

一九百十七年八月
岩崎男爵附囑予
代購北京墓理遊
圖書館並孤奮
美添二君自東京
來訪檢閱籍予
清牧野君助其
業畢於月之二
十九日舉授受之
式且在館中撮
影以為紀念
慕大夫惠存
小田切萬壽之助識



**MEN IN THE MIDDLE:
SHAPING GREAT POWER-
CHINA RELATIONSHIPS
1842-1949**

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

23 February 2024, 1.00pm - 4.30pm

24 February 2024, 9.00am - 4.30pm

Rise of Asia Museum, Haw Par Villa

Front cover image:

Morrison (centre), political adviser and former journalist at *The Times*, with Masunosuke Odagiri (seated left), representative of Baron Iwasaki, and Mikinosuke Ishida (seated right), 1917. File no. FL553415 retrieved from the George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738-1935, State Library of New South Wales digital collections (<https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/digital>).

This photo was taken when the deputies of Baron Hisaya Iwasaki (Mitsubishi's third president) visited Morrison's house in Beijing to receive his private library, which had been sold to Iwasaki. Odagiri was mentor and former manager of the Yokohama Specie Bank in Beijing. Ishida was an assistant lecturer at the department of History in Tokyo Imperial University, and later became one of Japan's leading Sinologists.

ORGANISERS



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

The Department of History at the National University of Singapore has been leading the analytical study of the past in Singapore since its inception in 1929. It has particular strengths in the areas addressed by this conference, including the modern international history of East Asia.



ORGANISERS

SINGAPORE HISTORY CONSULTANTS (SHC)

Established in 1995, Singapore History Consultants Pte Ltd (SHC) is a premier research and heritage consultancy organisation in Singapore. It aims to provide a deeper appreciation of the history and heritage of Singapore by ensuring that it reaches a broad target audience. It disseminates information in a digestible and engaging manner, be it in the development of museums or the conduct of heritage tours for young students.

As the pioneer private historical research house in Singapore, the firm has broken many new grounds in the field of history and heritage education in Singapore, and has contributed significantly to the ever-growing repository of historical knowledge.

SHC played a crucial role in the development and revival of the Chinatown Heritage Centre in the past. From 2014 to 2023, SHC also managed the Battlebox, a former WWII British underground command centre inside Fort Canning Hill which was converted into a museum. Under its management, the Battlebox became the #1 museum in Singapore on TripAdvisor from 2016 to 2022.

SHC was also engaged by Journeys Pte Ltd, the management of Haw Par Villa, to research on, design, and curate Hell's Museum, the world's first museum on death and the afterlife, in Haw Par Villa. Hell's Museum opened in 2021, and is currently the #1 specialty museum in Singapore on TripAdvisor.

The firm is currently focused on the development, launch and management of the upcoming Rise of Asia Museum (RoAM). The museum will be officially launched in June 2024.

ORGANISERS



RISE OF ASIA MUSEUM (RoAM)

Rise of Asia Museum (RoAM) aims to explain the modern rise of Asia and Asian entrepreneurship, and help the world understand the new evolving Asia.

RoAM will primarily focus on Ancient Asia's past contributions to and impact on world civilisation, its eclipse during the period of European colonial domination and its re-emergence as a economic, political and social powerhouse in the post-World War II era.



VENUE SPONSOR



HAW PAR VILLA **By Journeys**

Haw Par Villa - formerly known as the Tiger Balm Garden – is an 8.5-hectare Asian cultural park, the last of its kind in the world. Built in 1937, Singapore's largest outdoor art gallery is the brainchild of Aw Boon Haw, the millionaire philanthropist and marketing extraordinaire who gifted the world Tiger Balm. The eclectic park is a treasure trove of Asian culture, history, philosophy and religion – quirky yet enlightening. Since 2015, it has been managed by Journeys Pte Ltd, an award-winning heritage specialist passionate in preserving and bringing the heritage gem to greater heights.



