

Jack London's Influential Role as an Observer of Early Modern Asia

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For his novels and short stories, Jack London (1876–1916) is regarded as one of America's most popular writers. Less known today is the fact that he was also an astute observer of East Asian politics, societies, and peoples. Working as a journalist for several newspapers and magazines, he filed numerous articles and essays covering the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) and even foresaw the rise of Japan and China as world powers. This article provides an overview of London's journalistic and literary contributions about Asia, his insights into Asian ethnic and political complexities, and his vision for pan-Asian/American cooperation.

London the Journalist, Novelist & Essayist

Nearly a century after his death, Jack London (1876–1916) remains one of the most popular and beloved American writers. He is famous for his adventure stories in the Yukon, Polynesia, and across America; but he was also a renowned socialist and fabled journalist whose brilliant nonfiction work *The People of the Abyss* (1903) depicted the poverty and squalor of the low end of life in the capital of the British Empire. What is certainly less known about Jack London is that he was also an astute observer of Asia. His journalistic coverage of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) and his essays and short stories provide not only excellent coverage of the war but also a detailed view of social and political conditions in East Asia at the turn of the twentieth century. What makes London even more interesting was his ability to discern the potential power of both Japan and China and to predict their respective rises to dominance later in the twentieth century.

London's firsthand essays and photographs on the Russo-Japanese War present a very clear, in-depth picture of the early phase of the conflict. He filed at least twenty-four articles, each several thousand words long, to the Hearst newspapers. In his articles, he not only presented his own views of the development of the war but also analyzed the development of Korea, Japan, and China in their struggles to modernize and thus defend them-

selves from the onslaught of Western imperialism. London's Russo-Japanese War articles, if ever published as an anthology, might well make the best contemporary work on the subject. His analyses of East Asian development, especially his views on the downtrodden state of China and its potential for greatness, were especially perceptive. London made uncanny predictions of a future Japanese invasion first of Manchuria and later of China, and he predicted China's rise as a world power. Any student of early twentieth-century Asia would do well to read London's insightful analyses that addressed political, economic, social, and cultural themes.

London was a very prolific essayist and fiction writer who prided himself on composing at least a thousand words a day. Many collections of his essays appeared during his lifetime, but, oddly, he never published his Asian essays as a whole. (A small handful appeared more or less randomly in other anthologies.) A much later collection of his journalistic essays (Hendricks and Shepard 1970) includes some of his war correspondence in Asia and Mexico, mixed with his avid sports reporting; but this collection makes no effort to highlight London's Asian pieces. A full, in-depth study of London's Asian writings would be an invaluable contribution to the field of early modern East Asian history.

One must remember, however, that London was much more a journalist, novelist, and essayist than a scholar of Asian affairs. Still, he was certainly not ignorant of the complexities of Asian culture and history. A dedicated reader of scholarly works on Asia, he consumed everything he could find by writers like Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), whose work he lavished with praise in his essays. London very correctly focused on the role that China's conservative governing "learned classes" had on slowing the modernization of the country. London wrote that China would progress only when its masses rose up and overthrew their masters. On the other hand, London occasionally missed certain important elements and formulated several stereotypical views of various Asian societies. For example, he wrote that the Japanese were a nation of warriors who decried commerce (1909), ignoring the critical role of the merchant class throughout Japanese history.

London's Travels to the East: The Stirrings of a New Asia

London made two trips to Japan and East Asia during his brief lifetime. In 1893, at age 17, he signed on to the sealing schooner *Sophie Sutherland*, bound for the coast of Japan. He spent a raucous time in the Bonin Islands (today known as the Ogasawara Islands) and had a chance to explore Yokohama when his ship stopped there on its return to San Francisco.¹ London vividly described the trip itself in his acclaimed 1904 novel, *The Sea-Wolf*, but he did not mention anything in the novel about his stops in the Bonin Islands, Tokyo, or Yokohama while on the voyage. After his return, he

wrote several short stories based on his time in Tokyo and Yokohama, including "Story of a Typhoon," "Sakaicho, Hona Asi and Hakadaki," "A Night's Swim in Yeddo Bay," and "O Haru."² These stories reflect a deep affection for Japan and its people, especially those from the lower classes. They are also among the first pieces composed by the young writer.

