



How Japanese People Understood the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-41

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Introduction

When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in July, 1937, hardly any Japanese people imagined that this war would be fought fiercely for as long as 8 years. Most Japanese people thought that China would surrender soon and that the war would be “resolved” without expanding nation-wide, just like the Mukden Incident. But in reality, it developed into a long-lasting all-out war, with strong resistance put up by China. These circumstances forced the Japanese to consider seriously why this war, unlike the previous wars, had been prolonged, and why China would resist Japan so adamantly. In other words, the Japanese had to ask themselves what the true nature of the war was, and what they were fighting for.

This Japanese viewpoint on the Sino-Japanese War was in sharp contrast with the Chinese viewpoint, which regards this war as resistance against Japan. The Chinese term, “konichi senso (anti-Japanese war 抗日戰爭)” symbolizes the fact that the Chinese viewpoint on the war had basically been consistent, while Japan had had several viewpoints, which sometimes conflicted or contradicted each other. It can be said that these Japanese viewpoints on the war reflected an important aspect of the war and had very much influenced the Japanese war attitudes.

The purpose of this paper is to make clear the characteristics of the Japanese viewpoints on the Second Sino-Japanese War, based on the analysis of papers posted back then on the journals of *Gaiko Jiho* (外交時報) and *Chuokoron* (中央公論). *Gaiko Jiho*, published every half a month, dealt with international affairs, and *Chuokoron*, published monthly even now, is a major journal dealing with general themes. Of all the critical journals, these two are conservative-centrist, with papers written from various positions posted on them. Therefore, they provide great materials useful for finding out the major trends in the Japanese journalism then.

Needless to say, the views on the Sino-Japanese War presented by the intellectuals on those journals didn't necessarily represent the views of the Japanese general public. But there is no doubting that

they were opinion leaders and their discourse had, at least, an indirect influence on the views of the Japanese general public, sometimes with a little time lag.

The periods of time examined in this paper are as follows: the period between the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and the fall of Nanking (from July to December, 1937), the period between the statement of the First Konoe Cabinet and the fall of Wuhan's three towns and Guangdong (from January to October, 1938), the period between the New Order in East Asia statement and the recognition of the Reorganized National Government of China (from November, 1938 to November, 1940), and the period between the recognition of the Reorganized National Government of China and the outbreak of the Pacific War (from December, 1940 to December, 1941).

1. From the Marco Polo Bridge Incident to the Fall of Nanking (from July to Dec, 1937)

(1) Conflict in North China

For the three weeks after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, diplomatic solutions were sought to settle the incident. And even after the Japanese Army resorted to arms on a larger scale on July 28 and military conflict escalated, the area of the conflict was limited to North China for the time being. It was after an armed conflict broke out in Shanghai on Aug 13 that the incident developed into a full-scale war.

In this initial stage of the war, the main focus of argument among the intellectuals was not placed on the direct causes of the incident, but on the fact that the expansion of the conflict had made them unable to find any clues to solution. They generally thought that China was completely to blame and responsible for the unresolved conflict. For instance, Hanzawa Gyokujo (半澤玉城), president of Gaiko Jiho-sha (外交時報社), argued that the unsettlement of the conflict should be attributed to "China-centered consciousness" of the

Chinese, “conceit” and “self-absorption” which stemmed from some progress China had attained, and their “misunderstanding” of Japan.¹ These three factors were repeatedly discussed by many with some changes in expression.

If Japan was partly to blame for the unsettlement of the conflict, it was thought to be because of “Re-recognition of China (shina sai-ninshiki ron 支那再認識論)”. “Re-recognition of China” was a movement to review Japan’s China strategy and try to understand China’s national unification from different angles. However, according to Nakayasu Yosaku (中保与作) at Tokyo Nichinichi Newspaper Company (東京日日新聞社) (as director of the Research Board of East Asia), it was this re-recognition that had generated China’s “impudence”.²

Many argued that the most crucial factor behind the unresolved conflict was the anti-Japanese policy Chiang Kai-shek or the Nationalist Government of China had performed. According to Tanaka Kanae (田中香苗) at Tokyo Nichinichi Newspaper Company (as East Asia section chief), the problem was that anti-Japanese policy became a synonym for nationalism and that anti-Japanese nationalism was the drive behind China’s unification.³ Here, we can already see the formation of the patterned logic that the main cause of the expanding conflict was that China had used their anti-Japanese policy and education for the purpose of its national unification.

In late July, when the Japanese Army resorted to arms on a full scale in North China, the argument in journals became even more critical of the Nationalist Government. Nakayama Masaru (中山優), a China specialist (a part-time employee at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and later a professor at Manchurian Kenkoku

¹ Hanzawa Gyokujo, “Shina kokumin ni nozomu (Our expectations of the Chinese people),” *Gaiko Jiho*, August 1, 1937.

² Nakayasu Yosaku, “Hokushi jihen no hitsuzen sei to goho sei (The inevitability and legality of the North China Incident),” *Gaiko Jiho*, August 1, 1937.

³ Tanaka Kanae, “Hokushi jihen to niju-kyu gun narabi ni shina guntai (The North China Incident, the 29th Army, and the Chinese Military),” *Chuokoron*, August 1937.

University 満洲建国大学), argued that Japan's use of force was a kind of "punishment (burei uchi 無礼打ち)" of China for their anti-Japanese sentiment and contempt for Japan. He had no negative opinion of China's nationalism and its process of unification, but still criticized that their nationalism had been based on British capital and manipulated by the Comintern.⁴ Nakayama's logic included the perception that British capital and the Comintern (Soviet communism) had been supporting and promoting China's nationalism and anti-Japanese policy. This view was shared by many then, and repeatedly discussed later too.

(2) Into a Full-Scale War

After the war expanded to Shanghai, the Non-Aggression Treaty between China and the Soviet Union on Aug 22 had a major impact on the Japanese intellectuals. In response to this, Hanzawa Gyokujo argued that Japan had to fight, not only to punish China for "their anti-Japanese sentiment and contempt for Japan", but also for "the mission of world-wide scale" of preventing the world from going Communist.⁵ Shimizu Yasuzo (清水安三), who had been engaged in education in China (and established J. F. Oberlin University and Affiliated Schools after the war), also pointed out that the meaning of the war had shifted from punishing "atrocious" China to saving China from Communism.⁶ In addition, Miyazaki Ryusuke (宮崎龍介), a social activist whose father is Miyazaki Toten (宮崎滔天), defined Japan and China as "predestined war comrades for national liberation", despite his recognition that the war was a "crusade" to correct the "wrong international policy" by the Nationalist Government, and appealed to Chiang Kai-shek, "Never leave the Chinese people in the hands of the whites. Never let the Chinese people become

⁴ Nakayama Masaru, "Burei uchi no ato ni kuru mono (After the punishment of China)," *Gaiko Jiho*, September 1, 1937.

⁵ Hanzawa Gyokujo, "Toa no supein-ka wo sukue (Rescue the East Asia from its Spainization)," *Gaiko Jiho*, September 15, 1937.

⁶ Shimizu Yasuzo, "Shina jihen no mitoshi (Prospect of the China Incident)," *Chuokoron*, November 1937.

slaves of the whites.”⁷ It is worthy of note that racist argument had already emerged at this point of time.