OVERVIEW

This conference combines the study of an evergreen abstract theme – the role and influence of individuals as agents in history – with a particular context: Great Powers and their efforts to “globalize” China, during the period that country now refers to as “the century of humiliation”. This is not another pointless return to the old polemical “great man” explanation for what drives history. It is rather an exercise in exploring the premise that individuals always had, to some degree and in various ways, influence over how history unfolded, and why it went the directions it did. There has been an explosion in the study of the international history of China since the turn of this century, but one dimension remains underexplored: the perceptions, policies, views, and agendas of the “metropolitan authorities” among the Great Powers most heavily involved in that international history.

We will explore the premise that one good way to better understand that dimension is to examine a particular kind of individual involved: someone who worked in China, either as a sojourner or for a career, and, while in China, had a direct responsibility that moved in two directions: having to “answer up” directly to some sort of higher authority or body in their “home country,” while also exercising direct responsibilities in China, including daily contact with the Chinese population, to oversee, or conduct, whatever office, occupation, or project brought them there. We seek to understand what difference individuals made to how the rest of the world perceived and engaged China during this turbulent era, from a range of different times, occupations, and nationalities.

KEYNOTE SPEECH



Frank Dikötter

Frank Dikötter is Chair Professor of Humanities at the University of Hong Kong and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Before moving to Hong Kong in 2006, he was Professor of the Modern History of China at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has published a dozen books, translated into twenty languages, that have changed the way we look at the history of modern China. His *Mao's Great Famine* won the prestigious Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction in 2011.

He is currently finishing a book that addresses a deceptively simple question: how did a dozen men gathered in a dusty room in Shanghai in 1921 manage to conquer a quarter of humanity by 1949?

Men in the Middle: Shaping Great Power-China Relationships, 1842-1949

This talk explores the subject of the conference by bringing together two reasonably straightforward observations. The first is that China, even before Covid, had no more than 700,000 foreign residents, or 0.05 per cent of the overall population, amounting to less, as a proportion, than those in North Korea (Japan, by comparison, has 2.8 per cent, a proportion that is 56 times higher). Yet even a mere eight years after the fall of the empire in 1911 well over 350,000 officially registered foreigners resided in China, many more probably living in the country's border towns. By the end of the republican era, foreigners could be found in every walk of life, from cloth manufacturers in Lanzhou to powerful government advisors in Nanjing. Many knew and served the country well, and quite a few had a long-lasting, sometimes fatal impact on how history unfolded, whether Edgar Snow or Joseph Stillwell. There can be no history of modern China up to 1949 without fully taking this simple fact into account.





The second observation is more controversial: the historiography of modern China must rank as one of the most backward to be found on the shelves of any library. It is not just China that lives in splendid isolation, but also historians of that country, not least its foreign practitioners, and to this very day. Take, for instance, the 1929 Sino-Soviet War, which served as a model for the Japanese invasion of Manchuria two years later: all but one textbook fails to mention even in a sentence this international conflagration that saw hundreds of thousands of soldiers fight each other, with entire towns reduced to rubble by air force and naval power. Or the raid on the Soviet embassy in Beijing in March 1927, which brought to light a level of interference from Moscow so great that it prompted London to carry out its own search of Russian premises and break off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, a few months later. The reason for these low standards, besides the tight control exercised over knowledge by a one-party state, is to be found in the willingness of much Western historiography to reproduce official PRC historiography without due regard for basic rules of evidence, to the detriment of truth.

This paper will draw on the lives of several foreigners whose actions, besides having a significant impact on the course of history in China, also generated valuable primary sources for historians. Much as we cannot ignore the role these foreigners played, we cannot sidestep the sources they produced either. Many of them are crucial for an understanding of the history of the country as a whole. In short, while most historians in the West have yet to benefit from the rich archival deposits to be found in China, equally historians in China cannot do without the enormous archival holdings of the Great Powers.

