempt to find a middle ground, by challenging the number of fatalities and questioning alleged atrocities, but still condemning the massacre in general.[12] This plurality is much preferred to the recent past, when historian Saburō Ienaga had to undertake a series of lawsuits against the Japanese government from 1965 to 1997 over state censorship of his work on Japanese war crimes.

With East Asia still riven by disputes over wartime history, leading Canadian scholars Diana Lary and Timothy Brook, both of whom participated in the workshops leading to this volume, have returned attention to the occupation and brought previously dominant narratives into question.[13] Scholarly studies, geopolitical change, and the desire to understand an era before those who experienced it are no longer with us have rekindled interest in the occupation, leading to collections such as this volume. Earlier source collections have concentrated on military incidents or diplomatic texts, for the most part ignoring other aspects of the occupation, and lack the contextualizing essays this volume offers, thereby making them less accessible to non-specialists. Timothy Brook's *Documents on the Rape of Nanking* sheds light on what many perceive to be the darkest period of the occupation through documents of the international community, the Nanking Safety Zone, and personal correspondence.[14] Suping Lu's *A Dark Page in History* is a collection of British diplomatic dispatches, Admiralty documents, and US Naval Intelligence reports.[15] Donald Detwiler and Charles Burdick's *War in Asia and the Pacific* contains mostly wartime secondary sources, especially military reports, troop movements, and statistical reports, more suited as a reference work than for reconsidering more varied aspects of the war and occupation.[16] Collections with a broader focus have touched on the occupation but again highlight political and military aspects. David Atwill and

Yurong Atwill's *Sources in Chinese History* includes three pages on the occupation, all of which are government pronouncements.[17] Sven Saaler and Christopher Szpilman's *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History* has a number of excellent texts but is directed at intellectual and ideological essays and speeches, largely from Japan.[18]

In terms of sourcebooks on modern Chinese history, there are two main types: those that focus on primary sources, texts drafted by officials, ideologues, and literary people; and secondary sources produced from other forms of primary materials.[19] This volume falls firmly in the former category. The texts in this volume enable the reader to gain a firmer sense of how the occupation shaped official, intellectual, and popular cultures during a most tumultuous time.

As historians of twentieth-century China, we have an important goal in our work – to promote more fruitful comparative work and dialogue between East Asia specialists and our colleagues working on other areas. Beyond the barrier of language, a major challenge in this effort is the sheer complexity of working with texts produced under circumstances of invasion, occupation, or colonization. Accordingly, we have designed this project along very particular lines. A key feature of our approach is the use of scholarly translation, which lends itself well to the challenges of language, interpretation, and moral judgment that inevitably arise while researching a topic as charged as imperialist occupation. By drawing on the expertise of specialists working on wartime history, we place at the reader's disposal not only translations of primary source documents but the contextual information necessary to further interpret and make sense of them. This engagement with, and attention to, context invites the reader to begin evaluation of each text closer to the environment in which the author wrote, unburdened with the knowledge of how the war might end or what subsequent events might occur. More than that, the deep engagement involved in scholarly translation offers a useful bulwark against the rush to judgment that comes from nationalist narratives. The introduction to each translation enlarges on the meanings, contexts, and authorship of the text to draw us nearer to an understanding of the occupation as it unfolded, at particular points of time, as experienced by those who actually lived through it.

A long-standing problem in the study of wartime China has been the persistence of the collaboration/resistance binary as a means of positioning various individuals and factions during the conflict. Although that binary has long been called into question, it endures as an alluring form of analysis. A prime example of this is Pei-kai Cheng, Michael Lestz, and Jonathan

Spence's still-popular *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection,* which condemns Wang Jingwei's "shameless collaboration," dismissing out of hand Wang's explanation of his beliefs in a 1941 radio address.[20] Such characterizations are not uncommon, even after the groundbreaking intervention of Poshek Fu, who proposed a tripartite mode of intellectual responses to the "grey zone" of Japanese occupation in his 1993 monograph *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration.*[21]

Rather than attempting further refinements or offering up additional schemas for the broad spectrum of wartime behaviour that historians have long grappled with, this volume is framed around "occupation." As suggested above, the terminology surrounding "collaboration" in China (as elsewhere) remains morally freighted, leading Dongyoun Hwang to aptly describe "traitor" and "*Hanjian*" as "term[s] in the rhetoric of power that legitimates other ideologies."[22] "Occupation," by contrast, is a less freighted term demarcating a period when the existing order of a state is swept away and a foreign power props up a new one, militarily, often in the face of local responses that ranged from armed resistance to passivity to self-serving acquiescence and shifted as the war unfolded. Within this framework, this volume represents an effort to spur further reflection on the thoughts and actions of individuals who remained active in public life under Japanese-occupied territory, with particular attention to the varieties of Pan-Asianism, Sun Yat-sen thought, Confucianism and Marxism that occupation officials, ideologues, politicians, and literary types advocated from within the various occupation states sponsored by Japan.

