

Extraterritoriality and Its Abolition: Opium Production and Circulation in Japan-dominated Manchukuo, 1932-1937

Ming GAO

Abstract

This paper seeks new perspectives on the relationship between opium and the lived experience of historical actors. I show how these connections help reinforce and generate an organic yet symbiotic relationship among the individuals, their communities, and the new state Manchukuo under the Japanese control. The extant historiography on opium industry emphasizes the role of the Japanese in obtaining lucrative revenue from monopolizing opium industry. Less attention has been paid to people on the ground, more specifically, to the different groups of opium producers and opium shop proprietors. By examining these relationships from a social history perspective, I aim to discuss the dynamics, practices, and experiences of opium production and circulation as well as to challenge the historical perception of Manchukuo dominated by Japan as a puppet regime that predominantly profited from the opium trade within its territories. This paper therefore provides a new reading of the diverse beneficiaries on the ground and of the opium industry from the angles of production and circulation. Even as the authorities continued to make significant revenue from engaging in the opium trade, I argue that the opium industry in the new state generated the possibility for diverse actors of every stripe to profit enormously from taking part in the state opium monopoly scheme and that the interplay of these actors eroded Japanese imperial control over the new state. As a result, by dissecting the entanglement of the complex nature of the opium industry within a regional context in Japanese Manchukuo, I demonstrate how the opium industry share taken away by those individuals is large enough to propel political powers to take actions to combat the illegal system of opium plantation and circulation by abolishing extraterritoriality. Besides English, this paper also utilizes primary sources in three major East Asian languages (Japanese, Chinese, and Korean).

Key Words: opium, soldiers, officials, bandits, farmers, extraterritoriality

Ming GAO is a historian of modern East Asia. Currently, he is a visiting research fellow at Kokugakuin University (2019-20) in Tokyo, Japan, and an incoming research fellow at Seoul National University, South Korea. He holds a PhD from the National University of Singapore. He would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments. Particularly, the author would also like to thank Dr Timothy Amos, Dr Julia Schneider, and Sarah Tan for their comments on earlier drafts of this article. This research was conducted under the auspices of the Kokugakuin University Visiting Research Fellow Program. Contact him at mgao@u.nus.edu.

Introduction

In this paper, I look at the various types of historical actors on the ground in Japan-dominated Manchukuo and how they manipulated opium regulations, effectively weakening the Empire's grip on monopolized opium trade. This paper aims to highlight the different layers of actors, interests, and collaboration in the process of opium production and trade, as well as how these different factors influenced the ongoing erosion and adjustment of government regulations. I demonstrate that in order to understand how the Japanese Empire operated and expanded in Manchukuo, we must pay close attention to the underworld propped up by opium, or “black gold” (黑金子, *C. heijinzi*).¹ Further, I argue that the complex interplay between Japanese imperial administration and the on-the-ground actors' manipulation of the opium trade culminated in the first partial abolition of extraterritoriality in the new state in June 1936. In contrast with the existing historiography on opium and narcotics, which regards the Japanese Empire as the primary entity benefiting from the opium business, this paper corrects these conventional narratives, and, more importantly, it challenges and increases our understanding of the paradoxical character of Japanese imperialism by viewing it through the prism of the disparate actors who manipulated the government's opium monopoly schemes for their own economic benefit.²

Current studies reveal a relative lack of literature on the *social* history of opium and vice in the Japanese Empire, though works such as Mark Driscoll examined Japan's capitalist expansion through the angle of human life and labour. This study, however, amplifies the significance of a much more diverse group of people and discusses how such individuals from different races and backgrounds engaged in the illicit business of opium by disregarding governmental policies or by colluding with one another. Japanese soldiers and the gendarmerie worked in collusion with ordinary Japanese and Korean civilians on the one hand, and with opium farmers, bandits, and even Russians, who clandestinely circumvented the opium policies to partake in smuggling, on the other. My analysis demonstrates how a complicated network of different actors gradually eroded the political, social, and economic fabric of Japanese Manchukuo, a new state the Japanese Empire exerted tremendous efforts to build.

The discussion focuses mainly on the production side of various actors' engagement in illegal planting and transactions in opium. This included people who were a part of the Japanese authorities—such as soldiers, police, and senior officials—as well as people from different echelons of Manchukuo society, such as bandits, farmers, and even authorized opium retailers who were seeking to maximize their opium profits and who also became unauthorized dealers by illegally opening up new branches of opium shops. Such authorized opium retailers are in fact one of the focal points of this paper, in that they greatly complicated the opium scene in Manchukuo, I map out these actors' illegal activities. It is my intention here to sketch out how their illegal activities took away from the government opium monopoly and greatly weakened the state-building process in Manchukuo and its ability to secure opium revenues.

This paper covers the years 1932 to 1937. Why so is firstly due to how the intentions of government policies fundamentally differed before and after 1937. This was particularly true after the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War that year, following which the Manchukuo government's policies placed much more attention on the collection of war

¹ Yang Chaohui, and An Linhai, “Weiman shiqi de raohe yapien”, in *Weiman shehui*, eds. Sun Bang, Yu Haiying, and Li Shaobo (Jilin: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1993), 425.

² See John M. Jennings, *The Opium Empire: Japanese Imperialism and Drug Trafficking in Asia, 1895-1945* (Westport, CA: Praeger, 1997); Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, Dead, and Undead in Japan's Imperialism, 1895-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); and Miriam Kingsberg, *Moral Nation: Modern Japan and Narcotics in Global History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013).

materials for the sake of war against China. This intention became increasingly evident after the outbreak of the Pacific War.³ Secondly, the paper also revolves around a discussion of two major groups of illegal opium dealers. The complete abolition of extraterritoriality on November 5, 1937 contributed to the decrease of illegal opium dealers, and there was a great outflow of illegal Japanese and Korean opium dealers to China proper. Most importantly, this period was the so-called ‘gradual prohibition’ (漸禁主義, *J. zenkin shugi*) period. In 1932 the first year of the Manchukuo state, the Opium Monopoly Bureau was created on November 3, and in the same month, the Bureau introduced a government opium monopoly system. The policy foundation of the monopoly system was based on the Opium Law (阿片法, *J. ahen hō*) and regulations for its enforcement (阿片施行令, *J. ahen shikōrei*), which was promulgated on November 30, 1932 and put into effect from 1 January 1933.⁴ Such a move drew a plethora of criticism from both China and abroad. The dramatic change in policy intentions, coupled with tightening controls over the population, informs my decision to set my discussion between 1932 and 1937. Before proceeding to the discussion of historical actors, I would briefly examine the legal aspects pertaining to the opium regulations.

