

**The China War: A Bibliographical Exploration of Major Works in English
on the “China–Japan Conflict” and “Sino–Japanese Relations” in the
Second World War Era**

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The China War was one of the most massive military conflicts in this Century of Total War. It lasted eight years, from July 1937 through August 1945, or consumed fifteen years if the Sino-Japanese conflict is seen to have commenced with the outbreak of heavy fighting in when Japan seized Manchuria in 1931. Extending the war to include the Chinese Civil War that followed should make even clearer just what a colossal calamity it was. Nearly a generation of Chinese knew the country only to be in a perpetual state of war. On a geographic scale its fronts would have engulfed the entire Eastern United States and were comparable to those of the Eastern Front between the USSR and Germany. Spread across more than 2000 miles and embracing vastly differing terrain and environments, millions of soldiers and sailors were mobilized to fight it. Millions of people were displaced in its wake; few Chinese did not become refugees at some point during the war or feel the imprint of an influx of desperate people from the areas under Japanese or collaborationist “control.”

Even before the onset of the Japan’s war with the Western powers that began in 1941, more than half a million Japanese soldiers had become casualties, with about 191,000 dead. Chinese armies likely suffered several million fatalities, while many millions of ordinary Chinese people were either killed directly, murdered, or perished as

the war coursed through their land. It was truly Asia's Great War, one of the most horrific struggles in human history. Yet, it is hardly known to much of the world outside China. Even for Japanese, today the China War seems to occupy a much smaller place in popular consciousness than the war that seemed to grow from the conflict on the Asian continent and end at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

This paper will introduce a number of the principal books and key articles available in English for the study of that war. This conference on the China War is dedicated to sources. My discussion here, and the selections and annotations made on the attached list of important readings in English, have been made with our group in mind. In a conference bringing together scholars working in Chinese, Japanese, and English and Western European languages, dedicated to asking new questions, spurring new research, and opening up many new opportunities for cooperative and collaborative research into the vast conflict that convulsed China in the middle decades of the Twentieth Century, I can only suggest a few of the myriad issues and highlight but a tiny proportion of the published material available for consideration. This is just the beginning.

What Do We Call the War?

Elsewhere I have discussed, from a Japanese perspective, the issue of the name of this war.¹ The war in which Japan was defeated in 1945 does not have a single nationally agreed-upon name. In Japan, people speak of "the Pacific War," "the Greater East Asia War," "the China Incident," "the Japan–China War," "the Fifteen-Year War," or explain

¹ Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*. New York: The New Press, 1992. 11

how the war in Asia was different from the rest of “the Second World War.” The choice of name implies a choice of chronology—a given name might place the beginning of the war as early as 1931, or as late as 1941. Choice of name often also indicated ideological perspective. “The Fifteen-Year War”—generally a term of the Left—emphasized the imperialist origins of the war, beginning with Japan’s seizure of Manchuria in 1931. “The Greater East Asia War”—now generally a term of the revisionist Right—can be a sign that the speaker either is still caught up in images of wartime, or displays a sympathy with the goals and objectives articulated during the conflict for which it was the official name after December 8, 1941.

The most commonly used name in Japan is probably “the Pacific War,” the widely used term of the Occupation years and the name which most clearly differentiates between the open warfare that began in China in 1937 (called “the China Incident” at the time, now sometimes referred to as the “Japan–China War”) and the war with the U.S., Great Britain, and the Netherlands that began in 1941. I have found that “Pacific War” seemed to free many with whom I have spoken from the need to refer to those years of combat and conquest in China at all. Most interviewees in the course of my research, however, preferred simply “the War” to any more elaborate name.

I have since learned that for Chinese, during the conflict and since, contention over the names of the War is nearly as rife. Such terms as “War of Resistance” and “the Anti–Japanese War” with time frames of 1937–1945 or 1931–1945, are no less value-laden and contentious. Not only are there Nationalist and Communist versions of China’s story to tell, but the experience of millions living in the nominally Japanese-occupied areas of China, sometimes administered by the “Reformed Nationalist” Government of

Wang Ching-wei (Jingwei) or other Japan-dominated régimes. The Republic of China on Taiwan used the "Sino–Japanese War (1937–1945)" for their abbreviated English-language translation of their semi-official war history.

Here, I will most often use “the China War,” in keeping with our Conference title, to refer to the conflict that occurred in China. I have tried to look at the entire period from about 1931 to Japan’s surrender. Naturally, the warlord era that preceded the completion of the Nationalist revolution in 1928 cannot be separated from the story any more than can the Civil War that led to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in October 1949.

The China War: A Bibliographical Exploration of Essential Publications in English

In this brief survey of the major scholarly studies and the best popular works available, I have elected to look at the English writing on the China War from several perspectives. My initial brief called for me to generate a list of all the important books in English on the China War, with perhaps an annotation of the top ten or so I would suggest for a reader to start with, and an accompanying essay that would give a sense of the kinds of studies, their approaches, their biases, and so forth. The accompanying bibliography also provides a briefly annotated introduction to the key references and broad general treatments of the era that contain important insights on the war. In this bibliographical examination of The China War, I have divided the subject into four broad areas and I will suggest themes that we may need to develop as we look at the conflict:

First, I will begin conventionally by presenting the **Reference Works and General Histories** of the Second World War era that might help the English reader find

out about the China War. Gathering in one place some of the important bibliographical collections that have been compiled, key general histories of the global war and the wars fought in Asia and the Pacific, and essential official studies in English. I see this section as a guide to where we can find the China War in the general literature and as a pointer to quick coverage or biographical materials that might be of use to any student or researcher.

