

Sino-Japanese Peace Negotiations over the Mukden Incident

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I. Preface

The significance of the Mukden Incident in the history of modern Sino-Japanese relations requires no debate. Nevertheless, research on direct negotiations between China and Japan has until now been quite rare.¹ This gap in recent scholarship owes largely to the secretive nature of the negotiations, which has rendered them elusive to most historians. In order to fill this gap, the research herein focuses on the historical setting in which the two governments engaged in direct negotiations. I will further explore the reasons why the negotiations devolved into secretive talks, examine the actual content of the talks, and uncover the factors that led to their breakdown midway through the process. In addition to fleshing out the historical record and attempting to represent the actual historical circumstances at the time of negotiations, it is hoped that investigation of this subject will offer a new perspective on Sino-Japanese relations of this period. In other words, the focus of this article is on the circumstances surrounding the negotiations and their historical significance. The complex situation surrounding the Mukden Incident itself and the Japanese invasion in general fall beyond the scope of this paper.

II. Background

At least two days after the outbreak of the Mukden Incident (September 20th, 1931), the Nationalist government had still failed to formulate a clear strategy for dealing with the crisis. On the second day after the eruption of the incident, Finance Minister T. V. Soong (Sung Tzu-wen 宋子文), acknowledged all along as the prime mover in Sino-Japanese foreign relations,² met with Consul

Shigemitsu Mamoru 重光葵 from the Japanese legation in China to assess the feasibility of direct negotiations. Speaking as an individual, Soong suggested that the two nations immediately select three representatives each to form a joint committee and rush to the scene to mediate the dispute.³ While Soong was seeking direct talks to settle the disagreements, the Nationalist government reported the Mukden Incident to the League of Nations under the heading "Military Maneuvers by the Japanese Army."⁴

Such a split of forces clearly indicates that at the time the Nationalist government had formulated no firm strategy for dealing with the crisis of the Mukden Incident. It took until September 21, when Nationalist government chairman Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 flew back to Nanking from one of his Communist extermination campaigns, before a foreign policy committee headed by Tai Chuan-hsien 戴傳賢 and T. V. Soong was established expressly for handling diplomatic matters with Japan.⁵ On the same day, the Nationalist government lodged a formal protest with the League of Nations under the new heading "aggressive behavior of the Japanese army" and called for international intervention.⁶ From this moment, the Nationalists pinned all hopes for a resolution to the incident on the League, anticipating that the pressure of international public opinion would counteract Japanese aggression.

As the policy of appeal to the League of Nations had been set in motion, a cabled response from Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijūrō 幣原喜重郎 claiming that Japan was willing to solve the dispute as advanced in T. V. Soong's proposal was rejected the following day by Soong, who reasoned that time had made the original proposal devoid of substantial significance. Soong explained that at the time of the proposal, both parties considered the incident no more than a local clash, while recent developments had brought the whole of Manchuria into the thick of the conflict. Despite repeated Japanese announcements that the dispute would not be enlarged, Kwantung Army activity had increased daily, casting doubt on the ability of the Japanese government to control its militarists. With this in mind, Soong underscored that unless the Kwantung Army was removed to its original defensive regions, China would by no means enter into negotiations with Japan.⁷ With this communication, channels of negotiation between the Chinese and Japanese governments were severed, and the scene of negotiations shifted entirely to the League of Nations in Geneva.

Non-governmental forces were by no means uniform in their support of the Nationalist government's move to cut off direct Sino-Japanese negotiations. One such example of dissent was the former head of the Legislative Yuan, Canton boss Hu Han-min 胡漢民, who

stressed the necessity of direct Sino-Japanese negotiations. Hu assessed the inability of the Japanese cabinet to formulate a strategy over the Mukden Incident, holding that it was not a product of set Japanese government policy, but most likely a display of force by a small group of ambitious officials within the Kwantung Army. This, plus elements in the aftermath of the crisis--such as the unrest of Japanese society, widespread public anxiety, the continuous plummeting of securities and stocks, and the charge in opinion circles that the move was too rash--made it clear, Hu argued, that Japanese society was largely dissatisfied with the outbreak of the Mukden Incident. Thus, Hu advocated that the national government take advantage of the rift between the Japanese cabinet and militarists and find a quick solution before the crisis grew.⁸

This position won him the support of then Canton government Foreign Minister Eugene Ch'en (Ch'en Yu-jen 陳友仁)⁹. Ch'en held that the Mukden Incident was a conspiracy planned wholly by the Kwantung Army with no relation to the Japanese government, and that in addition the Manchurian authorities were in part responsible for inciting the Kwantung Army to make their desperate move. In other words, the inappropriateness of the Manchurian authorities' anti-Japanese policies was one of the major reasons leading to the incident. Ch'en believed that once authority in Manchuria was taken out of the hands of "Young Marshal" Chang Hsueh-liang 張學良, China and Japan would have enough leeway for mediation.¹⁰ In numerous meetings with Suma 須磨, the acting Japanese consul in Canton, Ch'en repeatedly underscored friendly Sino-Japanese relations as the guiding principle of Canton government foreign policy and expressed the wish that the Mukden conflict could be resolved through direct Sino-Japanese talks. He further made the famous remark that the Canton government stood right with the Japanese on the principle of "overthrow Chiang, eliminate Chang" (tao-Chiang ch'u-Chang 倒蔣去張).¹¹

From the above, it can be seen that the Mukden Incident was handled completely differently by the central government in Nanking and the Canton government. The central government advocated trusting its fate to the League of Nations, while the Canton government urged direct Sino-Japanese negotiations. In December, however, these differences naturally disappeared with the outcome of negotiations between Nanking and Canton whereby Chiang Kai-shek stepped down and the leaders of the Canton government took control of the central government. With this development, direct Sino-Japanese negotiations re-emerged as a possibility.

