

AMERICAN STUDIES OF WANG JINGWEI:
DEFINING NATIONALISM

by
Jian-Yue Chen

Wang Jingwei, “veteran revolutionary leader, [and] champion of republicanism, democracy, and national independence,” has remained one of the most controversial figures in the history of republican China because he ended up as the head of the Chinese collaborationist government during World War II.¹ Ever since both the Communist and Nationalist governments have condemned Wang as a national traitor (*hanjian*) as both claim to solely represent the nation. Chinese scholars who have written along the “party lines” have downplayed, if not totally omitted or twisted, Wang’s earlier contributions to modern China.² Little wonder that Wang has been among the very few Guomindang leaders “still hovering in historical obscurity.”³

In sharp contrast, leading collaborationists in China’s neighboring nations experienced little or no punishment at all during the postwar years. On the contrary, many became nationalist leaders for their newly independent nations, despite the fact that these nations were heavily influenced by the Chinese tradition of filial piety or loyalty to the nation. Recent research on wartime collaborationism of these nations, plus the latest revisionist reassessment of Japanese military occupation of Manchuria and Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan, has made obsolete our scholarship on Wang Jingwei, particularly his collaboration with Japan. Besides, a fair assessment of Wang’s contributions to preserving Chinese territory and saving millions of innocent Chinese people when he collaborated with the Japanese will add to a better understanding of the complexity of Chinese nationalism and its special wartime version—collaborationism.

Since the studies of Wang Jingwei have not surpassed the partisan lines either in Taiwan or Mainland China, this essay starts with an evaluation of American studies of Wang since World War II, for American scholars who supposedly enjoy more academic freedom could or should have expressed themselves more freely than their Chinese counterparts. After evaluating American studies of Wang, the essay then focuses on why a fair and nonpartisan reassessment of

Wang and Chinese wartime collaborationism must be done and can be done. By analyzing these issues in their historical and cultural context, this essay attempts to define the ever-evading or exclusive meaning of nationalism.

American Studies of Wang Jingwei

Nationalism or Confucian filial piety to the nation makes it difficult for Chinese scholars to remain neutral in their studies of the leading collaborationist Wang Jingwei. No doubt, Wang's wartime collaboration with Japan defined China as a modern nation either by the Communists or the Nationalists. Sometimes even American scholars who claim to enjoy more freedom of speech find it difficult to maintain impartiality on such controversial issues as wartime collaborationism, as their approaches are often influenced by both the domestic and international situation, and by their personal beliefs or concerns.⁴ Since the end of World War II, American studies of Wang Jingwei have witnessed roughly three schools of thought.

Without exception, American scholars who lived through the war years denounced Wang Jingwei either as an opportunist or simply a villain.⁵ Although it was Japan and not China that drew admiration among the great majority of American people and their statesmen before Pearl Harbor, Japan's surprise attack on the U.S. changed Americans' perception of the island nation. Japan turned almost overnight into a fanatical enemy of the United States. It is no surprise that American scholars of the day condemned Japanese aggression and treated Chinese collaborationists as Japanese puppets.⁶

In the 1950s when China turned Communist, the United States needed Japan as an ally to contain so-called Communist expansion in the region against the global backdrop of the Cold War. Thus, Japan once again became a good guy in the American eyes. In comparison Nationalist China under Jiang Jieshi, a former wartime ally of the United States, was still considered a bad guy, as he was blamed for America's "loss of China" to the Communists. As a result, American scholars of the 1950s tended to criticize the United States' earlier support of Jiang, whose regime was depicted as an incompetent and corrupt one.⁷ Such criticism led to revisionist works on Wang Jingwei, Jiang's archrival, though most of them centered on Wang's life before he became a Japanese collaborator. Such a focus enabled

the American academics to avoid the tough and sensitive issue of evaluating Wang's role as a Japanese collaborationist.

The revisionist school treats the prewar Wang Jingwei as a national hero, an important leader for Chinese modernization, and an unbending fighter for Chinese democracy. This approach later influenced the authors of two Ph.D. dissertations. Completed in 1967 and 1971 and focusing on Wang's peace efforts, the two works signify that Wang helped save millions of Chinese in occupied China while collaborating with the Japanese occupiers, though the Japanese harsh demands tarnished his reputation and, therefore, limited his success.⁸

In a subsequent article, Lin Han-sheng, author of one of the dissertations, furthered his pro-Wang Jingwei argument by considering Wang's peace efforts a "continuation of the early policies of Sun Zhongshan and the leftists." Had Wang's prewar "appeasement" policy toward Japan continued, Lin argued, China might have been able to avoid the war with Japan. The author who had personally survived the Japanese occupation was convinced that only peace would have helped China "reconstruct itself and thereby survive" as a modern nation under a hostile situation both at home and abroad.⁹ Gerald E. Bunker, a scholar of Sino-Japanese relations, agrees with Lin that Wang had a noble intention to rescue the nation and save millions of common Chinese through his collaboration with Japan. But, Bunker insists that Wang's yielding to Japanese demands led his peace efforts to fall short.¹⁰

Bunker's mixed coloring of Wang Jingwei was nothing but new. In 1964, Howard L. Boorman published a short biography of Wang, treating him as "a many-sided man." A romantic poet and a political realist, Wang made peace with Japan in an attempt to "ensure China's safety and security." Unfortunately, Wang "perished more for his follies than for his sins," as he simply followed what his mentor Sun Zhongshan had always done. Sun had often turned to Japan for help whenever necessary, even if such help meant sacrificing Chinese national interests. In addition to his "miscalculation, poor timing, and exiguous foresight," the collaborationist Wang lost his cause also because he failed to create "any unified body of political doctrine" or establish "an integrated political organization." Boorman admires Wang as "a man of high morality and political integrity," regardless

of his failure to achieve his goal.¹¹

While stopping short of criticizing the earlier negative scholarship on Wang Jingwei, Boorman praises his efforts “to maintain maximum integrity and to preserve maximum rights from a brutal enemy which had permitted the rape of Nanking [Nanjing] in December 1937.” Boorman further reminds the reader of the context in which Wang set up his government. By the time the collaborationist government was established in Nanjing, China had received little foreign aid while the Chongqing government offered the people in occupied China no assistance but demanded they fight to “the bitter end.” Boorman concludes that Wang’s noble intention to reduce the suffering of the people in occupied China and his success in doing so, no matter how limited or little it was, explained the little public remonstrance or violence against Chinese collaborationists following Japan’s surrender.¹²

By the late-1960s Japan had achieved economic “miracles.” With such economic success Tokyo dared to say “No” to Washington. In this context Japan-bashing appeared within the American academic world. At the same time a third school of thought in the studies of Wang Jingwei and his collaboration with Japan arose. Scholars of this school attempted to modify or compromise the two previous, yet opposite, approaches.

According to John Hunter Boyle, Wang Jingwei, in spite of his high profile, fell short with his peace mission because Japan did not work hard enough to win over the Chinese people’s support of the collaborationist government. While trying in vain to realize peace with Japan, Boyle argues, Wang made concessions to the Japanese far worse than did Marshal Pétain to the German occupiers of France during World War II. With little evidence to backup his accusation, the author views Jiang Jieshi’s 1939 assassination attempt on Wang’s life as the most important factor that pushed Wang onto a “self-destructive” road, that is, collaborating with Japan.¹³

Depending heavily on Japanese materials and interviews with Gao Zongwu, Boyle sometimes takes his sources at face value. For instance, how much can we trust what Gao said given his close relations with Jiang Jieshi? Gao, Jiang’s fellow provincial (*tongxiang*), initiated the peace movement and persuaded Wang Jingwei to lead it

before eventually denouncing it. Despised by Chinese collaborationists for his betrayal of such “a noble cause,” Gao is widely known to have settled down in the U.S. with Jiang’s money.¹⁴

As the twentieth century reached its end and as the postwar decolonization of many former European colonies led not to economic prosperity but economic destruction resulting from political chaos, endless civil wars, or even genocides, a reassessment of colonialism began to attract increasing scholarly attention in the 1990s. As a result, new studies of Japanese colonial rule in East Asia emerged. These studies, in turn, made necessary a re-examination of the nature of Chinese wartime collaborationism under Japanese occupation. The significance of such a new evaluation was further highlighted in the context of the Communists’ failure to carry out democracy in Mainland China and the Nationalists’ failure to maintain their popular mandate in Taiwan, even though both groups always claimed to represent the nation. Significantly, Communist and Nationalist “official” scholars treated Wang as an opponent of their type of nation.