Second, in **Military Dimensions of the War in China**, I address the looking first the military course of the war. How can we answer the questions of what happened where and when, with some suggestion as to why? I then turn to key factors and information that support military analysis of the war and its political framework at the general level available to us. America's War in China is treated as a separate subsection. The Horrors of War and Wartime Atrocities and the postwar trials receive attention, especially the areas of greatest controversy today, the Nanjing Massacre and Unit 731.

The China War: Societies at War is the third section of this Reading List. There I examine the essential literature that can assist us in assessing how China and Japan were transformed by the conflict. The interaction of war and culture—"high culture" and "mass culture"—, mobilization for both aggression and resistance, the place of survival and collaboration, the many levels of resistance, the sense of mission or national aggrandizement that move individuals and peoples at war require special attention.

The antecedents of war in the warlord era and the rise of the Nationalist government in China are all essential to the discussion for China, of course, but that era of imperialist opportunity was hardly less formative for Japan. One major omission in the list I present is the voluminous literature on and by Chiang Kai-shek himself.

Japanese society at war is treated in several sections with the experience of the Japanese people, Japan's wartime leadership and ideology, and the country's images of China and the Chinese are treated. A section on Modern History and Modern Memory and a look at Japan in Defeat and Occupation completes this part.

The Fourth and final section of the tentative bibliography is entitled **Toward an International History of the China War**. Beginning with the Japanese seizure of Manchuria, the place of China in the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," and the contribution of the war to bringing about the Pacific War are all treated from multi-lateral and international perspectives. Germany, the Soviet Union, and how Japan confronted the Jewish refugees at Shanghai all receive some attention here. I close with a brief list of works by Observers and Participants on the international scene that can inform our work.

I. REFERENCE WORKS AND GENERAL HISTORIES

The student of the China War may begin to look for the quick overview and certainly will need a great deal of detailed refinement and clarification as broad questions narrow down to specifics. In Reference Works and General Histories, I suggest some of the best reference materials, research tools, and background readings available. Let me first declare that bibliographers far more dedicated than I have plumbed the writing on World War II and created important volumes that must be referred to in the course of any serious attempt to undertake an extensive review of the literature. I am prepared to acknowledge here the bibliographical essays of many who have attempted to look at aspects of this conflict before me, like John J. Sprega's massive *The War Against Japan, 1941-1945. An Annotated Bibliography*. The most helpful efforts to lead the reader

toward the right literature made by Thomas Marvin Williamsen, Michael A. Barnhart, Mark R. Peattie (whose marvelous proposal for international collaborative research I draw on shamelessly), Mark P. Parillo, William M. Tsutsui, and others in Loyd E. Lee's *World War II in Asia and the Pacific and the War's Aftermath, with General Themes* are noted below under Bibliographies. They should certainly be consulted.

Were we to gather all the best general histories of the World War II era together, along with the encyclopedias of the war and biographical collections, and, in the spirit of prospectors in America's Old West, pan for the gold that might be found as we seek answers to some of our most immediate questions, I suggest that we can successfully extract some useful information. Yet the process is more arduous and spotty than one might think. The best of the compendia is probably Dear & Foot's *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, with some good entries on China and the China War where one can read a good quick overview. Some of the biographical dictionaries do contain entries on Japan's leaders, often by excellent scholars, but the selection is very sparse and the range of people involved in China quite narrow. For a fine introduction to the conflict, one would probably do better to read Marius Jansen's section on the war years in his general survey of the modern histories of the belligerents, *Japan and China from War to Peace 1894–1972*, than try to find explanations in most of the European theater oriented histories.²

Nevertheless, I have annotated some of these histories for what they can best contribute to our investigations. Ubiquitous as many of these are, and as well known to

² Marius B. Jansen, *Japan and China from War to Peace 1894–1972* Chicago: Rand McNally, 1975. It is interesting how little of the war is actually included in most of the general historical surveys of East Asian

the general public as they may be, unfortunately, few are terribly rich in information for serious study of the China War. Nonetheless, the fact that several of them are very strong can be of assistance to the reader trying to break into the English literature. I would like to suggest one from among the general histories of the Second World War, though it probably qualifies as a history of the Asia War as well. Calvocoressi, Wint, and Pritchard's second edition of *Total War*, especially the second half, or Volume 2, published separately as *The Greater East Asia and Pacific Conflict* is a fine study with a substantial section on the roots and course of the war in China. Under the Surveys of the Asian and Pacific War section, Pulitzer Prize Winner Ronald Spector's *The Eagle and the Sun. The American War with Japan* is a good place to go to capture the American war narrative; it is clear how little a Japanese voice is needed to tell the tale, while China is pure background. Japanese voices in English can be found in John Toland's massive and irreplaceable *The Rising Sun*, Ienaga Saburô's *The Pacific War* [interestingly published in Britain under the title, "Japan's Last War"] provides a reader with entrée to the contentious issues that Professor Ienaga spawned in his protracted lawsuit contesting the Ministry of Education's reluctance to approve his textbook for use in schools; he shows no reluctance to denounce Japan's military and wartime policies. The last four volumes in the Detwiler and Burdick's reprint editions of *War in Asia and the Pacific* are devoted to the Sino-Japanese War. These are the best of the hard-to-get *Japanese Monograph Series* of immediate postwar studies based on interviews and research by Japanese military officials.