Following the outbreak of the Mukden Incident, the consistent policy of the Japanese toward China was to espouse direct Sino-

Japanese negotiations. However, with developments in the international scene and the replacement of the Japanese cabinet, direct negotiations between the two nations took on a completely different meaning. In the judgment of the Canton authorities, the Mukden Incident was solely the product of an independent plot by the Kwantung Army and did not in the least bit represent the desires of the Japanese government. During the emergency cabinet meeting called by the Japanese government the day after the incident, an understanding was reached not to escalate the level of the conflict.¹² In addition, aside from adopting the stance of controlling the actions of the Kwantung Army, the Japanese government was to forbid units of its army stationed in Korea from crossing the border and coming to the aid of the Kwantung Army.¹³

These measures sufficiently support the assertion that the Japanese government, in which the stance of Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijūrō was most apparent, had no interest in enlarging the confrontation. At the start of the crisis, Shidehara fervently championed direct Sino-Japanese negotiations and looked forward to the peaceful solution of tensions in China. Nevertheless, with the Kwantung Army's successful propping up of puppet forces in Manchuria and the evolution of the international situation, Shidehara's attitude moved from firm opposition to the Mukden Incident to tacit support.¹⁴

To understand what led to Shidehara's change of stance, one must examine his basic attitude toward the Mukden crisis. Shidehara first opposed the incident because of his concern that the actions of the Kwantung Army, in addition to offending the signatories to the Nine Power Pact and provoking sanctions from the western powers, would also anger the Soviet Union and lead to a major war between the Japanese and the Soviets. After the conflict broke out, however, even with the Kwantung Army's continuing military aggression, reactions from the League of Nations and the United States were inordinately weak. Nor did the Soviet Union indicate any sign of reproach. At the same time, the Kwantung Army was unusually successful at cultivating puppet forces, as one after another major players under Chang Hsueh-liang declared their independence and threw their support behind the Japanese. Not only did these changes prompt Shidehara to change his original tact and begin supporting the Kwantung Army; he furthermore began hoping that this incident could in one move swiftly solve a host of unresolved difficulties between China and Japan over the Northeast region and bring Manchuria into Japan's sphere of power.¹⁵ Yet despite this change in attitude, he nonetheless championed direct Sino-Japanese negotiations toward the latter part of the conflict,¹⁶ mainly because he

hoped to avoid international interference and not because he genuinely desired to reach a peaceful solution with China.

Japanese political circles were divided over the Wakatsuki 若
槻 Cabinet's display of indecision and inconsistency after the outbreak of the Mukden Incident. This was especially true of the Seiyūkai 政友會, the major opposition party, and its leader Inukai Tsuyoshi 犬養毅, who were both deeply dissatisfied with the Wakatsuki Cabinet but for completely different reasons. The Seiyūkai's traditional China policy was to advocate vigorous pursuit of expanded interests in China. After the Mukden Incident broke out, the Seiyūkai, consistent with its past doctrine, extended its support to the Kwantung Army in a move which affirmed the legality of the incident. Further, the Seiyūkai openly expressed its strong displeasure with the Wakatsuki Cabinet's inability to support the Kwantung Army openly.

Interestingly, even though Inukai Tsuyoshi, as the Seiyūkai's leader, made the party's position known publicly,¹⁷ as an individual with longstanding ties to the Chinese revolutionary movement,¹⁸ he knew quite a bit about the Chinese political situation and was completely at odds with both the Japanese government and the Seiyūkai on the Mukden Incident. In a letter dated October 2 to a friend, Inukai expressed profound uneasiness with the massive upheaval wrought on the Chinese government by the Mukden Incident, and he maintained that the Nationalist government in Nanking concluded negotiations with Canton with the intent of offsetting the military actions of the Kwantung Army. While this is undeniably true, Inukai further feared that the Nationalist government might actually become interested in reaching a peace with the Chinese Communists and perhaps even seek an alliance with the Soviets. Such moves on the part of the Nationalist government, Inukai argued, would not only put China in danger of falling under Communist control, but would also contribute to tremendous turmoil over the whole of East Asia. The main forces in the Japanese government were seemingly unaware of the implications of such a move and would certainly never take any action to remedy the situation. No Japanese misfortune, Inukai warned, would be greater than this.¹⁹

From this correspondence one can see that Inukai's understanding of the Mukden Incident was much more sophisticated than that of the Kwantung Army, Premier Wakatsuki, or Foreign Minister Shidehara. Inukai approached the Mukden Incident with an appreciation of the evolution of Chinese internal politics, in contrast to the Kwantung Army and the Japanese government which were completely unconcerned with such matters. The Kwantung Army, infatuated with its own military capabilities, went out of its way to orchestrate the Mukden

Incident with the aim of a full-scale invasion of China;²⁰ that such a contemptuous approach to China would fail to consider the development of political movements within China is a given. For its part, the Japanese government was chiefly concerned with tempering a backlash from the western powers.²¹ Such a strategy held that as long as sanctions against Japan could be eliminated, all problems standing between China and Japan could be neatly solved. Hence, as far as Japan was concerned, any Chinese government reaction was irrelevant, and disputes between competing Chinese interests were of even less concern.

Inukai, understanding the significance of the changing political tides within China, held a more cautious attitude toward closer relations between the Soviet Union and China. Naturally, such a perspective made Inukai more impatient to find a solution to the crises than those in the government. Thus, when he took over the post of Japanese premier on December 13, 1931, an opportunity for Sino-Japanese peace talks logically presented itself.