TIMETABLE

FRIDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2024

1.00pm - 1.15pm

General Introduction

Prof. Brian P. Farrell, NUS, and Mr. Jeya Ayadurai MBE, Singapore History Consultants

1.15pm - 2.15pm

Auguste Haussmann and the French "Rediscovery" of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Prof. Robert Aldrich, Emeritus, University of Sydney

2.15pm - 2.30pm

Coffee and Tea Break

2.30pm - 3.30pm

Informal Networks and Information: The British Legation in Beijing, 1861-1875

Tang Sze Kay, NUS

3.30pm - 4.30pm

"The Game is Starting": Morrison of Peking's Reports on Foreign Rivalries in Late Qing China

Dr. Donna Brunero, NUS

TIMETABLE

SATURDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2024

9.00am - 10.00am

From Hankou to the World: Iwasaki Koyata and the Rise of Mitsubishi Trading
Dr. Yamamoto Fumihito, Tokyo

10.00am - 10.15am

Coffee and Tea Break

10.15am - 11.15am

Gunboats *and* Diplomacy: Vice Admiral Reginald Yorke Tyrwhitt and the Shanghai Crisis in 1927-1928
Prof. Brian P. Farrell, NUS

11.15am - 12.15pm

"Aide and Chief Odd-Job Man": Joseph Alsop and the Politics of American Strategy in China, 1941-1945
Dr. Charles J. Burgess, NUS

12.15pm - 1.45pm

Lunch

1.45pm - 2.45pm

Retooling and Regrouping: General Chen Cheng and the Guomindang Military Alliance with the USA, 1944-1945
Dr. Jennifer Yip, NUS

2.45pm - 3.00pm

Coffee and Tea Break

3.00pm - 4.30pm

Keynote - Men in the Middle: Shaping Great Power-China Relationships, 1842-1949
Prof. Frank Dikötter, Chair Professor of Humanities, University of Hong Kong



Robert Aldrich

Robert Aldrich is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Sydney. Among his recent publications are *Banished Potentates: Dethroning and exiling indigenous monarchs under British and French colonial rule, 1815-1955* (2018) and (with Andreas Stucki) *The Colonial World: A History of European Empires, 1780s to the Present* (2022), as well as three volumes on European and non-European monarchies and colonialism, edited with Cindy McCreery in Manchester University Press' "Studies in Imperialism" series.

Forthcoming is a chapter on "France in the Indo-Pacific in the Long Nineteenth Century" in *The French Globalization Projects* (ed. by Matthias Middell for Brill), and a co-edited volume on *Global Royal Families: Cultures of Transnational Monarchy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford University Press).

Auguste Haussmann and the French "Rediscovery" of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

In 1843 the government of King Louis-Philippe dispatched an extraordinary embassy from Paris to Canton, led by Théodore de Lagrené, to negotiate a trade treaty between France and China in the wake of the "Opium War". The diplomats were accompanied by four delegates of industrial interests. One of them was Auguste Haussmann (1815-1874), a member of a prominent family of Alsatian textile producers, who represented cotton manufacturers. On his return, Haussmann published a three-volume, 1300-page account, *Voyage en Chine*, considered an authoritative overview at the time: part travelogue (including details of his visits to the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, and Vietnam, as well as China), part wide-ranging study of Chinese society, politics and culture, part encyclopaedic handbook on trade. This paper considers Haussmann's perspectives on China – past, present and future – and the opportunities and challenges presented for French commercial and political engagement in Asia. The volumes give insight into French perceptions of the mid-century Chinese empire, and the role of a

figure such as Haussmann - businessman, traveller, author and (as a member of the Lagrené mission, and later French consul in Hannover and Cape Town) diplomat - in inflecting French attitudes and policies.



Donna Brunero

Donna Brunero is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. She teaches and researches on the British empire in Asia and maritime history, and the intersections between the two. This has led her to publish on a diverse range of topics including: Britain's maritime empire in *Empire in Asia: A New Global History* (Vol. 2), co-edited with Brian P. Farrell (2018), and on family life for foreigners in the treaty ports in *Life in Treaty Port China and Japan*, co-edited with Stephanie Villalta-Puig (2018). She has

also published on Britons in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, China coast views of the Meiji restoration, and maritime ethnography.