History or even Chinese history, but that is another matter, more of concern to those of us teaching historical survey courses.

II. THE MILITARY DIMENSIONS OF THE WAR IN CHINA

“What were the plans?” “What were the means available?” “What happened on the ground? Why? And how?” “How did any particular result impact future operations and/or the subsequent course of the war?” are the bread and butter questions of conventional military history. For most of the Second World War, the chronology of operations and campaigns are almost givens in contemporary studies of the war in Europe and North Africa, reasonably fixed for the Eastern Front, and nearly as well-known for the main American thrusts in the Central Pacific, with considerably less clear definition of MacArthur’s operations in the SW Pacific, or the Allied campaigns in Burma. Unfortunately, the war in China (both before 1941 and after Pearl Harbor) is far more obscure to most students of war, and its operational details are virtually unknown. This is hardly surprising, since the composition and organization of the forces of the belligerents, their deployment, leadership, tactical doctrines, logistical principles, and manpower bases are poorly understood. When combined with the general ignorance of even most students of military conflict of the particulars of the geography, demography, or climate of the many Chinese sub-environments, it is hardly surprising that few are prepared to debate the merits of the Japanese thrust at Wuhan in 1938 or the impact of Japan’s riverine campaign along the Yangzi or amphibious assaults on China’s ports with the customary “What If?” enthusiasm of military historians. Too little is known about too much, and it is not easy to remedy fundamental lack of data with the materials readily available in English.

The Military Course of the China War

The military dimensions of the war in China are not addressed particularly well in any of the books that have been published on the conflict in English. By far the best military treatment of the war is *The Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945* by Frank Dorn. This history is almost as much a memoir or first-hand observation as it is a reasoned and well-researched history, for Dorn was an active-duty U.S. Army officer in China at the time of the events he describes. His narrative is at times wonderfully animated by his own versions of adventures riding about in a privately-hired automobile, or his conversations (while under temporary detention) with a Chinese warlord —nominally a general under Chiang Kai-shek's command—more concerned with the transportation of his plundered loot than with his nation's fate. Dorn treats the military operations of the Chinese army in unusual detail, and he uses his experience as an officer with the Fifteenth Infantry in China and as a trained Chinese-language officer to bring to life the geography, the pace, and the general atmosphere of the first years of the China War, particularly in the North China area he crossed under orders from General Stilwell to find out what he could. He is very harsh on Chiang's generals and the Chinese Army's performance, not only because of the battles the generalissimo launched at Shanghai, perhaps in the mistaken belief that his crack troops, with their German training, could stand up to the Japanese in action, but also for the way they saw their tactical roles. Dorn makes a subtler objection than most when he criticizes both the KMT army and its German advisors for their thinking about general war. According to Dorn, the successive defensive positions that always seemed to lie behind them led Chinese commanders in the line to make

precipitous withdrawals to “prepared defense lines” rather than hold firm in strong positions that could serve to severely delay or channel Japanese lines of advance.

Such criticism of Chiang Kai-shek and his army are not to be found in such works as those by Hsu Long-hsien and Chang Ming-kai, *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945)* or Hu Pu-yu, *A Brief History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945)* and *A Brief History of the Chinese National Revolutionary Forces*. Published in English in Taiwan in 1971, these studies are condensed translations of the Republic of China’s (semi-) official history. They contain much useful information on orders of battle, good maps (at least the best available maps in English-language sources) and many of the official pronouncements and exhortations directed at the military forces and people of China during the war, but they show little objectivity and surely no empathy towards Japan and its commanders. Neither, interestingly enough, do these works deal explicitly with the issues of atrocities committed by Japanese forces in China. For example, in discussing the early months of the “War of Resistance” Hu’s *Brief History...* has this to say about the fall of Nanking:

On December 13, the enemy captured Nanking, and slaughtered more than 100,000 [of] our people. Later, through German Ambassador Trautemann, Japan proposed peace negotiations. Farsighted and determined, Generalissimo (sic) Chiang issued “A Message to the people upon our withdrawal from Nanking” on December 17, in which he reiterated our determination to fight to the last. In January 1938 at the Wuchang Conference, he pointed [out] that the lawlessness and brutality of the Japanese Forces would lead to Japan’s sure defeat in the end.³

Marvin Williamsen’s “The Military Dimension, 1937–1941” chapter in James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine, eds., *China’s Bitter Victory* is a place to begin for any

³ Hu, 116.

reader looking to see how the military aspects of the war looked from the Chinese side. Unfortunately, such a study is really not present for the Japanese side at this point.

One of the most surprisingly good studies of the war comes from an American historian, who, like Dorn, had experience with the China Theater, but in this case from the particular military intelligence sub-discipline of photographic interpretation. Roy M Stanley, II, in *Prelude to Pearl Harbor. War in China, 1937-41: Japan's Rehearsal for World War II* uses a mostly photographic picture of the conflict to present a sophisticated portrait of many of the mundane military aspects of the conflict missed by others; uniforms, equipment, and tactical deployments are noted, sometimes with aerial photographs, and one can get some sense of the lay of the land Dorn describes so vividly.

