

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 263

### “Discussion Is Useless”

#### Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

Japan remained generally disengaged from its neighbors during most of the 1920s, preoccupied as it was with internal problems.

But by the early 1930s, as the Great Depression was squeezing the Japanese economy, right-wing Japanese, especially in the military, saw in the Chinese region of Manchuria the solution to Japan's woes.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 263. Discussion is Useless.

We haven't looked in on Japan for a while, not since episode 199. We're going to get caught up today, and I'm going to begin by surveying Japan's place in the world in the years following the Great War. The overriding foreign policy goal of the Japanese government of this time was for Japan to claim its place as a peer among the world's Great Powers. Japan got that treatment, sometimes, at the Paris Peace Conference. The Japanese did not get that antiracism clause added to the Covenant of the League of Nations, which would have guaranteed people of Japanese descent equal legal standing with people of European descent in Western nations, because the English-speaking countries opposed it. That was humiliating, but Japan did get some trust territories in the Pacific out of the deal, plus the German concessions on the Shandong Peninsula in China, and those were significant gains.

The biggest divide in Japanese politics, with respect to foreign policy questions, was between those who believed the best strategy for Japan to gain her place in the sun among the major powers was to be a good citizen of the world and play by the rules, and those who believed that the Western powers would never voluntarily treat an Asian nation as a peer, and thus the only way to win foreign respect was through the use of force, or at least through an Army and Navy

strong enough to credibly threaten the interests of Western powers that did not show Japan the proper respect. We might describe this debate as between the doves and the hawks.

The Great War had been good for the Japanese economy, and unlike the other Great Powers, Japanese war deaths could be tallied in three or four figures, not six or seven. But the war had brought food shortages, social unrest, inflation, and depression to Japan, as it had to most of the world. After the Treaty was signed, Japan's position resembled that of Britain: an economic slowdown, rising unemployment, a decline in exports, and a militant socialist left.

Also like Britain, Japan had taken the yen off the gold standard for the duration of the war and was now committing itself to restoring gold convertibility at the pre-war exchange rate, despite the fact that this would require a painful period of deflation that would exacerbate its unemployment and balance of trade problems.

Meanwhile, with Japanese interests in northern China now protected, the hawks, many of whom were military officials, Japan's top-ranking generals and admirals, turned covetous eyes on eastern Siberia. You already know from our episodes on the Russian Civil War, that the Japanese military had placed some 70,000 soldiers there, as a first step toward establishing a Japanese sphere of influence in eastern Russia that would pair nicely with the one they already held in northeastern China.

But something unexpected happened during the Siberian intervention. The Japanese public in the Home Islands, already struggling to cope with a difficult economy, balked at shouldering even greater economic burdens for the sake of the Army's excellent adventure in Siberia. This was something not seen before in Japanese politics. The earlier wars against China and Russia and then the Great War had each stirred the proper patriotic spirit in the Japanese people, but it seemed the Japanese people had now had enough. One Japanese newspaper editorial of the time lamented that in conflicts past, the people asked, "Will this be good for Japan?" Now they asked instead, "What's in it for me?"

Besides this lack of domestic political support, the Siberian intervention also faced Western diplomatic opposition and a Red Army that had by 1922 grown greater in numbers and fighting ability than anyone would have predicted in 1919. So the Japanese wisely decided to cut their losses and withdraw. The two countries established diplomatic relations in 1925, and for the decade following, relations between Japan and the USSR would be characterized by a respectful wariness.

Also in 1922, Japan signed the Washington Naval Treaty. As you already know, the hawks in Japan were incensed that the civilian government would agree to cap the Imperial Navy at 60% of the US Navy, but the doves argued that if Japan rejected the treaty and entered into a naval competition with the Americans, Japan would spend far more money and still be unlikely to do any better than 60% of the American navy, and quite possibly would end up with less than that.

In this new post-war world, a more peaceful world that embraced the principles of Versailles, the League of Nations, and the Washington Naval Treaty, a nation's military strength mattered less and its economic power mattered more. Counting numbers of soldiers and dreadnought battleships was out; calculating GDP and balance of trade was in.

