

Chapter 1

Japan's Advancement into the Middle and South of China, From the First Sino-Japanese War to the First World War

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to reconsider modern Japan's advancement into China. It has been thought that there were two directions for advancing into China: northward and southward. First, what was the northward advance? The northward advance refers to advancing from the Korean Peninsula (colonized by Japan in 1910) to North China via Manchuria. In addition, it is said that the northward advance was mainly proposed by three parties: the Japanese Army, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Manchuria Railway company (Mantetsu).

Many studies on modern Japanese history so far have focused on the northward advance. As a result, the historical image has been drawn that the main direction of modern Japan's advancement into China was northward. On the other hand, with regard to the advance south, although there are studies that deal with individual themes, there are few studies that attempt to capture the whole picture. Hajime Shimizu (1990) pointed out that "Japan's southward advance began in earnest after the First World War." In order to comprehensively examine modern Japan's expansion into China, it is necessary to accumulate further research on the southward advance. In this chapter, I will reconsider modern Japan's expansion into China from the perspective of advancing southward.

2. An Outline of the “Southward Advance”

There were several objectives in modern Japan’s southward advance. The first was the advance into the Middle and South of China. It focused on advancement into Shanghai, Xiamen, and Hankou (now Wuhan). Especially after the First Sino-Japanese War, it started to attract attention. This chapter will cover the period from the Sino-Japanese War, which is the early stage of the southward advance, to the period of the First World War. The second objective was the advance into Southeast Asia. This started in earnest in the 1930s for the purpose of acquiring natural resources. The third objective was expansion into the islands of the Pacific. This was especially started in earnest after the First World War.

The southward advance was promoted by various actors such as the government, the military, and private enterprises. It involved the Japanese government, the Japanese Navy, and Taiwan’s Governor.

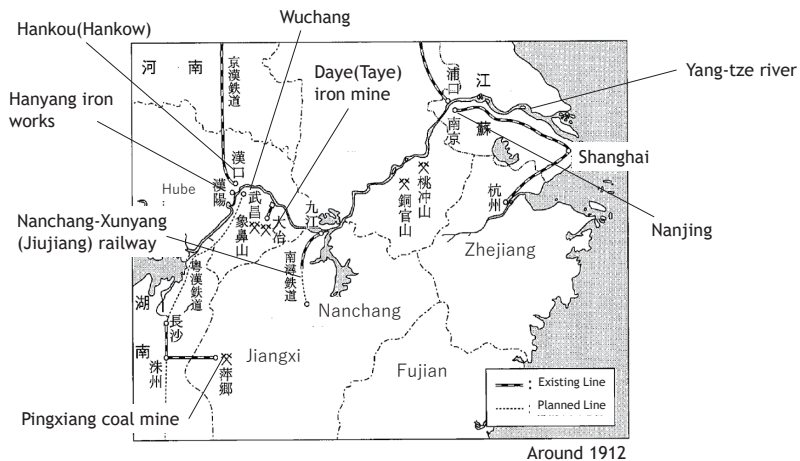


Figure 1. Concessions in the Yang-tze Region Circa 1912

Source: Author

Figure 1 is a map of the Middle and South of China, especially the Yangtze River basin where many interests existed. The Yangtze River runs through the middle of this map. Large cities such as Shanghai and Nanjing are located downstream of the Yangtze River. Going upstream, there is Jiangxi Province, and there is a railway called Nanxun Railway from the open port of Jiujiang to Nanchang. This railway is one of the few railways in which Japan was involved. Further upstream is Wuhan. Around Wuhan, there were the Hanyang Ironworks and Daye Iron Ore Company, which Japan invested in. Japan was trying to make a particularly economic advancement into these regions.

Next, I would like to explain the reasons for the growing desire to advance southward in modern Japan. The most important moment was the colonization of Taiwan after the First Sino-Japanese War. Starting from Taiwan, Japan began to actively try to expand into the Middle and South of China. In addition, in 1901, the state-owned Yawata Iron Works was established with the reparations for the First Sino-Japanese War, and the Japanese government began to seek iron ore and pig iron from the Yangtze River basin. How did Japan advance into this basin? Specifically, there were three strategies. The first was the trade in cotton textile and iron resources, the second was investment in railroads and iron mines, and the third was military action starting from Taiwan.