Illegal Opium Inspection Law and the Penetration of Regulations

In addition to closely examining the Opium Law and its enforcement, it is essential to also take a look at another set of laws related to the regulation of opium. The Illegal Opium Inspection Law (鴉片緝私法, *C. yapian jisifa*) (hereafter the Inspection Law) and the Regulations on Illegal Opium Seizure Inducement (查獲私土獎勵規則, *C. chahuo situ jiangli guize*) (hereafter the Inducement Regulations) went into effect at the same time as the Opium Law and its enforcement in January 1933.⁵ However, the fundamental difference between the two sets of laws and regulations was the focus on the illegal side of opium dealing, as demonstrated in the word *si 私*. This term originally means “personal” or “private”, but here specifically denotes the illegal use of opium. The Inspection Law and the Inducement Regulations dealt exclusively with the issue of illegal opium and what was actually happening on the ground, and they gave attractive incentives for the Illegal Opium Inspectors (緝私員, *C. jisiyuan*) to report and stop illegal opium.⁶ For example, after the confiscated opium was deposited in the Opium Monopoly Bureau, three-fifths of the total amount would be channelled back to the inspectors as incentives.⁷

The Inducement Regulations therefore greatly increased their motivation for hunting down illegal opium activity. As a result, 317 opium monopoly staff became inspectors, a new position did not exist before.⁸ The inspectors were actually the Opium Monopoly Officers (專賣官吏, *C. zhuanmai guanli*); they merely wore more than one hat. One of their primary duties was to spot all things related to illegal opium activity. Interestingly, the racial composition of

³ Susumu Tsukase, “The Penetration of Manzhouguo Rule in Manchuria”, in *China at War: Regions of China, 1937-1945*, eds. Stephen R. MacKinnon, Diana Lary, and Ezra F. Vogel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 128.

⁴ The promulgation of the Opium Law was accompanied by a signed proclamation from the first Manchukuo Prime Minister Zheng Xiaoxu providing an official rationale for the establishment of the Monopoly system. General Kenkichi Ueda, Commander of the Kwantung Army and Japanese Ambassador to Manchukuo on the same day issued a statement announcing the readiness and willingness of all Japanese officials in Manchukuo to assist the cause.

⁵ Manzhouguo Minzhengbu, *Yapianfa guanxi fagui* (Xinjing: Minzhengbu weishengsi, 1933), 50.

⁶ Miyajima Mikinosuke, *Kokusai ahen mondai no keii: fu mayaku ryakusetsu* (Tōkyō: Nihon kokusai kyōkai hakkō, 1935), 220.

⁷ Manzhouguo Minzhengbu, *Yapianfa guanxi fagui*, 55.

⁸ Miyajima, *Kokusai ahen mondai no keii*, 220.

the 317 Illegal Opium Inspectors—142 were Japanese, 155 Manchukuoan (Chinese), eighteen Korean, and two Russian—reveals a lot about the complexity of the illegal opium problem the new state was facing.⁹ The complicated nature of the disparate individuals involved in the illegal opium trade were just as diverse as the composition of inspectors themselves. In the meantime, the inspectors became very powerful, as they were allowed to carry guns and even request help from the police and military authorities when deemed necessary.¹⁰

As will be demonstrated below, the inspectors carried out their duties vigorously on many occasions, ranging from inspecting Manchukuo's high officials to investigating ordinary illegal opium dealers. The Inspection Law and the Inducement Regulations can be seen as complementary mechanisms in the fight against the continued use of illicit opium by various individuals on the ground, whereas the Opium Law and its enforcement was more concerned with the opium monopoly scheme as a whole.

Under this new scheme of illegal opium inspection, the inspectors assumed the role of policing the opium industry before the new administration could exercise full control over the region. Miyajima Mikinosuke (宮島幹之助), a prominent medical scientist of parasitology and the Japanese representative to the Opium Advisory Committee in The Hague, regarded the system as an ad hoc and temporary one (臨時に設けられた制度, *J. rinji ni mōkerareta seido*).¹¹ He was probably correct in his judgement, as the new administration was not able to properly enforce the laws and regulations they made. In particular, the laws and regulations hardly affected underground vice activities. For the first two years after Manchukuo came into being, law enforcement was not easy.¹² Even the South Manchuria Railway documents supported the idea that “the government found it exceedingly difficult to enforce the [opium] law.”¹³ On top of that, while laws and regulations were still carried out in the new regime to a certain extent, once one moved beyond the level of the county, the Japanese administration realized that the laws and regulations barely impacted villages and outlying regions. Lacking strict law enforcement, and confronted with a seemingly impenetrable Manchukuo society, the government consequently and unintentionally created a social and political environment ideal for illicit underground groups to take advantage of the new regime, a situation that continued until sometime around 1937.

People in Authority and Opium Shop Proprietors

After the creation of Manchukuo in 1932, the illegal activities of the Japanese police were sufficiently noteworthy to prompt coverage from leading news outlets in the Empire's capital, Tokyo, including reports by newspapers such as the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. On August 31, 1932, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported a shocking and large-scale conspiracy for the sale of illicit opium between the Japanese and Chinese.¹⁴ Over a hundred illicit opium dealers were rounded up by the police, but the ringleader, Liu Jiangzhong (刘江仲), who had until then lived a sumptuous life built on the illegal sale of opium, remained at large. For many years, the illegal sale of opium had been carried out in a sham Chinese restaurant, Yue Xiang Chun (越香春), from

⁹ Miyajima, *Kokusai ahen mondai no keii*, 220.

¹⁰ Manzhouguo Minzhengbu, *Yapianfa guanxi fagui*, 53.

¹¹ Miyajima, *Kokusai ahen mondai no keii*, 220.

¹² From our own correspondent, “Narcotics Purge in Manchukuo Rigid Measures Taken to Eliminate Indulgence: Cinema Monopoly Established,” *The North-China Herald*, October 13, 1937, 50.

¹³ South Manchuria Railway, *Fifth Report on Progress in Manchuria*, (Dairen: South Manchuria Railway, 1936): 48, quoted in Thomas David Reins, “China and the International Politics of Opium, 1900-1937: The Impact of Reform, Revenue, and the Unequal Treaties” (Ph.D., Claremont Graduate School, 1981), 275.

