

# That Old Imperial One-Two: Landlords, Tenants, and the Colonization of Manchuria

The emigration of Japanese farmers to Manchuria in the 1930s and 1940s is often taken as a sign of popular support for empire and fascism. The case of the Miyagi village of Nango, birthplace of the mass Manchurian emigration plans that were adopted as national policy, raises problems with this interpretation and suggests a different perspective on the links between popular imperialism and Manchurian emigration. Nango farmers faced pervasive problems of high rents, overpopulation, and high tenancy rates, and formulated plans to send half of the local population to Manchuria to found a sister village in response. Tenant farmers in Nango, however, leveraged these plans as a threat against the landlords who controlled village administration, and few had any interest in actually emigrating. The appeals to empire attracted the interest of the central government, which helped break the landlord monopoly on power in the village, after which popular support for Manchurian emigration dried up.

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**Tuesday, September 26th 12:30-1:30 PM**  
**UBC Institute of Asian Research Room 351**  
(C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall)