

RESURRECTING THE EMPIRE? JAPANESE TECHNICIANS IN POSTWAR CHINA, 1945–49¹

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“Trust is needed when you make use of the Japanese ... When they are trusted, the Japanese people work with devotion, even at the risk of their lives. This is their character.”² These words were not taken from a book on Japanese culture, but were addressed to the Chinese Nationalist government in late 1945 by Nishikawa Akitsugu, Toyoda’s general manager in China. These were truly remarkable words when one considers the fact that such a call for trust was made shortly after the long and bloody war that cost tens of millions of Chinese lives as a result of the Japanese invasion. It would be premature, however, to dismiss these words as simply wishful thinking on the part of one Japanese businessman. Nishikawa was but one of the tens of thousands of Japanese who actually spent their early postwar years in China to provide technical assistance.

This study hopes to shed light on the activities of Japanese technicians in postwar China in the context of both international politics and economic development. While keeping the picture of entire China, I shall focus on those Japanese civilians belonging to the Toyoda textile enterprise in Shanghai in order to highlight the prospects and limits of the proposed technical cooperation. In doing so, this study seeks to fill a gap in the history of Japan’s relations with Asia in the postwar period, which, in most standard accounts, begins with the³Peace Treaty negotiations or the communist victory in mainland China. A reader is given the impression that the several millions Japanese soldiers and civilians in the Asia Pacific region simply all packed up and went home without a trace. That many Jap-

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² Untitled memo by Nishikawa Akitsugu (November 1945), China Textile Machine Makers Co. Papers, Q192–23, The Shanghai Municipal Archives, China. (Hereafter CTMM Papers.)

³ For example, Tanaka Akihiko, *Nitchū kankei, 1945–1990* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1991), and Soeya Yoshihide, *Nihon gaikō to Chūgoku, 1945–1972* (Tōkyō: Keiō Tsūshin, 1995).

anese remained in the former imperial outskirts (*gaichi*) after the collapse⁴ of the empire is not only little known, but its impact also hardly assessed. The only English-language study on the subject of Japanese staying on in China, described the involvement of Japanese military personnel in the Chinese Civil War in detail, but dismissed any significant role of the civilians. The Chinese Nationalists failed to make “anything even approaching adequate use of Japanese civilians in China,” we are told, because they were “completely dominated by narrow-minded professional soldiers” and its foremost civilian leader, T.V. Soong⁵ often considered anti-Japanese, “declined to make use of the Japanese.” As this study hopes to demonstrate, although the actual cooperation probably failed to accomplish its political objectives, the influence of these Japanese technicians should be regarded as an important, if unintended, legacy of the Japanese empire.

POLITICS

Japanese Initiatives

Within days after the announcement of Japan’s surrender in August 1945, General Okamura Yasuji, commander-in-chief of the Japanese army in China and a leading China expert in the army, began formulating Japan’s postwar policy toward China. Although he had vehemently objected to surrendering the “one million and fifty thousand unbeaten Imperial Army,” he finally came to accept the reality of Japan’s defeat. After consulting with Ogura Masatsune, a well-known businessman from the Sumitomo concern then serving as the supreme economic advisor to the Nanjing regime, Okamura took the unusual step to draft by himself what became known as the “Outline of Postwar Settlement with China.” Recognizing

⁴ A search on the Diet Library CD-ROM under the subject of “repatriation” (*hikiage*) turned up over 200 Japanese books acquired by the library since 1948. For a general study written by a historian of migration, see Wakatsuki Yasuo, *Sengo hikiage no kiroku* (Tōkyō: Jiji Tsūshinsha, 1991).

⁵ Donald G. Gillin and Charles Etter, “Staying On: Japanese Soldiers and Civilians in China, 1945–1949,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (1983): 497–518. See also unpublished papers by E. Bruce Reynolds, “A Thwarted Strategy: The United States and Japan’s Plans for Postwar China” (seminar paper, University of Hawaii-Manoa, n.d.), and David Reuther, “Repatriation of Japanese Troops and Civilians From China, 1945–1946,” (seminar paper, The George Washington University, 1996). The latter two studies focused on Japanese intentions and American response, relying mostly on declassified U.S. government sources, including the important MAGIC documents—intercepted Japanese diplomatic correspondence.

that China would become the sole remaining power of East Asia, Okamura concluded that "Japan should contribute to the future restoration of the empire and the reconstruction of East Asia by clearing up the misunderstanding between itself and China and by helping strengthen China wherever possible."⁶ Adopted at the military and political affairs liaison conference in Nanjing, the Outline was sent to all Japanese consulates in China by the embassy on 21 August and forwarded to Tokyo.

