CHAPTER 5

Rivers and Mountains

In July 1941, following a state visit of Wang Jingwei to Tokyo, a pictorial album to commemorate the trip was published by the MoP. Edited by the filmmaker Wong Hing-sue and possibly designed by a White Russian artist, the album included a range of photo collages celebrating Wang's sojourn in Japan.[1] It also included an unattributed image on its inside cover that was aesthetically at odds with the rest of the book. A yellow and red print presented an almost clichéd picture of a timeless Chinese riverscape—complete with sailboat, sampan, and fishermen—bathed in the light of a rising sun (figure 5.1).

What is most remarkable about this print, however, is not its content or even its composition but, rather, the juxtaposition of this riparian idyll with the calligraphy in Wang Jingwei's name, which is superimposed onto it. The calligraphic script reads: "Huan women Dong Ya ren de benlai mianmu" (Return to us East Asians our original countenance). Any reader in 1941 would have been fully aware of the line's similarities with one of most commonly repeated phrases in the lexicon of the anti-Japanese resistance: "Huan wo heshan" (Return the rivers and mountains to us). This latter line of poetry, attributed to the Song-dynasty general Yue Fei, had been adopted by the Nationalist Chinese resistance to Japan since the 1930s.[2] In substituting "rivers and mountains" for something far more abstract—that is, "original countenance"—and doing so over an image of an imagined Chinese riverscape, Wang's propagandists were acknowledging the potency of the Yue Fei phrase and its invocation of landscape to the cause of wartime nationalism in China. If Wang could not publicly demand of the Japanese that China's actual "rivers and mountains" be returned to him, he could at least echo resistance propaganda that did make such demands, while at the same time imagining a historical, unspoiled China that existed only in prints and pictorials. This was a strategy that Wang's wartime administration would regularly deploy as it sought to establish its credentials as a patriotic, Chinese regime.

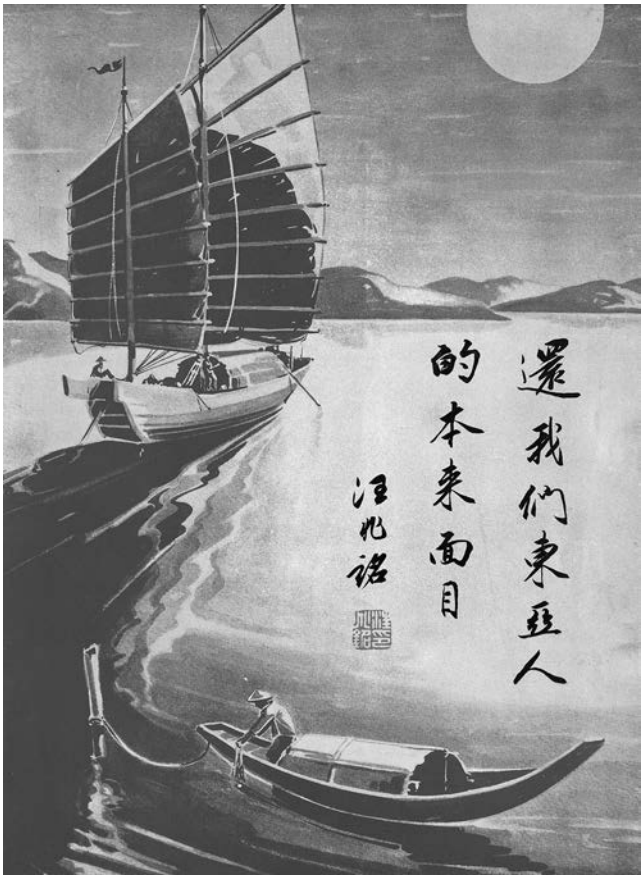

Figure 5.1. Unattributed image of sunrise over a Chinese river, featuring calligraphy by Wang Jingwei, which reads: "Huan women Dong Ya ren de benlai mianmu" (Return to us East Asians our original countenance). From Huang Qingshu [Wong Hing-sue], ed., *Wang zhuxi fang Ri jinian huakan* [Special pictorial in commemoration of Chairman Wang's visit to Japan] (Nanjing: Xuanchuanbu, 1941). Courtesy of the Hoover Institution Library, Stanford University.

The RNG was unusual among twentieth-century Chinese administrations in the limits of its irredentist claims. RNG spokespeople remained reluctant throughout the war to draw public attention to the regime's lack of territorial integrity. Nor did they publicly raise Chinese claims to Manchukuo, Taiwan, or other areas that had been carved out by the Japanese

empire. This lack of revanchist aspiration can be detected perhaps most clearly in the visual realm. Indeed, it is my contention in this chapter that depictions of space under occupation—as well as a marked *avoidance* of the depiction of certain types of space—were indicative of the RNG's lack of territorial confidence more broadly. This lack of confidence would only be partially satisfied in 1943, when Shanghai's *gudao* (literally, "solitary island"—a term used to refer to those sections of the city, including the International Settlement, that were not occupied by the Japanese until the end of 1941) came under nominal RNG rule. This development was celebrated in all kinds of visual ways by the RNG. Yet, throughout the war, RNG depictions of space highlighted the fact that this regime was perpetually trapped between the demands of Japanese imperialism on the one hand and a desire to cleave to Chinese patriotism on the other.

It is in the visual realm that we see various RNG attempts to respond to this conundrum and to reimagine the "rivers and mountains" of China in ways appropriate to the occupation context. These range from a symbolic emphasis on specific mountains and rivers (namely, Purple Mountain in Nanjing and the Yangtze) to a tendency—as we saw above with the 1941 print—to re-envisage China through various forms of visual culture that avoided direct reference to national territory. The RNG also oscillated between laments about the "ruined rivers and mountains" (*heshan posui*) of China that had been prevalent in Peace Movement propaganda prior to the *huandu* (as this group sought to justify accommodation with Japan) and a pictorial celebration of China's ability to rebuild itself from the ground up. My argument in this chapter, then, is not that the rivers and mountains of China were absent from occupation iconographies; landscapes are, after all, "a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings" and a central part of the study of political iconographies more generally.[3] Rather, the varied representations of China emerging under occupation reflected the contradictions inherent in a regime that, on the one hand, acknowledged Japanese conquest while, on the other, claimed to represent a return to Republican Chinese "orthodoxy."