As the military conflict between Japan and China, contrary to what was expected, was developing into a full-scale war, many started to review and discuss what the true nature of the war was. Hayashi Kyujiro (林久治郎), a former diplomat (a consul general in Mukden and ambassador to Brazil) didn't define this war as “a fundamental struggle” between Japan and China, which were “common in script and race”, but argued that Japan, as an affectionate big brother, had to punish his delinquent little brother and that their “peaceful family relationship” would be restored after the little brother reflected on what he had done wrong with regret.⁸ On the other hand, Yonaiyama Tsuneo (米内山庸夫), another diplomat, expressed a pessimistic and ironic view. He had worked as consul in China for a long time, and placed an emphasis on China's “national character”. He argued that “unfriendliness between Japan and China was predestined” because the Han people had always tried to invade other races around them every time they attained national unification and acquired great national power.⁹ According to Yonaiyama, the cause of the war lay in the “instinctive struggle for survival” of the Japanese people and Chinese people.¹⁰ Okabe Saburo (岡部三郎), yet another former diplomat, pointed out that the purpose of the war was obscure and hard to grasp, which had been puzzling Japanese people.¹¹ His remark can also be thought to represent that he himself was quite puzzled over how to define the war.

⁷ Miyazaki Ryusuke, “Shokaiseki ni atafuru no syo (A letter to Chiang Kai-shek,” *Chuokoron*, October 1937.

⁸ Hayashi Kyujiro, “Nisshi jihen syukyoku no mokuhyo (The ultimate aim of the China Incident),” *Gaiko Jiho*, October 1, 1937.

⁹ Yonaiyama Tsuneo, “Nisshi ryo-minzoku no taiji (Rivalry between the Japanese and Chinese people),” *Gaiko Jiho*, October 1, 1937.

¹⁰ Yonaiyama Tsuneo, “Nankin seifu no shorai (Prospect of Nanjing Government),” *Chuokoron*, December 1937.

¹¹ Okabe Saburo, “Nisshi jihen wa ikanishite syukyoku wo tsuguru no ka (How to end the China Incident?),” *Gaiko Jiho*, November 1, 1937.

Much of this puzzlement derived from unexpectedly stubborn resistance put up by China. In fact, Hanzawa stated that China had attained great progress and resilience, which made him even feel that China was a reliable neighbor.¹² Oikawa Musashi (及川六三四) at Domei News Agency (同盟通信), pointed out that “dauntless courage”, “indomitable perseverance” and “confidence of victory” were no longer exclusive to Japan, and that China had already acquired these characteristics.¹³

Apart from China’s resistance, it was also beyond the Japanese people’s comprehension why China could fight a prolonged war despite its fragile economy. Naomi Zenzo (直海善三), at Kokumin Newspaper Company (国民新聞), argued that, even if the Nationalist Government lost its practical power as the central government, it still could exist locally and keep fighting against Japan, because China was not a modern unified state in a perfect sense.¹⁴ Oikawa Musashi also made a similar argument that the very fact that China was not a modernized economy was the source of their endurance.¹⁵ It is true that there were some including Onishi Itsuki (大西齋), an editorial writer at the Asahi Shimbun Company (東京朝日新聞社), who expressed a view that China’s ongoing process of modernization had made them fragile to the attacks by the Japanese Army and therefore unable to resist Japan for long,¹⁶ but it can be assumed that they were a minority in journalism.

At any rate, many expressed harsh criticism of the Nationalist Government, which had been continuing to resist Japan without showing any willingness to compromise. Imura Shigeo (井村薫雄), a specialist on Chinese issues and later a part-time employee at the Koain (the East Asia Development Board 興亜院), considered it

¹² Hanzawa Gyokujo, “Shina gawa no jihen taisaku ika (What are the Chinese measures to cope with the Incident?),” *Gaiko Jiho*, October 1, 1937.

¹³ Oikawa Musashi, “Shina no tainichi choki kosen wa kano ka (Is it possible for China to resist against Japan for a long time?),” *Chuokoron*, October 1937.

¹⁴ Naomi Zenzo, “Jihen no eizoku fukahai to sono taisaku (The inevitable continuance of the Incident and the measures to cope with it),” *Gaiko Jiho*, October 15, 1937.

¹⁵ Oikawa, “Shina no tainichi choki kosen wa kano ka.”

¹⁶ Onishi Itsuki, “Nankin seifu no yukue (Where is the Nanjing Government going?),” *Chuokoron*, 600th Issue Memorial Edition, 1937.

Japan's mission to save the Chinese people from Chiang Kai-shek, whose military clique completely disregarded the interests of the people it ruled over, and insisted that the Nationalist Government "should be denied".¹⁷ On the other hand, Onishi Itsuki pointed out that, if the Nationalist Government never "reconsidered their behavior", it would be possible that Japan, in its effort to negotiate for peace, didn't know who to negotiate with.¹⁸ It is worthy of note that, even before the battle of Nanking, arguments had already emerged that virtually denied the authority of the Nationalist Government.

(3) The Battle of Nanking

China's stubborn resistance had caused the Shanghai war front to run into a deadlock, but in early November, the Chinese Army finally began to retreat from Shanghai and the Japanese Army rushed to Nanking.

While the capital was expected to fall to Japan soon, a new argument emerged as to peace negotiation: would Chiang Kai-shek actively look for peace talks? Should Japan agree to negotiate? Kanesaki Ken (金崎賢), a former employee at Yomiuri Shimbun Newspaper Company (読売新聞社) and Manshu Nichi-Nichi Shimbun Newspaper Company (滿洲日日新聞社), expressed an affirmative opinion about peace negotiation, arguing that if the Nationalist Government eliminated anti-Japanese and communist elements and understood "Japan's real intention", this would contribute to the stability of East Asia, because it was not China or its people, but anti-Japan elements that Japan had been fighting against.¹⁹

However, Yonaiyama Tsuneo had a negative attitude toward peace talks with Chiang Kai-shek. He doubted whether sitting down for peace talks at this stage was in Japan's best interest, because, in

¹⁷ Imura Shigeo, "Toa no hanei to shina minsyu (Prosperity of the East Asia and the Chinese populace)," *Gaiko Jiho*, October 1, 1937.

¹⁸ Onishi, "Nankin seifu no yukue."

¹⁹ Kanesaki Ken, "Jihen syusyu hosaku jitsugen no yoten (Main points for fulfillment of the measures to solve the Incident)," *Gaiko Jiho*, December 15, 1937.

his opinion, even if peace was realized, it would just be temporary and an even more serious war would break out again between Japan and China.²⁰ Kajiwara Katsusaburo (梶原勝三郎), at the East Asiatic Economic Investigation Bureau (toa keizai chosa kyoku 東亜經濟調査局) argued that the Nationalist Government wouldn't agree to sit for peace talks in the first place, and that even if they did, it would just be a waste of time to negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek, whose regime had become a regional one after the relocation of its capital.²¹

Yoshioka Bunroku (吉岡文六), a chief of the political department at Tokyo Nichinichi newspaper company, predicted that Chiang Kai-shek would feel inclined to sit for peace talks with Japan over time, but would never choose to surrender to Japan.²² But he later expressed a negative attitude toward peace with Chiang Kai-shek, arguing that Japan should make up its mind not to accept any talks except for talks for surrender, because Japan, which had been patiently waiting for Chiang Kai-shek to reconsider, could see no sign that he would.²³ Tamura Kosaku (田村幸策), a manager at the Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD) and later a professor at Chuo University, also emphasized that Chiang Kai-shek had already used up all the time Japan had given him to reconsider, and therefore it was no longer possible to sit for peace talks with his regime.²⁴ It is worthy of note that these arguments had already emerged before the statement of the First Konoe Cabinet on Jan 16, 1938.

Now, suppose Japan was to negotiate for peace at all, what would be the conditions acceptable to Japan? Before the Battle of Nanking, there were some views that it would be quite satisfactory

²⁰ Yonaiyama, "Nankin seifu no shorai."

²¹ Kajiwara Katsusaburo, "Nisshi chokusetsu kosyo no aite wa dare ka (Whom should Japan negotiate directly to solve the Incident?)," *Gaiko Jiho*, December 1, 1937.

²² Yoshioka Bunroku, "Shokaiseki dokusai no doyo wo omou (Considering a disturbance of Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship)," *Chuokoron*, December 1937.