The general military histories of China that we have are useful to the reader to some degree, in putting the conflict with Japan into the larger military context of Chinese history in the Twentieth Century. The trail-blazer in this field was F. F. Liu, whose *Military History of Modern China, 1924–1949* came out of Princeton in 1956, but remained almost alone in the field for decades. More recently, Edward L. Dreyer produced *China at War 1901–1949* that brings together most of the English-language material for a survey that sees the China War as the culmination of the first half-century's events.

Dick Wilson's, *When Tigers Fight. The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* is something of a disappointment, for despite its claim to be a study of the two nations at war is more a paean to the spirit of China. It is a well-written narrative and covers such operations as the Japanese offensive in 1944, operation Ichi-go, in more detail than elsewhere.

China's Internal Divisions

The history of modern China can be seen as a history of war—civil, international, political, and cultural. From the warlord era covered so well by Hsi-Sheng Chi in *Warlord Politics in China, 1916–1928* and the panoply of characters who were warlords like Donald Gillin's Yen Hsi-shan, James Sheridan's Feng Yu-hsiang, Oderic Wou's Wu P'ei-fu, or Gavan McCormack's Chang Tso-lin (interesting how the biographers become identified with their subjects in the mind of the bibliographer) came the Chinese Nationalist revolution. Perhaps most interesting to this writer was Diana Lary's *Warlord Soldiers: Chinese Common Soldiers, 1911-1937*, since that book helped launch me on my study of Japanese common soldiers in modern Japan.

The Kuomintang and its war have been the subject of works with differing perspectives, from Donald Jordan's *The Northern Expedition: China's Revolution of 1926–1928* to C. Martin Wilbur's *The Nationalist Revolution in China 1923–1928* it has been hard to break with the periodization established by the KMT itself. The "Sian Mutiny" as James Bertram called it in his *First Act in China* written in 1938, played an important role in preparing China for war, as Wu Tien-wei points out in his study of the incident, but the many valuable articles in James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levin, eds, *China's Bitter Victory* take the story of the KMT at war in many directions that need to be explored further in English.

Too large a topic to do more than mention, yet vital to China's modern history is, of course, the role and place of the Communist Party's Red Army in the civil wars and the war of resistance and Anti-Japanese War. The literature is vast, but Lyman P. Van Slyke's *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History* is a wonderful

place to go to get the feel of the tension, while Kataoka Tetsuya took the story further in *Resistance and Revolution in China: The Communists and the Second United Front*. The Nationalists extermination campaigns against the Communists, treated so well in Calvocoressi, Win and Pritchard's 2nd volume of *Total War*, are of course center stage for Gregor Benton's *Mountain Fires: The Red Army's Three-Year War in South China, 1934–1938*.

Mao Zedong's ideology, theories of War, and writings on the war with Japan would require a bibliography of their own.

Japan's Military and the War

Certainly the institutional history of Japan's military and the place it played domestically and in the formulation of Japan's international expansion is an area rich with potential topics of research, yet under-served by scholarship. My own work on the Japanese officer corps remains a dissertation.⁴ Edward Drea's essays in *In Service to the Emperor*, and Leonard Humphries' study of the army in the 1920s, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword* remind us all to look back at the pioneering work of Yale Candee Maxon's *Control of Japanese Foreign Policy: A Study of Civil-Military Rivalry, 1930–1945* us all to look back on the army in society. The sophisticated studies of the Japanese army in political action, such as Mark Peattie's study of Ishiwara Kanji noted below under the Manchurian Incident section of the *International Dimensions of the China War*, suggest what we could learn from significant expansion of the kind of work Hata Ikuhiko has made the core of his career. What he accomplished in the *Taiheiyô*

⁴ Theodore F. Cook, Jr., *and The Japanese Officer Corps: The Making of a Military Elite, 1872–1945*. Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton, 1987.

sensô e no michi project, including “The Marco Polo Bridge Incident, 1937” included in Morley, ed. *The China Quagmire*, and since surpassed by Hata himself in many important works on the army in China in Japanese, sets a high bar for scholarship into the military actions of Japan’s army in China. In the popular realm, Meirion and Susie Harries’ *Soldiers of the Sun. The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* gives a general reader a good place to go and should serve as an excellent guide to some of the lesser used archival materials, such as the French military attaché records, that can lead to some very interesting questions.

America's War in China

America’s conception of the China War has been very different in fundamental ways from the wars known in Japan and China itself. Joe Stillwell did not occupy the central position he may have thought he deserved, and either the Nationalist or Communist Chinese certainly did not accord him that status. Yet if one reads of the Americans in China, most of it seems to be Stillwell or Claire Lee Chennault centered. Of course, what the Chinese thought of either or both would make good reading, while a Japanese assessment of their American enemies in China would also be an addition to the literature. As ably as Michael Schaller has told us of *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938–1945* or Barbara Tuchman has given us *Stillwell and the American Experience in China*, and as thoroughly as Arthur Young documented *China and the Helping Hand, 1937–1945*, we are still probably giving too much weight to America’s role in China’s resistance.