London demonstrated his ability to depict the lives of ordinary Japanese in "O Haru" (1897), where he described the Japanese geisha:

The *geishas* or dancing-girls are the brightest, most intelligent and most accomplished of Japanese women. Chosen for their beauty they are educated from childhood. Not only are they trained in all the seductive graces of the dance and of personal attraction; but also in singing, music, and the intricate etiquette of serving and entertaining; nor are their minds neglected, for in wit, intelligence and repartee, they excell. In short, the whole aim of their education is to make them artistically fascinating. In class, they occupy much the same position as do our actresses, and though many are frail beauties that grace the tea house festivals, here and there will be found gems of the purest luster.

A decade later, when he had already achieved fame as a novelist and short-story writer, he became the premier American correspondent covering the Russo-Japanese War.³ His services as war correspondent and photographer for the conflict had been sought by *Collier's*, the *New York Herald*, *Harper's Magazine*, and the Hearst Press.⁴ The latter had made the best offer, and going off to war had definite advantages for him besides financial gain. He would be well paid, would have a splendid adventure, and would be able to develop considerable material for future novels and stories.

London was both a keen observer and, as already noted, a hugely prolific writer. The only Western reporter to reach the front in northern Korea (along the Yalu River) and, later, in Manchuria, London's many lengthy dispatches not only describe the travails of war but also provide fascinating descriptions of people and life in Korea and Manchuria. When the Japanese eventually brought his reporting to a halt,⁵ he wrote a series of lengthy essays wherein he compared the modernization processes of Japan, Korea, and China and made bold but surprisingly accurate predictions about the rise of China as a modern superpower in the late twentieth century.

London's essays on Korea, Japan, and China provide a penetrating analysis of the state of each of these nations a century ago. London clearly saw the stirrings of a New Asia, one that, when fully awakened, would directly challenge the West for world supremacy. He saw little use for Koreans, whom he found to be a physically powerful but immensely ignorant and servile people, totally unable to save their own country from wrack and ruin. London admired the Japanese not only for their unique ability to modernize so quickly but also for what he forecasted as their potential to awaken Asia from its sleep and to lead it to its renaissance vis-à-vis the West. But it was China, once awakened by the Japanese, that he predicted

would thrust small Japan aside and itself rise as the world's preeminent superpower by 1976.

London's View of Korea & Koreans

London actually spent most of his time in Asia traveling through Korea. When he arrived in Tokyo aboard the S.S. *Siberia* on January 25, 1904, after a difficult three-week Pacific crossing, he discovered to his horror that the Japanese had no intention of permitting foreign correspondents to travel to the front lines. Very strict censorship rules were in force, but London was not going to let a few Japanese censors get in his way. While other foreign correspondents passed the time in Tokyo-area bars and begged Japanese officials to let them join Japanese forces marching north in Korea, London caught two rattle-trap steamers in early February that took him to the southern port city of Busan and then along the Korean coast to Chemulpo, where he began a long march to Manchuria in tandem with Japanese forces.

The Japanese military was surprised when London suddenly showed up in Korea, but they were preoccupied with the movement of their own forces and tended to ignore London as long as he kept a low profile and did not interfere with Japanese military operations. London employed a Japanese civilian translator and a young Korean assistant as they moved north, just ahead of the Japanese army.