Among this new revisionist group of scholars was Dongyoun Hwang, a Duke-educated South Korean. In 1999, Hwang completed a dissertation on Wang Jingwei’s peace movement. While defending Wang’s collaboration with Japan, Hwang insists that Chinese peace “advocators” followed Wang not only because he symbolized “the heir of Sun Zhongshan” but also because of his compelling ideology for peace and his personal courage, plus the devastating reality China faced.¹⁵ Hwang’s study remains the most detailed and most sympathetic work of the Chinese peace movement led by Wang Jingwei.

Nationalism vs. Collaborationism

Dongyoun Hwang’s pro-Wang Jingwei thesis can hardly change the position of “patriotic” Chinese scholars. In their eyes, Wang remains as “a great traitor” or *da hanjian*. Yet primary sources now available, even in Mainland China, corroborate Hwang’s conclusion. Many well-known Chinese intellectuals of the 1930s actually supported a peaceful solution to the Sino-Japanese conflict. Hu Shi and Fu Sinian, for example, considered Wang a responsible and practical politician when he carried out an “appeasement” policy toward Japan before the Sino-Japanese War broke out in mid-1937. Hu even wrote a series of articles in support of Wang’s policy that condemned

so-called “patriotic” “war advocates.”¹⁶ As the head of the military, Jiang Jieshi also favored the “appeasement” policy so that China could “buy time” in order to reconstruct itself, build a strong army, and prepare for a possible military showdown with Japan.¹⁷

When the Sino-Japanese War started in July 1937, Wang Jingwei, as head of the state, changed his “appeasing position” and called on the Chinese people to resist the Japanese invasion. Yet, when Nanjing fell into Japanese hands in early December 1937, Wang, like the great majority of Chinese leaders, began to realize that China was not “militarily prepared” and had almost lost the war, and thus had to make peace with Japan in order to save the nation and prevent further suffering of the masses. In addition, Wang thought that a prolonged Japanese invasion would only benefit the Communists who sought every chance to expand, regardless of the suffering of the Chinese people.¹⁸

Official records show that Jiang Jieshi agreed with Wang Jingwei on peace with Japan as “a possible and reasonable solution for the national crisis” after German mediation failed in late-1938. Defying Confucian filial piety or loyalty to the nation, many businessmen simply thought “resisting Japan” meant meaningless yet costly losses of their businesses.¹⁹ Rebuffing “official” nationalism, many social elites actually welcomed Japanese occupation, for it helped end the “long, frustrating labor turmoil and other challenges to their leading position.”²⁰ As for the common people who had suffered incessantly, and much more, from Chinese warlordism than foreign invasions since the mid-nineteenth century, peace reflected what they had long cherished or what they wanted immediately. Besides, the “scorched-earth warfare” and “protracted warfare” policies of the Nationalist Government proved to have hurt them more than stop the advancement of the Japanese soldiers.²¹

After China lost Guangzhou and Wuhan in October 1938, Wang Jingwei concluded that the government policy of continuous resistance seemed ineffective if not useless. Worse, it seemed to dismiss the people as the fundamental amalgam of the nation. To Wang a nation was a community of citizens whose general will should be reflected in the fundamental law or policies of the state.²² In other words, the government had a duty to protect or promote the general

welfare of the people as it was the people rather than the government that should represent the nation. Furthermore, to Wang nationalism should never mean glorification of the nation through meaningless or wasteful human sacrifice. By late-1938 the most important issue facing Wang was how the great majority of the Chinese people could survive Japanese military occupation, for only with the survival of the people could China survive as a nation. These thoughts underlay Wang's decision to work with the enemy. And, Wang knew there would be a cost to making peace with the triumphant and overwhelming enemy.²³

When Wang Jingwei prepared to organize a collaborationist government in Nanjing in early 1940, the Chinese situation seemed to support his decision. By then, over half of the Chinese population lived in occupied China, with the rest suffering from "famine, cold, disease, and air-raids" under Nationalist rule. Military defeats, economic problems, and corrupt management continued to paralyze the Chongqing government beyond the end of the war. Such "organization decay" became "a consistent feature" of Jiang Jieshi's rule and eventually accounted for his loss of China to the Communists in 1949.²⁴

While in Nanjing Wang Jingwei hoped that Jiang Jieshi would accept direct and immediate peace with Japan in order to save China as a modern nation and avoid further suffering of the Chinese people. However, regardless of the hopeless and shocking situation China was facing and his inability to improve it, Jiang denounced Wang's peace efforts and disparaged the "three principles" Tokyo suggested to end the war.²⁵ Jiang's criticism did not surprise Wang. Wang knew that with Manchuria under Japanese control following the September 18 Incident of 1931, many Chinese politicians found it a political liability to make compromises with Japan. Therefore, they chose to advocate tough resistance, though they knew such a "high-tone" policy could not help save the nation nor reduce the suffering of millions of ordinary Chinese.²⁶ But the "high-tone" nationalism served them well, for it projected them as national heroes. While the common Chinese were suffering, these "true patriots" continued to enjoy "quality life" in the rear areas secure from Japanese attacks. They knew China could hardly defeat Japan alone but they expected

others to become “*hanjian*” and to negotiate peace with Japan in order to end the destructive war.²⁷

Chongqing’s denunciation did not shake Wang Jingwei’s determination to continue the “peace movement.” Wang knew China fought against Japan alone. Few Western powers, including the United States, were willing to offer China any substantial help. Even after Pearl Harbor foreign assistance often came either too little or too late.²⁸ As one scholar comments, lack of foreign support “deepen[ed] China’s sense of isolation from her potential allies, and cast gloom over the Chinese leaders that the war was to last much longer than they had recently projected, if victory would ever come at all.”²⁹

The discouraging international situation added to Wang Jingwei’s conviction that he was right to seek direct peace with Japan.³⁰ By collaborating with Japan he hoped not only to spare his countrymen further grief or suffering but also to destroy the Communist movement, recover foreign concessions, and restore national sovereignty from Western “imperialism.”³¹

In order to legitimize his government and bring a sense of normalcy to the people under his rule, Wang Jingwei struggled successfully with the Japanese military authorities to maintain the “Nationalist Government” as the title for his government and retain the same national flag. Meanwhile, Wang continued to project himself as Sun Zhongshan’s successor, declaring his policy based on Sun’s *sanmin zhuyi* (Three People’s Principles) and *xianzheng* (constitutionalism). Wang promised to honor Sun’s legacy by first *shixian heping* (realizing peace) and then *shishi xianzheng* (implementing constitutionalism). Rule by law, not by a man, had always been on Wang’s political agenda. Even *qingxiang yundong* (the Rural Pacification Movement) was designed to help realize *sanmin zhuyi* in the countryside, where the great majority of Chinese lived.³²

Wang Jingwei knew he could achieve nothing without Japanese support. He also believed once Japan recognized his government, it had no other choice but to “take our social and economic needs (*minsheng xuyao*) and our government structure (*zhengfu tizhi*) into consideration.” Besides, in Japan’s support Wang saw a chance for “our democracy,” a top political priority he had maintained since he followed Sun Zhongshan in the struggle for a modern, democratic

China. Wang had no doubt that his collaboration with the Japanese meant his personal sacrifice given the Confucian tradition of filial piety to the nation based on the “nationalistic propaganda” of the Nationalists and the Communists. But, he was willing to risk his reputation in the best interest of the people who, in his mind, were the backbone of the nation.³³

Wang Jingwei never thought that his collaboration with Japan would make China disappear as a nation. Nor did he believe Japan had a plan to turn China into a colony.³⁴ While defining a nation based on common blood, language, territory, customs, religions, spiritual and physical nature, and history, Wang might also have looked at the issue of Japanese invasion or occupation based on the theme of historical assimilation he had developed earlier—“a fourfold typological scheme” in which:

1. races of equal strength merge to form a new nation;
2. a majority conquering race absorbs the conquered minority;
3. a minority conquering race assimilates a majority race;
4. a conquering minority is assimilated by a conquered majority.³⁵

There is no evidence to prove or disapprove that Wang wanted to assimilate “a minority conquering race,” in this case Japan. Yet, familiar with Chinese history, Wang knew China, or Han China, just like a “huge snow ball,” had succeeded in assimilating any conquering minorities, or “barbarians”, including the Manchus and the Mongols.