²³ Yoshioka Bunroku, "Somei wo kaita Syokaiseki (Chiang Kai-shek devoid of sagacity)," *Gaiko Jiho*, January 1, 1938.

²⁴ Tamura Kosaku, "Jikyoku ni taisyo subeki sandai kyumu (Three major urgent needs to meet the exigencies of the time)," *Gaiko Jiho*, January 15, 1938.

and everything could be “settled for the moment” if an autonomous government in North China whose policy emphasized cooperation between Japan and China and anti-communism, was formally recognized.²⁵ However, after the Battle of Nanking broke out, demands for tougher conditions became prevalent. Yokota Minoru (横田実) at Domei News Agency, demanded Chiang Kai-shek’s immediate resignation in exchange for a cease-fire.²⁶ Yoshioka Bunroku, who had found out, through foreign media coverage, that Germany was trying to mediate to make peace, and that the conditions included the recognition of Manchukuo, a demilitarized zone throughout North China and the conclusion of an anti-Communism agreement, severely criticized that these conditions might have been acceptable about one month after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident happened, but were quite out of the question now especially after so much sacrifice had been made.²⁷

The Japanese government’s official view was that it didn’t regard the Chinese people as its enemy, and had no intention of expanding its territory. While there were many intellectuals who argued in line with this view, there were some who contradicted it. Saegusa Shigetomo (三枝茂智), a professor at Meiji University, suggested that some land in Manchuria and North China should be given to the soldiers who had engaged in the war, and some shares in resources development to the widows and orphans in the families of the dead soldiers.²⁸ Tamura Kosaku argued that it was necessary to make clear who had been responsible for the outbreak of this war, deal with complaints that might arise in Japan, and demand reparations for post-war reconstruction.²⁹

Although the vast majority of intellectuals were hard-liners as to the peace conditions and peace itself, they didn’t necessary regard

²⁵ Shimizu, “Shina jihen no mitoshi.”

²⁶ Yokota Minoru, “Gakaiseru Nankin Seiken (Collapsed Nanjing Government),” *Gaiko Jiho*, December 15, 1937.

²⁷ Yoshioka, “Somei wo kaita Syokaiseki.”

²⁸ Saegusa Shigetomo, “Jikyoku syusyu no konpon ninshiki (Fundamental understanding to save the situation),” *Gaiko Jiho*, December 15 1937.

²⁹ Tamura, “Jikyoku ni taisyo subeki sandai kyumu.”

the fall of Nanking as the onset of the last stage of war. Even before the fall of Nanking, some had already pointed out the possibility that the Nationalist Government might abandon Nanking to become “an existence extremely hard to deal with” without any “absolute weakness”, as if it were an animal of the lower orders.³⁰ After the fall of Nanking, while the Nationalist Government was thought to have been reduced to a local regime, Chiang Kai-shek was predicted to continue his resistance against Japan leading his local regime.³¹ According to Fujioka Takeo (藤枝丈夫), a commentator on Chinese issues (later engaged in working-class movements), the fall of Nanking was not a fatal blow to Chiang Kai-shek’s regime.³² Though not a few China specialists predicted that the relocation of Chiang Kai-shek’s regime to Chongqing would result in a greater influence exerted by the Communist Party, they at the same time forecast that anti-Japanese sentiment would only escalate, and never decline. It has generally been thought that the fall of Nanking made everyone in Japan rejoice over the victory, but in fact, intellectuals including China specialists didn’t seem to be that optimistic.

2. From the Statement of the First Konoe Cabinet to the Fall of Wuhan’s Three Towns and Guandong (from January to October, 1938)

(1) The Continuing Resistance and Foreign Assistance

The Japanese government, by delivering a statement that it “would disregard the Nationalist Government”, in January, 1938, practically denied the Nationalist Government. It officially announced that it would establish new diplomatic relations with a new central regime it

³⁰ Nomi, “Jihen no eizoku fukahi to sono taisaku.”

³¹ Yoshioka, “Syokaiseki dokusai no doyo wo omou.”

³² Fujioka Takeo, “Konichi minzoku sensen no yukue (Where is the Chinese national resistance front against Japan going?),” *Chuokoron*, January 1938.

backed up. Interestingly enough, some started to argue here that the war was going through the process to similar to the Spanish Civil War. From the previous autumn, the Soviet Union had already reinforced its assistance to Chiang Kai-shek's regime, and some expressed concern that, if Japan was to back up the new regime in response to it, this might create in East Asia a situation similar to Spain, where international confrontation and domestic conflict were intricately intertwined.³³ However, Hanzawa Gyokujo responded positively to this "Spanish" process, pointing out that if the Nationalist Government was denied and replaced by a new central regime, this would mean that China was undergoing a civil war as Spain had done, and logically, the Nationalist army would be defined as rebels.³⁴ In the Spanish Civil War, Francisco Franco won a victory and his regime was recognized as legitimate. Some expected the new central regime backed by Japan to play the same role as Francisco Franco's regime.³⁵

However, there was no sign of the Nationalist Government, which had been denied and treated as rebels, weakening its resistance. Different intellectuals analyzed Chiang Kai-shek's control over the resistance forces and the relations between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party differently, but those who argued that its resistance had weakened were a minority. It was generally considered that Chiang Kai-shek still maintained his power and that the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party, despite their opposition, wouldn't cause China to split.

After the fall of Nanking, the Japanese Army carried out three large-scale military operations: the Battle of Xuzhou, the Battle of Hankow, and the Battle of Guangdong. According to Onishi Itsuki, Japan made even better military achievements in the Battle of Xuzhou than in the Battle of Nanking, and caused major damage to Chiang's regime, but the fall of Xuzhou was no more a fatal blow to it than the

³³ Okabe, "Nisshi jihen wa ikanishite syukyoku wo tsuguru no ka."

³⁴ Hanzawa Gyokujo, "Syusyo · gaisyo no enzetsu (Speeches in the Parliament by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister)," *Gaiko Jiho*, February 1, 1938.

³⁵ "Shina wa supein-ka suru ka (Will China be Spainized?)," *Chuokoron*, February 1938.

fall of Nanking was.³⁶ In response to the question of how Chiang's regime could maintain its forces of resistance after being repeatedly defeated and faced with financial collapse, Yoshioka Bunroku argued that the answer lay in the resilience of the power structure Chiang Kai-shek had built and maintained over 10 years.³⁷

Wada Kosaku (和田耕作), an investigator at the Kikakuin (Cabinet Planning Board 企画院) (a Diet member from Democratic Socialist Party after the war) stated that it was China's "feudalistic nature" and "colonial nature", which were generally thought to be its fatal weaknesses, that had enabled it to put up a long-standing resistance. By "feudalistic nature", he meant that China's economy was not unified on a national scale and so it wouldn't cease to function even if its local economy was cut down, which was the same mechanism as an earthworm surviving even after being cut in half.³⁸

What Wada mainly meant by "colonial nature", was the fact that China had been dominated by the British economic power. In other words, Britain had been supporting the long-standing resistance by Chiang's regime. Actually this was not a new point of view, but it was given a new light because there was increasing criticism, condemnation, and hostility toward the foreign power backing up China's resistance. For example, Imura Shigeo argued that to "annihilate" Chiang's regime was to save the Chinese people from the "clutches" of Britain and the Soviet Union, and almost went so far as to say that Jewish family-run conglomerates based in Britain were supporting China to earn money from the war.³⁹ Similarly, Hanzawa Gyokujo said that Japan's true enemy was not China, and assumed that

³⁶ Onishi Itsuki, "Kanko kokan no kachi (Value of Hankow's capture)," *Gaiko Jiho*, August 1, 1938.