In addition to being co-PI for the *Friction and Order* project, she is collaborating on a project which traces the complexities of trade and tariffs in 19th and 20th century East Asia.

“The Game is Starting”: Morrison of Peking’s Reports on Foreign Rivalries in Late Qing China

This paper brings the career of Australian journalist George Ernest Morrison (aka “Morrison of Peking”) into view. A doctor, a self-styled adventurer, and a writer, Morrison was appointed as a special correspondent in the East for *The Times* in 1895. He cemented his name internationally through his reporting of the siege of Peking legations during the Boxer uprising. As a journalist, Morrison was often regarded as the source of the most accurate information from China, and in fact it was claimed that not only governments of the day, but the world, needed to read Morrison’s reports as a first point of reference to know the latest developments in China. This presentation explores Morrison’s reports on Russian and Japanese ambitions in China in the early 1900s and his observations of the Russo-Japanese war. Morrison also provided behind the scenes views on the subsequent peace negotiations. Importantly, Morrison’s writings did not always align with British Foreign Office views, and as a result his reporting was

sometimes “toned down” or withheld from publication by his editors in London. This case study reveals Morrison’s views as imbued with British high imperialism of the late Victorian era and driven by what he saw as the “Great Game” playing out in the Far East. The Morrison collection of diaries, letters, and ephemera held at the State Library of New South Wales forms an invaluable source for this study, revealing not only the tenor of reporting by Morrison as the “voice on the ground”, but also the circles in which he moved. Morrison’s writings on Russo-Japanese tensions reveal an ongoing pre-occupation with Britain’s position and status in China, in the late Qing and into the early years of the Republic.



Charles J. Burgess

Charles J. Burgess is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the National University of Singapore, where he also earned his PhD in 2020. A military historian, his research focuses on Western military power in Asia in the twentieth century, particularly the interactions between national policy, grand strategy, and the operational level of war. He is currently researching a book-length study on American and Nationalist Chinese airpower in China during WWII, while also converting his doctoral thesis on Allied grand strategy and anti-Japanese

resistance forces in Southeast Asia into a monograph.

He has also published articles in *Diplomacy and Statecraft* and the *Journal of Military History*. Prior to embarking on his PhD studies, Charles spent nearly 15 years working for the US government in various Asia-focused analytical and operational positions.

“Aide and Chief Odd-Job Man”: Joseph Alsop and the Politics of American Strategy in China, 1941-1945

Of the myriad areas in which the United States fought as part of the Grand Alliance during the Second World War, none were more problematic, strife-ridden, and confused, than China. Indeed, it stands to reason that some intimates of the China-Burma-India theater, the American label for the operational area covering the Asian mainland, relabelled it “Confused Beyond Imagination”. And perhaps in no other theater was the so-called “man in the middle” more prominent than in China, a theater filled with grand, charismatic, problematic and outspoken personalities. The story of “CBI” often focuses on the dramatic conflict between General Joseph Stilwell – the acerbic commander of American forces – and Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) – the Generalissimo of Nationalist China. Of course that narrative should rightly take center-stage, but the story is, like history itself, more complicated.