While collaborating with the Japanese, Wang Jingwei insisted on Asian spiritual unity under Japanese leadership. He justified his position simply on Sun Zhongshan’s Pan-Asianism. While alive Sun always had called on the Chinese to follow the Japanese in their common efforts to preserve “the purity of Asian culture” against European imperialism.³⁶ Wang also knew that Sun had been “willing to strike a bargain with any foreign power which would agree to help his political ambitions.”³⁷

We can never be certain whether Sun Zhongshan, founding father of Republican China, would have been able to avoid the Sino-Japanese War or even lead the collaborationist government had he lived through the era. But we do know that Sun often insisted that the

prosperity of East Asia depended on a Sino-Japanese alliance with more advanced Japan as the leader. We also know that frustrated with his repeated failures, Sun vigorously sought Japanese support, for which he was even willing to offer concessions that would have cost China no worse than what Japan had forced Yuan Shikai to sign—the infamous “Twenty-one Demands.” Nevertheless, Sun, his Nationalist Party, and the Communist Party all condemned Yuan for the “Twenty-one Demands” or used these Japanese demands as evidence to charge Yuan of betraying national interests and turning China into a Japanese colony.³⁸

It is no longer a secret that Sun Zhongshan made friends with the leaders of the Black Dragon Society, an expansionist organization that supported the Japanese invasion of China and financed Sun’s revolution around the same time.³⁹ While seeking Russian support in the early twenties, Sun ignored his northern rivals’ request that Russian troops withdraw from Outer Mongolia, part of China under Manchu rule.⁴⁰ Sun even asked the United States around the same time, though unsuccessfully, to send its troops and occupy China for a few years in order to save China “from ultimate ruin.”⁴¹ All these facts regarding the “other side” of Sun’s story have remained a taboo in Chinese “official” or “nationalist history.” But Wang Jingwei knew it. He was also familiar with the Chinese tradition or history of making accommodations with foreign or “barbarian” invaders.⁴²

Regardless of both Communist and Nationalist condemnations or denials, Wang Jingwei’s collaboration with Japan brought forth positive results for his government and for the common people under his rule. In early 1942 Japan’s “new China policy” gave Wang greater control over the Lower Changjiang Valley, the economic and political basis of the Nanjing collaborationist government. In early 1943 Tokyo allowed Nanjing more freedom to move goods into Shanghai, which helped drive down the price of rice. According to John King Fairbank, this new policy implied a more genuine collaboration between Wang and Japan.⁴³

While collaborating with Japan, Wang Jingwei focused on restoring economic order in occupied China. Although a thoroughly researched work on the life of ordinary people in occupied China is still missing, some primitive and revisionist studies have offered a

positive assessment of the economic achievements of the collaborationist government. One study argues that economic prosperity gradually appeared in occupied China after the establishment of the collaborationist government. Trade expanded not only in the region under collaborationist rule but also with “Free China” through the Japanese lines. Foreign trade also increased due to the economic recovery in occupied China.⁴⁴

This author’s research, ironically based on the Communist documents known for their partiality against collaborationist rule, indicates that soon after the “return” of Wang Jingwei’s government the economy quickly recovered and expanded, particularly in Jiangnan (the southern part of the Changjiang Delta and the heartland of Wang’s government). In Suzhou, capital of Jiangsu province, for instance, people who had fled the city during the early months of the war soon returned and restored their businesses. By 1943, on Guanqiang Street alone—still a famous commercial center today—about sixty-three renowned stores, including department stores reopened. Meanwhile, about a dozen hotels had opened or reopened in surrounding area. Economic recovery under collaborationist rule turned into an “abnormal” prosperity (*jixing fanrong*), recognized even in Communist sources.⁴⁵

In Shanghai, the “isolated island” surrounded by Japanese Occupation forces until Pearl Harbor, people also enjoyed “a seemingly anomalous economic boom” under collaborationist rule. With shipping and insurance industries booming, foreign trade also expanded tremendously. Meanwhile, the collaborationist government persuaded the Japanese authorities to return four hundred small enterprises to their Chinese owners.⁴⁶ Between 1941 and 1945 Shanghai, though twice as large as Hong Kong, a territory Britain lost to Japan during the war, found its residents enjoying a much better life because the collaborationist government helped restore the social and economic order of the largest metropolitan city of China.⁴⁷

Economic recovery and subsequent prosperity under collaborationist rule contrasted sharply with the nearly bankrupt economy of Chongqing under Jiang Jieshi’s rule. Both the Communist and Nationalist leadership also lost their credibility as many of their troops defected to the Nanjing side in search for a better life. Many regional

military leaders, or rather warlords, though still claiming to be “loyal” to Chongqing and the fight against the Japanese in the name of the nation, actually maintained “working relations” with the Japanese military as well as the Wang government, and profited from economic gains by “smuggling” with the collaborationist China.⁴⁸

The economic achievements of the collaborationist government benefited it politically, which explained its popularity and support among the people in occupied China.⁴⁹ With its economic achievements and subsequent political stability, the collaborationist government eventually managed to create a new national order that the “existing state,” that is Chongqing, had failed to maintain.⁵⁰

When Wang Jingwei decided to collaborate with the Japanese it never occurred to him that such collaboration meant total capitulation to Japanese demands. True collaboration necessitated concessions or costs for it to work; yet there was always resistance in collaboration. Such resistance was the driving force behind the success of the collaborationist government in recovering the economy and in restoring social stability, which contributed to the survival of millions of ordinary Chinese in occupied China.

China’s final victory over Japan during World War II facilitated the expansion of Chinese “official” nationalism at the expense of collaborationism. Recent research on Japanese occupation of Manchuria and Japanese rule over Taiwan, however, confirms the complicated nature of collaborationism. In his groundbreaking study, Rana Mitter finds that collaboration with the Japanese was “attractive [to local elites] in comparison with a powerless life in exile.” Japanese occupiers convinced regional social elites that normal and secure life would return with their cooperation. With their help the Japanese eventually managed to win over the local people. With a booming economy under Japanese occupation, the Chinese living in Manchuria found life much better than what they had under Chinese warlords or what their compatriots concurrently had under Nationalist rule on the other side of the Great Wall. Little wonder that those who lived throughout Japanese occupation concluded that the Japanese had been “not as bad” as the Nationalist or Communist propaganda insisted despite the fact that both the Nationalists and Communists did their best to euphemize their own rule by demonizing Chinese collaborationists in Manchuria. A postwar British source also admit-

ted that the Japanese occupation of Manchuria had actually benefited “the people in general.”⁵¹

While supposedly fighting the Japanese, many Manchuria warlords actually defied “official” nationalism by seeking private deals with the Japanese and the Manchurian government—a Japanese puppet denounced by Chinese “patriots” and their “patriotic” scholars even today.⁵² Contrary to its propaganda the Communist Party failed to attain local support in Manchuria due to the “indiscriminate killings and destruction” committed by the Communist guerrilla forces. One classic case in defiance of Communist “nationalism” was that of Ma Zhanshan, a Manchurian warlord who supposedly fought the Japanese. Nevertheless, Communist history books have so far kept silent on Ma’s secret, “unpatriotic,” and even dirty deals with the Japanese.⁵³

No doubt the Japanese invasion of Manchuria sacrificed Chinese sovereignty, but Manchurian prosperity under Japanese occupation benefited the local Chinese who, in turn, defied “official” nationalism after having suffered much from Chinese warlordism. Millions of Chinese, particularly from the Shandong region, migrated to Manchuria willing to become “*wangguonu*” (slavish people disloyal to the nation). Against their government’s order, they risked their lives by moving to Manchuria (*chuangguandong*) simply in search of a better life. The Manchurian case indicates the miserable failure of “official” Chinese nationalism when it confronted the cruel reality that the people would choose a better life rather than act upon an empty “nationalistic” slogan.