But this new world was developing not necessarily to Japan's advantage (to coin a phrase.) Japan had elbowed its way onto the world stage and taken its place among the Great Powers as a scrappy bantamweight, a deceptively small nation armed with an exceptionally skilled military that could deal a surprisingly hefty punch. Just ask China. Or Russia. Or Germany. But a small nation with an excellent military in a world where military strength doesn't matter so much becomes...just another small nation.

It felt as if Britain was treating Japan as just another small nation when it declined to renew the twenty-year-old alliance between the two powers. It felt as if America was treating Japan as just another small nation when the US Congress enacted the Immigration Act of 1924, banning Japanese from emigrating to the US. This had been a longstanding sore spot in Japanese-US relations, as you'll recall from some of our earlier episodes. In 1907, the two nations entered into the informal Gentlemen's Agreement, as it was known, under which Japan would voluntarily limit the number of its people it permitted to emigrate to the US, while the US agreed in return not to segregate Japanese-American children in its public schools.

The actual numbers of Japanese emigrating each year to the US were small, but the point for the Japanese was that Japanese were not outright excluded from America the way other Asian people were, and that ethnic Japanese living in the US had—at least in theory—something like legal equality with white Americans. These were more generous accommodations than the Chinese or other Asian peoples could get out of the US and so reflected the greater respect Japan commanded.

So when the 1924 Act shut the door on Japanese immigration, it was hard to see this as anything other than a sign of diminished respect for Japan. One might even call it a loss of face.

But by the time Calvin Coolidge had signed the Immigration Act of 1924 into law, the Japanese had bigger problems to deal with, problems closer to home. A few months earlier, on Saturday, September 1, 1923, a devastating magnitude-8.3 earthquake struck Honshu, the largest Japanese island. Its epicenter was only about 50 miles, or 90 kilometers, southwest of Tokyo, Japan's capital and largest city. The Japanese Home Islands sit atop fault lines where multiple tectonic plates bump against each other, so earthquakes are a fact of life there, but this one was the deadliest and most destructive in Japanese history, which automatically makes it also one of the deadliest and most destructive in *world* history.

It's a cliché by now to speak of a confluence of unfortunate events as a “perfect storm,” but I'm going to have to haul out the cliché for this one. The quake was huge in magnitude. The shaking lasted at least four minutes, and some sources say ten. In the cities of Tokyo and Yokohama,

building after building collapsed, until the cities were shrouded in clouds of dust thrown up by the destruction. And the timing couldn't have been worse: just before noon on a Saturday, when in many Japanese households families were preparing lunch over open fires. Those cooking fires triggered destructive blazes that tore through cities and towns, while the earthquake broke water mains, frustrating attempts to extinguish them.

The quake triggered tsunamis that rose as high as twelve meters, or forty feet, and landslides on the coastal mountains buried homes and villages. In Yokohama harbor, the Canadian passenger liner RMS *Empress of Australia* was just departing. Passengers on board were throwing confetti and streamers over well-wishers waving goodbye to them from the dock below when the ship began to shudder and heave. *Empress of Australia* and a British passenger liner, SS *Dongola*, were both almost sunk in the disaster, but managed to clear the harbor. Afterward, they became floating refugee shelters for thousands of Japanese left homeless by the disaster.

And as if all this wasn't bad enough, a typhoon was passing through the region at the same time, producing little rain but plenty of strong winds that fanned the flames and generated horrific firestorms. There are reports of victims fleeing building collapses only to die after getting stuck in the melting macadam on the street outside.

The unfinished battlecruiser *Amagi*, which was in drydock in Yokosuka at the time, was in the process of conversion to an aircraft carrier, pursuant to the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty. The quake wrecked the ship's hull and the project had to be abandoned. The battleship *Kaga* would be converted in its place.

In the aftermath of the disaster, rumors flew that ethnic Koreans were taking advantage of the emergency to rob, loot, set fires, and commit various other crimes and acts of sabotage. There was no truth to any of it, but thousands of ethnic Koreans were killed by mobs in retaliation. These vigilante mobs judged who was Korean by their accent, which meant that many of the victims were ethnic Chinese or even ethnic Japanese who happened to speak in unfamiliar accents.