¹⁴ “Nihonjin jyunsa mo mazaru ahen ō mitsubaidan kenkyō”, *Yomiuri shimbun*, August 31, 1932, 2.

which the police confiscated roughly 3,000 *yuan* (圓) worth of opium. In the late evening of August 29, a payroll had been acquired by the authorities. Ironically, seven Japanese police officers and fifteen Manchukuo patrol officers were also on the payroll.¹⁵ The roundup hence revealed how the police themselves were clandestinely involved in the opium business and cooperating with the civilian Chinese. Other evidence also demonstrated that the police had given the Japanese and Koreans a green light and protection when importing opium derivatives from as far abroad as Europe.¹⁶

In addition to opium smuggling, illegal opium growing and the conspiracies between officials of different capacities and ordinary Manchukuoans, licensed opium retailers, and illegal opium shop owners were also part of efforts to incapacitate the official opium monopoly system. According to the opium regulations, each opium retailer could open no more than one authorized opium retail shop under their name.¹⁷ Despite this, opium retailers tended to secretly open more illegal retail shops or branches. In this manner, they, too, like other actors on the ground, undermined the government's control over opium. At the same time, they also tried to appeal to opium authorities for permission to open more authorized shops.

Not long after the official promulgation of the Opium Law in January 1933, opium retail shops began to spring up in Manchukuo. By September, opium shops were to be found across major cities and provinces of Manchukuo. According to the Opium Ordinance (佈告, *C. bugao*) issued by the heads of the Civil and Financial Affairs Departments on December 22, 1932, the quota was set at 600 authorized opium retailers across Manchukuo.¹⁸ Ironically, however, a variety of evidence supports the claim that there were in fact already about 1,000 opium shops in the city of Shenyang, 800 in Jilin, 1,000 in Changchun, 400 in Heilongjiang, and about 200 to 300 in other smaller cities: a very conservative estimate.¹⁹ According to another source, there were actually more than 1,000 opium shops in the city of Harbin alone.²⁰ Although disparities in these statistics span numbers in the hundreds, there are very strong reasons to believe the larger numbers, since a great number of sources seem to support them. The only certainty, however, was that the very existence of so many unauthorized opium retail shops was something the opium authorities had deliberately ignored.

On September 24, 1933, the authorized opium retailer, Zhang Xiaozhou (張筱洲), along with other shop owners from Yushu (榆樹) county, reported the existence of illegal opium shops to the authorities.²¹ Zhang and two fellow retailers, Cai Zi'an (蔡梓菴) and Wang Wanjia (王萬甲), were among the first batch of officially approved dealers and the only three authorized opium dealers in Yushu county.²² The government pledged that, if the report was true, local police or the Opium Monopoly Bureau would take strict measures against the illegal opium shops. It was clear that the authorized retailers were trying to keep the number of unauthorized shops at bay by reporting them to the authorities. In the meantime, by citing the stagnant nature of the opium business as their motivation, authorized retailers made efforts to legitimize the need for each owner to operate more than one shop. Zhang and his fellow opium shop owners were not alone in their call for more shops. On the same day, Xu Jiwu (徐輯五) and other shop owners made a similar request for official permission to open retail branches.²³

¹⁵ "Nihonjin jyunsa mo mazaru ahen ō mitsubaidan kenkyō".

¹⁶ "Heihua de Dongbei", *Ta Kung Pao* (Da Gong Bao), April 1, 1935.

¹⁷ *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 456, September 26, 1933, 5.

¹⁸ Manzhouguo Minzhengbu, *Yapianfa guanxi fagui*, 16.

¹⁹ Yu Housheng, "Guonan yanzhong qizhong zhi Zhongguo yapian wenti (shang)", *Shehui wenti*, August 5, 1933.

²⁰ Benbao Tepai Jizhe, "Luanxian liangnian zhi Dongbei gaikuang", *Ta Kung Pao* (Da Gong Bao), September 18, 1933.

²¹ *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 457, September 27, 1933, 5.

²² *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 343, May 16, 1933, 1.

²³ *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 456, 4-5.

Though the request was turned down on the basis of the Opium Law—which forbade the practice of opening up more shops or branches—the authorities acknowledged that there were at least twenty unauthorized shops openly selling opium in Yushu county.²⁴ As mentioned above, the police authorities and the bureau did take measures to tackle the situation but to little avail, due to the shop owners’ tactic of simply employing imperial subjects to circumvent the authorities’ policing.

Descriptions of official engagement in the opium business can be found in some first-hand accounts. The naturalized Italian Chinese spy Amleto Vespa offered a candid discussion about the military police’s involvement in the vice businesses of opium-smoking dens and narcotics dispensaries, among others:

The Japanese Gendarmerie never missed an opportunity to profit from the exploitation of vice and soon also became very active in the field of prostitution, opium smoking dens and gambling houses. Many brothels, clubs and teahouses began to spring up in different localities, without having secured permission from the monopolies. The heads of the Syndicate filed protest with the High Military Authorities, who in turn passed on the complaint to the authorities of Harbin. The Gendarmerie officers would rise against any authority that dared oppose itself to them; and they [the author’s agents] did not want to engage in open opposition against the all-powerful Gendarmerie.²⁵

Vespa’s description may sound exaggerated given the nature of the Gendarmerie’s relationship with the imperial authorities. In addition, military and police engagements in the vice activities seem too brazen to be believed—at least, if based solely on Vespa’s account. His observations, however, are repeatedly proven in a range of previously unstudied official documents and publicized documents, such as newspapers in different languages that also included news coverage from the metropole.

However, it was not only the Japanese and Manchukuo police who were involved; the Japanese soldiers were as well. In one official document dated April 10, 1933, the opium wholesalers from Liaoyuan (辽源) in Jilin province reported that soldiers stationed in counties such as Taonan (洮南镇) had blatantly smuggled large amounts of opium, which allegedly became a major hindrance to the normal operation of the opium monopoly business authorized by the government.²⁶ The report prompted the Chief of the Monopoly Bureau to weigh in and request for cooperation between the Departments of Military Affairs and Civil Affairs to handle the issue. The chief pointed out that the Manchukuo soldiers’ undisguised engagement in illegal opium activities and flagrant disregard for the opium monopoly system was intolerable, if the report was in fact true. About two months later, in June, No. 362 of the Bulletin of the Government Office in Jilin province confirmed the fact that soldiers had indeed become involved in illicit opium smuggling.²⁷ The order stipulated that all counties that had stationed soldiers present should adopt strict regulations against illegal smuggling and should also remain in contact with the relevant military agencies. In the meantime, this order was

²⁴ *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 456, 5.

²⁵ Amleto Vespa, *Secret Agent of Japan* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1938), 100-101.