Chinese collaboration with Japan in Manchuria disputes Chinese “official” nationalism and expands our perspective on Wang Jingwei’s version of collaborationism, as does the Taiwanese case.⁵⁴ Influenced by “official” nationalism, Chinese “patriots” could hardly have imagined or accepted that their Taiwanese compatriots who lived through supposedly brutal Japanese colonialism would later prefer Japanese to Nationalist rule. Yet the fact remains that the wholesale killing by the returned Jiang Jieshi government of native-born Chinese during the infamous February 18 Incident of 1946 has left a deep scar on the Taiwanese and helped restore a strong pro-Japanese sentimentality among them. Indeed, such nostalgia was sustained by “the half-

century of Japanese colonial rule” that had left Taiwan with “a solid infrastructure of railroads, roads, hydropower, literacy, public health, and farm extension services.”⁵⁵

To study Wang Jingwei and his collaboration with Japan objectively does not exonerate the Japanese Imperial soldiers from the suffering and destruction brought to the Chinese people and heir nation. Yet, what Japan did in China was no more than a reflection or a copy of what the Western powers earlier had done in China and in its neighboring countries.⁵⁶ Western imperialism since the Opium War of the mid-nineteenth century proved to be no less destructive to Chinese national interests than Japanese imperialistic expansion in China did. Moreover, in the early 1930s Western “appeasement” policies toward Japanese encroachments in China served only to encourage Tokyo to expand its aggression across Manchuria into China proper.

When the Manchurian Incident took place in 1931, for instance, only a few Western nations, including the United States, sent wordy protests to Tokyo while offering China no concrete assistance in its struggle to resist the Japanese invasion. Meanwhile, Tokyo managed to convince the West that it had treated Manchuria the same way, if not better, as the United States had Panama. John V. A. MacMurray, one time Department of State Chief of the Far Eastern Affairs Division and Minister to China, reported to Washington that Japan had obeyed the treaties completed at the Washington Conference. The American diplomat also believed the Manchurian Incident resulted from China’s “reckless and irresponsible” attitude toward her treaty obligations.⁵⁷

Western “appeasement” policies toward Japan continued even after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Rather than stop the Japanese invasion from the very beginning, China’s Western allies chose to collaborate with Japan almost until the eve of Pearl Harbor. As a result, Japan was able to equip its war machine with materials from Western nations, including U.S. scrap iron and oil.

From the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War until almost the eve of Pearl Harbor, Western residents in China collaborated with the Japanese military occupiers in suppressing Chinese resistance fighters and thus helped consolidate the Japanese occupation of China,

particularly in Shanghai, the center of Chinese economy, culture, and foreign trade.⁵⁸ Three months after the establishment of the collaborationist government, for an example, Britain closed the Burma Road, the only channel left for a resisting China to get foreign assistance. The closure lasted for three months until Japanese pressure forced Chongqing to the negotiation table to work with Nanjing for peace. In recognition of Western cooperation, the Japanese respected Western rights or interests in China until Pearl Harbor. As lack of support from its Western allies partially contributed to Chinese defeats during the early months of the Sino-Japanese War, the Western-Japanese collaboration helped strengthen the Chinese collaborationists' defense of peace with Japan.

Like Western collaboration with Japan, the Chinese version also aimed to serve its national interests. If Western collaboration attempted to maintain lucrative businesses with Japan, Wang Jingwei considered his collaboration with Japan the only choice left for him to rescue China as a nation and help the survival of millions of ordinary Chinese.

With Japan defeated in 1945, however, the returned Jiang Jieshi government condemned Wang Jingwei and his followers for their collaboration with the Japanese. While claiming to solely represent the nation, the Jiang regime fared no better, if not worse, during the immediate postwar years.⁵⁹ The majority of Chinese people who welcomed the return of the resistance "patriots" soon found their enthusiasm evaporated in front of the widespread corruption of their "carpet-bagging" officials who were only interested in taking over Japanese property and "enjoying the night life of bars and dance halls."⁶⁰ As John King Fairbanks recalled, "even since 1943, I had believed revolution was probably unavoidable in China. The collapsing urban economy and the KMT corruption and repression visible in 1945-46 confirmed me in this view."⁶¹

History proves Fairbank's prediction true, as the Chinese people refused to bail out the Jiang Jieshi regime when it was losing the civil war, the mandate of heavy, or simply China as a nation to its Communist counterpart. In spite of its similar claim to represent the nation, the Communist regime that replaced the Nationalist Government in 1949 has proven to be more suppressive of the people, if not more

corrupt. Constant political campaigns or purges under Communist rule have led to millions of unnatural deaths since 1949.⁶² The fact that all tragedies caused by the Communist leadership took place when China faced neither civil war nor foreign threat contrasts sharply with the difficulty Wang Jingwei faced as he tried to save millions of Chinese when the nation was facing a terrible and destructive war.⁶³

Both the Nationalist and Communist regimes condemned Wang Jingwei's collaboration with Japan for betraying national interests, yet neither of them has done much better in defense of Chinese national interests. The Nationalist collaboration with the United States, for instance, forced Jiang Jieshi to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia. Later, Jiang had to give up, at the "request" by the United States, war compensations from Japan. For Russian support Communist China not only had to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia but also to denounce American imperialism and participate in the Korean War. Communist collaboration with Russia came at a huge cost to the nation and at great suffering for the Chinese people in the form of isolation from international community and a bankrupt economy.

Regardless of Communist or Nationalist denials, wartime collaborationism proved to be as widely accepted among the Chinese in occupied China, as well as among the neighboring nations invaded by Japan. In Southeast Asia, with the exception of the Vietminh led by Ho Chi Minh, local nationalist leaders chose to collaborate with the Japanese in hope of ending European colonial rule and winning national independence.⁶⁴ In Indonesia many nationalists who fought for independence welcomed the Japanese, a yellow race from the north, to liberate them from Dutch colonial rule. Until the end of the war they collaborated with the Japanese while waiting patiently for their moment of freedom and independence to come.⁶⁵

In the Philippines nationalists, including the first president of the postwar independent Philippines Manuel Roxas, worked with the Japanese during the war years. Right after the war few were persecuted; many collaborated with the returned American authorities in search of independence. General Douglas McArthur appreciated great partnership from these former Japanese collaborationists.⁶⁶

The postwar years witnessed few Korean collaborationists persecuted. Instead, many found a new leading role within their inde-

pendent government “under American military protection.” The Koreans generally believed that their collaborationist compatriots were realists who had simply been “responsive to the international constraints faced by Korea.”⁶⁷

For the Mongols in Inner Mongolia, wartime collaboration with the Japanese helped modernize the region, if not their nation. With Japanese support, they managed to rebuild or enhance their institutions, including Mongolian Buddhism. With their political position thus consolidated and their self-confidence strengthened, they were able to force the Communist regime to permit “the creation of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region” right after the Communist victory of 1949 over the Nationalist regime.⁶⁸

The reason that Japanese collaborationists beyond the Chinese borders experienced a different fate than their Chinese counterparts was more political rather than justice or fairness done. Jiang Jieshi persecuted the collaborationists more in his own political interests than for their “crimes.”⁶⁹ There had been two governments in China during the war, with Chongqing eventually representing victory and Nanjing representing defeat. Even though the winner Jiang punished the losers in an attempt to legitimize his rule, he had sought peace with Japan until the very end of the war, and his generals had either switched to Wang’s side or maintained close relations with Wang’s government or the Japanese forces.⁷⁰

With Japan defeated and condemned for war crimes, it became relatively easy for the “victorious” Jiang Jieshi government to defame Wang Jingwei and other Chinese leaders for their collaboration with the Japanese in an attempt to consolidate rule based on military power rather than popular votes.⁷¹ Truly, according to one scholar, while winners also declared a moral victory, losers lost everything, even their “plot,” no matter how decent it was.⁷² To Jiang and other “patriots,” their collaborationist compatriots not only failed on the “battleground,” but they also lost their cause and means for the cause, both of which became labeled as unjust and illegitimate.⁷³ In addition, postwar trials reflected the Chinese tendency to be more lenient with enemies than their own, for Jiang and his generals soon used Japanese war criminals to help fight the Communists during the civil war.⁷⁴