As he traveled from Seoul to Manchuria, London wrote numerous reports in which he offered his in-depth analyses of Koreans, Japanese, and Chinese. London was writing in an era when many of his fellow Californians had developed a strong sense of racial prejudice against Asians, especially those Japanese and Chinese immigrants who had settled in and around the San Francisco area. On occasion, London reflected some of these prejudices in his novels and essays, especially when he was writing about Koreans; but he more often showed genuine sympathy and respect for the Asians he encountered. In that sense, most of London's writing differs greatly from the anti-Asian diatribes found in many newspaper articles and books of the period.

London had little faith in the ability of Koreans to save their nation, but he was full of praise for the Japanese and Chinese, whose rise he predicted in his early writings: "The menace to the western world lies not in the little brown man [the Japanese], but in the four hundred millions of yellow men should the little brown man undertake their management. The Chinese is not dead to new ideas; he is an efficient worker, makes a good soldier, and is wealthy in the essential materials of a machine age. Under a capable management, he will go far. The Japanese is prepared and fit to undertake this management" (quoted in O'Connor 1964, 220).

One of London's first dispatches in early March 1904 belittled the Koreans as follows (quoted in Hendricks and Shepard 1970, 44):

A stalwart race are the Koreans, well muscled and towering above their masters, the [Japanese] "dwarfs" who conquered them of old time and who look upon them to-day with the eyes of possession. But the Korean is spiritless. He lacks the dash of Malay which makes the Japanese soldier that he is.

The Korean has finer features, but the vital lack in his face is strength. He is soft and effeminate when compared with the strong breeds, and whatever strength has been his in the past has been worked out of him by centuries of corrupt government. He is certainly the most inefficient of human creatures, lacking all initiative and achievement, and the only thing in which he shines is the carrying of burdens on his back. As a draught animal and packhorse he is a success.

London (1904b) developed an even more damning view of Koreans by the time he reached Manchuria in June 1904:

War is to-day the final arbiter in the affairs of men, and it is as yet the final test of the worth-whileness of peoples. Tested thus, the Korean fails. He lacks the nerve to remain when a strange army crosses his land. The few goods and chattels he may have managed to accumulate he puts on his back, along with his doors and windows, and away he heads for his mountain fastnesses. Later he may return, sans goods, chattels, doors, and windows, impelled by insatiable curiosity for a "look see." But it is curiosity merely—a timid, deerlike curiosity. He is prepared to bound away on his long legs at the first hint of danger or trouble.

Northern Korea was a desolate land when the Japanese passed through. Villages and towns were deserted. The fields lay untouched. There was no ploughing nor sowing, no green things growing. Little or nothing was to be purchased. One carried one's own food with him and food for horses and servants was the anxious problem that waited at the day's end. In many a lonely village not an ounce nor a grain of anything could be bought, and yet there might be standing around scores of white-garmented, stalwart Koreans, smoking yard-long pipes and chattering, chattering—ceaselessly chattering. Love, money, or force could not procure from them a horseshoe or a horseshoe nail. . . .

They have splendid vigour and fine bodies, but they are accustomed to being beaten and robbed without protest or resistance by every chance foreigner who enters their country.

London wrote about the material poverty of the Korean people. He especially disliked the *yangban* 兩班 aristocracy, which he claimed to be ruthless in its suppression of the Korean people. He gave several examples where the Japanese would pay for food and supplies taken from a Korean village. The local aristocrat would collect money from the Japanese but would give only a quarter of it to the villagers, pocketing the rest for himself. Some of London's most compelling photographs from the war are of Korean refugees, dressed in white, showing the devastating plight of war on civilians. Especially poignant is London's (1904b) description of a young girl, perhaps no more than six or seven, carrying a younger sister on her back, a bandage covering the younger girl's hand, and a terrible, worried expression on her sister's face.