³⁷ Yoshioka Bunroku, "Josyu-sen to sono ato ni kuru mono (Battle of Xuzhou and its aftermath)," *Chuokoron*, June 1938.

³⁸ Wada Kosaku, "Choki-sen no tokushitsu to tairiku seisaku no hoko (The characteristics of protracted war and a direction of continental policy)," *Chuokoron*, July 1938.

³⁹ Imura Shigeo, "Shina jihen no kiketsu (The results of the China Incident)," *Gaiko Jiho*, February 15, 1938.

there must be someone pulling China's strings behind the scenes.⁴⁰ He went on to argue that the Sino-Japanese War had proven to be “a battle against a ghost” and that it was absolutely necessary to beat up the ghost and frighten the true enemy behind it.⁴¹

Miyazaki Ryusuke argued that it was no longer necessary to say that the Sino-Japanese War was a war between Japan and Britain and between Japan and the Soviet Union.⁴² According to Wada Kosaku, the Sino-Japanese War was a long-standing struggle against Britain's stubborn moves to maintain China as its colony for a long time, and at the same time was an ideological struggle against the Soviet Union, which needed to take control over China as an important base to promote the communization of the world.⁴³ Yoshioka Bunroku insisted that Japan should capture Guangdong to break the “unsavory ties” between Britain and Chiang's regime.⁴⁴

It can be seen from these arguments that, of all the foreign powers, the main target of criticism at this stage was not the Soviet Union, but Britain. Criticism was also directed toward Japan's diplomatic policy, which seemed rather passive toward Britain. For instance, Kajiwara Katsusaburo, argued that, even though it was imperative, from a strategic point of view, to capture Guangdong to destroy Chiang's regime, Japan wouldn't do so because of Britain's presence.⁴⁵ But as a matter of fact, it was impossible to completely break down the military power of Chiang's regime, even if Guangdong was captured.

⁴⁰ Hanzawa Gyokujo, “Josyu kanrakugo no shindankai (New stage after the fall of Xuzhou),” *Gaiko Jiho*, June 1, 1938.

⁴¹ Hanzawa Gyokujo, “Shina jihen issyunen (A full year of the China Incident),” *Gaiko Jiho*, July 1, 1938.

⁴² Miyazaki, “Kanton koryaku subeshi.” (Need to capture Guangdong) *Chuokoron*, October 1938.

⁴³ Wada, “Choki-sen no tokushitsu to tairiku seisaku no hoko.”

⁴⁴ Yoshioka Bunroku, “Kanton koryaku no Juyosei (Significance of capture of Guangdong),” *Chuokoron*, October 1938.

⁴⁵ Kajiwara Katsusaburo, “Nihon no aratanaru kiki (Japan's new crisis),” *Gaiko Jiho*, April 15, 1938.

(2) The Meaning of the War

After Guangdong was captured, Chiang's regime still continued its resistance. According to Onishi Itsuki's opinion, no one had any idea how long the war would last, when everything would be settled, or how the war was going to proceed.⁴⁶ What was the nature of this war? What for were we fighting for? These questions were inevitably asked when the enemy never seemed to give up after continued defeats, making the prospects of the war unpredictable.

Naomi Zenzo insisted "the objective of this war, one of whose meanings was a holy war, must be accompanied by a lofty ideal that we would contribute to the whole human being from the viewpoint of world history".⁴⁷ His words represented Japanese people's feelings that they couldn't continue to fight only for the purpose of punishment or anti-Communism. Nashimoto Yuhei (梨本祐平), who worked for the South Manchuria Railway Company and the North China Railway Company, pointed out that the objective of the war was punishment of China for its anti-Japanese policy, and interruption and elimination of the international powers behind it, and argued that the ultimate goal of the war was to "infuse new incessant waves of life" into the underdeveloped nations and regions treated as colonies or semi-colonies in the East, and to create "a new social order in the East" based on Japan, Manchukuo and China.⁴⁸ Hori Makoto (堀眞琴), a political scientist and a professor at Hosei University, stated that Japan's objective of this war was not to colonize or semi-colonize China, but to give China an opportunity for unification and liberation, "create a new world order" in cooperation with China, and liberate the East from foreign powers.⁴⁹ Miyazaki Ryusuke defined the Sino-

⁴⁶ Onishi Itsuki, "Jihen to shinshina saiken (The China Incident and reconstruction of a new China)," *Giko Jiho*, November 1, 1938.

⁴⁷ Naomi Zenzo, "Jihen syusyu no mokuhyo to sono kihonteki yoken The aim of solving the Incident and basic requirements for it)," *Gaiko Jiho*, August 1, 1938.

⁴⁸ Nashimoto Yuhei, "Tairiku seisaku no kihonteki mondai (The fundamental problems of continental policy)," *Chuokoron*, August 1938.

⁴⁹ Hori Makoto, "Tairiku keiei no syo kosaku ni tsuite (On some measures of

Japanese War as “the first step toward the conflict between the National Front and the Popular Front, between the haves and have-nots, and between those who want to maintain the status quo and those who want to break it”.⁵⁰

In short, in pursuit of a new objective of the war, they tended to seek rather abstract ideals, and it can be seen here that the expression “a new order” was used frequently. Actually, there were many intellectuals who used this expression even before the “New Order in East Asia” statement on Nov 3, in various, and sometimes contradictory senses.

Part of this movement of seeking meanings and objectives in the war led to criticism of the government. Miyazaki Ryusuke, who openly criticized the government, argued as follows: what on earth did the government think and want to do? Under the influence of demagoguery, people were dubious and worried, keeping a wait-and-see attitude. What did the government want from its people and where would it lead them to? “What is Japan going to fight for?” “Where is Japan heading?” Japanese people always wanted to obtain a clear answer from the government, but so far they hadn’t received yet “an overwhelming and mesmerizing declaration” which “embodied Japanese people’s subconscious will and desire” and would “thrust their heart and let their blood surge”.⁵¹

(3) Reconsideration of the Recognition of China

In this period (the latter half of 1938), apart from the arguments for objectives of the war, there were also arguments that Japan’s recognition of China had been defective and should be revised. Some typical discussions are as follows.

Ota Unosuke (太田宇之助), at the Committee for Problems of East Asia (Toa mondai chosa kai 東亞問題調査会) of the Asahi Shimbun Newspaper Company, argued: after the Sino-Japanese War

continental management),” *Gaiko Jiho*, August 15, 1938.

⁵⁰ Miyazaki, “Kanton koryaku subeshi.”

⁵¹ Ibid.

broke out, Japan often had misunderstandings and wrong predictions about the Chinese government, the Chinese army and the Chinese general public. Many Japanese people were disappointed in those “authorities on Chinese affairs (shina tsu 支那通)” because their predictions had turned out to be wrong one after another. They were composed of two groups: the “old faction” who mainly analyzed people in power, assuming that the Chinese politics was controlled by warlords and politicians, and the “new faction” who made social-scientific analyses based on Marxism. The new faction was prevalent at that time, but the problem was that it had virtually reached the same conclusion as the extreme right-wing elements, whose standpoint was completely contrary to that of the new faction, in that they both called the Nationalist Government a bourgeois government, and hoped for its collapse. China’s social structure had been extremely complicated, and the addition of the elements of the modern economic structure to China’s economic structure, which was based on its already complicated social structure, made the situation all the more complicated. Though this complicated entity could be analyzed clearly and easily from the Marxist perspective, this would lead to misunderstandings of China even more serious than those of the old faction.⁵²

It is impossible to say how correct Ota’s view was. But it can be said, based on the various Chinese specialists’ analyses and observations introduced above, that what Ota pointed out was at least half correct. Ota, who had a high opinion of the Nationalist Government’s achievements in promoting national unification, and expressed a view that, though the driving force behind the Nationalist Government after the Mukden Incident had been anti-Japanese sentiment, and this was the very cause of their “collapse today”, it would have been impossible for China to attain cohesion and modernize its infrastructure without this driving force, which, in other words, was nationalism.