Representing National Space under Occupation

As we saw in chapter 2, patronage of the fine arts continued under occupation in China. Painting in a variety of forms—particularly *guohua*—appealed to many intellectuals in occupied China for a number of reasons. For instance, the debates of the 1930s about the need to promote a national style of art

in the face of foreign humiliation were entirely relevant for artists working under occupation.[4] Craig Clunas' argument that "the very act of painting the landscape, painting the *national* landscape, was in itself a political statement" makes just as much sense when we consider cultural production undertaken in areas of China under Japanese control as it does for the art of resistance produced in "Free China."[5]

At the same time, however, *guohua* could easily be celebrated for its invocation of ancient Chinese landscapes in the context of occupation.[6] As a genre that owed little to European traditions, it could even be relabeled "Pan-Asian." Michael Sullivan's account supports this argument. In his view, Chinese artists who continued to paint the rivers and mountains of an imagined China in a *guohua* mode under occupation, such as Qi Baishi, were responding to Japanese admiration for conservative forms of cultural expression.[7] Indeed, the scholarly Japanese interest in forms of cultural expression associated with the Chinese literati, such as *guohua,* "attracted the attention of many intellectuals" during this period.[8]

As Poshek Fu has shown, however, the embrace of genres within the *guohua* family, particularly *shanshuihua*—literally, "paintings of mountains and rivers"—also fitted with the self-image that many intellectuals chose to cultivate in the occupation context. In his study of the journal *Gujin,* Fu suggests that a number of prominent intellectuals of the period identified themselves as *mingshi* (unconventional scholars)—"literati whose moral idealism alienated them from society at large." In trying to emulate the *mingshi* of earlier eras, many intellectuals took up cultural practices associated with this social milieu, including a love of landscape painting. In this way, the Chinese landscapes imagined in *shanshuihua* served to express a particular response to occupation—one of withdrawal and detachment rather than conservative sentiment.[9]

None of these explanations discount, however, the very natural appeal that the *shanshuihua* form had for a regime that was constantly trying to defend itself against claims of compromised sovereignty. For example, the visualization of landscapes associated with the traditions of the literati could be utilized to project a message that Wang's regime was a protector of Chinese culture and a regime that could visualize the rivers and mountains of the country in distinctly Chinese ways. This was the narrative adopted by the Zhongguo wenyi xiehui when it reproduced the *shanshuihua* that its members—including some of the most loyal of RNG artists, such as Ma Wu and Cao Hanmei—had collected from areas beyond RNG control (all while printing congratulatory messages from the likes of Wang Jingwei

himself).[10] *Shanshuihua* of the kind reproduced in *Guoyi* and similar periodicals enabled the celebration of imagined though recognizably Chinese landscapes while avoiding the discomfort implied through realist depictions of Chinese land that had been lost to the Japanese.

This also helps explain the RNG patronage of *shanshuihua* at particular moments during the war. For example, in the spring of 1943—that is, shortly after Wang's declaration of war on the Allies—and in order (officially) to reinforce Sino-Japanese artistic exchanges, the MoP arranged for some two hundred works by a Cantonese *shanshuihua* artist called Lin Meishu to be exhibited at the Nanjing office of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Association (SJCA).[11] Tellingly, this exhibition of works by an artist who had hitherto been associated with the resistance[12] was held just a few months after the organization of the Greater East Asia Exposition (Da Dong Ya bolanhui/Dai Tōa hakurankai), also in Nanjing. The exposition was a highly publicized event that the Japanese military had forced the MoP to subsidize.[13] Aesthetically, the exposition was an almost entirely Japanese affair, for it included Japanese-produced depictions of conquered Chinese landscapes, reproduced through dioramas, photography, and vast *sensōga*.[14] Such a context made a *shanshuihua* exhibition in Nanjing by a Chinese artist associated with the resistance particularly significant.

To be sure, interest in Lin Meishu's oeuvre was part of a wider fascination for *shanshuihua* under the RNG. The same SJCA had already hosted exhibitions of a number of artists working in this genre, including Guan Yide, for example.[15] This was in keeping with the tendency of the SJCA—despite its name—to support art that was distinctly Chinese in origin. Yet by juxtaposing Lin's *shanshuihua* renderings of the national landscape with Japanese *sensōga* imaginings of a conquered China, and doing so shortly after the RNG's declaration of war, the MoP was essentially using this form favored by the literati to mark itself apart from Japan's colonial gaze. This was a proudly Chinese regime that could sponsor Chinese modes of artistic production—even in the absence of territorial control over much of China itself.

If the MoP was sponsoring *shanshuihua* depictions of Chinese landscapes, however, what kinds of landscape was it simultaneously trying to hide? To reference Gil Hochberg, what was "not being seen" of China under the RNG?[16] As we saw in chapter 1, the notion of a new regime under Wang Jingwei's leadership was founded on geographic imaginings. Wang had initiated negotiations with the Japanese in 1939 on the assumption that he could establish a Nationalist government in a single region of China that lay beyond Japanese control. The end result of these negotiations,

however, was a regime that was always territorially fluid and that struggled to exercise control beyond Nanjing.

It is hardly surprising, then, that few propaganda products from the MoP included maps of Chinese territory. The inclusion of maps would only have reminded viewers of the ultimate failure of Wang's negotiations in 1939 and the extent of Wang's lack of territorial control.[17] With the exception of stylized maps advertising the Yangtze-hugging routes of the Central China Railways (Huazhong tiedao/Kachū Tetsudō)[18] and the maps reproduced to demonstrate the success of specific campaigns (e.g., Rural Pacification), very few cartographic depictions were ever created by the RNG. And on the few occasions when RNG agencies did deploy maps of China in print media, they did so in such a way as to obscure China's borders.[19]

Cartographic depictions of China *were* used, however, by the Japanese military. This was especially so in the lead-up to spring 1940. Propaganda maps created by the Japanese to coincide with the *huandu* can be placed in a longer tradition, dating back to the founding of Manchukuo but peaking at the time of the Japanese invasion of China in 1937. David Nelson Rowe (an American who had been resident in Beijing that year) noted the use of stylized maps on Japanese posters, for example, while collecting numerous examples of such ephemera himself.[20] Such imagery complemented a "defeatist" message that was propagated by the Japanese military and placed an "emphasis on Japanese strength," for it was used to show how futile resistance was and how extensive Japanese control of territory could be.[21] The influence of this genre of propaganda can be seen in maps produced by the Japanese military for distribution in China in the spring of 1940. One such map divided China into two halves: occupied China (i.e., areas nominally controlled by the RNG) was bathed in light, while a dark west China of the resistance was filled with symbols of misery (figure 5.2).[22]

Similarly, representations of Chinese territory "from the air"—be they in photography or graphic art—were Japanese rather than RNG innovations in 1940. As Mark Dorrian and Frédéric Pousin have shown, the "aerial view" was a modern mode of artistic expression (especially in photography) that developed alongside aviation in the early decades of the twentieth century in Europe. The aerial view could be used to suggest a proprietorial relationship with, or control over, the spaces being represented.[23] Given the importance of aerial bombardment to Japanese war strategy—and a wartime Japanese fondness for picturing bombers in flight over China[24]—the "military utility" of such a perspective made perfect sense for Japanese propagandists. Contrarily, it made no sense for a Chinese administration that was so concerned about the limits of

Figure 5.2. A "map of light and darkness in China" (*Zhongguo ming'an tu*) produced by the Japanese military in spring 1940, depicting those areas of China under RNG rule as being wealthy and happy. Courtesy of the Institute of National Defense Studies, Tokyo.

its territorial control and the havoc caused by Japanese aerial attacks, especially when such attacks provided content for resistance propaganda.[25]