3. Non-cession Treaty of Fujian Province (April 1898)

Let us examine in detail Japan's advancement after the first Sino-Japanese War. Following the colonization of Taiwan, the turning point for Japan's southward advance was the "Non-cession Treaty of Fujian Province" concluded between Japan and China in April 1898. In the background of this treaty, Germany, Russia, France, and Britain, whom I will refer to as the Western Powers, set up leased land in China to

establish their “sphere of influence” and concluded various treaties and agreements. Regarding the content of their non-cession treaty, the Japanese government drafted it for its own convenience, stating that China would “not cede Fujian Province to any country other than Japan” in order to ensure Taiwan’s security and secure a base for advancing into “China Proper.”

However, it was recognized that the Qing Dynasty promised not to cede Fujian Province to any other countries (including Japan). As a result, there was a difference of perception between Japan and the Qing Dynasty regarding this treaty. Nonetheless, this agreement was a major basis for the Japanese side to attach importance to Fujian Province and to promote the southward advance from Fujian Province as a starting point.

4. The Japanese Cabinet’s Decision on its Interests in the Middle and South of China (February 1900)

In 1900, the Japanese government made a cabinet decision on concessions to the Middle and South of China in an attempt to make the previously mentioned non-cession treaty more concrete. As a long-term goal, Japan had indicated a policy of acquiring railway concessions as shown in Figure 2. The most important route was from Xiamen in Fujian to Fuzhou, and Nanchang in Jiangxi to Hankou in Hubei. The branch lines passed through Fujian Province and from Nanchang in Jiangxi Province to Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province. This decision was not an urgent policy, but rather a long-term goal. It was also related to the Twenty-one Demands, which we will discuss later.

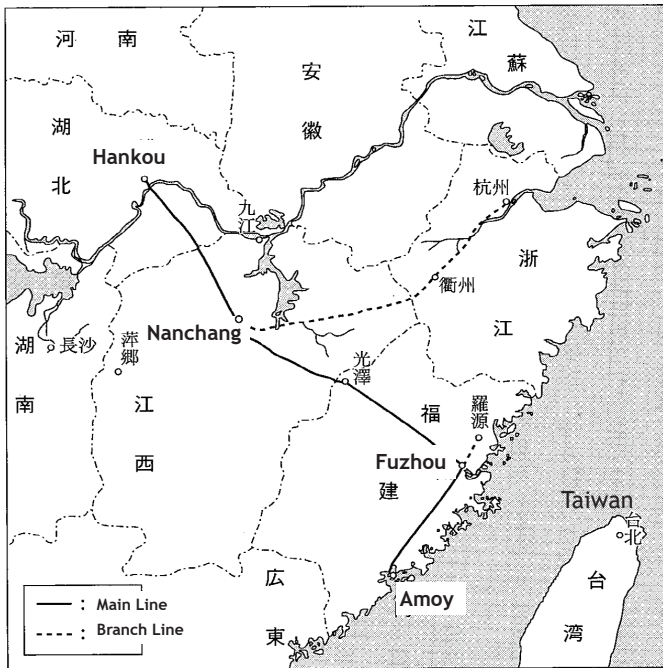


Figure 2. Plan of Railway Concessions

Source: Author

5. Impacts of the Boxer Rebellion (June 1900–September 1901)

Under these circumstances, the Boxer Rebellion occurred in China. The Boxer Rebellion was triggered by a xenophobic group called the Boxer Group, which called for the exclusion of foreign powers and intensified its activities. The Qing Dynasty initially tried to suppress this movement, but was unable to do so, instead choosing to wage war on the Western Powers together with the Boxer group. As a result of the Rebellion, the Qing Dynasty was defeated by the Western Powers and had to pay a large amount in reparations.

(1) The Xiamen (Amoy) Incident (August–September 1900)

The Boxer Rebellion was a major turning point for Japan's southward advance. First, the occurrence of the Boxer Rebellion triggered the Xiamen Incident. While the Qing Dynasty and the Boxer group were fighting against the Western Powers in northern China, the Japanese Governor-General of Taiwan dispatched troops to Xiamen on the opposite side of Taiwan. As this dispatch caused resistance from various countries, the Japanese government was limited to small-scale dispatches and canceled large-scale dispatches. This shows that Japan's military action in Fujian was strongly opposed by the Western Powers, and that Japan could not ignore it. As a result of the Xiamen Incident, the Japanese government came to recognize that advancing southward militarily would be difficult.