III. Negotiations

On Inukai's third day as premier (December 15, 1931), he selected his personal friend Kayano Nagatomo 菅野長知 as his secret envoy and sent him to China in search of a peace agreement.²² He hoped that by using the private channels he had established over a long period of time with the heads of the Nationalist government, an initial agreement might be reached on a non-official basis. That accomplished, he could then turn to the Kwantung Army with an established settlement, thus allowing it no excuse to expand the conflict. That the premier of a nation still had to resort to such a formula was largely because the political climate in Japan would not permit "give-and-take" open diplomatic negotiations between Japan and China.

Fueled by the concerted efforts at manipulation of opinion by Japanese militarists,²³ the entire Japanese nation was jubilant with the decisive victory of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. With the country in the midst of celebration over the extraordinary spoils won by the Kwantung Army, the government was reluctant to hold open negotiations with the Chinese government over the question of to whom the spoils truly belonged. In addition, Inukai's position in a party that maintained a traditionally hardline stance on China was tenuous. Inukai, 77 years old at the time of the incident, was able to win the position of Seiyūkai president at the age of 75 owing largely to internecine strife between its two major factions. As the party faced the crisis of a possible split in which neither

faction could sustain itself alone, Inukai, despite belonging to a minor faction, was a respected veteran who as president could be counted on to offset factional discord.²⁴ At the time of the Mukden Incident, the Seiyūkai held 237 seats in the Diet, of which Inukai had only twenty-odd seats under his control.²⁵ Naturally, given these circumstances, any political measure by Inukai had to be taken with extreme caution.

Kayano Nagatomo, Inukai's secret envoy, had long been recognized as a China expert. During the era of the 1911 Revolution, he had followed Huang Hsing 黃興 to war in Hanyang, and he was one of the few Japanese trusted by Sun Yat-sen.²⁶ Inukai's choice of Kayano stemmed from a hope that the latter's deep ties with the Chinese revolutionary movement could more easily win the trust of major figures in the Chinese government.

As Inukai set about making peace with China, Hu Han-min was also calling for peace and making overtures to Inukai. Although chronologically there was no direct connection between Hu's calls and Inukai's plans for peace.²⁷ Nevertheless, Hu's entreaties were enough to substantiate the great hope China put in Inukai after he took over the cabinet. Kayano Nagatomo arrived in Shanghai on December 21, coinciding exactly with the reshuffling in the central administration of the national government. Just as Inukai had predicted, in the aftermath of the Mukden Incident, the central government in Nanking actively sought reconciliation with the Canton government. As a result of arbitration between the two contingents, Nationalist government chairman Chiang Kai-shek announced his withdrawal, resigning from all positions of public office. Chiang's was succeeded as chairman by the major Canton government figure, Lin Sen 林森, while the post of head of the Executive Yuan was filled by Sun Fo 孫科, another strong force in the Canton government. In addition, the two governments took advantage of the reshuffling of the political scene to announce their merger.

After Kayano Nagatomo's arrival in China, he chose Chū Cheng 居正, soon to take on the post of vice minister of the new government's Judicial Yuan, as his counterpart in negotiations.²⁸ Kayano chose Chū Cheng because of the close personal relationship the two enjoyed; Kayano, with no children of his own, had adopted Chū Cheng's second daughter.²⁹ Furious that Kayano's negotiations with China were made using personal channels and not via formal Foreign Ministry channels, Foreign Minister Eugene Ch'en lodged a protest with the Japanese Consulate in China.³⁰ Despite the failure of the protest to influence Kayano's negotiations with central figures in the Nationalist government, it nonetheless exposed his position as a secret envoy. These elements were to have a decisive effect on the

development of his mission. From the outcome of bilateral negotiations, Kayano's mission can be termed fairly successful. On December 24, he went to Nanking to meet with Sun Fo, then the highest administrative official in the Nationalist government. After conferring with Sun, he sent the following cable to Inukai:

In order to solve the Manchurian problem, the Chinese government especially established the "Northeast Political Affairs Committee" (Tung-pei cheng-wu wei-yüan-hui 東北正務委員會) with Chü Cheng as chairman, and Hsü Ch'ung-chih 許崇智, Ch'en Chung-fu 陳中孚, Chu Ch'i-ch'ing 朱靈青, and Fu Ju-lin 傅汝霖 among its members. The Committee's task is to reshuffle the administrative organizations of the northeastern provinces, rectify administrative matters, maintain order, deal with Chang Hsüeh-liang (contact has been made with some of Chang Hsüeh-liang's subordinates), and resolve all outstanding differences between China and Japan. All matters will be handed over to the full authority of Chü Cheng alone... With the announcement of the appointment of the various committee members, Sino-Japanese bilateral relations should remain where they are. After Chü Cheng succeeds to his post, China and Japan shall negotiate on the matter of the withdrawal of Japanese forces.³¹

From this cable it is evident that both sides had already reached an initial agreement. The two major elements of the accord were, first, that the national government would make massive concessions on the question of troop withdrawal; and second, the investigation and handling of Chang Hsüeh-liang. After the Mukden Incident, the underlying principle of the Nationalist government on relations with Japan was the advocacy of "withdrawal first, then negotiation." With Japanese territorial pressure, there was not only the fear that it would be impossible to conclude reasonable negotiations with Japan, but also that China would be forced into a compromising agreement.³² The Nationalist government's willingness to make such concessions at this time had its objective and subjective reasons. Objectively speaking, reliance on the League of Nations could not effectively counterbalance Japan, and subjectively speaking, the Nationalist government then still trusted Inukai. In other words, in the immediate aftermath of the Mukden Incident, by holding steadfastly to the principle of no negotiations without withdrawal, the Nationalist government's severed the line of direct negotiations between China and Japan; the Nationalist government's eventual acceptance of the Japanese request to engage in peace talks without any prior Japanese withdrawal owed primarily to a kind of mutual trust. Inukai's stature among Chinese leaders was the key to

the recommencement of bilateral negotiations.