²⁶ “Zhuan gong ji diwuhao”, *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 362, June 7, 1933, 2.

²⁷ “Jilinsheng gongshu xunling”, *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 362, June 7, 1933, 1.

forwarded to the attention of all police agencies, as well as police stations and government offices at the county level, hastening the Opium Monopoly Bureau's action.²⁸

Bandits and Farmers

For a variety of reasons, after the new state came into being, the number of bandits increased, and they were clearly detested by the Japanese authorities.²⁹ In the context of Manchukuo, bandits were those “who caused social disturbance or committed anti-Japanese acts” in the region.³⁰ Li Narangoa argues that Japan held a “double standard in Manchuria towards the region's bandits.”³¹ The authorities exercised a carrot-and-stick approach to the banditry issue: chases on the one hand, and pacification on the other.³² With respect to opium, however, the imperial authorities saw them as a very unstable element, threatening the very existence of Manchukuo and serving as a natural foe of the Empire. Other than being a threat to the stability of the region, bandits' involvement in poppy growing and trade posed a problem for the enforcement of the official opium monopoly system as well.

The imperial authorities had learned a lesson so far: the opium corruption threat within the ruling class itself was probably bigger than the one outside of it. On July 25, 1933, two Japanese officials were appointed to carry out an additional, broader investigation into the potential irregularities related to opium. They were Yamamoto Kachō (山本課長), the Head of the Investigation Section, and Suzuki Shuha (鈴木宗派), the advisor to the Policing Commander in Jilin province (警備司令顧問, *J. keibi shirei komon*).³³ The police headquarters in Jilin (警備司令部, *J. keibi shireibu*) requested an investigation into a string of allegations from the heads of counties, councilors, and the Chief of Military Police (県長、参事官、警務指導官, *C. xianzhang, canshiguan, jingwuzhidaoguan*), with a focus on the following four categories:

1. The opium cultivation situation and bandits' activities;
2. Whether there were any links or relationships between individuals involved, such as opium buying agents and authorized purchasers (including local gentlemen and ordinary persons), the Manchukuo military police and other officials;
3. Whether there were any illegal activities committed by delinquent Japanese and Korean opium dealers who relied on

²⁸ “Jilinsheng gongshu xunling,” 1.

Regarding the power structure of Manchukuo, see Tsukase, “The Penetration of Manzhouguo Rule in Manchuria”; Hamaguchi Yuuko, *Nihon tōchi to higashi Ajia shakai: shokuminki Chōsen to Manshū no hikaku kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Keisō Shobō, 1996).

²⁹ According to Li Narangoa, the term “bandits” encompasses a broad array of meanings based on how the authorities had perceived them over time. The terms used to describe them in both Chinese and Japanese are as follows: *feizei* (匪賊, *J. hizoku*), *tufei* (土匪, *J. dozoku*), *daozei* (盜賊, *J. tōzoku*), *mazei* (馬賊, *J. bazoku*), and *honghuzi* (紅鬍子) or *huzi* (鬍子). For a detailed description on the history of bandits and their relations with the Japanese authorities, see Li Narangoa, “The Manchurian Bandits in the Making of Japanese Empire,” in *Von Bauern, Beamten und Banditen: Beiträge zur historischen Japanforschung*, ed. Marie-Luise Legeland (Bonn: Biersche Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 181-202; and Tōa Keizai Chōsakyoku, *Manshū tokuhon* (Tōkyō: Tōa keizai chōsakyoku, 1930), 73-76.

³⁰ Narangoa, “The Manchurian Bandits in the Making of Japanese Empire,” 183.

³¹ Narangoa, “The Manchurian Bandits in the Making of Japanese Empire,” 182.

³² “Bandit Chase,” *Manchuria Fortnightly Supplement of the Manchuria Daily News*, July 15, 1936, 74.

³³ “Wei hanqing diaocha guanyu yapian shixiangyou”, *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 418, August 11, 1933,3.

extraterritoriality to protect their businesses or if they had a connection with bandits or military police;

4. Whether there was any illegal smuggling from the Soviet Union (particularly around the Sungari River areas).

- 一. 鴉片種植之概況並匪賊之動作
- 二. 對於鴉片收買人以及購入許可者之地方紳民在業務實施上與滿洲國警備軍及其他官吏有無關係
- 三. 依治外法權之保障以鴉片為生之不良日鮮人有無不法行為並此輩與胡匪軍警關係
- 四. 由蘇聯地方有無密祕輸送（特別在松花江流域一帶）³⁴

It would not be an overstatement to say that the full-scale investigation led by Suzuki confirmed the earlier suspicion of the authorities that people on the ground were clandestinely involved in opium activities. No less significant was the fact that the authorities were already well aware of what was going on among people who took advantage of the opium system. It is clear from the above-mentioned target areas that there were many actors that were contributing to the illegal opium business, including outlaws and bandits in Manchukuo as well as high and prestigious military police and officials. Imperial Japanese and Korean subjects protected by extraterritoriality as well as illegal opium smugglers who straddled the two markets of Manchukuo and Russia, were, too, on board. The imperial authorities' suspicions about these individuals were actually proven correct through many cases (which will be discussed in this paper) that took place over the course of the first few years of Manchukuo's existence.

On November 24, 1933, *Ta Kung Pao* (大公報) ran an article on Manchukuo banditry, which contained extraordinary details surrounding the complexity, origin, and types of bandits.³⁵ Among them, one type of bandit—the bandit-cum-farmer—represented a challenge to the new state both politically and economically. Politically, they were for all intents and purposes outside of the authorities' control. It was hard to distinguish them from either farmers or bandits, since they would simply disguise themselves as farmers and hide all their weaponry when the government sent punitive troops to suppress them.³⁶ Economically, they planted poppies seasonally in order to make a profit. The poppy-growing region, at first glance, appeared to be lawless and bandit-infested, but, in reality, it probably followed a strict set of conventions.³⁷ The people usually formed their own poppy-growing villages without interference from the government. The leading American Sinologist Owen Lattimore, who had considerable experience working and living in China and Manchuria, was correct in his observation of the outlying poppy-growing regions and bandits:

[...] a large proportion of these outlying frontiersmen [bandits], who have never known any law but that of their own gangs and resent the imposition of outside control, move on still farther into the wilderness, carrying on the vigorous tradition of founding of fresh communities. There are, by common report, “outlaw” opium villages on the Chinese

³⁴ “Wei hanqing diaocha guanyu yapian shixiangyou,” 3-4.

³⁵ “Dongbei zhi bu'an 'fei' zhi zongkuo de diaocha Ribenren suo zui tonghen zhi shili”, *Ta Kung Pao* (Da Gong Bao), November 24, 1933.