For the same reasons, depictions of sweeping landscapes of China produced around the time of the *huandu* tended to be crafted not by members

of the Peace Movement or the nascent MoP but by Japanese news agencies. In March 1940, for example, the *Kabun* marked Wang's "return" with a two-page photo spread entitled "Youjiu de Zhongguo" (Eternal China). This included unattributed photographs of some of the most iconic landmarks in China's natural and built environments: the Yellow River, the Yangtze, Mount Tai, and, dominating the page, the Great Wall of China (the latter a particular favorite of the *Kabun*'s editors, as it had also been featured on the cover of earlier issues of this magazine).[26]

From the perspective of pre-RNG Japanese pictorials, many of which had appealed to Japanese readers via notions of a vast and ancient Asian continent, this was not unusual. However, with the exception of the Yangtze—a river that was frequently invoked in RNG political iconography—the idea of an "eternal China" of mountains, rivers, and plains sat at odds with an RNG determined to avoid mention of national territory. After all, as Martin Warnke has suggested, one of the most basic functions of depictions of the landscape is the display of ownership, "like an entry in a land register."[27] If anything, then, depictions of national territory had the potential to remind occupied China's population that this land did not, ultimately, belong to China. It may also have reminded viewers of the highly militarized depictions of Chinese landscapes that had been included in so much China-themed *sensōga* earlier in the war.[28]

If Wang's administration seldom chose landscape photography, cartography, or depictions of China from an aerial view—or anything, indeed, that hinted at resistance obsessions about the country's rivers and mountains—how *did* it seek to represent the country over which it claimed stewardship? Some of the earliest CNA publications provide at least one answer to this question. Within weeks of the *huandu,* the CNA published a series of extended travelogues in which RNG journalists and photographers set out (under the watchful eye of Mabuchi Itsuo's propagandists) to travel the length and breadth of the RNG realm. One purpose of these tours, according to the MoP cadre Guo Xiufeng (who helped in their organization), was "to propagate the significance of peace, anticommunism, and nation-building." The other purpose was to inspect the "suffering of the people [*minjian zhi jiku*]."[29] In reality, the series of resulting books were field surveys of China written (rather than photographed or drawn) from the "aerial perspective." Some of the resulting accounts betray a sense of inadequacy about a lack of Chinese control. Concurrently, however, they contain expressions of awe inspired by the landscapes of the Lower Yangtze delta, as well as an undeniable sense of pride in Chinese territory.

In the first book published in the series, for example, the CNA journalist Xue Huizi wrote emotionally about the land he was flying over as he rode in an airplane from Nanjing to Wuhan on the first leg of his journey, mixing wonder for the rivers and mountains below him with ambivalent references to events that had presaged the RNG's "return":

> Every now and then, we caught a glimpse of the winding Yangtze through the clouds, hiding from us and then appearing again like some mystical dragon. As I leaned against the window to look out, I thought back to the time when Nanjing had fallen [to the Japanese], and I had boarded a ship on the Yangtze headed for Wuhan, traveling for a full seven days and eight nights.[30]

This account is justifiably nostalgic, for this was Xue's first visit to Wuhan since the city's fall in 1938. And Xue made for the perfect choice to lead and report on such expeditions. A follower of Wang's Peace Movement, Xue had originally trained as a painter before choosing journalism as his trade and had spent a period in 1938 employed as a military journalist for the *Ta kung pao*. He had been embedded with Chiang Kai-shek's forces in Wuhan that year—an experience that apparently impressed upon him the "greatness of the motherland" (*zuguo de wei da*).[31]

What is equally striking about Xue's 1940 account is the selection of pictorial representations that sat alongside his territorialized prose. Dozens of photographs by the CNA photographer Xue Diwei (possibly Xue Huizi's brother) were included in this book. A second book was published a few months later detailing a similar trip to north China.[32] Not a single one of Xue Diwei's images, however, corresponds with the aerial view present in the accompanying text. Here are pictures of children begging for food beside railway tracks; a few pages later, we see crowds waiting to purchase basic provisions. This early CNA documentary photography shows an occupied China made up of sites and landmarks—most often photographed from street level and presented in such a way as to avoid reference to wide, open spaces or the grand vistas that the *Kabun* and other Japanese outlets were publishing at this same time. Indeed, the China that emerges from the pages of such accounts is one of *places* (rather than a single, national space) all marked as part of the RNG realm by deliberate inclusion of Republican (i.e., pro-Wang) icons, such as statues, murals, and ROC flags. It is also a China that is only just beginning to rebuild after years of chaos.

These CNA field surveys were representative of an entire genre of early post-*huandu* photojournalism. Accounts compiled by Chinese journalists and their accompanying photographers traveling throughout a now partially accessible China documented the rediscovery of towns and cities after a hiatus of some years.[33] These would be illustrated with snapshots of China from the perspective of the local street. Municipalities contributed to this genre by way of books that verified the survival of sites and landmarks, as well as the resilience of people living among them.[34] Indeed, they acted as an update to the tendency of Peace Movement media in 1939 to demonstrate the futility of war by actually picturing the sites of China that had been destroyed in the conflict. The *Central China Daily News,* for instance, published a number of pictorial accounts of the "ruined rivers and mountains" in the summer of 1939.[35] Pictorial accounts produced a year after such expressions of desperation supported the narrative of the regime's return by stressing the revival of prewar morphologies—for example, through references to the famous sites and relics (*mingsheng guji*) that had survived the fighting. Nowhere was this clearer than in official depictions of the RNG capital.

New Nanjing

For the RNG—like the Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek in the prewar years[36]—Nanjing was meant to serve as the ordered capital of a vibrant and modern republic. In choosing this city as its capital, the RNG was writing itself into Nationalist lore, for Nanjing was the very place that Sun Yat-sen had apparently chosen as the capital of the republic following the 1911 Revolution. Sites such as the Ming tombs were certainly important in this mythology,[37] but only insofar as they framed a capital that would encapsulate the modernity and nationalism to which the RNG aspired.

The message in 1940, then, was of a modern Nanjing being reborn under a regime that embraced peace and orthodoxy. And although the events of the winter of 1937–1938, which are now often referred to as the Rape of Nanjing, were never so much as mentioned in RNG publications, the sense that this returned regime was seeking to overcome recent trauma through rebuilding is palpable in *huandu*-era propaganda. Images of people "redecorating their houses, shops and even lamp posts" filled the pages of MoP publications in the spring of 1940.[38] Peace Movement journalists in Shanghai wrote of Nanjing being not remotely as ruined as "*gudao* propaganda" would have people believe.[39]

Figure 5.3. Woodcut of "new Nanjing" by Wang Yingxiao. Featured in *Huawen Daban meiri* 8, no. 7 (April 1942). Courtesy of the East Asia Library, Stanford University.