This presentation focuses on one such complicating individual. Joseph Alsop, a well-known journalist and relative of the Roosevelt family, emerged at the center of a circle of



officials attempting to influence American strategy in, and toward, China. He became an intimate of senior Chinese statesman T.V. Soong (Soong Tse-ven) and Claire Chennault, founder of the famous Flying Tigers mercenary group and later the American air commander in China. The erudite and politically-connected Alsop used his position, and was used, to advocate for an air force-centered strategy in China. Some in political Washington, including President Franklin Roosevelt himself, heartily endorsed this approach; however, it ran afoul of military Washington's prerogatives on strategy making and warfighting, as well as logistical capabilities. Using Alsop's own papers, including official and unofficial correspondence, this paper goes beyond the Stilwell-Chiang narrative to examine Alsop and his activities. It argues that Alsop's position as a "man in the middle", deeply enmeshed in a lobbying and warfighting effort in China, served only to confuse an already complicated situation. His activities, first as a civilian advisor in China to Soong, and then later as a member of the US Army Air Forces as Chennault's "aide and chief odd-job man", exacerbated the divide in Washington concerning China. He galvanized both supporters of the air strategy as well as those strategists and planners against it, and helped to put the politics in American strategy in China.



Brian P. Farrell

Brian P. Farrell is Professor of Military History in the Department of History, National University of Singapore, where he has been teaching since 1993. His main research interests include the military history of the British Empire, the problems of imperial defence, and the Western military and geopolitical experience in Asia. He has published nine authored or edited books and more than a hundred journal articles, book chapters, and contributions to scholarly encyclopedias, dictionaries, companions, and handbooks.

His most recent publication is the co-edited *From Far East to Asia Pacific: Great Powers and Grand Strategy 1900-1954* (2022). He is the Principal Investigator of the project *Friction and Order: Great Powers and Globalizing China 1854-1949*, which generated this conference

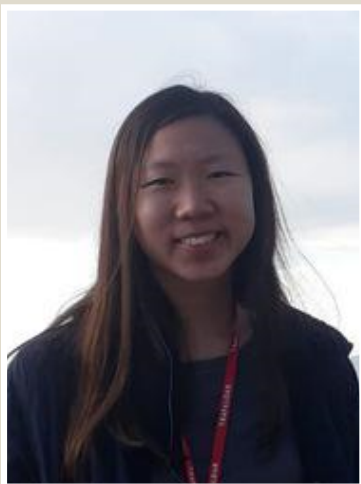
Gunboats AND Diplomacy: Vice Admiral Reginald Yorke Tyrwhitt and the Shanghai Crisis in 1927-1928

From the Opium War to the Second World War, the strongest and most influential Western Power in China was the British Empire. And from 1865 to 1941, the senior officer responsible for the defence of all British interests in China was the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Royal Navy's China Station. This command, required to dominate the coastal and riverine routes of movement along which trade flowed into and out of China, virtually invented the strategic concept of "gunboat diplomacy". But after the First World War, the rise of national feeling in China, amidst the turmoil of a country politically splintered by feuding warlords, transformed the environment in which British interests sought wealth through trade and commerce. Events triggered a confrontation in the mid-1920s, as anti-British boycotts were magnified by the Northern Expedition, a strategic military and political offensive launched by the Guomindang to unify China under its administration. By the end of 1926 full-blown crisis loomed in the very heart of the sphere of greatest British influence: the Yangtze River and valley, crowned by the



great port city that was simultaneously China's greatest metropolis and the capstone of foreign Great Power penetration: Shanghai.

Into this challenge stepped Vice-Admiral Reginald Yorke Tyrwhitt, appointed C-in-C China Station in November 1926. Tyrwhitt found himself in command of what became the largest concentration of British army and navy combat power between the two world wars – and under orders to prevent the British and foreign presence in Shanghai from being evicted by force, yet at the same time to ensure that British forces did not become entangled in the escalating civil war in China. To master this very tall order, Tyrwhitt brought to his new post no previous experience at all in China – but a lifetime of service in the Royal Navy, in a career that spanned many of the navy's various assignments, in most of the places it served, and a glittering wartime record of combat command in the First World War. Tyrwhitt, a highly regarded and aggressive officer, faced a personal test in China that in fact tested far more: the premise upon which the entire Royal Navy had been developed. The *Pax Britannica* globalized the navy, making it a service that faced an almost endless variety of challenges across virtually the entire world – a service whose senior officers therefore had to learn to be not jacks but masters of all trades, yesterday, on the job, and often under fire. This paper will examine how Tyrwhitt came to personalize this robust institutional culture, in a crisis whose political waters were as murky and turbulent as those of the great river on which his ships showed their flag.