³⁶ “Dongbei zhi bu'an 'fei' zhi zongkuo de diaocha Ribenren suo zui tonghen zhi shili”.

³⁷ Owen Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1935), 195.

side of the Ussuri that are virtually autonomous. They defend their valley approaches, govern themselves and hold themselves independent of ordinary civil administration, admitting no officials and paying no taxes.³⁸

From an external perspective, his account also confirmed the joint field investigation carried out by the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, discussed below.

Although the bandits were normally not under the control of the government opium monopoly scheme, they were not necessarily free from entanglements with soldiers or the police. Economically, the interests of the imperial authorities were threatened by the bandits who also did not contribute any taxes to the government. Further, the outlying detachments of troops or police in the vicinity tended to demand a share of these bandits' opium profits.³⁹ Such links between these two groups of individuals (also mentioned in the official investigation launched by Yamamoto and Suzuki) in many ways debilitated the efficacy of the government's control of the opium industry. These links were partially confirmed in the Bulletin of the Government Office. On January 11, 1933, Xin Dianfang (辛殿芳) brought a case against the Chief Commander (總隊長, *C. zongduizhang*) in the county of Shulan (舒蘭縣) to the attention of the Governor of Jilin province.⁴⁰ The Chief Commander was subsequently prosecuted for smoking opium and, more importantly, for encouraging soldiers to become bandits. The partnership between bandits and soldiers (or police) confirmed official suspicion of an opium conspiracy against the imperial authorities. However, there were also other actors, such as bandits and farmers or solo opium bandits (煙匪, *J. enhi*) who shared their opium revenue with the government and who also played a significant part in weakening the efficacy of the Opium Law.

Opium Smugglers and its Circulation

Apart from the close ties or partnerships with Chinese smugglers, officials of the imperial government were themselves not exempt from involvement in illegal opium activities. Their desire to exploit the new colony's opium industry was just as strong as that of the various groups discussed above. On October 24, 1933, one of three popular newspapers on the Korean peninsula, the *Chosun Choong-Ang Ilbo* (조선중앙일보), blew the whistle on a high-ranking official in Manchukuo.⁴¹ The *Chosun Choong-Ang Ilbo* was a very progressive Korean-language paper and was relatively free from the censorship of the Japanese authorities, since its target readership was ordinary Korean people who opted to read newspapers in the original.⁴² On the night of October 12, 1933, a group of Opium Inspectors from the Opium Monopoly Bureau Binjiang (濱江) branch had witnessed crowds of people carrying opium into and out of the official residence of a high-ranking Manchukuo official. The following afternoon,

³⁸ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 196.

³⁹ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 195.

⁴⁰ "Jilinsheng gongshu pi bao zi di yi hao", *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province* No. 362, January 18, 1933, 2.

⁴¹ "Gong-gwan su-saeg-eul wi-byeong-i geo-jeol man-chu-kuk yo-chik-ŭi a-p'yŏn mil-mae-lo pin-kang-chŏn-mae-wŏn-i su-saek-chung", *The Chosun Choong-Ang Ilbo*, October 24, 1933, 4.

⁴² The paper's progressive and nationalistic stance reflected in its coverage of a Korean gold medallist, Son Ki-Chŏng (손기정), in the Berlin Olympic Gold in August 1936. On August 13, 1933, the front-page printed Son's Olympic victory but the flag of Japan on his uniform was removed. The incident was a devastating blow to the paper when the colonial authorities discovered the reportage.

the Opium Monopoly Bureau sent six inspectors to search for opium, but they failed to enter the residence, stopped by the residence's security guards because said official was in a discussion with the Opium Monopoly Bureau on how to deal with this particular situation. The connection between opium smuggling and some Manchukuo officials received a great deal of attention thereafter. Indeed, Owen Lattimore acknowledged that “officials [were] sometimes involved in the opium traffic.”⁴³ For instance, a late governor of Heilongjiang province earned a reputation for earning a large income from the opium business, with lower-level officials under him also profiting from it.⁴⁴

On February 2, 1934, Sōma Masao (相馬正男), the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* special correspondent to Harbin (哈尔滨), joined the Manchukuo Political Work Squad (政治工作班, *J. seiji kōsakuhan*) to conduct a joint field investigation pertaining to illegal opium growing and trafficking by bandits in the counties of Mishan (密山) and Hulin (虎林).⁴⁵ The Political Work Squad—one of many squads operated by the military authorities—was chiefly responsible for working out the root causes of and solutions to social issues.⁴⁶ The Political Work Squad, headed by a squad leader (班長, *J. hanchō*) who held the rank of either lieutenant (中尉, *J. chūi*) or captain (大尉, *J. taii*), was answerable to the commandant of the local troops (現地部隊司令官, *J. genchi butai shireikan*).⁴⁷ One of the core fields that was subject to joint investigation was a clandestine opium-growing area called *yangou* (煙溝) (opium trench) located in Hulin (虎林). It was popularly known among locals as *gouli* (溝裡) (inner side of the trench), a term which implied that the place was not known to the outside world.⁴⁸



Figure 1. The Poppy Paddy Nearby Hulin, February 22, 1934. Source: The Asahi Shimbun Company, Photo ID: 0000003876

Its continued existence even after 1932 was the result of an advantageous location that enabled it to be easily defended against any external threat. The total cultivation area reached 5,000

⁴³ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 193-194. Lattimore used to be the director of the Department of Chinese Studies at the University of Leeds and was fluent in Chinese, Russian, and Mongol. He was regarded as a leading expert on the China-Russia frontier. For more see <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Owen-Lattimore>.

⁴⁴ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 194.

⁴⁵ Sōma Masao, “Yahan hyōsetsu no Usuri kōjyō mitsuyūori ha hashiru Manshūkoku seiji kōsakuhan to tomoni tōsa”, *Tokyo asahi shimbun*, March 1, 1934, 4.

⁴⁶ Shimizu Ryōtarō, “Manshūkoku tōchi kikō ni okeru senden senfu kōsaku”, *NIDS Military History Studies Annual*, 17 (2014), 49.

⁴⁷ Shimizu, “Manshūkoku tōchi kikō ni okeru senden senfu kōsaku”, 56.