Atrocities of War

As historians begin to look again at the China War, much recent work has focused on the atrocities and horrors of the war, particularly those attendant to the Japanese capture of Nanking in December 1937. I think I hardly need to list the works of Iris Chang, James Yin and Shi Young, Honda Katsuichi, or mention the new English translation of John Rabe's diary to an audience that includes Hata Ikuhiko and Daqing Yang. Yet, one very important consequence of the Nanjing massacre literature in English has been to bring to the English-speaking audience the extent of the interest in the subject in the Chinese-speaking world and to reveal the extensive attention given to the subject in Japanese over many years, despite some claims to the contrary. It seems important to me that reading of contemporary sources (whether the observations of Timperley or others) would be so greatly stimulated by growing interest in what happened both at Nanjing and throughout China that it may prove possible to bring out many newly-discovered records linked to the actions of the armies in China.

R.J. Rummel should be examined for a view of "Demo-cide" in what he calls *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder since 1900*, a history that encompasses the Qing, the KMT, and the CCP, as well as the Japanese. The entire atmosphere of murder, the psychology of atrocity, and the use of terror, repression, and "extermination" as political weapons are important questions that still require considerable attention.

An Academic Side-Bar: “Gaming” the China War

Among those who have looked at military operations on the Chinese continent from a very different “end-product” perspective than professional scholars or popular historians have been the designers of “historical simulations” (often referred to as “war games”). Using often-extensive research, some such students of the war recognize in this conflict both the extraordinary scale of the conflict and the relatively unexplored nature of its military dimensions. This has led to the production of several very detailed and complex attempts to capture the theatre of operations and the interplay between military forces. To a lesser extent, the political and social dimensions of the conflict are grafted on as constraints to be faced by the senior military commanders whose roles the players take. By far the most complete of these is *War of Resistance. China Theater—July 7, 1937–December 7, 1941* from Game Research/Design in Grinnell, Iowa.⁵ Designed on a scale of 20 km (16 miles) per “hex” by Mark Royer, the game comes with numerous maps—based on carefully researched cartographic studies—cover the massive theater of war from the borders of Japanese-controlled Manchukuo in the northeast to Hainan Island in the south and deep into the hinterland of China up the Yangzi, from Shanghai and the coasts in the east to beyond the wartime Nationalist capital of Chungking in the west. More than a thousand counters are available to represent on the maps the units and activities of Japanese army units and the units of the Nationalists, Communists, and several factions of dubious loyalty nominally on the Chinese side. What makes this a useful effort to be raised in the context of an international conference on bibliography is the tremendous effort to produce a “reasonable” order of battle for the forces engaged in

China over this period before American forces were engaged there, which is where most English-language orders of battle begin.

When Tigers Fight. The War in Asia 1944, a simulation designed by L. Dean Webb, published by Command Magazine, looks at Japan's Ichi-Go offensive that year on a much larger map scale at a lesser degree of detail, played out on a 34x22 game map.⁶ It calls attention to one of the least-known military successes of Japan and perhaps the worst Allied disaster of the late-war period. *China Incident*, designed by Laurel Cochrane, was published in *Wargamer*, in 1985 tried to capture the entire pre-1941 war as well, but on a much larger-scale and lower level of sophistication and detail than *War of Resistance*.⁷

While no claim can be made here that historians of the war need follow the historical simulators down the path of war-gaming, the tableaux offered for examining the geographic and logistical constraints on military operations, within a sophisticated set of political variables that may not be fully known to the participating commanders on each side may go a long way toward allowing the historian to feel something of the frustration of Chinese and Japanese commanders in 1937–38.

III. SOCIETIES AT WAR

⁵ *War of Resistance. China Theater—July 7, 1937–December 7, 1941* from Game Research/ Design in Grinnell, Iowa, 1998. GR/D is now producing a series of games on the Pacific Theaters

⁶ *Command Magazine*, Issue 26 (Jan-Feb 1944), Game Supplement: *When Tigers Fight. The War in Asia 1944*. The issue also includes several articles on the war in China, L. Dean Webb's own "When Tigers Fight: The War in Asia 1944" (12-21) which covers the Imphal operation in more detail than Ichi-Go, "Fighting Nature, Insects, Disease & Japanese: The Chindit War in Burma" (22-36) touching on that theatre peripheral to operations in the China-Burma-India Theatre by Manbahadur Raj, and "Killer Bs in China: B-29s and Strategic Bombing from China" (37-42) by Timothy J. Kutta.

Arthur Marwick, path-breaking British historian of the social dimensions of war, once declared that “war is the supreme challenge to, and test of, a country’s military, social, political, and economic institutions.”⁸ Crediting that this is indeed arguably so, one would hardly be wrong to argue that all aspects of these varied institutions—before, during, and in the wake of a conflict— are legitimate targets of inquiry for students of a war. Marwick’s attempt to break free from the “war as catalyst” or “war as midwife” schools of study have earned many his sharply directed barbs over the years, but his efforts to urge students of war to emphasize the multi-dimensional impact of “war” on entire societies must be recognized by those of us who would look at the titanic struggle between Japan and China.