(2) The Opportunity of the “Southward Advance” — International Relations

The second major impact of the Boxer Rebellion was that it gave Japan a good opportunity to advance southward. The Governors general of the southeastern provinces of China held talks and declared that they would remain neutral on the Boxer Rebellion. This was the so-called Southeast mutual support agreement. It was aimed at keeping the Southeast provinces away from the Boxer Rebellion and stabilizing relations between the Southeast provinces and the Powers. While northern China was chaotic and devastated by the battle, the situation in the middle and south of China was relatively stable. Furthermore, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was concluded several years after the Boxer Rebellion. The main purpose of this alliance was to respect the status of both Britain and Japan in Korea and China. However, when considering the southward advance, it cannot be overlooked that the Anglo-Japanese

Alliance came to be seen as a good opportunity to advance into the Yangtze region, which was considered to be the British sphere of influence.

6. The Turning Point of Japan's Advancement into China — The Russo-Japanese War

The Russo-Japanese War greatly influenced Japan's advancement into China and its policies toward China. Due to the Russo-Japanese War, Japan acquired Guandongzhou (the tip of the Liaodong Peninsula) from Russia and the South Manchuria branch line of the Eastern Qing Railway (Dalian to Changchun). After that, many people from the mainland of Japan began to migrate to Guandong-zhou and become involved in business there. For Japan at that time, the Russo-Japanese War was a war that cost a lot of money and

risked many human lives. Aritomo Yamagata, who was an elder and had great influence in the Japanese political world, evaluated the Russo-Japanese War as having cost "Two billion yen in national expenses and two hundred thousand in human lives." Triggered by this war, the main direction of Japan's policy toward China would shift northward. Thus, the Russo-Japanese War was a major turning point in Japan's advance into China.



Fig. 3 Arimoto Yamagata

Source: *Kinsei Meishi Shasin*, Osaka: Kinsei Meishi Shasin Hanpu Kai, 1935

7. The Xinhai Revolution (1911~12)

Japan's advancement into China shifted northward after the Russo-Japanese War, but then came the turning point. This was the Xinhai Revolution, also known as the Chinese Revolution of 1911, which overthrew China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing Dynasty. It took place in Wuhan, in the middle of the Yangtze River basin. Two weeks after the outbreak of the revolution, the Japanese government made an important cabinet decision. The contents of the agreement were to cooperate with Russia in defending Japan's interests in Manchuria, and to cooperate with the Western Powers in "China Proper" and make efforts to expand its interests. The Japanese government showed a positive policy regarding "China Proper." After that, Japan provided financial assistance to the revolutionaries who were expanding their influence in the middle and south of China. They were financed through private enterprise but were mostly unsuccessful. However, the policy to advance south during the Xinhai Revolution was the origin of various policies during the First World War.

8. The Outbreak of the First World War

A few years after the Xinhai Revolution, the First World War broke out. Although they are well known, I would like to confirm Japan's trends immediately after the outbreak of the First World War. Japan took military action in several directions. First, Japan and Britain jointly dispatched troops to the Shandong Peninsula, which had been occupied by Germany. Japan inflicted a small number of casualties but succeeded in the occupation. Second, the Japanese troops occupied the German South Sea Islands. Both the first and second actions were quickly implemented within months of entering the war. In the short term, the

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First World War had the following effects on both Japan and China. First, Japan had accumulated a large amount of capital through increased trade with China and the United States. Secondly, with regard to China, there was no longer scope for European countries to get involved, but there was more scope for Japan to get involved. Third, the Chinese government at that time (the Yuan Shikai regime) also needed Japan's cooperation in military and economic areas. Thus, Japan's policy toward China during the First World War was prepared.

9. The Twenty-one Demands



Fig. 4. Eki Hioki, Japanese Minister to China
Source: George Grantham Bain Collection
(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs
Division, LC-DIG-ggbain-37364)



Fig 5. Takaaki Katō, Minister of Foreign
Affairs
Source: *Teikoku Gahō*, Tokyo: Fuzanbō
Publishing, 1906

One of the important policies Japan implemented during the First World War was the Twenty-one Demands. This entire list of demands is not detailed here. I will explain the brief history of this request, focusing on the important points for the southward and northward advances. In

late January 1915, the Japanese Minister to China, Eki Hioki (Figure 4) handed over a list known as the Twenty-one Demands directly to President Yuan Shikai and negotiations between Japan and China began. These demands were divided into five groups, No. 1 to No. 5. The Japanese government strongly hoped for the realization of their demands in Groups 1 through 4 as “requests.” In addition, the demands in Group 5 were expressed as “hopes.” Of these demands, Group 3, Group 4, and part of Group 5 were involved in the southward advance. Figure 5 shows Takaaki Katō, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time of the Twenty-one Demands.