⁴⁸ Sōma, “Yahan hyōsetsu no Usuri kōjyō mitsuyūori ha hashiru Manshūkoku seiji kōsakuhan to tomoni tōsa”.

shang (晌) (equivalent to 100 acres), and at harvest time, 15,000 laborers from outside would crowd into the opium trench.⁴⁹ This large-scale opium production also triggered the building of a network of illegal trafficking and the outflow of raw opium to other parts of Manchukuo. After a bumper harvest, one of the many routes to transport the opium to the outside for sale was from Beidalinzi (北大林子) to Raohe (饶河) and then to Harbin via Hulin, as shown in Map 1. The authorities in the latter half of 1935 began to take measures to tackle opium trafficking that moved across both land and water.



Map 1. ‘Beidalinzi – Raohe – Hulin – Harbin’ Opium Route from Production Origin Beidalinzi to Destination Harbin. Source: Google Maps, created by the author, 2020.

Exploiting and Manipulating the Opium Industry

In the meantime, opium shop owners made every effort to maximize their opium revenue. Although the operation of opium shops was allowed under the “principle of one person, one shop” (一人一館主義, *J. ichinin ichikan shugi*), owners were eager to expand the number of shops from which they could make more profits.⁵⁰ By the second half of 1934, unauthorized opium branches, or “proxy opium shops” (代賣所, *C. daimaisuo*), as they were called, could be found all over Manchukuo. These proxy opium shops sold opium on consignment and were a known form of business in violation of Article Six of the Opium Law Enforcement Regulations forbidding the operation of retail shop branches by the same owner.⁵¹ On October 21, 1934, the Department of Civil Affairs had to intervene in the growing numbers of proxy opium shops, and it demanded that the governors dispatch local police to suppress the growing numbers of proxy opium shops. The situation did not seem to have improved much by 1935. On June 29, 1935, the government office of Shuangcheng (雙城) county issued an order addressed to the police authorities in all districts within the county, demanding that the police

⁴⁹ Sōma, “Yahan hyōsetsu no Usuri kōjyō mitsuyūsori ha hashiru Manshūkoku seiji kōsakuhan to tomoni tōsa”. One *shang* roughly is equivalent to 100 acres.

⁵⁰ Manshūkokushi Hensan Kankōkai, *Manshūkokushi* (Tōkyō: Daii Hōki Shupan Kabushiki Kaisha, 1971), 479.

⁵¹ *Bulletin of the Government Office of Jilin Province*. No. 197, October 11, 1934, 2.

strictly minimize, if not stop, an increase in the number of unauthorized opium retail shop branches.⁵²

The authorized opium retailers, therefore, were no different from other actors on the ground in terms of exploiting the opium industry and chipping away at the opium monopoly system. As the number of the proxy opium shops increased, the authorities, too, increased their supervision, and more opium lawbreakers came to face execution. There were many opium-related crimes on the fugitive list issued by the Jilin High Prosecutor's Office on July 11, 1935.⁵³ Among them was one Xu Zhensheng (徐振盛), who was prosecuted for smoking opium in an illegal opium establishment at 8 p.m. on August 3, 1934.

On the other hand, in a concerted effort to police the opium trafficking via land and water, the government office of Shuangcheng (雙城) county, on August 12, 1935 and at the request of the Department of Civil Affairs, implemented a directive to supervise and stop illegal opium trafficking via land and water along the Sungari River and other nearby rivers.⁵⁴ In the directive, the head (縣長, *C. xianzhang*) of Shuangcheng Jia Wenling (賈文凌) made an appeal to the relevant heads of other counties to take unilateral steps to control the import and export of opium. The directive was issued at a time when there was an increasing number of ships due to the opening of rivers for navigation, and it came right after the opium harvest season. In a three-article Prevention Policy (防止方針, *C. fangzhi fangzhen*) prepared by the Civil Affairs Department, Article One stipulated that all passengers—including crew who embarked and disembarked from ships—were subject to strict inspection by both the police officers and the Illegal Opium Inspectors (緝私官員, *C. jisi guanyuan*).⁵⁵ The concerted attack against illegal opium trafficking demonstrated that the authorities began to perceive the opium smugglers in the region as a growing menace. This was particularly true if we look at the root of this menace through some numbers.

The above-mentioned joint field investigation came to the conclusion that the opium bandits in the Hulin area were earning an annual opium revenue that amounted to 2,500,000 yuan.⁵⁶ The calculation and breakdown were as follows: one *shang* could produce 12.5 kilograms of raw opium. With a total area of 5,000 *shang*, the total production in a year would be 62,500 kilograms. Fifty grams sold at two yuan, which meant that the annual profit from opium trafficking stood at 2,500,000 yuan.⁵⁷ This sum was massive, considering that it was merely from plantations in one locale controlled by opium bandits. Comparatively speaking, it was also a massive amount of opium revenue. In 1934, the total output of Manchukuo stood at 372,652 kilograms—a combination of the primary output of four big opium-producing provinces: Rehe (熱河省), Xing'an (興安省), Fengtian (奉天省), and Jilin (吉林省).⁵⁸ The opium trench in Hulin county alone produced the equivalent of about 17% of the official opium output that same year. It is therefore not difficult to imagine how much the illegal opium trade ate into official opium revenues.

Another vice that weakened the efficacy of the Manchukuo opium monopoly scheme was illegal smuggling and shipping, also mentioned in the investigative report carried out by Yamamoto and Suzuki. This was happening in many parts of Manchukuo, particularly along areas of the Ussuri and Sungari Rivers.

⁵² “Shuangchengxian gongshu xunling di erwulingliu hao”, *Shuangchengxian xianzheng yuekan*, June, 1935, 13.

⁵³ Zang Ershou, *Jilinsheng gongshu gongbao zhoukan*, 25 (1935), 43.

⁵⁴ “Shuangchengxian gongshu xunling di sanlinglingsan hao”, *Shuangchengxian xianzheng yuekan*, August 12, 1935, 21.

⁵⁵ “Shuangchengxian gongshu xunling di sanlinglingsan hao”, 21.

⁵⁶ Sōma, “Yahan hyōsetsu no Usuri kōjyō mitsuyūsori ha hashiru Manshūkoku seiji kōsakuhan to tomoni tōsa”.

⁵⁷ Sōma, “Yahan hyōsetsu no Usuri kōjyō mitsuyūsori ha hashiru Manshūkoku seiji kōsakuhan to tomoni tōsa”.

⁵⁸ “Guolian zhongyang yapien changshe weiyuanhui Riben weiyuan diaocha Manzhouguo yapien zhengce baogao”, in *Riben yapien qinhua ziliaoji 1895-1945*, ed. Deng Yimin (Shijiazhuang: Zhonggong Hebei shengwei Jiguan wenyin zhongxin, 2002), 741.