In our time, September 1 is designated Disaster Prevention Day in Japan, in memory of the earthquake. On or near this date, many Japanese take part in disaster preparedness exercises, which include exhortations to be skeptical of rumors during an emergency.

Estimates of the number of people killed in the disaster range from 100 to 150 thousand. Tokyo, Yokohama, and a number of smaller towns lay in ruins. Half a million people were left homeless. Property damage ran to about one billion US dollars of the time, perhaps 15 billion dollars in our time, but remember that the Japan of this time was far smaller in population and GDP than the Japan we know today.

The Bank of Japan had no choice but to issue emergency loans to help with the rebuilding effort. As interest rates dropped, foreign capital disappeared from the country, erasing Japan's progress

toward reinstating the gold standard. Japan had to take out large foreign loans to finance the needed reconstruction. In the old days, the Bank of Japan would have looked to London for financing. Now Wall Street was the world financial capital, and it was J.P. Morgan and Company in New York that brokered the loans, at the exorbitant interest rate of 6.5%, much higher than the rate a sovereign nation can usually negotiate. Many Japanese took this as a further sign that Japan's international status had dwindled to that of a minor country and referred to this agreement as the "national humiliation loan."

The disaster and the accompanying economic blow kept Japan occupied with its domestic problems throughout the middle 1920s. The Communist International encouraged the development of a Communist Party in Japan in 1922. By 1923, the Japanese Communist Party was taking full advantage of the relatively liberal political climate in Japan to call for radical reforms, such as a Japanese withdrawal from Korea, Manchuria, and Taiwan, the territories seized in the wars with China and Russia. In December of that year, while the ruins of Tokyo were still smoldering, a young Communist attempted to assassinate Prince Regent Hirohito. This led to the resignation of the serving prime minister.

The year 1925 saw political reforms that introduced universal male suffrage in Japan, but also outlawed the Communist Party.

Allow me to remind you at this point that the Meiji Emperor passed away in 1912 and was succeeded by the Taisho Emperor. But by 1919, the Taisho Emperor had all but withdrawn from his Imperial duties. He was known for behaviors that ranged from "highly eccentric" to "evidence of some sort of mental or emotional disorder." His son, the Prince Hirohito I mentioned a minute ago, filled the role of regent beginning in 1921, when he was just 20 years old. His father passed away on December 25, 1926, at the age of 47. The prince would succeed him as the Showa Emperor, and his would be the longest reign of any Emperor in Japan's very long history.

The Taisho era in Japanese history is remembered as a time of political liberalism, more so than the Meiji period that came before or the decades to follow. I don't want to give away too many spoilers here, but let's just say that the first few decades of the Showa Emperor's reign will be...eventful. His reign got off on the wrong foot when Japan experienced a financial panic just months later, which brought down the government.

Between the earthquake, the political reforms, the death of one Emperor and the ascension of the next, and an economy in crisis, this was a time when Japan's attention was largely focused inward. But as you know from our recent episodes on China, quite a lot was going on in Japan's next-door neighbor. This was the period when the Nationalists under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek began the Northern Expedition, at first with Communist support. Later Chiang turned on the Communists, but by 1928, the last warlord in Manchuria submitted and Chiang had taken control of the whole country.

The Western powers were not entirely thrilled about Chiang's triumph. The Nationalists were, well, nationalists, who wanted to revoke the concessions the old Imperial government had been forced to grant to the West. The fighting in China had been bad for foreigners, who sometimes had to be evacuated from war zones. And the Western powers were very nervous about the role of the Chinese Communists. Western diplomats protested to Moscow that the Soviet Union was interfering in China's internal affairs. The government in Moscow patiently replied that it was not the Soviet government, but the Communist International that was supporting the heroic freedom struggle of the Chinese people. In fact the Communist International was run by the same people who ran the Politburo, though granted they were meeting around a different table in a different building when they were acting as Comintern. This is what you call plausible deniability. Still, when Chiang turned on the Communists, Western governments were quite pleased.