Another important argument was one by Tanaka Naokichi (田中

⁵² Ota Unosuke, “Shinshina ninshiki e no michi (The way for recognizing a new China),” *Chuokoron*, November 1938.

直吉), a political scientist (and a professor at Ritsumeikan University). Tanaka argued that Japan's views of China could generally be divided into two types: one view was that China was still a disorderly semi-feudal country dominated by bandits and warlords, and the other was that China was shifting into a modern capitalist country under the unification and construction efforts by the Nationalist Government. However, they were both one-sided about China and belittled the importance of the anti-Japanese nationalist movement, which was now China's major driving force. Therefore, Japan's predictions had never been correct, with its expectations betrayed. It was not Chiang Kai-shek's individual abilities, but the power of the anti-Japanese nationalist awareness surging all over China that had enabled China to put up resistance against the powerful Japanese Army.⁵³

Tanaka insisted that it was necessary to establish "a supranational community of the races in East Asia", in order to win the decisive victory in this war. The keyword in his argument about modifications to Japan's recognition of China was China's nationalism, too.

3. From the "New Order in East Asia" Statement to the Recognition of the Reorganized National Government of China (November, 1938 to November, 1940)

(1) A New Order in East Asia

Japan's objective in the war was officially formulated in the government's statement on Nov 3, 1938, and the prime minister's statement on Dec 22: Japan, Manchukuo, and China were going to cooperate to establish "a new order in East Asia" for "neighborly friendship, concerted efforts in containing Communism, and economic partnership". In the prime minister's statement, Japan asked for the conclusion of an anti-Communism agreement and the establishment

⁵³ Tanaka Naokichi, "Choki kensetsu to taishi shinninshiki (A long term construction and a new recognition of China)," *Gaiko Jiho*, November 15, 1938.

of Japanese Army garrisons in some particular regions to contain Communism. Japan also clarified that it didn't intend to monopolize China economically and demanded that "favors" should be given to it in the exploitation and use of the resources in North China and Inner Mongolia. In addition, Japan emphasized that it wouldn't demand any territory or reparations and was willing to discuss the possibility of abolishing its extraterritoriality and concessions in China. After this statement, many intellectuals, in particular, cited Japan's declaration not to annex any Chinese territory or ask for reparations, and repeatedly emphasized how generous Japan's conditions for peace were and why Chiang's regime wouldn't appreciate this.

On the other hand, the government's statement answered, whether intended or not, the criticism from those intellectuals who argued that there was no clear objective in this war. After the statement, there was no such criticism of the government as that expressed by Miyazaki Ryusuke any more. However, the new idealistic objective in the war of creating a new order in East Asia beyond punishment and anti-Communism, was still extremely abstract, and therefore many went on to discuss what exactly the new order in East Asia meant. Among them, Royama Masamichi (蠟山政道), a political scientist (and professor at Tokyo Imperial University), attracted particular attention by submitting his view of "the East Asian Cooperative Body (toa kyodo tai 東亞協同体)", which was understood to refer to the concrete content of the new order in East Asia.

What was particularly significant about the East Asian Cooperative Body, as Ozaki Hotsumi pointed out sharply, was that it started from the re-recognition of Chinese nationalism.⁵⁴ As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Chinese nationalism was "rediscovered" during the process of the prolonged war. Ozaki, in response to the question of what had enabled China, with its low economic power, defective political system, and inferior army, to continue fighting thus far, emphasized that the answer was not the anti-Japanese policy and

⁵⁴ Ozaki Hotsumi, "'Toa kyodo tai' no rinen to sono seiritsu no kyakkanteki kiso (The idea of the East Asian Cooperative Body and the objective basis of its establishment)," *Chuokoron*, January 1939.

education, but was Chinese nationalism that underlay them. Thus the concept of the East Asian Cooperative Body was thought to be able to resolve the Sino-Japanese War by requesting Chinese nationalism to “actively cooperate with Japan”. It also emphasized the importance of contributing to the “liberation and welfare” of the Chinese people, who were eager to free themselves from their semi-colonial state, by increasing production in East Asia, which was deemed contradictory to Japan’s capitalist demand to expand to China for more rights and interests. In this sense, the concept of the East Asian Cooperative Body was also a demand for Japan’s domestic reform.

Royama himself emphasized that the issue of Chinese nationalism should be the starting point, arguing “if the Japanese people and Chinese people were not to cooperate, what kind of meaning would there be in this war?” If different peoples were destined to struggle with each other, China’s anti-Japanese movement had to be approved of. But if not, there was no choice but to find a way to cooperation between different peoples, however difficult it might be. What was important was “passion”, “sympathy”, and “will” to establish the East Asian Cooperative Body.⁵⁵

However, the concept of the East Asian Cooperative Body gradually faded, mainly because it was too theoretical and showed no realistic, concrete directions. Criticism to a lack of concrete measures was expressed even by such intellectuals as Nashimoto Yuhei, who showed some understanding of the concept, not to mention those who completely rejected it.⁵⁶ Their rejection derived from their emphasis on Chinese “national character” and this tone of argument, as mentioned above, already existed at the initial stage of the war.

Yonaiyama Tsuneo was the typical example. His criticism of Chinese national character was fierce. According to Yonaiyama, there were only two types of Chinese people then: those Chinese people who were fighting against Japan with weapons in their hands, and

⁵⁵ Royama Masamichi, “Toa kyodotai to teikoku syugi (The East Asian Cooperative Body and imperialism),” *Chuokoron*, September 1939.

⁵⁶ Nashimoto Yuhei, “Jihen syori no seijiteki ninmu (The political duties of solving the Incident),” *Chuokoron*, April 1939.

those who “pretended to be friendly, but were mentally engaged in war”. He argued that friendship between Japan and China would only be possible after Japan dominated China with force or Japan surrendered to China.⁵⁷ He even doubted that China would understand the concept of the East Asian Cooperative Body at all, arguing that if the power of an ideal were strong enough to enable Japan and China to cooperate with each other or to unify China, the Sino-Japanese War wouldn’t have broken out in the first place.⁵⁸

Takagi Tomosaburo (高木友三郎), an economist (and a professor at Hosei University) also expressed a critical view, based on his analysis of Chinese national character, that it would only backfire even if Japan, during the war, approached China with an idea of cooperation on an equal basis.⁵⁹ Otani Kotaro (大谷孝太郎) (a former professor at Toa-Dobunshoin University 東亜同文書院) argued that this war represented the conflict and collision between the “world views” of the Japanese people and the Chinese people, which was one of the typical views related to Chinese nationality. He went on to describe Chinese people as “nihilistic, not confident of themselves, apathetic, emptily arrogant, immersed in animosity, good at reasonable calculation, with a risk of becoming unreasonable when taken to extremes.”⁶⁰ Not a few of those who emphasized the negative aspects of Chinese national character were rich in experience with China. It was true that the East Asian Cooperative Body was an attractive “theory” to the intellectuals, but observations of Chinese national character by people with real experience might have been more persuasive to the general public.

⁵⁷ Yonaiyama Tsuneo, “Koain no setsuritsu to waga taishi seisaku (Establishing the East Asia Development Board and Japan’s policy toward China),” *Gaiko Jiho*, January 15, 1939.

⁵⁸ Yonaiyama Tsuneo, “Tairiku seisaku no riso (The ideal of continental policy),” *Gaiko Jiho*, April 15, 1939.

⁵⁹ Takagi Tomosaburo, “Toa kyodo tairon no hihan (Criticism of the East Asian Cooperative Body),” *Gaiko Jiho*, March 15, 1939.

⁶⁰ Otani Kotaro, “Jihen to shina minzoku no sekaikan (The Incident and Chinese people’s view of life and world),” *Gaiko Jiho*, August 1, 1939.