Improvement of relations with China was by no means a new theme in Japan's Asian policy. As the war turned against Japan in the Pacific, Asian solidarity found new endorsement among Japanese leaders. Not surprisingly, this latest call following Japan's surrender was echoed in Tokyo. In a dispatch to Nanjing, Shigemitsu Mamoru, the new foreign minister of Japan and a long-time advocate of Sino-Japanese cooperation, agreed that Japan "will henceforth strive to foster the basis for a Japanese-Chinese coalition." "Before we can even hope to achieve this end," he further elaborated in the telegram, "we shall have to carefully lay the groundwork by using every possible approach open to us."⁸ Sino-Japanese cooperation apparently became one of Japan's objectives immediately after the war.

As a method to forge a cooperative relationship between Japan and postwar China, Okamura's Outline recommended that "we shall dispatch Japanese technical experts to China on a large scale; and, in particular, we will develop widely in China those branches of industry (prohibited) in Japan as well as mining and agricultural techniques."⁹ In Okamura's view, now that Japan was defeated in war, the "only way it could provide assistance was through technology and experience."¹⁰ To government leaders of Japan, therefore, technical assistance to postwar China was to

⁶ "Wahei chokugo no tai-Shi shori yōkō" (18 August 1945), reprinted in *Senryō shiroku 2: Teisen to gaikōken teishi*, ed. Etō Jun (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 1989), 148–51. See also Okamura's diary on 16 August, in *Okamura Yasuji taishō shiryō* 1 (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1970), 34. Now that China had replaced Japan to accomplish the "liberation of East Asia," Okamura wrote, "Japan must assist China to become strong and prosperous."

⁷ In addition to Akira Iriye's seminal works in English, *Power and Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), the latest research in Japanese can be found in Hatano Sumio, *Taiheiyō sensō to Ajia gaikō* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1996).

⁸ "Sino-Japanese Relations: Japan's China Policy" (Publication of Pacific Strategic Intelligence Section, Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, 2 October 1945), 19–20, Record Group 457, SRH-093, U.S. National Archives. This was largely based on English translations of ULTRA intercepts of Japanese diplomatic correspondence.

⁹ "Wahei chokugo," 150; "Sino-Japanese Relations," 7–8.

¹⁰ When Nishikawa visited Okamura in Shanghai in April 1948, as the latter recorded in his diary, they agreed completely on policies toward postwar China. *Okamura Yasuji taishō shiryō*, 21, 177.

take on political significance. Namely, it would become a means to maintain and to strengthen Japan's influence in that country after Japan had failed in its military endeavor. Technical assistance to postwar China was also seen as an economic incentive for Japan. Given the dire socioeconomic condition in Japan, some argued, employment of Japanese technicians to China would help alleviate unemployment pressure at home. As one Foreign Ministry official noted in an internal memo, due to the removal of many industrial facilities for reparation as well as the large-scale repatriation of Japanese from overseas, considerable unemployment among Japanese technicians would be expected. Therefore, he concluded, "Japan should consider how to make use of them [technicians], especially in places long under Japanese administration, such as Taiwan and Kwantung provinces [i.e. southern Manchuria]."¹¹

In the fall of 1945, Nishikawa Akitsugu of Toyoda submitted a long letter to T.V. Soong, premier of the Chinese Nationalist government. The letter is worth quoting in some length, as it spelt out the vision of technology as the medium of Sino-Japanese cooperation:

It is unfortunate that China and Japan had resorted to war, but since the war has ended this way, we are now friendly neighbors. However, Japan has benefited much from the elder [*senpai*] China, and has developed by learning much in fields of culture, Buddhism, moral teachings, and business. From now on, since the war has ended, we must consider ways of repaying the debt of gratitude. What we are capable of doing is to serve China and its people through the textile technology, namely, to teach the Chinese people the technology of automatic looms invented by our late (founder) Toyoda Sakichi ... This is because I believe that, by transplanting Toyoda's textile technology to a revitalized China, we can start friendly relations between the two peoples and open the path to coexistence and coprosperity."¹²

Nishikawa Akitsugu first came to Shanghai in 1919, accompanying inventor and founder of the company, Toyoda Sakichi, to assess the China market and to acquire the land for new Toyoda mills. By the end of the Second World War, Nishikawa had been Toyoda's top manager for its China operations for nearly three decades, almost his entire adult years. Likewise, many other senior management or technical personnel had been in China

¹¹ "Nik-Ka kankei seijōka ni kanrenseru shomondai oyobi kokkō shūfuku ni itaru katoki ni okeru enjō yōsei jikō" (April 1946), 23, A 0122 6-2, Postwar Records, The Diplomatic Record Office, Japan. (Hereafter Postwar Records.)

¹² Nishikawa Tatsu, ed., *Nishikawa Akitsugu no omoide* (Nagoya: n.p., 1964), 61-62.

over twenty years. Like many Japanese long involved with China, Nishikawa viewed the eight-year war between the two countries only as an aberration to a longer history of peaceful Sino-Japanese exchanges. His confidence in the superiority of Toyoda technology was certainly not affected by Japan's defeat in the war. In another letter, he reminded the Chinese that, having been in Shanghai throughout the war, the Toyoda technicians would be an invaluable¹³ asset to the Nationalists returning from inland China after eight years.

Although there was no evidence that Nishikawa was acting under the orders of the Japanese government, it was noteworthy that Horiuchi Tateki, Japan's minister in China since 1942, played the role of a facilitator. In fact, Nishikawa later recalled that he first learned about the possibility of remaining in China from Horiuchi, who in turn had been instructed to remain¹⁴ in China "to deal with the necessary affairs under the new situation." Almost certainly a participant of the liaison meeting in Nanjing in August that approved the Outline, it is therefore more than just a coincidence that Horiuchi's views closely resembled the aforementioned Outline.¹⁵ A career diplomat with thirty years of service in China, Horiuchi himself had been a proponent of Sino-Japanese cooperation. As Horiuchi saw it, the future industrial recovery of Japan depended on both a steady supply of raw material and foodstuff as well as a huge market. Since China possessed both, assistance to China in the form of Japanese equipment and skills was an indirect form of contribution to Japan's own recovery.¹⁶ Together with Nishikawa's letter, Horiuchi wrote on his own to the Chinese government to recommend Toyoda's technology.

Nishikawa's faith in Japanese technology was shared by Takasaki Tatsunosuke, former president of the Manchurian Heavy Industry Co., who was to be in charge of all remaining Japanese in entire northeast China. In appealing to his fellow Japanese, however, Takasaki downplayed the role of politics:

We are neither politicians nor military men. We came to Manchuria as businessmen and developed industries here. However, as a result of the war most of the facilities were taken away by the Soviet troops. It feels just like our own child being taken away from us. How can we abandon these enterprises in Manchuria and go home? Why don't we

¹³ Untitled memo by Nishikawa (November 1945), CTMM Papers.

¹⁴ Ambassador (Tani) to Foreign Minister (Shigemitsu) (26 August 1945), in *Senryō shiroku*, 165–67.

¹⁵ Horiuchi allegedly in turn read it in the newspaper. See his speech at a dinner in honor of Japanese technicians (4 May 1947), CTMM Papers.

¹⁶ Horiuchi Tateki, *Chūgoku no arashi no naka de* (Tōkyō: Kangensha, 1950), 96–97.

help restore these half-damaged enterprises and then leave? This is the duty of us technicians.

Chinese Policies

Toyoda's offer of technical assistance was welcomed by the Chinese leaders. In the early spring of 1946, T.V. Soong met with Nishikawa in Shanghai, with Horiuchi Tateki present. Expressing interest in Nishikawa's suggestions, Soong urged him to make a detailed proposal as soon as possible.