Scholarly translation and the application of a more analytical, less condemnatory approach to sources produced under and within Japan's occupation states reveal the intense ideological competition and blurring of boundaries that characterized the period. As the following chapters suggest, those who served in the occupation states were not a uniform group that emerged from nowhere. In many cases, their careers in prewar Chinese politics are crucial for understanding their occupation activities. At the same time, the work they did was more complex than simply regurgitating Japanese propaganda points. A more careful analysis reveals elements of subversion, either by advancing a covertly CCP world view, or by defending a China defined in terms of the prewar Republican state and its Three Principles of the People ideology, or by incorporating other indigenous streams of thought.[23] Accordingly, the individuals who staffed the occupation state and remained in public life, and who took the opportunity to advance an agenda (ideological or personal) that was stymied prior to invasion, should

be recognized not only as more complex than the still-popular *Hanjian* caricatures allow but as representatives of the full complexity of prewar Chinese politics. If scholars accept the idea that the resistance/collaboration binary is (at least theoretically) insufficient to capture the complexities of occupation, then a contribution of this volume will be to provoke increasingly critical approaches to the full range of activity and personality that have hitherto been shoehorned into the categories of "collaboration," "*Hanjian*" and "puppet," to name a few.

Implicit in this approach, including the use of scholarly translation, is the issue of judgment. In 2005, Timothy Brook emphasized the ambiguity of decision-making processes, arguing that historians should refrain from making moral judgments on acts of so-called collaboration that cannot be fully understood today. Continuing this discussion, the February 2012 issue of the *Journal of Asian Studies* featured three articles revealing considerable disagreement on questions of moral judgment and the role of the scholar in studies of wartime collaboration, particularly as John Whittier Treat argued that moral adjudication is possible and understandable, taking Korean writer Yi Kwang-su (1895–1950) and his love for Japan as an example. Treat explains that this kind of judgment of those who work with the enemy "has to do with what we fundamentally are."[24] In the same issue, Timothy Brook emphasized that in due time regime changes further challenge questions of collaboration and resistance and repeated that historians should hesitate before making moral claims.[25] Whether historians should make moral judgments on their subject matter remains a question for many scholars. But how do our decisions to judge shape the histories that we construct?

Writing on the 1791 to 1804 Haitian Revolution, Michel-Rolph Trouillot asserted that the silencing of the revolution in Western historiography was "due to uneven power in the production of sources, archives, and narratives."[26] The same is true of the production of history in any time and place, yet regarding the Japanese occupation of China, the Chinese narrative – the victorious rise of the nation and people from tragedy – has taken on such power and is delivered with such apparent simplicity and "truth" that "Resist Japan" has dictated historical construction for decades. Putting aside moral questions, this dominance has inevitably obscured details that can inform, challenge, or even substantiate the master narrative. This volume addresses that paucity of details in the hope that it will inspire further work on the period.

Translating the Occupation: The Japanese Invasion of China, 1931–45 is divided into three parts: "Manchukuo," "East China," and "North China and

Beyond." In each region, Japanese imperialism in mainland China developed in a distinct manner. To accentuate these distinctions, we have selected readings from a wide variety of persons and topics, ranging from education to the "woman question," and much beyond and in between. Some of the authors were leading figures of their time, such as the well-known Chinese intellectual Zhou Zuoren. Others were less prominent, including Japanese agricultural colonists and Korean sex workers. By attending to the contexts in which these texts were produced and the varied perspectives they provide, we hope to shed valuable new light on life in China under Japanese occupation and demonstrate the utility of scholarly translation for advancing academic discussions on contentious historical topics.

