

Summer Session Scholarship Report 2005  
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Over the course of the Summer Session Honours Scholarship my understanding of the nature of research projects and the perspective that my thesis will take have both changed considerably. In light of these developments my report will consist of two parts; the first being to give a general but succinct outline of the methodological aspects of my summer research, starting with my original proposal and then examining how the summer research has clarified my thesis topic. The second part, comprising the bulk of this report, will outline the division of my thesis into three chapters and give a subsequent explanation of the research I have done thus far for each chapter. In doing so I hope to prove that my work has benefited greatly from the generosity of the University and that I have been a worthy recipient of the Scholarship.

I began my proposal with specific reference to the Manchurian Incident of 1931, stating that this incident would be the focal point for the study of the effects it had on Chinese and Japanese communities in Australia. This is still the case but my understanding of what constitutes the effects of this incident has become more comprehensive and the pretext for the event itself has become more involved. That is to say that I have now decided to focus less on the Manchurian Incident and the diplomatic effects following it, and more on the cultural implications and assumptions of the Japanese that lie behind the Incident. The issue of Chinese nationalism in Australia has also come to involve an understanding of Chinese Diasporas and Chinese racial identity. Both developments were important because they facilitate a better understanding of the cultural issues that the thesis will touch on and therefore a better understanding of the evidence.

Due in part to cultivating these areas of research, the thesis will now focus substantially less on the Australian role in both the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident and in the relationship

between 'Australia' as nation and the Chinese and Japanese persons living within its borders. This is because the racial and nationalist issues surrounding the question of Chinese and Japanese interaction and perception in the 1930s are a study in their own right and do not need to be validated by contrasting them within the confines of the nation in which they were living. In fact to do so would confuse and distort the question and would make the thesis unnecessarily problematic.

Arguably the most important development in my research, however, has been the decision to focus on the Chinese and to abandon the study of Japanese communities in Australia. Originally I had intended to have four chapters with the latter two devoted separately to the Chinese Australian and Japanese Australian perspectives. Now I have decided to write three chapters and to only investigate the Chinese Australian perspective of the time. This decision was informed by the research I have undertaken, of which I shall now provide a brief overview in order to clarify the reasons for this choice.

The availability of sources is the crucial factor in this choice. On the suggestion of one of my supervisors I searched Kinetica (an Australian wide library database) for publications held in Australian libraries relating to the residence of Chinese and Japanese in Australia in order to ascertain how feasible my project was. While there is quite a lot on the Chinese in Australia (Though not specifically on my topic of course), there is not very much on the Japanese in Australia. There are some publications on Japanese pearlers and the pearling industry in general, but while these are not irrelevant to my topic they seem to focus on a different demographic.

This is because my main primary source will be newspapers and it is far more likely that the opinions of non Anglo-Australians in English language newspapers will come from prominent and

well-established members of communities. The Chinese have a well-documented economic presence in Australian cities and in the north of the country in the 1930s, and some Chinese communities even had their own Chinese language newspapers. But there was no such large, prominent, and economically developed Japanese community in Australia, because there were fewer Japanese entrepreneurs and the vast majority of Japanese residents in Australia were involved in the pearling industry. So while a newspaper like Darwin's *Northern Standard* will represent some Chinese voices, it is highly unlikely to have any significant amount of Japanese opinion. What would be needed is an English language Japanese newspaper published in Australia in the 1930s, and if such a newspaper exists then it has eluded my search for it. In comparison, I have found an English language Chinese newspaper published from Sydney, *The Tung Wah Times*, which I will use in conjunction with the *Northern Standard*.