Many of these same ideas had been used by pre-RNG groups such as the Daminhui prior to the *huandu,* and Daminhui influence can be discerned in many of the textual and pictorial depictions of the "reborn" capital that were authored in the first year following's Wang's return. In the pages of Daminhui-published pictorials from 1939, unnamed artists had favored simple line drawings of modernist urban architecture when celebrating the imminent arrival of the new order. Sometimes the architecture that Daminhui artists drew would be reminiscent of actual sites in the landscape; yet just as often an unidentified office tower—one that might have been picked from the streets of any modern city in the world—was invoked as the generic symbol of the "new central government" (*xin zhongyang zhengquan*).[40]

Thanks to Daminhui artists (many of whom, like the abovementioned Ma Wu, were redeployed to RNG institutions in 1940), this old version of the "new" capital was transposed seamlessly onto the rhetoric of "peace."

RNG artists began to imagine their "new China" as one populated by imposing architectural symbols of modernity, which spoke not to Japanese contributions to China's landscape but to the urban innovations of the prewar years. The CNA even chose a modernist depiction of its own office building in the RNG capital to adorn the cover of its institutional reports.[41] This practice was not limited to Nanjing, however. In Wuhan, it was the customhouse (Jianghanguan dalou) first erected on the city's bund in 1922—one of the largest buildings to survive the destruction of 1938—that embellished early RNG publicity (figure 5.4). Lithographic depictions of this structure, which would have looked at home on the pages of any number of prewar Shanghai magazines, were reproduced on the cover of locally published RNG pictorials.[42] In Guangzhou-specific propaganda, the Oi Kwan Hotel (Aiqun da jiudian), completed just before the Japanese invasion and remaining the tallest building in the city throughout the war, was granted comparable prominence.

Other pre-RNG modes of depicting the cities of Japanese-occupied China, however, were far more problematic for the RNG. One of the most enduring motifs in the print propaganda of both the PGROC and the RGROC, for example, had been that of a radiant sun rising over a generic city wall, city gate, or pagoda. This "dreamlike scenery," as Shaoqian Zhang has described it, often showed "new China"—and its ancient architecture—under the light of a rising sun (i.e., Japan).[43] Such imagery may owe a debt to the 1930s work of Japanese war artists who experimented with the motif of the sun rising over the Great Wall of China.[44] Its more direct antecedent, however, was Manchukuo poster art, much of which deployed what Norman Smith has referred to as "sun-centered propaganda."[45] Yet as the theorist of iconography Martin Warnke has shown, this was not a purely imperial Japanese invention. "There is hardly any political situation," he argues, "that cannot be elucidated by comparisons with the sun."[46]

Produced in a linear perspective, such imagery would commonly show rays of a dawning sun shining over a horizon that split the image in two (e.g., sky and land). Often, the viewer's gaze would be drawn toward a central vanishing point of light or radiance via a path or road. In some cases, the horizon might itself be a city wall.[47] In others, a suitably "Asian" edifice would be drawn floating like fata morgana above the horizon. In the spring of 1940, this trope of a new dawn breaking over the horizons of RNG Nanjing was used to celebrate the imminent *huandu*, just as it had been in Manchukuo and north China propaganda a few years earlier. For Japanese and Daminhui artists, Nanjing's city walls—still damaged from the attacks of December 1937 but now emblazoned with large pro-regime

Figure 5.4. Cover of *Xin Wuhan*, including an unattributed and stylized illustration showing the Wuhan customhouse (Jianghanguan dalou) and the Yangtze riverfront. Anonymous, *Xin Wuhan* [New Wuhan] (Wuhan: Wuhan shi zhengfu, 1940). Courtesy of the East Asia Library, Stanford University.

slogans in concrete and the sun-and-moon logo of the Daminhui—could be used to frame the rays of an imagined dawn. In some instances, the characters for "peace" (*heping*) and/or "nation-building" (*jianguo*) replaced the city wall, envisaged as a three-dimensional edifice rising over the horizon like the sun itself (figure 5.5).[48]

Figure 5.5. The characters for "*heping jianguo*" (peace and nation-building) emerge from the ground as an edifice emitting light in this undated poster, produced by the North China Political Affairs Commission. Courtesy of the Hoover Institution Archives (Poster Collection, CC 106), Stanford University.

The light of dawn breaking over city walls would remain a staple of propaganda art well beyond the *huandu*.[49] For Lin Baisheng and his staff, however, the sun had to be made to rise over far more modern architectural features of Nanjing's streetscapes than its ancient city walls. From the MoP perspective, the most hallowed landmark in the capital was the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum on Purple Mountain. This building, completed in 1929, became the RNG's premier landmark. In Wang Jingwei's China, it would

be this suitably modern yet Chinese edifice that would emit the light of new China's dawn.

The Sun Mausoleum's construction had been an integral part of the prewar modernization of Nanjing under Chiang Kai-shek.[50] Indeed, it had been built to serve as the "monumental, ceremonial center of the nation."[51] Just as importantly, the mausoleum had been purposefully designed as a modern Chinese monument built with Western engineering techniques. While it emulated Chinese palace architecture, it also included beaux arts elements of design and was influenced by commemorative sites beyond China, such as the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.[52] The mausoleum and Purple Mountain, upon which it had been built, could allude to RNG patriotism while avoiding reference to national space or bounded territory. This was one mountain that had, indeed, been returned.

In the RNG context, the mausoleum also served to reinforce claims to a Republican provenance for this regime and to remind the population of Wang Jingwei's personal connections to Sun Yat-sen. For an RNG obsessed with establishing political legitimacy, ownership of a mausoleum housing the physical remains of the nominal founder of the Chinese Republic mattered a great deal. Little wonder, then, that ceremonial visits to the mausoleum (a practice that had commenced as soon as the mausoleum was completed) continued apace throughout the RNG period.[53] Such visits were invariably photographed for posterity and publication by CNA photographers.[54] RNG ameliorations to the mausoleum echoed prewar practices. Much emphasis, for example, was placed on the need to beautify the site with trees—though under the RNG these would be known as commemorative peace forests (*heping jinianlin*) from 1941 onward.[55] Accordingly, entire tracts were penned to justify the need to forest Purple Mountain. Images of RNG dignitaries planting trees at the site were reproduced in many of these same publications,[56] while tree-planting activities around the site were filmed and distributed as official newsreels.[57]

As this reference to photography and newsreels suggests, the veneration of the mausoleum deserved overtly modern modes of representation. If Japanese and Daminhui artists had turned to poster and graphic art to imagine the sun rising over Nanjing's city walls, it was through photography (and photo-realist art) that the mausoleum would be celebrated. The manner in which this monument was depicted changed little throughout the RNG period. The favored mode of representation, first utilized in the lead-up to the *huandu* itself, was to picture the mausoleum from a low camera angle and to include elements of the site, such as its eight flights of steps

Figure 5.6. Photograph of Wang Jingwei and other Peace Movement advocates leaving the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing ten days prior to the *huandu*. Photo by the *Asahi shimbun* via Getty Images.

and *via sacra* leading to its central hall. This accentuated the mausoleum's height and scale and encouraged viewers to literally look up at the mausoleum in reverence.