London on Japan

As a journalist, London was quite annoyed with Japanese government officials because they refused to allow Western reporters to actively cover the war at the front and because Japanese army officials and police detained him several times when he took pictures in sensitive areas or wandered too close to the front lines. Nevertheless, despite his disdain for Japanese officialdom, he certainly respected Japan's ability to modernize so quickly, and he often befriended ordinary Japanese. He employed a string of Japanese menservants during the last dozen years of his life, and he developed close friendships with each of them. London was sure that Japan was headed for greatness as a major world power, equal to the West not only in military and industrial power but also in terms of the depth of its religious and cultural heritage. He reported an exchange with a Japanese civilian after the Japanese army had won a battle in Manchuria—"Your people did not think we could beat the white. We have now beaten the white" (1904a, 107)—as evidence of Japan's self-confidence in its efforts to gain great-power status.

Americans, London noted, were infatuated and often surprised by Japan because of their ignorance of Japanese history and civilization. They had created an image of the Japanese based on their own culture and then expected Japanese to behave in a manner predictable to Americans. The reality, however, was that "we know nothing (and less than nothing in so far as we think we know something) of the Japanese. It is a weakness of man to believe that all the rest of mankind is moulded in his own image, and it is a weakness of the white race to believe that the Japanese think as we think, are moved to action as we are moved and have points of view similar to our own" (London 1909).

London respected Japan's extraordinary ability to modernize while other Asian states had not: "Japan is the one Asiatic race, in that alone among the races of Asia, she has been able to borrow from us and equip herself with all our material achievement. Our machinery of warfare, of commerce, of industry, she has made hers" (1909). London reflected that Japan had also developed a taste for empire-building like the West. He wrote that the Japanese are

a race of mastery and power, a fighting race through all its history, a race which has always despised commerce and exalted fighting.

To-day, equipped with the finest machines and systems of destruction the Caucasian mind has devised, handling machines and systems with remarkable and deadly accuracy, this rejuvenescent Japanese race has embarked on a course of conquest the goal of which no man knows. The head men of Japan are dreaming ambitiously, and the people are dreaming blindly, a Napoleonic dream. And to this dream the Japanese clings and will cling with bull-dog tenacity. (1904b)

London commented frequently on the collective nature of Japanese culture. While he admired and respected many individual Japanese, especially

certain Japanese generals who showed great courage and fighting skill, he was amazed at the Japanese ability to coalesce and at the high degree of patriotism he found. Writing in late 1904, he stated that:

The Japanese is not an individualist. He has developed national consciousness instead of moral consciousness. He is not interested in his own moral welfare except in so far as it is the welfare of the State. The honour of the individual, per se, does not exist. Only exists the honour of the State, which is his honour. He does not look upon himself as a free agent, working out his own personal salvation. Spiritual agonizing is unknown to him. He has a "sense of calm trust in fate, a quiet submission to the inevitable, a stoic composure in sight of danger or calamity, a disdain of life and friendliness with death." He relates himself to the State as, amongst bees, the worker is related to the hive; himself nothing, the State everything; his reasons for existence the exaltation and glorification of the State.

The most admired quality to-day of the Japanese is his patriotism. The Western world is in rhapsodies over it, unwittingly measuring the Japanese patriotism by its own conceptions of patriotism. "For God, my country, and the Czar!" cries the Russian patriot; but in the Japanese mind there is no differentiation between the three. The Emperor is the Emperor, and God and country as well. The patriotism of the Japanese is blind and unswerving loyalty to what is practically an absolutism. (1904b)

London's observations here come from an article that he entitled "The Yellow Peril" (1904b). *Yellow peril* was a derogatory term of the period meant to demean the squalor and poverty that typified Asia in the eyes of so many Western writers and political leaders. Although London used this expression in his title, his writing contradicted the typical view toward Asians. London respected both the determination of the Japanese to save their nation through modernization and the hard work and endurance of the Chinese whom he had encountered.