Tang Sze Kay

Tang Sze Kay earned her BA with Honours in History from the National University of Singapore in 2022. She is currently working as the Research Assistant for the project *Friction and Order: Great Powers and Globalizing China 1854-1949*. The paper she will present at this conference is an expanded and amended discussion drawn from the Honours Thesis she submitted as part of her undergraduate degree.

Informal Networks and Information: The British Legation in Beijing, 1861-1875

The British Legation in Beijing (1861-1959) was chiefly noted for its role in facilitating Anglo-Chinese diplomatic contact. Less explored, however, was its role in building knowledge for informing Britain's China policy. The communities which formed Beijing's social milieu, and the informal relationships that connected them, were a rich source of intelligence on developments in the highest echelons of the Qing government. Seen through the eyes of the British ministers, information from informal interactions was thoroughly analysed, and became a key source informing the Legation's - and by extension Britain's - perceptions of the Qing. The Legation's social environment was therefore influential in British processes of knowledge construction on the imperial court in the years 1861-1875. This knowledge, which helped to inform the practical workings of the 'co-operative policy' of that period, in turn shaped Britain's approach to China in the Legation's early years. This presentation will explore the Legation diplomats' role by examining how they, from their position within Beijing's social networks, gathered, processed, and utilized information from informal interactions. It will include discussion on the role of this knowledge in the Legation Diplomats' relationships with the Qing, as well as with officials back in Britain.



Yamamoto Fumihito

Yamamoto Fumihito is an author, historian, and book translator (English to Japanese). Born in Paris, brought up in Tokyo, and educated in Japan and Singapore, his research interests lie in the international history of the Twentieth Century, especially in Anglo-Japanese history. He received his PhD from the National University of Singapore, MA and BA from Dokkyo University, Saitama Japan.

He has published a research monograph in Japanese, *Nichiei Kaisen Eno Michi: Igrisu No Shingapōru Senryaku To Nihon No Nanshin No Shinjitsu* (The Road to the Anglo-Japanese War: Truths of the British Singapore Strategy and Japan's Southbound Policies). He has also co-edited three volumes of studies in Japanese, *Kensho Taiheiyo Senso to so no Senryaku* (Studies of the Pacific War and Its Strategies). His translation works include Kishore Mahbubani's *The Great Convergence: Asia, the West and the Logic of One World*, Niall Ferguson's *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, and Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. He also co-translated Azar Gat's *War in Human History* into Japanese.

From Hankou to the World: Iwasaki Koyata and the Rise of Mitsubishi Trading

Today, trading is one of the three main businesses of Mitsubishi Group, alongside heavy industries and banking. But a little known fact is that Mitsubishi started its trading business in Hankou, a port city located in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, in the early twentieth century. It was not in Japan but in China. Moreover, it was not in Shanghai or Hong Kong. From this port city in China, Mitsubishi expanded its trading network to the world. This paper examines why Mitsubishi's trading business started in Hankou in the 1900s, how it expanded to the world in the 1910s, and how the trading philosophy of Iwasaki Koyata, the fourth president of Mitsubishi, shaped this process.

One feature of Mitsubishi was the dominant position of its founding family, the Iwasakis. Under the leadership of its third president, Iwasaki Hisaya, Mitsubishi launched its



trading business in Hankou, and this expanded to the world during and right after the Great War under Koyata. In 1902, Mitsubishi opened its first overseas office in Hankou to sell coal produced by its coal mines in Kyusyu, Japan. In those days, Mitsubishi had already carried on various businesses such as shipbuilding and banking, but the main source of revenue was mining. In 1908, this Hankou office started trading various goods.