The other major condition of the agreement dealt with Chang Hsüeh-liang. This condition indicated that in the bilateral handling of the Manchurian situation both sides were determined not to allow Chang Hsüeh-liang to play a major role in the area's future. As the agreement was reached, Chang's forces were deployed in an antagonistic stance against the Kwantung Army at Chinchow, his last base in Manchuria. Despite repeated Nationalist government orders calling for Chang Hsüeh-liang to "actively resist to the best of his ability,"³³ in the private negotiations the Chinese and Japanese governments agreed that he was to be sacrificed. On this point it is clear that the Nationalist government was uninterested in aiding Chang's battle at Chinchow; and whether or not Chang Hsüeh-liang was committed to the defense of Chinchow was not a major concern of the Nationalist government.

Judging from Kayano Nagatomo's diary, it is apparent that in his December 24 meeting with Sun Fo both sides had already reached a crucial accord, and that in the following days his involvement centered on activities of a social nature. Upon his return to Shanghai on the 29th, the cables Kayano relayed to Inukai concentrated largely on reporting the personnel changes occurring with the arrival of major Canton government figures in the central government, as well as the Nationalist government's plan for winning over Chang Hsüeh-liang's subordinates.³⁴ This communication documents the tremendous energies the Nationalist government dedicated to attempting to remove Chang Hsüeh-liang from power after major Canton government figures took over the central government.

Although Kayano sent seven successive cables to Inukai after his arrival in China, he never received a response. Thus, on December 31 he sent communications once again, this time to Secretary to the Premier Inukai Ken 犬養健, Inukai Tsuyoshi's son, and in addition inquired as to the situation back in Japan.³⁵ The next day, January 1, 1932, Inukai Ken replied:

As the premier was occupied with sacrificial rites at the Ise Shrine, he was unable to respond to your cables. Chang Hsüeh-liang is showing signs that removal of his troops from Chinchow is foreseeable within the next few days. After his withdrawal, or around January 10, please have Mr. Chü Cheng leave for Manchuria. The Japanese side shall also send a figure of similar status to Manchuria.³⁶

This response confirms that Inukai Tsuyoshi had no dissenting views on the initial accord between Kayano Nagatomo and Sun Fo, and that arrangements for representatives from each country to engage in formal negotiations in Manchuria had already commenced. According

to Inukai Ken's memoirs, the Japanese representative mentioned in the cable was set to be the chairman of the Seiyūkai's Political Affairs Investigation Committee and the former president of the South Manchurian Railway Company, Yamamoto Jōtarō 山本条太郎.³⁷ The decision that formal negotiations would have to wait until Chang Hsüeh-liang's withdrawal from his last base in Manchuria, Chinchow, once again verifies the determination on both sides to prevent Chang's return to Manchuria.

Kayano responded to this cable immediately, reporting to Inukai the news that Chū Cheng would arrive in Manchuria on January 9 as scheduled.³⁸ From this cable it is evident that the negotiation process had been smooth and Kayano had successfully handled his mission. At this time both China and Japan quietly anticipated the commencement of formal peace talks in Manchuria on January 10.

IV. Failure

Just as the Nationalist government began celebrating the dawn of renewed Sino-Japanese peace,³⁹ dramatic developments interfered. First, on January 4, Kayano received a cabled warning from Tokyo, essentially serving notice that Inukai was unable to receive his communications. As the details of the difficulty were under investigation, he was to change to secret codes and veiled language. The next day Kayano received a signed cable from Inukai requesting that he return to Japan immediately. With this development, Sino-Japanese negotiations in which a basic accord had been reached, were abruptly abandoned. Chū Cheng's trip to Manchuria was also subsequently called off. On January 8, Kayano returned to Japan as ordered,⁴⁰ thereby breaking off Sino-Japanese peace negotiations.

The urgent order from Inukai to Kayano to return from abroad, thus ending peace talks between Japan and China, was brought about by the opposition of the Japanese military and the Foreign Ministry. For the initial period following Kayano's arrival in China, Inukai Tsuyoshi happened to be away from the premier's palace in Mie prefecture, worshipping at the Ise Shrine. For this reason, Kayano's incoming cables had been intercepted by the General Secretary of Inukai's Cabinet Mori Kaku 森恪.⁴¹ Although Mori did not know the secret code, he nonetheless sensed that Inukai had covert arrangements going on in China and made this fact known to the military. With this tip, the military began keeping close watch on the cabled exchanges between China and Inukai, while at the same time launching a concerted investigation into the whole situation.

In addition, apart from military deployments, the Foreign Ministry also obtained information on Kayano's peace efforts in China.

On December 31, 1931, Consul Shigemitsu sent his first cable to Inukai Tsuyoshi on Kayano's identity as secret envoy. On the same day, he dispatched another cable to report that the legation office in China had learned of the content of the basic agreement reached by Kayano and Chū Cheng after their negotiations.⁴² The following day, the military also came across similar intelligence to that picked up by the legation office.⁴³

From this time, Kayano's identity was no longer secret, and the moves for peace were effectively cut off by the Japanese Army and the Foreign Ministry. Responsible departments of the Foreign Ministry, claiming that failure to report to related departments and the unauthorized dispatch of Kayano to seek a peaceful resolution to the Mukden crisis violated public administration law, registered their protests with Inukai, who also held the additional post of chief of the Foreign Ministry. Subsequently, claiming that Kayano's peace formula violated the newest "Policy for Handling the Problem of Manchuria and Mongolia," formulated by the Foreign Ministry and the related affairs departments of the headquarters of both the army and navy, the Foreign Ministry also asked that Inukai Tsuyoshi put an end to Kayano's activities in China and order his immediate return to Japan.⁴⁴ It was under such pressure that Inukai was forced to terminate all peace efforts with China. The "Policy for Handling the Problem of Manchuria and Mongolia" was designed to fully accommodate the Kwantung Army's scheme for the invasion of Manchuria and the establishment of Manchukuo.⁴⁵ The policy was formulated with the full participation of the Foreign Ministry and the administrative bureaucracies of the army and navy headquarters. Hence, by this time, the Japanese bureaucracy was firmly behind a policy of supporting the Kwantung Army and propping up the puppet Manchukuo government.