(1) The “Southward Advance” and the Twenty-one Demands

1) Requests

Group 3’s demands concerned Hanyeping, China’s largest iron company which was located in Wuhan. The Japanese and Chinese governments had promised to form a Sino-Japanese joint venture for Hanyeping. Through this, the Japanese government aimed to expand its influence over the Hanyeping company. Group 4’s demands requested that the Chinese government promise not to lease ports and islands in the southeastern part of China to foreign powers to protect Japan’s interests in Taiwan.

2) Hopes

Group 5 was the “hope” group. Among these provisions, there was also something about advancing southward. Japan’s first hope was to transfer the railway concessions in the Middle and South of China to Japan. Its second hope was that China would consult with Japan initially when funds were needed for the development of railways, mines and ports in Fujian. In this way, against the background of

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Britain's declining position in China, the Japanese government showed a willingness to aggressively advance into the Yangtze Region, which was recognized as Britain's "sphere of influence." In other words, they carried out an aggressive southward advance policy. The British Foreign Office had warned of this group of demands as a threat to Britain's position in the Yangtze Region, as well as in the Middle and South of China.

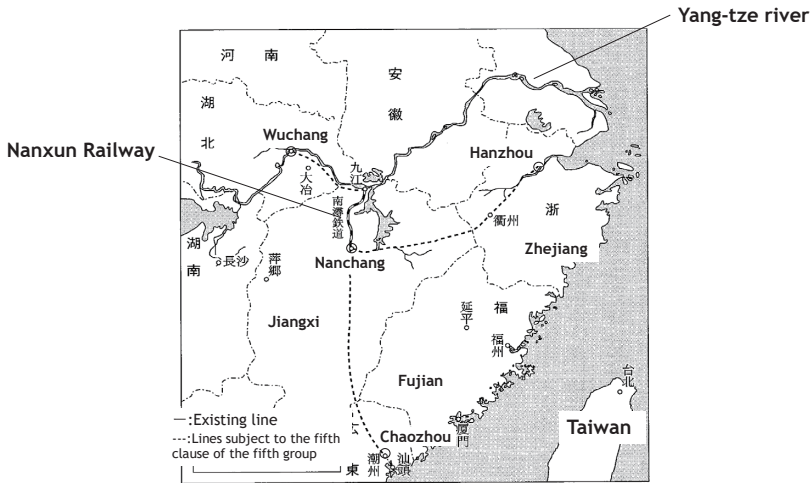


Figure 6. Railway concessions in Group 5 of the 21 demands

Source: Author

Figure 6 shows the contents of the railway concessions in the Middle and South of China that were in Group 5 of demands. The contents of this group were to give Japan the right to lay a railway line extending downstream of the Yangtze River (Nanchang to Hangzhou), a railway line extending upstream of the Yangtze River (Jiujiang to Hankou), and a railway line extending from Nanchang to Chaozhou in Guangdong Province centered on the Nanchun Railway, with which

Japan had already been involved.

(2) The “Northward Advance” and the Twenty-one Demands

However, in the end, the Japanese government withdrew their demands in Group 5. As a result, the content concerning railway interests in the Middle and South of China and Fujian Province was not realized. On the other hand, the Twenty-one Demands strengthened Japan’s interests in Manchuria. Contents concerning Manchurian interests were included in Group 2 of demands. As a result of the negotiations, the lease period of Guandong-zhou and the loan period of the South Manchuria Railway were extended. As a result, in Japan, expectations for advancement into Manchuria increased in various fields. The results of the Twenty-one Demands also meant further promotion of the northward advance.

10. Conclusion

(1) Developments of the “Southward Advance” and the Relationship between Japan and Britain

Japan’s southward advance continued from the end of the First Sino-Japanese War until the First World War, although there were some gradations depending on the period. A particularly important criterion for Japan’s southward advance was its diplomatic relations with Britain. Japan aggressively advanced southward when the Xinhai Revolution and the First World War broke out. However, an aggressive southward advance could have caused friction with Britain. Therefore, the Japanese government used private enterprise and negotiated directly with the Chinese government to proceed with measures to advance southward.

During the First World War, the Japanese government aggressively pursued its southward advance, but it did not produce many results.

(2) Comparison to the “Northward Advance”

Compared to Japan's northward advance, the southward advance centered on the Middle and South of China was more important in terms of relations with China and Britain. In particular, “China's autonomy” is an important perspective. Focusing on “China's autonomy” highlights the importance of Anglo-Japanese and Sino-Japanese relations in the modern history of Japan, which cannot be grasped by the history centered on the northward advance.

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