Empire and the Meaning of Religion in Northeast Asia

Manchuria entered the twentieth century as a neglected backwater of the dying Qing dynasty, and within a few short years became the focus of intense international rivalry to control its resources and shape its people. This book examines the place of religion in the development of Manchuria from the late nineteenth century to the collapse of the Japanese Empire in 1945. Religion was at the forefront in this period of intense competition, not just between armies, but among different models of legal, commercial, social and spiritual development, each of which imagined a very specific role for religion in the new society. Debates over religion in Manchuria extended far beyond the region, and shaped the personality of religion that we see today. This book is an ambitious contribution to the field of Asian history and to understanding of the global meaning and practice of religion.

THOMAS DAVID DUBOIS is a leading scholar of religion in East Asian history and the author of Religion and the Making of Modern East Asia and Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China. His work has been published in Arabic, Chinese, and Russian translation.
Empire and the Meaning of Religion in Northeast Asia

Manchuria 1900–1945

Thomas David DuBois
## Contents

**List of Figures**                  \hspace{1cm} page vii  
**List of Maps**                    \hspace{1cm} viii  
**List of Tables**                  \hspace{1cm} ix  
**Acknowledgments**                \hspace{1cm} x  
**Note on Romanization**           \hspace{1cm} xii

**Introduction**                   \hspace{1cm} 1  
Manchuria: Land of Progress        \hspace{1cm} 1  
But Is It Religion?                \hspace{1cm} 5  
Manchuria in a Global World        \hspace{1cm} 9  
Sectoral Silos and Structural Resonance \hspace{1cm} 11  
Neo-empire and Spiritual Engineering \hspace{1cm} 14  
Structure of This Book             \hspace{1cm} 18

1 **Foundations of Religion in Society in Manchuria**  \hspace{1cm} 19  
Political Religion before the Qing Dynasty \hspace{1cm} 19  
Political Religion under Qing Rule \hspace{1cm} 23  
Migration \hspace{1cm} 24  
Conclusion: Faith on the Frontier \hspace{1cm} 29

2 **From the Blood of the Martyrs**  \hspace{1cm} 30  
Violence and the Transformation of Religious Mission \hspace{1cm} 30  
Catholic Mission to 1900 \hspace{1cm} 31  
Protestant Mission to 1900 \hspace{1cm} 39  
Boxers and Christians \hspace{1cm} 43  
Mission Methods Following the Boxer Suppression \hspace{1cm} 47  
God’s Kingdom Comes to Manchuria \hspace{1cm} 53  
Mode, Moment, and Miracle \hspace{1cm} 57  
Conclusion: A Time to Suffer, A Time to Prosper \hspace{1cm} 61

3 **The Mind of Empire**            \hspace{1cm} 63  
Manchuria and Religion in the Eyes of Asian Social Science \hspace{1cm} 63  
Indigenization of Social Science in Japan \hspace{1cm} 63  
Social Science and Social Reform in China \hspace{1cm} 67  
Universities in Manchuria: The Role of Institutions \hspace{1cm} 71  
Japanese Social Science and Manchurian Religion \hspace{1cm} 77  
Conclusion: Scholarly Formation of the Spiritual-Imperial Self \hspace{1cm} 83
Contents

4 Piety in Print 85
    Religion in the Pages of the Manchurian Press 85
    Commerce and Community 86
    Nakashima Masao and Japanese Journalism in China 87
    Religion and Social Reform: 1906–1924 91
    Reaching the Masses: 1925–1935 95
    Religious Patriotism and National Spirit: 1936–1944 100
    Conclusion: Marketplace of Ideas, Ideas in the Marketplace 106

5 The Laws of Men 108
    Law and Religion in Manchukuo 108
    Beyond Code and Church 108
    Precedents: Law and Religion in China and Japan 109
    Manchukuo: Rule of Law under an Illegal Regime 114
    Conclusions 129

6 A Charitable View 131
    New Religions and the Birth of Public Philanthropy 131
    New Religions in Republican China 133
    Confucian Revival and the Turn to Charity 139
    Spread to Manchuria 149
    Conclusion: New Religions, “Redemptive Societies,” and Secular Charities. What’s Really in a Name? 161

7 Manchukuo’s Filial Sons 164
    Graveside Piety and the Transformation of Popular Practice 164
    State Perspectives on Confucian Ritual 165
    A Tale of Two Sons 170
    A Death Cult Lives On 180
    A Tomb to Remember 183
    Conclusion: Orthodoxy, Orthopraxy, or Something Else? 185

8 May God Bless Manchukuo 187
    Religion and Diplomacy in Northeast Asia 187
    Transformations of Catholic Mission in East Asia 188
    Developments in Manchuria 198
    Conclusions 209