Notes

1 Peter Hays Gries, "China's 'New Thinking' on Japan," *China Quarterly* 184 (2005): 835.
2 The term "Second Sino-Japanese War" is commonly used in English-language literature on the China-Japan conflict from 1937 to 1945. In mainland China, the conflict is called the "Chinese War of Resistance against Japan," and is sometimes dated from 1931. In Japan, the terms are "China Incident," "Japan-China Incident," or, from 1941, the "Greater East Asia War." We have encouraged contributors to this volume to decide what term is most appropriate in their work.
3 Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013).
4 Gerald E. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 272.
5 Cited in Aly Song, "China's World of Anti-Japan War Films," 23 August 2013, *Reuters: The Wider Image,* https://widerimage.reuters.com/story/chinas-world-of-anti-japan-war-films.
6 Yang Kuisong, *Guizi laile* [The devils have come] (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2016), 173–75.
7 Zhang Chengzhi, *Zunzhong yu xibie: Zhi Riben* [Respect and reluctance at our parting: For Japan] (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chuban gongsi, 2008).
8 Ge Zhaoguang, *What Is China? Territory, Ethnicity, Culture, and History,* trans. Michael Gibbs Hill (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).
9 For example, see the 2018 essay by Zhang Quan, "Zhongguo lunxian qu wenyi yanjiu de fangfa wenti: Yi Du Zanqi de 'Manzhouguo' xiangxiang wei zhongxin" [Methodological problems in the study of literature and art in China's enemy-occupied territories: Taking Prasenjit Duara's imagination of "Manchuria" as the centre], *Wenyi piping* [Literary criticism], 30 July 2018, http://www.sohu.com/a/244095274_754344.
10 Akiko Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.
11 Takashi Yoshida, *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
12 Hata Ikuhito, *Nankin jiken: "Gyakusatsu" no kōzō* [The Nanjing Incident: The structure of a "massacre"] (Tōkyō: Chūōkōronshinsha, 2007); Kasahara Tokushi, *Nankin jiken ronsōshi: Nihonjin wa shijitsu o dō ninshikishitekitaka* [A history of debates on the Nanjing Incident: On the Japanese people's understanding of the historical facts] (Tōkyō: Heibonsha), 2007.

13 For example, see Diana Lary and Stephen R. MacKinnon, eds., *The Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001); Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); and Diana Lary, *The Chinese People at War: Human Suffering and Social Transformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
14 Timothy Brook, ed., *Documents on the Rape of Nanking* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
15 Suping Lu, ed., *A Dark Page in History: The Nanjing Massacre and Post-Massacre Social Conditions Recorded in British Diplomatic Dispatches, Admiralty Documents, and US Naval Intelligence Reports* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2012).
16 Donald S. Detwiler and Charles Burdick, eds., *War in Asia and the Pacific, 1937–1949: A Fifteen Volume Collection* (New York: Garland, 1980).
17 David Atwill and Yurong Atwill, eds., *Sources in Chinese History* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009).
18 Sven Saaler and Christopher W.A. Szpilman, eds., *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History, 1920–Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011).
19 We thank an anonymous reader for drawing our attention to this significance. Two examples of the first type are Patricia Ebrey, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook* (New York: Free Press, 1981) and Wm. Theodore De Bary and Richard Lufrano, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 through the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). An example of the second type is Kenneth J. Hammond and Kristin Stapleton, eds., *The Human Tradition in Modern China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).
20 Pei-kai Cheng, Michael Elliot Lestz, and Jonathan D. Spence, eds., *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014).
21 Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), xiv.
22 Dongyoun Hwang, "Wang Jingwei, the Nanjing Government and the Problem of Collaboration" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1999), 20.
23 For a recent discussion of this, see Annika A. Culver, "Introduction" in *Manchukuo Perspectives: Transnational Approaches to Literary Production,* ed. Annika A. Culver and Norman Smith (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019), 1–10.
24 John Whittier Treat, "Choosing to Collaborate: Yi Kwang-su and the Moral Subject in Colonial Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71, 1 (February 2012): 81–102.
25 Timothy Brook, "Hesitating before the Judgment of History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71, 1 (February 2012): 112.
26 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History,* 2nd rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 27.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: Translating the occupation: the Japanese invasion of China,1931–45 / edited by Jonathan Henshaw, Craig A. Smith, and Norman Smith.

Names: Henshaw, Jonathan, editor. | Smith, Craig A., editor. | Smith, Norman (Associate Professor), editor.

Description: Includes texts translated from Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20200289659 | Canadiana (ebook) 20200289780 | ISBN 9780774864466 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780774864480 (PDF) | ISBN 9780774864497 (EPUB)

Subjects: LCSH: Sino-Japanese Conflict, 1931–1933 – Sources – Translations into English. | LCSH: Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945 – Sources – Translations into English. | LCSH: China – History – 1928–1937 – Sources – Translations into English. | LCSH: China – History – 1937–1945 – Sources – Translations into English. | LCSH: China – Social conditions – 1912–1949 – Sources – Translations into English.

Classification: LCC DS777.5 .T73 2020 | DDC 951.04/2 - dc23

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada (through the Canada Book Fund) and the British Columbia Arts Council.

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Set in Museo, Warnock, Univers Black, and SimSun by Artegraphica Design Co.
Copy editor: Sarah Wight
Proofreader: Alison Strobel
Indexer: Noeline Bridge
Cover designer: David Drummond
Cartographer: Eric Leinberger

UBC Press
The University of British Columbia
2029 West Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2
www.ubcpress.ca