COLUMBIA JOURNAL OF ASIA

FALL 2025 / VOLUME IV, ISSUE 1

COVER ART

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Artist Statement

Flows from the Kalapani heights to the lower fields,
And down the valley wind come the white horses:
Their manes the sudden gleam of foaming light,
Their hooves the thunder rising from water surges,
Their neighing sets the valley people's prayers onto the wind,
And nothing they cross remains untouched by rising fortunes.

And while many hands drew their lines upon the map,
Calling one slope their district and the far slope their foe,
And quarreling over the river's true origin,
As if that birthplace bound the whole valley to their claim;
The horses still roam wherever the wind will,
Flung out from the valley and borne into ten directions.

Lungta (wind horse) is a mythical Tibetan creature symbolizing the "inner air" (tib. *rlung*) that travels through the "subtle channels" (tib. *rtsa*) of the body's psycho-physical systems; and it is also the practice of releasing prayer papers into the wind, trusting their movement to disperse aspiration and dispel obstruction. This work presents a figure wearing the "*chungbala chyukti*" attire of the Rang (or Byasi Sauka) Tibetan community living three valleys stretching between India's Puithoragarh district and Nepal's Sudurpashchim province. The Northern end of the three valleys lies at the center of the Kalapani territorial dispute and has been an unsolved consequence of the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli, which attempted to divide the land by locating the "true" source of the Kali River, resulting in Rang community divided under two administrations. I do not claim to represent them; rather, their circumstances open up a broader question: when powers assign bodies to cartographic positions, what forms of movement and meaning remain impossible to contain?

In this work, as the figure casts the lungta, they become not just prayer papers but horses riding on the wind. This wind has no borders: it recognizes neither colonial demarcation nor disputes over a river's origin, nor the claims of where it belongs; it roams and flows freely across the contested line. The work therefore seeks to show that the people of frontier land exceed the grids of governance, that remembrance, cultural inhabitation, and embodied existence always find paths across imposed

boundaries. For Asian bodies living within contested landscapes, belonging can be fluid and relational rather than determined by the cartographic lines that nations insist upon.

Yuhan Zhang, *Lungta (Wind Horse)* (2025)
Digital media
4500 × 8000 pixels (15 × 26.6 in. at 300 dpi)

MASTHEAD

VOLUME IV | Issue 1 | Fall 2025

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

December 5th, 2025
Columbia University, New York, NY

Dear readers,

It is our distinct pleasure to present the fourth issue of the *Columbia Journal of Asia* (CJA). Volume IV, Issue 1 features scholarly and creative works contributed by undergraduates and recent graduates representing academic institutions across Asia and North America. The issue is structured into two sections: Articles, comprising long-form academic research papers, and Creative Works, encompassing an array of artistic, poetic, and literary expressions.

Building on the preceding themes of our past two volumes, "Genealogies of the Orient(al)" and "Body Politics in the Orient(al)," and inspired by the questions posed by our selected works, this year's thematic focus turns to the "Liminality of the Orient(al)." The works featured in this issue span a wide range of disciplines including history, archeology, anthropology, architecture, and the arts—and put in conversation, they illuminate the various multitudes and boundaries of liminality. These include social boundaries related to visibility, play, violence, and gender; material and metaphysical boundaries related to immortality, decay, and idealized and lived realities; and geographic and spatial boundaries, shaped by colonial and imperial metropoles and their peripheries. In light of these tensions, this issue seeks to consider what is the role of liminality within binary structures, and more specifically, within scholarly and creative discourses. Do liminal spaces subvert, reconcile, or reiterate binaries? Are they sites of contested negotiation or amorphous fluidity? And what may be the (un)productive consequences of characterizing a space as liminal? In accordance with CJA's aim, we hope that this issue's theme will help destabilize notions of a single, stable, and monolithic "Orient(al)," and instead, prompt readers to further engage with the complicated, and sometimes contradictory, narratives put forth by diverse voices.

We are thrilled to announce that this past year has been marked by much growth across many aspects of the journal. As an annual publication, we formally dedicated the spring semester to hosting cross-disciplinary events open to the broader Columbia University community, including film screenings, poetry readings, and moderated academic panels. As we have expanded our event capabilities, we have launched our new initiative, the "Forum Event," a space where editorial staff record and reflect on the events. Written by Managing Editor Ethan Kuperman and Deputy

Managing Editor Shilpa Kesavan, the inaugural article of the "Forum Event" series follows the screening of "Lone Wolf and Cub: Sword of Vengeance (1972)," discussing the role of the child both in film and in its historical context. The positive reception of our events additionally allowed us to expand our editorial team and introduce new roles within the production and outreach teams. This fall, shifting our focus back to the journal publication, we organized multiple editing, copyediting, and typesetting workshops to help standardize our workflow and provide valuable, transferable skills to our editorial staff. Overall, this year strengthened both our community presence at Columbia and our internal organization as a journal.

As always, we extend our sincere gratitude to our Faculty Advisory Board for their invaluable support and guidance: Dr. Manan Ahme, Dr. Isabel Huacuja Alonso, Dr. Jungwon Kim, Dr. Timsal Masud, Dr. Manijeh Moradian, and Dr. Neferti X. M. Tadiar. Our heartfelt thanks also go to our exceptional Managing Editor, Deputy Managing Editor, and Director of Peer Review—Ethan Kuperman, Shilpa Kesavan, and Cara Wreen—along with the incredible editors who dedicate countless hours to providing thoughtful feedback on submissions, fostering a sense of camaraderie, and ensuring the success of our journal. Thank you to all the speakers and participants who graciously shared their time, insights, and expertise at our events—their contributions have greatly fostered a sense of a community centered on meaningful and inclusive representation. We are deeply grateful to the Columbia University Libraries and our graduate peer reviewers for their patience, expertise, and steadfast support throughout this semester. Finally, we express our profound appreciation to our writers and contributors, whose scholarship and creativity form the core of this publication. Your insights and ingenuity continue to inspire our mission to promote critical scholarship on Asia and the Asian diaspora. Thank you all for your dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to making CJA the best it can be.

Isabel Andreatta CC'26
Linda Qin BC'26
Editors-in-Chief, *Columbia Journal of Asia*

UNITITLED (PORTRAITS OF AN ASIAN WOMAN)

VIELA HU
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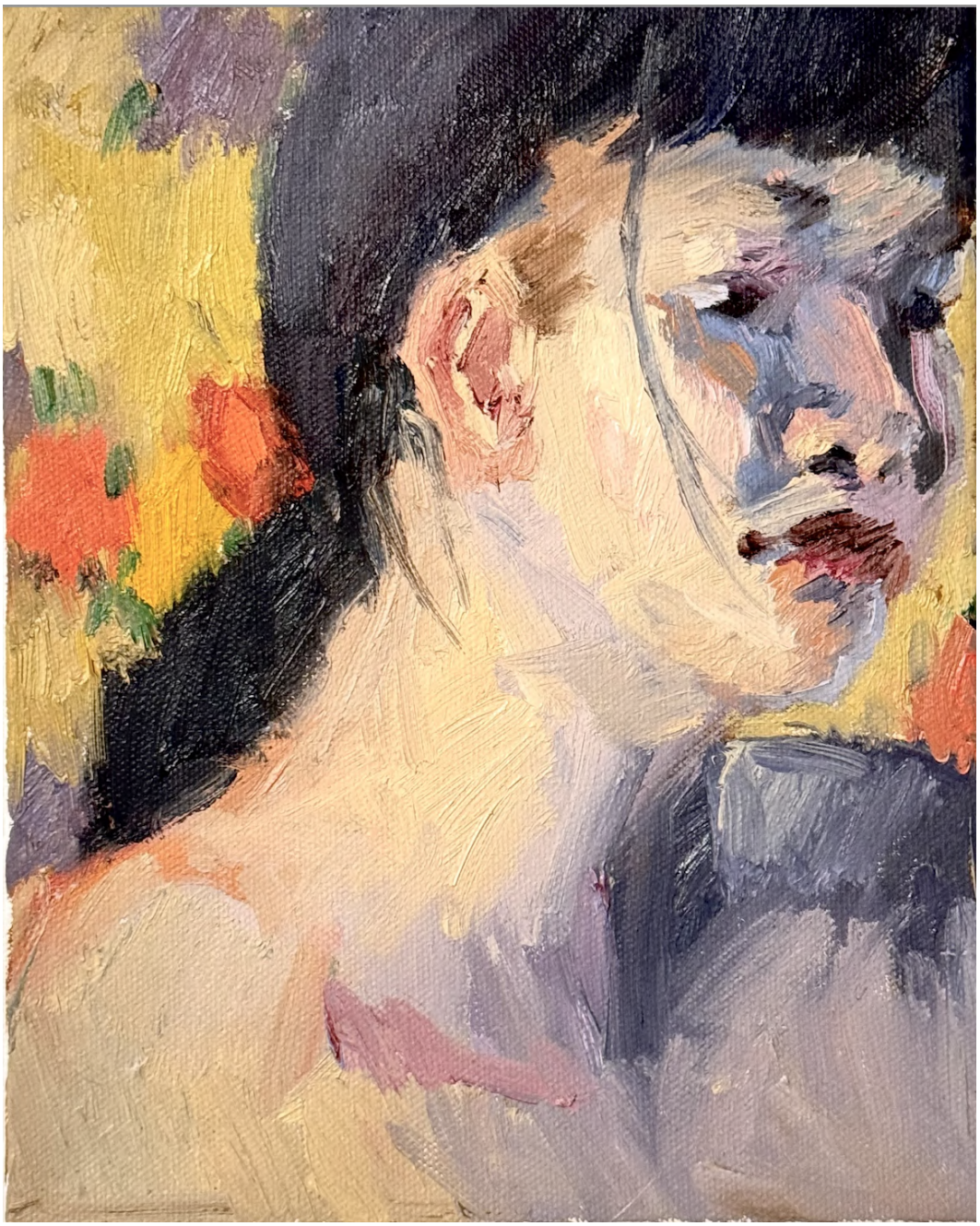
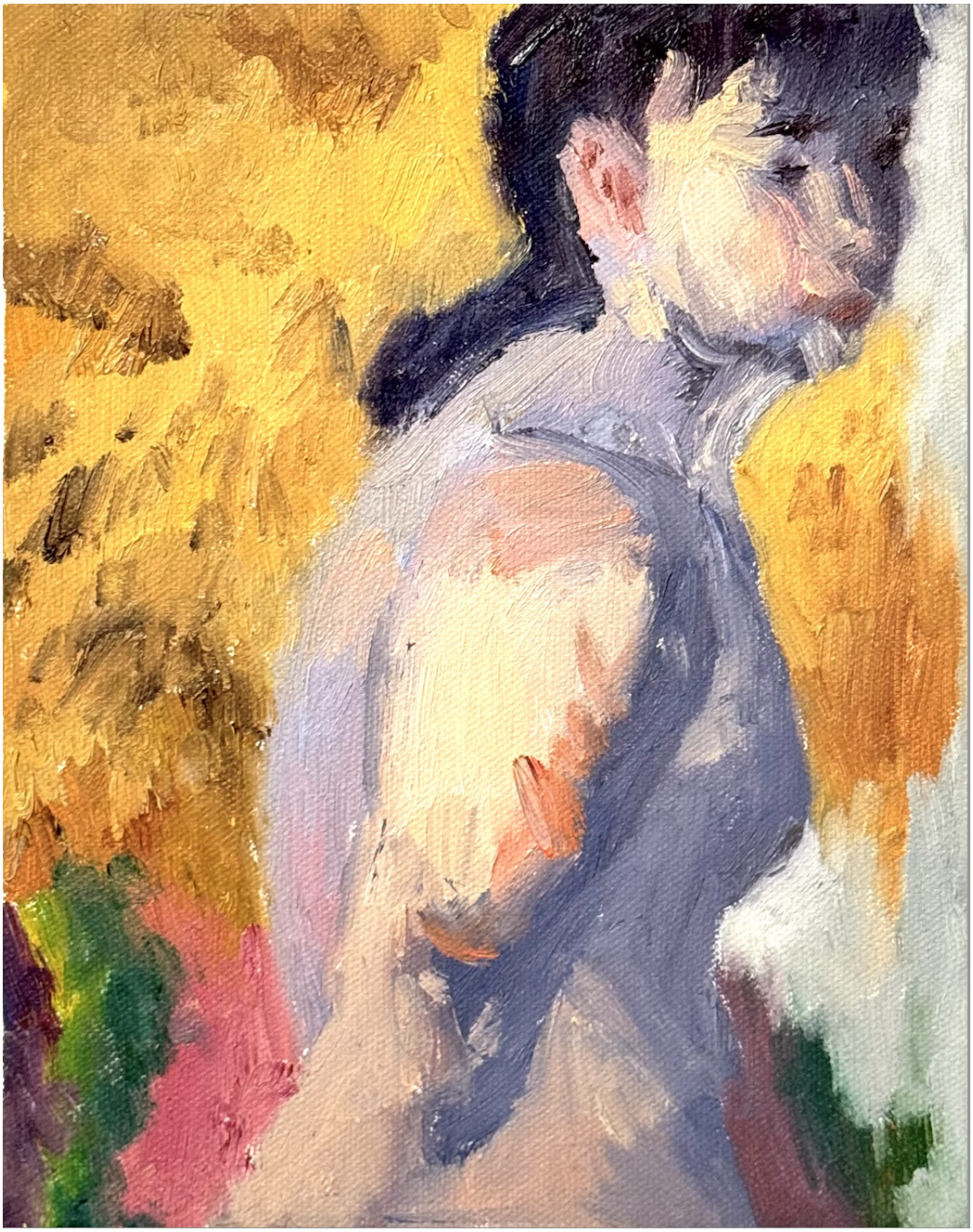
Columbia University, Class of 2027

Artist Statement

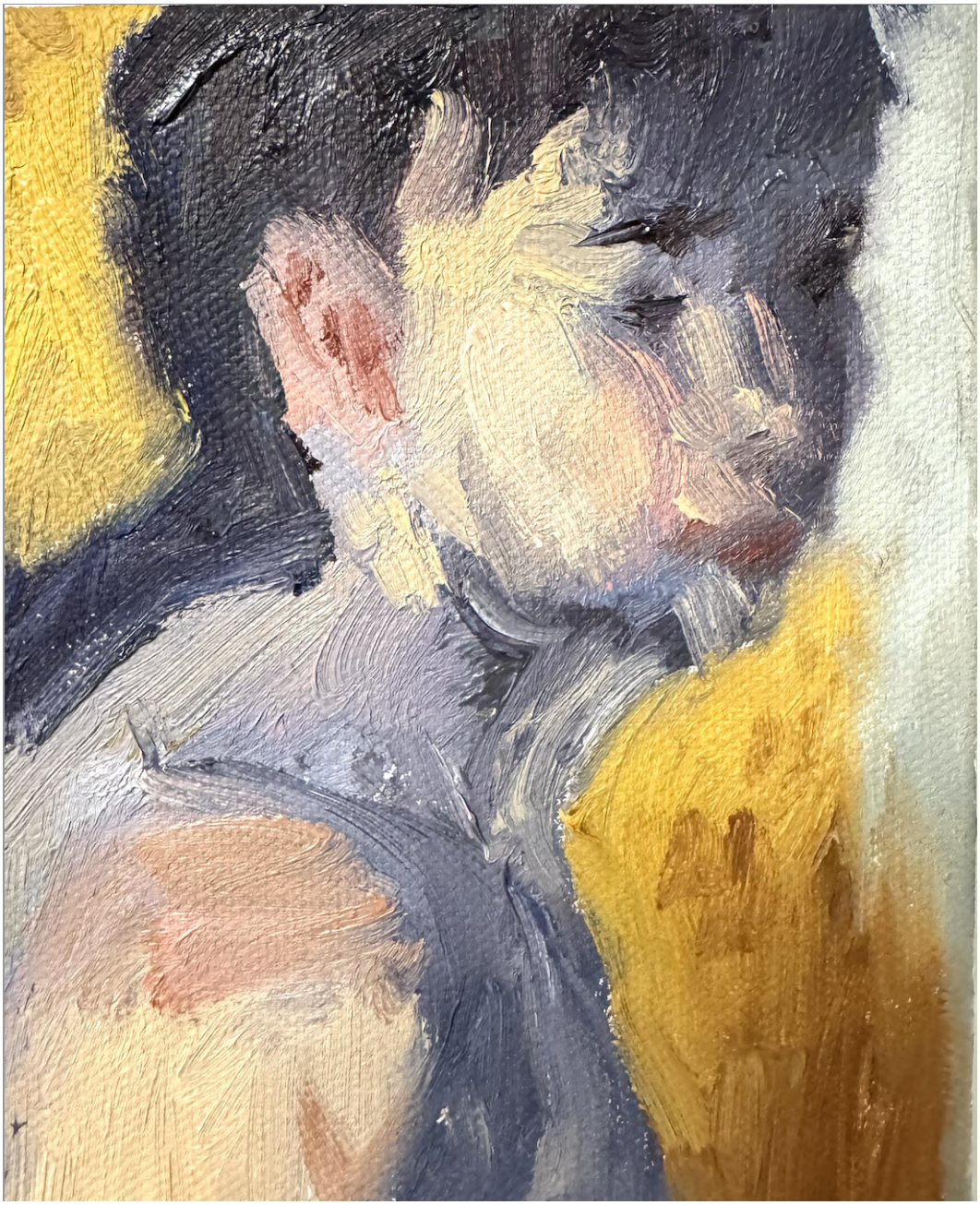
How to portray an Asian woman with a Western medium, imbued with its history of japonisme and orientalism: the stereotypes and fantasies of coy, petite female bodies? These questions were in the artist's mind after a visit to Boston to see impressionist and Manet's paintings that exhibited the fascination, stereotyping, and appropriation of Japanese art and culture. Painted during a live-modeling session, these two portraits have gestural brushstrokes that blur the nameless model's face, prioritizing presence over form and achieving a sense of undefinability of the woman's being. She appears in a state of flux, between motion and stillness, culture to culture, embodying the diasporic experience of creating an entirely new people through voyage, a people who are no longer defined by others in the West but are taking the brush to constantly redefine themselves.



Viela Hu, *Untitled (Portraits of an Asian Woman)* (2025)
Oil on Canvas
7 × 11 in.



Viela Hu, *Untitled (Portraits of an Asian Woman)* (2025)
Oil on Canvas
7 × 11 in.



Viela Hu, Close-up of *Untitled (Portraits of an Asian Woman)* (2025)
Oil on Canvas
7 × 11 in.

UNITITLED (SELF-PORTRAIT)

VIELA HU
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Columbia University, Class of 2027

Artist Statement

To portray yourself, you must confront your own gaze and those of others questioning: who are you? The play with ambiguity continues throughout Hu's practice. Here, it is a play with femininity through the body of an Asian woman. In the return of gaze, the viewer's habitual expectation of the female subject's passivity is denied, but no answers of her identity are given. The layered, gestural brushstrokes and the dripping paint melt along with the figure. Everything about the piece is fleshy and corporeal. The square canvas is like a container for the artist's body. The artist stretched the canvas and prepared the fabric in clear gesso, so the raw, rough, imperfect, skin-like canvas would show through the paint. The piece is a visceral physicalization of the artist's inner self-examination in search for a concrete identity when faced with the task of completely a self-portrait. The palette swirls in confusion and chaos with movement in all directions. The piece is inspired by works of Willa Wasserman, Petra Schott, Jennifer Packer and Morgan Allender. Like the title suggests, the portrait invites only an exploration with the artist of her own identity. To give an answer would be restricting herself.

Viela Hu, *Untitled (Self-Portrait)* (2024)
Oil on canvas
48 ×48 in.

THE PRODIGAL DAUGHTER

KATE HUANG
B.A. Candidate in English
Columbia University, Class of 2028

You know it's her because you've seen her many times, ever since you came here, and you've clandestinely sworn, contemptuously and shamefully, that you won't be her. Contemptuously, because she was everything you were; shamefully, because they told you, that she was everything you can never be, and then they spat you out, built walls around their enclaves.

You distance yourself far from her: she who is smart, talented, hailed to be the next big thing; born with such brightness, utter sheens of brilliance. The future is set that she would be the pride of our country. They surrounded her, showered her with dignity. The bright young star must be protected from people like you. Your dullness must not touch her dazzling brilliance.

You hear screaming. Within the ivy-covered walls you are disfigured, red blobs swelling grease all over your face. In the corners of the classrooms, you sit in your own excrement. *Your dreams are foolish*. Just look at her. You're squandering our investment. You, the prodigal daughter. (What a waste).

She draws near you, gold medals clinking on her chest as she walks. Her blinding rays. You recoil. You run. Deep within the forest, you find a patch of woods they have not touched.

Soft, muddy, earthy, the treetops are nestled with sunshine. You dig your toes into the earth, whispering a language nobody spoke. You close your eyes. They hold you until you fell asleep. They whisper some more when you awake, pages and pages of beauty, all your own, in a language nobody spoke.

Soiled diapers were laid aside. They were here, talking your ear off with their stories, their privations, their worries, anxiously confiding in you: *Will you be here when I return? Don't leave until I fall asleep.*

On campus, you hug the books to your chest. In the classrooms, there was no longer the stench of human waste. They told you, *Your English is impeccable!*

So you earned your badge of honor. Your sheen. Your brilliance. English made sense. English was lyrical, clear, unstained. You carry in your arms the Brontës and Edith Wharton and George Eliot and Virginia Woolf. You breathe in words of unimagined beauty, awash with unbounded joy.

Then you see her again, just round the corner, another one. You wonder if your friends with tall noses see you as her. A repulsive thought to you, as if *they* entered your bloodstream.

Back at home, suddenly they swarm around you. Oh, how smart you are, how brilliant. Attempts were made to rewrite your memories. *You were always a smart kid.*

You swallow. What do you have to complain about? You're safe now, bathed in a sheen of brilliance, of glory, of future-looked-well-uponness. They would leave you alone.

On your shoulders, the impending gravestones press heavy. You decide, they must have the sun in their eyes until the very end. The medals on your chest clinked. Every day, you clean her diapers and stuff a washcloth into her mouth, hoping that silence means death.

You are called from the waiting room outside the fire chambers. Your face disfigures as you draw near them for the last time. (You and her). The ashes are still hot. You know you must forgive.

THESE HILLS HAVE TEARS

LUKE RIMMO LOYI LEGO
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The roosters hadn't even crowed when Leyang's pebbles clattered against the bamboo wall—*tik-tik-tik*—our secret code. *Gosh*, it's 5am. Who gets up this early and goes to a friend's house to wake them up?

"Ai Faith! The beetles are marching!" he hisses. I stumble outside, still wrapped in sleep, and there he stands: barefoot, grinning, dawn's first light gilding his cheeks like stolen honey.

"Liar," I yawn. "You're just here to steal my rice cakes again."

"I swear!"

I don't believe him, but I follow him to the creek, still half-asleep. The elders have long gone to tend to the fields, yet the dawn has not yet taken a bite from the horizon. The silence is loud.

"Look," Leyang breathes, finally breaking the void of silence, crouching in the dewy grass. A battalion of jewel beetles crawls across a fallen log, their shells gleaming—green as snake scales, and blue as the river's deepest vein. Leyang scoops one up, its legs wriggling. "See? They're wearing armor."

I wrinkle my nose. "They eat poop, Leyang."

"So do you," he shoots back, grinning. The beetle flies at me. I shriek, swatting it away. It lands on its back, legs kicking at the air, its glorious armor useless now.

"That's a beetle, idiot, what's to be scared," Leyang giggles, poking my shoulder as I crouch by the bamboo grove.

I squint at the bug crawling over my toes. "Looks like your face," I say, sticking out my tongue. Leyang snorts, tossing a pebble into the stream below. Our laughter tangles with the wind chimes hung outside the church, the bamboo grove swaying like those gossiping aunties.

"Race you to the pine tree!" he shouts, already sprinting.

"Cheater!" I yell, but my laughter chases him. Leyang is always faster, his legs like bamboo shoots. He skids to a stop where the earth dropped sharply, and the whole world opened.

Our village lies below like a drowsing beast slowly waking for the festival. Smoke, sweet with the scent of slow-cooking gingerbread and spiced wine, curls from the chimneys. From the

churchyard, where we helped the elders weave pine wreaths just yesterday, a single new lantern gleams like a first star. The rusty bell at the schoolhouse is silent, but the dirt road coiling around the hills like a scar is already dotted with relatives from neighboring hamlets, their bright Christmas shawls like splashing of color against the winter-brown earth. In two days, it will be Christmas.

Not to say he wins, of course. He slaps the trunk with a grin. *"You run like a goat with three legs,"* he teases.

I punch his arm. "Shut up, jalebi-brain."

We collapse in the grass, breathless. Above us, the sky's so blue it hurts, dotted with the few clouds that had dared to brave the morning sun.

"That one looks like a water buffalo," I say, pointing at a slow, lumpy cloud.

Leyang snorts. "A water buffalo? Your brain is cooked. That's a helicopter. See? The rotors." He traces a circle in the air.

"You see helicopters in everything."

"Because they're more interesting than your dumb buffalo," he says, grinning.

Leyang then plucks a wild orchid, tucking it behind my ear. "For your funeral when Auntie finds out you stole her turmeric," he says solemnly.

I throw dirt at him, knowing all well that I am dead if mum finds out about her turmeric.

Thup-thup-thup.

We freeze. The sound is foreign, metallic—like a giant dragonfly.

Leyang jumps up, eyes glittering. "Helicopter!"

We scramble to the ridge, hearts pounding. Below, three jeeps, armored and gleaming like dark beetles, crawl up the mud road. From their bellies, soldiers in olive green spill out, swarming over the dirt compound with a purpose that feels like anger.

Boots crunch. Voices bark.

"Are they here for the festival?" I whisper, a foolish hope rising in my chest. "Maybe they've come to see the Christmas lights."

Leyang's eyes follow the jeeps, not with my fear, but with a strange fascination. "The posters at the school say they are our protectors," he says, his voice low. "I heard on the crackling

radio in the headman's house that they hunt militants in the hills. We all saw for ourselves how the militants forcefully tax us and shoot people. The army is there to keep India safe." He puffs out his chest slightly. "I want to join them one day. To protect our country… protect this."

His words hang in the air, borrowed and naive. The adults always speak of both the militants and the soldiers in hushed, careful tones when these jeeps come, their stories of distant villages burning like ghost stories we weren't supposed to hear. But Leyang always …

As the last word leaves his lips, a scream splits the air raw, a final sound that doesn't belong to any festival. The silence that follows is heavier than any we have ever known.

Then, movement. The soldiers kick down the door of our schoolteacher's house. The sound of splintering wood is a gunshot. Glass shatters. A baby's wail pierces the sudden chaos.

"Militants here!" one of them barks.

"No, sahib, please—only my grandson!" a frail voice pleads.

Another gunshot.

Leyang drags me behind the church wall, his hand clammy. He whispers. "I do not understand. Soldiers meant uniforms. Uniforms meant school posters: 'Our Brave Protectors!'"

Two soldiers yank our math teacher from his house. "Militant sympathizer!" one barks. A third soldier, tall, with a scar splitting his eyebrow like a fault line, presses a boot to the teacher's throat, grinding his face into the earth. "Filthy tribal," he spits. "You people never learn your place."

Something clatters to the ground, the teacher's wire-framed glasses. The left lens, its crack webbed from years of careful mending, stares up at the sky like a dead eye.

Another gunshot.

My knees buckle. Leyang clamps a hand over my mouth. The soldier laughs, high and sharp. "One less traitor!"

Blood pools in the dirt, a dark, thick paste that seemed to swallow the light. "Let's go back home, Leyang."

However as we are about to leave, a soldier catches a glimpse of us—we're found.

"Look what we've got!" A soldier with a ruddy, wind-chapped face yanks me up by my braid, his breath sharp with tobacco and something sour, like fermented rice. His fingers dig into my

scalp, rough as bark. Leyang doesn't even blink—he lunges, teeth bared, clamping onto the soldier's wrist with a crackle of bone.

"Run, Faith!" Leyang's voice cracks mid-scream.

A gunshot splinters the air, sharper than axe-blade on pine. Leyang's body arches, his fingers splaying toward the clouds we'd raced beneath moments ago. For a heartbeat, he hangs there, suspended. Then he folds, knees hitting the dirt first, his face tilting sideways as if listening to the earth's final secret. The orchid tumbles from my hair, its petals scattering over his still chest.

"Leyang?" I claw toward him, my throat raw. His eyes are open, fixed on something beyond the sky. I shake him, my fists tangling in his shirt. "Get up! Get up!*"* His eyes are open, fixed on the clouds we'd named just hours ago.

I shake him, my fingers clawing his shirt. "Get up!"

His head lolls, a thread of blood weaving through the dirt.

A shadow loomed over me. "Little rebel thought he was a hero," sneers a soldier with a chipped front tooth. His comrade, a thick-necked man with a birthmark splashed across his cheek like spilled tea, grabs my arm, his grip like a vise.

"See?" the second soldier growls to the others. "They all fight like wildcats."

They tear at my dress. The fabric screams as it rips. I bite down on his wrist, tasting salt and metal. A slap explodes against my cheek, and my vision shatters into a burst of white light.

"Feisty!" the birthmarked soldier laughs, pinning me down.

"Sir!" A voice slices through the violence.
A young soldier skids into view, his uniform too crisp, his Adam's apple bobbing. He freezes; his eyes locked on Leyang's body. "They're—they're just children, sir. This isn't—" he whispers, the words crumbling.

The chipped tooth soldier snarls. "Shut your gaddar mouth, Sanjiv—"

Sanjiv stands rigid, his rifle trembling. For a moment, I see it—the flicker in his eyes, as the candle flaring in monsoon gusts. Then his jaw tightens. "I said stop!"

Two shots. Crack. Crack.

Sanjiv yanks me up, shoving me toward the tree line. His name tag glints in the sun—*RAJPUT, S. A.*

"Sorry kid, I wish I had come earlier, but now Run! Don't look back—don't!"

I stumble, my legs jelly. "Leyang's still—!"

Sanjiv's hands dig into my shoulders, his nails biting through my torn dress. "Go!" he hisses, his voice raw and ragged. "Tell them… this uniform has forgotten its mother. It serves a trident and a sword, but not the earth that bore us." His eyes flicker toward the shadows moving at the tree line—figures in olive green, rifles glinting like fangs. "The real India doesn't burn children. It is in the eyes of our mothers, the soil of our villages… not in the barrels of their guns!"

I stumble back, my legs numb. "But you'll—"

"Run!" He shoves me so hard I tasted blood. "And don't you dare pray for me!"

The forest swallows me whole. Thorns tore my ankles. Branches slapped my face. Behind, shouts erupted. A single gunshot rings out—*krrrang*.

IMMORTALITY AND REBIRTH IN JADE: A WHITE JADE CICADA FROM THE HAND DYNASTY (202 BCE–220 CE) AT THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

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Introduction

The cicada is known for its molting, a process by which it sheds its old skin and grows a new one. In the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), the *Historical Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記) describes it as, "the cicada sheds its shell in the filth."[1] We may perhaps thus assume that ancient Chinese people believed that cicada larvae were dirty; only when the cicada shed its old and dirty skin did it transform into a new symbol, representing a clean, pure beginning of life.[2] Foregrounded in the symbolic associations of purity and transformation, the cicada similarly transformed material culture in early China. And within this material culture, the cicada motif can often be found associated with three carved objects.

The first object is the cicada pendant 佩蟬, a type of pendant that features a hole at the top, to be worn as clothing. The second object is the cicada-shaped head ornament 冠蟬, which has a hole in the abdomen and serves as a decoration on elite men's head crown. The last object is the funerary jade cicada 唅蟬, typically placed on the tongue of the deceased, symbolizing spiritual immortality and rebirth for the deceased.

This article focuses on a funerary jade cicada from the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), shown in Fig. 1 (object number 918.7.154). It was dated to the Han dynasty, and it was used as a burial object.[3] It was carved from a single piece of translucent white jade; the surface remains smooth and polished with no visible cracks on the surface. Age has only made the cicada slightly yellowish at the edges. This cicada's well-preserved condition makes it especially valuable for study and allows for an investigation of its role in the funerary practices in Han dynasty China. Specifically, this article will explore its symbolic functions in the funeral practices of the Han dynasty, including its significance for both the living and the dead at that time. This

[1] The original Chinese is: 蟬蛻於濁污. Qian Zhang 张倩, "Gudai yuchan de wenshi yanbian he daoguang bianhua 古代玉蝉的纹饰演变和刀工变化 [The evolution of decorative patterns and carving techniques of ancient jade cicadas]," *Wenwu tiandi* 文物天地, December 2023, 92.
[2] Qian Zhang, "Gudai yuchan de wenshi yanbian he daoguang bianhua," 92.
[3] "Cicada," Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection, accessed August 10, 2025, https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/354587/carving-of-cicada.

article will also examine the material quality of this white jade cicada, focusing on how jade was associated with the deceased's status and how the white jade material reveals a broader and unexamined social and cultural background of the Han dynasty.

Fig. 1. White Jade Cicada at the ROM. "Cicada," Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection, accessed August 10, 2025, https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/354587/carving-of-cicada.

Methodologically, this article combines archeological contextual analysis and textual analysis. Specifically, building on the analysis of excavated jade cicadas in the Han tombs, this article examines classical works compiled during the Han dynasty or earlier, such as the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) and the Daoist classic, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, to provide a social and cultural contextual understanding of people's views on death and funerals in the Han dynasty, as well as how jade cicadas were conceptualized. This article also adopts a comparative method to examine the material quality of the jade cicada. By creating a table in Appendix B that records comprehensive information about all twenty-two cicadas in the Royal Ontario Museum's collection, from the Shang dynasty (1600 BCE–1046 BCE) to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), this article compares the selected white jade cicada with other cicadas in the museum and interprets the significance of materiality. It will then explore why jade was chosen for funerary cicadas and how its use reflected the social status of the deceased.

Materiality of the Jade

Jade's color, shape, carving technique, and material provide an understanding of its function and significance in the burial practice of the Han dynasty. The cicada is carved from a single piece of translucent white jade, and the surface is polished, smooth, and shiny. As Fig. 1 shows, it is symmetrically oval-shaped and carved as a three-dimensional cicada. The head is small and carved in a triangular-like shape, with two protruding spiral-shaped eyes and a few lines carved in relief on both sides of the

head. The body tapers into a pointed oval shape, as the top is rounded and gradually tapers toward the bottom, and a semicircle is carved at the top of the body. Two symmetrically teardrop-shaped wings are carved on the back, and they also have a rounded top that tapers to a pointed end, almost meeting each other along the centerline. The surface of the wings and back features no additional decorations or textures, showing the simplicity of the carving technique.

Having examined the cicada's appearance and carving techniques, it is equally important to situate this object within the broader archeological context of Han funerary practices. The cicada's significance becomes clearer when viewed alongside archeological evidence from Han tombs.

As a large number of cicada-shaped burial objects were unearthed from Han tombs, archeological findings also indicate the cicada's presence in both elite and civilian tombs.[4] Scholars have classified cicadas into three categories: Type A refers to a basic pupae-like or egg-shaped form (*yongzhuangluan xing* 蛹状卵型),[5] which carves the triangular head and the cicada's body and does not carve wings. Type B is called the plain and simple form (*sumian jianyixing* 素麵簡易型), which carves the general shape of a cicada without much detail, and there are usually no physical features like eyes and necks.[6] Type C is called the multi-angled type (*duolengjiao xing* 多稜角形), which is the most commonly unearthed type from Han tombs. They are characterized by carving the details of the cicada and skillful craftsmanship, including the use of the *Han Badao* technique, which literally means "Han Eight Knife," but refers to concise carving.[7]

The white jade cicada's style belongs to Type C, the multi-angle type cicada, as its details of the eyes and wings are skillfully carved using the Han Badao technique. Specifically, the craftsman carved the details of the protruding eyes and wings of the cicada. A semicircle pattern (the lower part of a circle) was carved at the point where the horizontal line connects the head and the body. As Fig. 1 clearly shows, on the two sides of the triangular-shaped head, there are a few carved segment lines along two sides of the head as texture, which is used to show the protruding eyes. This carving technique, which can exhibit the "full vitality of the jade cicada through just a few concise lines,"[8] is typical of the Han Badao (concise carving) technique. However, despite the seeming simplicity of this technique, the durability of jade makes it

[4] Jian Zhang 张健, "Handai muzang chutu yuchan yanjiu 汉代墓葬出土玉蝉研究 [A Study of Jade Cicadas Excavated from Han Dynasty Tombs]," *Wenwu jianding yu jianshang* 文物鉴定与鉴赏 14 (2023): 118–21, 119.

[5] Naicheng Zhu 朱乃诚, "Handai yuchan yanjiu 汉代玉蝉研究 [A Study of Han Dynasty Jade Cicadas]," *Wenbo xuekan* 文博学刊, no. 1 (2019): 4–16, 5.

[6] Zhu, "Handai yuchan yanjiu," 4–16, 5.

[7] Zhu, "Handai yuchan yanjiu," 8.

[8] Mingying Wang and Guanghi Shi, "The Evolution of Chinese Jade Carving Craftmanship," *Gems & Gemology* 56, no. 1 (May 1, 2020): 30–53, 39.

"difficult to work,"[9] and creating "a jade carving is difficult."[10] As a result, this Han Badao technique only became popular when iron grinding tools became widely used,[11] and developed as a distinctive and systematic carving style only since the late Han dynasty.[12] Considering the technical difficulty of jade carving at the time, the Han Badao carving technique not only highlights the artisan's skilled craftsmanship but possibly suggests that the deceased possessed sufficient status and resources to commission a finely made jade object.

By reconsidering the three primary usages of jade cicadas in the Han dynasty, it can be deduced that the most likely use of this jade cicada was that it exclusively functioned as a burial object. For example, as the table of the cicadas at the ROM shows, the pendant in the form of a cicada from the Western Zhou dynasty (object number: 932.16.18) has a hole at the top, likely serving as a cicada pendant worn on one's clothing (see Fig. 2). By contrast, there is no hole on the surface of the white jade cicada, meaning it could not have been hung on head crowns or clothes. Additionally, the white jade cicada's small size (with dimensions of 5.5 × 3.1 × 0.9 cm) made it comparatively more suitable for putting into the deceased's mouth than to be worn.

Fig 2. Pendant in the Form of a Cicada at the ROM. "Pendant in Form of a Cicada," Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection, accessed August 10, 2025, https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/321877/pendant-in-form-of-a-cicada?ctx=673a17a081f7a3d27d28afb65eae82eb964008e1&idx=6.

To further examine the role that this jade cicada played in burial practices in the Han dynasty, it is important to place it within a broader historical and cultural background. Since the Neolithic age, various peoples of early China placed jade cicadas

[9] Jessica Rawson and Carol Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing* (London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, 1995), 22.
[10] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 22.
[11] Wang and Shi, "The Evolution of Chinese Jade Carving Craftmanship," 30–53, 38.
[12] Zhu, "Handai yuchan yanjiu," 4–16, 9.

into the graves of the deceased. Jade cicadas were also found in the Yinxu site (present-day Henan province) located in the capital of the Late Shang dynasty.[13] Cicadas were crafted with jade or other tough stones, which symbolized the eternality of life. In the Han dynasty, death was viewed symbolically through the molting of the cicada, meaning that even after the body died, the soul was still preserved.[14]

The association between the cicada's molting and the soul's preservation was not merely conceptual but materially enacted through the placement of jade cicadas in tombs. By the Han dynasty, the use of jade amulets for the tongue in funerary rites, with the hope that the deceased might attain rebirth, had already become an established practice.[15] Excavations have elucidated the high possibility that jade cicadas were significant burial objects throughout various stratas of society as jade cicadas have been found both in the centers of the capital Chan'an (current Xi'an) and other more peripheral zones within the Han dynasty.[16] These excavations have also shown that as shared funerary objects, the jade cicada functioned similarly to elite and civilian tombs, only differing in terms of material and craftsmanship quality.[17]

By placing the cicada into the deceased's mouth, an intimate physical contact is created between the object and the body, showing that the cicada played an important role in Han burial practice. This significance becomes clearer when viewed within the broader intellectual and religious transformations of the period. As the authority of the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) declined in the Western Han, Daoist ideas gained prominence, offering an alternative framework for understanding life, death, and the cosmos. Daoism also foregrounded spiritual transcendence and the possibility of attaining immortality, which directly shaped new funerary meanings and practices. Within this context, rulers like Emperor Wu of Han (156–87 BCE) elevated themselves as semi-divine figures in sacrificial rituals and pursued various means of achieving immortality. The cicada's periodic molting resonated strongly with the Daoist concept of "ascending to immortality" (*yuhua chengxian* 羽化成仙), making the cicada an especially potent symbol during this period. Consequently, the jade cicada was not merely a burial ornament but a material embodiment of these emerging beliefs in metamorphoses and eternal life. Its placement in the mouth of the deceased,

[13] Sarah Laursen and Donna Strahan, "Art and Technology in a Chinese Gold Cicada Plaque," *Archives of Asian Art* 64, no. 1 (April 1, 2014): 43–57, 52.a

[14] Lin Xu 徐琳, "Liang Han yong yu sixiang yanjiu zhi er—Shenxian changsheng sixiang," 两汉用玉思想研究之二 — 神仙长生思想 [A Study of the Concept of Jade in the Two Han Dynasties (II)—The Thought of Immortality and Transcendence]," *Gugong xuekan* 故宫学刊 4 (2008): 431.

[15] Jian Zhang 张健, "Handai muzang chutu yuchan yanjiu 汉代墓葬出土玉蝉研究 [A Study of Jade Cicadas Excavated from Han Dynasty Tombs]," *Wenwu jianding yu jianshang* 文物鉴定与鉴赏 14 (2023): 118.

[16] Zhang, "Handaimuzang Chutuyuchan Yanjiu," 119.

[17] Zhang, "Handaimuzang Chutuyuchan Yanjiu," 119.

therefore, symbolized both the preservation of the soul and the promise of spiritual rebirth.

The Han dynasty Daoist philosophical classic, *Huainanzi*, which was compiled by the Prince of Huainan, Liu An, also discusses the nature of life and death in great relevance to the natural molting process. In one passage, it states, "[the one] shedding its shell like a cicada, or discarding its skin like a snake, freely drifting in the Grand Pure Place, ascending lightly and going alone, then suddenly entering the darkness" that during the Han dynasty, people viewed the cicada's periodical motif as representing the immortal soul's release from the body. The elite class in the Han dynasty placed it on the tongue of a deceased person as part of burial practices in the hope that the deceased's soul could be preserved immortally and reborn one day.

For the living, by contrast, the jade cicada symbolized the practice of the Confucian virtue of filial piety, as Confucianism also rose along with Daoism during the Han dynasty. Starting from the mid-Western Han dynasty, Emperor Wu[18] promoted the teaching of Confucianism, which significantly informed ritual practices at that time. Confucianism emphasized the virtue of serving the dead as one serves the living,[19] greatly influencing how the living treated the dead in the funeral practice. More specifically, *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), a Confucian classic compiled by Dai Sheng during the Western Han dynasty, states, "To serve the dead as if they were alive, and to serve the departed as if they were still present, this is the ultimate expression of filial piety."[20] Within this Confucian framework, when the living used luxurious jade in the funeral practice, and particularly by placing jade cicadas into the deceased's mouth, they not only expressed hope for the deceased's immortality but also performed, as living descendants, devotion to dedicating precious materials to the deceased. Thus, this white jade cicada also reflected living people's practice of filial piety through careful service to the dead.

Although cicadas had a symbolic significance and were widely used in Han dynasty burial practices across all social classes, archeological findings still show that jade cicadas were only found in the elite's tombs, while civilian tombs only included cicadas made from stone or other materials.[21] Most of the cicadas from the Han dynasty displayed in the Royal Ontario Museum's gallery are made of worked and polished jade, primarily in white and green jade. In contrast, as the table in the appendix indicates, an exquisite cicada from the Shang dynasty (Object number: 928.12.159) polished and carved in a three-dimensional and realistic form still used fluorite rather than jade (Fig. 3). This distinction supports the scholarly argument that the use of jade cicadas in funerary practice became widespread and reached its peak

[18] 漢武帝.

[19] Zhang, "Handai muzang chutu yuchan yanjiu," 120.

[20] The original Chinese is 事死如事生，事亡如事存，孝之至也. Sheng Dai 戴圣, *Li Ji* 礼记 [Book of Rites] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 2022), 1019.

[21] Zhang, "Handai muzang chutu yuchan yanjiu," 120.

during the Han dynasty.[22] The reason for using jade as a primary material for cicadas in the Han dynasty is analyzed in the following paragraphs.

Fig 3. Cicada in the Shang dynasty at ROM. "Figure of Cicada," Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection, accessed August 10, 2025, https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/295797/figure-of-cicada?ctx=6fab82901e778152ca1db5931fa369d83e8de6a3&idx=22.

Firstly, jade is historically associated with the elite class's ornaments in ancient China because of the jade's physical features.[23] Specifically, jade is extremely tough and durable. In addition to its strength, jade is also valued by the elite class because of its beauty—color, texture, and translucence—becoming a symbol of beauty and refinement for the elite class.[24] These material characteristics guarantee that particular items have survived for exceptionally long periods of time and convey enduring beauty to the owner.[25] These features make jade a beautiful and easy-to-preserve burial object, and it was widely used in the elite's funeral practices.

The toughness and durability of jade make it a symbol of eternity and indestructibility. Because jade does not easily break, decay, or lose its luster, it visually and materially suggests a body or soul that can resist corruption over time, which matches the elite class's desire for eternal power and immortality.[26] What's more, jade is also associated with the moral virtues of a gentleman in Confucian thought. Specifically, the *Book of Rites* records that Confucius once said, "In ancient times, the gentleman likened people's virtues to those of jade: its gentle warmth and luster

[22] Zhu, "Handai yuchan yanjiu," 4.
[23] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 13.
[24] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 13.
[25] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 13.
[26] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 13.

embody benevolence; its dense and solid texture embodies wisdom; its edges, which are sharp yet do not wound, embody righteousness; and the way a jade pendant hangs downward embodies propriety."[27] Accordingly, as jade is smooth and soft to the touch and angular but not sharp, it represents important Confucian values of benevolence and righteousness. [28]

The jade cicada, as a burial object, was also thought to protect the deceased's body and status after death. As mentioned earlier, jade is a luxury ornament worn by the elite class in their lifetime in ancient China, as Rawson states, "jade ceremonial blades and swords with decorative jade hilts were held in the hand to indicate role or status."[29] Jade can ensure that "a person's rank was recognised by others, and courtiers and servants could thus keep their distance."[30] In other words, jade made the elites' class status visible and cautioned others to not offend them, thus providing protection to the elite.[31] This protection is extended into death, as the elite used the jade in the burial practices to guard against supernatural forces, like ghosts and evil spirits. People in the Han dynasty also believed that jade had a preservative function that could prevent the decay of the body after death,[32] as when a Daoism classic, *Bao Puzi* 抱樸子, discusses the ways of being immortal, it states, "If gold and jade are placed in the nine orifices [of the human body], the dead will become immortal" 金玉在九竅，則死人為不朽.[33] These nine orifices include the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, urethra, and anus. Under the influence of Daoism, people in the Han dynasty believed that the use of jade could protect the body of the dead. Thus, jade became a primary material of the burial objects in the Han dynasty, and it could be directly placed on the body of the deceased. Consequently, the materiality of jade and the symbolism of the cicada work together to form a particular view of death and rebirth in the Han dynasty. Jade, with its toughness and endurance, protects the corpse, while the cicada, with its shedding and renewal, symbolizes the soul's ability to escape the decaying body. In other words, jade represents the preservation of the body, while the cicada form embodies the transformation of the spirit. Together, they construct a framework of immortality and rebirth, where the physical body may remain intact through jade's protective power, even as the soul undergoes rebirth and ascends into a new form of

[27] Dai, *Li Ji*, 1225. The original Chinese: 夫昔者君子比德於玉焉：溫潤而澤，仁也；縝密以慄，知也；廉而不劌，義也；垂之如隊，禮.

[28] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 13.

[29] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 17

[30] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 17.

[31] Rawson and Michaelson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing*, 17.

[32] Xu, "Liang Han yong yu sixiang yanjiu zhi er—Shenxian changsheng sixiang," 430.

[33] Hong Ge 葛洪, *Baopuzi neiwaipian* 抱朴子内外篇 [Baopuzi, Inner and Outer Chapters] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1985), 43.

existence. Then, the deceased can become immortal, with their bodies being preserved and souls being reborn.

Cultural Exchange in the Han Dynasty

To further understand the social and cultural meaning of this jade cicada, it is essential to examine the material quality of the jade itself. The white jade cicada being discussed is made of white snowflake jade, and the surface is well-polished. Although the exact identity of the deceased with whom it was buried is unknown, the material of the jade cicada still suggests their elite status. Furthermore, since only glass and stone cicadas have ever been excavated from civilian tombs, it is nearly impossible that the white jade cicada in question could have been made for a civilian. [34] This is evident as the table in the appendix shows that there are two glass-made cicadas from the Han dynasty (933.12.11.C, 933.12.11.D) in the ROM collection: as Fig. 4 and Fig. 5 show, their surfaces were unpolished, with a mottled and flawed surface, suggesting that the craftsman did not polish the surface very carefully. Additionally, in terms of the carving technique, these cicadas were not carved in a three-dimensional, realistic style; instead, they were carved in a flat manner, showing that the craftsmen were unable, or not commissioned, to employ the more advanced protruding-carving technique. Accordingly, the deceased who held these kinds of cicadas plausibly had a relatively low status.

Fig 4. Carving of Cicada. "Carving of Cicada," Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection, accessed August 10, 2025, https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/355450/carving-of-cicada?ctx=673a17a081f7a3d27d28afb65eae82eb964008e1&idx=11.

[34] Xu, "Liang Han yong yu sixiang yanjiu zhi er—Shenxian changsheng sixiang," 416, 30.

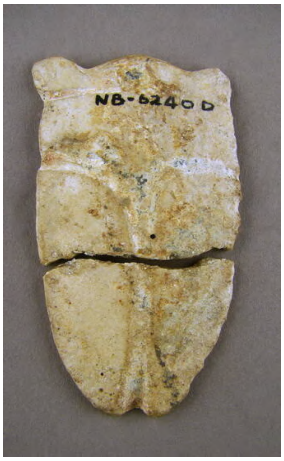

Fig 5. Carving of Cicada. "Carving of Cicada," Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection, accessed August 10, 2025, https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/516120/carving-of-cicada?ctx=6fab82901e778152ca1db5931fa369d83e8de6a3&idx=12.

As mentioned above, scholars have classified burial cicadas into three categories, and although these two glass cicadas can be identified as Type C, the multi-angled type of cicada, they are still similar to a cicada that is collected in the Shaanxi Historical Museum, as the figure shows, and, with a rectangular body shape, is classified as the "crude and simple type" 粗糙简陋型[35] by scholar Zhu Naicheng. The specific features of cicadas, such as eyes and wings, are also present but carved in a simple and crude way.[36] Since the Spring and Autumn Period (771 BCE–476 BCE), the artisans have been managed by dedicated government bureaus. The elite class had their own craftsmen, and these glass cicadas show that craftsmen employed less advanced and developed techniques in crafting burial objects for commoners, compared to the sophisticated craftsmanship of elite jade cicadas. Hence, the choice of jade as a material serves as a marker of the deceased's high social status in Han dynasty funerary practice.

[35] Zhu, "Handai yuchan yanjiu," 10.
[36] Zhu, "Handai yuchan yanjiu," 10.

Fig 6. Cicada from Shaanxi Historical Museum. Zhu, "Handai yuchan yanjiu," 8.

Moreover, the color of the white jade cicada is also important to examine, as the white jade may indicate the emergence of the Silk Road and cultural exchange via the Silk Road during the Han dynasty. As scholar Xu Lin states, before the Hetian jade was introduced to China, people in the Han used jades from local Chinese jade mines such as those in the current Gansu Province.[37] The archeological site of Mazongshan mountain jade mine[38] in the Han dynasty in Gansu shows that most of the jades are bluish-green jade, blue-gray, light yellow, and sugar-colored jade, with a small amount of white jade, and all of them are tremolite jade materials,[39] showing that most of the local Chinese jades are green in color. Among the twenty-two cicadas in the Royal Ontario Museum collection, most are made of worked and polished jade, and mainly white and green jade.

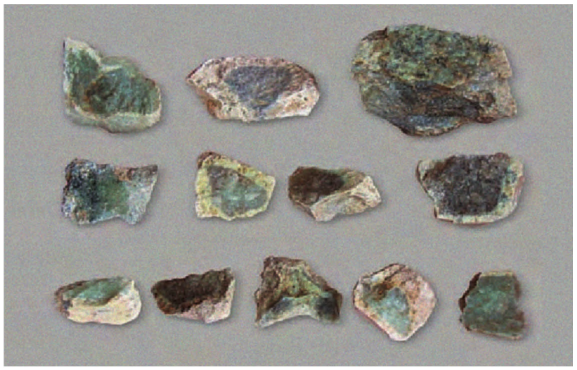

Fig 7. Tremolite jade materials in the Mazongshan mountain jade mine. Xu, "Zhongguo gudai yuliao laiyuan de duoyuan yitihua jincheng," 103.

[37] Lin Xu 徐琳, "Zhongguo gudai yuliao laiyuan de duoyuan yitihua jincheng 中国古代玉料来源的多元一体化进程 [The Process of Diversified Integration in the Sources of Jade Materials in Ancient China]," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊, no. 2 (2020): 103.

[38] 马鬃山玉矿.

[39] The original Chinese: *toushan shiliao* 透闪石料. Xu, "Zhongguo gudai yuliao laiyuan de duoyuan yitihua jincheng," 103.

As the table shows, the carving of a cicada (object number: 915.7.5) in the Han dynasty in the ROM collection was made of tremolite jade. It is similar to the green tremolite jade that was unearthed from the Mazongshan jade mine, as Fig. 8 shows. Therefore, this cicada at ROM supplements Xu Lin's argument that the color of jade that originated from the jade mines in the regions of the Han was mainly green, instead of white jade.

Fig. 8. Carving of Cicada at the ROM. "Carving of Cicada," Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection, accessed August 10, 2025, https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/322866/carving-of-cicada?ctx=6fab82901e778152ca1db5931fa369d83e8de6a3&idx=20.

But in the late 2nd century BCE, the Emperor Wu sent the diplomat Zhang Qian to the Western region, including Central Asia, to secure political allies and open trade routes. With Zhang Qian's return to the Han dynasty in 126 BCE, he brought back information about Yutian (Hetian) jade to the Han court, which was a high-quality jade in the Yutian Kingdom (current Hotan Prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region). This marked the official entry of jade into the purview of the royal family and the elite class.[40] With the introduction of Hetian jade, the phenomenon that the elite class used Hetian white jade or green jade had become more common. Burial objects, including the jade cicadas, were made of high-quality jade with no defects.[41] As scholar Zhang Jian states, most of the white jade cicadas were made of jade from the Western region.[42]

Therefore, this specific white jade cicada in the ROM could be identified as Hetian jade because it is white, and the quality of the jade is warm, smooth, and lustrous (*wenrun* 温润), and it is not the tremolite jade material, as compared to jades

[40] Xu, "Zhongguo gudai yuliao laiyuan de duoyuan yitihua jincheng," 102.
[41] Xu, "Zhongguo gudai yuliao laiyuan de duoyuan yitihua jincheng," 102.
[42] Zhang, "Handai muzang chutu yuchan yanjiu," 120.

in Fig. 7. Its surface has no defects and no brownish-red color (*tangse* 糖色), and it is smooth, which is a feature of Hetian jade.[43] Therefore, this specific jade cicada is likely a Hetian jade that originated from the Western region (current Xinjiang province) and was used by the elite class in the Han dynasty. Other than its role as a burial object, it also shows how materials could be exchanged through the Silk Road. The use of the snowflake jade as a material of the cicada not only shows that the elite class had access to imported luxury goods but also highlights that the cultural exchange through the Silk Road also influenced the funeral ritual in the Han dynasty.

Conclusion

By focusing on a single white jade cicada from the Royal Ontario Museum, this article has demonstrated how a single small funerary object reflects the broader cultural, religious, and material worlds of the Western Han dynasty. Through archeological analysis and close examination of classical Han dynasty and earlier texts, the article has shown that jade cicadas represented both Daoist beliefs in preserving spiritual immortality and Confucian practices of filial piety. Jade cicadas' placement in the mouth of the deceased embodied the view of death as a cicada's molt in the Han, a transition in which the body perishes but the soul endures. For the deceased, the cicada symbolized immortality and rebirth; for the living, it materialized devotion and filial piety toward their ancestors.

Analysis of the white jade cicada's form and carving technique further revealed how its materiality marked social hierarchy. By comparing this cicada with other examples in the ROM collection and with excavated jades from Mazongshan, the article demonstrated that the jade's durability, beauty, and moral associations made it uniquely suited for funerary purposes, while its refined craftsmanship shows the elite social status of the deceased. Finally, the cicada's material, Hetian jade, underscores the cultural exchange in the Han dynasty, showing how materials that circulated through the Silk Road found their way into elite ritual life.

[43] Xu, "Zhongguo gudai yuliao laiyuan de duoyuan yitihua jincheng," 105.

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"Cicada." Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection. Accessed August 10, 2025. https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/354587/carving-of-cicada.

"Figure of Cicada." Royal Ontario Museum Online Collection. Accessed August 10, 2025. https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/295797/figure-of-cicada?ctx=6fab82901e778152ca1db5931fa369d83e8de6a3&idx=22.

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APPENDIX A

Object Label of the cicada at the ROM:

Object Name: Cicada
Medium: Worked and polished jade
Geography: China
Date: 3rd Century BCE–Early 3rd Century AD
Period: Han dynasty
Dimensions: 5.5 × 3.1 × 0.9 cm
Object number: 918.7.154
Credit Line: The George Crofts Collection
Collection: China
Department: Art & Culture: China

APPENDIX B

Table of cicadas in the ROM Collection:

No.	Name	Date	Period	Medium	#	Color	Type
1	Figure of cicada	13th–1st half of 11th century BCE	Shang dynasty	Worked and polished fluorite	928 .12. 159	Green	C
2	Cicada	3rd century BCE–3rd century AD	Western Zhou dynasty	Worked and polished jade	931 .13. 42	Green-brown, wholly buff-coloured due to calcification	B
3	Pendant in form of a cicada	1046–771 BCE	Western Zhou dynasty	Worked and polished jade	932 .16. 18	Brown with red mottling	Similar to B
4	Pendant in form of a cicada	1046–771 BCE	Western Zhou dynasty	Worked and polished	932 .16. 17	Brown with red mottling	Similar to B

				jade			
5	Carving of cicada	Late 3rd century BCE–early 1st Century AD	Western Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	918.7.150	Dark green with a little bit of grey	C
6	Carving of cicada	late 3rd Century BCE–early 1st Century AD	Western Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	931.13.253	Translucent light green	C
7	Carving of cicada	late 3rd Century BCE–early 1st Century AD	Western Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	918.7.148	White, but yellowish at the bottom left	C
8	Carving of cicada	Late 3rd century BCE–early 1st Century AD	Western Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	918.7.146	White	C
9	Carving of cicada	206 BCE–24 AD	Western Han dynasty	Glass	933.12.11.B	White, but most areas are yellowish	C (crude and simple)
10	Carving of cicada	206 BCE–24 AD	Western Han dynasty	Glass	933.12.11.C	Green-white, but wholly buff-coloured and mottled	B
11	Carving of cicada	206 BCE–24 AD	Western Han dynasty	Glass	933.12.11.D	White but wholly buff-coloured and mottled	B
12	Carving of cicada	206 BCE–24 AD	Western Han	Glass	933.12.	White and yellowish	C (crude

			dynasty		11.A		and simple)
13	Carving of cicada	24–220 AD	Eastern Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	932.16.194	Light green-grey	C
14	Carving of cicada	206 BCE–220 AD	Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	915.7.4	White, but most areas are yellowish	C
15	Cicada	206 BCE–220 AD	Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	918.7.149	Translucent white	C
16	Cicada	late 3rd Century BCE–early 3rd Century AD	Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	918.7.154	Translucent white	C
17	Carving of cicada	late 3rd Century BCE–early 3rd Century AD	Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	921 X6 9.1	White	C
18	Carving of cicada	late 3rd Century BCE–early 3rd Century AD	Han dynasty	Worked and polished jade	915.7.5	Green	C
19	Carving of cicada	late 3rd century BCE–early 3rd century AD	Han dynasty	Worked and polished	921.21.515	Green (a bit yellow)	B
20	Carving of	618–907 AD	Tang	Moulded	930	Green	N/A

	cicada		dynasty	glass	X170.9		
21	Carving of cicada	18th–19th century AD	Qing dynasty	Worked and polished jade	996.119.3	Translucent green	C
22	Pendant in form of a cicada	1644–1911 AD	Qing dynasty	Worked and polished jade	918.7.152	Brownish-yellow with red mottling	B

THE FORMATION AND DYNAMICS OF COLONIAL "LIVED SPACES": URBAN SPACE AND SOCIETY IN COLONIAL HANOI, 1883–1916

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Abstract

This study examines the nuanced experiences and perceptions of urban space among different social groups in colonial Hanoi in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by analyzing the French colonial agendas, as reflected through modern urban planning and practices, and its reception among the colonial urban inhabitants, as suggested through their responses to the Statue of Liberty—a colonial urban monument. While existing scholarship has often framed colonial cities as stages for consolidating imperial power, introducing Western ideals of modernity, and forming systems of oppression and exploitation against colonial subjects, it has often overlooked the perceptions and experiences of colonial settlers and native communities, who account for the majority of the city's population. To address this gap, this study utilizes Henri Lefebvre's notion of "lived spaces" to explore the multiple layers of experiences of colonial subjects reflected in memoirs, records, and testimonies. A detailed analysis of these sources suggests that colonial subjects were not passive recipients of the colonial agendas but rather active agents constantly challenging and reinterpreting the imposed ideologies according to their interests. Hence, the colonial city, rather than a stage for advancing colonial rule, was a "contact zone" where colonial agendas clashed with subalterns' resistance.

Introduction

In 1889, the French-led Hanoi Municipal Government installed a statue in the *Square des quatre bâtiments* ("Square of Four Buildings") overlooking Hoàn Kiếm Lake—the heart of colonial Hanoi.[1] The statue, titled *Statue de la Liberté éclairant le monde* ("The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World"), was a 2.5-meter replica of the Statue of Liberty in New York. By placing such a symbolic monument at the center of the

[1] *L'Avenir du Tonkin* [The Future of Tonkin], 1889, JO-5467 (BIS), *département Droit, Économie, Politique, Bibliothèque nationale de France* (hereafter cited as *L'Avenir du Tonkin*), https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/13-juillet-1889/1/cf53e232-8776-4ec2-b8e1-3691d4165419.

colonial city, the French appeared to inculcate and promote this modern idea of "liberty" among their colonial population, seeking to "civilize" and assimilate them into the colonial order. Despite the colonizers' expectations, however, the colonized subjects interpreted the statue differently. Rather than viewing the statue as a symbol of "liberty," Vietnamese memoirs and accounts referred to the statue as *Bà Đầm Xòe* ("Lady in a Flared Dress"), based on the statue's long, loose-fitting garment.[2] This local conceptualization persisted until the statue's removal in 1945, undermining the original meaning and symbolic values the colonizers had intended.[3] This reimagination of a colonial symbol—the Statue of Liberty—suggests that the colonized subjects were not merely passive recipients of colonial narratives and agendas but rather active agents in reinterpreting colonial ideologies to reflect their experiences and perceptions of their living space.

This reconceptualization of a colonial monument among the colonized population reflects an alternate narrative underlying the colonial city that is often overlooked in the studies of colonial urbanism. Existing studies on the topic often interpret the colonial city as an instrument for implementing imperial power, legitimizing colonial rule, and establishing systems of oppression and exploitation upon their colonial subjects.[4] By constructing and remodeling the urban space according to Western modernity, the colonizers transformed the colony into a "familiar" space, while alienating the colonial subjects from their homeland.[5] Historians of colonial Hanoi, including William Logan and Michael Vann, have drawn on French colonial archives and administrative records to show how *mission civilisatrice* ("civilizing mission") was embedded in the colonial city's design.[6] Through urban planning, the colonial government not only highlighted the modernity they brought to the colony but also created a highly segregated space, where colonized subjects

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[2] Văn Uẩn Nguyễn, *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century], vol. 1 (Hà Nội Publishing House, 2016; Originally published in 1985): 653–54. Citations refer to the Hà Nội Publishing House edition.

[3] "Với công cuộc phá tượng đầu tiên sáng hôm qua, thành Thăng Long đã tẩy trừ được 4 vết tích thời Pháp thuộc" ["With the initial demolitions of statues yesterday morning, Thăng Long (Hanoi) has eliminated 4 remnants of the French colonial period"], *Tin Mới*, (1945), Newspaper Archive, National Library of Vietnam, http://baochi.nlv.gov.vn/baochi/cgi-bin/baochi?a=d&d=WMVa19450802.2.5.

[4] Elleke Boehmer and Dominic Davies, eds. *Planned Violence: Post/Colonial Urban Infrastructure, Literature and Culture* (2018), and Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1994), both cited in Julia C. Obert, "Introduction: Postcolonial Psychogeographies," in *The Making and Unmaking of Colonial Cities*, 1st ed., by Julia C. Obert (Oxford University Press, 2023): 1–2, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198881247.003.0001.

[5] Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1994), as cited in Obert: 1–2.

[6] Michael G. Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River: Race, Power, and Urbanism in Paul Doumer's Hanoi, 1897-1902," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 33, no. 2 (2007): 277–304; William Stewart Logan, *Hanoi: Biography of a City* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2000).

remained subjugated under their imperial agendas.[7] These studies, while significantly enriching our understanding of how colonial urban spaces were planned and constructed, only reflect the colonial government's narrative. They overlook the daily experiences and perceptions of the urban inhabitants, which in turn limits our understanding of the nuanced ways in which different urban communities engaged with and perceived the colonial city. Hence, what merits further investigation is how other groups in the colonial city, notably colonized subjects and colonial settlers, responded to and experienced these colonial-dictated spaces.

As recent studies on colonial cities around the world have shown, the colonial population, which accounts for the majority of colonial urban residents, contributes significantly to the construction and maintenance of urban space.[8] A study by Danielle Labbé, Caroline Herbelin, and Quang-Vinh Dao has unpacked the key contributions of Western-trained Vietnamese architects in the planning of Hanoi's New Native Quarter in the late 1920s, suggesting active participation of colonized subjects in colonial urban planning.[9] Another study by Jessie Palsetia regarding the Parsi—a native community in Bombay—also emphasizes the influence of the native community over British urban-making and planning decisions.[10] Lisa Drummond, in her analysis of the *L'Avenir du Tonkin* newspaper, also highlights the role and capacity of early French settlers to force change within the colonial city.[11] The case of Hanoi's Statue of Liberty, where the native population created an alternative identity and narrative to a colonial monument, also underscores the capacity of colonized subjects to disrupt colonial agendas, suggesting their crucial role in the operation and maintenance of the city.

Through a detailed analysis on the construction of colonial Hanoi and a case study of the Statue of Liberty from both the perspective of the colonial authorities and the colonial population, this study aims to illustrate how urban inhabitants engaged with and transformed colonial agendas by producing alternative meanings and narratives of their living space. Such engagements and interactions turn the colonial

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[7] Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River."

[8] In this study, the term "colonial population" refers to the communities/social groups in the colonial city that are not part of the colonial urban government. Specifically, in the scope of this study, it primarily concerns two major groups: the native population and the colonial settlers. This is different from "colonized population" (or "colonized subject"), which refers only to the native communities.

[9] Danielle Labbé et al., "Domesticating the Suburbs: Architectural Production and Exchanges in Hanoi during the Late French Colonial Era," in *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840 to 1940*, ed. Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine (Hong Kong University Press, 2013): 251–72, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2854bb.17.

[10] Jesse S. Palsetia, "Parsis and Bombay City: Community and Identity in the Nineteenth Century," in *Bombay Before Mumbai: Essays in Honour of Jim Masselos*, ed. Prashant Kidambi et al. (Oxford University Press, 2019): 35–56, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190061708.003.0003.

[11] Lisa Drummond, "Colonial Hanoi: Urban Space in Public Discourse," in *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840 to 1940*, ed. Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine (Hong Kong University Press, 2013): 207–30, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2854bb.15.

city from a stage for imperial power into a dynamic space for resistance and negotiation between the colonizers and colonized subjects.

Theoretical Framework and Source Selection

To fully explore the colonial city from the perspective of its population, this study utilizes the concept of "lived spaces," a key component in the conceptual triad of space models introduced in Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*.[12] This concept has been previously applied to the study of colonial urban space, notably in Todd A. Henry's *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* and Jini Kim Watson's *The New Asian City: Three-Dimensional Fictions of Space and Urban Form*, which look at the colonial and postcolonial development of Seoul, Taipei, and Singapore.[13] The "lived spaces," according to Lefebvre, are the space of the urban "inhabitants" and "users," formed through the direct experience of the urban population rather than the planning and narrative of the urban administration.[14] They emerge through interactions and experiences among different urban groups, in which the elements of the colonial city are reimagined and reinterpreted according to their particular interests. By focusing on the direct experiences of the urban population rather than the agendas of the city's administration, the "lived spaces" provide a suitable framework for unveiling the interactions and responses of the colonial population that are often omitted from formal colonial archives, but which played an important role in defining the urban identity and its underlying dynamics.

However, as Lefebvre also mentioned, to properly analyze "lived spaces," it is crucial to consider their interconnection with "perceived space"—the material, regulations, and practices imposed upon the space—and "conceived space"—the intentions and visions of the government, the intellectual, and the urban planner behind the space's layout and construction.[15] In that sense, earlier works on colonial Hanoi have clearly laid out the colonial government's planned "perceived space" and "conceived space" of the city.[16] Yet the experiences and perceptions of urban inhabitants, especially the native population, remain relatively obscure. This study aims to illuminate these relatively undefined "lived spaces" and provide insights into the

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[12] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013; Originally published in 1974 in French): 38–40. Citations refer to the Blackwell Publishing edition.

[13] Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*, Asia Pacific Modern 12 (University of California Press, 2014): 10; Jini Kim Watson, *The New Asian City: Three-Dimensional Fictions of Space and Urban Form* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[14] Lefebvre, 39.

[15] Lefebvre, 38–39.

[16] Logan, *Hanoi*; Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River."

nuance and complexity of the colonial space through the previously overlooked but pivotal viewpoint of the colonial inhabitants.

Lefebvre's "lived spaces" suggests that the colonial city, rather than a single space dictated by the colonial authorities, is a nexus for interaction between the culture of the colonizer and colonized, in which the colonized subjects remain active agents of change and city-shaping despite the agendas imposed by colonizers. This understanding further positions the colonial city as what Mary Louise Pratt called the "contact zone," a space where multiple groups, often distinct in origin and culture, co-exist.[17] In the case of Hanoi, the "contact zone" of colonizers and colonized subjects bubbled up from a dynamic stew of factors, including a Western-style landscape, the imposition of French-colonial regulations on everyday life, ideals of modernity, and mission civilisatrice. Within this mix, the colonial agendas were not only implemented but also negotiated, revealing the struggle of the colonizer to implement its vision while balancing subaltern demands, resistance, and collaboration.

This study utilizes a wide range of primary sources produced and circulated in colonial Hanoi from both colonial and colonized agencies. These include government decrees and documents, colonial settlers' newspapers, as well as memoirs of French colonial officials and members of the native population. Recently, scholars have highlighted the value of non-governmental sources in uncovering the complex social and political dynamics of colonial space. Se-mi Oh and George Dutton, for example, examine magazines and cartoons published by colonized subjects to illustrate their anxieties and confusion in navigating the colonial city and modernity.[18] By incorporating a wide range of textual sources produced by the colonial population in my analysis, I aim to uncover and reconstruct how urban communities experienced, navigated, perceived, and defined their "lived spaces" in the colonial city.

In addition to textual sources, I also explore the visual archive, notably colonial photo albums from the *Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulindien* (ASEMI) collection currently stored in the Digital Library of the University of Côte d'Azur (hereafter referred to as ASEMI collection), through which I examine the colonial city's "conceived space." Scholars like Se-mi Oh and Joseph Allen have incorporated visual media produced by the colonizers in their studies, which unveil the manifestation of the colonial attempt to showcase and dictate the social memory of the colonial urban space in Seoul and Taipei.[19] Following their path, my study takes a close look at some of the visual media produced by the French colonial government, which I believe

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[17] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992): 7.

[18] Se-Mi Oh, *City of Sediments: A History of Seoul in the Age of Colonialism* (Stanford University Press, 2023): 147–66; George Dutton, "Lý Toét in the City: Coming to Terms with the Modern in 1930s Vietnam," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 2, no. 1 (2007): 80–108, https://doi.org/10.1525/vs.2007.2.1.80.

[19] Oh, *City of Sediments*:73; Joseph R. Allen, *Taipei: City of Displacements* (University of Washington Press, 2011): 41–67.

provides a glimpse into the intention and vision of the colonial authorities regarding the city. Close analysis of both textual and visual materials will provide a crucial key to unveiling the voice and perception of the colonial population upon their living space as well as reveal the nuanced relationship between the colonizer and colonized subjects within the colonial city—the "contact zone" of the colony.

Building on the framework created by Lefebvre and these sources, the study begins with a brief historical analysis of the French construction and transformation of Hanoi in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to examine how the colonial government embedded its visions and ideas into the colonial city. The study then moves to a case study of the 1916 album *Ville de Hanoi* (City of Hanoi) from the ASEMI collection to examine how colonial authorities utilized controlled media to reproduce and promote their vision of the colonial city—the colonizers' "conceived space."[20] Finally, the study considers the public perceptions and discourses surrounding the Statue of Liberty—one of the first French-installed monuments in Hanoi—between 1889 and 1902 to explore the nuance and dynamics of the city's "lived spaces." By reconstructing Lefebvre's framework in colonial Hanoi, the study highlights the complex interactions and social dynamics that shaped the colonial city, underscoring the capacity of the urban population to challenge, resist, and reshape the colonial urban space and its underlying colonial agendas.

The Creation of a Colonial City: French Colonial Theory and its Application in the Planning of Hanoi, 1883–1908

Throughout the nineteenth century, the French Empire actively engaged in its colonization projects around the world, establishing colonies across Africa and Asia. This project, according to Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, a French economist in the late nineteenth century, was "a matter of life and death" for France.[21] As Ambe J. Njoh further analyzes in his work on French colonial urbanism, colonies were crucial for France to maintain its global prestige and meet its needs for raw materials amid rapid industrialization.[22] Within that context, Indochina, with its strategic location in Asia as well as its rich resources, emerged as a potential colony for the French. The colonial project in the region began in 1858, when France attacked Đà Nẵng.[23] Within the first

[20] *Ville de Hanoi* [City of Hanoi], 1916, PH04, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences Humaines, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/4898 (hereafter cited as *Ville de Hanoi*).

[21] Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes* [On colonisation among modern people], 6th ed. (1908), translated and cited in Stephen H. Roberts, *History of French Colonial Policy*, vol. 1 (P. S. King & Son, Ltd, 1929): 18.

[22] Ambe J. Njoh, *French Urbanism in Foreign Lands* (New York: Springer, 2015): 93.

[23] A key port-city in now-central Vietnam. Also known in French and English sources as Tourane.

ten years, France acquired and established a colony in Cochinchina, and throughout the 1870s and 1880s, launched multiple campaigns across Indochina that led to the establishment of protectorates in Cambodia (1863), Tonkin (1883), Annam (1883), and Laos (1893).[24] In 1887, the French government established the Indochinese Union (French Indochina) by incorporating Cochinchina and other protectorates, further consolidating colonial rule in the region. Hanoi, as the capital of Tonkin (1883–1949) and later of French Indochina (1902–1945), served as the seat of the colonial authority and the commercial hub for goods and resources to flow between the colony and the imperial core. As a result, the city served an important role in the consolidation and reproduction of colonial authority.

The city, however, was not an unoccupied space (or "blank slate") for French colonial imagination: inhabited since the second century BCE, Hanoi had, by the time of the French acquisition in 1883, thousands of years of history. The city also served as the capital of precolonial Vietnamese states for almost 800 years before the Nguyễn (1802–1945) relocated the capital to Phú Xuân in central Vietnam—after which it remained a key political and economic center of northern Vietnam.[25] By the mid-nineteenth century, the city was already home to about 50,000 Vietnamese inhabitants with distinct urban organization, society, and practices.[26] Premodern Hanoi consists of two key elements: the citadel to the west, which housed the city's administrative and military offices, and the native quarter to the east, a group of thirty-six neighborhoods specialized in certain products (Map 1).

Living in a foreign and unfamiliar space was a challenging task for the early French colonial settlers in the city, as shown through contemporary records. Gustave Dumoutier, an archeologist and early French settler in Hanoi, compares the neighborhoods surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake in the late 1880s to a "labyrinth" in which an urban explorer trying to reach the lakeshore must navigate through "a thousand detours" and "hop among stinking puddles and piles of garbage," only to "[find] himself again at his starting point" after an hour.[27] Anxiety and uncertainty about tropical heat, insects, and disease were frequent themes across French settlers' accounts, especially in contemporary newspapers. In the late 1880s, a news piece in *L'Avenir du Tonkin* reported on a sudden death of a French colonial official, who showed no symptoms except a headache on the previous day and a fever later that

[24] Cochinchina: The southern provinces of Vietnam; Tonkin: the northern provinces of Vietnam; Annam: the central provinces of Vietnam.

[25] Between 1010 and 1802, Hanoi served as the capital of the Lý (1010–1225), Trần (1225–1397), Later Lê (1428–1527; 1592–1789) and Mạc (1527–1592).

[26] Logan, *Hanoi*, 57.

[27] André Masson, *The Transformation of Hanoi, 1873–1888*, ed. Daniel F. Doeppers, trans. Jack A. Yaeger, 2nd ed. (University of Wisconsin, 1987; Originally published in 1929 in French): 74. Citations refer to the University of Wisconsin edition.

night.[28] In her analysis of other pieces in *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, Lisa Drummond argues that French settlers considered Hanoi to be a "dangerous" place with mad dogs, crime, kidnapping, and unhygienic conditions.[29] This reality motivated the French to transform the city to better accommodate their needs and facilitate their colonial rule.

In his extensive studies on colonial Hanoi, Ambe Njoh indicates two key motivations driving the French colonial government's urban planning: the improvement of the colony's economic potential, as well as the acculturation and assimilation of the colonial subjects, which consolidate and legitimize colonial rule.[30] These two objectives were in line with the rhetoric surrounding French colonialism. In 1885, then-Prime Minister Jules Ferry delivered a key speech indicating the three objectives of France's engagement in colonial expansion: economically, colonialism brought France new markets and raw materials; politically, colonialism helped increase the grandeur of the French empire; and culturally, colonialism allowed the French Republic to fulfill its "humanitarian" obligation to spread the spirit of French enlightenment ideology throughout the world.[31] This responsibility to culturally enhance the colony, coined in the term "mission civilisatrice," involves the total integration and assimilation of colonial subjects into the French colonial system, reflecting their belief in the universalism of France's Republican values.[32] In light of this, the modernization of Hanoi's urban landscape can also be understood as an effort by the colonial government to "civilize" and assimilate their colonial subjects—the main rationale behind the mission civilisatrice.

French interference with Hanoi's urban layout began in the late 1880s with the establishment of a new French quarter in the area surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake. This area, south of the city's native thirty-six neighborhoods, included a swampy area between the Lake and Red River as well as some Vietnamese villages adjacent to the precolonial city. To transform this area into the new center of colonial Hanoi, the colonial authority evicted local residents and demolished existing precolonial structures.[33] They also mobilized locals to fill in the swamps and lagoons.[34] By erasing this precolonial suburb, the colonial government not only eliminated an "unhygienic"

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[28] Drummond, "Colonial Hanoi," 214.

[29] Drummond.

[30] Njoh, *French Urbanism in Foreign Lands*, 89.

[31] Jules Ferry, speech to the Chamber of Deputies, 28 July, 1885, cited in Timothy Baycroft, "The Empire and the Nation: The Place of Colonial Images in the Republican Vision of the French Nation," in *Empire and Culture: The French Experience, 1830–1940*, 1st ed. 2004 (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2004): 149-50, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230000681.

[32] Baycroft, 149–50.

[33] Văn Huề Hà and Hoàng Anh Đỗ, eds., *Quy Hoạch Đô Thị và Địa Giới Hành Chính Hà Nội, 1873-1954* [Urban Planning and Administrative Boundaries of Hanoi, 1873–1954] (Vietnam National Archive Center No 1, 2010): 18.

[34] Logan, *Hanoi*, 72–76.

and "chaotic" space—sources of their anxiety—but also created a blank space for their urban imagination. The colonial government then constructed the so-called "French quarter" following modern urban planning techniques and using technology from the French metropole. This involved the formation of wide boulevards, European-style villas, and open public spaces. The colonial authority also invested in a modern sewage and electrical system, reflecting contemporary urban planning in the imperial metropole. To facilitate colonial rule, they also constructed administrative, religious, and recreational infrastructures such as the Hanoi City Hall, the Residence of Tonkin's Superior Resident, the St. Joseph Cathedral, the Municipal Theatre, and the Post Office. These massive European-style buildings appeared to echo major urban landmarks in Paris: the Municipal Theatre (Fig. 1), for instance, was similar in style to Paris Palais Garnier, while the Gothic-style St. Joseph Cathedral (Fig. 2) appeared to take its inspiration from medieval churches in Europe, particularly the Notre-Dame de Paris. Such transformation, which resembled the Haussmann reconstruction of Paris between 1853 and 1870, resulted in the transformation of the area surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake from an informal and chaotic settlement to a European-influenced "modern" neighborhood. When he first arrived in Hanoi in late 1908, Dr. Hendrik Muller, a businessman, diplomat, scholar, and traveler from the Netherlands, was impressed by the city's "wide boulevards," "large houses and government buildings," and "gigantic theatres," which led him to characterize it as a "spacious, elegant European city of truly grand design."[35] The striking contrast between Muller's travelogue and earlier accounts in the late nineteenth century, which described Hanoi as an unhygienic and dangerous city, underscores the impact of the colonial government's urban transformation in the area surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake.

Development and transformation of the urban layout also occurred in the old citadel—the precolonial administrative center of the city. Previously occupied by the Nguyễn's mandarins, the citadel was turned into French military barracks after the acquisition. During this process, the wall of the former citadel was gradually torn down, and the Long Thiên Hall—the symbol of Nguyễn authority—was replaced by a French artillery command center.[36] During the tenure of Indochina Governor-General Paul Doumern (1897–1902), construction of the new Governor-General Building began on a plot of land adjacent to the former citadel, thereby reproducing the site's role as the new administrative center of French Indochina. In both the case of the French Quarter and the former citadel, the colonial government replaced symbolic buildings from the precolonial period with European-style constructions that

[35] Hendrik Pieter Nicolas Muller, *Dr. Muller's Asian Journey: Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Yunnan (1907–1909)*, trans. Carool Kersten (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2005): 153.

[36] For more information on the destruction of Hanoi Citadel, see Thị Diến Đào, *Hà Nội Thời Cận Đại - Từ Nhượng Địa Đến Thành Phố* [Hanoi in the Modern Era - from Concession to City] (Hà Nội Publishing House, 2024): 54–61; Logan, *Hanoi*, 70–71.

highlight their notion of modernity and progress. This act of destruction and replacement reflects what Edward Said referred to as colonialism's "cartographic impulse" and what Julia Obert coined as "architectural uncanny," where a colonial power purposefully alters the spatial condition of the colonial space to create a replica of their metropolitan center.[37] This consolidates colonial power by establishing familiarity among colonizers while at the same time alienating the colonial subjects from their space.[38] In addition, by placing the modern European political and spiritual structures over the site of its precolonial Vietnamese counterparts, the colonial authorities created a cultural and social hierarchy, which associates "civilization" with the (French) European race, culture, and society, while characterizing the local native society as "uncivilized."[39] This vision is echoed in the words of Paulin Vial, the first Resident-Superior of Tonkin:

> It was a colossal task to renovate an ancient city which had to be improved, made healthy and delivered to the air and light without destroying the most interesting remains of its past.[40]

The destruction of traditional Vietnamese urban layout and its replacement with French urban morphology, planning, and practice are hence justified as the enhancement of urban quality, in which the French "improve[d]" and "made [the city] healthy." By "renovat[ing] an ancient city," they introduced the values of modernity and civilization to their colony—the manifestation of mission civilisatrice that justified their colonial rule over Indochina.

Representing the Colonial City: Hanoi as Displayed Through a Colonial Photo Album

Through a massive urban renewal project, the colonial authority, by the end of the 1900s, had completely transformed the southern part of Hanoi from a swampy and unhygienic cluster of native settlements into a modern, French-style urban space. As argued above, this spatial transformation had two underlying impacts. First, it turned the city into a familiar space to the French while alienating it from the native population. Second, by replacing the precolonial urban layouts and structures with French counterparts of the same function and meaning, the colonial authority also formed a hierarchy, in which the precolonial urban traditions were considered

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[37] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), cited in Obert, "Introduction," 1–3.

[38] Obert, "Introduction," 1–3.

[39] Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River."

[40] Paulin Vial, *Nos premières anées au Tonkin* [Our first years in Tonkin] (1889), cited in Masson, *The Transformation of Hanoi, 1873–1888*: 71.

backward and hence were ultimately replaced by French-style, modern urban practices that represent civilization and progress.

With the development of cameras and photography techniques in the late nineteenth century, the French colonial government gained access to a new medium to showcase its activities and progress in the colony through photo albums and postcards. In *Global Photographies: Memory-History-Archives*, ethnologist Hans P. Hahn suggests through his research on archival colonial photos that such photographs were once considered the "documentation of fact" on the life and nature of the space and society they depicted.[41] However, recent studies and models by cultural critic Susan Sontag and art historian Christopher Pinney have challenged such viewpoints: photographs, which only capture a particular moment and space, should be perceived as more of an interpretation of the past than a representation of it.[42] Under such understanding, it becomes evident that photographers and editors can choose what, how, and when to capture the photo that best represents their interests. This understanding of the nature of the photograph makes it an ideal material for analyzing France's vision and manipulation of the colonial space to legitimize and reproduce their colonial ideology. Within that context, the paper provides an analysis of the 1916 album *Ville de Hanoi* (City of Hanoi) in the ASEMI collection to reveal the French "conceived space" embedded in their colonial city.[43]

The album, composed of 72 photos of Hanoi and the surrounding suburb, appears to be commissioned and compiled by a French government entity. First, many of the album's images bear the seal of the *Bibliothèque du Ministere des Colonies* ("Library of the Ministry of Colonies"), suggesting that the album may have been compiled by the French Ministry of Colonies or an associated office. In addition, the majority of photos in the album depict colonial administrative buildings, modern infrastructure, and monuments surrounding the French quarter, further suggesting that it was likely compiled by the colonial government.

At first glance, the album appears to serve as a testimony of French colonial achievements in Hanoi. Featured in the album are wide boulevards (Figs. 3 and 4), open public spaces (Figs. 5 and 6), and modern institutions such as hospitals, schools, post offices, and police stations (Figs. 7 to 10). Besides showcasing the amenities of modern urban life, the album also displays French colonial grandeur through colossal governmental and recreational buildings such as the Governor General Palace (Fig. 11), the Municipal Theatre (Fig. 1), and the Commercial and Industrial Museum (Fig. 12). In all these cases, the photos were taken from afar to show the full extent of the

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[41] Hans Peter Hahn, "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures: Polyphony and Fragmentation," in *Global Photographies: Memory-History-Archives*, ed. Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, 1st ed. (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2017), 93, https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839430064-007.

[42] Christopher Pinney, "The Phenomenology of Colonial Photography" (2007) and Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (1973), both cited in Hahn, 91, 95.

[43] *Ville de Hanoi*, 1916, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/4898.

buildings' structures, which emphasizes their scale. This display of French colonial architecture, when compared with the Brush Temple (Fig. 18)—the only precolonial structure presented in the album—illustrates a sharp contrast. Unlike French-style constructions, which extend beyond the surrounding trees, the surrounding environment hinders the colonized subjects' construction. This contrast reinforces the idea of a hierarchy between France and its colonies, in which the latter appears inferior and is subjected to the former's guidance, further justifying the logic of mission civilisatrice.

In addition to the underlying message of cultural superiority, the French highlight their industrial and technological achievement in the album. After a photographic tour of modern urban space, viewers are invited to see two pictures of the Doumer Bridge (Figs. 13 and 14), the first bridge to cross the Red River. Once thought by Vietnamese colonial subjects as "insane" and "unachievable," the bridge was a clear display of French technological advancement and a symbol of French industrialization.[44] The bridge, which connected Hanoi to the eastern part of Tonkin and southern China, also facilitated the transportation of goods and resources between Hanoi and the rest of Indochina, highlighting the economic achievement of the colony. In addition, the album also features two photos of a power plant (Figs. 15 and 16), underscoring the fact that the city was well-electrified. The electrification of the city, as suggested by social anthropologist Kristen W. Endres, served as one of the most obvious ways to use technology as a means to spread the message of mission civilisatrice, in which the electric lighting bears in it a metaphor of enlightenment against the obscurity of backwardness.[45] The *Ville de Hanoi* photo album, with the majority of images displaying the modern infrastructure and technology in the colonial city, appears to create among its viewers a vision of Hanoi as a totally modern and westernized urban space. This emphasizes the achievements of French civilizing efforts, which in turn consolidate, legitimize, and reproduce French colonial rule.

The seemingly modern and westernized colonial urban space, as presented in the *Ville de Hanoi* album, omits, however, many other aspects and experiences of the colonial city. A quick analysis of the location of photos shows that out of 72 photos, 40 were taken in the French quarter, 8 from the French Administrative Quarter, and only 3 were from the Native Quarter (21 other photos were captured outside of the city or have an unidentified location). Regarding the style of architecture presented in the album, only two photos (Figs. 17 and 18) display Vietnamese traditional architecture. Even within these two featured constructions, the Native Guard Barracks (Fig. 17), whose gate represents that of a traditional Tonkin village, was indeed a

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[44] Paul Doumer, *Xứ Đông Dương: Hồi ký* [French Indochina: A memoir], ed. Thừa Hỷ Nguyễn, trans. Đình Tuân Lưu et al. (trans., Thế Giới Publishing House, 2017; originally published in 1905 in French), 523–24. Citations refer to the Thế Giới Publishing House edition.

[45] Kirsten W. Endres, "City of Lights, City of Pylons: Infrastructures of Illumination in Colonial Hanoi, 1880s–1920s," *Modern Asian Studies* 57, no. 6 (November 2023): 1173, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X22000555.

modern structure mimicking Vietnamese style architecture in the French quarter. This misrepresentation obscures the actual nature and lived dynamics of Hanoi urban space, where the colonized subjects account for the majority of urban population. The 1916's *Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine* (General Directory of Indochina) indicates the European (including French) population of Hanoi was 3,381 inhabitants, roughly 25 times smaller than the native population of approximately 84,500 inhabitants.[46]

As suggested by Hahn, Sontag, and Pinney, one should understand this album not as a "documentation of fact" but rather an interpretation of facts by the commissioners, editors, and photographers.[47] By selecting its preferred representation of their colonial ideology and authority in the album, the French colonial authority created its own interpretation of space in a way that reproduced and justified the mission civilisatrice ideal while excluding the narratives and experiences of the colonized subjects. However, as Henri Lefebvre suggests, the "lived spaces"—the experiences and reception of the city by different urban communities—are not always synchronized with the "conceived space" proposed and implemented by the imperial regime.[48] To further explore that phenomenon, I will consider the case of the Statue of Liberty—a French-installed monument in the city—to highlight the way in which different receptions and interpretations of the space interacted and forced changes in the colonial space as well as colonial ruling strategy.

Statue of Liberty or Lady in a Flared Dress: Public Discourse and Memory of an Urban Monument, 1887–1902

During their transformation of Hanoi into a modern colonial urban space, the French also constructed multiple monuments and statues. As suggested by urban geographer John S. Adams in his study of monumental architecture in late imperial Russia, monuments can "symbolize" an idea or meaning, which in turn helps authorities deliver their agendas to the people.[49] If one puts it in Lefebvre's framework, the monuments help the urban administrator better channel their "conceived space" to the urban population, hence creating a way to connect it to the inhabitants' "lived spaces."[50] Under that framework, it is understandable that the colonial government

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[46] *Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine* [General Directory of Indochina] (Hanoi-Haiphong: Imprimerie D'Extrême-Orient, 1916), p. 228; 8-LC32-38 (BIS), département Philosophie, Histoire, Sciences de l'homme, Bibliothèque nationale de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5606804q/f1.item.

[47] Hahn, "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures," 91–95.

[48] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38–40.

[49] John S. Adams, "Monumentality in Urban Design: The Case of Russia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 49, no. 3 (2008): 287, https://doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.49.3.280.

[50] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38–40.

commissioned numerous urban monuments across Hanoi, including the La France monument in front of the Governor General Palace and the Paul Bert monument by Hoàn Kiếm Lake.[51] This study focuses on one of the first French-installed monuments in colonial Hanoi—a 2.5-meter replica of the Statue of Liberty—between 1887 and 1902. First displayed in the 1887 Hanoi Exhibition, the statue was given to the Hanoi Municipal Government, which erected it in the Square of Four Buildings in 1889.[52] Since that first installment, the statue was relocated several times until permanently placed in the Neyret Square to the south of the French quarter. By looking at public discourse and memories surrounding the statue's relocations, this case study aims to reveal the complex and fluid dynamics of the reception of the urban space between different groups in the colonial city that go beyond the colonial state's vision. In addition, by considering the interaction between the colonial government and the urban subjects, this case study also aims to illustrate how such responses from the colonial population shaped change in urban space and colonial discourse.

In 1890, just one year after the installation, the Statue of Liberty faced its first relocation. Earlier that year, the colonial government decided to install a statue of Paul Bert (1833–1886)—the first Resident General of the French Republic in Annam and Tonkin—in place of the Statue of Liberty, prompting the latter's removal.[53] The city later decided to place the statue on top of Turtle Tower, a traditional Vietnamese pagoda on an island in the middle of Hoàn Kiếm Lake (Fig. 19).[54] While the rationale was not explicitly stated, it might bear a symbolic value. By placing the statue—a symbol of French liberty—on top of a Vietnamese-style structure, the colonial government appeared to deliver a message of French superiority over the Vietnamese. In addition, given the position of Turtle Tower at the middle of Hoàn Kiếm Lake, placing the statue at the top of the tower makes it stand out at the heart of the colonial city, further introducing the French message of "liberty" to its colonies. Indeed, the Statue of Liberty was frequently mentioned as a major landmark in descriptions of festivals or celebrations surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake during this period.[55] During the 1890s, there were proposals to install a lamp on the statue's torch, which, if implemented, would further highlight it vis-à-vis the surrounding landscape.[56] Overall,

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[51] For a detailed description of the monuments in colonial Hanoi, see Muller, *Dr. Muller's Asian Journey*, 154.

[52] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, July 13, 1889. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/13-juillet-1889/1/cf53e232-8776-4ec2-b8e1-3691d4165419.

[53] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, December 4, 1886. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/04-decembre-1886/3/b536d78a-ae6c-4c50-aed7-0d3dfb5ee9b4.

[54] Bourrin, *Le Vieux Tonkin, 1890–1894* [Old Tonkin, 1890–1894], 48.

[55] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, July 19, 1893. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/19-juillet-1893/2/169180cc-f949-44d5-805e-d0d0baaa8873.

[56] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, June 21, 1902. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/21-juin-1902/1/4a2f63f3-8037-43b4-92f8-caee2f73eebc.

the relocation of the Statue of Liberty to the top of Turtle Tower, at least through the lens of the colonial government, would further foster the message of "liberty" in the colony—an integral part of their mission civilisatrice.

This relocation of the Statue of Liberty, however, drew objections among French colonial settlers, who viewed the placement of a western-style statue on a traditional Vietnamese-style structure as anachronistic. The *L'Indépendence Tonkinoise*, in one of its columns, satirized this positioning: "Yes, but having placed the statue on the Pagoda [Turtle Tower], what can we put on the statue?"[57] The *L'Avenir du Tonkin* also commented on the relocation: "Liberty on the pagoda [Turtle Tower] is a victory of light over obscurity. And why not place the Grand Buddha on one of the cathedral towers?"[58] By comparing the relocation of the Statue of Liberty with the placement of the Grand Buddha,[59] a symbol of Buddhism (or Daoism), on top of the cathedral—a Catholic site, the comment highlighted the contrast between the statue and the Turtle Tower, making the juxtaposition grotesque. Not only did the statue's location cause controversy among French colonial settlers, but its direction was also criticized. The statue was positioned facing the statue of Paul Bert (Fig. 20), which *L'Indépendence Tonkinoise* commented: "Protector and protected embraced each other even in their architecture."[60] In this respect, the statue of Paul Bert, which depicts him holding a French flag and extending his hand to cover a small colonial subject, represents the protector, while the Statue of Liberty represents the protected value of "liberty." By describing the protector and protected as "embrac[ing] each other," it appears that the columnists of *L'Indépendence Tonkinoise* perceive the two statues as having a romantic relationship, undermining the intended notion of the colonial government.

While criticism among French colonial settlers regarding the Statue of Liberty's position wound down after 1892, new issues soon emerged. On June 3, 1893, a column in *L'Avenir du Tonkin* raised a concern about the maintenance of the statue:

> The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World, which adorns the Small Lake [Hoàn Kiếm Lake] Pagoda, appears to be in a *chemise* for Europeans and in mourning clothing for Asians. This is because it is entirely covered in a thick layer of bird droppings.
> A wash is required between now and July 14 [French National Day].[61]

[57] Bourrin, *Le Vieux Tonkin, 1890–1894*, 49.

[58] Bourrin, 48–49.

[59] Despite the name "Grand Buddha" given by the French, the mentioned statue, currently in the Quán Thánh Temple, Hanoi, features Trấn Vũ (真武)—a Daoist deity.

[60] Bourrin, *Le Vieux Tonkin, 18900–1894*, 49.

[61] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, June 3, 1893. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/03-juin-1893/1679/2970273/1. Quotation translated by author.

Other columns throughout the 1890s also complained about the negligence of the statue, highlighting the hardship of cleaning and maintaining a statue located on the top of an isolated tower in the middle of the lake.[62] It appeared that, unlike the expectation of the colonial government, the French colonial settlers held a negative viewpoint toward the relocation of the Statue of Liberty. As a result, the Hanoi Municipal Government decided to move the statue once again in 1902 to Nayret Square, in the south of the city, where it would stay until the end of the colonial period.[63]

The relocation of the Statue of Liberty to the Nayret Square, while not subject to much discussion among colonial settlers, was embedded in the memory of many Vietnamese colonial subjects at the time. Due to strict press surveillance and a lack of news coverage, Vietnamese accounts of the Statue of Liberty's relocation were recorded primarily through postcolonial oral testimony or memoir. Despite the limitations caused by time and potential biases, such accounts remain valuable as they provide a glimpse into how Vietnamese colonial subjects perceived and experienced their urban space. In his work *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* (Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century), urban researcher Nguyễn Văn Uẩn interviewed Thành Đức, an old urban inhabitant, who recalled the following anecdote:

> Mr. Paul Bert married Lady in a Flared Dress [Statue of Liberty]. Lady in a Flared Dress was having an external affair, which Mr. Paul Bert's servant witnessed. He came back and told his master about the affair. Mr. Paul Bert, enraged by the fact, takes the bamboo cane from his foot and kicks Lady in a Flared Dress all the way to the Southern Gate.[64]

Furthermore, in his memoir *Nhớ Gì Ghi Nấy* (Wrote Anything I Remembered), famous Vietnamese writer Nguyễn Công Hoan (1903–1977) also echoed the same anecdote with some variation:

> We often joke: Mr. Paul Bert flirted with Lady in a Flared Dress. However, Mr. Lê Lợi (statue at the Lê Emperor's Temple) stood at the middle, held a sword, saw it, so the Lady in a Flared Dress had to

[62] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, May 21, 1898. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/21-mai-1898/1679/2971291/1.

[63] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, July 14, 1902. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/14-juillet-1902/1679/3224777/1.

[64] Nguyễn, *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century], 1:654. Quotation translated by author.

hide.[65]

Both accounts, while slightly different, provide a remarkable approach to examining the Vietnamese perception of the Statue of Liberty. In both accounts, the statue, rather than being called by its French name, is referred to as Lady in a Flared Dress based on its physical attributes. This reconceptualization undermines the French colonial government's embedded value of the statue, reducing it from a symbol of liberty to a French lady in a weird "flared" dress. In both anecdotes, the Lady in a Flared Dress is depicted as an immoral woman who engaged in external affairs, enraging witnesses. Ultimately, in both cases, "liberty" was driven out of the city center by a Vietnamese figure: a servant in the first story, and a Vietnamese historical figure in the second story. The detail that, in the second anecdote, it is Lê Lợi—a national hero who led an uprising against the Ming in the fifteenth century—who frightened the Lady in a Flared Dress and compelled her to relocate underscores the Vietnamese resistance to embracing and assimilating into the French colonial order. This resistance against assimilation was visible even after the Statue was removed to its new location, as suggested through a poem in which its author, upon seeing the Statue of Liberty at Nayret Square, expressed their nostalgia for the old urban setting:

> Pass by Quảng Văn Đình[66] I came to hear,
> Unable to see "Câu Kê,"[67] only see "Flared Dress."
> The sound of Ten Teaching went silenced,
> Dizzied by the squeaky sound of Western trumpet.[68]

In this account, the native author expressed their remembrance of the long lost precolonial urban space while considering the French-designed modern urban space unpleasant, referencing the "Flared Dress" and "squeaky sound." This account reflected a clear attitude of objection and refusal among a group of Vietnamese colonial subjects in the city to demands that they absorb and assimilate into French colonial values and order. By reinterpreting urban monuments and symbols, the

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[65] Công Hoan Nguyễn, *Nhớ Gì Ghi Nấy* [Wrote Anything I Remembered] (Hanoi: Hội Nhà Văn Publishing House, 1998; Originally published in 1970), 254. Quotation translated by author. Citations refer to the Hội Nhà Văn Publishing House edition.

[66] Quảng Văn Đình (廣聞亭, The Pavilion of Board Hearing): A place for the premodern Vietnamese court to announce decrees and communicate with their subjects, located in the Southern Gate. Following the acquisition of Hanoi, the French demolished the Pavilion and the Southern Gate, replaced them with the Nayret Square.

[67] Câu Kê: a premodern official position in the Vietnamese court in charge of announcing the government policy.

[68] Văn Uẩn Nguyễn, *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỉ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century], vol. 2 (Hà Nội Publishing House, 2016; Originally published in 1985), 28. Poem translated by author. Citations refer to the Hà Nội Publishing House edition.

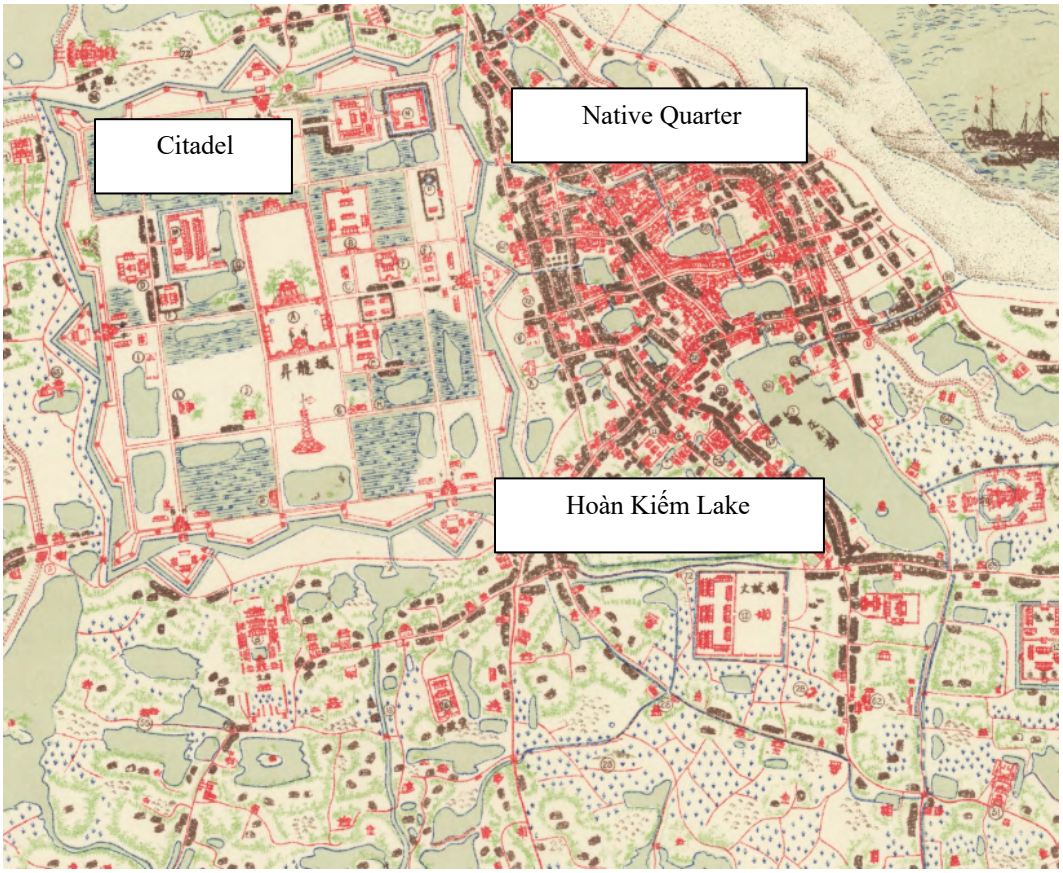
colonial subjects alter the "conceived space" pushed forward by the colonial government, undermining the French colonial agendas. This highlights the underlying clash and resistance between the colonizers and colonized subjects that defines the nature of colonial city.

Conclusion

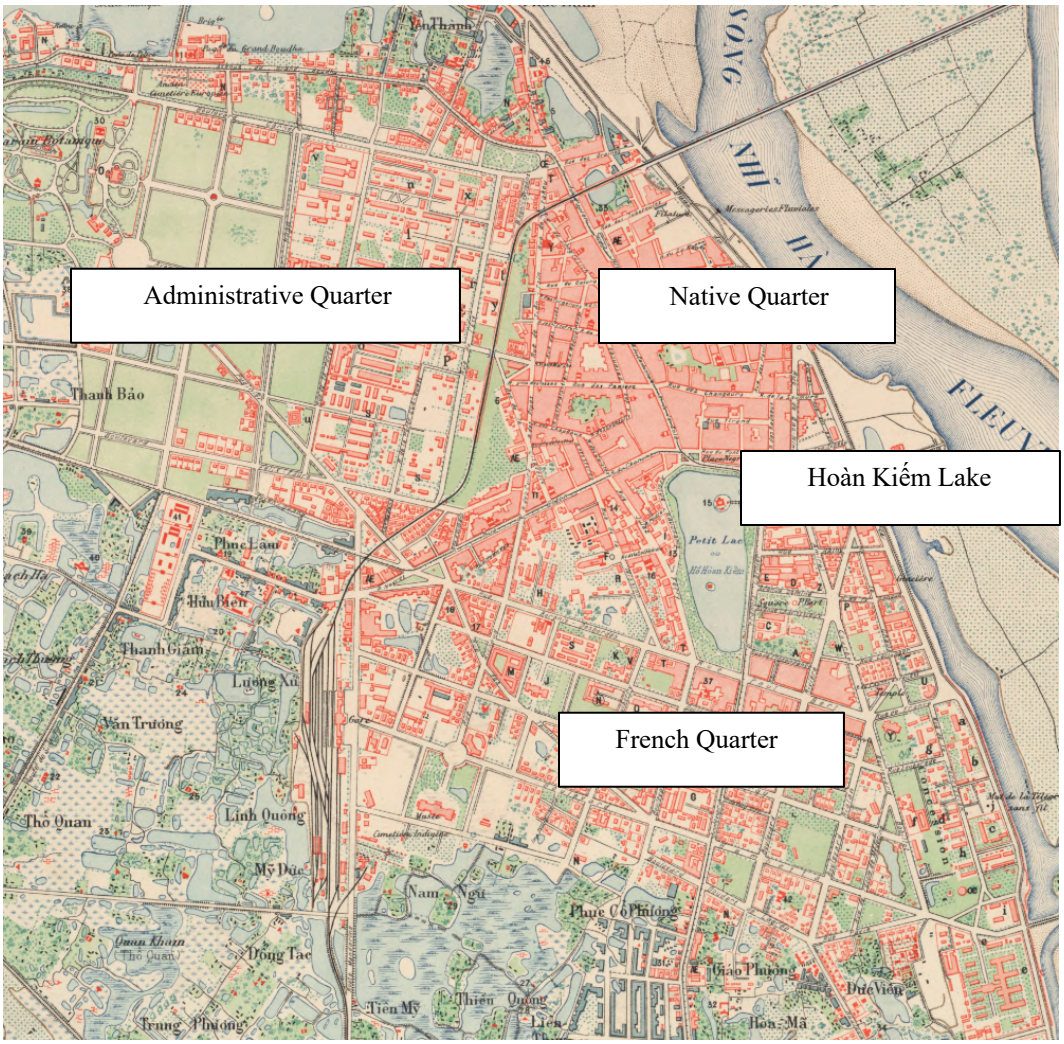
Through close analysis of textual and visual sources from both colonial authorities and local communities, this study shows that Hanoi, rather than a space of colonial manipulation, assimilation, and oppression, was indeed a dynamic place where colonial agendas clashed with subalterns' interpretation and reimagination. In the first few decades of colonial rule, the French colonial government sought to transform the city—through massive urban transformation, installment of monuments and symbols, and deployment of modern media—into a stage for modernity and progress that advanced their narrative of "civilizing" and assimilating their subjects into the colonial order. Despite such efforts, colonial populations engage with such narratives and agendas in complex and often substantive ways, as suggested through the reinterpretation and appropriation of the Statue of Liberty among the colonial communities. This dynamic underscores the capacity of local communities in engaging, adapting, and reinventing the colonial city, turning it into a "contact zone" where colonial power was not universally accepted but continuously challenged and reshaped through interaction with colonial subjects.

Recognizing this phenomenon is crucial in consolidating our understanding of not only the colonial city but also the colonial period. By recognizing the capacity and agency of non-governmental and local actors in the construction and maintenance of the colonial space, the study challenges the existing assumptions of the top-down and unilateral nature of the colonizers in the construction of the colonial space. The colonial city, rather than a monolithic space, was indeed a diverse and contested site where colonial power was constantly imagined, reinterpreted, and challenged. Recognizing the capacity and agency of the local communities would allow for a more in-depth understanding of the colonial urbanization process that shaped not only Hanoi but also other colonial cities around Asia. For future research, comparative studies between Hanoi and other colonial urban spaces such as Seoul or Hong Kong can help further explore the role of the colonial population in shaping colonial modernization across Asia. Moreover, more comprehensive studies that explore the experience and response of the colonial population to other dimensions of colonial modernity—such as technology, culture and media, and education—would provide a deeper understanding of these communities' role and influence in the colonial period.

APPENDIX



Map 1. Map of Hanoi in 1873. Source: Pham-Dinh-Bach, Hanoï 1873, 1937, Hanoi: Service géographique de l'Indo-Chine, GE C-15056, Département Cartes et Plans, Bibliothèque nationale de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b531213085. Notes added by author.



Map 2. Map of Hanoi in 1911. Source: *Plan de la ville de Hanoï*, 1911, Hanoï: Service géographique de l'Indo-Chine, GE C-4260, Département Cartes et Plans, Bibliothèque nationale de France, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53063324v. Notes added by author.

Fig. 1. Municipal Theatre. Source: Ville de Hanoi, 1916, PH04, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences Humaines, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/4898.

Fig. 2. St. Joseph Cathedral. Source: *Ville de Hanoi*, Photo Album.

Fig. 3. Paul Bert Street. Source: Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 4. Henri Riviere Boulevard. Source: Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 5. Paul Bert Square. Source: Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 6. Chavassieux Square. Source: *Ville de Hanoi*, Photo Album.

Fig. 7. Indigenous and Maternity Hospital. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 8. The Protectorate School. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 9. Postal and Telegraph Office. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 10. Special Police Brigade Barrack. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 11. Governor General Palace. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 12. Commercial and Industrial Museum. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 13. Doumer Bridge from a distance. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 14. Doumer Bridge close-up. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

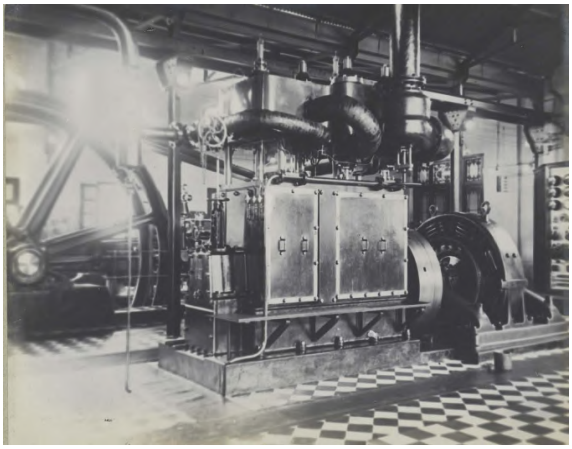


Fig. 15. Electric Plant (Dynamos). Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

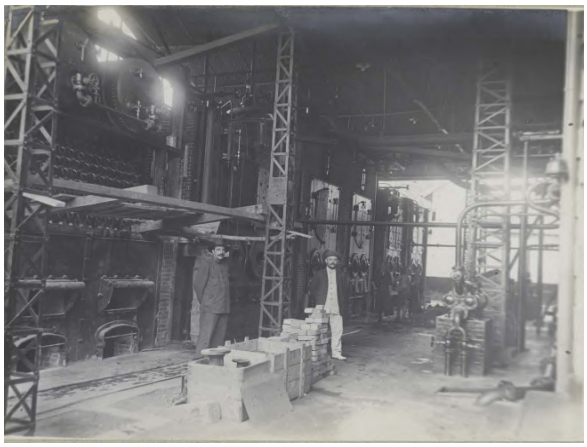


Fig. 16. Electric Plant (Generator). Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 17. Native Guard Barrack. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 18. Brush Temple (Ngọc Sơn Temple). Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

Fig. 19. The Statue of Liberty on the top of the Turtle Tower. Source: Vietnam – Tonkin: Hanoi, le pagodon du Petit Lac, c. 1890s, photograph, PH45-27, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/8151.

Fig. 20. Hoàn Kiếm Lake from the Paul Bert Square. The statue of Paul Bert (front) was facing the Statue of Liberty (on the top of the Turtle Tower). Pierre Dieulefils, Tonkin: album de photographies, c. 1890s, photo album, PH13-35, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/13764.

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TAMING CHINA'S FRONTIER: JAPAN'S ETHNIC CONTROL POLICY AND THE 1920 GANDO INTERVENTION

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the formulation and implementation of Imperial Japan's policy of ethnic control in the Gando region by delving into the prelude and development of the Gando Intervention from October 1920 to May 1921. The Gando region had been a significant base for the Korean independence movement due to its proximity to the Korean Peninsula, which was favorable to independence activists' military operations along the Sino-Japanese border. From a different perspective, Japan also sought to expand its influence on Gando and eliminate anti-Japanese forces which continued to disrupt its colonial governance over Korea. China, which officially owned the territorial sovereignty over Gando, or Yanbian (based on the *Gando Convention* in 1909) had to deal with conflicts between Korean independent activists and Japan as well as Japan's ambitions towards control of Gando. This formed Gando as a contested space where three sides of power existed. By analyzing newspapers and official documents produced by these three sides, this paper highlights the complex interplay of imperial expansion, ethnicity, and the geopolitical situation in the early twentieth century. This paper breaks from the traditional narrative of military history, focusing instead on Japan's ethnic exploitation over the expatriate Koreans in Gando.

Introduction

On November 1, 1920, fearing the brutality of the Japanese army, Yi Wŏn-sŏ, a fifty-one-year-old Korean farmer, attempted to escape but was stabbed to death by the Japanese army in Yanji (延吉), a city located in the Gando region.[1] On November 6, 1920, another Korean farmer, Chi Sŏng-nyong's house was burnt down by the Japanese army since the whole village was suspected to have connections with

[1] "Jilin Yanji Xian disanqu Rijun shaosha kenmin sunshi caican ji siwang renkou shumu qingdan 吉林延吉縣第三區日軍燒殺墾民損失財產及死亡人口數目清冊 [A Detailed Record of Property Losses and Death Toll Due to Japanese Army's Burning and Killing of Civilians in District 3, Yanji County, Jilin Province]," Record, March 1921, 98, Foreign Ministry of the Beiyang Government, Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH), https://archivesonline.mh.sinica.edu.tw/byfonds/init/byfonds/.

the Korean Independence Army (대한독립군, 大韓獨立軍).[2] Both examples took place in the Gando region[3] in Manchuria near the Sino-Japanese border and the Tumen River, approximately the present-day Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in the Jilin Province. (For the map of Gando drawn by Japan, see Fig. 1.) In 1909, the *Gando Convention* or the *Tumen River Sino-Korean Boundary Agreement* affirmed Qing China's sovereignty over the Gando Region after Sino-Korean territorial disputes were settled. Utilising the status of Gando as Chinese territory, many anti-Japanese Koreans had fled to the Gando region to escape the control of Imperial Japan, creating a special space for conflicts between Imperial Japan and the Korean independence activists. The examples of Yi and Chi epitomize the situation of Japanese military intervention in the Gando region from October 1920 to May 1921. On October 2, 1920, Japan started to send troops, mainly from the side of the Tumen River in the Korean Peninsula, to the other side, claiming to protect its own people from bandit groups and anti-Japanese Korean armies. The troops implemented indiscriminate burning and killing. These events happened right after the Second Hunchun Incident, where various parties, such as Chinese bandit groups and Gando Koreans (believed by Japan to be anti-Japanese), burnt down the Japanese consulate. Through a military intervention into the Gando region (including Hunchun 琿春 under the rule of China), Japan sought to exterminate these "threatening" groups, whom they had perceived to be a harm to social stability in Korea under its rule. To clarify, "China," in this paper, is the Republic of China nominally represented by the Beiyang Government but locally controlled by the Fengtian Clique (led by Zhang Zuolin) in Manchuria.

Gando Koreans, in this paper, are defined to be Koreans based in the Gando region. This community of Koreans was partly formed by Korean migrants from the Korean Peninsula. Large-scale Korean migration to Gando started in the late nineteenth century and was primarily driven by natural disasters, such as heavy rain and hail, and corruption among officials in the northern provinces of Joseon Korea.[4]

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[2] "Jilin Yanji Xian dierqu Rijun shaosha kenmin sunshi caican ji siwang renkou shumu qingce 吉林延吉縣第二區日軍燒殺墾民損失財產及死亡人口數目清冊 [Register of Property Losses and Death Toll of Reclamation Settlers Caused by Japanese Military Burning and Killing in the Second District of Yanji County, Jilin]," April 1921, 101, Foreign Ministry of the Beiyang Government, Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH), https://archivesonline.mh.sinica.edu.tw/byfonds/init/byfonds/.

[3] Gando is initially named by Koreans as "cultivating land (간토, 墾土)", "cultivating island (간도, 墾島)" or "in-between island (간도, 間島)." However, in many academic papers and books, it is written as "Jiandao" in the Chinese pinyin system. Since Gando has mainly been used by Koreans and Japanese, the Korean romanization is used in this paper. Gi-Dae Bok, "How Do You Understand 'Gando?'" *Journal of Humanities* 74 (2022): 63–99, https://doi.org/10.33252/sih.2022.9.74.63; Junqiang Wang, "A Review of the 'Jiandao Issue' in Early 20th Century East Asia Focusing on the Writings of Naito Konan," *Journal of the Graduate School of East Asian Cultures* 1 (January 2013): 265–79.

[4] Ji-young Lee, "19 segi mal Ch'ŏngjoŭi tae Kando Chosŏnin chŏngch'aek - wŏlgan Hanin ŭi chiwi

Moreover, Qing China's implementation of the "immigration for practical defense" (*yimin shibian*, 移民實邊) policy and establishment of various institutions, such as the Hunchun General Bureau for Reclamation (*zhaoken zongju*, 招墾總局), attracted Korean border residents to "cross and cultivate" (*yueken*, 越墾).[5] Thus, Korean communities were gradually formed in Gando with many migrants being peasants and lower-class individuals who desired a better life. Apart from them, anti-Japanese Koreans, including Korean independence activists such as the *ŭibyŏng* (righteous soldiers), also formed a part of Gando Koreans. After the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), Joseon Korea became an independent state and dissolved tributary relations with Qing China according to the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which favored Japan in strengthening its influence over Korea. Later in 1910, Korea was completely subsumed into the Empire of Japan, and the Government-General of Korea under Imperial Japan was subsequently established. Thereafter, Koreans who were dissatisfied with the suppressive and militaristic Japanese rule fled to Manchuria, especially the Gando region, which was close to Korea.[6] Moreover, since Koreans had lost sovereignty and political rights under colonial rule, the March First Movement broke out, wherein a large number of Koreans resisted against the Japanese rule in Korea and advocated for independence.[7] Under intense suppression from Imperial Japan, many independence activists shifted their bases to the Gando region to evade the control of Imperial Japan in Korea.

Given the formation and structure of Gando Koreans, Japan implemented an ethnic control policy that predominantly aimed to expand its influence into the Gando region through political and cultural assimilation by means of its extraterritoriality in the Gando region according to the Gando Convention. This paper suggests that Japan's actions in Gando are ethnic-oriented and target the Gando Koreans exclusively, concluding that Japan's ethnic control policy was an unofficial doctrine before and during the Gando Intervention. An important detail within the policy is

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munje wa kwallyŏnhayŏ 19世紀 末 淸朝의 對 間島朝鮮人 政策: 越墾 韓人의 地位문제와 관련하여 [Late 19th Century Qing Dynasty Policies Towards Korean People in Gando: Regarding the Status Issues of the Korean Settlers]," *Journal of Ming-Qing Historical Studies*, no. 32 (2009): 259–60, https://doi.org/10.31329/jmhs.2009..32.008.

[5] Lee, "19 segi mal Ch'ŏngjoŭi tae Kando Chosŏnin chŏngchaek," 261.

[6] The harsh measures of Imperial Japan towards Korea after 1910, such as dissolving all political organizations and prohibiting all debates and speeches, aroused anti-Japanese sentiments. In Teak Chung, "The Korean Minority in Manchuria (1900-1937)" (Thesis (Ph.D.), American University, 1966), 22–26, http://hdl.handle.net/1961/thesesdissertations:3655.

[7] Japan's territorial interests in the Korean Peninsula to the Korean people's anti-imperialist movements in 1919. The Empire of Japan granted Koreans no political rights, implemented a total ban on political activities, and discouraged the restoration of Korean sovereignty. See Frank Baldwin, "Participatory Anti-Imperialism: The 1919 Independence Movement," *Journal of Korean Studies* 1, no. 1 (1979): 123–62, https://doi.org/10.1353/jks.1979.0015.

that Japan perceived Gando Koreans to also be subjects within the Japanese Empire since the annexation of Korea in 1910 so as to gain control over them in Gando. Under this policy, Japan categorized Gando Koreans into two main types—"obedient" and "disobedient" subjects. "Obedient" subjects were neutral or pro-Japanese and willing to submit to the assimilation policies, whereas "disobedient" subjects were anti-Japanese or even Korean independence activists and rejected assimilation under Japanese influence.[8] To control the Gando Koreans, Japan deployed conciliatory policies towards the obedient subjects and suppressive policies towards the disobedient. The ultimate goal of this policy was to encircle the entire Gando Korean population within the colonial system by turning them into collaborators and eliminating disobedient subjects by force. In doing so, the Japanese government's official discourse and propaganda media firstly started to stigmatize disobedient subjects, mostly Korean independence activists, by labeling them "*futei senjin*" (不逞鮮人, unruly Koreans). In October 1920, the Korea Army (chōsen gun, 朝鮮軍), which was Japanese army in Korea, then started its military intervention to suppress the disobedient subjects and expand its influence while neglecting China's condemnation and multiple objections.[9] The Chinese government actively sought to negotiate with Japan and emphasized that it was "no longer necessary for your esteemed country to dispatch a large force," and that the Japanese government should "cancel the action of sending troops."[10] However, these efforts were primarily unsuccessful; ultimately, the Japanese army remained in China until May 1921, and even after, still maintained a consulate police presence in Gando to take control over Korean communities.

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[8] In this sense, the act of being obedient is defined by people's behaviors instead of ideological changes, as "obedient subjects" include individuals of extremely complicated intentions, where some became "obedient subjects" for their self-interests and others merely to avoid colonial violence. Thus, the evaluation of the effectiveness of conciliatory policy focuses on whether it could cultivate the cooperation of Gando Koreans rather than changing their ideologies. Moreover, such binary categorization of Gando Koreans is based on Japanese discourse and its purpose of ethnic control; however, it was undeniably an imperial tool for Japan to simplify and rationalize its ethnic control over Gando Koreans. Such categorization is used in this paper to analyze Japan's colonial policy in Gando instead of showing it as an objective political and social reality in the Gando region.

[9] "102. Dispatch of troops in Jiandao Area," Record Collection of Cabinet Meeting Decision Documents The third volume of Matsumoto File, 7 October 1920, B04120018000, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/das/image-en/B04120018000.

[10] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (China), "Hunchun An 琿春案 [Case of Hunchun]," Diplomatic Note, with Yūkichi Obata, 11 October 1920, Hunchun An, Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH), https://archivesonline.mh.sinica.edu.tw/byfonds/init/byfonds/. The complete sentence reads, "是貴國更無派遣大隊之必要，應請貴公使電達貴政府，將派遣軍隊之舉即行作罷。(It is therefore no longer necessary for your esteemed country to dispatch a large force. We should ask Your Excellency the Minister to immediately communicate with your government and cancel the action of sending troops.)"

Based on such historical background, this paper proposes two key questions: Firstly, how did Japan formulate and implement its ethnic control policy toward Gando Koreans in order to consolidate pro-Japanese power and eliminate anti-Japanese forces in Gando. Secondly, what were the strategies and outcomes of this policy before and during the Gando Intervention in 1920. Departing from existing scholarship on the Gando Intervention, this paper will utilize primary sources from three parties—China, Japan, and Korea—in order to comprehensively analyze the details from different perspectives, while supplementing the possible limitations of documents from any particular party. Official documents, such as *Kandō shuppeishi* (間島出兵史, "Sending History of Dispatching Troops to Jiandao") from Japan and *Hunchun An* from China, will be used to describe the details of Japan's ethnic control policy and casualties during the intervention. Korea's sources, such as the *Independent* and reports of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, can reflect a new perspective of Gando Koreans.[11]

To be able to present the arguments in a well-structured manner with existing historical sources, this paper will limit its range of analysis to within 1919–22, from the March First Movement to the aftermath of the Gando Intervention. This paper will also be divided into three main sections. Firstly, this paper will explain the mechanism and design of Japan's ethnic control policy before the Gando Intervention. Japan's plan to expand its influence into the Gando region was established in the 1910s when they attempted to take control over Gando Koreans in an effort to maintain stability under its colonial rule in Korea and maximize its political and economic interests in Manchuria. The categorization of "obedient" and "disobedient" people in the policy will also be covered so that a more thorough analysis can be shown in this section. Secondly, this paper will delve into the escalation of violence in Japan's ethnic control policy through the Gando Intervention, in which massacre and burning were used as chief weapons in eliminating "disobedient" Gando Koreans and to envelop them into Japan's sphere of influence. Finally, this paper will evaluate the effectiveness of the ethnic control policy and responses of Japan, China, and the Korean independent activists to Japan's ethnic policy to reveal how the policy catalyzed resentful sentiments

[11] The main Korean source in this paper is the *Independent*. It was the official newspaper of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea which was established by Korean independence activists in Shanghai. Sources of the *Independent* were mostly communication and intelligence networks of the Provisional Government, which were connected with other independence activists during that time. An example which illustrates the tragic situation of the Gando Intervention was informed by an ex-publisher of an anti-Japanese paper, the *Korea Daily News* (1904–10), who recorded the whole process. Woo-Taek Jeong, "Media Strategy and Poetry Arrangement in Shanghai Version of 'Tongnip Sinmun,'" *The Korean Poetics Studies*, no. 59 (August 2019): 185–222, https://doi.org/10.15705/KOPOET..59.201908.007; "Kanbuk Naesin 墾北來信 [Letter from North Gando]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 27 January 1921, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

of the Beiyang government and the local population within China, in addition to how the policy impacted the Korean independence movement, leading to new dynamics in Northeast Asia. The discussion focuses on how Japan established effective control over the Koreans in Gando, which was outside its official territory, before and during the Gando Intervention so that this paper can contribute to scholarship on Japanese colonialism.

Existing scholarship provides a strong foundation for this paper regarding the Gando Intervention of Japan and Japan's strategy of ethnic control. Early studies focus on the Korean Independence Army before and during the Gando Intervention, such as the activities of the Independence Army led by Hong Beom-do (홍범도, 洪範圖).[12] Their discussions shed light on the movements of the Korean independence activists from 1920 and 1921 and battles between them and the Japanese army through the lens of military history. Additionally, scholars such as Jin Chunshan and Park Minyoung expound on how the Gando Korean community suffered from Japan's Gando Intervention and clearly show the "governance and utilization" strategy of the Japanese government towards the expatriate Koreans during and after the intervention.[13] Erik Esselstrom, while focusing on Japan's consular police network in Manchuria, delves into the radical Korean resistance in Gando against Japan and introduces the pro-Japanese Korean community after Japan's use of violence during the intervention.[14] However, while their works mainly perceive the Gando Intervention to be a unilateral suppression of Korean independent movements, Japan's non-violence policies, which served as an indispensable part in Japan's Gando policy, are underemphasized. To delineate further, military operations, such as battles with the Independence Army and massacres are well-described and explained, but these studies overlook the nature of ethnic categorization and Japan's early policies towards pro-Japanese Korean communities before the intervention. In relation to the ethnic control policy within the existing literature of studies on Japanese colonial rule, there are abundant and comprehensive outcomes. For instance, Lee Ji Won, Lee

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[12] Yong-ha Shin, "Tongnipkun ŭi ch'ŏngsalli chŏnt'u 獨立軍의 靑山里戰鬪 [The Battle of Qingshanli of the Independence Army]," *Kunsa (Military History)* 8 (June 1984): 245–75; Yeongguk Chae, "1920 nyŏn Honch'un sagŏn chŏnhu Tongnipkun ŭi tonghyang 1920년 「琿春事件」 전후 독립군의 動向 [The Activities of Independence Forces before and after the 1920 Hunchun Incident]," *Institute of Korean Independence Movement Studies* 5 (December 1991): 273–94.

[13] Chunshan Jin, "Kyŏngshin Ch'ambyŏn yŏn'gu: hanin sahoe wa kwallyŏn chiŏ 庚申慘變 연구: 한인사회와 관련지어 [Studies on the 1920 Massacre: Its Relation with the Korean Society]," *Journal of Korean History* 111 (2000): 137–76; Minyoung Park, "Kyŏngshin Ch'ambyŏn ŭi punsŏk yŏn'gu 庚申慘變 의 분석 연구 [An Analytical Study of the 1920 Massacre]," *Kuksagwan nonchong* 103 (December 2003).

[14] Erik Esselstrom, "Policing Resistance to the Imperial State," in *Crossing Empire's Edge: Foreign Ministry Police and Japanese Expansion in Northeast Asia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wr0v1.7.

Bangweon and Gyewon Kim emphasize the cultural assimilation and suppression of Japan in the Korean Peninsula through means of social edification, superstition control, and categorization of "ideological criminals."[15] However, when focusing on a peripheral area of the Japanese Empire which lacked strong and effective administration, there are insufficient case studies to evaluate how Japan implemented its ethnic control policy in areas without its own official institutional power.

Departing from the conventional perspective of military history in viewing the Gando Intervention, Japan's ethnic control policy concealed its ambitions in the Gando region by dehumanizing Koreans through various violent tactics. Through means of cultural assimilation and indiscriminate violence, a two-sided ethnic policy is reflected in which Japan produced an illusion of cooperation with Koreans while simultaneously fostering an atmosphere of intimidation in order to serve its own interests in the Gando region. The analysis in this paper, with various newspapers and official documents in the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese languages, reveals multiple perspectives. One example is the *Kandō shuppeishi* recorded by the Korea Army in 1926, which provides comprehensive information from Japan's perspective.

To maintain analytical impartiality, the "Gando Intervention of the Japanese army" in 1920-21 is a more neutral name used in this paper for this particular incident of the Japanese army sending troops to the Gando region to suppress the Gando Koreans. This term is neither pro- nor anti-action in the sense that it does not include any explicit political judgments. Other names of this incident vary by country according to their perspectives. Where the Chinese literature mainly names it the *Gengshen nian da taofa* (庚申年大討伐, Great Campaign of the Year of 1920), *Yanbian can'an* (延邊慘案, Yanbian Tragedy) or *Hunchun shijian* (琿春事件, Hunchun Incident), the Japanese literature mainly names it the *Kandō jiken* (間島事件, Gando Incident) or *Kandō Shuppei* (間島出兵, Gando Expedition), and the Korean literature mainly names it the *Kando ch'ambyŏn* (간도참변, 間島慘變, Gando Tragedy) or *Kyŏngshin ch'ambyŏn* (경신참변, 庚申慘變, 1920 Tragedy).

[15] Ji Won Lee, "Japanese Colonial Social Edification Policy after the March 1st Independent Movement and Chosun Ethnicity," *Haklim* 45 (March 2020): 167–202, https://doi.org/10.36274/HAKRIM.2020.45..167; Bangweon Lee, "The Control of Superstition and its Effect on Daily Life during Japanese Colonial Rule of Korea," *Study of the Eastern Classics* 24 (2005): 281–314; Gyewon Kim, "Faces That Change: Physiognomy, Portraiture, and Photography in Colonial Korea." In *The Affect of Difference: Representations of Race in East Asian Empire*, ed. Christopher P. Hanscom and Dennis Washburn (University of Hawaii Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824852818-007.

Formulation of Japan's Ethnic Control Policy

Before implementing the ethnic control policy in Gando, Japan attempted to exert total authority over Gando and Gando Koreans. During the period from 1905–09, Japan interfered in the Sino-Korean territorial disputes over the Gando region and actively investigated the historical and geographical information related to Gando after Korea became a protectorate of Japan in 1905. This is exemplified by Naitō Konan's (内藤湖南) investigation of the Gando problem, which attempted to frame Gando as a *terra nullius* ("nobody's land"), legitimizing Korea's claim supported by the Korean migration.[16] In 1909, Japan, after negotiations, ultimately recognized Gando as Chinese territory and Gando Koreans as Chinese nationals.[17] In exchange, Japan also gained the right to attend court hearings involving Gando Koreans and to be notified in advance in cases involving serious criminal charges. This marks the early stage of Japan's ambitions in controlling Gando Koreans with extraterritorial rights despite accepting China's sovereign rule over Gando Koreans. Later in 1915, Japan signed a treaty with China ruling that legal matters involving Japanese subjects should fall under the jurisdiction of Japanese consular officers.[18] Since then, Japan claimed Gando Koreans as Japanese imperial subjects, equivalent to Koreans under the Japanese occupation since 1910, and had constant negotiations with the local government of Yanji in the 1910s, which did not bring about radical changes until the Gando Intervention.[19] Concurrently, Japan began to implement the ethnic control policy

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[16] Naitō Konan, an editorial writer for the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* until 1906 and a lecturer at Kyoto Imperial University since 1907, was twice commissioned by the General Staff Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to investigate the problem of Gando between Qing and Korea. Wang, "A Review of the "Jiandao Issue" in Early 20th Century East Asia Focusing on the Writings of Naito Konan," 268–75.

[17] China aimed to take control of the Korean settlers in Gando by naturalizing them into Chinese nationals in order to check the further encroachment of Japan's influence in Gando. Such a policy of naturalization started in the late nineteenth century when the Qing government demanded to reinforce its "immigration for practical defense" policy. At that time, only the minority of Gando Koreans changed their nationalities mainly due to their dissatisfaction with the Qing hairstyle and their financial abilities. "Tumen Jiang Zhonghan jiewu tiaokuan 圖們江中韓界務條款 [Tumen River Sino-Korean Boundary Agreement]," 4 September 1909, Wikisource, https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hant/圖們江中韓界務條款; Lee, "9 segi mal Ch'ŏngjoŭi tae Kando Chosŏnin chŏngch'aek"; Hongxi Li, "The Sino-Japanese Negotiations for Jiandao in 1906–1931," Modern Chinese History Studies, no. 4 (2019): 20–34.

[18] "Zhongri minsi tiaoyue 中日民四條約 [Sino-Japanese 1915 Treaty]," 25 May 1915, Wikisource, https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/中日民四條約.

[19] Longfan Jiang, "'Manshū jihen" izen no Kantō Chōsenjin kankatsuken o meguru Chūnichikan no funsō 「満州事変」以前の間島朝鮮人管轄権をめぐる中日間の紛争 [The Sino-Japanese Dispute over Jurisdictuion of Koreans in Gando before the Manchurian Incident]," *East Asian Studies (Review of the Institute of Asian Studies, Osaka University of Economics and Law)*, no. 47 (2006): 35–37.

starting from the 1910s in an attempt to exert dominion over Gando Koreans, paving the way to its military intervention in 1920. The following will describe the strategies employed by Japan towards obedient and disobedient subjects before the Gando Intervention.

For obedient subjects, Japan, specifically the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was inclined to adopt a more compromising strategy to assert leadership through establishing pro-Japanese Korean organizations and implementing pro-Japanese education. Deploying a soft-policy approach towards compliant and submissive people could create a stable environment in favor of Japan's interests and turn them into advocates for Japan, helping spread influence in the Gando region. In 1916, Japan already observed a continuously growing number of Korean migrants in Manchuria and recorded around 270,000 living in Manchuria and 70,000 along the Yalu River.[20] Citing the discriminatory attitude and oppression of the Chinese people towards Gando Koreans and emphasizing the identity of Gando Koreans as imperial subjects, Japan decided to provide Gando Koreans with "protection" regarding their inherent rights and privileges in Manchuria. In 1920, *Manju Pominhoe* (만주보민회, 滿洲保民會，Manchurian People's Salvation Association) was established as a "self-defense organization" organized by futei senjin in response to the riots in Longjing (龍井, a village in the Gando region) in the spring of 1919 under the heightened nationalist sentiments fueled by the March First Movement.[21] In Manju Pominhoe, obedient Koreans were required to study the Japanese language, and students had to use textbooks edited by the Government-General of Korea in order to learn "common virtues and knowledge."[22] Particularly in history textbooks, Japanese nationalistic and revisionist historical perspectives were deployed in the description of Korean history in order to dampen the rise of Korean nationalism. For example, according to an elementary school textbook published in 1920, Empress Jingū subjugated kingdoms during the Three Kingdoms period of Korea and established Japanese governance in Mimana or Imna (任那).[23] Korean resistance was to a large extent not mentioned. This

[20] "1 From 17 November 1916 to 14 July 1920," Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13 March 1920, B03041620600, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/das/image-en/B03041620600.

[21] "1 From 17 November 1916 to 14 July 1920," 39–48.

[22] The original text is 子弟ニ普通ノ知識技能ヲ授ケ特德性ヲ涵養シ國語ヲ普及スル目的. "1 From 17 November 1916 to 14 July 1920," 32–33.

[23] The issue of Imna has long been a controversial historical topic, with historians often arguing about its authenticity and nature. Imna was also described as a tool utilized by Japan to legitimize its colonial rule over Korea beginning in the 1890s. Government-General of Korea, *Jinjō shōgaku kokushi hojū kyōzai jidō yō Ken'ichi 尋常小學國史補充教材兒童用卷一* [Ordinary Elementary School National History Supplementary Materials for Children, Volume 1], 1st edn (Keijō, 1920), 1:8, Uri yŏksa net; Stella Xu, "Reconstructing Ancient History: Historiographical Review of the Ancient History of Korea, 1950s–2000s," *ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts* 19, no. 2

reflects the notion that Japan sought to control the rise of nationalist sentiments among the obedient Gando Koreans by introducing Japan's nationalistic ideology through history education.

Moreover, according to the confidential document produced by Shōsuke Akatsuka (赤塚正助), the Consul General of the Japanese consulate in Fengtian (present-day Shenyang), many Koreans were dissatisfied with the futei senjin's behaviors and some "dedicated Koreans" (*yūshi senjin*, 有志鮮人) came forward to organize a movement against them "under the aegis" of the Japanese authorities.[24] Interestingly, the bias of Japan's description, particularly in proving the widespread discontent of the Gando Koreans towards futei senjin, was revealed by *Shun Pao*, a Chinese newspaper on May 5, 1920, which recorded that many Gando Koreans who "had a sense of determination" suddenly realized the situation of Japan opportunistically using Koreans as pioneers for its invasion of Manchuria and Mongolia.[25] The sources reflect two different narratives in which the Japanese consulate tried to show an emergence of pro-Japanese movements within Gando, and, in contrast, the Chinese newspaper attempted to emphasize the widespread activities of Korean independence activists. Akatsuka's discourse shows an obedient-disobedient differentiation of Gando Koreans to weaken the legitimacy and representativeness of Korean independence activities, while *Shun Pao* insisted to stress China, no matter the Beiyang or Fengtian government, owned the territorial sovereignty over Gando and was responsible for the Gando affairs by describing the complexity of Korean independence activities in Gando in order to prevent further intervention by Japan. In this framework of the Japanese consulate's discourse, obedient subjects were indoctrinated with hostile sentiments against disobedient subjects and instilled with colonial values which Japan intended to spread in Gando. As a result, allegiance of the obedient subjects towards Japan grew gradually, cementing the binary categorization of pro-Japanese and anti-Japanese Gando Koreans, exemplified by an article in the *Eastern Times* in December 1920 about pro-Japanese Koreans warning against independence activists.[26] The article asserted that Manju Pominhoe announced three warnings to Gando Koreans, discouraging the public from joining them, claiming that the independence activists were not controlled by the law. The reporting reveals that the Manju Pominhoe was an exceptionally loyal channel to Imperial Japan, becoming promoters and backers to convey pro-Japanese messages publicly through existing organizations.

(2012): 19–20, https://doi.org/10.16995/ane.22.

[24] "1 From 17 November 1916 to 14 July 1920," 43.

[25] "Manzhou zhi Hanren yu Riben guanli 滿洲之韓人與日本官吏 [Koreans in Manchuria and Japanese Officials]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 5 May 1920.

[26] "Qinri Hanren jinggao dulipai 親日韓人警告獨立派 [Pro-Japanese Koreans Warn Independence Faction]," *Eastern Times* (Shanghai), 1 December 1920.

Japan, in distinction to the compromising strategy, imposed considerably more suppressive policies towards the disobedient subjects. After the annexation of Korea in 1910, Japan faced the existence of anti-Japanese sentiments against the colonial regime in Korea and thus labeled the anti-Japanese independence activists as futei senjin, a disparaging label used to pathologize these "rebellious" movements. Futei senjin accurately describes Koreans who "harbored grievances or complaints according to their own whims" and the "unruly and discontented Koreans who did not heed the demands of the Japanese imperialists."[27] Such labels in official documents first appeared in 1911, where the general circumstances in Gando and Hunchun regions were recorded. While the term existed early on, futei senjin's appearance had become substantially more frequent since the March First Movement in 1919, and Japan's approach towards them became more suppressive in the sense that massive arrests were implemented.[28] It is recorded that the label futei senjin appeared for thirty-three days from January 1919 to September 1920 before the Gando Intervention in the *Asahi Shimbun*, a major newspaper in Japan.[29] In 1919–20, Japan made every effort to construct discourses on the demonization of Koreans, especially those who had strong anti-Japanese sentiments. An article dated May 15, 1920 in the *Asahi Shimbun* emphasized the Japanese threats from the futei senjin by simultaneously describing two terrifying incidents—futei senjin sending letters in the name of assassination squads threatening inspectors from the Japanese Foreign Ministry to resign from their jobs and Japanese being attacked by dozens of futei senjin in a hostel run by Koreans in Gando.[30] Through the description of these two incidents, the threats from Koreans were exaggerated to create a victimized image of Japan. Moreover, on February 21, 1920, an article in the *Asahi Shimbun* accused the futei senjin of forcing Gando Koreans to donate money and to join their organizations in Ji'an by threatening to shoot them.[31] The article, regardless of the claim's authenticity, tried to discredit the Korean

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[27] Kyung-Ja Kang, "The Discourse and Policies over the "Criminal Koreans" before and after the Great Kando Earthquake Massacre," *Journal of Japanese Culture* 86 (July 2020): 45–46.

[28] Kang, "The Discourse and Policies over the "Criminal Koreans" before and after the Great Kando Earthquake Massacre," 51–52.

[29] This data is based on the search results of "不逞鮮人" (futei senjin) in the newspaper archive of the *Asahi Shimbun*. Also, *Asahi Shimbun* tended to adapt the Japanese imperialist discourse in order to cater to a broader national readership in Japan and avoid domestic controversies. Its position as a major newspaper was driven by business competition and sales, thus leading to a tendency towards moderation instead of controversial speeches, which might cause conflicts with the public discourse. Hayato Yamanaka, "The Formation of the Image of Koreans in the Modern Japanese Media: A Content Analysis of Korean Related Articles in Japanese Newspapers in the Prewar Period," *Bulletin of the National Institute of Multimedia Education* 8 (1993): 89–118.

[30] "Kandō hōjin yūryo 間島邦人憂慮 [Concerns of the Japanese in Gando]," *Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo), 17 May 1919, Asahi Shimbun Cross-Search.

[31] "Futei senjin no kyōhaku 不逞鮮人の脅迫 [Threat of Unruly Koreans]," *Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo), 21 February 1920, Asahi Shimbun Cross-Search.

independence movement by describing the independence activists as people who participated in a ruthless act of brutal extortion, reflecting Japan's attempt to delegitimize Koreans' self-determination. From these two articles, it is apparent that Japan started a policy to depoliticize independent movements in its own official discourse and demonize them as a form of terrorism through the media.

In addition to the stigmatization of disobedient subjects, Japan's suppressive strategies also involved concrete measures such as arrests and battles. Since late 1919, the Korean independence activists in Gando had continuously attacked the northern border of colonial Korea, sometimes even occupying cities along the border. According to an article on April 15, 1920 in *Shun Pao*, there were occasional incidents of "Korean parties (*Handang*, 韓黨, a name used by China to refer to the independence activists)" attacking Japanese officials and even hundreds of their soldiers entering Korea.[32] *The Independent*, which aimed to increase the morale among Koreans and the expatriates, reported that more than eighty soldiers in the Independence Army attacked the Japanese gendarmerie in Onsŏng in late March 1920 and captured cash of 700 dollars.[33] Among the provocative operations during 1919–20, the most shocking case to the Government-General in Korea was the capture of 150,000 dollars from the Chōsen Bank in early January 1920, recorded in *Kantō shuppeishi* as an important catalyst to legitimize Imperial Japan's Gando Intervention.[34] According to *Donga Ilbo*, which possessed a certain extent of autonomy under the Japanese rule, the independence activists captured the money on January 4 while in transit from the Hoeryŏng Branch of Chōsen Bank to Longjing in Gando.[35] *The Independent* later further commented that Japan seized this opportunity to conduct a wide-ranging

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[32] "Dongbian Handang zhi huodong 東邊韓黨之活動 [Activities of the Korean Party in the East]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 15 April 1920; *Shun Pao*, "Manzhou zhi Hanren yu Riben guanli."

[33] "P'alship yŏ ŭi tongnipkun i chŏk'ŏn pyŏngdae rŭl chin'gyŏk 八十餘의 獨立軍이 敵憲兵隊를 進擊 [Over Eighty Independence Army Soldiers Attack Enemy Gendarmerie]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 22 April 1920, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[34] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," The National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense, 3 May 1926, 2, 陸軍省−密大日記-S1-4-4, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/das/image-en/C03022770200.

[35] "Chosŏn ŭnhaeng chijŏm shibo man wŏn dŏpjyŏ ch'yŏngjin chich'yŏng ŭi kongp'ane puch'ŏ 朝鮮銀行支店 十五萬圓犯人 청진지청의 공판에 부처 [Trial of the Criminal from the Chōsen Bank Branch for 150,000 Won at the Cheongjin District Court]," *Donga Ilbo* (Keijō), 16 July 1920, Korean History Database. *Donga Ilbo* tends to have a nationalist bias despite being censored by the Japanese authorities in Korea. It therefore provided the Korean civilians with news of the independence activities within a censorship boundary under the Japanese rule. Geon-ho Song, "Sam il undong hu ŭi minsim sa: Tong-a Ilbo ŭi chimyŏn punsŏk 三・一運動 후의 民心史:「東亞日報」의 紙面分析 [A History of Public Sentiment After the March First Movement: An Analysis of Donga Ilbo's Pages]," *Creation and Criticism*, no. 36 (June 1975): 232–55.

search campaign against the Independence Army with its police force in Gando.[36] There were more than forty Japanese policemen searching for members of the Independence Army in schools and houses by threatening ordinary Gando Korean civilians to "say the truth," all the while the Japanese policemen held them at gunpoint. The Japanese police "collaborated" with their Chinese counterparts to arrest suspicious and disobedient subjects in Gando. Japanese policemen even assaulted them during the two large-scale searches, according to the discussions in the Youth Association.[37] These suppressive actions of Japan were in response to threats from disobedient subjects. Japan aimed to stabilize the Sino-Korean border by preventing potential attacks in the northern border and to exert further influence in Gando by exterminating those threats. Sending consular police to Gando was the first step for Japan to suppress disobedient Koreans.

In order to capture and eliminate the disobedient subjects in Gando more thoroughly all at once, Japan even considered sending troops to China in May 1920. Japan sent Machino Takema (町野武馬), the Japanese consultant in Northeast China (Chinese official), to negotiate with China in two Fengtian conferences regarding the search of unruly Koreans in Gando. Later, according to the *Shun Pao*, China, represented by the Fengtian government leader, Zhang Zuolin (張作霖), agreed to conduct a deep investigation in Yanji for one month—but the investigation was unrelated to Japan, except for the case of Machino.[38] According to the Chinese negotiators, any unruly Koreans that were arrested should be returned to China's jurisdiction. However, the Japanese side recorded that this incident was a Sino-Japanese collaborative investigation in which Japan held an active position.[39] This illustrates Japan's ambition to utilize force in the Gando region and implement cross-border arrest campaigns in China in order to attain the goal of its ethnic control policy. Concurrently, this opportunity enabled Japan to eliminate disobedient subjects while presenting an aura of legitimacy. In early June, there were even devastatingly violent fights and battles between Japan and the independence activists in Santunzi (三屯子) and Fengwudong (鳳梧洞) along the border. The *Eastern Times* described that on June 4, fifty Independence Army soldiers entered Chongsŏng, a prefecture of Korea near the border, and later shifted to Santunzi on the Chinese side to continue the fight with

[36] "Puk kando t'ongshin shibo man wŏn sagŏn 北墾島通信 十五萬圓事件," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 8 April 1920, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[37] "Puk Kando ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe hwaltong kwa Ilgyŏng ŭi haenghaeng 北墾島靑年會活動과 日警의 橫行 [Activities of the North Gando Youth Association and the Rampant Actions of the Japanese Police]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 16 March 1920, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[38] "Fengji Hanqiao zhi diaocha fa 奉吉韓僑之調查法 [The Investigation Method of Koreans in Fengji]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 31 May 1920.

[39] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 7.

the Japanese army.[40] Both sides eventually suffered losses in the Santunzi Battle. On June 6, another fierce battle occurred in Fengwudong on the Chinese side, and eventually the Japanese army was defeated and suffered the deaths of more than 120 soldiers. In contrast, *The Independent* recorded that the battle resulted in 60 deaths and 50 casualties for Japan.[41] These two sources illustrate that although Japan actively sent troops from Korea to combat the Independence Army in an attempt to annihilate the disobedient subjects in Gando, the plan proved unsuccessful with a significant defeat and at least 60 deaths in 1920. This eventually paved the way for further Japanese military actions in order to destroy the bases of disobedient Koreans and achieve complete assimilation in the Gando region.

Generally, Japan's ethnic control policy towards the obedient subjects before the Gando Intervention was more effective than towards the disobedient. Employing conciliatory measures towards the obedient subjects through establishment of pro-Japanese organizations and promoting pro-Japanese education was effective and successful in cultivating collaboration at minimum, and ideally pro-Japanese loyalty. In contrast, the implementation of suppressive measures towards the disobedient subjects was not as satisfactory as Japan initially aimed due to the defeats in battles with the independence activists. However, before the Gando Intervention, Japan started its early stage of suppression towards the disobedient subjects through stigmatizing and by arresting them.

The Hunchun Incident and the Application of Violence in the Ethnic Control Policy

Before the Gando Intervention, Japan had already formulated a detailed and strategic outline of a full-scale military intervention in the Gando region so as to fulfill the aims of its ethnic control policy. In July 1920, another Japanese consultant participated in the Third Fengtian Conference with China, requesting the reinforcement of the Sino-Japanese joint investigation and action against the unruly Koreans.[42] China rejected the harsh suppression requested by Japan but maintained limited enforcement to preserve Sino-Japanese relations.[43] Therefore, due to apprehension regarding the feasibility of Sino-Japanese collaboration, Japan

[40] "Han Ri liangjun zhi jizhan 韓日兩軍之激戰 [Fierce Battles between Korean and Japanese armies]," *Eastern Times* (Shanghai), 23 June 1920.

[41] "Tongnipkun yŏnjŏn yŏnsŭng chŏk ŭi saja yukship sangja oship agun sangja i myŏng 獨立軍連戰連勝 敵의死者六十傷者五十 我軍傷者二名 [Independence Army Victories: Enemy Casualties Sixty, Injured Fifty; Our Army Casualties Two]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 24 June 1920, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[42] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 8–11.

[43] "Huaguan Qudi Dongsansheng Zuzhi 華官取締東三省韓黨組織 [Chinese Officials Suppress the Korean Party Organizations in the Three Eastern Provinces]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 28 August 1920.

formulated the *Plan for the Suppression of futei senjin in the Gando Region* (間島地方不逞鮮人剿討計劃) after the Third Fengtian Conference to establish the necessary groundwork for a large-scale direct military intervention in the Gando region.[44] Detailed plans were included, such as the mobility of the Japanese army from Vladivostok, and a total budget of 280,000 dollars for military intervention. China predicted Japan's possible cross-border suppression of the disobedient subjects after the Battle of Fengwudong.[45] In contrast, the Japanese recorded that the Chinese side encountered an "outright failure" to realize its aim of suppressing the futei senjin as it was extremely frugal in the utilization of ammunition.[46] Japan's discontent with Sino-Japanese cooperation in suppressing the disobedient subjects thus led to the more radical and aggressive decision to carry out the Gando Intervention. Therefore, Japan's intention and decision to launch a military intervention in Gando stemmed from its resentment toward China's attitude in the suppression of the disobedient subjects.

The Hunchun Incident served as a significant trigger for Japan's Gando Intervention. There were in total two incidents in Hunchun, a city in Gando, recorded in Japan's official document respectively on September 12 and October 2, where three hundred bandits, for the first time, attacked and burned down a market and houses, and for the second time, four hundred bandits including Russians, Koreans and even Chinese soldiers attacked and burned down the Japanese consulate in Hunchun.[47] Japan argued that such cruel and brutal behavior "had little difference with those of the partisans." However, the participants in the Hunchun Incident were described in differing ways by the various parties. For example, according to the report of the Foreign Ministry of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, the incidents were unrelated to Koreans, and Japan tried to seize the opportunity of the Hunchun Incident to completely suppress anti-Japanese Koreans by promoting the involvement of Koreans in the incident.[48] The *Eastern Times* even claimed that the bandits and Chinese soldiers were doubtlessly masqueraded by Koreans and blamed the Chinese government for being useless in "listen[ing] to the words of Japan."[49] Nowadays there are still different versions of the "truth" about the Hunchun Incident

[44] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 12.

[45] "Jisheng Helong Handang Ziluan 吉省和龍韓黨滋亂 [Chaos of Korean Parties in Helong, Jilin Province]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 1 July 1920.

[46] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 14–15.

[47] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 17.

[48] The Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea was a political organization established by the Korean independence activists in 1919 and based in Shanghai. "Puk Kando ŭi Hanin e taehan Ilbon ŭi manhaeng 북간도의 韓人에 대한 일본의 만행 [Japanese Atrocities Against Koreans in North Gando]," Government Report, 9 December 1920, Taehan min'guk imshi chŏngbu charyojip, Han'guk kŭndae saryo DB.

[49] "Hunchun shijian zhi jinwen 琿春事件之近聞 [The Recent News of the Hunchun Incident]," *Eastern Times* (Shanghai), 6 November 1920.

in studies of the incident. For example, Yuan Canxing points out that there were no "radicalized Russians" (communists) involved, but the Independence Army was supported by communist Russians.[50] Some Chinese and Korean scholars have even insisted that the whole Hunchun Incident was planned by Japan.[51] Nevertheless, the chaotic and controversial aftermath of the Hunchun Incident within Chinese society and the Gando region were advantageous to Japan in legitimizing its subsequent military interventions. Regardless of the true identity of the participants in the Hunchun Incident, it provided Japan with a timely opportunity to rationalize and operationalize its existing military plan. For Japan, the more important question was: How should it utilize this incident to rationalize its military intervention so that it could operationalize its ethnic control policy?

After the Hunchun Incident, the Japanese government urgently discussed its response to the attack on the Japanese consulate in Hunchun and ultimately decided to conduct a military intervention in the Gando region. Considering Japan's perspective, its military intervention needed to be legitimate in order to avoid possible troubles and diplomatic obstacles in the future from the global Western powers, although the European powers were experiencing economic recoveries after the First World War and did not pay much attention to Northeast Asia.

Moreover, the military operation had to facilitate the progression of its ethnic control policy in Gando to exert influence to the maximum extent. Firstly, the Japanese government officially stated that the Gando Intervention was aimed at safeguarding its imperial subjects—probably including the Japanese people and obedient Koreans in Gando—and its national interests, which were compromised by the disobedient Koreans, or futei senjin.[52] Japan aimed to either extirpate the threats from them or coerce them into submission, thus creating an advantageous ambiance of fidelity to Japan in Gando. Through the emphasis on the need to protect pro-Japanese Koreans, Japan reinforced a divide between obedient and disobedient subjects, eventually

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[50] Canxing Yuan, "On Hun Chun Event in 1920," *Journal of Shenyang University* 23, no. 3 (2011): 38.

[51] Jin, "Kyŏngshin Ch'ambyŏn yŏn'gu: hanin sahoe wa kwallyŏn chiŏ," 147; Yu Liu, "Zai tuique zhong shentou: Hunchun shijian shanhou jiaoshe de shenceng toushi 在退却中渗透：珲春事件善后交涉的深层透视 [Infiltration in Retreat: A Deep Perspective on the Aftermath Negotiations of the Hunchun Incident]," *Study & Exploration*, no. 9 (2015): 158.

[52] The original text is 不取敢龍井村、頭道溝、局子街及百草溝等ノ帝國臣民及ヒ其利益保護警備ノ為メ軍隊派遣方ニ付直ニ支那側特ニ東三省巡閲使張作霖ニ対シ右軍隊派遣ノ已ムヲ得サト理由ヲ說明シ… (Regarding the dispatch of troops, urgently and directly in order to protect and guard the Imperial subjects and their interests in Longjingcun, Toudaogou, Juzijie, and Baicaogou, etc., the reason why the said troop dispatch is unavoidable was explained to the Chinese side, especially to the Inspector-General of the Three Eastern Provinces, Zhang Zuolin…). "103. Hunchun Incident," Record Collection of Cabinet Meeting Decision Documents The third volume of Matsumoto File, 7 October 1920, 815–19, B04120018100, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/das/image-en/B04120018100.

justifying stricter surveillance and assimilation policies. Secondly, the Gando Intervention was partially attributed to China's lack of thoroughness in subjugation against the disobedient subjects, according to Japan.[53] The Japanese consulate sent a diplomatic note to China questioning China about its lack of effective measures which resulted in the Hunchun Incident.[54] In light of Japan's situation, accusing China of incompetence helped legitimize Japan's expansion in the Gando region since it provided Japan with excuses and opportunities to intervene in Gando affairs. This was exemplified in the instance of Sino-Japanese collaboration and even in the Hunchun Incident, as well as in Japan's broader attempts to amplify control over Gando Koreans, both obedient and disobedient. It also allowed Japan to position itself as the only power capable of maintaining order, thereby legitimizing its administrative encroachment. Thirdly, Japan mentioned the involvement of radicalized Russian individuals in the Hunchun Incident, as illustrated in the official documents.[55] "Radicalized Russian individuals" here presumably referred to the communist Russians who aided the Independence Army. Combating the communists in the Russian Civil War, Japan exceptionally checked the influence of communism in Gando and was concerned about their expansion of influence in Northeast Asia. Within Japanese society, there was a claim that one of the causes of the Hunchun Incident was the communist linkages between the disobedient Koreans and the communist Russians.[56] This was due to the fact that Korean independence activists received arms from communist Russians to continue their movements.[57] The focus on communist Russians in such a claim validated the extension of Japan's intervention beyond security into ideological suppression, ensuring Koreans in Gando adhered to pro-Japanese sentiments.[58] Therefore, such emphasis on communist Russians' presence in

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[53] "103. Hunchun Incident," 818.

[54] Japanese Consulate, "Hunchun Ri lingguan bei fenshao shi 琿春日領館被焚燒事 [Incident of the Japanese Consulate in Hunchun Being Burnt]," Diplomatic Note, 7 October 1920, Hunchun An, Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH), https://archivesonline.mh.sinica.edu.tw/byfonds/init/byfonds/.

[55] "103. Hunchun Incident," 815; Japanese Consulate, "Hunchun Ri lingguan bei fenshao shi;" Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 18.

[56] "Kagekiha Rojin to bazoku to futei Senjin Akka renraku Konshun gyakusatsu no boppatsu shitaru dōki 過激派露人と馬賊と不逞鮮人　赤化連絡琿春虐殺の勃発したる動機 [Motives behind the outbreak of the Hunchun Massacre, involving radical Russians, horse bandits, and insolent Koreans, linked to communist activities]," *Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo), 20 October 1920, Asahi Shimbun Cross-Search.

[57] "Chajin Hanguo Mindang Qingxing 查禁韓國民黨情形 [Circumstances of the Suppression of the Korean Nationalist Party]," *Eastern Times* (Shanghai), 13 March 1920. For further discussion of this problem, see Andrew James De Lisle, "Japanese Borderland Colonialism and the Koreans in Jiandao, 1905–1932" (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2020), 114; Esselstrom, "Policing Resistance to the Imperial State," 38.

[58] There is another interpretation of why Japan exceptionally emphasized the relationship between the

a certain sense implies Japan's desire to control the ideology among the Gando Koreans through the Gando Intervention. By framing the Hunchun Incident in these three aspects, Japan could both legitimize its intervention and advance its long-term aims of enforcing ethnic and ideological control over Gando.

In this instance, the role of obedient subjects in Gando was also significant in legitimizing Japan's military intervention. On October 4, the chairman of the Manchuria Residents Association, another pro-Japanese Korean organization, advocated for sending Japanese troops to Gando while emphasizing that the Hunchun Incident was tragic, "like the Nikolaevsk incident," and led to deaths and casualties of many Japanese people.[59] This shows that Japan's pre-intervention policy towards the obedient Koreans was effective since it was successful in cultivating the compliance of a group of Gando Koreans who could eventually support its expansion, either wholeheartedly or superficially, into the Gando region.

During the Gando Intervention, Japan's ethnic control policy chiefly targeted the disobedient subjects, with the support and assistance of the obedient subjects in the Gando. Two strategies were adopted, where Japan, firstly, had direct military confrontations with armed forces of the disobedient subjects—such as the Independence Army—and, secondly, carried out violent policies of massacres, burning, and looting, predominantly in the Korean communities. After Japan dispatched troops to the Gando region in the name of protecting its subjects, it immediately requested Sino-Japanese collaborative military actions.[60] In this collaboration, Japan continued to take a more prominent role; sometimes there were only Japanese troops, and no Chinese troops present in the countryside of the Gando region. The collaboration was merely titular in a sense that Japan had complete power in controlling Gando during the intervention. Concerning the battles between the Japanese army and the Independence Army during the Gando Intervention, there are a myriad of studies from the perspective of the Korean Independent movements. A typical example is Shin Yong-ha's *Tongnipkun ŭi ch'ŏngsalli chŏnt'u*, which provides a thorough analysis through the lens of military history of the Battle of Qingshanli (青

Hunchun Incident and communist Russians. Wang Long-hua argues that it was because Japan intended to create a plausible explanation for its maintenance of military presence in Siberia. Long-hua Wang, "Hunchun Shijian zhi yanjiu 琿春事件之研究 [A Study of the Hunchun Incident]" (Thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 1990), 137, https://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgi-bin/gs32/gsweb.cgi?o=dnclcdr&s=id=%22078NTNU2493007%22.&searchmode=basic.

[59] "Petition for Japanese Army Dispatch by Chairman of Manchuria Residents Association and Representative of Feryon City Citizen Conference," From 1920 to 1922 Documents Related to Jiandao Incident 1 of 2 Ministry of the Army, 26 December 1922, C06031218300, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/das/image-en/C06031218300.

[60] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 33; "Zhongri huijiao hufei ji Handang zhi zhenxiang 中日會剿胡匪及韓黨之真相 [The Truth About the Joint Sino-Japanese Suppression of Bandits and Korean Factions]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 30 October 1920.

山里) in late October 1920, in which the Independence Army tremendously defeated the Japanese army.[61] This paper, with the foundation of Shin's work, aims to present this battle vis-à-vis Japan's ethnic control policy.

The Battle of Qingshanli marked an early stage of Japan's campaign to crush the disobedient subjects in Gando and was the most representative battle among the military confrontations. Japan sent troops from northern Korea, such as from Hoeryŏng and Namyang, to Hunchun and Wangqing (汪清), and the Japanese army spread all over Gando.[62] The Japanese troops, after noticing that the anti-Japanese forces had shifted to Sandaogou (三道溝) in Helong (和龍), advanced rapidly to Qingshanli in Sandaogou and attempted to utterly destroy and eradicate those forces in Gando.[63] *The Independent*, likely with morale-boosting purposes for the Koreans, exaggerated that the Japanese army "possessed a multitude of advantages" in the battle and even underestimated the enemy.[64] However, Shin argues that Japan was defeated by the Independence Army since it was completely unalert and inexperienced in the battlegrounds of dense forests and rugged terrains.[65] Moreover, the morale of the Japanese army was so low that there was war fatigue among the soldiers. To the Independence activists, the Battle of Qingshanli was the largest war of victory during the independent movement of thirty-six years, while Japan suffered 1,200 deaths and 3,300 casualties from this battle due to logistical and morale-related issues. Not only did the battle lead to huge losses of Japan's military force when combating the independence activists, but it also marked a significant failure in the implementation of its ethnic control policy against the disobedient subjects solely through direct military confrontations. As a result, after the Battle of Qingshanli, the independent activists gradually shifted to Siberia through the Sino-Russian border in late 1920 and early 1921, and the defeat of the Japanese army in military confrontations led to the second step of the Gando Intervention, which was characterized by a more violent approach.

After the Battle of Qingshanli, the Japanese army, humiliated by their loss, directed their resentment toward the disobedient Koreans in Gando and thus began the large-scale suppression of Gando Korean civilians who were suspected of having connections with the disobedient subjects. Japan, in general, targeted a few groups of disobedient subjects: independence activists, Koreans who had a Christian

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[61] Shin, "Tongnipkun ŭi ch'ŏngsalli chŏnt'u."

[62] "Ch'ŏngsalli pugŭn ŭi chŏn 青山里附近의 戰 [Battle near Qingshanli]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 25 December 1920, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[63] *Chaoxianzu jianshi 朝鮮族简史* [A Brief History of the Korean Ethnic Group], 1st edn (Yanbian People's Publishing House, 1986), 41–42.

[64] "Taehan kunjŏngsŏ pogo 大韓軍政署報告 [Report of the Korean Military Government Office]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 18 January 1921, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[65] Shin, "Tongnipkun ŭi ch'ŏngsalli chŏnt'u," 272–75.

background, and Koreans connected with bandits and terrorists.[66] One of the target locations in the suppression plan was the Korean villages in Gando. Japan employed tactics of killing, burning, and looting during the suppression, as recorded in *The Independent*, which reported that three thousand "miserable compatriots" were killed and their homes and food were lost, resulting in them being unable to bear the freezing winter.[67] According to statistics from the Provisional Government, more than 2,300 Gando Koreans were killed and more than 2,500 houses were burned down by the Japanese army during the Gando Intervention.[68] In the *Eastern Times*, it was recorded that the Japanese army "freely sent troops, indiscriminately slaughtering villages and burning houses everywhere, to the extent that some entire villages had no survivors."[69] Even the army "unleashed their brutal power and burned everything to ashes at the time of the autumn harvest when grain and fodder were stored in fields and granaries." Young children were thrown into flames. The article emphasized that the purported purpose of the Gando Intervention of Japan was to exterminate the Independence Army, but those who suffered were all innocent civilians. Reports of the Chinese government after investigations include many cases of the Japanese army unreasonably burning the belongings of Gando Koreans. For example, the house and belongings of Hwang Un-o, a sixty-six-year-old farmer, were burnt on November 1 by the Japanese army because the army simply claimed he belonged to the Independence Army.[70] Japan also burned the churches and Christian schools of Koreans with a Christian background, exemplified by the pro-Japanese Korean newspaper, *Maeil Sinbo*, which recorded that the Japanese army entered Zhangyandong (獐岩洞) to burn down a Christian school having conspiratorial agendas of Korean independence.[71] These accounts of the destructive and brutal actions by the Japanese army in the Gando Intervention, though it may include potential biased purposes for Korean independence activists to maximize the emotional impact for international sympathy or for Chinese newspapers to report Japanese misconduct in the Chinese territories, illustrate that Japan was outraged at their defeat by the Independence Army and

[66] Watanabe Rie, "Sŏninŭi haengdonge kwanhan kŏn 선인의 행동에 관한 건 [Regarding the Actions of the Korean People]," Confidential Document No. 59, 25 August 1921, Korean History Database, https://db.history.go.kr:443/id/haf_011_0410.

[67] "Kando tongp'o ŭi ch'amsang 間島同胞의 慘狀 [The Tragic Condition of Compatriots in Gando]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 18 December 1920, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[68] "Puk Kando ŭi Hanin e taehan Ilbon ŭi manhaeng," 59–67.

[69] "Yanhun jiaoliu zhi zuowen 延珲交涉之昨聞 [Recent News on the Yanji-Hunchun Negotiations]," *Eastern Times* (Shanghai), 12 November 1920.

[70] "Jilin Yanji Xian dierqu Rijun shaosha kenmin sunshi caican ji siwang renkou shumu qingce," 6.

[71] "Changamdong ŭi tongniptan ŭn yasugyo hakkyo 獐岩洞의 獨立團은 耶蘇教學校 [The Independence Corps of Jangamdong is in a Christian School]," *Maeil Sinbo* (Keijō), 6 November 1920, Newspaper Archive of ROK.

attempted to heighten its suppression of the disobedient subjects in the Gando region in response. Through such atrocities, Japan sought to, on one hand, eradicate all disobedient subjects using all means and, on the other hand, take full control of the Gando Korean communities. In a concise manner, the horrendous behaviors conducted by the Japanese army were due to both its ambition toward the Gando region and the revengeful sentiments from the Battle of Qingshanli.

The Effectiveness of and Responses to the Ethnic Control Policy

The Gando Intervention of Japan was to a large extent effective in realizing its objectives of the ethnic control policy to assimilate the Gando Koreans with pro-Japanese ideologies and eliminate the disobedient Koreans in order to create a "futei senjin-free" Korean community in Gando. More precisely, Japan aimed to transform Gando Koreans into compliant citizens and obedient subjects who could be easily controlled. Japan provided a brief conclusion to the impacts of the Gando Intervention in 1926 and listed out a few achievements, namely the scattering of the bandit armed groups, the destruction of bandit stronghold resources, and the surge of surrenderers.[72] Many disobedient subjects from the Korean independent associations escaped from Gando or surrendered, and the Independence Army led by Hong Beom-do and Kim Chwajin (김좌진, 金佐鎭) was eradicated and the epicenter of their movements was obliterated. Light firearms and ammunition were captured from the disobedient subjects. The articulation of the Japanese army here, despite including potential biases such as overstating the success of its intervention to further validate its actions, reflects the reality of the shift of the Independence Army to Russia through the Sino-Russian border.[73] As a result, the resistance from the independence activists advanced Japan's ethnic control objective to exterminate disobedient subjects in Gando. Thus, the withdrawal of the primary resistance forces against Japan from the Gando region led to a promising future of the ethnic control policy, as the disobedient and adversarial forces were largely removed due to the military intervention, creating space for Japan to reinforce its assimilation policies.

However, *Kandō shuppeishi* did not reflect the increasing allegiance of some obedient subjects towards Japan in the Gando Intervention. The impartial circumstance was that Japan's intervention and maintenance of troops in Gando could protect the livelihood of the obedient subjects "from the depredations of criminal gangs and radical Korean resistance groups."[74] In their view, safety and stable social

[72] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 143–46.

[73] "A tongnipkun ŭi toch'ŏ hwanyŏng 我獨立軍의 到處歡迎 [The Warm Welcome Everywhere for Our Independence Army]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 27 January 1921, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

[74] Esselstrom, "Policing Resistance to the Imperial State," 76.

order were priorities, and banditry was an exceptionally troublesome matter which undermined their daily lives. The *Independent*, in January 1921, described that Japan incited the Koreans in Longjing and Toudaogou to initiate a petition for troop deployment.[75] This newspaper article could be a presentation of obedient Koreans' pro-Japanese actions during the Gando Intervention. The incitement of Japan was possibly the implementation of the assimilation approach under the ethnic control policy, while initiating the petition could be a proactive behavior to support Japan's military intervention. Another apparent example was the consecutive warnings given by Manju Pominhoe to the disobedient subjects.[76] The military advantage and domination of Japan might provide such obedient subjects with a strong background to voice their allegiance and patriotism towards Japan during the Gando Intervention. Additionally, within the binary categorization between obedient and disobedient subjects, Gando Koreans could change their status from being disobedient to obedient, or vice versa, depending on their needs. The choice, in most cases, was not a reflection of their political views or ideological alignments, but simply for survival. Tao Bin (陶彬), the Yanji Circuit Intendant at the time, sent a telegram to the Beiyang government informing them of the situation that many Gando Koreans went to the Japanese consulate to submit letters of repentance "in an endless stream" to prevent possible damages during the suppression of the Japanese army in November 1920.[77] Tao's description can be corroborated by sources from other parties. The pro-Japanese colonial newspaper in Korea, *Maeil Sinbo*, recorded that all members in a "conspiracy group," presumably referring to an anti-Japanese group, surrendered to Japan.[78] Sakai Yosankichi (堺與三吉), the Japanese Consul-General, sent a message with eleven points about how the surrenderers should be treated in Gando to Uchida Kōsai, the foreign minister of Japan. The first point is translated in English as follows:[79]

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[75] "Waejŏk ŭi ŭmhyung hanin ŭl chongyong hayŏ chubyŏng ch'ŏngwŏn ŭl shik'yŏ 倭賊의 陰凶 韓人을 慫恿하여 駐兵請願을 식혀 [The Japanese Bandits' Sinister Plot Incited Koreans to Initiate a Petition for Troop Deployment]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 18 January 1921.

[76] *Eastern Times*, "Qinri Hanren jinggao dulipai."

[77] Bin Tao, "Hanmin fu Ri lingguan ju huiguoshu you 韓民赴日領館具悔過書由 [Reasons for Koreans Submitting Letters of Repentance at the Japanese Consulate]," Telegram, Yanji, 17 November 1920, Foreign Ministry of the Beiyang Government, Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH), https://archivesonline.mh.sinica.edu.tw/byfonds/init/byfonds/.

[78] "Kwisŭnja ŭi kyŏluĭmun, ŭmbodanŭl hanado namgiji ani hago ta kwisyunsikhijya nŭn ttŭt 歸順者의 決議文, 음모단을 하나도 남기지 안이하고 다 귀슌식히쟈는 뜻 [Resolution of the Surrenderers, the meaning is to force everyone, without leaving a single member of the conspiracy group to surrender]," *Maeil Sinbo* (Keijō), 13 December 1920, Republic of Korea Newspaper Archive.

[79] Yosankichi Sakai, "Kwisuncha-e taehan ch'och'ŏ 歸順者에 對한 措處 [Measures for the Surrenderers]," Telegram, 7 November 1920, Korean History Database.

> 1) Policy regarding the treatment of surrenderers: In view of the fundamental objective of the punitive expedition, regarding ringleaders and similar core figures appropriate measures shall be taken. Dispositions must be carried out decisively. However, for other non-ringleader personnel, a policy of moral influence should be adopted, and treatment should be as lenient as possible. However, even in the case of ringleaders, exceptions need not apply if: their repentance is evident and there is a definite prospect of them becoming law-abiding citizens in the future; or if they report the whereabouts of other ringleaders or the hiding places of weapons and ammunition, and assist our forces in the joint punitive expedition with distinguished merit; or if, due to special circumstances, granting leniency is deemed particularly advantageous from the perspective of political strategy.

Moreover, *The Independent* on October 28, 1921, published an article warning those Gando Koreans who were to surrender to the Japanese army and consulate that they should not do so for "short-term security" and might be "captured and killed" later.[80] These sources illustrate a trend: Gando Koreans sought to join the category of obedient Koreans in response to the colonial violence and military power possessed by Japan during the intervention. Disobedient subjects labelled by Japan surrendered to Japan, sought leniency, and thus became obedient subjects. In general, the Gando Intervention resulted in increased manifestations of cooperation from the obedient subjects, underscoring its successful implementation.

Regarding Japan's ethnic control policy in the Gando Intervention, there were distinct responses from important parties of China and the Korean independence activists. These responses serve as important references to observe Japan's well-rounded policy execution and to analyze the impacts of the ethnic control policy on these parties.

With regard to China, Japan's ethnic control policy was an ambitious and aggressive move which posed critical harm to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Gando region. Japan's ethnic control policy originally aimed at establishing complete dominion over Gando Koreans by both conciliatory and suppressive means, but Gando Koreans, in China's view, should be controlled by the Chinese government in accordance with the *Gando Convention* of 1909. Thus, the military actions of Japan after the Hunchun Incident, including conducting active searches of disobedient subjects in the Chinese territory and perpetuating acts of

[80] "Chŏg-ege kwisunghanŭn chŏdŭl-iŏ 敵에게 歸順하는 者들이어 [You who surrender to the enemy]," *The Independent* (Shanghai), 28 October 1921, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

genocide and looting against them, were illegitimate and in breach of China's sovereignty. At the governmental level, China immediately requested Japan to withdraw its troops through the diplomatic route, emphasizing that the Chinese troops were sufficient to maintain societal order.[81] The Foreign Ministry of China stated that the Sino-Japanese collaborative military action suggested by Japan was in breach of China's territorial sovereignty while China "possess[ed] a resolute commitment to seek fundamental solutions" to the problems facing the "Korean Parties."[82] *Shun Pao* also reflected that the local government sought to "restore harmony and tranquility" in the negotiations with Japan.[83] The general public in China showed a more serious and discontent attitude towards them, as shown in the protests and petitions of the citizens of Jilin Province. The Jilin Provincial Assembly sent telegrams to the Foreign Ministry to request serious negotiations with Japan regarding the withdrawal of troops from Gando.[84] Jilin students showed their resentment by protesting, distributing anti-Japanese leaflets, and boycotting Japanese products.[85] These examples illustrate the resentful and dissenting attitude of China towards Japan's intervention and ethnic control policy in Gando since China believed that Gando's affairs were China's internal affairs, and Japan should not interfere—including in the administration of Gando Koreans. In contrast, Japan believed that its military intervention made China realize that Japan's cross-border military actions in Gando were not completely impossible and that they needed to be serious about the rebellious Koreans in Gando.[86] Japan's analysis implies the incompetence of China in resisting Japan, contributing to its more lenient attitude in dealing with the Gando Korean problem with Japan in the future. In spite of determined diplomatic actions and strong popular opposition by the Chinese government and people, no practical military actions were taken to halt Japan's military intervention or force Japan to withdraw its troops, thus allowing Japan to maintain its troops freely in Gando without restrictions, and indirectly facilitating the implementation of Japan's ethnic control policy in Gando.

Korean independent activists were compelled to act in lawful self-defense and organize a considerable militia to counter Japan's military intervention with force. As highlighted in the previous section, the Independence Army was victorious in the

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[81] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (China), "Hunchun An."

[82] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (China), "Hunchun An."

[83] "Hunchun Shijian Zhi Mianmian Guan 琿春事件之面面觀 [A Comprehensive View of the Hunchun Incident]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 24 December 1920, 9.

[84] State Council of China, "Jilin Sheng yihui diancheng Hunchun An qing yanzhong jiaoshe you 吉林省議會電稱琿春案請嚴重交涉由 [The Jilin Provincial Assembly Telegraphed a Request for Serious Negotiations Regarding the Hunchun Case]," 23 October 1920, Foreign Ministry of the Beiyang Government, Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH).

[85] "Fengtian xuesheng zhi youjie kang Ri 奉天學生之遊街抗日 [Fengtian Students' Street Demonstrations Against Japan]," *Shun Pao* (Shanghai), 16 December 1920.

[86] Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," 147–48.

Battle of Qingshanli, which led to great losses for the Japanese army. The Korean Provisional Government stressed that the independent activists would not be discouraged by Japan merely because of its atrocious behaviors in Gando.[87] The report stresses that the "burned villages would see the emergence of more devoted patriots and the murdered fathers would inspire their children to resolutely pursue and advance the independence movement." This proves that the Gando Intervention led to huge devastation to the bases and families of independence activists, fueling vengeful sentiments towards Japan. From a different standpoint, many independence activists could escape the massacres and burning by fleeing to Russia to meet the communist Russians.[88] As Gando was no longer a safe place for them to organize the independence movements under the protection of China, the independent activists became more inactive due to the increasing surveillance and suppression carried out by Japan. In other words, Japan's ethnic control policy was effective in eliminating the disobedient subjects and furthering their control over the Gando region. After the withdrawal of troops, Japan increased the number of consular police so as to check the revival of disobedient subjects within Gando.[89] This shows the consolidation of Japan's influence in Gando after the intervention.

On the whole, Japan's ethnic control policy was effective in exploiting Gando Koreans through cultivating pro-Japanese sentiments among the obedient subjects and concurrently exterminating disobedient subjects. After the Gando Intervention, the Gando region became a place where Japan could enter freely and arrest citizens as it wished when Japanese consular police increased. The increasing aggressiveness of Japan also led to a sentiment of discontent amongst the general public in China and a stronger attitude of the Chinese government in the negotiations after the Gando Intervention with Japan. Korean independence activists experienced a shift of bases and could no longer operate the independence movements in Gando on a large scale with the extension of Japan's influence to the Gando region. The Gando Intervention thus became a turning point for China, Japan, and the Korean independence activists in the governance of the Gando region.

Conclusion

From the formulation and strategy to the outcomes, Japan's ethnic control policy toward Gando Koreans in China was continuously reinforced by Japan before and during the Gando Intervention. Through such calculated yet challenging imperial

[87] "Puk Kando ŭi Hanin e taehan Ilbon ŭi manhaeng," 69.

[88] *Shun Pao*, "Hunchun Shijian Zhi Mianmian Guan."

[89] Japanese Consulate, "Hunchun chetui Ri junshi 琿春撤退日軍事 [Japanese Military Withdrawal from Hunchun]," Diplomatic Note, 8 April 1921, Foreign Ministry of the Beiyang Government, Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH), https://archivesonline.mh.sinica.edu.tw/byfonds/init/byfonds/.

policy, Japan aimed to establish full governance among Gando Koreans using a categorization system which labelled them as either obedient or disobedient subjects. This was a policy in which conciliatory measures were taken to foster obedience and suppressive tactics were used to eliminate resistance. Simultaneously, the ethnic policy evolved from subtle influence on violent intervention, which gradually unveiled Japan's ambition to control the Gando region. In order to observe the big picture of the ethnic control policy, the exploration of Japanese relations and their corresponding responses is indispensable. The ethnic control policy was deeply rooted in Japan's early 20th-century territorial ambitions over Gando, and Japan proactively utilized the Sino-Korean disputes to formally establish influence over Gando. Gaining extraterritorial rights in the Gando region from the Gando Convention in 1909, to a large extent, established a key foundation for Japan to claim Gando Koreans as imperial subjects after the Korea-Japan merge and the conclusion of the 1915 Sino-Japanese Treaty. The dual strategies used for Gando Koreans were clear since the 1910s: obedient subjects were integrated through pro-Japanese education and pro-Japanese Korean organizations such as *Manju Pominhoe*, which served as a crucial pathway to spread Japanese ideology and strengthen pro-Japanese imperialism. In contrast, disobedient Koreans, labelled futei senjin, faced different kinds of demonization, arrests, and military suppression, especially after the 1919 March First Movement. The Gando Intervention, triggered by the Hunchun Incident, marked the policy's violent apex. While Japan scattered the Independence Army and coerced some into submission, defeats like the Battle of Qingshanli and atrocities against civilians revealed the policy's partial failure to fully subdue resistance.

The Gando Intervention resulted in multifaceted outcomes where obedient Koreans continuously submitted and became more cooperative with Japan, exemplified by petitions and warnings issued by Manju Pominhoe*,* whereas disobedient Koreans were forced to flee to Russia and their network in Gando was disrupted during the intervention. On the other hand, the implementation of the ethnic policy in the cross-border intervention undermined China's sovereignty and even exposed its incompetence in countering external aggression. The protests of Chinese people show the resentful sentiments of China against Japan. While the ethnic policy's aims were largely achieved, the tension between Japan's imperialism and the resilience of Korean identity in a contested borderland was heightened. Moreover, the success in the ethnic control policy at the same time implied that Japan had exerted influence over the Gando region. Geopolitically, Japan's actions in Gando thus led to the Sino-Japanese convention of 1925, which officially allowed Japan to conduct cross-border arrests of Gando Koreans.[90] The incidents in the early 1930s such as the Wanpaoshan Incident (July 1, 1931) and the Mukden Incident (September 18, 1931) were also not unrelated to the ethnic control policy of Japan in the 1910s and 1920s.

[90] De Lisle, "Japanese Borderland Colonialism and the Koreans in Jiandao, 1905-1932," 134–37.

Manchurian ambitions of Japan at the same time also caused the collaboration between China and the Korean independent activists as the Gando Intervention spurred Koreans in Shanghai, such as the Provisional Government to engage in active speeches in an effort to promote their experiences to the Chinese people.[91] This paved the way to the further collaboration between the Provisional Government and the Nationalist Government of China led by Chiang Kai-shek, a relationship which intensified with the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Ultimately, Japan's ethnic control policy in Gando reveals its measure of forming a binary categorization of Gando Koreans and its imperial ambition of controlling the Gando region whereas strategic assimilation and brutal suppression collided with fierce resistance, leaving a legacy of both domination and defiance in China's frontier.

[91] Hyun-hee Lee, "1920 nyŏndae Han Chung yŏnhap hangil undong 1920 年代 韓・中聯合 抗日運動 [The 1920s Korea-China Joint Anti-Japanese Movement]," *Kuksagwan Nonch'ong* 1 (October 1989): 17–20.

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"Jilin Yanji Xian disanqu Rijun shaosha kenmin sunshi caican ji siwang renkou shumu qingdan 吉林延吉縣第三區日軍燒殺墾民損失財產及死亡人數目清冊 [A Detailed Record of Property Losses and Death Toll Due to Japanese Army's Burning and Killing of Civilians in District 3, Yanji County, Jilin Province]." Record. March 1921. Foreign Ministry of the Beiyang Government. Archives of the Institute of Modern History (AIMH).

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The Independent (Shanghai). "Kanbuk Naesin 墾北來信 [Letter from North Gando]." 27 January 1921. National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

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Appendix

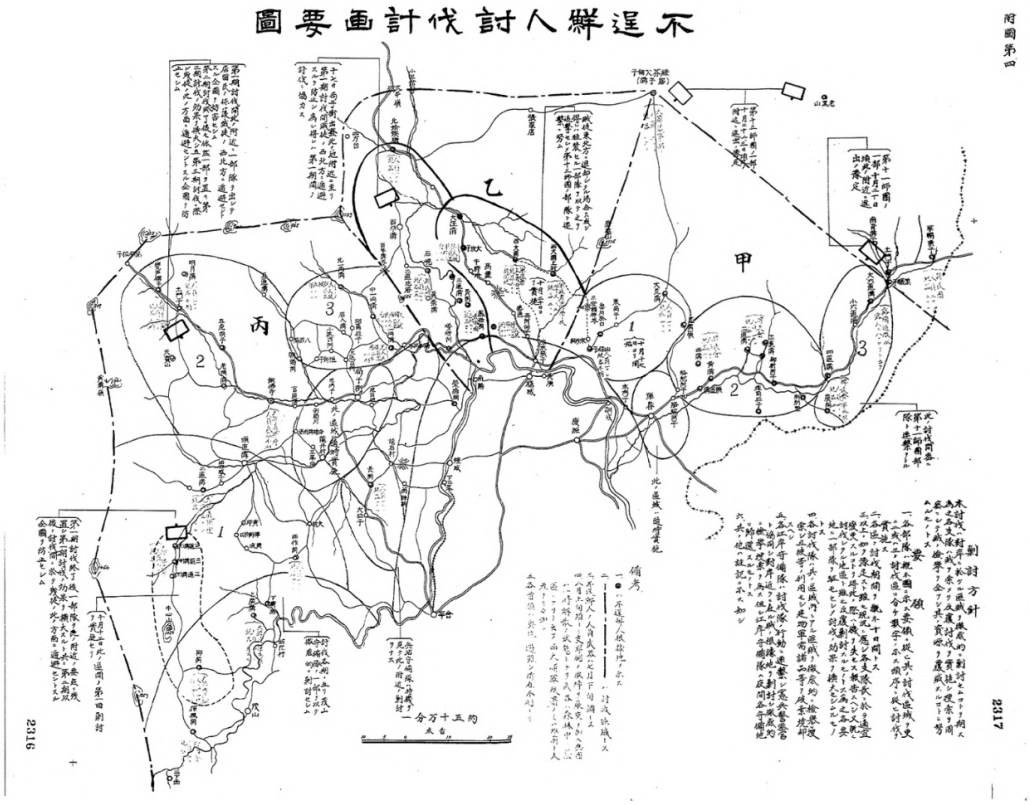

Fig. 1. A map of the Gando region and a small part of Northern Korea depicting the subjugation plan of futei senjin (The river in between is the Tumen River). Source: Korea Army Headquarters, "Sending history of dispatching troops to Jiandao," The National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense, 3 May 1926, 陸軍省-密大日記-S1-4-4, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/das/image-en/C03022770200.

KHANNA KHAZANA: FOOD LABOR IN COSMOPOLITAN INDIA

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Abstract

This work aims to understand the relationship between food workers, gender norms, and class dynamics within economically and culturally diverse Indian cities. While food workers, specifically chefs and line cooks, inhabit a central role in urban food economies and cultural systems, their labor and positionality transcend the spatial confines of a restaurant. However, present research solely focuses on food workers as laborers, rather than considering how their positionality shapes local and regional sociopolitical processes. This gap has manifested in both the subjugation of food workers to the boundaries of the restaurant and a dearth of insight into their perspective regarding the experiences, principles, and values that govern their work. The physical space thus provides ethnographic glimpses of restaurants in India; the consumers and food workers present in a restaurant interact with the spatial boundaries of the eatery in significant ways. Interviews with the food laborers reveal wider implications about social values from their position in both local and global political economies.

I contend that the experiences of food workers display characteristics of broader sociopolitical frameworks, where food workers contribute to the creation of sociopolitical cleavages within domestic and professional spaces. This research bridges these gaps through the triangulation of participant observation, qualitative interviews, and menu analysis at four eateries in Mumbai conducted over a week. I find that occupational limitations and systemic inequity of urban India faced by chefs have contributed to their views on gender, language, and westernization, thus impacting the larger political economy. The research suggests that Western ideals and influence shaped how some food workers in the Mumbai restaurant scene approached their work, while fiscal necessity motivated others. My study suggests important findings about the interplay between political economy and social factors—such as class, gender, and westernization—for food workers in major cities of the Global South. Through this project, I hope to highlight the agency of food workers: rather than viewing them through their occupation, this paper endeavors to view their occupation from the perspectives of food workers themselves.

Introduction

Through the air floats a myriad of sights, sounds, and smells. Many of them are pleasing, but the combination of them all sticks to my skin, overwhelming me with its magnitude. The sheer amount makes each individual indiscernible from the other, pulling me in all directions. I take a sharp, deep breath and ground myself in the moment. As I parse through everything around me, the picture slowly becomes clearer. In front of me stands a street of food stalls, each with a bustling crowd around it. The people wear work uniforms and sweaty foreheads, calling the employees to their attention. I see food being passed around, from *vada pav* to *bakharvadi*, all accompanying steaming glasses of brown chai. Loud music from the latest Hindi films fills the air, clashing with the speakers from each of the vendors. I hear a cacophony of conversations, dialects, and languages, all overlapping one another. Behind me, the busy street screams with fast cars and even faster auto rickshaws, where the cars communicate in honks. I smell no less than twenty dishes, all made with red chili powder, turmeric, asafoetida, onion, and garlic, as the air swirls with vapors of flavor.

Just five miles away: cut to standing in the middle of a grand, opulent hall, where the ceiling, stretching as far as the eye can see, drips with sparkling diamonds. As a live pianist plays music by artists from Coldplay to Billy Joel, the air permeates a sense of calm. Uniformed workers walk around with straight backs and soft smiles, politely approaching guests in every corner of the lobby. They speak in low tones, asking seemingly international guests for their needs first, stretching out from there. The conversations I hear, albeit limited, speak in accented English from every corner of the globe, laughs escaping behind manicured hands and the clicks of expensive shoes. All I smell is the luxurious cleaner the pions frequently scrub every surface with, fearing that a smudge should ever be visible. While food is whisked around, no dish looks distinguishable—the immaculate plating makes it difficult to discern the exact offering.

India's diversity is one of its most notable aspects, and its culinary diversity is no different. Food lays the foundation of any community, nation, or culture. From building camaraderie between groups of people to carrying forth tradition, food forms the cornerstone of Indian culture, both providing meaningful differentiation between various food traditions within the nation and uniting these very traditions through fusing cuisines. As such, the food culture of a given region in India provides insights into that region's history as well as its daily life.

The rise of globalization and the prominence of food culture within cosmopolitan cities have fundamentally changed how we view food. Restaurants have become social spaces that reflect and reinforce class differences instead of simply

functioning as taste-driven spaces.[1] Furthermore, consumption culture has undergone a notable transformation in the post-COVID era. Food now occupies an increasingly central position in the labor market as the sector devoted to food consumption outside the home continues to expand.[2] Restaurant owners and "food makers" profit from class divisions by tailoring service and dish selection accordingly.[3] While food is essential for survival, eating at restaurants has historically been a sign of luxury.[4] Nowadays, with the rise of fast food and casual dining establishments, eating out has become more accessible to people from across socioeconomic classes. The impact is twofold: on one hand, dining out is no longer as restricted; on the other, access to particular restaurants remains shaped by social cleavages.[5] At the same time, food consumers approach the food they eat outside of the home with a degree of self-awareness: they assess the perceived class designation of the restaurant, and through actively choosing, attempt to establish their own class designation through their choice of restaurant.[6]

The commodification of ethnic food for Western tastes is a global phenomenon and occurs because of the colonial nature of markets under globalization.[7] Food authenticity in frequented tourist destinations within non-

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[1] Thomas Lund et al., "Eating out in Four Nordic Countries: National Patterns and Social Stratification," *Appetite* 119 (June 2017). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2017.06.017; Sohrab Rahimi and Mallika Bose, "Social Class and Taste in the Context of US Cities: Validating Bourdieu's Theory of Distinction Using Restaurant Reviews," *Proceedings of the 2nd ACM SIGSPATIAL Workshop on Geospatial Humanities* (New York, NY, USA), GeoHumanities 18, Association for Computing Machinery (November 6, 2018:7, https://doi.org/10.1145/3282933.3282938.

[2] Lund et al., "Eating out in Four Nordic Countries: National Patterns and Social Stratification."

[3] Rahimi and Bose, "Social Class and Taste in the Context of US Cities," 8; Qi Yao et al., "The Impact of Social Class and Service Type on Preference for AI Service Robots," *International Journal of Emerging Markets* 17, no. 4 (2022): 1053, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS); Heewon Kim and SooCheong (Shawn) Jang, "Restaurant-Visit Intention: Do Anthropomorphic Cues, Brand Awareness and Subjective Social Class Interact?," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 34, no. 6 (2022): 2373.

[4] Khondoker A. Mottaleb et al., "Consumption of Food Away from Home in Bangladesh: Do Rich Households Spend More?," *Appetite*, vol. 119 (December 2017): 59.

[5]Ibid.; Claudia Giacoman et al., "Vegan on a Low Budget: Enacting Identity through Cuisine in an Internet Community," *Food, Culture & Society* 0, no. 0 (2023): 5, https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2023.2191102; Rahimi and Bose, "Social Class and Taste in the Context of US Cities," 8.

[6] "Eating out in Four Nordic Countries: National Patterns and Social Stratification - ScienceDirect," accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666317308735?via%3Dihub; Anita Mannur, "Easy Exoticism: Culinary Performances of Indianness," in *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture* (Temple University Press, 2010), 185.

[7] Annisa Mardatillah et al., "Riau Malay Food Culture in Pekanbaru, Riau Indonesia: Commodification, Authenticity, and Sustainability in a Global Business Era," *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 6, no. 1 (2019): 8. Mannur, "Easy Exoticism," 182.

Western countries is often proclaimed as a marketing tool for tourists, regardless of the authenticity of the food itself.[8] The identity of the food laborers becomes justification for perceived authenticity, contributing to Western myths of the "Orient."[9] Western interactions with ethnic cuisines thus influence how restaurants choose to present themselves—their décor, menu items, and choice of servers all cater to a false authenticity that feeds into an orientalist view of culture, food, and people.[10]

Hierarchies within restaurants and food establishments mirror capitalist hierarchies in the broader political economy.[11] Modern social structures, including labor hierarchies in industries like food service, are influenced by historical systems of colonialism that imposed racial and cultural hierarchies.[12] These enduring structures continue to shape contemporary occupational roles and reinforce systemic inequalities. As Acker's seminal work underlines, the intersecting identities of race, class, gender, and caste are integrated within the workplace.[13] Food laborers, like servers and chefs, are also subject to discrimination based on their identity.[14]

The rise of food-based social media content and the aestheticization of food have turned food consumption into a performative act where food becomes a symbol of status.[15] Through social media, the consumption of ethnic food has become

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[8] Vishal Chauhan, "CULINARY IMPERIALISM AND THE RESISTANCE: A CASE STUDY OF MCDONALDIZATION AND MICRO-RESISTANCE IN DELHI, INDIA," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 75 (2014): 1287."The 'Ethnic' Restaurant," *China Perspectives*, no. 131 (2022): 63.