The attitude of Japan was similar to that of the West, only more wary. Japanese leaders wanted above all else for Japan to be the preeminent regional power in East Asia. A China divided among squabbling warlords, some of whom could be bribed or bullied into aligning with Japan, was the ideal neighbor. A China united by Nationalists who wanted to end foreign interference in Chinese affairs was the other thing.

And the timing could hardly have been worse. As Chiang was pursuing the goal of a united and nationalist China, Japan was preoccupied with its internal economic and political problems.

[music: "Moon over Desolate Castle"]

The Japanese had taken the German concession at Qingdao during the Great War, and their control over it had been ratified by the Treaty of Versailles. Nevertheless, Japan had agreed to give up control over this territory in 1922.

That left Manchuria, the northeasternmost region of China. Japan had secured its "interests" in Manchuria through the Russo-Japanese War, and Manchuria, like Korea, offered Japan much of what Japan lacked. Japan needs natural resources; Manchuria had timber and coal and iron ore deposits. Japan needed arable land. Manchuria had that. Control over Manchuria was key to establishing Japan's economic independence. No one in the councils of Japanese government disputed that. The doves believed Japan could eventually win control over Manchuria by diplomatic means. The hawks expected to have to fight for it.

The Japanese government, and especially the Army, encouraged settlers, including many ethnic Koreans, to move to Manchuria and farm land seized from Chinese farmers as a way of establishing a permanent Japanese presence. But the relatively small numbers of farmers persuaded to make the move were more than made up for by ethnic Chinese moving into Manchuria, often to escape the fighting farther south. So that wasn't working so well for the Japanese.

Also, there was also a Russian presence in Manchuria. If you think of Manchuria as being roughly diamond-shaped, Japan controls the southern point of the diamond, the former Russian naval base, now a Japanese naval base, at Port Arthur. From Port Arthur, the South Manchurian railway runs north to the city of Harbin, Manchuria's most important city, which lies about at the center of the diamond. The Japanese control this railway and the coal and iron ore mines it serves, and this is the center of the Japanese presence, which is maintained and protected by Japan's Kwantung Army.

The Russians control the China Eastern Railway, which runs horizontally across the diamond, also through Harbin. This railway is valuable to the Russians, as it considerably shortens the time to travel to and from Vladivostok by avoiding the need to go the long way around Manchurian territory. As we saw last week, when the Communists took power and Russia became the Soviet Union, the new government loudly and pointedly renounced Russian concessions in China, which were dismissed as a relic of imperialism. But the new Soviet government dragged its feet on giving up that railway. Its economic value made it too tempting to hold on to, even for socialists.

As we saw last time, the Chinese warlord who controlled Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin, had a cooperative relationship with the Kwantung Army. But in 1928, as the Nationalist Army approached, Zhang chose not to oppose them. This decision infuriated the commanders of the Kwantung Army. These were right wing, hawkish soldiers, who believed that Japan had to hold Manchuria at all costs, for the sake of the nation's future, no matter what the Chinese or the Russians or anyone else thought about it. Or for that matter, what those wimpy politicians in Tokyo thought about it.

And so, without the knowledge or approval of the government, renegade Japanese military officers in Manchuria assassinated Zhang by blowing up his train as he was headed home from Beijing.

That much of the operation went according to plan. But these officers expected a subordinate commander sympathetic to Japan to take control of Zhang's forces. Instead, his 27-year-old son, Zhang Xueliang, took command. The Japanese pressed him to declare Manchurian independence, but he refused and instead submitted to Chiang and the Republic of China, who hailed him as a national hero.

So by 1929, Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists had secured control over all of China. On paper, at least. The reality was less impressive. A number of warlords had joined forces with Chiang, but they retained their militaries and their regional dominance. The Chinese Army numbered 1.5 million, making it the largest army in the world, and a huge financial burden on the government in Nanjing, but half of these soldiers were part of warlord armies that would have rebelled against any attempt to demobilize them. The other half were needed to keep the first group from getting any ideas, like say, declaring independence or trying to oust Chiang.