Although Inukai was forced to end Kayano's activities as secret envoy due to opposition from Japan's military and Foreign Ministry officials, he never gave in to them. This is corroborated by his reply to Chū Cheng. On January 28, 1932, in order to direct the world's attention away from Manchuria, the Japanese military stirred up an incident in Shanghai. With this, Chū Cheng, who had wanted all along to get back to discussing peace, sent a communication to Inukai inquiring as to the latter's good will. Inukai replied:

I have received your communication. I too am deeply worried by the troubled situation of which you speak. I, an aging man not worthy of the responsibility of the task, wish to take this occasion to work out an extensive plan for the prosperity of all Asia. This was the foremost wish of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and it is my wish as well. It is my hope that

you may do something great for all yellow races.⁴⁶

Although Inukai did not clearly state in this cable the manner in which another effort at peace might be sought, he still managed to express his determination to work for peace. At this time, Inukai's emphasis was on the domestic situation, maintaining that the most pressing issue was still control of the military. On February 15, 1932, Inukai wrote a personal letter to seasoned Marshal Uehara Yūsaku 上原勇作, imploring the latter to restrain the young and zealous Japanese militarists and support plans for Sino-Japanese peace talks. In the letter, Inukai discussed his views of a Manchukuo regime. He held that Japan could absolutely not allow the establishment of Manchukuo for two reasons. First, it would violate the Nine Power Treaty. Given that the Nine Power Treaty clearly provided for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of China, Japan's plans to establish a puppet regime in Manchukuo was unquestionably a challenge to that treaty, one that would undoubtedly meet the censure of various nations.

Second were strategic considerations involving the Soviet Union. That the Soviet Union did not so much as flinch in the wake of the Mukden crisis was largely because all its energy was invested in the economic construction of its first Five-Year Plan. However, after the completion of its first stage of economic construction (1933), the Soviet Union would respond to Japanese developments in Manchuria. In order to take first strategic advantage, Japan needed Chinese cooperation, which meant that Japan could under no circumstances sacrifice the good will of China for Manchukuo.

With this in mind, Inukai introduced his proposal for solving the problem. He held that in order to avoid conflict with the signatories to the Nine Power Treaty, it might be best if Japan simply looked to establish self-rule in Manchuria.⁴⁷ Inukai did not, however, make clear just how self-rule would be established. Still, according to the memoirs of Inukai Ken who worked along with Kayano Nagatomo on the secret envoy scheme, Inukai Tsuyoshi's original intent was that Japan continue to acknowledge that Manchuria had long been the territory of China, while also recognizing that China enjoyed sovereignty in Manchuria. On the other hand, Japan demanded that China allow Japan to enjoy the same rights to economic development in Manchuria enjoyed by China, that the Nationalist government forbid anti-Japanese activities of all kinds, and at the same time allow the Japanese army to set up defenses in the Sino-Soviet border region.⁴⁸

Again based on Inukai Ken's memoirs, Inukai Tsuyoshi's proposed solution centered on the control of economic privilege. Inukai Ken made no further clarification as to what was meant by Japan and

China enjoying equal rights to economic development. Tsou Lu 鄒魯, a participant in the Chu-Kayano negotiations, provided an additional explanation, claiming that Japan agreed to scrap all unequal treaties with China and rescind the right to navigate along China's inland waterways. Nonetheless, China had to allow Japan the right to lease land in Manchuria. For all intents and purposes, this was the reappearance of the second and third articles of the second of the Twenty-One Demands,⁴⁹ the original text of which reads:

(1) Japanese subjects in South Manchuria are given the right, by negotiation, to lease lands necessary for erecting suitable buildings for trade and manufacture or for engagement in agricultural enterprises.

(2) Japanese subjects are given the right to reside and travel freely in South Manchuria and engage in business and manufacturing of any kind.

As is commonly known, China and Japan had reached an agreement over these two articles, signing a treaty in May 1915. Conclusion of the treaty was not the mutual wish of both sides, but was entirely the product of a unilateral Japanese military threat. Thus, after the signing, China persisted in using domestic administrative law to offset the effective implementation of the articles. For example, one month after the conclusion of the treaty, the Chinese government promulgated the "Provisions for the Punishment of Traitors," which strictly forbade Chinese subjects from concluding lease agreements with foreigners over land, mines, or forests. This administrative order was aimed at offsetting the right to lease land gained by the Japanese in Manchuria. Subsequently, in addition to the central government, local authorities in Manchuria often secretly issued orders to county-level authorities aimed at limiting the effective application of land lease rights by the Japanese.⁵⁰ Major Chinese government efforts to counter Japanese use of the special privileges to acquire land and enjoy the right to reside and engage in business freely, both of which were bestowed in the Twenty-One Demands, aroused deep resentment from the Japanese. While implementation of the right to lease land had always been an outstanding issue between the Chinese and Japanese governments,⁵¹ at this time Inukai Tsuyoshi used the peace negotiations over the Mukden crisis to win Chinese concessions on this very question. With the gain of land lease rights, the majority of Japanese demands pre-dating the outbreak of the Mukden Incident had effectively been met.