London on China & Predictions for the Future of East Asia

London also had considerable admiration for Chinese civilization and predicted that, when its people "woke up," it would become a world superpower, becoming so powerful by 1976—he predicted—that the nations of the West would rally together to curtail China's dominance. He found the Chinese to be intelligent, clever, pragmatic, and extremely hardworking. Tragically, however, China had been held back by a conservative governing elite who feared innovation and who looked to the glories of their nation's past, shunning chances to learn from the technologically superior West or from the recent achievements of the Japanese. London believed that the only hope for the Chinese would be a revolution from below, because the lethargic literati who governed China did so with an iron hand. The rulers would make no concessions to modernize China, for to do so would cause

them to lose their power and wealth. The real tragedy, noted London, was that so little had changed in China for centuries because the “government was in the hands of the learned classes, and . . . these governing scholars found their salvation lay in suppressing all progressive ideas.” He continued as follows (1904b):

The Chinese is the perfect type of industry. For sheer work no worker in the world can compare with him. Work is the breath of his nostrils. It is his solution of existence. It is to him what wandering and fighting in far lands and spiritual adventure have been to other peoples. Liberty to him epitomizes itself in access to the means of toil. To till the soil and labour interminably with rude implements and utensils is all he asks of life and of the powers that be. Work is what he desires above all things, and he will work at anything for anybody. . . .

Here we have the Chinese, four hundred millions of him, occupying a vast land of immense natural resources—resources of a twentieth-century age, of a machine age; resources of coal and iron, which are the backbone of commercial civilization. He is an indefatigable worker. He is not dead to new ideas, new methods, new systems. Under a capable management he can be made to do anything. Truly would he of himself constitute the much-heralded Yellow Peril were it not for his present management. This management, his government, is set, crystallized. It is what binds him down to building as his fathers built. The governing class, entrenched by the precedent and power of centuries and by the stamp it has put upon his mind, will never free him. It would be the suicide of the governing class, and the governing class knows it.

London predicted that a Chinese revolution and future ascendancy would be triggered by a Japanese invasion of China. Looking to the future in 1905, London conjectured that Japan would never be satisfied with control over Korea. Just above Korea lay Manchuria, with its huge deposits of coal and iron, the very ingredients that Japan would need to expand its industrial empire. South of Manchuria lay four hundred million highly disciplined workers who, if harnessed by the Japanese, could become the factory workers and miners who would make Japan a truly great world power.

London’s predictions for the future of East Asia are found in a 1906 short story, “The Unparalleled Invasion.”⁶ In this story, London foretells of the rise of China in 1976 as a threat to world peace and how the Western powers combated this threat through the use of biological warfare. Japan, after its victory over Russia, had moved into Manchuria and then China and had persuaded the Chinese to work with the Japanese as kindred brothers. This collaboration included building a vast modern Chinese army that was to be at the disposal of the Japanese, but then something happened that the Japanese had not counted on: The Chinese woke up. They realized their great power and own potential. It was time for China to throw the Japanese out and to seek its own fortune in world affairs! London (1906) described the situation as follows:

China rejuvenescent! It was but a step to China rampant. She discovered a new pride in herself and a will of her own. She began to chafe under the guidance of Japan, but she did not chafe long. On Japan's advice, in the beginning, she had expelled from the Empire all Western missionaries, engineers, drill sergeants, merchants, and teachers. She now began to expel the similar representatives of Japan. The latter's advisory statesmen were showered with honours and decorations, and sent home. The West had awakened Japan, and, as Japan had then requited the West, Japan was not requited by China. Japan was thanked for her kindly aid and flung out bag and baggage by her gigantic protégé.

In the story, London predicted that Japan would go to war with China to be able to use China as a great workshop for their expanding industries, but he felt that this invasion would awaken the Chinese to the extent that they would drive out the Japanese and then become an industrial and military power in their own right. Japan then would become a peaceful nation no longer interested in remaining a major military power. China, too, was not a war-like nation—her strength lay “in the fecundity of her loins”; and by 1970 the country's population stood at a billion and was spilling over its boundaries. However, in 1970, when France made a stand for Indo-China, China sent down an army of a million men, and “the French force was brushed aside like a fly.” France then landed a punitive expedition of two hundred fifty thousand men and watched as it, too, was “swallowed up in China's cavernous maw.” Then, as China expanded, Siam fell, the southern boundary of Siberia was pressed hard, and all other border areas from India to Central Asia were absorbed as well as Burma and what is now Malaysia.