So what's an ambitious warlord to do? Several of them tested Chiang and the Nationalist Army over the next few years, in every case unsuccessfully. Zhang Xueliang, the young warlord in Manchuria was more creative. Zhang turned on the Russians and tried to seize control of the Chinese Eastern Railway through Manchuria. This proved to be a grave miscalculation. The Red Army moved in, easily brushing aside Zhang's forces, and secured the railway, as we saw last time.

Western opinion was on the Russian side of this conflict. True, the Russian government was Stalin and a cabal of Bolsheviks, but even Bolsheviks have property rights, as *Time* magazine in the United States quipped, and if we don't stand up for Russian rights in China, how long will it be before the Chinese come after our concessions?

All these developments were being closely watched by the Japanese, who noted first, how poorly Chinese forces performed against the Red Army, and second, how quick the Western powers were to defend Russian interests in Manchuria. To the right-wing hawks in the Kwantung Army, the implications were clear: The Western powers would never uphold Japanese rights over Russian rights in Manchuria. Europeans will always stick up for fellow Europeans, even Bolsheviks, against an Asian power like Japan, and no amount of diplomacy, however adroit, will change that. Second, China may field an army that looks awesome on paper, but it will collapse like a house of cards in any conflict with a properly trained adversary. Even the Red Army humiliated them. Imagine what the Japanese Army could do.

But the government in Tokyo wasn't listening. The previous government, under Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi, a conservative Army general, had taken over in the wake of the 1927 financial panic. The Tanaka government had supported military intervention in China, but when the assassination of the elder Zhang backfired and drove his son into the arms of the Nationalists, the Tanaka government fell. His successor, the more liberal Hamaguchi Osachi was much more interested in reviving the Japanese economy than in foreign adventurism.

This brings me back to something I said earlier, about how Japan's economic position was comparable to Britain's. Like Britain, the Japanese government was promoting austerity and deflating the yen in an effort to restore gold convertibility at the prewar rate. Also like Britain, Japan was running a trade deficit and its postwar economy remained stubbornly sluggish, problems that deflation and restoration of the gold standard were only making worse.

When Hamaguchi became Prime Minister in July 1929, he promised to put Japan's economic house in order. He could not have known at the time how big a challenge that was going to be. Just three months later came the stock market crash in the United States. You know and I know that the crash was just the first in a series of system shocks to the world economy, but in late 1929 it was still possible to believe that it was strictly an American problem, of no particular concern to Japan.



The Bank of Japan finally restored gold convertibility at the prewar rate in early 1930, which was the worst possible time, just as the US was enacting the Smoot-Hawley tariffs, which triggered retaliatory tariffs from other major economies. Japan's exports plunged. Its trade deficit deepened, forcing the government to raise interest rates and cut spending.

Domestic spending cuts came just as unemployment was rising. Cuts in military spending enraged the right-wing military officers. In November 1930, a member of an underground right-wing group shot Hamaguchi at a train station in Tokyo, the very same train station in fact where Hamaguchi's predecessor, Hara Takashi had been assassinated in 1921, nine years ago. This time, though, Hamaguchi survived the attack, although he was forced to step down from the premiership during his convalescence. Hamaguchi was restored to office four months later, in March 1931. His government introduced a bill granting women the right to vote, but it was defeated in the House of Peers, the upper house of the Japanese Diet.

And that was as far as the second Hamaguchi government got. He never fully recovered from the assassination attempt and was forced to resign his office entirely in April. He died four months later, at the age of 61.

And as you already know, the world economic situation was deteriorating rapidly in 1931. In September, the United Kingdom was forced to suspend the gold convertibility it had reinstated in 1925.

That same month, September 1931, a group of dissident right-wing junior Kwantung Army officers, acting on their own, detonated a bomb near the Japanese-controlled South Manchuria Railway line in Manchuria. You might be thinking you've already heard this story. That's because you have. Three years ago, a similar cabal of rogue Japanese Army officers in Manchuria assassinated the local warlord by bombing a railroad. The 1928 assassination had been conducted in the hope that it would strengthen Japan's position in Manchuria. Actually, it weakened it.