One of the first and most commonly circulated images of the mausoleum to be produced in this mode was a photograph of Wang and his courtiers walking down the steps from the site after paying their respects to Sun Yat-sen on March 20, 1940 (just over a week before the *huandu*).[58] This photograph recalled a similar image of Sun Yat-sen in front of the tomb of the first Ming emperor in Nanjing in February 1912.[59] In this image, almost certainly taken by an Asahi journalist, Wang and his followers are dwarfed by the sheer scale of the mausoleum site, with the steps filling most of the image and a slightly blurred central hall sitting at the top of the frame, slightly to the left of center (figure 5.6).

While this photograph was produced to document that Wang had indeed returned to Nanjing in 1940—hence the centering of Wang within it—it set the tone for many subsequent depictions, all of which presented the mausoleum as an almost sacred site for the new regime, and one that was to be looked up to in awe by the occupied Chinese. Indeed, RNG banknotes would include similarly expansive photo-realistic images of the mausoleum, with

steps leading to the central hall, and the undulating silhouette of Purple Mountain in the background. The same image could also be manipulated to accentuate the mausoleum's height and Wang Jingwei's connection to it. When the editors of the *Central China Daily News* published this image in 1940, for example, they chose to crop it into a portrait orientation, thus placing Wang, and the central hall, at the center of the image.[60]

An International Settlement

Not all RNG attempts at claiming Republican-era landmarks in the existing landscape were necessarily this coherent or successful, however. Indeed, beyond Nanjing, the story of other architectural icons and their adoption by RNG agencies hints at a far more difficult relationship between Wang's regime and the Japanese. For example, when it came to the city of Shanghai, there was constant tension over how best to imagine, draw, or photograph this most cosmopolitan of centers. This tension can be illustrated with reference to one particular landmark on the Huangpu riverfront.

In Shanghai before World War II, one of the most recognizable features of the city's bund had been Henry Fehr's art nouveau Allied War Memorial, erected in 1924 and featuring at its top a statue of a winged Victory. According to Robert Bickers, this monument was so important a sight in Shanghai that it made its way into the city's culture, being included in classic films such as Yuan Muzhi's *Street Angel* (*Malu tianshi*) of 1937. This may explain why the statue came to be referred to colloquially in the city either as the angel of peace (*heping tianshi*) or the victory angel (*shengli tianshi*) during the 1930s.[61]

In 1939, however, Fehr's figure was appropriated by the Daminhui and transformed into a goddess of peace (*heping nüshen*) or even a mother of peace (*heping zhi mu*) in pre-RNG periodicals.[62] A sketch of pro–Peace Movement citizens rallying around the monument was featured in the *Zhonghua ribao* in Shanghai in July 1939.[63] And stylized sketches of Victory looking mercifully down upon the Shanghai Bund below a sky of billowing clouds were used on the covers of the Peace Movement periodical *Gengsheng* (Regeneration).[64]

In the hands of RNG-affiliated artists, however, this angel/goddess/mother was taken out of Shanghai's International Settlement and added to imagined Chinese landscapes whenever anthropomorphized references to peace were deemed necessary. In Guangzhou, children were dressed as the angel of peace when celebrating important dates in the RNG calendar. The

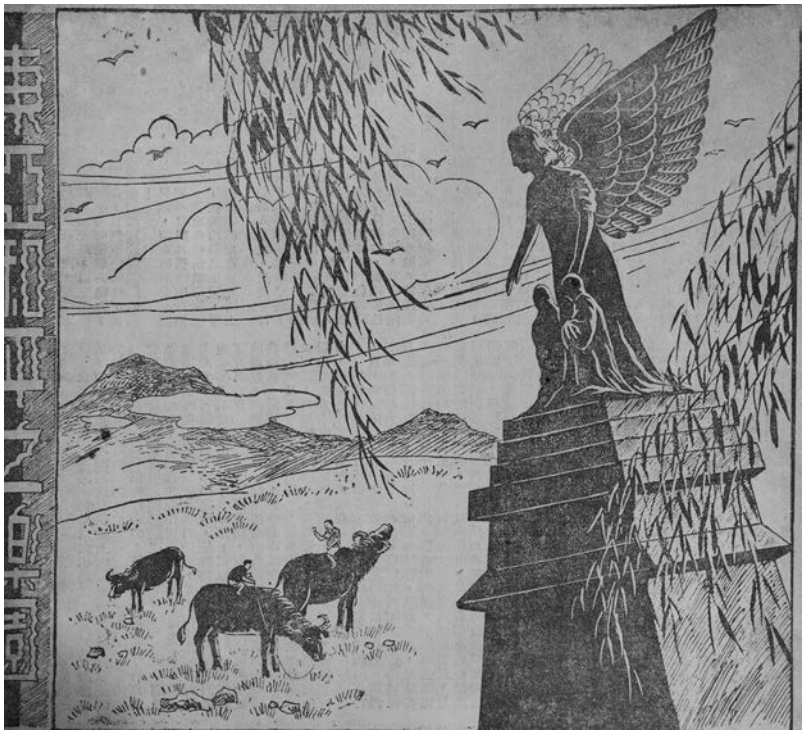

Figure 5.7. The angel of peace looks down upon oxherds riding water buffaloes in a "paradise of East Asian peace" (*Dong Ya heping leyuan*), as depicted by an unattributed artist. *Dong Ya Lianmeng huabao* [Toa pictorial] 4 (June 1941). Courtesy of the East Asia Library, Stanford University.

angel graced the front page of the Suzhou-based *Jiangsu ribao* (Jiangsu daily) when it marked China's National Day in October 1941, with the KMT sun rising behind her plinth (much as the sun had risen over Nanjing's city walls in Daminhui propaganda art).[65] In the hands of the East Asia League (EAL), Fehr's Victory could even be placed in rural Chinese landscapes as she watched over the "paradise of East Asian peace" (*Dong Ya heping leyuan*) (figure 5.7).[66]

Ironically, however, with the return of the foreign concessions to RNG rule in the summer of 1943, the angel of peace physically disappeared and was subsequently expunged from RNG visual culture. With their takeover of the International Settlement at the end of 1941, the Japanese had ordered that the residue of Western imperialism be removed from Shanghai's streets. This included, of course, Fehr's Victory.[67] Despite initially being

festooned with RNG flags to celebrate the *tuihuan* in the summer 1943, this key icon that the Peace Movement and the Daminhui had visually prized from the Bund was rendered physically and figuratively invisible by the Japanese in September of the same year. Wang's regime had won Shanghai but lost its angel.

As the fate of the angel of peace suggests, the celebration of treaty port streetscapes was a field of considerable contention under occupation. On the one hand, the treaty ports (which could claim an eclectic mix of architecture, public art, and monuments) had also been the training ground for many cultural workers who were employed by RNG agencies. With the move toward "anti-imperialism" promoted from the start of 1942 onward, however, sympathetic depictions of the treaty ports—and particularly Shanghai—became problematic. How could a regime that claimed to loathe what Lin Baisheng had referred to as "compradors and slaves to foreigners" laud landmarks so closely associated with a semicolonial presence? This question only became more urgent in the summer of 1943, as the RNG faced the difficult task of balancing commemoration of what was the most important achievement of the regime to date—the return of the foreign concessions—with the increasingly nativist rhetoric generated under the NCM.