(2) The Reorganized National Government of China

Wang Jingwei (汪精衛) fled Chongqing immediately after Prime Minister Konoe's statement in late December, 1938, which came as a great shock to Japanese journalism. This incident was understood to represent the rise of pacifists in the Chongqing regime. But it was also pointed out by some that Wang's camp had no influential member in the army, and so his power as top of the pacifists was quite limited.⁶¹ After that, expectations for Wang as the leader of the anti-Chiang camp in opposition to the Chongqing regime gradually declined for the moment,⁶² because there were not as many influential figures as had been expected who fled Chongqing after Wang, and even Wang's defection didn't seem to have had much impact on the Chongqing regime. Ota Unosuke went so far as to say that Wang's role as a politician had practically ended, though his pacifist theory should be highly valued.⁶³ Kajiwara Katsusaburo criticized Japanese journalism for its indifference to Wang, and insisted that Japan should assist Wang's pacifist movement more actively.⁶⁴

After missing for a while, Wang attracted attention again in July, 1939, when he embarked on "anti-communism, peace, and national salvation" movement and declared his intention to establish a government. In response to this, Yokota Minoru immediately demanded that the government Wang was going to establish should be recognized as the central government and argued that Wang's pacifist movement was the first step toward the establishment of the new order in East Asia.⁶⁵ Matsumoto Sokichi (松本鎗吉), at Osaka Mainichi

⁶¹ Tanaka Kanae, "O Chomei no dassyutsu to sono eikyo (Escape of Wang Jingwei and its consequences)," *Gaiko Jiho*, February 1, 1939; Yoshioka Bunroku, "O Chomei ron (On Wang Jingwei)," *Chuokoron*, February 1939.

⁶² Onishi Itsuki, "Jihen syori no zento (Prospect for solution of the Incident)," *Gaiko Jiho*, April 1, 1939.

⁶³ Ota Unosuke, "O Chomei no eikyo (Wang Jingwei's influence)," *Gaiko Jiho*, May 1, 1939.

⁶⁴ Kajiwara Katsusaburo, "O Chomei to nihon no kankei (Wang Jingwei and his relation with Japan)," *Gaiko Jiho*, May 1, 1939.

⁶⁵ Yokota Minoru, "O Chomei kosu to jukei no doyo (The course adopted by Wang Jingwei and the disturbances in Chongqing)," *Chuokoron*, September 1939.

Shimbun Newspaper Company (大阪毎日新聞) (a director at the Committee for Problems of East Asia), admitted that Wang was not, in fact, an excellent politician, who had experienced continuous failures, without tolerance or resilience, though he was a man of passion, and insisted that Japan should assist him so that he could obtain the support of the Chinese people, especially the young intellectuals.⁶⁶ Miki Kiyoshi (三木清), a philosopher, insisted that Wang should contribute to the realization of the East Asian Cooperative Body.⁶⁷

Wang's regime, established in late March, 1940, was welcomed in Japanese journalism, but not very ardently. It was repeatedly pointed out that Wang's regime lacked real military power and that, as the Chongqing regime still existed, its establishment wouldn't lead to the end of the war. Matsumoto Sokichi argued that Wang's regime required all the more assistance from Japan because local Chinese people's response to Wang's regime was not ideal.⁶⁸

After the establishment of Wang's regime, the focus of argument was placed on the issue of the treaty which was to be concluded between Japan and Wang's regime. The majority insisted that the autonomy and independence of Wang's regime should be recognized to the largest degree possible. Hanzawa Gyokujo insisted that Japan "should guarantee China's future development in exchange for its conquest, and give China the honor of the establishment of peace and the joy of secure life and work in exchange for the humiliation of defeat," and that "the patriotism of the leaders of the new regime should be recognized, its sovereignty should be respected, and their honor and freedom in action should be fully considered."⁶⁹ According to Tachibana Nobukazu (田知花信量), at Tokyo Nichinichi Newspaper

⁶⁶ Matsumoto Sokichi, "Shinseiken ni taisuru enjo no genkai (Limits of assisting the new government)," *Gaiko Jiho*, December 1, 1939.

⁶⁷ Miki Kiyoshi, "OChomei shi ni yosu (Letter to Mr. Wang Jingwei)," *Chuokoron*, December 1939.

⁶⁸ Matsumoto Sokichi, "Shina minsyu no doko ni tsuite (On the Chinese populace's tendencies)," *Gaiko Jiho*, March 1, 1940.

⁶⁹ Hanzawa Gyokujo, "Toa jikyoku no honkakuteki shinten (Genuine progress of the situation in the East Asia)," *Gaiko Jiho*, July 1, 1940.

Company (chief at Shanghai Bureau), in order to settle the current situation, Wang's first priority should be to grasp how people felt, and for this, demands from some Japanese people for more rights and benefits should be suppressed.⁷⁰

However, the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and China, which was finally concluded on November 30, didn't accept the regime's autonomy or independence. Those Japanese people's demands were not necessarily suppressed. The conclusion of this treaty didn't open the path toward the end of the war, either.

(3) From "East Asia" to "Greater East Asia"

The international circumstances surrounding Japan and China underwent great changes during this period. The Soviet-Japanese border conflicts broke out in Nomonhan in May, 1939, the Non-Aggression Treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union was concluded in August, and the next month the Second World War broke out. After a temporary lull, Germany made a foray into West Europe in May, 1940, which caused Japan to conclude the Tripartite Pact, and start its Southward Expansion by making an entry into French Indochina.

During this period, intellectuals argued how these changes in international circumstances had influenced the foreign powers' attitudes toward Chiang's regime, and what impact this, in turn, would have on the anti-Japanese camp in China. Some argued that the Nomonhan Incident had made it clear that The Sino-Japanese War was, in fact, "a struggle against non-Asian forces" behind the anti-Japanese regime. In other words, it was a war between Japan and the Soviet Union, and was also a struggle between Japan and Britain.⁷¹ Nakayasu Yosaku mentioned the possibility of the Soviet Union or the Comintern strengthening their activities in Asia and insisted that much

⁷⁰ Tachibana Nobukazu, "Jihen shori eno kosatsu (A study for solving the Incident)," *Chuokoron*, July 1940.

⁷¹ Onishi Itsuki, "Jihen to honkakuteki dankai (Genuine stage of the Incident)," *Gaiko Jihō*, August 1, 1939.

caution should be paid to the moves of the Chinese Communist Party in response to them. Nakayasu assumed that even if Chiang's regime fell, the war wouldn't end, because the Communist forces would rise and the "true war" would begin.⁷² Hanya Takao (半谷高雄), at Domei News Agency (a deputy manager at East Asia Department) predicted that the supply to Chiang's regime would stop and the Chongqing regime would experience difficulties,⁷³ whereas Yoshioka Bunroku argued that the breakout of war in Europe would cause Britain and the Soviet Union to quickly retreat from Asia, which would be an unfavorable situation to Chiang's regime, but wouldn't lead to its collapse.⁷⁴

As European powers gradually retreated from East Asia after the breakout of the Second World War, the presence of the USA became the center of attention. Osawa Akira (大沢章), an international law scholar (a professor at Kyushu Imperial University), criticized the USA for being openly uncooperative with Wang's regime.⁷⁵ There also were repeated arguments as to the opposition between Japan and the USA over the new order in East Asia.

After a shift in the course of the war in Europe in May, 1940, the Sino-Japanese War came to be seen in a new light. Hanzawa Gyokujo argued that the Sino-Japanese War was no longer a conflict limited to Japan and China, but was "an enterprise to punish the whites for their world domination by defeating the anti-Japanese regime".⁷⁶ Hanzawa reached a conclusion that if the colonies of European powers and

⁷² Nakayasu Yosaku, "Dokuso fukashin joyaku to shina kyosanto (Russo-German Non-aggression Treaty and the Chinese Communist Party)," *Gaiko Jiho*, October 15, 1939.