So you might think the lesson that Kwantung Army officers would have taken from that experience was this: before you go off on some freelance covert op because you figure your superiors in Tokyo are just a bunch of cowardly civilian bureaucrats who don't understand what's *really* going on in Manchuria the way front-line soldiers like you do, consider the possibility that their prudence is justified and your rogue op might actually make things worse.

But in fact, the lesson they took was this: Hey, we got away with it last time. The government in Tokyo was aware of the Army's involvement in the 1928 assassination of Zhang Zuolin, though it was not public knowledge, and no one had been disciplined for taking part in it. And this time, the operation was simpler and more likely to succeed. This bomb went off some 15 meters from the railway, too far away to do significant damage, and in fact a train passed over those tracks shortly after the explosion, to no ill effect.

But all this was in accord with the plan, which was to blame the bombing on the weakness of the Chinese central government and use it as an excuse to secure Japan's holdings in Manchuria. And when I say "secure Japan's holdings in Manchuria," I mean, "seize total control over the territory."

The morning after the explosion, Japanese troops attacked the garrison of the warlord Zhang Xueliang in the city of Mukden. Despite outnumbering the Japanese 7,000 to 500, the poorly trained and caught-by-surprise Chinese soldiers were routed.

In Dalian, the commander of the Kwantung Army was informed of what had transpired. He was at first outraged that junior officers in his command had taken matters into their own hands to this extent, but he was quickly persuaded that given the circumstances the best course of action was to follow through with what his junior officers had begun.

In Nanjing, Chiang Kai-shek ordered Zhang Xueliang not to resist the Japanese. Zhang transmitted these orders to his soldiers and they withdrew from most of the cities and towns where they had garrisons. In a few places, Chinese soldiers resisted despite orders, but their resistance was scattered and lackluster. By early 1932, Japan had secured control over Manchuria.

On February 18, 1932, the Kwantung Army proclaimed the independent State of Manchuria. Army officials reached out to Puyi, China's last Emperor. At the age of 26, Puyi was living in the Japanese concession in the port city of Tianjin, in China. He was told the Japanese Emperor was moved by his plight and was prepared to restore him as Emperor of a newly independent Manchuria. When Puyi dithered, the Japanese Army orchestrated an anti-Japanese riot in Tianjin, then spirited Puyi away to Manchuria. The Army announced that a Chinese mob had formed with intent to kill the former Emperor, who had been forced to flee for his own safety. On March 1, he was named Chief Executive of the State of Manchuria. Two years later, he would be made Emperor of Manchuria.

Recruiting Puyi to act as head of state of the new independent Manchuria was a masterstroke of public relations. Imperial Japan could depict itself as upholding tradition against the upstart Nationalists and Communists. If the Han Chinese no longer wished to be ruled by a Manchu Emperor, well fine, the Manchu Emperor would withdraw to Manchuria, where he would continue to reign over his own people.

The government in Tokyo was less than thrilled with any of these developments. Hamaguchi's successor as prime minister, Wakatsuki Reijiro, frustrated with his inability to rein in the Army, resigned in December 1931. His successor, Inukai Tsuyoshi, began his premiership by taking Japan back off the gold standard, less than two years after returning to it, in an attempt to stanch Japan's hemorrhaging trade deficit. As for the situation in Manchuria, Inukai was a conservative who had the reputation of being more supportive of the military than his predecessor. He acceded to a demand from the Kwantung Army to send additional troops to help secure Manchuria.

The occupation of Manchuria was popular with the Japanese public. The decline in international trade and the raising of tariffs by Japan's trading partners, such as the US and the UK, had crippled the Japanese economy, which was heavily dependent on those exports. Unemployment was high and poverty was growing.

The Army and the right wing hailed the occupation of Manchuria as the salvation of the nation. Exploitation of its natural resources would reduce Japan's need for imports. The Army promised farmland in Manchuria to impoverished Japanese, homesteads where they could settle and build new lives. In February 1932, Japan held a general election. Two weeks before Election Day, the leader of the more liberal Minseito party, the party that held the majority in the Diet, was assassinated. When the votes were counted, Prime Minister Inukai's more conservative Seiyukai party took control.