If the MoP had taken its angel of peace out of Shanghai, it had also initially chosen to ignore those areas of the city from whence she came. This was especially the case in the medium of photography. When the RNG municipal administration of Shanghai celebrated the first anniversary of the *huandu* in the spring of 1941, for example, it presented the city not as a thriving treaty port but as a miniature Nanjing. The Shanghai Bund—associated within the International Settlement, which had become part of a *gudao* beyond the reach of Japanese control—was rarely included in such accounts. At a time when "*gudao* propaganda" was feared in Nanjing, those areas of Shanghai that lay beyond RNG or Japanese control were simply not seen. Here was a city in which municipal government buildings and "new," occupied landscapes—including Shanghai's own commemorative peace forest—took precedence over the famous vistas of the International Settlement, synonymous with Shanghai itself.[68]

Such imagery sat at odds not only with the continuing prevalence of print culture emanating from the International Settlement (which, despite bans, circulated unofficially in occupied China) but also with depictions of Shanghai promoted by Japanese filmmakers. Japanese film companies that were, for all purposes, producing pro-occupation pabulum in this period, were obsessed with the streetscapes of the International Settlement. For example,

Shina no yoru (China nights), one of the most famous of the "continental films" (*tairiku eiga*) starring Li Xianglan (and released just months after the *huandu*), is spliced with newsreel footage shot on location on Shanghai's Bund (including scenes featuring Fehr's Victory), all of which presented the Bund as a dynamic and exciting space of consumption and cosmopolitanism—one possible reason behind the film's apparent popularity later in the war with Shanghai audiences.[69] Similarly, the 1941 Sino-Japanese joint production *Shanghai zhi yue/Shanhai no tsuki* (Moon of Shanghai)—a film that was supposedly "dedicated to [those] who has [*sic*] sacrificed their lives in the Sino-Japanese conflict for peace and friendship between the two countries"—used the International Settlement itself as the mise-en-scène to a story of collaboration.[70] It was precisely Shanghai's supposed "sentimentalism and eroticism," as embodied in its famed waterfront, that animated Japanese cultural production in the period around the *huandu* more generally.[71]

One can detect a clear shift of emphasis in the representation of Shanghai with the start of the Pacific War in December 1941, however. With the end of the International Settlement's special (i.e., non-occupied) status, the MoP and its local offices no longer feared direct engagement with this supposed bastion of semicolonialism. But how might this urban space be recast now that Western imperialists had been purged from it? In February 1942, the inaugural issue of the Wuhan-published *Changjiang huakan* featured on its cover a photograph of Japanese troops aboard a captured American ship moored in Pudong, with the famous buildings of the Shanghai Bund in the background.[72] This emulated similar imagery that was being promoted through the *Kabun,* in which Shanghai riverscapes were associated with naval themes. Rivers could also be worked into other visual narratives imagined by RNG propagandists, however. For example, as we saw in chapter 4, the Yangtze—apparently freed from its foreign (i.e., Western) presence—could be turned into a stage upon which the working men of occupied China could roar against imperialism.

RNG riverscapes need not always be militarized, however. In both Wuhan and Guangzhou, for example, the CNA had managed to sustain a visual narrative through the medium of pictorials and photojournalism of lively river ports replete with modern, treaty-port architecture and an urbane Chinese citizenry. Such imagery was a common feature of the *E bao,* a pictorial published by the RNG's Hubei Provincial Government from 1940 onward. Using photomontage techniques clearly inspired by wartime Japanese pictorials,[73] the very first issue of *E bao* lauded a "developing Hankou" (*fazhan zhong de Hankou*) with a photo spread of the city's

bund, modern city residents framing a view of the Yangtze riverfront and customhouse.[74] Less than a year later, the Wuhan Municipal Government published a photographic collection of very similar images to mark the first year of "new Wuhan."[75] The same was the case for *Xin Guangdong* (New Guangdong), a pictorial that included photographs of a lively bund and a Pearl River bustling with water traffic. Such examples demonstrated how pictorial representations of treaty port riverscapes did not need to contradict the message of "peace, anticommunism, and nation-building" inherent in the RNG project. An occupation treaty port in which extraterritoriality was no longer exercised was entirely imaginable—in fact it had been envisaged in the Basic Treaty of 1940.[76]

If we accept the official RNG line that China attained liberty and equality through the return of the foreign concessions in 1943, then we might expect to see depictions of Shanghai replicate this bund-themed photography from Wuhan and Guangzhou. It was certainly the case that in many forms of visual media—from photojournalism to graphic art—the events of summer 1943 generated copious amounts of visual imagery. Indeed, the return of the foreign concessions to RNG rule even prompted the publication of entirely new pictorials, including the *China Pictorial*—an MoP-edited magazine that was initiated in August 1943 with the specific purpose of documenting the process of the *tuihuan*. This pictorial documented the removal of imperialist statues from the International Settlement (although Fehr's Victory was conspicuously absent) and included photographs of all the urban landmarks that a postcolonial, RNG-controlled Shanghai could now embrace.[77] One recurrent image in this and other regime publications, for example, was a photograph of the ROC flag flying above the headquarters of the Shanghai Municipal Council's office building (figure 5.8). Other landmarks, such as Broadway Mansions, also became common icons in this post-*tuihuan* period. Broadway Mansions had been a site/sight of some fascination for Japanese propagandists for some years. It had also, however, been the stage from which one of the most iconic and enduring antiwar photographs ever produced in China had been taken in September 1937—that is, Ma Yingbiao's photograph of hundreds of refugees crossing Garden Bridge (Waibaidu) to enter the International Settlement.[78] This image had been taken from the top of Broadway Mansions. Now, following the *tuihuan,* the same view could be replicated to achieve "aerial views" of a "liberated" (i.e., RNG-administered) Shanghai.[79] In other words, it was an early twentieth- century office block that enabled the RNG to see the Yangtze from the aerial perspective it had been denied prior to 1943.

