

[Japan Society-New York: Documents Project. (1930-1945, Economics)]

**[Document 60]: “Anshan Iron and Steel Works.” Poster by Taguchi Masato for South Manchuria Railway Company, early 1930s.**

[Run poster here—from the poster collection of the Mantetsukai, available on this link:

<http://www.01.246.ne.jp/~mateka/unews-special.html>. We need to get a good copy of the poster, as well as permission. Louise Young at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who suggested this, should be helpful. Her e-mail is [louiseyoung@wisc.edu](mailto:louiseyoung@wisc.edu). I will be happy to work with her in securing the poster image and the permission.]





### **Context.**

The economic linchpin of Japan's empire in the 1930s was the South Manchuria Railway Company. Founded in 1906 to oversee the railway after it was secured from Russia at the end of the Russo-Japanese War, it became Japan's largest corporation, competing with the Guandong Army to control Japan's huge political and military operations in Manchuria. When Japan poured 6 billion yen into Manchuria between 1932 and 1941, in the effort to create a self-sufficient empire, the SMRC took responsibility for managing much of that. It supervised harbors, railroads, hotels, mines, local governments, and a massive research wing that studied colonial policy across the entire empire. The SMRC also supervised the emigration of a quarter of a million Japanese to Manchuria, people who would settle a thousand towns and villages, growing soybeans, teaching in local schools, and running administrative offices. As this poster for the Anshan Iron and Steel Works shows, the railway company put considerable effort into publicity, explaining what the company did, why it mattered, and why people should support the imperial project. The Japanese characters at the bottom say South Manchuria Railway Company.

### **Questions.**

1. Looking at the poster, list the variety of activities in which the Japanese were engaged in Manchuria.
2. Analyze the less obvious messages conveyed by the poster. Note, for example, that the man and women at the bottom are Chinese. What is the artist suggesting about them: their clothes, their activities, the quality of their lives?



**Terms.**

*Anshan Iron and Steel Works.* Founded in 1916, Anshan became the largest steel producer in Manchuria—one of the largest in the world—in the 1930s. Its name was changed in 1933 to Shōwa Steel Works. By the early years of the war, its capacity had reached more than 3 million tons of iron and steel a year.