Description

Title Imperial Japan and English language press
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Description This thesis seeks to use English language publications to help shine a light on Pan-Asianism as an ideology in regards to Manchuria and the Empire as a whole. The Japanese Empire was a transnational one and one that existed during a time of increasing internationalism. In the field there has not been as much attention to the role that Pan-Asianism has played in the foreign relations of Japan. I will study this by using English language Pan-Asianist texts as well as Japanese governmental and semi-governmental publication cross-referenced with United States Department of State archive to see the effect of such texts on the ideology. The effect was usually negligible, but the reasons and avenue that it was pursued may be even more important and interesting. The focus is on the time period from 1931 until 1934 because that it when the massive changes occurred in Japan within a rapidly changing international environment. Manchuria and Manchukuo represented the point on which change was catalyzed. It was from this moment that captured world attention that a need to publish English language texts became clear to the government and its allies. These publications would do the work of telling the story of Japan to the West and convince them of the Empire’s righteousness. The direct appeal to the publics of foreign nations coincides with the beginning of central control of the mass media within Japan. The analysis of English language publications shows that they were part of a convergence of media, an ideology and the state. Pan-Asianism could be found in these documents that sought not only to convince Western audiences of the correctness of Japanese actions, but also to attract investment and interest in the new state. However, this would be on the terms of the Japanese government rather than an open door. Pan-Asianism and the Manchukuo were integral to the formation of imperialist Japanese state in the 1930s. Through looking at English language publications I seek to see through a new lens the foreign policy of Japan and how it viewed itself in these non-official channels of international interactions.

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When the ethnic-nationalist interpretations of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination failed to materialize, a portion of anti-colonial activists in Asia began to emphasize the need for solidarity by drawing on what they perceived as traditional and shared "Asian" values. While challenging the Western-dominated international order of nation-states that perpetuated imperialism, such notions of Asian solidarity at the same time served as an ideology of liberation from Japanese imperialism.