Figure 2. Poppy Paddy in Manchukuo along the Ussuri River (left), August 16, 1934.
 Figure 3. Manchurian Lady Collecting Opium along the Ussuri River (right), August 16, 1934.

Source: The Asahi Shimbun Company, Photo ID: 0000002424 (left) & 0000002497 (right).

The *Yomiuri Shimbun* special correspondent to Shinkyō, Takagi Takeo (高木健夫), was correct in claiming that “where there are poppies, there are bandits” (有煙則有匪, *J. yuen soku yuhi*).⁵⁹ As a result by 1935, poppy growing was gaining in popularity among bandits (匪賊間に阿片栽培熱に流行して, *J. hizoku kan ni ahen saibainetsu ni ryūkōshite*).⁶⁰ In addition to the economic ties with the outlying detachments of troops or police, the banditry also established strong ties with opium-growing villagers. The bandits protected the villagers from the initial stages of opium planting to the final stage of shipping. Takagi termed this symbiotic relationship the “business of banditry” (匪賊商売, *J. hizoku shōbai*).⁶¹ Both parties profited from this relationship. One of the primary reasons for this was that the high opium tax pushed the farmers closer to banditry. On October 18, 1935, a round of opium taxes prompted an uprising staged by several thousand villagers around Lowenku (罗文峪) district.⁶² The protest was so violent that the Opium Monopoly Bureau branch was destroyed by the protesters. Japanese reinforcements had to be mobilized to quell the disturbances.

Nevertheless, the authorities did not turn a blind eye toward what was truly happening: the gradual erosion of a government monopoly business. In 1935, the Manchukuo army, in conjunction with the Kwantung Army, waged a punitive battle against opium profiteers.⁶³ The government reaped the opium planted in a total area of 4,000 *shang*, worth 1,500,000 yuan, as a result.⁶⁴ Without a doubt, the authorities intended to kill two birds with one stone: subjugating

⁵⁹ “Keshi ni saku ‘aku no ka’”, *Yomiuri shimbun*, August 23, 1935, 7.

⁶⁰ “Keshi ni saku ‘aku no ka’”.

⁶¹ “Keshi ni saku ‘aku no ka’”.

⁶² *The North-China Daily News*, October 23, 1935, 6.

⁶³ Kirin Honsha Tokushin, “Katto setsume”, *Yomiuri shimbun*, August 23, 1935, 7.

⁶⁴ Kirin Honsha Tokushin, “Katto setsume”.

the banditry as well as putting a lid on the illegal opium business. However, this battle was a hard one to fight, and next to impossible to win.

Extraterritoriality Abolition

In the wake of the joint field investigation led by the Manchukuo Political Work Squad, the illegal opium issue of both Japanese and Chinese Manchukuo officials attracted attention from the Japanese metropole. In June 1934, the metropole inspectorate, composed of senior military officials (*kōkyū gunkan* Jp. 高級軍官), descended on Manchukuo to inspect the new state. Upon return to Tokyo, they published an inspection report denouncing the Manchukuo administration as corrupt and plagued by misgovernance.⁶⁵ Some of the misgovernance issues also pertained to opium. That same year, the Inukai administration passed a resolution asking the governments of Japan and Manchukuo to execute a plan based on the idea of “a partial abolition of extraterritoriality with respect to opium” (阿片ニ關シ治外法權ノ一部撤廢ヲ行フコト, *J. ahenni kanshi chigai hōken no ichibu tehhai o okonfukoto*).⁶⁶ The document pointed out that Japanese and Chinese officials had been derelict in their duties when engaging in the business of opium. In particular, the great majority of Koreans took advantage of their extraterritorial rights to become involved in opium trafficking.⁶⁷ Consequently, the two governments of Manchukuo and Japan inked the “Treaty on the Residence of Japanese Subjects and Taxation et cetera in Manchukuo” (満州国に於ける日本国臣民の居住及満州国の課税等に関する条約, *J. manshūkoku ni okeru nihonkoku shinmin no kyojyū oyobi manshūkoku no kazei nadoni kansuru jyōyaku*), also known as the First Abolition Treaty (第一次撤廢条約, *J. dai ichi ji teppai jyōyaku*), on June 10, 1936.⁶⁸ This treaty stipulated the transfer of administrative authority from the Japanese authorities to that of Manchukuo. A highly classified document, it was aimed primarily at holding those imperial subjects who would contravene the Opium Law accountable.⁶⁹

According to the document, extraterritoriality rights presented the single biggest obstacle to preventing Japanese, Korean, and even Manchukuo officials of Japanese origin from being prosecuted by the laws of Manchukuo.⁷⁰ Wholly reliant on extraterritorial protection, the Japanese and Korean opium and narcotics traffickers were not afraid of any of the Manchukuo law enforcement measures, and dared to continue smuggling opium and opium derivatives to the extent that they gained a reputation as “the vanguard of imperial aggression”

⁶⁵ “Fu Dongbei diaocha zhi Rijunguan zhizhai Riren zai Man bizheng”, *Ta Kung Pao* (Da Gong Bao), June 27, 1934.

⁶⁶ Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref. B02030711000, “Manshūkoku no ahen oyobi mayaku torishimari, kankri no tokushoku nadao ni kansuru hōkini ihan nihonjin no torishimari ni kanshi niman ryōkokukan ni kettei teiketsuhō ni kansuru ken”, in the possession of National Archives of Japan, 155. This document was part of larger policy book, which contained various documents published between February 1932 and November 1935; however, there were a few documents that did not have a date on them, and this particular document was one of them. I assume that the document was written in 1934 or 1935. There is the slightly higher chance that it was in 1934 because, first, the opening sentence of the document refers to an issue from September 12, 1933. Second, this document was closely followed by another series of documents that precede in chronological order, from August 1933 to April 18, 1934. Therefore, the date following April 18, 1934 should be within the year 1934.

⁶⁷ JACAR Ref. B02030711000, 154-155.

⁶⁸ Hidemi Higuchi, “Issues in the History of Manzhouguo: Contemporary and Succeeding Perspectives,” in *Towards a History Beyond Borders: Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations*, trans. Eric Esselstrom and ed. Daqing Yang, Jie Liu, Hiroshi Mitani, and Andrew Gordon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 165.

⁶⁹ JACAR Ref. B02030711000, 154-156.

⁷⁰ JACAR Ref. B02030711000, 154.