[9] Wendy Cheng, "Strategic Orientalism: Racial Capitalism and the Problem of 'Asianness,'" *African Identities* 11, no. 2 (2013): 152.Author?"The 'Ethnic' Restaurant," 62; Lisa Heldke, "'Let's Eat Chinese!': Reflections on Cultural Food Colonialism," *Gastronomica* 1, no. 2 (2001): 78.

[10] TUXUN, "The 'Ethnic' Restaurant," 64; Heldke, "Let's Eat Chinese!," 79; Shun Lu and Gary Alan Fine, "The Presentation of Ethnic Authenticity: Chinese Food as a Social Accomplishment," *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1995): 535; Elizabeth Buettner, "'Going for an Indian': South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain," *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 4 (2008): 872.

[11] Sarah E. Dempsey, "Racialized and Gendered Constructions of the 'Ideal Server': Contesting Historical Occupational Discourses of Restaurant Service," *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 5 (October 2021): 3.Joan Acker, "Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations," *Gender & Society* 20, no. 4 (2006): 443.

[12] Buettner, "'Going for an Indian,'" 868; Zachary W. Brewster and Sarah Nell Rusche, "Quantitative Evidence of the Continuing Significance of Race: Tableside Racism in Full-Service Restaurants," *Journal of Black Studies* 43, no. 4 (2012): 361.

[13] Acker, "Inequality Regimes," 449; Dempsey, "Racialized and Gendered Constructions of the 'Ideal Server,'" 5.

[14] Brewster and Rusche, "Quantitative Evidence of the Continuing Significance of Race," 365; Buettner, "'Going for an Indian,'" 871.

[15] Pascale Joassart-Marcelli, "The Taste of Gentrification: Appropriation and Displacement in the Cosmopolitan Foodscape," in *The $16 Taco*, *Contested Geographies of Food, Ethnicity, and Gentrification* (University of Washington Press, 2021), 163. Judith Williams, "THE MANGO GANG AND NEW WORLD CUISINE: White Privilege in the Commodification of Latin American and Afro-Caribbean

commodified into small, bite-sized visual formats.[16] The aestheticization of food, particularly through high-end dining experiences or fusion cuisine, often forces the labor and histories behind traditional food practices into the shadows while catering to an elite consumer base. While certain "acceptable" ethnic food establishments are advertised, embraced, and amplified, others receive racial backlash.[17] This phenomenon commodifies ethnic food to package it for elite audiences. As food becomes increasingly commodified through digital platforms and global markets, the distinction between "authentic" and "commercialized" cuisine is often dictated by privileged consumers rather than the communities that originally produced these culinary traditions.[18]

Current literature, however, fails to address the proliferation of food-based social media content as instances where representations of food spills outside of their physical spaces—restaurants—and instead confines food workers to their place of occupation. While scholars agree that an establishment itself can be influenced by sociopolitical dynamics outside the restaurant—and that owners, in turn, can influence an establishment—chefs and workers are reduced to mere functions of their labor. Scholars place food laborers within their place of work as products of sociopolitical cleavages, rather than recognizing them as autonomous, agentive figures in their own right. Therefore, this work seeks to analyze chefs as independent contributors to processes of dynamics, such as westernization and the construction of gender roles, rather than as passive subjects.

Case Selection and Methodology

My research is based on one week of fieldwork in Mumbai, India, where I conducted interviews with five chefs, each at a different restaurant. Each of them worked in kitchens that prepared North Indian food, even if they were not responsible for the preparation of the exact same dishes. Because I was interested in studying gender and age as relevant sociopolitical dynamics, I did not restrictively select participants based on either. However, all my participants ended up being men between the ages of 25 and 65. Out of ethical consideration, I use pseudonyms for the

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Foods," in *Black Food Matters: Racial Justice in the Wake of Food Justice*, ed. Hanna Garth and Ashanté M. Reese (University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 271.

[16] Joassart-Marcelli, "The Taste of Gentrification," 172; Williams, "THE MANGO GANG AND NEW WORLD CUISINE," 252; Raúl Matta and Padma Panchapakesan, "Deflated Michelin: An Exploration of the Changes in Values in the Culinary Profession and Industry," *Gastronomica* 21, no. 3 (2021): 47.

[17] Joassart-Marcelli, "The Taste of Gentrification," 174.

[18] Robert Lemon and Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Making Sacramento into an Edible City," in *The Taco Truck: How Mexican Street Food Is Transforming the American City* (University of Illinois Press, 2019), 58; Williams, "THE MANGO GANG AND NEW WORLD CUISINE," 270.

chefs I interviewed and will not mention the names of the restaurants where they work. Instead, I will also refer to the restaurants through pseudonyms.[19]

Additionally, I use the terms "food workers" and "laborers" to refer to the chefs and anyone else working in the restaurant. However, I use "laborer" specifically when referring to the relationship between restaurant owner and worker—since, under capitalism, workers are treated as primarily objects to produce labor. While I discuss domestic labor, primarily performed by women, the sociopolitical dynamics that both govern hierarchies within the restaurants and are reproduced by food workers who do not consider domestic labor as equal to labor that produces capital.[20] I define urbanism similarly to Sheth, who characterizes an urban area by the concentration of population and way of life.[21] Mumbai falls squarely within this designation and is especially relevant for this topic since my analysis focuses on the social dynamics of an urban, cosmopolitan city. Mumbai is one of the most densely populated cities in the world, with about 73,000 people per square mile.[22] Because of the wide range of industries located in Mumbai, as well as its wide international impact, many people across India migrate to Mumbai for work. Most migrants relocate to the city for employment opportunities.[23] However, the city is gentrified and segregated, containing pockets of both immense wealth and extreme poverty. India faces extreme income inequality, and Mumbai is a prime example: over 60% of the population lives in slums without access to affordable housing, while some of India's wealthiest families also reside in the same city. Thus, Mumbai provides an ideal setting to analyze various sociopolitical dynamics such as wealth, gender, caste, and the role of westernization.

Mumbai was also the most accessible city in India for me as a researcher. Hindi is my native language, and I can also understand Marathi. Along with English, Hindi is an official language of India—accordingly, much of Mumbai's population speaks Hindi.[24] Furthermore, Hindi and English are the dominant languages of the workforce and are emphasized for all laborers across industries, as both have become tools of neoliberal capitalism.[25] Since Mumbai is located in the state of Maharashtra, where the

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[19] See Appendix A for a table of the names of interviewees, restaurant names, and descriptors of each restaurant.

[20] Eileen Boris and Jennifer N. Fish, "'Slaves No More': Making Global Labor Standards for Domestic Workers," *Feminist Studies* 40, no. 2 (2014): 421.

[21] N. R. Sheth, "Modernization and the Urban-Rural Gap in India : An Analysis," *Sociological Bulletin* 18, no. 1 (1969): 19.

[22] "Mumbai Population 2025," accessed March 19, 2025, https://worldpopulationreview.com/cities/india/mumbai#.

[23] Sheth, "Modernization and the Urban-Rural Gap in India," 19.

[24] Robert L. Hardgrave, "The DMK and the Politics of Tamil Nationalism," *Pacific Affairs* 37, no. 4 (1964): 402.

[25] Mehtabul Azam et al., "The Returns to English-Language Skills in India," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 61, no. 2 (2013): 339.

primary language is Marathi, effective communication requires a working knowledge of all three languages. Given my knowledge of all these languages, I knew I would be able to effectively communicate with all the chefs I would interview. My knowledge of colloquial phrases in the languages also helped me ease chefs into our conversation, allowing them a comfortable space in which to express their opinions. From a data interpretation perspective, my near-fluent knowledge in Hindi ensured that what the chefs expressed was preserved the way they meant it. Translation requires some adulteration of the initial phrase, and by interpreting the interviews in the original language, I was able to avoid most adulteration.

A prominent part of my research is the politics of access to restaurants and chefs. While I spent several weeks attempting to contact restaurants across Mumbai, I was met with resounding refusals all around. None of the chefs I interviewed agreed to participate based on my own outreach. The political circumstances within which this research was conducted also shaped my access to the research itself—I have family connections within the Indian government, all of whom have jurisdiction over the neighborhoods in Mumbai I was attempting to access. As a last resort, I contacted my family members to see if I could use their connections. The next day, I had three interviews lined up at expensive restaurants. I was also able to interview workers from a streetside eatery, or dhaba, and mid-range restaurants as a result of my grandfather's personal relationships.

To explain my access to the restaurants and chefs in question, I draw upon Cunliffe and Alcadipani's work on the politics of access. Cunliffe and Alcadipani posit the idea of "gatekeepers"—those at the top of some hierarchy who restrict access to members of a given space—these people tend to be at the top of the hierarchy and prevent anyone from the lower rungs from accessing from the outside. Applying this idea to my fieldwork, the gatekeepers of the restaurants were administrative, as the owners or managers of the restaurant were suspicious of the research activity and thus restricted access to their chefs and spaces for participant observation.[26] Cunliffe and Alcadipani's recommendation is to negotiate between pre-existing social dynamics and the result-driven nature of interviews by forming trusted relationships with both the intermediaries and the informants themselves.[27] In this case, I had to build trust after gaining access. By starting each interview with a conversation, only recording interviews if agreed by the interviewee, and conducting interviews in the interviewee's chosen language, I was able to build a rapport with the chefs. In fact, India's political system made that necessary: many scholars describe India's current government as a neofascist system controlled by a majoritarian party riddled with corruption, where

[26] Ann L. Cunliffe and Rafael Alcadipani, "The Politics of Access in Fieldwork: Immersion, Backstage Dramas, and Deception," *Organizational Research Methods* 19, no. 4 (2016): 550.

[27] Cunliffe and Alcadipani, "The Politics of Access in Fieldwork," 552.

top-level government connections provide access to a variety of spaces.[28] Government connections open most, if not all, doors in Mumbai, and I had to resort to mine to complete this research. Notably, I only discussed my government connections with the restaurant owners or managers—who then passed my message down the chain until they found a chef who was willing to sit for an interview. In some cases, like Badsha and Hotel Blue, I directly spoke to the restaurant owner and manager, respectively.

My process of accessing Badsha and Darshan more closely resembled the process recommended by Cunliffe and Alcadipani. In Mumbai, local stores and restaurants pepper every street, with no shortage of people to talk to. Yet, due to a rise in social media posts targeting local restaurants, workers in those establishments are reluctant to speak with outsiders.[29] I went to three different streets, asking to speak with every establishment, but all of them turned me away at the door. I told this to my grandfather's driver, Amir, who then took me to the neighborhood in which he lives—a predominantly Muslim neighborhood in the center of the city, where he has lived for his whole life. There were streetside stalls, or *dhabas*, in every lane. Amir took us to a dhaba named Badsha, which he visits for dinner every week with his family, and has been a regular since childhood. He spoke to the cashiers at the register and asked them to bring out the owner of the dhaba, Ali, with whom he went to school. As a result, I secured this interview. I was able to build initial trust with the informant because of his relationship with my grandfather's driver, with whom I already had a connection. Ali, the owner of the dhaba, consequently felt comfortable having a recorded conversation with me. Similarly, I conducted my interview with Surya at the middle-class establishment through my grandfather's relationship with the owner—my grandparents have lived in Mumbai for ten years and have built relationships with the businesses in their locality. My grandfather called the owner of the restaurant and helped set up the interview for the next day.

From a gender standpoint, all the people who facilitated my interviews were men, all the restaurant owners were men, and all the chefs were also men. As a woman, I had to rely on the men around me for access; the politics of access disproportionately impacted women in these spaces, often forcing researchers to resort to other means of access. In my case, that included government relationships. My privileges as an American with government connections, in many ways, outweighed my gender, so

[28] Maya Tudor, "Why India's Democracy Is Dying," *Journal of Democracy* 34, no. 3 (2023): 125.

[29] Teenagers and young adults had been releasing rodents and insects into the kitchens of these restaurants under the guise of conducting interviews. They then made videos of these kitchens, posting them on Instagram Reels, and thus impacting how many customers came to the restaurants.

while I do not believe my gender impacted the interviewees' answers, my positionality is still important to keep in mind while reading the remainder of this paper.

Gender Roles within Labor and Capital

The role of women, or the lack thereof, in commercial kitchens speaks to the entrenched expectation of women to remain within the domestic space. I was not able to interview or speak to a single woman at any of the establishments that I visited. When I asked about the presence of women in the kitchens at Badsha and Darshan, the chefs reacted with both surprise and disdain. The owner of the dhaba, Ahmed, was confused about why women would be in close quarters with men, and said, "Well, there is touching in the kitchen." Meanwhile, the chef at the middle-class restaurant, Surya, looked to his boss for guidance. He laughed nervously before shaking his head no, indicating there were no women in the kitchen. At both restaurants, however, women were employed as peons and maids.

Members of the higher-range restaurants displayed no such hesitation in answering the same question. Ali, the executive corporate chef of Hotel Blue in Mumbai, made clear that he does not consider gender when hiring a chef. Instead, the hiring team looks for graduates of hotel management schools, like the International Institute of Hotel Management in Pune (IIHM Pune), and candidates with at least six months of experience at a 4+ star restaurant. Ali said, "gender does not come up—only talent." As he spoke, his maid came in with two cups of tea. He nodded at her and then waved her out of the room. This act of dismissal also emphasizes an act of allowance; not only was I the only woman in the room, I was also the only woman allowed in the room. The location of Ali's office within the restaurant's premises further contributes to the framing of gender. Ali's office was far from the kitchen, but it acted as an extension of it—to bring the tea, the laborer traveled up three flights of stairs. Ali, being the head of the kitchen, controlled who was allowed in and what role they would play. His office, then, acts under the same rules. Barring her from his office points to how female laborers are relegated to and suspended in an in-between space; female laborers are not allowed a space of their own but must stay in a transitional state.

Customers at every establishment also spoke to broader gender dynamics in India's social culture. At Badsha, which is in a bustling neighborhood full of local stores, I only saw one female customer, and she was accompanied by her husband and children. While he ate, she fed their children. There was no substantive communication besides the children speaking to each other. Other than this family, all the other customers were men, mostly eating alone, with some scattered groups of two or three people. They spoke amongst each other, mostly about work. Since I went after dinner on a Saturday, it is reasonable to assume that many were local shop owners, especially

because of the restaurant's location. None of the men interacted with the women cleaning the store, and the laborers serving the orders were all men.

Darshan had significantly more female customers, though none were alone. Located near a busy bus stop, this establishment becomes especially crowded after 5 pm, when people are coming back from work. Most women were with male partners, all of whom were dressed in business attire, while the women wore casual clothing. There were also men eating alone, similarly dressed in business attire, and often watching Instagram Reels or scrolling through Facebook on their phones. Most, if not all, conversations were in Hindi or Marathi, with household matters, like family, children, and cleaning, being discussed. Again, all the servers were men, while all the maids were women.

At all three of the higher-range establishments, there was a shift in the gender dynamics of customers; men and women were both seated alone and in groups. These groups included men and women together, groups of only men, and groups of only women. However, topics of conversation varied amongst the groups. Each of the groups made up of only men were discussing business, and I saw no less than three pitches to potential customers at Mahal. None of the groups of only women included South Asian women, and their discussions revolved around their plans for the day. The mixed groups of men and women ranged in ethnicity but were all tourists. Finally, the solo diners were guests at the hotel connected to Mahal and spent the meal on their phones.

Synthesizing all five experiences yields an important insight about women as laborers and consumers: women remain vital to the workplace as laborers yet are rarely placed in central positions. As consumers, they occupy space in the restaurant but are not the primary audience, as shown by who was observed at the restaurant. By not centralizing women in both labor and consumption, restaurants effectively reproduce patriarchal dynamics. Mannur's work on the invisibility of female labor within restaurants is instructive here; while all food laborers are, in some way, confined to their occupations—almost restricted from existing outside the four walls of their employer—this confinement is especially pronounced for women.[30] At Badsha and Darshan, the vital work that women performed was largely overlooked because it didn't exist in the kitchen. This work does not receive praise or acclaim—it is invisible. In the upper-class restaurants, women were not given opportunities to leave their roles or occupy space outside of their occupation by engaging in the interview. Although Sajid reassured me that restaurants use gender-blind hiring, I did not see a single woman during my tour of the kitchen. Mannur's work underlines how women struggle

[30] Anita Mannur, "Red Hot Chili Peppers: Visualizing Class Critique and Female Labor," in *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture* (Temple University Press, 2010), 129.

to retain agency as laborers: entrenched gender roles within the workplace confine them spatially and in terms of responsibility.

When I asked each chef what they preferred to eat when they were not on shift, all responded that they only ate at home-cooked food outside of work. As a follow-up, I asked who cooked in their homes. The chefs who were married said their wives, and those who were not said their mothers. Only one chef lived with roommates and cooked for himself. Across restaurants, male chefs retained authority over women in domestic spaces. Regardless of whether the women in their houses participated in the labor market, the male chefs, by not participating in domestic food-making, ensure that women continue to be restricted to the physical and figurative space of the kitchen. When restaurants receive praise, the male chefs are celebrated for their genius, while female laborers are kept to the domestic cooking space without the same recognition: their labor remaining invisible.[31] Since being paid to cook situates men within the capitalistic workplace as "providers," performing work that women conduct at home is not a concern. The validity of work or labor remains in connection with the exchange of capital. A person making food for the purpose of serving at a restaurant engages in a profession, while a person making food for the purpose of domestic consumption does not. The intersection between gender roles in the domestic space and within capitalistic frameworks lies here, where male chefs rely on the invisible and unpaid female labor in the domestic space after they return from their acknowledged occupation.

Both the labor and consumption dynamics of restaurants reveal the same trend: the higher the class designation of the restaurant, the more integrated women are. This demonstrates the innate desire to protect an image—more specifically, through the facade the restaurant seeks to portray to the visitors it caters to. The invisibility of female labor and its delegation to front-of-house spaces, like cleaning roles, helps present a more acceptable image to those visiting the restaurant, especially when considering Ali, who repeatedly reassured me of gender-blind hiring.

The role of women also raises questions about access to space, including the space of the restaurant. When I asked to tour the kitchen of the dhaba, I was immediately denied. However, when my grandfather later made the same request, he was allowed to view the kitchen from the entrance. My identity as a woman restricted me from accessing back-of-house spaces, just like the female laborers in the establishment. The exclusion of women from designated spaces is a product of the

[31] Katharina Vester, "'Wolf in Chef's Clothing': MANLY COOKING AND NEGOTIATIONS OF IDEAL MASCULINITY," in *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities* (University of California Press, 2015), 72.

restaurant's reproduction of the chefs' patriarchy, where chefs and other male food workers act as both active agents and reproducers of social norms.

Westernization within the Establishment

Note on Westernization

For the purpose of this paper, I would like to establish how I use the loaded term "westernization." Many scholars, like Shirin Deylami, make clear that westernization and modernity are neither interchangeable nor necessarily correlated.[32] I do not contest this and reaffirm that the role of the West has not necessarily contributed towards the modernization of other states and peoples, and has often hindered growth. Nevertheless, I still believe the concept of westernization is vital in understanding how sociopolitical cleavages within post-colonial states are exacerbated by looking at the role of Western hegemony on political economy, language, and more. To expand, India uses significant characteristics of the West to establish similar systems of racial capitalism and neoliberalism within their own government, such as English education and relationships with foreign governments (i.e., Israel).

Perceptions of Authenticity

Westernization within the Indian food industry can be traced back to colonial foodways, where the British Raj greased cartridges with beef and pork fat that the majority of Indian and Muslim soldiers would have to bite, thereby forcing soldiers to ingest a religiously and culturally forbidden food. The primary difference between this occurrence and modern manifestations of westernization is the large-scale anticolonial movement the former triggered, while the latter remains largely unnoticed. The British Raj influenced food culture in India through inducing famines, exploiting resources, and neglecting its South Asian subjects. Throughout the British Raj's regime, South Asians were drained of both wealth and food as heavy taxation redirected local revenue to Britain and its settler colonies.[33] Manufactured famines affected rural laborers and low-caste workers the most, as they did not have access to grain storage or traditional food patterns; the Raj forced farmers to produce only certain goods for export, stripping agricultural workers and local communities of their traditional goods and

[32] Deylami, Shirin S. "In the Face of the Machine: Westoxification, Cultural Globalization, and the Making of an Alternative Global Modernity." *Polity* 43, no. 2 (2011): 244.

[33] Dylan Sullivan and Jason Hickel, "How British Colonialism Killed 100 Million Indians in 40 Years," Al Jazeera, accessed December 2, 2022, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/2/how-british-colonial-policy-killed-100-million-indians.

farming practices.[34] From the colonial empire forcing communities to consume restricted foods to strategically eradicating traditional food and produce, the authenticity of Indian foodways has been chipped away. Claims of authenticity by food producers must be assessed.

I draw from David Grazian's work on how marginalized communities manufacture authenticity for outsider audiences to analyze authenticity. Similar to how Black blues performers once sought to give white audiences the "Black experience," upper-class restaurants in Mumbai seek to give the global upper-class a constructed, stereotypically Indian experience.[35] While scholars define authenticity as being derived from recognizable cultural markers, I take those markers to be artificially created by food workers as both a voluntary act and an act of labor.

The perception of authenticity of food among both laborers and consumers is influenced by class perception: local practices and visual indicators of class, like cutlery, cleanliness, and physical size of the eatery, influence food laborers and prompt consumers to prove the authenticity of the food and restaurant to justify their food choices. I refer to Saren et al.'s theory of market exclusion for my analysis of authenticity. Saren et. al suggest that artificial forces, like decor, seek to exclude certain groups from accessing parts of the market; these divisions are created based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class.[36] Similarly, all restaurants supposedly cater towards any demographic with the capacity to consume, but actively screen and select who among those are fit to consume at their establishment. The poor are allowed in the market at the "mercy of the upper classes and how, with no laws to protect them, the underprivileged live under threat of the essentials of everyday life being seized from them by the dominating upper classes."[37]

The question of forced authenticity can be answered using Benz's analysis of the conflation of poverty and authenticity.[38] Her discussion of poverty tourism closely aligns with my analysis of the fetishization of lower-class restaurants as markers of authenticity. Where poverty and stereotypes of Indian poverty are immediately associated with cosmopolitan Mumbai, dhabas are automatically heralded as the most authentic representations of Indian food, regardless of their menu offerings.

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[34] Urmita Ray, "Subsistence Crises in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Bihar," *Social Scientist* 41, no. 3/4 (2013): 7; Kundan Kumar Thakur, "British Colonial Exploitation of India and Globalization," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 74 (2013): 407.

[35] Grazian, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 44.

[36] Michael Saren et al., "Dimensions of Marketplace Exclusion: Representations, Resistances and Responses," *Consumption Markets & Culture* 22, nos. 5–6 (2019): 475–85.

[37] Saren et al., "Dimensions of Marketplace Exclusion: Representations, Resistances and Responses," 481.

[38] Terressa A. Benz, "Urban Mascots and Poverty Fetishism: Authenticity in the Postindustrial City," *Sociological Perspectives* 59, no. 2 (2016): 465.

Meanwhile, upper-class restaurants strive for that same designation while continuing to exclude those from whom they attempt to take the title.

Mumbai is colloquially known as the city of "dreams," appearing in pop culture as India's beacon of opportunity. Notably, MasterChef India, the leading cooking reality TV show in India, is hosted in Mumbai; 800 people in Kolkata alone auditioned to be on the show.[39] Vikas Khanna, a Michelin-star chef and judge on MasterChef India, also owns two restaurants in New York City, but he does not own a restaurant in India. My research uses westernization as a prime analytical framework to understand the workplace dynamics within the restaurants, the interactions between the participants and the restaurant, and the role of the chefs outside their occupation. Mumbai's relationship with westernization is exemplified by Vikas Khanna's prime role in India's top cooking show: Mumbai, the city of dreams, hosting a celebrity chef who owns restaurants in the West, reinforces the perception that "making it" in the West is the ultimate success.

Through interactions between western culture and restaurants in Mumbai, the "exoticism" of the food and establishment is highlighted, while footholds of traditional cooking may be overlooked (i.e., the type of stove).[40] The upper-class establishments seek to demonstrate their authenticity to Western audiences by making their menus more palatable to Western tastes and orientalizing their decorations to align with Western views of South Asia. It is important to emphasize that Western taste is not limited to consumers from the West; restaurants also attempt to prove their authenticity to India's cosmopolitan upper class.

On TikTok, Facebook, and other social media platforms, the dominant imagery of Indian food, especially in cosmopolitan cities, is street food. Influencers and other social media users popularize videos of food workers preparing dishes at streetside stalls. They focus on the dirt and grime, often creating an unhygienic scenery for content. Many dhaba owners refused to entertain an interview for this reason: restaurants on their street had been targeted by content creators, who released rodents in the restaurants to create content. For example, one of the longest-running eateries on the street was shut down because the video became incredibly popular. As a result, the global perception of restaurants in India becomes conflated with stereotypical images of poverty. Mumbai is where the Dharavi slums are located—poverty tourism runs rampant in Dharavi, where non-Indians act as voyeurs into the daily lives of the residents of the slum, and online portrayals only exacerbate the fetishization of poverty

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[39] Jaismita Alexander, "MasterChef India | Culinary Dreams on the Table for MasterChef Season 8's Kolkata Auditions - Telegraph India," accessed March 20, 2025, https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/events/culinary-dreams-on-the-table-for-masterchef-season-8s-kolkata-auditions/cid/1958808; Mallika Khurana, "7 Shooting Locations Of MasterChef India Season 7," Curly Tales, accessed March 15, 2023, https://curlytales.com/7-shooting-locations-of-masterchef-india-season-7/.

[40] Heldke, "Let's Eat Chinese!," 78.

within Mumbai.[41] In order for restaurants in Mumbai to differentiate themselves from this international image of Indian cuisine, they turn towards Western imagery instead.

While settling in the West may be the ultimate goal, restaurants within Mumbai employ marketing tactics to artificially create a "target audience"; menus contain "fusion" items, anglicize dish names, and restaurants serving Indian fare will combine traditional recipes with dishes popular in the UK and the US. Decorations include cultural markers that are easily recognizable to Western audiences, like mandalas and Devnagari-style fonts. Taftoon, located in the Bandra-Kurla Complex (or BKC), is comparable to the five-star restaurant I visited. With opulent decorations and steep prices paired with the upscale location, Taftoon targets a specific population: Mumbai's elite. The restaurant's description reads, "regional Indian food paired with outstanding cocktails."[42] Moreover, all chefs employed there have studied at an IIHM and have had prior experience at premier restaurants. Notably, the website is completely in English, and there is no option to change the language. English thus becomes not only the ideal language, but the sole language of access, barring those who are not fluent from existing in the online or physical space.

When I asked Benjamin, the chef at Mahal, which restaurants he aspired to work for, or which restaurants' style he attempted to emulate in his own work, he quickly responded with a UK-based restaurant featured in the Michelin guide, Fallow. Fallow is one of London's busiest restaurants, boasting sustainable and creative recipes with an extensive contemporary menu. Currently, Fallow serves not only cold dishes such as mushroom parfait and venison tartar, but also hot dishes such as stone bass Goan curry and tandoori cauliflower. Benjamin specifically noted their unique techniques and the ingredients they work with.[43] I find it interesting that he chose a restaurant based in the UK serving Indian fusion food to aspire to, while his specialty within the restaurant he works at now is western cuisine, with his signature dish being roast chicken. His clear preference for Western food and cooking directly correlated with how restaurants in Mumbai frame their desire to be "Western."

Language as a Tool of Division and Exclusion

I conducted three out of five interviews in English, deciding which to use either by asking the interviewee's preference or adjusting based on the trajectory of the conversation. All interviews at the higher-range establishments were conducted in English: Ali the Hotel Blue, Shyam at the Rani, and Benjamin at Mahal. Shyam initially indicated that his preference was Hindi but proceeded to speak in English for the remainder of the interview. Even though I would ask him questions in Hindi, he would

[41] Dharavi is also the backdrop of the internationally acclaimed film, *Slumdog Millionaire*.

[42] "Taftoon," Taftoon, accessed September 15, 2025, https://taftoon.in/.

[43] "Menus - Fallow," accessed June 21, 2022, https://fallowrestaurant.com/menus/.

respond in English. The chef grew up in the state of Bihar, the state with the lowest literacy rates in the country and did not attend an English-medium school.

Bihar's contentious history with the Indian state includes systematic casteism and classism, where low rates of literacy correlate with governmental negligence.[44] Women and low-caste individuals are restricted from accessing English education, which also coincides with class divides.[45] Lower-caste communities have mobilized to fight ongoing oppression within Bihar, often culminating in violent conflict. Due to these confrontations, upper-class and upper-caste Indians, particularly Hindus, developed prejudice against Bihari migrants. Many people from Bihar migrate to cosmopolitan cities like Mumbai and New Delhi in search of work; a large portion of migrants are unskilled laborers. In Mumbai, the founder of the alt-right regional Hindu nationalist party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, Raj Thackeray, stated that migrants must go back to Bihar because they are "destroying the city."[46]

The history and political situation of Bihar are relevant to contextualize Shyam's insistence on speaking English. His choice of language separates him from the migrants the city's government discriminates against. Both Hindi and English are viewed as languages of status, where the imposition of Hindi nationally is a tool used by nationalist parties to exacerbate caste- and class-based hierarchies; the spread of sanskritized Hindi education is linked to caste-based education systems, where education is linked to the occupation of a child's parents, which forces the perpetuation of caste-based duties, most of which favor the upper-class North.[47] However, English is both the language of success and the language of privilege in India: English-medium education, or English as the medium of teaching and learning, is the standard in college-level education, and is primarily used in private schools.[48] Thus, English is reserved for upper-class individuals who can afford private schooling and higher education.

The two other English-language interviews were with Mumbai locals educated in private, English-medium schools. While the bulk of the interviews were conducted in English, they would switch back and forth between Hindi and English with ease, choosing their language based on the sentiment they wanted to convey. Neither of these chefs were new to the area or to the hotel industry—both had family connections within restaurants worldwide. A notable difference between Ali and Benjamin's

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[44] Amarendra Das, "How Far Have We Come in Sarva Siksha Abhiyan?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 1 (2007): 22.

[45] Christophe Jaffrelot, "Caste and Politics," *India International Centre Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2010): 105.

[46] "Respect Local Culture or Suffer: Raj Thackeray | India News - Times of India," accessed March 17, 2025, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Respect-local-culture-or-suffer-Raj-Thackeray/articleshow/2770188.cms.

[47] Hardgrave, "The DMK and the Politics of Tamil Nationalism," 402.

[48] Peggy Mohan, "Hindustani, Hindi and English in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 35, no. 19 (2000): 1673.

interviews and Shyam's interview was their locality to Mumbai—Ali and Benjamin lived at home with their families, while Shyam lived with coworkers from the restaurant. I argue that their unconstricted approach to communication can be attributed in part to their comfort with both the language and the city itself. Whereas Shyam is perceived as an outsider to the city by virtue of his status as a migrant and his identity as a Bihari, Ali and Benjamin do not face this barrier to entry into the workforce.

Shyam's choice to use English instead of Hindi speaks to the entrenchment of caste- and class-based hierarchies in professional environments within cities of migrants. His conscious effort to present himself as fluent in English indicates how companies and employers within cosmopolitan cities emulate and reinforce discriminatory perceptions, where language usage influences how laborers are seen. Capitalism, education, and caste designations are thus intrinsically related. While the neoliberal usage of English in India in terms of consumption is important, English as a tool to control workers is also fundamental. Companies spend resources training workers to speak in English, especially those servicing upper-class Indians and westerners.[49] Since the chef works at one of the richest restaurants in the country, catering to celebrities and global clientele, English becomes not just a tool of communication, but an affirmation of the status of the restaurant itself.

Hindi also operates as a tool to carry out the neoliberal agenda. Hindu nationalists, who aspire towards whiteness in many ways, carry out the imposition of Hindi across India, despite linguistic diversity holding cultural significance. In Tamil Nadu, these policies have received major backlash and protest.[50] The National Education Policy was introduced in 2020 and acted as a major upheaval of the current education system; the policy seeks to enforce a "three-language" requirement, where students must learn two languages native to India in school. Tamil Nadu's leadership has fiercely pushed against the policy, lauding it as the latest in a long line of efforts to enforce Hindi over regional languages. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist majority party in India, has frequently boasted about its goal to establish a "Hindu Rashtra," where its ideal state is rooted entirely in Hindu ideology. To the BJP, this includes standardizing Hindi and Sanskrit as the main languages of India. Hindu nationalist ideology is quite similar to white supremacy, as both acts as ethnoreligious economic agendas that aim to fundamentally change the workings of a state.

Although located in Maharashtra, Mumbai's residents aren't only Maharashtrians. Internal migration, which follows the promise of a "better life" in a big city, has led Indians from all over the country to settle in Mumbai. Migrants from Tamil Nadu live across Mumbai, including in the slums. For example, Dharavi has a

[49] Sazana Jayadeva, "'Below English Line': An Ethnographic Exploration of Class and the English Language in Post-Liberalization India," *Modern Asian Studies* 52, no. 2 (2018): 585.

[50] Tamil Nadu is the southernmost state in India, where the most commonly spoken language is Tamil.

thriving population of residents of Tamil origin and Tamil speakers.[51] Maharashtra has begun the process of enacting the NEP 2020, with Hindi now as a mandatory third language in all schools in the state.[52] Where anti-ethnic sentiment already seeps through Mumbai, and the conflation of Hindu identity and national identity, the imposition of the Hindu Rashtra onto Tamil speakers in Mumbai is emblematic of a larger push towards homogenizing the city.