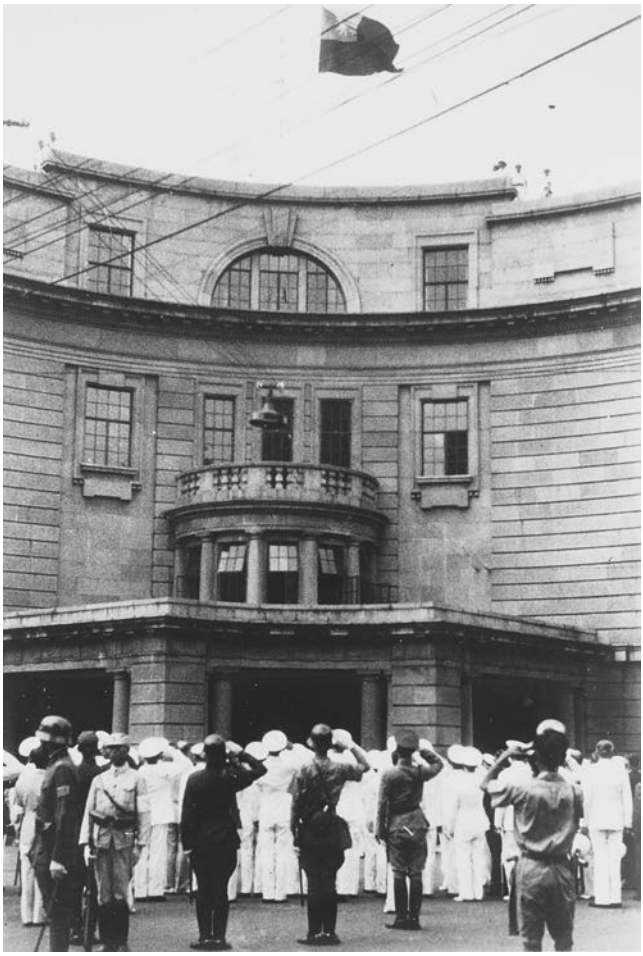

Figure 5.8. RNG troops saluting the ROC flag as it is raised above offices of the Shanghai Municipal Council in August 1943. Chu Minyi Collection (Lot 11700), Prints and Photographs Reading Room, Library of Congress.

Pacific Jiangnan

Tensions over what China should or actually did look like were not limited to depictions of urban streetscapes or riverscapes. A number of contradictory ideas about how rural China should be visually represented during wartime also developed within the RNG. This may well have been a predominantly

urban regime that imagined its main support to be concentrated in the cities of China's east and south. Nonetheless, it always aspired to greater control over the countryside. In seeking to achieve this, it sought to create a visual narrative about its rural hinterland for its urban clientele. From the summer of 1941 onward, it also tried to involve rural communities themselves in the creation of a new vision of a "pacified" yet politicized countryside under occupation.

Prior to Rural Pacification, the RNG had not maintained a significant presence in rural China. Indeed, as we have seen, much of the regime's energy in the first year of its return had been spent rebuilding its capital. As a result, many of the depictions of the Chinese countryside found in early RNG art and propaganda are highly negative and are dominated by images of the ubiquitous *youjidui* (guerrilla units) of the resistance.[80] These were presented as bands of shadowy figures visiting havoc on otherwise peaceful villages and were a common feature of murals, as well as performative cultural production such as dramas.[81]

In the absence of a strong RNG presence beyond the cities, the Japanese military had maintained a monopoly over the production of visual depictions of rural China and of visual cultures in occupied rural China itself. Prior to 1941, it was Japanese artists (rather than RNG cadres) who had adorned the walls of rural towns with murals and posters touting bucolic Chinese villages. Japanese military broadsides, often aimed at local Chinese elites, showed Japanese soldiers being welcomed into villages where crops were high and skies were clear.[82]

Such imagery found its way onto the pages of pictorials such as the *Kabun*. Mainichi editors reinterpreted military visions of rural bliss through the medium of photography and graphic art. Even following the *huandu,* this Japanese tendency to visually imagine rural China as a land of contented hamlets and towns continued: publications that introduced the RNG realm to Japanese audiences included ink-wash paintings and landscape photography of temples, riverboats, and hamlets by the likes of Yonaiyama Tsuneo.[83]

A good deal of this material drew on the canon of the Manchukuo pastoral, itself highly influenced by Barbizon interpretations of rural France in the nineteenth century.[84] As Kari Shepherdson-Scott has argued, in this Manchukuo vision of Chinese villages, "the subjects [of propaganda photography] become evocative symbols of local culture . . . occupying a timeless rural landscape."[85] Like the Manchukuo villages imagined in Japanese photography of the sort Shepherdson-Scott has studied, the Chinese villages that emerged from the pages of the *Kabun* and other pictorials from 1939 onward were defined by their simplicity and innocence. They included simple

shacks and fecund paddies and were peopled with happy peasants. Even the vocabulary used to describe such imagery betrayed a Manchukuo provenance. These were "central Chinese villages in which people lived in peace and enjoyed their work" (*anju leye zhi Huazhong nongcun*).[86] This "picturesque China" (*fengguang mingmei de Zhongguo*) was one of waterside vistas, pagodas, and bridges.[87] The harsh frontier feel that had typified a good deal of Manchukuo photography was replaced in east China with more languid scenes anchored firmly in the Jiangnan—China "south of the Yangtze."[88] Such imagery reflected visions of an idyllic China that had been developing in the imperial Japanese imagination for some decades prior to the war. Be it Japanese tourists to China in the early twentieth century or the main protagonists in occupation-era films such as *Shina no yoru* (China nights) (1940), "romantic idylls by the river"[89] were presented as quintessential to rural China.[90] That Japanese propagandists had become so adept at depicting the Jiangnan is hardly surprising: Mabuchi Itsuo had run propaganda work out of the Jiangnan city of Hangzhou in 1939.[91]

Other markers of rural Jiangnan presented in *huandu*-era visual cultures betrayed imperial Japanese connotations as well. In pictorials, for example, one of the most recurrent icons was that of the "peasant riding on his water buffalo—as happy as you please" (*nongcun mutong, qi niu bei shang, kuaile ziru*).[92] This obsession with peasant children herding oxen even included the publication of apparently traditional folk songs on this very theme.[93] As recent scholarship in art history reminds us, depictions of rural landscapes featuring peasants herding oxen can be dated back to at least the Song dynasty (960–1279 CE).[94] In occupied China, however, the oxherd carried with him distinctly imperial Japanese connotations. Despite its Song origins, the theme had been invoked by Japanese *nihonga* (literally, "Japanese-style paintings") artists in China such as Yokoyama Taikan prior to the war.[95] It had also been revived under Japanese colonial rule in Taiwan, with the oxherd-themed carvings and sculptures of Huang Tushui being featured in empire-wide art exhibitions and helping to popularize the water buffalo and rural child as a symbol of colonial harmony.[96] That ox herding as an artistic theme also had Buddhist connotations only helped make this image fitting for a regime that (as we have seen) found this religion to be both suitably Pan-Asian and dedicated to the same notion that had animated Wang's followers in seeking a settlement with Japan in the first place (i.e., peace).[97]

The image of the sleepy Jiangnan village with its water buffaloes, canals, and temples was not, however, the only means of imagining rural China under occupation. Indeed, this clichéd Japanese picture came under direct

challenge from the RNG with the introduction of Rural Pacification in the summer of 1941. Rural Pacification prompted a fundamental shift in the ways in which RNG state actors both promoted occupation to rural China itself and promoted rural China to occupied cities. For some sections of the RNG state (especially the MoP), it involved a reordering of the imagined Chinese countryside, so that the slow and sleepy villages of the pre-1941 era could be repackaged as spaces of production and politics. Ironically, Rural Pacification also entailed increased levels of regime surveillance in the countryside and thus increased the control over what peasants themselves could actually see—even while their villages were pictorially lauded as sites of productive harvests.[98]