But in fact, Inukai wasn't any happier about the Army in Manchuria going rogue than his predecessor had been. He began to resist calls for additional reinforcements. His government took the symbolic step of refusing to recognize the State of Manchuria that its own Army had created.

It didn't take long for the military to express their displeasure. Inukai was assassinated three months later, by a cabal of junior naval officers, most of whom were still teenagers. He was 76 years old. It is said that Inukai's dying words to his killers were, "If I could explain, you would understand." To which his killers replied, "Discussion is useless."

Inukai's assassins were court-martialed. The court received over a hundred thousand petitions pleading for leniency, which the killers got. Only a few realized it at the time, but democracy in Japan was as dead as the late prime minister. For the next 13 years, the Japanese government would be following the directives of the military, rather than the other way around.

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd especially like to thank Mitchell for his kind donation, and thank you to Fergal for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Mitchell and Fergal help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, just visit the website, [historyofthetwentiethcentury.com](http://historyofthetwentiethcentury.com) and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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And it's that time of year again. The holidays are upon us, so allow me to remind you that donations and patronages to *The History of the Twentieth Century* make the perfect holiday gift—for me. No need to spend your valuable time shopping, no worries over whether it's the right size or the right color, and you can feel absolutely confident that it will never be returned. Another giving option is a rating—that's where you click on the stars—or a review—when you write actual words—at the iTunes store, which is still where your rating and review carry the most weight, or wherever podcasts are available for download. And thanks again to everyone who has already supported the podcast, by any or all of these means. You help keep me going, and help other listeners find the podcast, listeners who hopefully will enjoy it as much as you do.

I'm planning to attend the Arisia Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention in Boston next month, over Martin Luther King Day weekend. If you happen to be there, look me up and say hi. Don't forget to get vaccinated and wear a mask, though. Both are required.

Next Saturday is Christmas, in Western Christianity, and my opportunity to present a Christmas gift to you in the form of a bonus episode. We'll depart from East Asia for this one episode and turn our attention to the 1930 discovery of Pluto, the ninth planet. Or is it the ninth planet? What is a planet, anyway? We'll get into it on Christmas Day.

And I hope you'll join me again, the following day, here on *The History of the Twentieth Century* as we return to Manchuria and consider the international reaction to Japan's unilateral creation of a Manchurian state, and Japan's reaction to the reaction. Foreign Commentary Changes Nothing, next week, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. I'd like to say a word about the various names of the region of China I've been calling *Manchuria* ever since the early days of the podcast. The name *Manchuria* is Latinized from *Manchu*, which is the name of the ethnic group that calls the region home and to which the Qing Dynasty belonged. But the fact that it's a Latinization should clue you in that the name was coined by Europeans. The Japanese have been calling the region *Manshu* since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; whether Europeans adapted the name from the Japanese or vice versa is not clear.

When the Japanese created an independent Manchuria in 1932, they called it *Manshukoku*, which I translated as “State of Manchuria.” When Puyi was crowned Emperor, the nation was renamed *Manshu teikoku*, which you could translate as “Empire of Manchuria.”

*Manshukoku* translates into Chinese as *Manchukuo*, and *Manchukuo* is how the independent Manchurian state was usually referred to in the West during the 13 years of its existence, and afterward. Even today, Western commentators generally use the name *Manchukuo* to refer to the Japanese-created Manchurian state.

So to review, then: in English, we generally use the name *Manchuria* as a geographical term to describe the northeasternmost region of China, and we use name *Manchukuo* specifically to

describe the Japanese-created Manchurian state. You could just as easily call the state Manchuria, but we usually don't.

But please note that these names are not used in China itself. For one thing, in our time, the vast majority of Manchuria's population is Han Chinese. Even in the last days of the Qing Dynasty, what we call Manchuria was divided into three provinces, and was usually referred to as the "three eastern provinces" or "the three northeastern provinces." In modern China, it is often called simply, "the Northeast." The name Manchuria is not favored in China, because it evokes the unhappy history we discussed today. When the name Manchuria *is* used in Chinese, it's usually phrased as "so-called Manchuria" or something similar, to emphasize the illegitimacy of the former Manchurian state.

[music: Closing Theme]