Surya, at Darshan, was born and brought up in Tamil Nadu, and moved to Mumbai as an adult after marriage. His children were born in Mumbai and attended a government school near his house. While I interviewed Surya using Hindi, he switched into Tamil a few times, nervously looking at his boss after every slip. His boss sat with us the whole time, watching Surya answer questions and jumping in to translate occasionally. I reassured them both that I had a working knowledge of Tamil and did not need a translator, but his boss stayed seated. Surya explained that he was hired to cook South Indian food, even though he did not know how to cook at all before arriving at the restaurant. He also had never traveled to any South Indian state other than Tamil Nadu. In the kitchen, he worked with two other chefs—a South Indian chef and a Punjabi chef. Notably, he did not clarify where in South India the former was originally from. When asked what the chefs refer to each other as, he simply said "Bhai," which is a colloquial way of saying "brother" in Hindi.[53]

Surya, as a laborer, was offered no autonomy as he was constantly surveilled by his boss in terms of both his responses and the language in which he answered my questions. The oppression of regional languages within the workspace was helmed by his manager, reflecting how the imposition of Hindi acts as a neoliberal tool of control. Even in back-of-house settings, where workers only interact with each other, the chefs use a Hindi term of endearment to refer to each other. "Bhai" is the replacement of "Chef" in this setting; Hindi replaces English as a tool of capitalism. Notably, Bhai is less formal than Chef and transcends contexts—Chef is only used in a kitchen

[51] Amrita Abraham, "Violence in a Bombay Slum," *Economic and Political Weekly* 14, no. 44 (1979): 1789.

[52] Snehal Mutha, "Hindi Now a Mandatory Third Language in Maharashtra for Classes 1-5 as It Rolls out NEP 2020," The Hindu, accessed April 18, 2025, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/maharashtra/hindi-now-a-mandatory-third-language-in-maharashtra-for-classes-1-5-as-it-rolls-out-nep-2020/article69459520.ece.

[53] For those not familiar with Hindi, Hindi speakers use the term "Bhai" or "Bhaiya" to refer to men of similar age to themselves in everyday settings. For example, customers wave down rickshaw drivers by calling "Bhaiya" and rickshaw drivers refer to their male customers as "Bhai" as well.

producing food, while Hindi speakers use the term Bhai to refer to people in various situations, including non-labor contexts.

Conclusion

Food workers and laborers are often confined to their occupations, not allowed to occupy space outside of capitalist frameworks. This study seeks to view chefs as reproducers of knowledge in their own right, not just in relation to their work. The implications of this research lie in interrogating daily interactions within the restaurant, rather than their positions within larger food structures. From their role in reproducing language-based divisions, whether from internal or external pressures, or the invisibility of female labor, this set of interviews offered insight into chefs as reproducers.

Future studies should develop a comprehensive set of data regarding the class breakdown of restaurants in relation to the wealth distribution in Mumbai. There is a significant lack of census data related to the lack of transparency from the current majority government. However, researchers should continue to investigate the relationship between urban geography and food pathways. With frequent changes in internal migration, researchers should study the impact of these demographic shifts on changes in restaurant labor and organization.

Notably, future studies should study domestic labor as food work. Although gender is an important framework of this study, examining the chefs behind the food that the interviewed food workers eat during their days off would provide important insights into the invisible labor that drives the labor market. It is imperative that researchers continue to engage in dialogues with local communities to examine their relationship with labor, capital, and food, instead of only relying on larger frameworks of political economy, race, gender, class, and caste.

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APPENDIX A

Restaurant Strata
Pseudonym (Name)
Pseudonym (Restaurant)
Descriptors
Dhaba
Ahmed
Badsha
North Indian, Mughal, family seating
Mid-Range
Surya
Darshan
Predominantly South Indian cuisine, family seating, two floors
Four-Star
Ali
Hotel Blue
Large chain, 4 restaurants, trained in Western cuisine
Five-Star
Shyam
Rani
Cafe style menu
Seven-Star
Benjamin
Mahal
Mixed cuisine, bar seating, mostly Western

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GANDA LAND, GANDA LABOR, AND GANDA'S LOVE: EMPIRE'S MILITARIZED INTIMACY OF TRANS-PINAYS

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Abstract

This paper investigates how the U.S. military-industrial complex in the Philippines sustains racialized and gendered sexual economies of capitalism that disproportionately exploit poor transgender Filipina women (trans-Pinays). It traces the historical foundations of these dynamics from colonial agricultural dispossession and liberal economic restructuring to contemporary security agreements and military basing. Through the lens of militarized intimacy, U.S. imperialism operates not only through territorial domination but through desires that eroticize and exploit the feminized colonial subject. Trans-Pinays, situated at the margins of legality and visibility, become effective laborers within these economies: desired yet disposable, visible yet unprotected. Understanding these systems of domination is essential to exposing how those systems sustain themselves through intimate acts of dehumanization. This article examines the complex interplay of American imperialism, militarized masculinity, and the commodification of trans-Pinays' bodies, using the 2014 murder of Jennifer Laude as a critical site of analysis. Jennifer Laude's murder is not an isolated act of transphobic violence, but rather an imperial crime that renders visible the violence embedded in capitalism.

Introduction

Those who knew her well called her "Ganda" —beautiful.[1]

She was the sister who would wear makeup even when she was just inside the house. She was the breadwinner of her family in Leyte, Philippines. She was the friend known to be confident in both her looks and personality. She was a proud transgender Filipina woman. She was Ganda. She was beautiful. She was Jennifer Laude.

On October 11, 2014, Jennifer Laude was at a disco bar, where she met Joseph Scott Pemberton, an American Marine. After having drinks together, they went to a motel. And, after they had arrived, Pemberton was the only one to leave. Later, the

[1] Katerina Francisco, "Remembering 'Ganda': The Tragedy of Jennifer Laude," *Rappler*, October 15, 2014, https://www.rappler.com/nation/72004-jennifer-laude-transgender-death/.

hotel staff found Laude half-naked in the bathroom, her neck marred with strangulation injuries, and her head leaning inside a toilet bowl. Jennifer Laude was assaulted, drowned, and murdered.[2] In the following days, Pemberton was arrested and invoked the "Trans Panic Defense" argument in court—a legal strategy where the revelation of an individual's transgender identity triggers a "panic" reaction.[3] His justification for violence against this unarmed woman was that he was caught by surprise and angered by Laude revealing that she is transgender. Through the work of activists, Laude's family, friends, and attorneys attempting to administer a sentence that would bring justice for Laude, Pemberton was found guilty. Despite this work, the then-president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, granted Pemberton an absolute pardon in 2020.[4] Six days after the announcement of the pardon, Pemberton was deported back to the United States, all while being simply discharged without even a court-martial, and allowed back in his country.[5] Jennifer Laude's killer is still alive and pursuing a normal life—all things Pemberton robbed her of on October 11, 2014.

Laude's murder by Pemberton is not just a singular act of violence but the consequence of a long-standing structure of domination. Capitalism, especially racial capitalism, "asserts that racism and colonialism are not epiphenomena of capitalism, but instead materially ground the very logic and practice of capitalist accumulation, dispossession, and exploitation."[6] In the case of the Philippines, it is the colonial domination of land and labor for militaristic purposes that disenfranchises Filipina women. The racialization of the colonial subject by deeming them lesser and pathologizing them is co-constitutive with the material, legal, and political practices of capitalism. Through the legal policies of creating military bases, mandating native land be used for them, and determining that there be an influx of military personnel, military abuse (and the subsequent pardoning and excusal of that abuse by the justice system) are intricately connected with racial capitalistic domination.

The lack of justice for Jennifer Laude is just one of the numerous cases of men in the military abusing Filipina women, particularly trans-Pinays. Following the

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[2] Michelle Abad, "TIMELINE: The Killing of Jennifer Laude and Release of Joseph Scott Pemberton," *Rappler*, October 11, 2022, https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/timeline-jennifer-laude-killing-joseph-scott-pemberton-release/.

[3] Juan Paolo M. Artiaga and Christine Faith M. Tango, "The Transplantation of the Trans 'Panic' Defense in the Philippines as a Consequence of People v. Pemberton," *Ateneo Law Journal* 65, no. 2 (November 2020): 753–830, https://doi.org/https://ssrn.com/abstract=4246007.

[4] Regine Cabato, "Philippines' Duterte Pardons U.S. Marine Convicted of Murdering Transgender Woman," *The Washington Post*, September 7, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/philippines-duterte-pardons-us-marine-convicted-of-murdering-transgender-woman/2020/09/07/db0934ee-f0f2-11ea-8025-5d3489768ac8_story.html.

[5] Jason Gutierrez, "U.S. Marine Pardoned for Killing Transgender Woman Is Deported From Philippines," *The New York Times*, September 13, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/13/world/asia/philippines-us-marine-transgender-woman.html.

[6] Allan E. S. Lumba, *Monetary Authorities: Capitalism and Decolonization in the American Colonial Philippines* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 5.

coverage of Laude's death, journalists and the public alike pointed to the connections between the Laude case and the 2005 Subic rape case, where four American Marines raped a Filipina woman, but were quickly acquitted.[7] Not only did both cases involve Filipina women being confronted by gendered violence from American military members, but they also involved U.S.-Philippine geopolitical relations as the justification for uneven sentencing. This relationship continues to replicate gendered and colonial violence through its capitalistic history.[8] In the same vein, the Laude and Subic incidents are not isolated but are instead indicative of colonial and capitalistic power structures.

In April of 2023, the United States announced that it would have military access to four more locations in the Philippines, increasing the number of troops and bases, and strengthening U.S. military presence in the Pacific[9]—another colonial agreement for continued expansion of the American empire. As "base agreements contribute to empire-building," it becomes critical to understand that "without a more robust vision for consent and conscionability, that asymmetry will continue to perpetuate historical injustices."[10] For Laude, the asymmetries of Duterte's pardon, the U.S.-Philippine military agreements, and the increased presence of military men continue to be injustices that should not be relegated to the past, but understood as an ongoing project of capitalism.

The U.S. not only expands its own imperial control over Filipino land and waters, but also over Filipina women and their love, owning and desiring Filipina women. Today, Filipina activists are acutely aware of Filipina women's "commodification by the [U.S.] military, captains of industry, and [American] men looking for a taste of exotic—and eroticized—subservience."[11] This dynamic is made more prominent and exacerbated for transgender Filipina women (trans-Pinays) through both the lack of protections for transgender people in the Philippines

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[7] Reynaldo Santos, "LOOKING BACK: Daniel Smith and the Subic Rape Case," *Rappler*, December 1, 2015, https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/114585-looking-back-daniel-smith-subic-rape-case/.

[8] Jason Castaneda, "Why Duterte Pardoned a Murderous US Marine," *Asia Times*, September 14, 2020, https://asiatimes.com/2020/09/why-duterte-pardoned-a-murderous-us-marine/.

[9] Chad De Guzman, "U.S. and Philippines Announce New Sites for Military Cooperation: What to Know," *TIME*, April 4, 2023, https://time.com/6268379/philippines-us-military-bases-china/.

[10] Eliza Faye Lafferty, "'Control Without the Costs of Conquest': Reimagining U.S. Military Bases in the Philippines," *Georgetown Journal of International Law* 55, no. 2 (2023): 305–45, https://doi.org/https://www.law.georgetown.edu/international-law-journal/in-print/volume-55/volume-55-number-2-winter-2024/control-without-the-costs-of-conquest-reimagining-u-s-military-bases-in-the-philippines/, 345.

[11] Bronwyn Winter, "Lily Pads and Leisure Meccas: The Gendered Political Economy of Post-Base and Post-9/11 Philippines," essay, in *Gender, Power, and Military Occupations*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 101–24, 119.

and the social stigmas of being transgender; there is a heightened sense of exotic and erotic desire and dehumanization. Laude's murder exemplifies the profound effects of U.S. military presence in the Philippines and the dehumanizing legacy of the American empire, which continues to manifest in the racialized, gendered commodification of Filipino subjects—particularly trans-Pinays. These systems of militarism, commodification, and subsequent gendered violence do not act independently; rather, they function in concert to produce and naturalize particular forms of precarity and disposability. Given the increasingly hostile tensions in the South China Sea and the broader Pacific—the area that makes the Philippines a strategic military stronghold for the U.S.—it becomes imperative to interrogate the impacts of this rising militarism and ask: How has violence against transgender and cisgender Filipina women emerged through capitalism and imperialism in the context of the U.S.-Philippine military bases? By contextualizing Laude's murder within the broader geopolitical and economic structures of the trans-Pacific empire, I argue that Filipina women, especially trans-Pinays, have been rendered as both abject and desirable—produced by a colonial gaze that simultaneously fetishizes and dehumanizes them. In the case of Jennifer Laude, this murder is not an isolated act; rather, it's symptomatic of deeper structural relationships in which cisheteronormativity is a necessary condition of militarism. This colonial gaze is embedded in military policies, economic treaties, and cultural ideologies that trace back over a century, beginning with the American imperial control of the Philippines in the late 19th century.

I. The Beautiful Colony and the Cost of Empire

The United States' relationship with the Philippines is one steeped in paternalism and violence, shaped by a capitalist logic that sees land, labor, and bodies as extractable resources. An extraordinarily long and seemingly subtle history of capitalism is omnipresent in U.S.-Philippine relations. Though cloaked in the language of liberation, U.S. colonization of the Philippines was a project of capitalist expansion. Despite "freeing" the Philippines from its Spanish colonizers in 1898 during the U.S.-Philippine War, the U.S. continued to maintain its control as both a formal and informal colonizer for over a century. In the late-19th and early-20th century of American interference, the U.S. sought out colonies for sugar production, including in the Philippines, as the U.S. "[built] on what little the Spanish had accomplished, [... creating] an important sugar colony."[12] Firstly, there were "policies granting local elites some degree of political autonomy" for them to "protect their newfound economic

[12] James H. Galloway, "The Modernization of Sugar Production in Southeast Asia, 1880–1940," *Geographical Review* 95, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 1–23, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1931-0846.2005.tb00189.x, 1.

interests."[13] Secondly, it occurred through "economic policies [that opened] Filipino agricultural resources to American investors and [controlled] Filipino access to credit and world markets."[14] Both of these legal and protective policies, from the creation of the Agricultural Bank in 1908 to the implementation of the Philippines Organic Act in 1902, ensured a stratification of labor, where Filipino and American elites worked to build their own wealth at the expense of peasant and working-class native Filipinos. As a result of American capitalism's necessity to maintain the extraction of land and labor for sugar and other agricultural production, newly formed class antagonisms were not only realized but also heightened in these two significant ways. The results of plantation-style capitalism created class stratifications that persist to this day. Women, especially in rural areas, have borne, and continue to bear, the brunt of economic disenfranchisement.

With its "beautiful" colony in the Pacific, the U.S. was open to maritime and oceanic trade routes that were not previously available, allowing for the greater trade of agricultural products and the opening of novel markets.[15] At the same time, the changing economic relations also removed rural farmers' control over the land, allowing the U.S. to codify its paternalism over the archipelago. Dr. Allan E. S. Lumba describes that due to "circuits laid down by the U.S. empire, economic experts [...] determined which people possessed the racial capacity to soundly make decisions over large-scale capital, and which people did not."[16]

The early decades of American rule were marked by the integration of Filipino agricultural production into globalized, capitalist markets. Sugar, hemp, coconut, and more became key exports, controlled through colonial economic policies applied in the Philippines, such as the American Homestead Laws, that dispossessed rural populations of land and turned fertile jungles into cash crop plantations.[17] American

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[13] Marco Antonio Guzman, dissertation, *Imposing Capitalism: Japanese and American Colonialism in Taiwan, the Philippines, and Cuba, 1890s–1920s* (2015), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5225g2bs, 84.

[14] Guzman, *Imposing Capitalism: Japanese and American Colonialism in Taiwan,* 84.

[15] In "An Imaginary* Interview with a Philippines Collections Museum Donor," the author imagines a conversation with a museum donor who refers to the Philippines as the "Beautiful, beautiful country of ours." This sentiment reflects both past and present tourism and paternalism that is mirrored in colonial writings such as Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden." Camille Ungco, "An Imaginary* Interview with a Philippines Collections Museum Donor," *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement* 17, no. 1 (November 22, 2022), https://doi.org/10.7771/2153-8999.1256.

[16] Lumba, *Monetary Authorities: Capitalism and Decolonization in the American Colonial Philippines*, 5-6.

[17] David Max Findley et al., "Colonial Policy, Ecological Transformations, and Agricultural 'Improvement': Comparing Agricultural Yields and Expansion in the Spanish and U.S. Philippines, 1870–1925 CE," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 11, no. 1 (June 27, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03310-z. Sabiha Iman Mohyuddin, "Female Migrant Labor in the Philippines: The Institutionalization of Traditional Gender Roles in the Name of Economic Development," *Pursuit: The Journal of Undergraduate Research at the University of Tennessee* 8, no. 1 (2017): 93–102, https://doi.org/10.7290/pur8sklw.

investors gained control over industries and infrastructure, while Filipino elites—often educated in U.S. institutions—were groomed to serve as intermediaries between imperial power and native labor.[18] Concurrently, the removal of native control over land subordinated rural farmers to a peasant and working-class subject position that pushed families and women into the outskirts of the market.

The cost of these imperial policies, which disenfranchised working-class Filipino populations, was the drastic increase in poor and peasant women being present in military base areas. Best exemplifying this is the migration of Filipina women to Manila for work as economic and sexual laborers, as "non-elite indigenous women had labor obligations that entailed long-term separation" from family and native communities.[19] Not only are Filipinos from poor, rural areas simply more prevalent as a result of uneven agricultural, land, and labor development, but rural Filipinos also face higher risks of prostitution or, at the very least, face increased risks of gendered exploitation. This is because, as Jean Enriquez, a member of the coordinating board of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women—Asia Pacific (CATW-AP), describes, the phenomenon of rural women being sexually exploited is due to factors in which "they have lost their land, there's not enough source of income, so clearly [soldiers exploit] also the poverty of the rural women."[20] As land was consolidated under elite control, rural women were pushed outside the formal, calculable economy, whether through domestic work, sex work, or migration to seemingly more economically opportune places.

Throughout its history, the globalization of labor and markets forced the Philippines into a never-ending imperial rule, through both the direct and indirect colonial control of Spain and the U.S. Despite the Philippines' internationally recognized "independence," the nation still remains under U.S. imperial subjugation. It is because the latter—in order to maintain its title as a capitalist hegemon—*must* militarize its trans-Pacific trade routes in order to expand its influence and access to markets. And therefore, justifying its control through protectionism of a "weak," "small," and "beautiful" country.

II. Militarized Intimacy: Bases, Bodies, and Borders

By the mid-20th century, the Philippines had been transformed into a key U.S. military outpost in the Pacific. The Philippines presently hosts "one of the most significant and vast US military complexes in the world" with around 13,000 military

[18] Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[19] Mohyuddin, "Female Migrant Labor in the Philippines: The Institutionalization of Traditional Gender Roles in the Name of Economic Development," 93-102.

[20] Tica Moreno, "From 'Comfort Women' to Prostitution in Military Bases," Capire, July 18, 2023, https://capiremov.org/en/interview/from-comfort-women-to-prostitution-in-military-bases/.

personnel from the U.S. alone.[21] Even after formal base closure and supposed military withdrawal from the Philippines during the 1990s, various policies such as the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement, the 2002 Mutual Logistics and Support Agreement, and the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, allowed for ongoing military presence so that the U.S. might use the Philippine islands as "lily-pads" across the Pacific.[22] These policies then become the asterisks to notions of sovereignty in order to maintain military control—inherent parts of capitalism's colonial control. These agreements indeed facilitated continued U.S. military presence, and they also reflect the Philippines' strategic interests in combating Chinese coercion in the South China Sea: Following the 1992 base closures, Manila sought renewed cooperation to offset its limited defense capacity and respond to growing security concerns, particularly in the South China Sea and in domestic counterterrorism. Furthermore, the Visiting Forces Agreement (1999), Mutual Logistics and Support Agreement (2002), and Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (2014) served not only the U.S. interests but also provided the Philippines with military training, logistical support, and security assurances. Despite this, they still illustrate a form of asymmetry, yet they are mutually beneficial to both parties' interdependence rather than serving as unilateral control by the U.S. The Philippines does not always act in the interests of the Americans: Duterte, for instance, sought to abandon bilateral agreements with the U.S. and instead align (bandwagon) more to China at the first half of his presidency for economic reasons, thus showing that Philippines' foreign policy is not determined by U.S.' interests. The U.S.-Philippines agreements may not purely serve American interests, but the Philippines also had strategic reasons for entering them. In these instances, however, there is still an enduring asymmetry in the relationship that ultimately enables the exploitation of trans-Pinays by American military personnel.

As a result of these exceptional policies, Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base have become some of the largest U.S. military installations outside of the continental United States. These bases do not only serve geopolitical aims; they also generate extensive local economies built around servicing American troops. The increased military basing and the protections for military personnel meant that more soldiers could abuse and exploit prostitution and sex work.

Through these agricultural and military policies, it is clear that the U.S. already felt entitled to Philippine land and labor; now, its policies allow it to feel entitled to Filipina women and their bodies. The economy surrounding U.S. military bases gave rise to a semi-formalized system of sex work, euphemistically called the "Rest and

[21] Jodi Kim, *Settler Garrison: Debt Imperialism, Militarism, and Transpacific Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 30.

[22] Kim, *Settler Garrison: Debt Imperialism, Militarism, and Transpacific Imaginaries*, 74.

Recreation" industry.[23] Women were economically coerced into sex work, both through poverty and systemic disenfranchisement. Transgender women, in particular, finding themselves excluded from mainstream labor markets, were funneled into sex work by transphobia and the lack of legal protections it engendered (i.e., the lack of employment protections, transgender affirming healthcare, legal recognition of their chosen name on official documents, and more).[24]

It is not only the absence of protections, but also transphobic legal conceptions that disenfranchise Filipina women. Best exemplifying this is Pemberton's use of the Trans Panic Defense in the case of Laude. As Christine Faith M. Tango and Juan Paolo M. Artiaga explain, Pemberton's high-profile use of the defense in the Philippines "would make the country an appropriate location for the cultivation of the defense and the continuation of its legacy, having literally been brought upon Philippine soil by an American."[25] The intentional utilization of these types of defenses exploits a legal system that already fails to recognize transgender women as women.

The usage of LGBTQ+ panic defenses in the U.S. is rooted in the notion that being queer is a mental disorder—a blatant display of homophobia and transphobia deemed acceptable in the American legal system and is now entertained in the Philippines.

This transplantation of the defense is indicative of the latent military ties of the U.S. empire and its stronghold on Filipino legal, social, and economic systems. These systems reinforce unending cycles of poverty and exploitation. Furthermore, poverty is not just a backdrop; it is part of the mechanism of capitalism that makes rural and working-class women vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

III. Trans-Pinays and Exotic/Erotic Labor

Despite the U.S. historically painting Filipinos as "uncivilized" and "savages" through past and present colonial and capitalist propaganda (for instance, Charles L. Bartholomew's political cartoons that include racist, paternalistic depictions of the Philippines), Filipina women's abjection became simultaneously disgusting *and*

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[23] Sachiyo Yamato, "Prostitution and Feminisms: Integrating the Subjective Accounts of Power for Women in the Philippine Sex Industry" (dissertation, 2000), https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp01/MQ60693.pdf.

[24] The Human Rights Situation of Transgender People in the Philippines Submission of the Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines (STRAP) to the 13th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, accessed June 15, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session13/PH/STRAP_UPR_PHL_S13_2012_SocietyofTranssexualWomenofthePhilippines_E.pdf.

[25] Artiaga and Tango, "The Transplantation of the Trans 'Panic' Defense in the Philippines as a Consequence of People v. Pemberton," 753–830.

desirable.[26] They became a perverse pleasure, an exotic commodity to consume. U.S. troops stationed abroad engage with local populations through gendered and racialized economies of desire, wherein Filipina women are constructed as both hyper-feminine and sexually available—a dynamic exacerbated for trans-Pinays, whose bodies are viewed through a lens of both fascination and revulsion. The Trans Panic Defense exemplifies this: there is a fascination with romancing the colonial subject; yet, when tension is created by the revelation of transness, violent revulsion is unjustly accepted as a common reaction. In the context of Jennifer Laude's case, Pemberton was in the Philippines as a result of joint military operations. He sought out Laude for her beauty but was appalled by her transness. Transgender women's hypervisibility in global and local sex economies contrasts sharply with their invisibility in terms of legal and social protections. Trans-Pinays face heightened discrimination in employment, housing, and healthcare, driving many toward sex work, overseas employment, or performance industries.

The colonization of the Philippines did not merely seek territorial control; it was also a project of desire. Missionary, anthropological, and travel texts illustrated feminized depictions of the archipelago and its people, often portraying Filipinas as sexually available, emotionally malleable, and naturally subordinate.[27] These texts did not merely reflect colonial ideology; they epistemologically produced and circulated it, making the subjugation of the Philippines intelligible through metaphors of tutelage and intimacy. This economy persists in the global circulation of Filipina women's bodies, whether this figure is reproduced as a domestic worker, mail-order bride, care laborer, or sex worker. In each instance, the colonial image is sustained: the Filipina as a commodity, a subject to whom the Global North feels entitled to intimacy.

Trans-Pinays are simultaneously inserted into and excluded from this image. Their gender legibility—whether or not they are "passing"—becomes a matter not just of social acceptance but of physical survival. The politics of visibility and legibility here are deadly: the more visible the trans-Pinay is as a site of non-normativity, the more likely she is to be targeted. And yet, trans-Pinays remain indispensable to the very economies that marginalize them. They perform emotional, sexual, and aesthetic labor, even as that labor is disavowed, criminalized, or erased.

Furthermore, Pemberton's use of the Trans Panic Defense in the murder of Jennifer Laude is not merely a legal strategy that disenfranchises trans-Pinays, but a chilling articulation of what Eric Stanley theorizes as *overkill*—a mode of violence that

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[26] Susan A. Brewer, "Selling Empire: American Propaganda and War in the Philippines," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 11, no. 40 (October 2013), https://doi.org/10.1017/s155746601303489x.

[27] John Lee Candelaria, "'Dainty Hands Do Useful Work': Depicting Filipino Women in Japanese Wartime Propaganda," *Plaridel Journal of Communication, Media, and Society* 18, no. 1 (June 2021): 111–45, https://doi.org/10.52518/2021.18.1-06cndlra. Roland Sintos Coloma, "White Gazes, Brown Breasts: Imperial Feminism and Disciplining Desires and Bodies in Colonial Encounters," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 48, no. 2 (April 2012): 243–61, https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2010.547511.

exceeds the act of murder to annihilate the subject symbolically, socially, and ontologically. In strangling Laude and subsequently drowning her, Pemberton demonstrates a commitment not only to ending her life, but to erasing her being—an act that is both materially brutal and semiotically saturated. Stanley notes that overkill "names the technologies necessary for, and the epistemic commitment to, doing away with that which is already gone," signaling how transgender bodies, particularly those racialized as trans-Pinay or Filipina, are forced to exist in a paradox of hypervisibility and disposability.[28] This violence cannot be abstracted from the conditions that produced it: the ongoing entanglements of American imperialism, militarism, and capitalist commodification of gendered subjects. Pemberton's very presence in the Philippines was the result of the Visiting Forces Agreement—a bilateral security pact steeped in the logic of colonial dominance and economic asymmetry. His encounter with Laude was not incidental but structured by these imperial arrangements: a white U.S. Marine stationed in a post-colony seeking pleasure from a feminized, racialized subject whose economic precarity was in part shaped by that same imperial order.

Within this imperial schema, the trans-Pinay becomes a figure of both desire and revulsion, a "perverse pleasure," as colonial capitalism constructs her simultaneously as object and threat. The Trans Panic Defense, then, is not just a juridical maneuver but a narrative of whiteness and imperialism reasserting its dominance through the erasure of the "unthinkable" transgender Other. This defense finding traction in the Philippine court system—under the shadow of American military influence—further underscores colonial residues in Filipino legal infrastructures, where U.S. servicemen have long enjoyed impunity. Overkill, in this context, is not only corporeal excess but a political and ontological one: it is the empire's necropolitical logic made manifest. As a result of that necropolitical order, the trans-Pinay must be doubly killed: firstly, as a subject who defies the colonial-imperial ordering of gender and race, and secondly as an economic and sexual object whose commodification can only be sustained through her dehumanization. Pemberton's violence, therefore, is emblematic of a broader imperial economy that thrives on the production of abjection, the circulation of racialized sexual labor, and the elimination of those who exist at the juncture of these exploitative systems.

The intertwining of the U.S. military-industrial complex and the global sex economy is not a peripheral phenomenon—it is foundational to the operation of the American empire through concepts such as the Rest and Recreation industry. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Philippines, where the apparatus of militarism is saturated with the gendered logics of desire. The so-called Rest and Recreation industry around U.S. military bases is not simply a site of leisure; it is a node of imperial extraction, where local populations are rendered disposable in both economic and affective registers. Filipina women, in exchange for their labor, would receive passage

[28] Eric A. Stanley, *Atmospheres of Violence: Structuring Antagonism and the Trans/Queer Ungovernable* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2024), 33.

entry to the United States, or alternatively, for their love, marry an American man as a pathway to obtaining citizenship status. In these scenarios, military men would engage in predatory practices, directly contributing to the exploitative and informal economy of sex workers and women. These women circulate literal money as laborers and contribute to the sexual economy as prostitutes, as their love becomes eroticized and commodified. These dynamics intensify in military contexts, where cis-heteronormative environments fetishize the exotic while policing gender deviance. Pemberton's actions toward Laude are emblematic: he sought pleasure but responded with violence when his own masculinity was seemingly threatened.

In this context, relationships between Filipina women and U.S. military men—whether transactional or genuinely romantic—are deeply shaped by imperial asymmetry. Access to U.S. citizenship, even the mere fantasy of it, becomes an effective economic lure. Trans-Pinays often find themselves caught within what Neferti Tadiar terms the "remaindered life," where survival depends on circulating in spaces that are simultaneously discarded or devalued by neoliberal capitalism and formal state economies, but also serve as political horizons of care.[29] Here, love itself becomes labor, and desire becomes infrastructure. Women's erotic labor fuels imperial presence, and American servicemen extract not just physical pleasure but emotional submission, fantasies of control, and gendered domination from Filipina women. Pemberton's encounter with Laude thus cannot be reduced to a singular act of transphobic violence; it must be understood as a metaphor for a longer history of imperial sexual economies in which the feminized postcolonial subject is always already positioned as violable.

Laude's murder exemplifies the violent contradictions at the heart of this sexual-political economy. Pemberton, as the embodiment of imperial masculinity, seeks pleasure from the colonized transgender Other. Yet, his desire is structured by revulsion and fragility. The moment Laude's gender non-normativity disrupts the fantasy of heteronormative consumption; Pemberton reacts with lethal force. His violence is not merely personal—it is the structural expression of queer subjects' inclusion within the metropole's tolerance, which depends on the expulsion or erasure of others in the periphery. In this sense, Laude's death is not just a hate crime, but an imperial crime: a moment in which the converging forces of militarism, racial capitalism, and transphobia erupt in brutal clarity.

This imperial crime cannot be disentangled from the longer colonial genealogy of gendered and racialized domination, for capitalism constructs these contradictions with ruthless efficiency. As Tadiar has observed, love is no longer a reprieve from labor, but another modality through which labor is extracted.[30] Jennifer Laude existed at the intersection of these violent systems: both as worker and lover, both Filipina and transgender, both desired and despised. Her murder by Pemberton is not an

[29] Neferti X. M. Tadiar, *Remaindered Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022).

[30] Tadiar, *Remaindered Life*.

aberration; it is the logical outcome of a system that renders trans-Pinays both hypervisible in the circuits of imperial pleasure and invisible in the domains of legal protection, citizenship, and personhood. What remains after her death is not just grief, but the enduring silence of a world that consumes difference while punishing those who embody it. Her death, like many others, marks the horizon of capitalist militarism—a regime that no longer requires life to sustain itself, only the ongoing circulation of subjects rendered killable.

Capitalism thrives on these intimate inequalities. In turning love into labor, the global economy extracts value not only from what bodies produce, but also from how they are desired. Jennifer Laude's death crystallizes how capitalist militarism consumes such contradictions, leaving behind only silence.

Conclusion

In the wake of Jennifer Laude's death, activists mobilized not only for justice but for memory. Organizations such as GABRIELA and other LGBTQ+ coalitions across the Philippines protested Pemberton's release and demanded structural reforms to the Visiting Forces Agreement and Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. They called not only for the prosecution of one man but for the dismantling of the imperial infrastructure that made her murder possible. Activists have also turned to art, performance, and storytelling to preserve Laude's memory and critique the systems that failed her. Plays, documentaries, and murals across the Philippines and throughout the diaspora carry her image, reminding Filipinos that the violence of the empire is not only historical—it is ongoing.

The death of Jennifer Laude is not an anomaly; rather, it is a symptom. Her story reveals how the intersections of capitalism, militarism, and imperial desire converge upon the most vulnerable, rendering their lives disposable. It challenges us to rethink sovereignty, not only as a matter of national borders, but of bodily autonomy, gender self-determination, and economic justice. Throughout over a century of colonization, the power relations imposed by capitalism have shaped the material conditions of Filipino property to be one of imperial garrisons and laying waste to once-beautiful land. As a result of the militarization of Asia and the Pacific, Filipino labor is being removed to rural areas and concentrating capital. Filipinos fall susceptible to exploitation where the colonial and capitalistic desires of artificially imported military men consume the love of women, trans-Pinays, and Jennifer Laude—Ganda.

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