For those of us doing our own writing on the subject, we naturally have individual choices of emphases, but the bibliographer would surely drown were he attempt to include in one list all books bearing on all these areas of inquiry. I do not attempt it here, but instead raise the caveat that pursuing nearly any social question or researching most institutional within the temporal frame of the China War, or its prelude or aftermath, will require one to expand one’s reading list into the general literature far removed from immediate concerns of war narrowly defined. More to the point, perhaps, when we venture to compare Japan’s experience with that of China, we may do well to realize that we have at our disposal a full range of comparative possibilities where we may be able to

⁷ *China Incident*, published in *Wargamer*, No. 37 (January 1985). See the accompanying articles by Laurel Cochran, “The Generalissimo’s War” and “The Armies of ‘37”, pp. 6-11.

⁸ Arthur Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century. A Comparative Study of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States*. London: Macmillan, 1974, 12. Also see Arthur Marwick, ed., *Total War and Social Change*. New York: St. Martin’s, 1988, a collection of articles supplementing and updating the field. Again, Japan is excluded.

measure and examine the impact of war on the two societies. To do this would be of immense help to the sub-field of war and society, and would probably do a good deal, too, to demolish the isolation of scholars working on opposite sides of the Japan-China front in the wartime era. In looking at the social dimensions of the war I have selected a few key books and suggest others that might inform the researcher of the materials available.

Societies at War

How were Japan and China transformed by the war? Such a broad question is naturally as difficult to answer simply as it is easy to pose. Yet perhaps it is possible to look at some books that attempt answers. Let us begin with the best. It seems to me that popular culture is of immense importance in understanding war and no scholar working in English has done more than Chang-tai Hung to make clear the variegated nature of China's resistance and the kaleidoscopic nature of Kangzhan (Resistance War). The sophisticated argument, the range of sources employed, and the degree to which he seriously examines the vast literary output of the war is impressive. Haruko Taya Cook and I have long been interested in just this approach to Japan's war, and seeing how Hung has made a major study out of what must have seemed an impossible task can serve as a stimulus for all scholars who want to bring into English the intellectual life of China and Japan during their war.

For China, while there is no general social history of the war in English of which I am aware, the outstanding work of Loyd Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937–1945* (listed on the Reading List in Section II) gives

an overview of the whole war seen through a KMT lens. His-sheng Ch'ii, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937–1945* is one of the very rare books that take on the entire war from the Chinese Nationalist perspective. This is a vital source, one that any student of war would be well served by reading. The rise and fall of the Kuomintang is the central theme, but Chi brings to the reader key assessments of how the disasters KMT military forces met in the war molded the party and the country's history.

Survival, Collaboration, and Active Resistance

What happened in the Chinese territory that came under Japanese “control”? Surely, one can subscribe to the story of heroic resistance and revolutionary guerilla struggle that is at the core of the Chinese Communist view. Surely Chalmers Johnson's *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* remains intriguing nearly forty years from its publication, perhaps because it poses a nearly unanswerable question: was the Communist Revolution brought about more because of peasant nationalist opposition to the Japanese than by the political and economic appeal of Communist ideology. Surely it is both, and a lot more besides.

Nevertheless, the question of who did not actively oppose Japan, or even who did not oppose Japan most of the time, is part of the story of how people survived for years in Japanese-dominated areas of China. At the higher levels of the political hierarchy, the work of John H. Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937–1945: The Politics of Collaboration* is still the core study for the Wang Ching-wei regime, supported by Gerald Bunker's *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937–1941*.

Yet collaboration is a lot more complicated, and embraces all strata of society, as Poshek Fu makes clear to us in *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937–1945*; there, holding multiple positions, temporizing, and incremental shifting from action to inaction and back were the rule. Indeed, China's largest city has been the subject of some of the best research available on the issues of peace, war, and security available to us, including Fred Wakeman's brilliant *Policing Shanghai 1927–1937* and his equally fascinating and invaluable *The Shanghai Badlands: Wartime Terrorism and Urban Crime, 1937–1941*. Harking back to Ernest O. Hauser's 1940 classic, *Shanghai: City for Sale*, Wakeman's two volumes make clear that the character of a city is not shaped by decrees or orders from outside or even made by occupation by a foreigners, whether friends or enemies, but by the interplay of immensely complex concepts of self-interest and opportunism occasionally tinged by idealism and even altruism.

Japan at War: Japanese People and Ideas at War

Japanese people's embrace of the war in China is not as clear-cut as postwar hindsight might suppose, and surely not as complete as the Japanese government's propagandists would have wanted. The efforts of the Thought Police and Japan's military to enforce censorship throughout the theaters of operation and at home while at the same time seeking to use the media—journalists, film, literary, and art—to build mass support behind an ever-expanding and increasingly costly war, surely attest to their concern that given full knowledge, the people might not accede to the policies they were pursuing on the Continent. A range of studies allow us to look at these issues, though the China War

is not the central focus of any of them. Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook's *Japan at War: An Oral History*, Tom Havens' *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two*, and the collection of letters from the late 1980s published in the *Asahi* newspaper edited by Frank Gibney as *Sensô. The Japanese Remember the Pacific War* all contain much that allows us to see the range of opinions that lay beneath the surface.