As the story continues, the Great Powers of Europe came together and decided that the Chinese threat must be eradicated. They sent a great military and naval force toward China, which, in turn, mobilized all of its forces. But although the great armies approached each other, there was no invasion. Instead, on May 1, 1976, an airship flew over Peking, dropping tubes of fragile glass that fell on the city and shattered. In due course, all of China was bombarded with glass tubes filled with microbes and bacilli. Within six weeks, most of Peking's eleven million inhabitants had died from a pandemic sparked by virulent forms of every infectious disease, including smallpox, scarlet fever, yellow fever, cholera, and the bubonic plague. Before long, much of the rest of China experienced the same catastrophe, and much of the country became an empty wilderness. London concluded his story by commenting on the downfall of China:

Such was the unparalleled invasion of China. For that billion of people there was no hope. Pent in their vast and festering charnel-house, all organization and cohesion lost, they could do naught but die. They could not escape. As they were flung back from their land frontiers, so were they flung back from the sea. Seventy-five thousand vessels patrolled the coasts. By day their smoking funnels dimmed the sea-rim, and by night their flashing searchlights ploughed the dark and harrowed it for the tiniest escaping junk. The attempts

of the immense fleets of junks were pitiful. Not one ever got by the guarding sea-hounds. Modern war-machinery held back the disorganized mass of China, while the plagues did the work.

But old War was made a thing of laughter. Naught remained to him but patrol duty. China had laughed at war, and war she was getting, but it was ultra-modern war, twentieth century war, the war of the scientist and the laboratory. . . . Hundred-ton guns were toys compared with the micro-organic projectiles hurled from the laboratories, the messengers of death, the destroying angels that stalked through the empire of a billion souls.

During all the summer and fall of 1976 China was an inferno. There was no eluding the microscopic projectiles that sought out the remotest hiding-places. The hundreds of millions of dead remained unburied and the germs multiplied themselves, and, toward the last, millions died daily of starvation. Besides, starvation weakened the victims and destroyed their natural defences against the plagues. Cannibalism, murder, and madness reigned. And so perished China. (1906)

It is highly ironic that London so clearly foresaw Japan's eventual seizure of Korea and Manchuria—and its long, difficult invasion of China. Most importantly, he saw that Japan would not be satisfied with the mere defeat of Russia and the seizure of Korea and small parts of southern Manchuria. He foresaw that the Japanese would want to become the powerhouse of Asia and that they would come to realize that they would benefit if they could employ the power of four hundred million Chinese working on their behalf. History tells us that Japan did indeed invade Manchuria for its fertile land and rich natural resources in 1931 and that it subsequently invaded China to force the Chinese to accept Japanese supremacy in Manchuria. A number of Japanese industrialists did indeed build profitable factories in several Chinese cities, and the Japanese military even installed its own puppet Chinese government in China. London correctly predicted that Japan's incursion into China would so enrage the Chinese that they would rise up and expel the Japanese. This awakening of the "sleeping dragon" of China was what, according to London, led to that nation's emergence as a major world power.

London the Internationalist

Many writers have accused London of being a racist and white supremacist. For example, his essays after leaving Manchuria have frequent references to the "Yellow Peril." In his 1904 article by that name, he wrote that the "yellow" Chinese and "brown" Japanese might one day embark on an adventure that would shatter the domination of the West. London's many political speeches as the Socialist Party candidate for mayor of Oakland, California, and elsewhere made it clear that he felt socialism would work only in advanced societies and would fail in less developed societies—until the inferior races were able to advance themselves sufficiently.