While preparing their cases against the collaborationists Jiang

Jieshi's "official" prosecutors found "ready excuses," including Wang Jingwei's recognition of Manchukuo, though Manchuria had fallen into Japan's hands years before the Sino-Japanese War. Besides, Wang recognized Manchuria not only as a *fait accompli* but also as a means to win Japan's support, without which he knew nothing could be achieved. In comparison, Jiang's recognition of Outer Mongolia—the cost of his collaboration with both the United States and Russia—had few positive results for China. Moreover, U.S. military support encouraged Jiang to wage a civil war with the Communists from which the Chinese people suffered no less greatly than under Japanese occupation.⁷⁵

Just as Jiang Jieshi's government condemned the Chinese collaborationists to legitimize his rule, the victorious nations used the Tokyo Tribunal to whitewash themselves and blame the losers—the Japanese.⁷⁶ The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor still makes it easy even today for Japan-bashing scholars to turn emotional and neglect the fact that Japan of the 1920s actually carried out a foreign policy of peaceful co-existence or international cooperation, even though they recognize that both the Paris Conference of 1919 and the Washington Conference of 1922 aimed to ensure a *Pax Agnlo-Americana*.⁷⁷

Following the "Great Depression" that started in the late 1920s, Japan found it increasingly difficult to compete with the Western powers that wanted to limit Japanese business activities to Manchuria. Meanwhile, China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy" specifically targeted Japanese imperialism and aimed to exclude Japanese business from the Chinese market.⁷⁸ In this context Tokyo decided that it was necessary to use all means, including war, to teach the Chinese leaders a lesson while defending Japanese national interests from "hostile Chinese and Western competitors."⁷⁹ Later, Tokyo allowed the Sino-Japanese War, or the China Incident, to expand in an attempt to keep China from allying with the West or turning into "a hostile economic bloc."⁸⁰

It was a real misfortune for the Chinese people that their leaders put too much trust in their Western allies' ability or willingness to help solve the Sino-Japanese conflict and they therefore lost a chance to solve the conflict directly with Japan in a timely manners.⁸¹ The

miscalculation of the Chinese leaders was due to their failure to realize that long before the Sino-Japanese War the Western powers had seen China as a loose collection of warlord domains rather than a sovereign state worthy of recognition, protection, or loans. In sharp contrast, the Western powers considered a quickly modernized Japan an equal and had a sympathetic ear for Tokyo's justifications for its invasion of China.⁸² Ironically, as China alienated many Western powers through its "Revolutionary Diplomacy" of the late 1920s that insisted on negotiations over tariffs, extraterritoriality, and so forth, a prewar Japan successfully cultivated an image of a great power with global interests.⁸³

When Wang Jingwei decided to collaborate with Japan, China seemed to be fighting a losing war with Japan under an extremely unfavorable international situation. To understand Wang's motivation scholars must understand the preconditions related to Chinese culture and history. In its history of over five thousand years China has experienced one after another invasions from "barbarians," or non-Han peoples. So, to the Chinese people of Wang's time foreign invasion was nothing new. Yet, foreign conquerors or rulers, with Chinese collaboration, had left positive impacts on Chinese civilization. It can never be overstated that China today is "the historical product of the interaction of many different peoples."⁸⁴ China under Manchu rule, for instance, was probably the most glorious period of material achievements facilitated by the most sophisticated political absolutism in Chinese history, which was realized under Manchu-Chinese collaboration.⁸⁵ Through systematic sinocization, the Manchu rulers won the loyal support of the Han Chinese and enjoyed "more than a full century of peace, prosperity, and population growth."⁸⁶

Wang Jingwei hoped that his collaboration with Japan would bring similar positive results to China and its people as Chinese collaboration with the Manchus or the Mongols had done. Familiar with Chinese history, Wang also considered collaboration with Japan might have been a better or only choice left to maintain China as a nation. Wang had a reasonable doubt whether the Chongqing government would survive after being driven to remote Sichuan, for no last efforts of a falling dynasty to maintain its mandate of heaven had ever succeeded in Chinese history. However, Wang hoped that the profound

cultural and historical connections between Japan and China could facilitate Sino-Japanese collaboration, if not assimilation. Culturally speaking, the Japanese were closer to the Chinese than the Manchu or Mongolian conquerors. Confucianism and the Chinese language are the essence of Japanese civilization today.

Wang Jingwei believed that a productive Sino-Japanese collaboration could be realized, given the fact that the Japanese of the early twentieth century still considered China the cradle of Eastern civilization and were willing to help restore Chinese civilization by helping China modernize to resist Western encroachment. Many Japanese earlier had offered Sun Zhongshan and his followers great assistance in their efforts to overthrow the Manchu government and build a modern, prosperous China. The first foreigner who died in the 1911 Revolution was Japanese. Besides, Japan's successful record in modernization, plus its "*dobun doshu*" (common race and language) relationship with China, convinced many Japanese leaders of their ability to help realize, if not lead, such a mission.⁸⁷

In other words, the self-confidence nourished under the success of the Meiji Reform convinced Tokyo of its ability to lead the reconstruction of "a new global cultural order" as the aftermath of World War I had demonstrated signs of a "waning Western civilization." With such confidence, and in the name of renovating East Asian civilization under its leadership, Japan invaded China and subsequently conquered Southeast Asia. The success of its propaganda was further reflected in the wide support from almost all local nationalist leaders of the Japanese goal of replacing European colonialism with its own version.⁸⁸

A defeated Japan was criticized for its efforts to build a "Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere" during World War II, yet one cannot miss a revival of Pan-Asianism in the recent economic and political cooperation among East Asian nations and "contemporary relevance to the historical problem of Greater Asianism and its role in the modern era." Meanwhile, Communist China's lack of democracy, aligned with the global failure of Communism and in the context of closer economic cooperation among East Asian nations, presents a sharp contrast with Wang's political ideas or "Wang Jingweism," which was consisted of Greater Asianism, anti-Communism, and democracy.⁸⁹

Wang Jingwei did not have to collaborate with the Japanese and thus destroy his political career, at least in the eyes of the Chinese “patriots.” In the interior of wartime China, Wang, like other high-ranking Nationalist leaders, enjoyed a quality and safe life. As a most trusted disciple of Sun Zhongshan, Wang had enough seniority within the Nationalist Party and its government to face any political challenge from anyone including Jiang Jieshi.

Before the 1911 Revolution Wang Jingwei as a leading member of the *Tongmenhui* risked his life fighting the Manchu government and in order to create a modern republic. In the mid-1920s he led the National Government and collaborated with the Communists in the Northern Expedition, in a mission to replace warlordism with national unity on which to build a modern and prosperous China. In the late-1920s Wang as a leader of the Nationalist Left struggled for a democratic China against Jiang Jieshi’s authoritarian rule. In the early-1930s Wang headed a coalition government and managed to concentrate on China’s rapid and relatively successful modernization, despite overwhelming domestic political turmoil and natural disasters, Japanese imperialistic expansion into North China following the Manchurian Incident, and the global “Great Depression.”⁹⁰

From the outbreak of the war until the fall of Guangzhou and Wuhan in late-1938, Wang Jingwei led the nation’s fight against the Japanese invasion. Later, when he decided to make peace with Japan, nobody knew how and when the war would end or whether China would ever defeat Japan. Nevertheless, it was no secret to every educated Chinese that foreign or “barbarian” invaders had conquered China, and China had survived as a nation by collaborating with the invaders.

Defying “official” nationalism, the common Chinese in occupied China welcomed Wang’s collaboration with Japan, which brought them peace and economic recovery. To the common people, “official” nationalism or patriotism was a political ideology too vague with which to identify. Neither could patriotism fill up their empty stomachs. Their immediate concern was to survive the Japanese occupation. Besides, nationalism blurred in their mind, as they saw no real difference between the Japanese soldiers and the soldiers of Chinese warlords from whom they had suffered so much and for so

long.

If Japan's occupation of Manchuria replaced Chinese warlord politics and helped restore the political and economic order, from which millions of Chinese of the region benefited, Wang Jingwei's collaboration with Japan helped rescue a far larger number of ordinary Chinese. Wang's motivation underlying his decision to work with the enemy should not be considered as based on his selfish calculation simply because he ended up as a "political loser." Neither should Wang's contribution to rescuing the nation be misinterpreted or twisted for the same reason.