Bringing together both Chinese and Japanese sources allows for a general understanding of the content of the secret bilateral agreements reached at the time. Aside from the failure to address the secondary railroad question,⁵² the agreements did satisfy Japan-

ese demands predating the Mukden crisis. However, the Japanese military, the general populace, and the bureaucracy at this time were too enamored of the military success of the Kwantung Army to allow their return. It was under such pressure that Inukai's peace efforts were set back time and again. The plan to appeal to Uehara Yūsaku for assistance not only failed to gain Uehara's support, but, thanks to leakage of the plan, led to worsening tensions between Inukai and the Japanese militarists. Inukai then formulated a plan to use the power of the emperor in rectifying military discipline in an effort to bring the military under his control. However, his efforts came to an abrupt halt when he was unexpectedly assassinated by right-wing militarists in the premier's palace on May 5, 1932.⁵³ From this time, no one in Japanese power circles dared oppose the military, and the radical policies of the military gradually became Japanese national policy. With the death of Inukai, the avenues to peace negotiation between China and Japan were closed.

V. Conclusion

Three months following the outbreak of the Mukden Incident, no war had been declared between China and Japan, nor had any direct negotiations been launched to resolve the conflict peacefully. The main reason for the resulting situation, a state of neither war nor peace, was that China was unable to make an unequivocal choice between war and peace. On the one hand, China was unprepared to declare war; on the other hand, China was leery of the Japanese government's sincerity in seeking peace and feared being forced into a compromising agreement. Such fears caused China to look entirely to the League of Nations and to pin its hopes on the ability of international pressure to curb Japanese aggression.

Two key elements thrust China and Japan into direct negotiations. First, the Canton government essentially took over the central government; second, Inukai Tsuyoshi became the new Japanese premier. After the Mukden Incident, the Canton government felt it knew enough about the political situation in Japan to be convinced that there was still room for discussion of peace between China and Japan. Their central role in the Chinese world, they reasoned, would further aid the prospects of peace talks. Inukai Tsuyoshi's attitude toward the Mukden Incident hailed back to the former Wakatsuki cabinet and was a crucial factor allowing the peace talks to come to fruition. The previous cabinet saw the Mukden Incident as a litmus test of the antagonism between the signatories of the Nine Power Treaty and the Japanese. When it was discovered that the great powers had no interest in dealing harshly with the Japanese,

calls for peace talks became no more than perfunctory formalities. Nevertheless, Inukai saw the Mukden Incident as Japan's pushing the Nationalist government on the destructive path to Communism. It was this belief that caused him to maintain that a prompt rescue of the Nationalist government from its tenuous situation was the most pressing matter at hand. Thanks to Inukai's determination to resolve the Mukden crisis quickly, secret peace negotiations were launched as soon as he took over as premier.

No disputes occurred between government representatives of the two nations over the process or content of the talks. It was the contemporary political climate in Japan which led to the tabling of negotiations. While the Mukden Incident was not a product of set government policy, the success gained by the Kwantung Army's guiding strategy of rapid advance won the universal favor of the Japanese bureaucracy and military. The dominant factor forcing Inukai to break off the peace talks was the oppositional pressure he received from the administrative bureaucracy and the military. Further, it was this same antagonism between Inukai and forces opposed to returning Manchuria to its original state that eventually led to his assassination. Inukai's death broke off the bridge of communication between China and Japan, ending Chinese hopes of a peaceful resolution. From this point on, China lost its lines of communication with the Japanese political realm and with it the confidence that the Japanese government could control the overall situation. As a result, Inukai's passing not only rendered the immediate resumption of peace talks an impossibility, but also foreshadowed the tragic events that were to follow.

Notes

1. Some articles indirectly mention attempts at peace negotiations between China and Japan. See Chiang Yung-ching 蔣永敬, "Ts'ung 918 shih-pien tao 128 shih-pien Chung-kuo tui-Jih cheng-ts'e chih cheng-i" 從九一八事變到一二八事變中國對日政策之政議 (The Debate over Chinese Policy toward Japan from the Mukden Incident to the Shanghai Incident), in Proceedings of the Conference on Pre-War China 1928-1937, The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, ed., (Taipei, 1985), pp. 369-70. Tokitō Eijin 時任英人, "Inukai Tsuyoshi to Manshū jihen" 犬養毅と滿州事變 (Inukai Tsuyoshi and the Mukden Incident), Seiji keizai shigaku 政治經濟史學 209 (December 1983), pp. 50-54. See also Baba Akira 馬場明, "Manshū jihen to Inukai naikaku" 滿州事變と犬養内閣 (The Mukden Incident and Inukai's Cabinet), Kokushigaku 國史學 92 (January

1974), pp. 2-5.

2. See Shigemitsu Mamoru 重光葵, Gaiko kaisōroku 外交回想録 (A Diplomatic Memoir) (Tokyo: Mainichi shinbunsha, 1953), pp. 101-02. According to Shigemitsu's recollections, during that time T. V. Soong and Chiang Kai-shek were the central figures in the Nationalist government. Finance Minister Soong was his main counterpart in negotiations over Sino-Japanese relations.

3. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 1:2. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ed. (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press, 1977), p. 288.

4. Liang Ching-ch'un 梁敬鐸, 918 shih-pien shih-shu 九一八事變史述 (A Narrative of the Mukden Incident) (Hong Kong: Ya-chou Press, 1964), p. 286.

5. Hsieh Kuo-hsing 謝國興, "The Background and Meaning of the Tangku Truce," Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History (Academia Sinica) 13 (June 1984), p. 206.