⁷³ Hanya Takao, "Shina shin chuo seifu no juritsu (Establishment of the Chinese new central government)," *Gaiko Jiho*, October 1, 1939.

⁷⁴ Yoshioka Bunroku, "Shokaiseki no kumon (Chiang Kai-shek's agony)," *Chuokoron*, Extra Issue to Cope with the World War and the Sino-Japanese War, 1939.

⁷⁵ Osawa Akira, "Shinsei shina to kokusai chitsujo (Newborn China and the international order)," *Chuokoron*, May 1940.

⁷⁶ Hanzawa Gyokujo, "Sekai doran to nihon no yakuwari (World upheaval and role of Japan)," *Gaiko Jiho*, June 15, 1940.

the USA in East Asia were left as they were, it would be almost impossible to establish a new order in East Asia in a true sense.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Taira Teizo (平貞藏), at the Showa Research Association, stated that the Sino-Japanese War and the war in Europe were not linked to each other on the surface, but that they were “linked in that they had a global scale and had great significance in world history”. Taira went on to argue that, as Britain and France, in crises of survival, would loosen their grip on Asia, the United States was busy helping Britain and France, Germany and Italy had no power to spare for Asia, and the Soviet Union had no time to deal with any potential trouble in Asia, only Japan could act in Asia independently, and insist that Japan should take advantage of this opportunity to put an end to the war with China, requesting it to cooperate with Japan to liberate Asia. In response to the Southern Expansion Doctrine (Nanshin-ron 南進論), which had increasingly attracted wide attention, Taira sounded a warning to it, saying that Japan’s power should not be directed to other areas in such a critical period as this.⁷⁸

However with the start of the Second Konoe Cabinet, arguments which directly linked the Sino-Japanese War to Southern Expansion became especially prevalent. Tanaka Kanae expressed a view that now Japan was not only engaged in the Sino-Japanese War, but was also “dedicated to the great movement to establish the East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere including the South Seas”, and argued that if the three countries in East Asia proceeded together as a community with a common destiny, the Asian races around them tormented, just as they had been, under the control of Western colonial powers would be encouraged and become conscious of being part of the whole Asian community with a common destiny.⁷⁹ When the USA adopted a

⁷⁷ Hanzawa Gyokujo, “Toa shinchitsujo to ran’in, futsuin (The New Order in East Asia, and the Dutch East Indies and the French Indo-china),” *Gaiko Jiho*, July 15, 1940.

⁷⁸ Taira Teizo, “Jihen shori no shikaku kara (From an angle of solving the Incident),” *Chuokoron*, July 1940.

⁷⁹ Tanaka Kanae, “Unmei kyodokan to toa minzoku syugi (A sense of sharing fortunes and the East Asian nationalism),” *Gaiko Jiho*, October 1, 1940.

stringent posture toward Japan's southward expansion, Onishi Itsuki criticized the USA for its "increased hostility".⁸⁰ Tachibana Yoshimori (橘善守), at *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, argued that the establishment of the new order in East Asia "represented a death sentence to the control of East Asia by Western imperial powers, which would inevitably let a war to liberate East Asia explode."⁸¹ It can be seen from these examples that words by some intellectuals were hollow and empty. Such expressions as the new order in East Asia and the East Asian Cooperative Body, were gradually replaced with "Greater" East Asia "Co-Prosperity Sphere", as if they were still not powerful enough.⁸²

4. From the Recognition of the Reorganized National Government of China to the Outbreak of the Pacific War (from December, 1940 to December, 1941)

(1) Argument over the Reinforcement of Wang's Regime

Though Japan recognized Wang's regime, Japan didn't grant it as much autonomy and independence as many intellectuals expected. Shinmei Masamichi (新明正道), a sociologist (a professor at Tohoku Imperial University) stated that Japan had not offered sufficient assistance to Wang's regime to strengthen it, in spite of being fully aware that the power of Wang's regime was limited.⁸³ At that time, the stable governance under Wang's regime was called "local peace", and the

⁸⁰ Onishi Itsuki, "Jihen kansui no daishiren (Great trials for successful execution of the Incident)," *Gaiko Jiho*, October 15, 1940.

⁸¹ Tachibana Yoshimori, "Nankin kosho no daketsu to gaiko tenkan (Settlement of Nanjing negotiation and volte-face of diplomacy)," *Gaiko Jiho*, November 1, 1940.

⁸² Kawakami Sanitsu (川上散逸), "Toa renmei no tameni (For the East Asian Federation)," *Gaiko Jiho*, December 15, 1940.

⁸³ Shinmei Masamichi, "Shintoa kensetsu no gendankai (Present stage of building a new East Asia)," *Gaiko Jiho*, January 15, 1941.

termination of the war with Chiang's regime was called "full peace", but actually there was a very long way to go to even attain "local peace".

Ujita Naoyoshi (宇治田直義), manager at the Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD) argued that, now the Nanking regime (Wang), the Chongqing regime (Chiang) and the Yan'an regime (Communists) were opposed to one another, the two decisive requirements in victory were to make people's lives stable and to grasp the nationalist awareness of the intelligentsia, and insisted that, in order to let Wang's regime meet the requirements, Japan should avoid interfering with it and give it freedom.⁸⁴ Matsumoto Sokichi expressed a view that the fact that demands for reinforcement of Wang's regime were still strong even one year after his inauguration symbolized that it hadn't lived up to expectations.⁸⁵ Yoshioka Bunroku thought that the problem didn't lie only in Japan's interference and criticized Wang's regime for being weak and fragile like "a shabby hut hastily thrown up with materials at hand".⁸⁶ Arguments for reinforcement of Wang's regime still continued after them, which clearly represented the fact that it hadn't been successfully reinforced.

As expectations for Wang's regime gradually became lower, it is worthy of note that there was a rise, though temporarily, in the evaluation of Chiang's regime. It was mainly because of the New Fourth Army Incident; in other words, Chiang's regime was highly valued for cracking down on Communists. Even Hanzawa Gyokujo acknowledged that credit must go to Chiang Kai-shek's great power of control for preventing China from going totally communist by oppressing impudent Communists, while taking advantage of the

⁸⁴ Ujita Naoyoshi, "Jihen syori no seijiteki dankai (Political stage of solving the Incident)," *Gaiko Jiho*, March 1, 1941.

⁸⁵ Matsumoto Sokichi, "Nankin seifu no kyoka to kiso to no kankei (The relation between strengthening the Nanjing government and its bases)," *Gaiko Jiho*, April 1, 1941.

⁸⁶ Yoshioka Bunroku, "O seiken kyoka no ichi hoho (A method of strengthening Wang Jingwei's government)," *Gaiko Jiho*, June 15, 1941.

Communist forces to put up resistance against Japan.⁸⁷ Tachibana Yoshimori also commented that “the Chongqing regime had clearly been getting back on its feet lately”.⁸⁸ The opposition between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party inside the anti-Japanese camp had long attracted attention and had been analyzed closely. In this light, the New Fourth Army Incident attracted much attention from those concerned, who concluded that Chiang Kai-shek’s power of control had recovered, with the anti-Japanese posture of the Chongqing regime reinforced. The incident was not regarded as a step toward “full peace”.