But from the very beginning, Mitsubishi had to face the boycotts of Japanese products. Immediately it realised that it was difficult to sell Japanese products to Chinese people. Furthermore, Mitsui and other existing Japanese trading houses had already established such dominant positions in the lucrative cotton trade that it was extremely difficult for the latecomer Mitsubishi to make profits by exporting Chinese raw cotton to Japan. It ventured into this trade, but continued to make operating losses (finally withdrew in 1913). But the large capital reserves of Mitsubishi and the long-term views of Hisaya and Koyata allowed these initial failures. Meanwhile, the exportation of tung oil (a kind of vegetable oil used as an ingredient in paint), sesame seeds, and beans in large quantity to North American and Western European markets, launched in 1911, brought profits to Mitsubishi's Hankou office. Mitsubishi sold these Chinese goods in these markets through local merchants. But the outbreak of the Great War made it difficult for Mitsubishi to sell these goods through them in these markets. As a solution, Mitsubishi opened its offices in Europe and North America. This is the reason Mitsubishi opened its first office in the West in London during the Great War in 1915 and its second in New York in 1916.

In short, it could be argued that the boycotts of Japanese products in China and the outbreak of the Great War spurred Mitsubishi to geographically expand its trading network. During the war, Mitsubishi's trading business expanded greatly, and this made it possible for Mitsubishi to establish its global trading network by 1921.



Jennifer Yip

Jennifer Yip is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. She studies modern war, strategy, and the socio-economic effects of war mobilization, with a focus on Republican China. Prior to joining the Department, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. Her work has appeared in *Modern China*.

Her first book manuscript, currently under contract with Cambridge University Press, focuses on the Chinese

government's military grain provisioning policies during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). It highlights the seizure of grain as the lynchpin of the three-way struggle among the Nationalists, Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the Japanese.

Retooling and Regrouping: General Chen Cheng and the Chinese Military Alliance with the United States, 1944-45

This paper studies programs of reorganization and reform within Chinese military institutions during the last year of China's war against Japan (1944–1945). In the wake of the Japanese Ichigō Offensive, which decimated Chinese government forces and wrested away large swathes of territory, the Nationalist military establishment faced bitter accusations of corruption and inefficiency both from within China and abroad. Against this backdrop, in December 1944, Chen Cheng (陳誠) replaced He Yingqin as China's Minister of War. In this capacity, he oversaw an ambitious overhaul of China's military infrastructure, from staff bureaucracies to military training institutions to engineering and logistical bodies. The United States, locked in a tense alliance with the Chinese government against Japan, was deeply invested in the enhancement of Chinese military capacities. US interests in improving Chinese military forces manifested in the Chinese Training and Combat Command, established in November 1944, and the formation of the 'Chinese Army' in December, a cluster of thirty-six (later thirty-nine) divisions based in Kunming, with US officers serving in liaison and advisory roles. The latter served as an



experiment in training and structuring based on significant US input.

This paper does not, however, place its emphasis on US actors or strategies in the Pacific. To the contrary, it highlights Nationalist calculations, and treats the Sino-American alliance as the broader setting within which the Chinese government embarked on its own army strengthening schemes of 1944–1945. It investigates these government army reform experiments as part of a much longer series of Nationalist army strengthening initiatives. In the process, it focuses on Chen Cheng as a consistent key decision-maker in more than a decade of attempts to improve China's military. Chen had helmed pre-war army strengthening programs just as he later would those in the final phase of the war. As one of Chiang Kai-shek's most trusted subordinates, and a respected leader in the eyes of both the US establishment and public, he was well-placed to carry out army reform within the context of a wartime alliance. The US' vested interest in providing advice and assistance presented new conditions and opportunities for Chen to pursue the Nationalists' longstanding goal of revitalizing their military. The Allied connection, therefore, enabled a spurt of reform within the Nationalists' military institutions, with important consequences for its post-World War II demobilization agenda – but also for its prospects in the civil war against the Chinese Communist Party.

Back cover image:

American marines holding up a Japanese patrol in Shanghai, 1930s. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons.



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