Nationalism is always self-serving. Just as their collaboration with Japan served their national interests within and without China, the Allied nations subsequently fought with Japan for the same purpose, though their victory helped Jiang Jieshi and other Chinese "patriots" claim themselves as "victors." Likewise, the Japanese invasion of China aimed to protect Japanese interests; it was nothing but another version of imperialism or efforts to share, if not dominate, the Chinese market, which the major European powers had long carved up among themselves into their "spheres of influence." To some extent Japan defended its national interests in East Asia the same as the European powers and the United States tried to maintain theirs in the region. What Japan did was not different from what the United States always had done in Latin America based on the Monroe Doctrine or what Greater Britain had done in order to maintain its global colonial empire.

Paradoxically, Tokyo was condemned for the "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere" as a Japanese plot to dominate the region, while the whole of East Asia, particularly the southeastern part, had fallen under Western colonial influence or rule for hundreds of years. The anti-Western sentiment among local peoples explained the popularity or the quick success of the Japanese occupation of the region.

During World War II Japan ended up as a big "loser." Yet, just as the Americans still remember their fallen heroes of World War II who died in defense of American national interests, though honored in the name of defending democracy, the Japanese too worship their own. Their ashes are well preserved in national shrines that are respectfully visited by the Japanese people and statesmen including, prime

ministers, regardless of Chinese “nationalistic” protests.

Truly the Chinese final “victory” over Japan during World War II enabled both the Communists and the Nationalists to condemn Wang Jingwei’s collaboration as a betrayal of national interests but both collaborated with their “foreign masters,” the Soviet Russia and the United States, at the expense of Chinese national interests. This author believes that history proves that both were no better, if not worse, in the treatment of millions of common people than was the collaborationist government. Under both Communist and Nationalist rule millions of innocent people were persecuted or killed, and both justified their mass killings in the name of the nation.⁹¹

While claiming to serve the people both the Communist and Nationalist leaderships never hesitated to show who were the real masters of the nation when their interests conflicted with those of the people. To both the definition of nation simply corresponded to the “party lines” decided, or rather dictated, by party leaders Chairman Mao Zedong and President Jiang Jieshi. To oppose these leaders was equivalent to opposing the nation. Therefore, both the Communists and the Nationalists have simplified or, more exactly, sacrificed real nationalism is supposed to protect the best interest of the people rather than serve the abstract nation personified by Mao or Jiang.

The Chinese “victory” over Japan during World War II has contributed to simplifying Chinese nationalism as much as it has left a bitter memory among the Chinese people. The simplified “nationalistic” sentimentality best serves “nationalistic politicians” when they confront any criticism of their rule. While it often facilitates the Chinese Communist leadership in its efforts to suppress any call for democracy in the name of the nation, the “official” nationalism explains the difficulty any Chinese scholars face if they try to restore the true picture of Wang Jingwei.

In order to preserve China as a nation and help the survival of millions of Chinese, Wang Jingwei collaborated with the Japanese and thus sacrificed his political career against the backdrop of Confucian filial piety and in opposition to the nationalist propaganda of both the Communists and the Nationalists. Although his tomb was completely destroyed by soldiers of the returned Jiang government, Wang has left a lonely soul calling for a fair and just verdict of his role

in the Chinese national revolution and modernization. Many historical documents, plus interviews with those who have lived through the three governments—collaborationist, Nationalist, and Communist—will help reach a non-partisan conclusion, should freedom of speech be respected in China and should American scholars get rid of the historical burden resulting from Pearl Harbor.

In addition to Chinese sources, both primary and secondary Western sources facilitate a difficult, yet worthy reassessment of Chinese wartime collaborationism. For instance, John Melby, who worked for the American Embassy in Nanjing during the postwar years, reported to Washington, “[P]eople say conditions [under collaborationist rule] were better under the Japs.”⁹² Frederic Wakeman, Jr., a well-known scholar on modern China, admits that Wang achieved most of what he had hoped through his collaboration with Japan.⁹³ Another American scholar of modern China concludes, “[T]he culture, politics, and social formation of occupied China demands to be rewritten in a new conceptual framework that is attuned to the subtlety and multiplicity of the human condition in an extreme situation.”⁹⁴

If a good government is one “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” as the American standard goes, or if any government should “serve the people,” as the Communist Party often claims, Wang Jingwei’s dedication to saving the people during one of the darkest periods in Chinese history suggests such his commitment did not go astray from the above two standards. As discussed earlier, Wang was willing to put the best interest of the people above his reputation, simply because he considered that a nation was composed of people first and always. In other words, Wang’s collaboration resulted from his belief that a nation was not a party, an interest group, or a leader, but the people. And, real nationalism should focus on the best interests of the people.

This essay does not intend to exonerate the imperialist Japanese soldiers and their generals for the war crimes they committed against millions of innocent Chinese people. Nor does this essay attempt to downplay the heroic sacrifices of Chinese resistance fighters in their great service to the nation. Yet, if the Chinese “patriots” could forgive the Japanese for their aggression, why should it be difficult for them and their scholars to maintain neutrality in their studies of

Wang Jingwei. American scholars, with their Constitutionally protected freedom of speech, should be able to make a better judgment of Wang, one Chinese patriot who was convinced that the nation meant nothing but the people and nationalism was the love of the nation to which he dedicated all his life.

End Notes

1 Han-sheng Lin, "A New Look at Chinese Nationalist 'Appeasers,'" in Alvin D. Coox and Hilary Conroy, eds., *China and Japan: Search for Balance Since World War I* (ABC-Clio, Inc., 1978), 211.

2 In a conference paper, Wang Ke-ken, a senior scholar, summarizes the publications by both Taiwan and Mainland scholars on Wang Jingwei. He argues Chinese scholars' negative judgment of Wang is not only due to China's tradition of "writing 'official histories' by the government," but also based on the "party lines." Although they condemn Wang, the Chinese scholars use different theories, including "class struggle" theory and "character approach," to explain Wang's motives underlying his collaboration with Japan. In the late 1990s, Taiwan scholars began to call for an "alternative approach," yet "a truly dispassionate examination" is still missing, Wang concludes. So it is unlikely to reverse the "official" verdict on Wang "in the near future." Cited from Wang Ke-wen, "Irreversible Verdict? Historical Assessments of Wang Jingwei in the People's Republic and Taiwan," paper prepared for the Conference of the Historical Society for 20th Century China, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, October 20-21, 2000.

3 Diana Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue-The Contemporary Agenda of History: Scholarship and Identity," *Modern China*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 19.

4 Philip C. Huang argues although American scholars enjoy considerable academic freedom, "the difference between China and the United States in terms of ideological influence on scholarship was a matter mainly of degree." See Philip C. Huang, "Theory and the Study of Modern Chinese History: Four Traps and a Question," *Modern China*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 187.

5 We really do not have any major scholarly work on Wang's peace movement and his collaboration with Japan that were completed during the immediate postwar years, except for a few M.A. theses, such as Travers Edgar Durkee, *Wang Ching-wei and Japan, 1937-40* (M.A. thesis, Stanford University, 1949).

6 Before Pearl Harbor the only Western nation that supported China the most was not the U.S., but Hitler's Germany. Ironically, it was the U.S. that contributed partially to maintaining the Japanese war machine against China. Moreover, during the early months of the Sino-Japanese War, it was not the U.S. either, but Soviet Russia that offered China most of its much-needed military support, particularly in its air force. In mid-1938, many Russian pilots died in the tragic but heroic Chinese defense of Wuhan in Central China.

7 Liberal writers, such as Theodore H. White, published works denouncing Jiang Jieshi's regime for its corruption and incapability which they believed led to his loss of Mainland China to the Communists. These works definitely influenced the Truman Government, which eventually refused to bail out Jiang during the last year of the Chinese civil war. Thus, with American support, Jiang was able to maintain his power throughout the War of Resistance; without such support, he lost to the Communists in the subsequent civil war. Again, with American support, Jiang was able to maintain his power till his death in Taiwan in 1975. In the context of the Cold War, the U.S. restored its support of Jiang in an attempt to counterbalance Communist China.

8 See Han-sheng Lin, *Wang Ching-wei and the Japanese Peace Efforts* (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1967) and Chia-lin Pao Tao, *The Role of Wang Ching-wei during the Sino-Japanese War* (Ph. D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1971).