6. Westel W. Willoughby, The Sino-Japanese Controversy and The League of Nations (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), pp. 31-33.

7. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 1:2, pp. 305, 308, 312-13.

8. Hu Han-min 胡漢民, "Lun Chung-Jih chih-chieh chiao-she" 論中日直接交涉 (The Direct Negotiations between China and Japan), San-min-chu-yi yüeh-k'an 三民主義月刊 2:5 (November 1933), pp. 19-25.

9. Ibid., p. 28. See also Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 1:2, p. 453.

10. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 1:2, pp. 309-10, 400, 438.

11. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 1:2, p. 400, 453.

12. Inaba Masao 稻葉正夫, ed., Taiheiyō sensō e no michi: Bekkan shiryō hen 太平洋戦争への道: 別巻資料篇 (The Road to the

Pacific War: Extra Volume, Documents) (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1963), pp. 114-15.

13. Afterwards, the Korea Army crossed the Yalu River and entered Manchuria on September 21, 1931. This decision to cross the border was made by the commander of the Korea Army himself and not under orders from the Japanese Emperor. See *ibid.*, pp. 114-19.

14. The most significant sign of this shift was Shidehara's agreement to offer the Kwantung Army three million yen to persuade Ma Chan-shan 馬占山 to prop up the puppet forces in Tsitsihar in early November. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 1:1, pp. 459, 473-74.

15. Yü Hsin-ch'un 俞辛焞, "Manshū jihen to Shidehara gaikō" 滿州事變と幣原外交 (The Mukden Incident and Shidehara's Diplomacy), Nihon shi kenkyū 日本史研究 253 (September 1983), pp. 30-60.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 56-57.

17. Inukai Tsuyoshi, "Itchi kessoku shite ketsuzen kokunan o tsukue" 一致結束して蹶然国難を求へ (Let Us Unite to Save the Country), Seiyū (November 1931), pp. 1-2.

18. See Huang Tzu-chin, "Ch'üan-yang Yi yü Sun Zhong-shan ti ko-ming yün-tung, yüan-chu tung-chi ti t'an-t'ao" 犬養毅與孫中山的革命運動援助動機の探討 (Inukai Tsuyoshi and Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Movement: A Discussion of the Motivation Behind [Inukai's] Assistance), Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan chin-tai shi yen-chiu-so chi-k'an 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 19 (June 1990), pp. 235-47. When Sun Yat-sen chose Japan as his revolutionary base in 1897, Inukai Tsuyoshi was the key figure who acted as the bridge between Sun and the Japanese political and business communities.

19. "Soejima Giichi ateru Inukai Tsuyoshi shokan" 副島義一宛犬養毅書翰 (Letter of Inukai Tsuyoshi to Soejima Giichi [dated October 2, 1931]), in Washio Yoshinao 鷲尾義直, ed., Inukai Tsuyoshi shokanshū 犬養毅書簡集 (Inukai Tsuyoshi's Collected Letters) (Tokyo: Jinbundo, 1940), p. 571.

20. Usui Katsumi 臼井勝美, Manshū jihen: Sensō to gaikō 滿州事變: 戦争と外交 (The Mukden Incident: War and Diplomacy) (Tokyo: Chūkō shinsho, 1974), p. 97. See also Nakamura Kikuo 中村菊男,

Manshu jihen 満州事変 (The Mukden Incident) (Tokyo: Nihon kyōbunsha, 1965), pp. 113-14, 128-31.

21. Wakatsuki Reijirō 若槻礼次郎, Kofūan kaikoroku 古風庵回顧録 (Memoirs of Kofūan [Wakatsuki's pseudonym]) (Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1975), p. 376. See also Harada Kumao 原田熊雄, Saionji kō to seikyoku, dainikan 西園寺公と政務, 第二巻 (Prince Saionji and Political Developments, Volume 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1950), pp. 62-63, 91-92.

22. Iwasaki Sakae 岩崎栄, "Inukai Tsuyoshi hishi: Kayano Nagatomo no nisshi" 犬養毅密使: 菅野長知の日記 (The Secret Envoy of Inukai Tsuyoshi: The Diary of Kayano Nagatomo), Chūō kōron 中央公論 (August 1946), p. 82.

23. Eguchi Keiichi 江口圭一, "Manshū jihen to dai shinbun" 満州事変と大新聞 (The Mukden Incident and the Main Newspapers), Shisō 思想 583 (January 1973), pp. 98-113. See also Wakesu Masahiro 分須正弘, "Formation of Public Opinion Prior to the Manchurian Incident," Seiji keizai shigaku 政治経済史学 191 (April 1982), pp. 32-36.

24. Itō Takashi 伊藤隆, Shōwa shoki seiji shi kenkyū: Rondon kaigun gunshuku mondai o meguru sho seiji shūdan no taikō to teikei 昭和初期政治史研究: ロンドン海軍軍縮問題をめぐり諸政治集団の対抗と提携 (A Study of Early Shōwa Political History: Collaboration and Opposition among Various Political Pressure Groups over the Question of Arms Limitations at the London Naval Conference) (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1980), pp. 216-20.

25. Tokitō Eijin, "Inukai Tsuyoshi to Manshū jihen," Seiji keizai shigaku 209 (December 1983), p. 47.

26. See Kayano Nagatomo 菅野長矢, Chūka Minkoku kakumei hikyū 中華民国革命秘笈 (The Inside Story of Republican Revolution in China) (Tokyo: Kōkoku seinen kyōikukai, 1941).