Although London may well have harbored some beliefs leaning toward white supremacy, he clearly admired many of the Asians he encountered and strongly urged a forum where East and West could exchange views and ideas on an equal basis. These are hardly the thoughts of a racist; rather, they are the words of a true internationalist. He resolved that Hawai'i was the ideal place for this encounter to take place and, in 1915, urged the creation of a Pan-Pacific Club where people of all races could meet to discuss the issues of the day.

In one of his last essays, "The Language of the Tribe," London described what he perceived to be some of the reasons for cultural misunderstanding between Japanese and Americans. He saw the Japanese as a patient and calm people, while Americans are hasty and impatient in their daily lives. According to London, these and other extreme differences made it difficult for Americans to understand the Japanese and to accept their immigrants to the United States as citizens. Needed was a place where both Americans and Japanese could come together and better understand their respective cultures. He wrote: "A Pan-Pacific Club can be made the place where we meet each other and learn to understand each other. Here we will come to know each other and each other's hobbies; we might have some of our new made friends of other tribes at our homes, and that is the one way we can get deep down under the surface and know one another. For the good of all of us, let's start such a club" (Wichlan 2007, 126).

London traveled extensively over the course of his short life. He encountered people of many cultures and empathized with the suffering of the downtrodden not only in the United States but also in Europe, East Asia, and the South Pacific. Yet he lived in California at a time when many of his neighbors supported openly racist legislation against the many Japanese and Chinese immigrants who had settled there. London took the time to know many foreigners as individuals and realized their potential worth as fellow human beings. Even as a very young writer he wrote stories and essays where he sympathetically portrayed the suffering and aspirations of Japanese, Chinese, and Inuit characters. His reporting in Manchuria emphasized the Chinese potential for greatness and the remarkable progress that the Japanese had made in the late nineteenth century. His writing on the squalor in London showed the disdain that people in Britain had for unfortunate individuals in their own country.

Jack London, unlike many writers of his time, was an internationalist who made a genuine effort to get to know the people and cultures in the lands that he traversed. His call for a Pan-Pacific Club was his final appeal for the West to remove its stereotypical view of Asians as inferior people who needed Western domination for their own good. He wanted his readers to get to know people of other cultures as real people. He also correctly foresaw the rise of a powerful new Asia and hoped that the West would develop peaceful and respectful relations with emerging nations like Japan and China.

Notes

An earlier version of this article appeared as “Jack London Reporting from Tokyo and Manchuria: The Forgotten Role of an Influential Observer of Early Modern Asia,” Asia Pacific: Perspectives 8 (June 2008), 1–6.

¹For accounts of his adventures aboard the *Sophie Sutherland*, see Kingman (1979, 42–46) and O’Connor (1964, 50–55). Even though they lie 1,000 km south of Tokyo in the Pacific Ocean, the Ogasawara Islands—an archipelago that includes Iwo Jima—are administered as a village of Tokyo.

²Several of these stories were initially published in 1895 in *Aegis*, the Oakland (California) High School literary magazine, before appearing in other collections. London attended Oakland High School upon his return from the *Sophie Sutherland* adventure.

³Many renowned American journalists were sent to cover the war, including Richard Harding Davis (1864–1916), but London was the only one who managed to provide firsthand coverage of the war from the front lines. Davis and other reporters found themselves marooned in Tokyo because they lacked London’s boldness in seeking and actually finding passage from Japan to Korea.

⁴London was also a respected photographer whose detailed images of the Japanese army in Korea and Manchuria were published in many newspapers.

⁵Japanese officials often warned London to stay away from the front lines in Korea and Manchuria. They frequently detained London, took away his camera, and finally expelled him from Korea and Manchuria in summer 1904 because of his failure to abide by Japanese censorship laws.

⁶In 1910 “The Unparalleled Invasion” was published by *McClure’s Magazine* in book form, with the same title, together with several other short stories.

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