9 Han-sheng Lin, "A New Look at Chinese Nationalist 'Appeasers,'" in Alvin D. Coox and Hilary Conroy, eds., *China and Japan: Search for Balance Since World War I* (ABC-Clio, Inc., 1978), 212-29.

10 Gerald E. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937-1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

11 Howard L. Boorman *Wang Ching-wei: China's Romantic Radical* (New York: School of International Affairs/ Columbia University, reprinted from *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. LXXIX, No. 4, December 1964), 505, 524-5.

12 Howard L. Boorman, 523-5.

13 John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937-1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1972).

14 Wang Ke-wen argues that Gao supported Wang as a third force to replace Jiang, for Japanese insisted that Jiang must resign before Sino-Japanese peace talks could start. Wang also suspects Gao "might have been wandering between Wang and Jiang." See Wang Ke-wen, "Gao Zongwu 'Shenru Huxue,'" [Gao Zongwu "deep in the tiger's den"], *Dangdai* [Contemporary history] Issues 168-69, 93-95. The Nationalist Government considered it a heroic event when Gao left Nanjing. Gao was widely reported by Chongqing mass media to have parted with the Chinese peacemakers for he refused to accept the Japanese harsh conditions for peace. Yet, it was no secret that Gao left Wang and his peace movement for he failed to win the position as foreign minister. See Liu Hongjuan, *Li Shiqun: Wangwei tegong sharenkuang* (Li Shiqun: head of the special agency of the Wang puppet government and a demented killer) (Tuanji chubanshe, 2000), 181.

15 Dongyoun Hwang, *Wang Jingwei, The Nanjing Government and the Problem of Collaboration* (Dissertation—Duke University, 1999).

16 Han-sheng Lin, "A New Look at Chinese Nationalist 'Appeasers,'" 230-5; Wang Ke-wen, "Wang Jingwei and the Policy Origins of the 'Peace Movement,' 1932-1937" in David P Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., *Chinese Collaboration*

with Japan: *The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 35

17 Stephen G. Graft, "Opponents of Appeasement: Western-educated Chinese Diplomats and Intellectuals and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1932-1937," *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 35, No. 1 (2001): 206.

18 Wang Ke-wen, "Wang Jingwei and the Policy Origins of the 'Peace Movement,' 1932-1937," 93; John Hunter Boyle, "Peace Advocacy during the Sino-Japanese Incident," in Alvin D. Coox and Hilary Conroy, 250.

19 Gregor Benton, *New Fourth Army: Communist Resistance along the Yangtze and the Huai, 1938-1941* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 322.

20 David P Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, "Introduction," in David P Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., 10

21 Wang to Jiang, telegrams, October 24, 29, 1938, in Chen Mushan, *Conghandian shiliao guan kangzhan shiqi de Jiang Wang guanxi* (The relationship between Jiang and Wang during the war of resistance as told through letters and telegrams) (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuchu, 1995), 234. So far, no research has been done on the negative effects on the local Chinese of the Three Changsha Fires ordered by the Nationalist Government in the name of the nation or based on its "scorched-earth policy." Neither has been any scholarly condemnation of the breaking-up of the Yellow River's embankment at Jiang Jieshi's order which did slow down the marching Japanese soldiers for a couple of months, but caused millions of deaths of innocent Chinese and incalculable property damages. So far we have no scholarly condemnations of these man-made tragedies committed by the Nationalist Government in the name of the nation during World War II.

22 See Presenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 160.

23 Lung-Kee Sun, "Social Psychology in the Late Qing Period," *Modern China*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 239; Edmund S. K. Fung, "Anti-Imperialism and the Left Guomindang," *Modern China*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 264.

24 Julia Strauss, "The Evolution of Republican Government," *The China Quarterly*, No. 150, 346 and "Symbol and Reflection of the Reconstituting State: The Examination Yuan in the 1930s," *Modern China*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 234.

25 Jiang Jieshi, "Japan's So-Called New Order," a speech addressed to Government leaders at the Central Guomindang Headquarters on December 26, 1938, cited from Chiang Kai-shek, *Resistance and Reconstruction: Messages during China's Six Years of War, 1937-1943* (New York: Harper, 1943), 57-62.

26 John Hunter Boyle, "Peace Advocacy during the Sino-Japanese Incident," 250.

27 To rescue the nation and save the people was a popular argument that Chinese collaborationists used to justify their peace movement and later defend themselves during the postwar trials.

28 Only in December 1938, nearly one year and a half after the outbreak of

the Sino-Japanese War did Britain and the United States start to give Chongqing modest financial help. The United States offered a loan of \$25 million and Britain £500,000 (U.S. \$2 million). However, both prohibited China from buying weapons with these loans, afraid it would provoke Japan. During 1941 and 1942, only around 1.5% of the total Lend-Lease aid went to China. In 1943 and 1944, that number was reduced to 0.5%. See Arthur N. Young, *China and the Helping Hand, 1937-1945*, 207; Lloyd Eastman, "Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945," in Lloyd Eastman, Jerome Chen, Suzanne Pepper and Lyman P. Van Slyke, eds., *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, 144-45. Ironically, the Guangxi authorities appreciated the Japanese generosity in offering loans, while their appeal to the British for funds turned unsuccessful. See also Graham Hutchings "A Province at War: Guangxi during the Sino-Japanese Conflict, 1937-1945," *The China Quarterly*, No. 108, 654.

29 Hsi-sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1982), 61.

30 Wumien Zhao, *Bainian gongzui* (Achievements and crimes of the past centuries), *China New Digest*, January 15, 2003, 12. The anonymous author is very knowledgeable about this period of history. Given Chinese "official nationalism," it is understandable that he does not want anyone to know his name as he defends Wang, still the No. 1 *hanjian* in the eyes of the Chinese "patriots."

31 One can hardly miss these points if he/she reads official documents of the Wang Jingwei government.

32 Andrew Cheung, *Slogans, Symbols, and Legitimacy: The Case of Wang Jingwei's Nanjing Regime* (Indiana University, working paper, no date), 5-6.

33 Andrew Cheung, 8.

34 Donald A. Jordan criticizes that Chinese scholars are not interested in studying how "the Chinese aggravated Japanese tensions," which eventually contributed to the breakout of the Sino-Japanese War. See Donald Jordan, "The Place of Chinese Disunity in Japanese Army Strategy during 1931," *The Chinese Quarterly*, No. 109, 42.

35 Presenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 36.

36 Presenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 208.

37 Michael R. Godley, "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: Sun Yatsen and the International Development of China," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* no. 18, July '87.

38 C. Martin Wilbur, *Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot* (Columbia University Press, 1976), 83.

39 Harold Z Schiffrin, *Sun Zhongshan and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (University of California Press, 1970), 147; 358; also see C. Martin Wilbur, 57; 272.

40 See Bruce Elleman, "Soviet Diplomacy and the First United Front in China," *Modern China*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 465.

41 Bruce Elleman, 465-70.

42 David P. Barrett, "The Wang Jingwei Regime, 1940-1945: Continuities and Disjunctures with Nationalist China," in David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., 112-3.

43 John King Fairbank, *Chinabound: A Fifty-Year Memoir* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982), 48, 52.

44 Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Shanghai Badlands: Wartime Terrorism and Urban Crime, 1937-1941* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 54.

45 Li Changgen and Yu Qing, "Guanqian shangye de lishi tese (The unique commercial features of the guanqian street] in Suzhoushi difangzhi bianzhan weiyuanhui bangongshi, suzhoushi zhengxie xueshi he wenshi weiyuanhui (the editorial committee of Suzhou history and the study and historical literature committee of Suzhou political consultation conference), *Suzhou shizhi* (The history of Suzhou), 2000, Vol. 25, 102-3.

46 Frederic Wakeman, Jr., 7.

47 Frederic Wakeman, Jr., 135.

48 His-sheng Ch'i, 97-103. To reduce embarrassment, Jiang Jieshi's government euphemized these widespread defections as *quxian jiuguo* (save the nation through false defections). While keeping silent on the defections of their own forces, Communists used these Nationalist defections as evidence to support their claim that the Jiang government did not really fight with the Japanese.