This raises geographical issues such as which cities will be used for case studies (since it would be unthinkable for an honours student to tackle this question on a national scale). Darwin and Sydney make the best cases because of availability of and access to primary sources. The 1933 Census also indicates that both these cities have large numbers of Chinese residents and very few Japanese (though it is to be understood that the figures for northern Australia are not totally accurate due to the prevailing conditions of the pearling industry). Consultation with academics from outside the University of Wollongong as well as with my supervisors has also highlighted that while there is certainly enough information to study the Japanese in Manchuria, Chinese and Japanese ideological attempts to understand race and nation, and the Chinese reaction in Australia to Japanese aggression in China, there is scant information available at the moment to assist an honours student studying Japanese nationalism in Australia. And for a thesis in which I have one year to complete there is simply not enough time to do the research necessary to make an original

contribution on that scale. It is for these reasons that I will now focus only on the Chinese in Australia.

In my first chapter it will be important to not only give a summary of the Manchurian Incident but to explore the cultural background that informed Japanese motives and actions. It is imperative to state here that I have read more publications than those mentioned in this report but that these are the ones which I have deemed may be useful to my research. Saburō Ienaga's *Japan's Last War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945* provides an excellent account of the Incident itself and the political and diplomatic history surrounding it. He details the economic and international implications of the Japanese move and it is in this way that this account will be most useful, despite the fact that Saburō is not ignorant of wider cultural attitudes. This book will be used in conjunction with books such as Ian Nish's *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919 – 1952* in an attempt to grasp the import and consequences of Japan's seizure of Manchuria as a politico-diplomatic prelude to examining how the Japanese perceived the Chinese and themselves.

In *Inventing Japan 1853-1964*, Ian Buruma confronts some of the cultural assumptions and trumped up claims of the Japanese in regard to the Manchurian takeover. He explores Japanese explanations of Manchuria as a 'lawless no-man's land' and tries to identify why the Japanese invasion of China received mass popular appeal. The reasons for this are embedded within Japanese perceptions of the Chinese, and this is where a book like Joshua Fogel's *The Cultural Dimensions of Sino-Japanese Relations* is incredibly useful. Fogel's essays cover a wide array of topics within the broad spectrum that the title suggests, but a common trend he traces is the changing attitude of the Japanese to the Chinese. This is crucial because part of the chapter will deal with how and why Japanese opinion changed, from before the end of the Tokugawa era, when the Japanese were highly respectful of the 'Motherland', to the beginning of the 1930s when

the Japanese were contemptuous of the degraded Chinese and sought to ‘liberate’ them militarily. Dick Stegewerns’ *Nationalism and Internationalism in Imperial Japan: Autonomy, Asian Brotherhood, or World Citizenship* explores similar changes. Though it is concerned more with the ideological relationship between nationalism and internationalism, this publication touches on the nationalist perspective of the Japanese and how this informed attitudes towards the Chinese.

Another important perspective of the Japanese to take into account is the Japanese discourse on race and racial difference. Essays by Michael Weiner, Louise Young and Kosaku Yoshino in Frank Dikötter’s *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan* all examine Japanese conceptions of race, especially ideas such as the *minzoku* (‘synonym for Japanese ‘race’, ethnicity and nation’) and the Yamato myth (unbroken line of descent common to all ‘true’ Japanese). These perspectives will inform the Japanese construction of the Chinese and combined with the Manchurian Incident itself will comprise the first chapter.

In the second chapter I will focus on the theory behind the Chinese Australian reaction I am attempting to trace. That is to say, that it will be based on theories of nationalism, Chinese nationalism, and also an understanding of the transnational Chinese Diasporas. As yet I have not read any of the ‘major’ texts on nationalism (Anderson, Hobsbawm, Said, Bhabha), and have focused on, following the suggestion of a supervisor, getting a handle on the particulars of Chinese nationalism (and in turn Chinese transnationalism). I have only scratched the surface of the reading I will have to do for this chapter, and I expect the theoretical issues to increase significantly as I read more.