Concluding Thoughts 210
Discourse and Differentiation 210

Appendix 216
Bibliography 219
Index 242
# Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Manchuria as sacred ground</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Manchuria as a land of glamor and adventure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Japanese tourists posing in front of the St. Nikolas Orthodox church in Harbin</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Conference of the Danish mission near Anshan in 1900</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Catholic church towering over the surrounding farmhouses in Hulan, 1932</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Students and workers of the Danish mission cholera station in Andong</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Flags of Japan and Manchukuo fly over the front gate of National Foundation University</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Students of National Foundation University on daily march</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Postcard of the military cenotaph (literally the “loyal souls stele”) in Qingdao</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Ceremony marking the 1905 repatriation of Red Cross workers to Japan</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Front gate of the Tongshanshe Charity Hospital in Mukden (Shenyang)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Refugees arriving in Ji’nan during the 1928 famine</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Rows of reed mats erected as temporary shelters for famine refugees</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Confucian ceremony in Changchun</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Artist’s portrayal of the war-dead shrine in Xinjing</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Postcard image of Filial Tomb</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Left to right, Jean-Claude Combaz, Archbishop Jean Pierre-Rey of Tokyo, and Joseph Petrelli</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Japanese kindergarten students pose beneath flags of Japan and Manchukuo at the Fushun Catholic mission, 1934</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maps

1.1 Northeast Asia 1895–1934  page 17
2.1 Catholic missions in Manchuria, c. 1889  33
2.2 Protestant mission stations, showing the progress of the Manchurian Revival  55
7.1 Xinjing, showing the location of the Tomb of Filial Wang  175
Tables

2.1 State of MEP missions in Asia, 1913
2.2 Chinese Catholics and adult baptisms in Manchuria
   1872–1899
2.3 Missions of the Scottish United Presbyterian Church, 1891
2.4 Progress of the Manchurian Revival
6.1 Meals served at WRSS soup kitchens in Beijing
6.2 Number of Daoyuan in Manchuria/ Manchukuo, by year
8.1 Leadership of dioceses in Japan
8.2 Ecclesiastic jurisdictions in Manchuria, 1928–1945

page 31
32
40
56
147
157
194
200
The most gratifying part of the writing process is finally being able to thank those who have proven so helpful, selfless and inspiring in the years it has taken for a book such as this to come to light. There are of course far too many people to mention by name, so I must stick with the highlights.

The generosity of Chinese scholars never ceases to amaze me. Professor Guo Dasong of the Shandong Teachers University presented me with copies of his entire library of Daoyuan-World Red Swastika Society publications. Professors Zhang Yang and Yu Qun of the Northeast Normal University in Changchun helped me to locate materials, including some of the original visual materials used in this book. Professors Li Shiyu (1922–2010), the great master of the study of Chinese popular religion, and Pu Wenqi first introduced me to groups such as Zailijiao and Tiandimen, as they live and breathe in the villages of northern China.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of state archives and libraries in Shenyang, Tianjin, and Changchun, the National Library of Australia, as well as generous access to academic library collections at Cornell, Hokkaido, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Waseda universities, and the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences.

Among many others, I would like to thank my good friends and valued colleagues, Chi Zhen, Jack Fairey, Ryoko Nakano, Hu Wen, Luman Wang, and Hongyan Xiang, who graciously read and discussed sections of the text while it was in progress. I have benefitted from the insightful comments of Tomoko Akami, Robert Cribb, Prasenjit Duara, Gao Mingjie, Paul Katz, Lina Koleilat, Bruce Lockhart, David Ownby, and John Powers. I am especially grateful to Robert Antony, Raj Brown, Frank Dikötter, David Faure, Vincent Goossaert, and David Palmer for allowing me to present chapters of this book at workshops in Beijing, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Macao, Penang, and Taiwan. I have also benefitted greatly from the opportunity to discuss this book with scholars in Aichi, Renmin and Shandong Universities, the Australian National University,
Acknowledgments

and especially at the National University of Singapore, where the great majority of this research was conducted. Just before the book went to press, a group of talented graduate students at the ANU graciously held a full-day seminar to discuss the manuscript. Beyond improving the manuscript itself, this event also introduced me many new friends at the university. Nicole Faut helped me gather materials at the Maryknoll Mission Archives in New York. For her work on the text itself, Rebecca McSwain deserves to be mentioned in a category all her own.

Earlier versions of some of these chapters have appeared in the *American Historical Review, East Asian History* and *Minsu qüyi*. Chapter 4 originally appeared in Thomas David DuBois, ed., *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). I am grateful to these publications for their permission to use revised versions of these materials in this book.

My academic career has taken me far from my family, whom I miss terribly. It is always a highlight of my year to make the annual migration back to the USA to see my father David, sisters Alicia and Jennifer, and their families: Sean, Garrett, Quinlan, Griffin, Xavier, Dominic, and Camille. And also Spencer. *Yes, even you, Spencer.*

Finally, there can be no one more deserving of thanks than Misako Suzuki. She is the love of my heart and the light of my life.
Note on Romanization

Many of the terms used in the book could be read in Chinese or Japanese. In such cases, I have generally opted to Romanize following the language of the source. Characters and alternate pronunciations for important terms are included parenthetically. For the sake of readability, proper names mentioned in quotations are converted to pinyin. The exception are terms that are already well known in English in an alternate spelling (such as Chiang Kai-shek, Manchukuo, Harbin). Macrons are omitted from well-known Japanese terms (e.g., Tokyo instead of Tōkyō, Shinto for Shintō).