At the same time, the extensive efforts of many organs of government and leaders in many spheres of society to create and enforce a "Group Think" that would support the war are well documented. Perhaps the best source for penetrating how this worked is Tsurumi Kazuko's *Social Change & the Individual: Japan Before & After Defeat in World War II* brought out by Princeton in 1970. Ben-Ami Shillony's *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* has something to offer on this, though his seeming willingness to accept a "politics as usual" approach is confusing. Tsurumi Shunsuke's *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931-1945* gets at some things Iritani Toshio's *Group Psychology of the Japanese in Wartime* gropes to explain. Haruko Taya Cook has long been looking at the literature of the war in China, while Gregory Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan 1918-1945* looks at press in the war carefully. Surely, none of these books are specifically on the War in China, but they all lay the groundwork for studies to come.

When it comes to seeing how China was viewed through the Japanese lens, Joshua Fogel's work is unsurpassed. Whether looking at Japanese Sinologists like Naito Kônan or Nakae Ushikichi, or in chronicling *The Literature of Travel in the Rediscovery of China 1862-1945*, where he presents absolutely essential coverage of the writings on China of businessmen, military men, and artists, Fogel makes clear the role of "Shina" in

the Japanese imagination in ways few others have even attempted. As mentioned earlier, no one has done better than Marius B. Jansen at putting the two national histories together.

To seek out the war in the Japanese imagination, Donald Keene remains the standard, though there have been others pressing on to uncover the literature of war that can illuminate the ways Japanese writers and poets came to represent the conflict, while John Dower and William Hauser have written of the cinematic efforts made to capture the war for the Japanese public.

Finding Ways to Look at Reciprocating Cultures and Societies

Bringing to the study of the China War a truly multi-national perspective will surely be no easy task. While our final section is on the International Dimensions of the China War, I would like to touch here on one direction research might take that would both expand our detailed knowledge of Chinese and Japanese society and bring these two countries more into the broad category of peoples whose wartime experience is essential for comparative work.

Jay Winter has argued that the main drawback of the national framework of analysis of war “is that it tends to conflate into aggregates quite different and frequently contradictory experiences. The best way to penetrate behind the illusory veil of a unitary ‘national experience’ is to describe the character of community life in wartime.”⁹ The challenge to focus on “the social and geographical entities around which ordinary people construct their daily lives” is a great challenge to the historian of war, and the study of the

⁹ Jay Winter in his opening chapter in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, *Capital Cities at War. Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 3.

city is a great place to look for the community he sees as key to wartime experience. For the China War, Tokyo could be focus of such a study, but has not yet been the focus in English. For China, it would seem that Shanghai has begun to take pride of place, though it surely was not “typical” of China’s urban centers and spent the war “behind Japanese lines” in the formal sense. Fred Wakeman has shown us what can be done in his look at the socially peripheral and the police. Yet in wartime Nanking, Chungking, Peking, Canton, and even perhaps Hong Kong or a city in Japan-dominated “Manchukuo” much could be found of interest.

IV. TOWARD AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF THE CHINA WAR

No student of the China War can simply begin at the beginning, since that itself is immediately to dive into one of the greatest areas of contention. Yet, if we are to move toward an International History of the conflict, and we choose not to push our opening remarks back to the Opium War or Perry's expedition, or elect the Boxer Rebellion or one of the numerous other Western imperial assaults on Chinese sovereignty, and if we elect to set the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 as off-limits, the Manchurian Incident of 1931 is as good a place to start as any. Certainly, it has grabbed the attention of generations, first of diplomats, and then of scholars, who have sought to unravel the complexity of events in northeastern China with threads leading southward to China and eastward to Japan.

Manchuria, Manchukuo, and Japanese Empire in China

Setting aside the contemporary accounts, of which there were many, the Manchurian Incident has been the center of many studies of the Japanese expansion in China that bear mentioning here. The overall impression of Yoshihashi Takehiko's *Conspiracy at Mukden* (1963), Ogata Sadako's *Defiance in Manchuria* (1964), and James Crowley's *Japan's Quest for Autonomy* (1968) was that Manchuria was a target for Japan's military for grand strategic reasons, but that its history was bound up with the Army's political struggle for control within the Japanese homeland itself. Mark Peattie's excellent biography of Ishiwara Kanji, architect of the Japanese army's seizure of the region of Manchuria from China, makes clear just how far the officer corps was prepared to go to achieve its objective, but makes clear that for Ishiwara, at least, continental expansion was deemed essential for national survival, at the same time as it would be a foundation for forging a tight alliance with a new China, freed from Western domination. Seki Hiroharu's "The Manchurian Incident, 1931" provides a solid blow-by-blow description from the Japanese point of view of the incident.

The lure of the vastness of Manchuria itself, and the economic incentives for Japanese industry and potential Japanese immigrants to the state of Manchukuo when it was set up is the subject of Louise Young's brilliant, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*. Of course, keeping control of Manchuria was no easy matter, as Chong-sik Lee shows in his *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria: Chinese Communism and Soviet Interest, 1922–1945* and his earlier *Counterinsurgency in Manchuria: The Japanese Experience* which he prepared for RAND in 1967.