49 Christian Henriot, "Rice, Power and People: The Politics of Food Supply in Wartime Shanghai (1937-1945)," *Twentieth-Century China* Vol. 26, No. 1 (November, 2000), 60.

50 Dongyoun Hwang, 26.

51 Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 6, 80, 110.

52 Read what Pu Yi, wrote about his collaboration with Japan and one finds how hard the last Manchu emperor actually struggled to control Manchuria, contrary to what Nationalist or Communist scholars have always interpreted. See Pu Yi, *From Emperor to Citizen* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1979).

53 Edward Friedman, "Reconstructing China's National Identity: A Southern Alternative to Mao-Era Anti-Imperialist Nationalism," *Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 53, No. 1 (Feb. 1994), 82. See also Tang Degang and Wang Shuqun, *Zhang Xueliang shiji chuanqi* (Zhang Xueliang's story: an oral history) (Shandong youyi chubanshe, 2002), 456.

54 I use the term Taiwanese to indicate those whose ancestors had arrived in Taiwan before the Japanese occupation (1895-1945) and who had lived through Japanese rule before Jiang Jieshi and his troops arrived to "liberate them" in 1945. They have different opinions toward Japanese rule from those who followed Jiang Jieshi to Taiwan after their defeat in the Communist hands in 1949. The latter

often claimed their victory over the Japanese during the eight years of the War of Resistance and thus superiority over the native-born Chinese. Their disagreement over the meaning of nationalism also complicates the recent national election held in Taiwan. The central issue is whether Taiwan should be a Chinese Taiwan or a Taiwanese Taiwan. Meanwhile, Mainland China threatens to “liberate” Taiwan if it decides to declare independence. It is interesting to note both claim to represent the nation: China vs. Taiwan. Although Communist China has allowed the U.N. membership for South and North Korea, it has successfully boycotted Taiwan’s application for the last twelve years. It has done so in the name of the nation, or, rather Communist China.

55 John King Fairbank, 379.

56 Sandra Wilson, “The Manchurian Crisis and Moderate Japanese Intellectuals: The Japan Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations,” *Modern Asian Studies* 26, 3 (1992): 541.

57 Sandra Wilson, “Containing the Crisis: Japan’s Diplomatic Offensive in the West, 1931-33,” *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 29, No. 2 (1995): 342, 355.

58 The Chongqing Government criticized the Shanghai Municipal Council of the International Settlement and the French Concessions for surrendering criminal jurisdiction to Japanese authorities. On July 27, 1938, Chongqing government filed a formal protest with the British and US governments. See Frederic Wakeman, Jr., 40.

59 Li Zongren, acting President of Republic of China, felt guilty with the ill-treatment and random arrests of people in the name of traitors after the war, the same people the government had failed to protect during the war. The widespread persecutions shook the social foundation for the National Government which quickly lost its mandate of heavy to the Communists. See Li Zongren, *Li Zongren huiyi lu* (The memoris of Mr. Li Zongren) (Xianggang: Nanyue chubanshe, 1986), 560.

60 Joseph Esherick, “War and Revolution,” *Twentieth-Century China*, vol. 27, no. 1 (November 2001): 2.

61 John King Fairbank, 316.

62 Hu Yaobang, the late general secretary of the CCP, estimated that as high as 100 million Chinese had suffered during the Cultural Revolution alone. See Mobo C. F. Gao, “Debating the Cultural Revolution: Do We Only Know What We Believe?” *Critical Asian Studies* 34: 3, 422.

63 Chinese former President Jiang Zeming studied three years at the Central University of the Wang Jingwei government before the war ended. As his father worked for the Wang government, Jiang’s secret history has become a taboo for Mainland scholars, while Chinese dissenters use it to attack his credibility as a “patriotic” Chinese.

64 Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (University of California Press, 1998), 49.

65 Elly Touwen-Bouwsma, "The Indonesian Nationalists and the Japanese 'Liberation' of Indonesia: Visions and Reactions," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27, 1 (March 1996): 1-18.

66 Grant K. Goodman, "Aurelio Alvero: Traitor or Patriot?" *Journal of South-east Asian Studies* 27, 1 (March 1996): 102.

67 Koen de Ceuster, "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies* Vol. 25, No. 2 (2002): 209-10, 227.

68 Li Narangoa, "Japanese Imperialism and Mongolian Buddhism, 1932-1945," *Critical Asian Studies* 35:4, 492-510.

69 Li Ke, *Chen Gongbo* (Hebei Renminchubanshe, 1997), 435.

70 According to Graham Hutchings, the War of Resistance also saw a civil war between the Central Government and regional warlords, who "pursued an activity likely to produce swift returns—including indirect involvement in smuggling supplies to the enemy. See Graham Hutchings, 664-9.

71 Lo Jiu-Jung, "Survival as Justification for Collaboration, 1937-1945," in David P Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., 132.

72 John Fitzgerald, "The Nationless State: The Search for a Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* Vol. 0, Issue 33 (Jan. '95), 102.

73 Timothy Brook, "The Tokyo Judgment and the Rape of Nanking," *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 3 (August 2001): 675.

74 The civil war of four years turned out to be no less bloody than the Sino-Japanese War, yet neither the Nationalist Party nor Communist Party has ever apologized for the deaths of millions of innocent Chinese civilians or victims of their power struggle. Both have defended their indiscriminate killings of millions of innocent people in the name of the nation, while condemning the killings committed by the Japanese invaders in the same name. Only recently have we begun to read Mainland Chinese publications on how the Communist forces disregarded civilian lives in their battles with the Nationalist forces. Yet such books tend to be banned quickly by the Communist Party once again in the name of the nation. One of these books is Zhang Zhenglong, *Xuebai xuehong* (White snow, red snow) (Shenyang Shi : Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 1993).

75 Russia always wanted to keep Outer Mongolia under its control. At the end of World War II, the U.S. sacrificed Chinese interests in this region in order to gain Russian support of Jiang Jieshi instead of Communist Mao Zedong. At the cost of Chinese sovereignty, the U.S. and Soviet Russia made such a deal when China also claimed to win the war with Japan.

76 Timothy Brook, 685.

77 Iran Nish, "An Overview of Relations between China and Japan, 1895-1945," *The China Quarterly*, No. 124, 610-12.

78 Donald A. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 211.

79 Donald A. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire*, 202.

80 Hans van de Ven, "Some Historical Perspectives on the Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism," *Issues & Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 6 (November/December 2000): 63.

81 Wang Jingwei as head of the Nanjing coalition government of the early 1930s should be held responsible for China's failure to gain support from Western powers in its struggle against Japanese encroachments. Yet, he learned a lesson and realized the unaccountability of those power nations including the U.S. before he made the decision to collaborate with Japan to save China.

82 Donald A. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire*, 209.

83 Iran Nish, 615.

84 Evelyn S. Rawski, "Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: the Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (November 1996): 841.

85 Wang Guanwu, "Power, Rights and Duties in Chinese History," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* Vol. 0, issue 3 (Jan. 1980), 14.

86 Ho Ping-Ti, "In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Reenvisioning the Qing,'" *Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 57, No. 1 (February 1998): 144.

87 See Heng Teow, *Japan's Cultural Policy toward China, 1918-1931* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 168-69.

88 Louise Young, 49.

89 Dongyoun Hwang, 33, 264.

90 For Wang's democratizing efforts of the late twenties, see So Wai-chor, *The Kuomintang Left in the National Revolution, 1924-1931: The Leftist Alternative in Republican China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the Chinese achievements in its modernization under Wang Jingwei's leadership. Against the Communist scholarship on the issue, we have some Western scholars who have provided positive comments. See Parks M. Coble, *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republic China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), and Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911-1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1989).

91 During the Cultural Revolution, as high as 100 million of Chinese suffered from the Communist Party's policy under sadist Mao Zedong's leadership. See No. 62. Unfortunately, the Communist Government in Mainland China has allowed no scholarly efforts to study this period of history from approaches other than the Communist party's line or once again in the name of the nation, which is equivalent to the party.

92 John Melby, *The Mandate of Heaven: Record of a Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 84-5.

93 Frederic Wakeman, Jr., 3.

94 Poshek Fu, "Resistance in Collaboration: Chinese Cinema in Occupied Shanghai, 1941-1945," in David P Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., 180-98.