27. Hu Han-min called for peace with Inukai on December 19, 1931, but Inukai had selected Kayano as his secret envoy for the peace agreement on December 15, 1931. See Chiang Yung-ching, Hu Han-min nien-p'ü 胡漢民年譜 (A Chronological Biography of Hu Han-min) (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1981), p. 512. See also Iwasaki Sakae, "Inukai Tsuyoshi hishi," p. 82.

28. Iwasaki Sakae, "Inukai Tsuyoshi hishi," pp. 83-84.

29. The original name of Chū Cheng's second daughter was Chū Ying-chiu 居瀛玖. Her name had been changed to Kayano Katsue 菅野華惠 after she was adopted by Kayano Nagatomo. See Chū Chung Ming-chih 居鍾明志, "Wo ti hui-i" 我的回憶 (My Memoirs), in Chu Ch'uan-yü 朱傳譽, ed., Chū Cheng chuan-chi tzu-liao: 2 居正傳記資料: 2 (Biographical Data on Chū Cheng, 2) (Taipei: T'ien I Press, 1979), pp. 35-36.

30. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 2:2, pp. 663-64.

31. Iwasaki Sakae, pp. 84-85.

32. Chiang Yung-ching, "Ts'ung 918 shih-pien tao 128 shih-pien Chung-kuo tui-Jih cheng-ts'e chih cheng-i," pp. 368-69.

33. Lo Chia-lun 羅家倫, ed., Ko-ming wen-hsien 革命文獻 34 (Documents on the Revolution, Volume 34) (Taipei: Chung-yang wen-wu kung-ying she, 1984), p. 7787.

34. Iwasaki Sakae, p. 86.

35. Iwasaki Sakae, p. 87.

36. Iwasaki Sakae, p. 87.

37. Inukai Ken 犬養健, "Yamamoto Jōtarō to Inukai Tsuyoshi: Mori Kaku" 山本条太郎と犬養毅: 森恪 (Yamamoto Jōtarō, Inukai Tsuyoshi, and Mori Kaku), Shin bunmei 新文明 (July 1960), p. 29.

38. Iwasaki Sakae, p. 87.

39. According to a telegram from the American minister in China to the Secretary of State on January 5, 1932, Eugene Chen, the new Chinese Minister of Foreign affairs, in a meeting with the American Consul General in Nanking on January 4, 1932, expressed his optimism regarding the outcome of the Manchurian situation because Japanese Premier Inukai had approached him unofficially on the subject of opening discussions regarding Manchuria. See Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1932 III (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1932), pp. 3-4.

40. Iwasaki Sakae, pp. 87-88.
41. Iwasaki Sakae, p.86. See also Inukai Ken, p. 28.
42. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 2:2, pp. 657-58.
43. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 2:2, p. 661.
44. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 2:2, pp. 660-61.
45. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: The Manchurian Incident 2:2, pp. 661-62.
46. Wu Hsiang-hsiang 吳相湘, "Chü Cheng yü ko-hsin ssu-fa" 居正與革新司法 (Chü Cheng and Legal Reform), in Chu Ch'uan-yü 朱傳譽 and Wang Chu-li 王茱莉, eds., Chü Cheng chuan-chi tzu-liao, pp. 77-78.
47. Washio Yoshinao, Inukai Bokudō den, chūkan 犬養木堂伝, 中巻 (The Biography of Inukai Tsuyoshi, Volume 2) (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), pp. 943-44.
48. Inukai Ken, p. 27.
49. Tsou Lu 鄒魯, "Ch'üan-yang I ch'üeh-tseng chih-li Chung-Jih ho-p'ing 犬養毅確曾致力中日和平" (Inukai Tsuyoshi Indeed Contributed to Sino-Japanese Peace), in Tsou Lu, ed., Ch'eng Lu wen-hsüan 澄廬文選 (Selected Writings of Ch'eng Lu) (Nanking: Cheng Chung Press, 1948), pp. 153-54.
50. Mizuno Akira 水野明, Nit-Chū kankei shi gaisetsu 日中關係史概説 (An Introduction to Sino-Japanese Relations) (Nagoya: Chūbu Nihon kyōiku bunkakai, 1990), pp. 166-68, 205-09.
51. Hayashi Hisajirō 林久治郎, Manshū jihen to Hōten Sōryōji: Hayashi Hisajirō ikō 滿州事変と奉天総領事: 林久治郎遺稿 (The Mukden Incident and the Consul General at Mukden: The Posthumous Papers of Hayashi Hisajirō) (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1978), pp. 50, 75, 82-84.
52. The railway problem and the right to lease land in Manchuria

were both outstanding issues between China and Japan during the period in which Tanaka Giichi 田中義一 served as prime minister. After Wakatsuki Reijirō took over his position, he decided to make a concession on the railway issue. Instead of prohibiting China from establishing any railway which could influence the economic benefits of the South Manchurian Railway Company, Japan simply asked China to sign an agreement of connective transportation with the Hailun-Kirin 海龍・吉林 railway and Tahushan-T'ungliiao 打虎山・通遼 railway which maintained the benefits of the South Manchurian Company in Manchuria. Baba Akira 馬場明, "Kaisetsu" 解説 (Interpretation), in Hayashi Hisajirō, pp. 160-66. See also Mizuno Akira, Tōhoku gunbatsu seihen shi no kenkyū: Chō Saku-rin Chō Gaku-ryō no taikai teikō to tainai tōitsu no kiseki 東北軍閥政權史の研究: 張作霖 張学良の對外抵抗と対内統一の軌足亦 (A Study of Warlords in Manchuria: Chang Tso-lin, Chang Hsueh-liang, and the History of Foreign Resistance and Domestic Unification) (Nagoya: Chūbu Nihon kyōiku bunkakai, 1990), pp. 295-300.

53. Tokitō Eijin, pp. 57-59.