The works edited by Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie that deal with *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, *The Japanese Informal Empire in China*,

1895–1937, and Peter Duus, Myers, and Peattie's *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* are essential reading; the outstanding articles they contain are very important resources to the conflict. Yet, F. C. Jones' venerable *Japan's New Order in East Asia, 1937–1945* should be a required opening read, since he captures so completely the connections seen in 1954 to have existed between Japanese continental ambition and the war in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

The "Far Eastern Crisis" and the China War

In the history of the Second World War, the “China Incident” is usually viewed as a prelude to the outbreak of the “real” war in September 1939. Set against the tumultuous events in China in the first three decades of the Twentieth Century —confusing to most students of international relations (and probably to most scholars dedicated to East Asian history as well)—the conflict that broke out between Japan and China seems to play a part only as a preamble. The “Far Eastern Crisis” seems to have become locked into place. I have chosen to omit from this list most of the studies of the events that led to Pearl Harbor that make that event their principle reason for treating the war in China. I thus elect to avoid the problem identified by Michael A. Barnhart when he wrote, “The controversy over the American disaster at Pearl Harbor generated a publishing industry unto itself, one with a remarkably long life span.”¹⁰

Yet several very important studies need to be mentioned lest they escape detection. For an understanding of where America's national interests in China lay, few laid things out better than John Van Antwerp MacMurray in his memorandum to the

¹⁰ Michael A. Barnhart, “International Relations and the Origins of the War in Asia and the Pacific War,” in Loyd

State Department in 1935 as edited by Arthur Waldron.¹¹ Barnhart's own *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919–1941* is the base for an assessment of whether Japan's continental adventures brought or undermined economic security. While there is no danger that Akira Iriye's magnificent efforts at international history, especially with regard to the developments in East Asia and the Pacific will not be noticed, his focus has increasingly seemed to be on the Pearl Harbor crisis, while his earlier works dealt more comprehensively with the broader contours of China-Japan-America interchange.

Nations of Consequence

The place of Great Britain in both the diplomacy and the economics of Eastern Asia in the Twentieth Century sometimes seems to take a back seat in U.S. scholarship on China, yet it is surely central to the notion of Great Power rivalry in China and to the coming estrangement of Japan and Britain described so well in its naval dimensions by Arthur Marder in his two volumes on *Old Friends, New Enemies*. Anthony Best has assumed the mantle of Anglo-Japanese relations studies, first broken in by Ian Nish with his excellent studies of Britain, Japan, and Pearl Harbor. *Avoiding War in East Asia, 1936–1941*, which needs to be read in conjunction with both Brad Lee's *Britain and the Sino–Japanese War, 1937–1941* and Christopher Thorne's several studies of Far Eastern international relations. Interestingly enough, the field of China's role in the entire matter seems to belong to Sun Youli's *China and the Origins of the Pacific War*.

¹¹ Waldron, Arthur, ed., *How the Peace Was Lost: The 1935 Memorandum "Developments Affecting American Policy in the Far East," Prepared for the State Department by John Van Antwerp MacMurray*. 1991: Hoover Institution Press.

Germany and the Soviet Union are two additional players in the China theater that few would have ignored in the 1930s, but fewer seem to recall in general discussions today. Certainly, the place of German advisors in Chiang's inner circle prior to 1938 is very important, as J. Bernard Seps has pointed out, though it is usually as a partner of Japan, in the quadrille that led to the Axis Pact, that Germany is most often mentioned. Kurt Bloch in 1939 discussed *German Interests and Policies in the Far East*, John P. Fox looked carefully at German diplomacy, while we can go back to Ernst Presseisen, *Germany and Japan: A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy, 1933–1941* for a look at the Axis alliance as a dysfunctional marriage.

The Soviet Union, neighbor of both Japan and China, and ideological threat and model to both in many ways, was surely a player, though Stalin's USSR was still a pariah state from the vantage point of the Western halls of power. Japan's military confrontations with the USSR were the life's work of Alvin D. Coox and his contribution in that area is enormous. I find that I have set out only a smattering of the studies of the Soviet Union as an actor in China and will leave that list to be filled in by experts in that field.

Shanghai seems to return again as the nexus of the Jewish experience in Eastern Asia, since Shanghai was the site of the ghetto and the refuge of Jews who escaped both Russia and Germany to reach China in the era of Nazi efforts to exterminate them. David Kranzler and Ernest Heppner tell two different tales of the Jewish experience in China, yet they are only a tiny part of the incredible story.

Observers and Participants

This is the final section of the Reading List on which I will comment. A look at the memoirs of Joseph Grew, going back ten years prior to his departure in 1942, Shigemitsu Mamoru's version of events, and the selections of Kido Kôichi's diary are all irreplaceable commentaries on the events in China and the war that grew out of it. As a witness to war, Kiyosawa Kiyoshi's diary, which has been the source of many good quotes for the Japanese-literate for years has recently been translated and edited by Eugene Sowiak and Kamiyama Tamie. *A Diary of Darkness* covers 1942–1945, but captures many of the ideas of earlier years.

The memoir of former British military attaché to Tokyo, Major-General F. S. G. Piggott, C.B., D.S.O, *Broken Thread. An Autobiography* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, Ltd., 1950), inadvertently omitted from the Reading List, provides fascinating insight into the attitudes of those who might seem much to reproach on both the British and Chinese sides during the Far Eastern crisis. Piggott's words may not readily convince today, but they should point our research toward a series of questions concerning the Second Battle of Shanghai and the March on Nanking that might elude a more casual inquiry. Similarly, the vision of British Army captain Malcolm Kennedy in 1935 (who I inexplicably identified as a "naval" observer on the Reading List) helps us to understand what a long-time veteran of the Japan scene thought before everything was clarified by war.