(2) Intertwined with the Southern Issues

The intellectuals’ focus of attention gradually shifted from Wang’s regime to the south. Naomi Zenzo compared the Sino-Japanese War to a fight against a swarm of flies, and argued that it was impossible to kill all of those flies however hard you tried to smash them, and that, in order to prevent the reproduction of flies, it was necessary to resort to hygienic measures, which were, in other words, “the treatment of the Southern Issues”. As Chiang’s regime had been dependent on “the leftovers of Britain and the USA” to survive, you only had to get rid of the leftovers to finish the regime — this was the idea of resolving the Sino-Japanese War through the treatment of the Southern Issues.⁸⁹ In addition to the viewpoint of this “practical” methodology, there were also other arguments in favor of the treatment of the Southern Issues, which, in other words, referred to Southern Expansion, in light of the establishment of the new order in East Asia. Kamei Kan’ichiro (亀井貫一郎), a member of the House of Representatives and a chief at the East Asia

⁸⁷ Hanzawa Gyokujo, “Cho taishi no rainin nisaishite (At the time of arrival of Ambassador Chu Minyi),” *Gaiko Jiho*, February 1941.

⁸⁸ Tachibana Yoshimori, “Jukei kosen taisei saiken no shin doko (A new tendency of rebuilding resistance posture in Chongqing),” *Gaiko Jiho*, March 15, 1941.

⁸⁹ Naomi Zenzo, “Jihen syuketsu saku toshite no nanposaku jissen ron (On executing southern advance policy as a policy of ending the Incident),” *Gaiko Jiho*, February 1941.

Department of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, defined the Sino-Japanese War as part of the war toward the establishment of a new order in the world, and stated definitely that, frankly speaking, such a thing as the Sino-Japanese War didn't exist from his subjective point of view.⁹⁰ Taira Teizo argued that as the Sino-Japanese War was part of the Second World War, Japan and China couldn't resolve it only by themselves, and insisted that it must be resolved on "a global scale".⁹¹

On the other hand, Komuro Makoto (小室誠), an editorial writer at the Hochi Shimbun newspaper company (報知新聞社), criticized that the insistence that the Sino-Japanese War should be resolved together with or as part of the Second World War was wrong, and was a mere "theoretical game", even though the objective in the Sino-Japanese War was not only the defeat of the Chongqing regime, but also the elimination of the Imperial influences by expelling those white powers with semi-colonial policies and in this sense it surely was "a global issue" intertwined with the Southern Issues.⁹² Komuro went on to argue that it had always been clear that the Sino-Japanese War would be prolonged, and that therefore, those who made arguments in the context of the Second World War, perhaps with a sense of "resignation" faced with the extreme difficulty in resolving the Sino-Japanese War, should be ashamed of themselves.⁹³

However, the measures submitted by Komuro to resolve the Sino-Japanese War were mostly a mere repetition of those previous arguments for the reinforcement of Wang's regime, and so seemed to be far from workable. Later, just as Komuro was concerned, the arguments over the Sino-Japanese War proceeded further in the context of the Southern Issues and the Second World War.

⁹⁰ Kamei Kan'ichiro, "Koa dantai togo no koso (A plan to integrate groups of Asia development)," *Chuokoron*, April 1941.

⁹¹ Taira Teizo, "Sekai seikyoku to jihen syori (The world political situations and solving the Incident)," *Chuokoron*, June 1941.

⁹² Komuro Makoto, "Shintoa kensetsu suishin no jiki dankai (Next stage of drive to build a new East Asia)," *Gaiko Jiho*, May 1, 1941.

⁹³ Komuro Makoto, "Konoe-Okyodo seimei no igi to shiko (The Significance and direction of Konoe-Wang joint statement)," *Gaiko Jiho*, July 15, 1941.

Conclusion

The papers related to the Sino-Japanese War cited in this paper are from *Gaiko Jiho* and *Chuokoron*. As was mentioned in Introduction, those views on the Sino-Japanese War were not necessarily completely consistent with those of the Japanese general public. Moreover, this paper only cites papers from those two journals, and therefore should not be thought to necessarily represent the views on the Sino-Japanese War common among all the intellectuals and advocates. Please be aware of these points first, before looking at the noteworthy characteristics in Japanese views on the Sino-Japanese War at that time below.

First, as was also mentioned in Introduction, there was no consensus built among the Japanese views on the Sino-Japanese War, as there was among the Chinese views on the war. Moreover, the Japanese views gradually changed as the war was prolonged. For example, at the initial stage, it was some anti-Japanese elements that were regarded as Japan's enemy, but later, it was the anti-Japanese Nationalist Government, and close attention was paid to the "hostile" external forces which supported the anti-Japanese movement. Apart from the elimination and annihilation of the anti-Japanese elements, the "ideal" of establishing a new order in East Asia was incorporated into the objective of the war.

These changes in the definition of the enemy and the objective of the war were, of course, related to the Japanese government's official positions. It was beyond doubt that the statement of the First Konoe Cabinet on Jan 16, 1938, and the "New Order in East Asia" statement had a major impact on the arguments in journalism. However, it is worthy of note that those arguments often preceded the government's policy statements. The denial of the Nationalist Government and the arguments for the new order were typical examples. Sometimes, arguments also emerged demanding that the government should clearly state its official position.

In addition, there were not a few insistences in journalism, especially in *Gaiko Jiho*, which were more hard-line than those of

the government. Sometimes, they were even more hard-line than the Japanese Army, or the Renovation Faction in the Foreign Ministry of Japan, which was diplomatically more hard-line than the army. We should be fully cautious about jumping to easy conclusions as to what this meant, but these hard-line views had undoubtedly influenced the views of the Japanese general public on the Sino-Japanese War. In this sense, it is worthy of note that many of the authors of the posted papers were journalists specializing in Chinese issues.

Among the authors, not a few used Marxist analytical terms and concepts. It is very intriguing, as Ota Unosuke pointed out, that their “social scientific” analyses were consistent with those extreme right-wing insinuations in that they both reached the same conclusion that Chiang Kai-shek’s regime, which was a bourgeois government, should be overthrown. It is hard to decide whether to interpret this as the consequence of the “the censorship of speech and thought” by the Japanese government or as the “true feelings” expressed by left-wing intellectuals.

As Tsuda Sokichi (津田左右吉), a leading authority in the study of Japanese history (a professor at Waseda University), pointed out, as the Sino-Japanese War was prolonged, some came to review themselves and think that Japan understood too little about China.⁹⁴ Strong attention was paid to, and study and research were performed about how China had successfully continued its resistance against Japan despite not being fully modernized. In some sense, the fruit of these attempts was the “rediscovery” of Chinese nationalism, which, as mentioned above, was linked to the concept of the East Asian Cooperative Body.

What was “rediscovered” was not only Chinese nationalism, but was also Chinese “national character”. While the rediscovery of Chinese nationalism led to the objective evaluation of the anti-Japanese elements, the rediscovery of Chinese national character led to the formation of a stronger impression of China as being “pre-modern” and “arrogant”. Which had influenced the Japanese people’s understanding of the Sino-Japanese War more, Chinese nationalism or

⁹⁴ Tsuda Sokichi, “Nihon ni okeru shinagaku no shimei (The mission of Sinology in Japan),” *Chuokoron*, March 1939.

Chinese national character? It is impossible to give a definite answer here, but it can be reasonably assumed that for the Japanese general public, not for the intellectuals, views that emphasized the influence of Chinese national character seemed more persuasive.

Finally, a rather ironic passage from the paper submitted several months after the Pacific War went as follows: “We haven’t seen any clues to the solution of the Sino-Japanese War, except for mere abstract ideals. Today we often here it said, ‘the Sino-Japanese War has to be resolved’, but I doubt if there is anyone who can answer what resolving the Sino-Japanese War means. What does ‘resolve’ mean? We have to resolve this problem first.”⁹⁵ It can be seen that at that time, it was still unclear what “resolve” meant at all. This means that it was unclear, too, what Japan had been fighting for. (潮田耕一譯)

⁹⁵ Yamano Yoshikazu, “Dai toa senso to shina no syorai (The Greater East Asian War and the future of China),” *Shina*, July 1942.