One author whom I have read that has impressed me has been Wang Gungwu. While both *The Limits of Nanyang Chinese Nationalism, 1912 - 1937* (Cowan and Wolters [Eds] ) and

*Sojourning: The Chinese Experience in Southeast Asia* (Reid [Ed] ), are not specifically written about Australian Chinese communities they explore the relationship between the Chinese overseas, as well as those of Chinese descent, and the government in China. In these chapters Wang touches on and explores the patriotism of the overseas and Diasporal Chinese. He agrees with others who have noted that nationalist sympathies of the Chinese abroad were at their peak between the years after the 1911 nationalist revolution and the opening years of the war with Japan in the late 1930s. Wang's perspective will be important because it combines issues of both nationalist sentiment and transnational communities.

I had originally intended to use the phrase 'transnationalism' to describe the reaction of the Chinese in Australia to the Japanese incursions into northern China which began what some Japanese scholars have termed the 15 Year War. After having consulted both the multi-authored *Approaching Transnationalisms: Studies on Transnational Societies, Multicultural Contacts, and Imaginings From Home* and Aihwa Ong's *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logistics of Transnationality*, I believe that the use of this term would be inappropriate and misleading. Certainly Ong will be another author to read more of because she has contributed considerably to the understanding of Chinese Diasporal societies. But it has become apparent to me that 'transnationalism' (In all its multitude of ambiguous meanings) refers more to persons from one nation residing in another, rather than a person residing abroad and holding nationalist sympathies for their nation of descent. It would seem that Wang's term 'Nanyang nationalism' is far more fitting for my purposes. More research needs to be done, but I feel at this moment that this second chapter will comprise of looking into the theory of nationalism and then specifically looking into Chinese nationalism and, briefly, the Chinese abroad.

My final chapter will focus on the more research intensive aspect of my thesis – trawling through the primary source material (newspapers) in order to uncover and collect enough evidence to provide a coherent account of the topic and the period. The road to this point has not been straight however. Before I had decided to focus on the cities of Darwin and Sydney and to trace only the Chinese reaction (each informed the decision towards the other), I had read Humphrey McQueen's *Japan to the Rescue* and Henry Reynolds' *North of Capricorn*. While not uninformative, these books were ultimately dead ends. This was due, in part, to the fact that I myself needed to clarify my topic considerably. In light of this it has only been in the last week or so of this scholarship that I have begun seriously researching the Chinese in Australia through secondary reading. This is not to say that I have little idea of where this thesis chapter is going – I have found several primary sources (*Northern Standard*, *Tung Wah Times*, oral histories) which will be invaluable to my thesis. So although I have little in the way of actual reading on this chapter to show after 8 weeks, I have done a significant amount of library catalogue searches and have spent a great deal of time assessing what information is available and how this will shape my topic.

The only other materials I have read for this chapter have been two books. The first, *Dinky-Di*, by Morag Loh and Judith Winternitz, chronicles the involvement of and profiles Chinese Australians in the Australian armed forces. Despite the vast difference between the topics of the book and my thesis there were useful profiles of service persons alive at the time of the Manchurian Incident. The other work, an honours thesis by Paul Anthony Jones out of the University of Melbourne, studied the attitude of Australian newspapers towards Japan in the 1930s up until the 1936 wool trade dispute. He found that Australian newspapers were amiable towards the Japanese and that following the Manchurian Incident the newspapers showed little to no recognition of the violation of Chinese national and civil rights during the repeated border

incursions. I recognise the need to read more thoroughly for this final chapter and it is at the moment one of my main priorities.

Over the last 8 weeks I have used the Summer Session Honours Scholarship to investigate the viability of my research proposal and to clarify the areas that I will research, as well as identifying and studying texts which I deem relevant to my thesis topic. After this period I have decided to divide my thesis into three approximately equal chapters of 4,000 – 5,000 words each. The first will explore the Manchurian Incident and Japanese cultural understandings surrounding it, the second will elucidate the theory of nationalism and outline Chinese nationalism in particular, and in the last chapter I will attempt to identify a Chinese reaction to the Manchurian Incident in Australia. At this point in time the two most important areas to research are the second and third chapters, though I am finding fewer publications on these topics than those on the topics in the first chapter.