We can still find evidence of the visual cultures that MoP cadres sought to promote to pacified villages in the *nongcun jianshe tu* (village-building pictures) that they produced in the name of Rural Pacification—images of which survive in photographs that were reprinted in regime pictorials. A huge canvas that dwarfed even the artists who posed in front of it was hung at the entrance to the site of the MoP's First National Conference, held just as Rural Pacification was getting under way. Entitled *Revitalize the Villages and Improve the Lives of the People* (*Fuxing nongcun gaishan renmin shenghuo*), this image showed peasants leading ever-present buffaloes across fecund paddies, yet with smokestacks of industry pointing out from behind distant hills.[99] In the late summer of 1942, Chinese activists from the EAL depicted toiling peasants engaged in manual labor, foregrounding picturesque hamlets in the shadow of hills as they appealed to peasants to "return to their villages," just as the RNG had returned to Nanjing.[100]

In the CNA photography that was generated as part of the Rural Pacification campaigns, the countryside was decidedly *not* idyllic. When Lei Yimin articulated the aims of these campaigns in early 1943, for example, he described in vivid terms the countryside that he had apparently encountered as he set out to take charge of Rural Pacification propaganda work in July 1941: "The people were missing or homeless, and all the buildings had been left abandoned, their walls reduced to rubble. It was shocking to see."[101] Rural Pacification photography reflected such sentiments. While not necessarily dwelling on images of rural destitution, CNA photographers chose to present rural China as a dynamic space in which peasants were expected to perform (and be seen to perform) acts of reconstruction and political engagement (figure 5.9). Indeed, peasants themselves featured prominently in the photographs that Chen Guoqi and others produced to document Wang Jingwei's tours of the pacified zones. Rural Pacification publications

Figure 5.9. Undated photograph of unidentified Rural Pacification cadres rousing peasants. © Imperial War Museum (HU 73374).

showed peasants raising their fists in protest (at enemies unspecified) or erecting new bamboo fences that would separate their villages from communist guerrillas.[102] The symbols of the bamboo fence and the watchtower, in particular, would emerge as an integral part of the visualized countryside under the RNG: physical markers that accentuated the dichotomy between apparently happy (i.e., pacified) villages and the chaos of the ruinous, resistance-infested countryside that Lei Yimin had lamented (figure 5.10).

This image of a politically engaged countryside would even find its way into the cinema of occupied China. A small number of feature films, the plots of which revolved around *tufei* (bandits) wreaking havoc on Lower Yangtze rural communities, presented Chinese villages that cooperated

Figure 5.10. Cartoon depiction of a Rural Pacification village by Wen Ying. *Zhongguo manhua* [Chinese cartoons] 2 (October 1942): 46. Courtesy of Shanghai Library.

with the authorities and that enjoyed social harmony and high crop yields as a result. One example was the CUMP-produced film *Lai ri fangchang* (The days to come) (1943), directed by Zheng Xiaoqiu and shot in the vicinity of Changshu, near Suzhou.[103] Ironically, many of these movies—examples of what we might call "Rural Pacification cinema"—were filmed on location in the very same pacified areas that had been featured in photo shoots of Wang Jingwei's Rural Pacification tours. The actual "pacification" of

Figure 5.11. Jiangsu peasant boy collecting the harvest. *Guomin xinwen huabao* 3 (March 1942). Courtesy of Shanghai Library.

the countryside, in other words, enabled new visions of rural China to be produced for the consumption of urban RNG audiences.

By 1943, this RNG vision of the countryside was showing signs of far more direct influence from imperial Japanese propaganda praising occupation in other parts of Asia. With the start of the Pacific War, the focus in much propaganda throughout Japanese-occupied Asia emphasized agricultural production (figure 5.11).[104] In this context, Rural Pacification–themed visual propaganda, especially as it was presented in Japanese publications for Pan-Asian markets, began to conflate pacified Jiangnan with Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia.[105] Peasants pictured gathering the harvest in occupation pictorials were now as likely to be from Java as Jiangsu (figure 5.12). In photography of rural production, a clear shift toward gigantism—south China villagers growing supersized melons, just as their brethren in occupied Indonesia did—can also be detected.[106] By the end of 1944, pacified rural China had been almost entirely conflated with occupied Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

During the postwar trials of high-ranking members of the RNG staged by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government in 1946, Chen Bijun berated prosecutors over the accusation that she and her husband had "sold out the nation" in 1940. How could there be a nation left to sell, asked Chen, when China had been effectively abandoned by Chiang Kai-shek over the course of

Figure 5.12. *Fengren de Zhuawa* (A bumper harvest in Java). Unattributed image featured on a *New China Pictorial* cover. *Xin Zhonghua huabao* 6, no. 4 (April 1944). Asian Reading Room, Library of Congress.

1937 and 1938? Retrospectively reinterpreted, the notion of "returning the rivers and mountains" could thus be interpreted, not as a call to arms, but rather as a justification for the creation of a Chinese regime under occupation that would ensure the restoration of partial Chinese sovereignty, as well as the resurrection of a moribund Chinese republic with its capital in Nanjing.[107]

What the visual record shows us, however, is that this is not how the situation was interpreted by many sections of the RNG state. If anything,

the tendency toward avoidance of particular modes of spatial representation under occupation, particularly maps and representations of space from an aerial perspective, suggest that this regime was sensitive to the limits of its sovereignty. Just as tellingly, the RNG's sponsorship of specific modes of representing imagined rivers and mountains (e.g., in *shanshuihua*), together with its symbolic obsession with one particular mountain (Purple Mountain) and one specific river (the Yangtze), all suggest that the RNG was open to a selective appropriation of resistance iconographies when such appropriation fitted its own agenda. Just as importantly, RNG attempts to harness existing sites within the prewar built environment (e.g., Fehr's Victory) or render certain spaces invisible were sometimes undermined by Japanese policies. This demonstrates just how difficult it was for Wang's regime to maintain a consistent and coherent visual narrative that complied both with Japanese imperial designs and with Republican orthodoxy. The photographic veneration of the Sun Mausoleum thus hints, not simply at the symbolic importance of this site, but also at the fact that this was one of the few prewar monuments whose iconographic importance could be agreed upon by both the RNG and the Japanese.

In the shifting visions of rural China before and during Rural Pacification, we find further evidence of these same tensions. Wang Jingwei had established a thoroughly urban regime, turning its back on the ruralization of the resistance[108] and embracing the cities of the south and east, including those that had been so central to the prewar mythology of Republican Chinese nationalism—Guangzhou, Wuhan, and, of course, Nanjing. Under Rural Pacification, however, RNG cadres began to explore new ways of representing the hinterland, moving away from Jiangnan riverscapes so often celebrated by Japanese army artists and news agencies, in favor of the pacified village marked out by its bamboo fence.

Overall, however, we see in the visual depictions of China produced by the agencies of the RNG an administration that felt fundamentally undermined by its own lack of sovereignty. Resistance artists called on the Japanese to "return the rivers and mountains [to us]"; RNG cadres, in contrast, clung desperately to those few rivers and mountains they could find—Purple Mountain and the Yangtze—as a means of claiming some semblance of sovereignty. In doing so, however, they also ensured that much of China would remain unseen and unseeable—even to Wang Jingwei himself.