(侵略的急先鋒, *C. qinlüe de jixianfeng*).⁷¹ Their special status led the Manchukuo government to constantly file grievances against a large number of illicit imperial traffickers. As a result, the metropole put forward a regulation based on the logic of partially abolishing the extraterritorial rights of the Japanese, Korean, and Manchukuo Japanese officials. At the same time, if the Manchukuo Japanese officials were found guilty of dereliction of duty, they would be turned over to the courts of Manchukuo and subject to Manchukuo's laws and punishments. The five-article regulation spoke volumes about the government's eagerness to hold those individuals protected by extraterritorial rights accountable. In actuality, the regulation subordinated the above-mentioned group of people to the laws of Manchukuo and enabled Manchukoan authorities to penalize those individuals as local Manchukoans (Chinese). However, the Japanese consuls or ambassadors to Manchukuo reserved the right to uphold justice wherever judgments of Japanese subjects were deemed unjust.⁷²

It is interesting that the imperial authorities would design such a treaty ahead of the complete abolition of extraterritorial rights in Manchukuo to partially abolish long-held (indeed stretching well before the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932) rights in the region due to the corruption of government officials and Japanese subjects in the opium industry. A second and final abolition treaty was inked one year later on November 5, 1937, known as the "Treaty between the State of Japan and the State of Manzhouguo concerning Abolition of Extraterritoriality in Manchuria and Transfer of Administrative Authority in Districts Belonging to the South Manchurian Railroad" (満州国に於ける治外法権の撤廃及南鉄道付属地行政権の委譲に関する条約, *J. manshūkokuni okeru chigai hōken no teppai oyobi minami manshū tetsudō fuzokuchi gyōseiken no iijōni kansuru jiyōyaku*).⁷³ The First Abolition Treaty can hence be viewed as a transitional step, while the Second Abolition Treaty saw the complete elimination of extraterritorial rights enjoyed by imperial subjects.⁷⁴

What prompted their eagerness to get rid of those who were illegally involved in the opium business? The answer might be that the imperial authorities did not want Japanese and Korean imperial subjects to profit from it, as demonstrated in an official document titled "On the Resolution Between Japan and Manchukuo" (日満両国間ニ決定締結方ニ関スル件, *J. niman ryōkokukan ni kettei teiketsuhō ni kansuru ken*).⁷⁵ The government of Manchukuo, as noted earlier, was already targeting people who took advantage of the opium monopoly scheme for their own benefit. Both the Manchukuo and the Japanese governments did not want to see their opium revenue eroded or further exploited by opium and narcotics traffickers and government officials. Upon the complete abolition of extraterritoriality in 1937, around 6,000 illicit opium traffickers were expelled from Manchukuo, and the majority of them moved to China.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Between 1932 and 1937, the illicit opium industry was as robust as that of the official opium monopoly system. The two different opium systems—one legal and the other underground—competed to carve out a larger slice of the opium market. This unique phenomenon occurred

⁷¹ "Jixianfeng shibai bei ju", *Ta Kung Pao* (Da Gong Bao), June 1, 1931.

⁷² JACAR Ref. B02030711000, 156.

⁷³ Higuchi, "Issues in the History of Manzhouguo: Contemporary and Succeeding Perspectives," 165.

⁷⁴ Higuchi, 165-166.

⁷⁵ JACAR Ref. B02030711000, 154-155.

⁷⁶ League of Nations, *Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs*, Official No.: C. 237.M. 136. 1938. XI., Geneva, 1938, 12.

primarily because of the various obstacles that the new government faced when implementing policies to penetrate the society of the new state. From the evidence discussed above, we know that the authorities made every effort to prevent illegal opium activities from burgeoning. However, the Japanese administration had to face up to the fact that their regulatory policies barely impacted the popular practices of people on the ground, particularly in the outlying regions. The “passive resistance” emanating from those people, to use Tsukase Susumu’s (塚瀨進) phrase, may best explain why the regime did not succeed in fully monopolizing the opium revenues the authorities sought.⁷⁷ Further, actors such as bandits, imperial subjects who were protected by extraterritoriality rights, opium-growing farmers, soldiers and police, as well as Manchukuo officials of both Japanese and Chinese descent were all part of the underground opium market networks that significantly eroded official opium revenues.

From the above, it is also apparent that the imperial regime was not able to earn the entirety of the substantial profits generated from opium because of the presence of individuals from all walks of life who came to participate in this industry. One of two Korean traffickers—both imperial subjects—is a case in point, demonstrating a positive correlation between an increase in the government’s opium revenue and stricter law enforcement. After the complete abolition of extraterritorial rights and the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War on November 5, 1937, the Korean traffickers had to move to China. That year, the total sale of government opium exceeded governmental projections and increased by 25% over the previous year.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is safe to assume that illegal opium trafficking of all kinds diverted official revenue from opium monopoly sales into the pockets of illegal traffickers, greatly decreasing government profits.

In addition, and as has been mentioned above, one particular illegal opium plantation region could produce as much as seventeen percent of the total official opium output. Another piece of evidence from the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* also indicates that the illegal opium market occupied almost half of the total opium market share.⁷⁹ For example, the Opium Monopoly Bureau usually produced an amount of opium worth 26,000,000 yuan in a given year, but based on an estimation from *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, there was somewhere between 50,000,000 and 60,000,000 *yuan* worth of opium being produced and circulated in the market.⁸⁰ Half of that was reportedly illegal opium. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the different actors discussed above were the primary contributors of half of the opium circulating in Manchukuo.

The details and evidence demonstrated throughout the text corroborate the argument that the dramatis personae in this paper led the imperial authorities to gradually put an end to its special rights of the extraterritoriality in Manchukuo, a significant move in the course of the Empire-building. It must be reiterated that an imperial regime so concerned about opium control and opium profits was in fact exploited by its own government officials, ranging from senior government officers to the army and police forces. The corrosive effect on the state-building of Manchukuo and even on Empire-building, therefore, forces us to rethink how the Empire operated and expanded. This effect compels us to look at what happened in the process of Empire-building and in the process of state control all over again with a renewed concern about the Empire of Japan and its colonies.

⁷⁷ Tsukase, “The Penetration of Manzhouguo Rule in Manchuria,” 110.

⁷⁸ Park Kang, *20 Se-ki Chōn-pan tong-puk-a han-in-kwa A-p’yōn* (Seoul: Sumin publishing, 2008), 176.

⁷⁹ Takamiya Taihei, “Sainyūshu no kinkō wo izukoni mitomeru keishi dekinu ahen mondai”, *Tokyo asahi shimbun*, March 5, 1936, 3P.

⁸⁰ Takamiya, “Sainyūshu no kinkō wo izukoni mitomeru keishi dekinu ahen mondai”.

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