Despite his alleged anti-Japanese stance, Soong's attitude came as no surprise. During the meeting just mentioned, Soong was said to have confided in Horiuchi about his disappointment with both the Soviet Union and the United States, which had concluded the Yalta Agreement behind China's back.¹⁸ At the time of Japan's surrender, the Nationalist Government in Chongqing was already considering "drafting Japanese POWs in China so as to expedite recovery of the industry, mining, and transportation in the occupied areas."¹⁹ These areas, including Manchuria, Peiping-Tianjin area and lower Yangtze area, and Taiwan, boasted the bulk of China's modern economy. As soon as the Nationalists returned, the government confiscated all Japanese-owned enterprises. Although some of them were later auctioned off to private Chinese businesses, operation of many industrial enterprises remained a government responsibility. One official reported from Nanjing that those sent from Chongqing to take over Japanese facilities "know nothing about the political and economic situations in the occupied area and do not know how to proceed."²⁰ Convinced that it desperately needed Japanese expertise in China's postwar reconstruction, the government promulgated "Temporary Regulations Concerning the Use of Japanese Personnel in China" in late 1945. According to it, Japanese with expertise which China currently lacked, or whose departure would interrupt regular work or transfer operations, might be retained by the Chinese government. All retained Japanese must sign pledges that they would obey Chinese laws as well as their Chinese superiors. Before

¹⁷ Takasaki Tatsunosuke, *Manshū no shūen* (Tōkyō: Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, 1953), 305.

¹⁸ Okada Akira, *Hong Kong* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shinshō, 1985), 51–52. The author was Horiuchi's interpreter.

¹⁹ "Chuli Riben wenti ijianshu" (Discussed at the Supreme National Defense Committee on 12 August 1945), *Zhonghua Minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian: Dui-Ri kangzhan shiqi* Series 7, Vol. 4 (Taipei: Zhongguo Guomindang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui Dangshi Weiyuanhui, 1981), 639.

²⁰ Shao Yuling to Chiang Kai-shek (22 September 1945), *Zhonghua Minguo*, 31–32.

conclusion of a peace treaty²¹ with Japan, these retained Japanese would be paid only living expenses.

Soong's interest in Nishikawa's suggestion also reflected the fact that the recovery of the textile industry, was arguably the most important industry for China, was high on the government agenda. The numerous Japanese textile mills confiscated by the Chinese government became the single largest conglomerate of China's postwar textile industry—The China Textile Reconstruction Corporation (CTRC). The Toyoda mill, long regarded as a "model mill" because of its cutting-edge technology,²² was the first among all Japanese mills to resume production after the war.²³ As an important component, textile machinery manufacturing in China was now considered a "national policy." The China Textile Machinery Maker (CTMM), capitalized at 6 billion yuan, was set up to repair and manufacture the much-needed machinery. Private businesses supplied 60 percent of the capital, while the remaining 40 percent came from the government in the form of the Toyota²³ Auto Factory and another Japanese-owned textile machinery factory.

Not all Chinese were in favor of retaining Japanese technicians, to be sure. To some it was a humiliation having to rely on technicians from a defeated country; others also suspected that those Japanese who chose to remain in China harbored designs of economic aggression. Indeed, the Nationalist government had to walk a fine line and to avoid being too close to the Japanese. Though preoccupied with economic and military matters, they were not entirely oblivious to the political implication of Japanese technical assistance for postwar Sino-Japanese relations. Perhaps as a tactic of persuasion, the Chinese director told Japanese technicians in the northeast China that:

We will not treat retained (technicians) as belonging to a defeated country. We do not create inequality between Japanese and Chinese. You are chosen to carry out Sino-Japanese cooperation which is currently receiving worldwide attention ... No amount of diplomatic pleasantries can come close to such cooperation. By taking a firm first step, we can²⁴ settle the past and build the foundation of Sino-Japanese relations.

²¹ "Zhongguo jinnei Riji yuangong zhanxin zhengyong tongze," in *Ziyuan weiyuanhui dang'an shiliao huibian*—*Guangfu chuqi Taiwan jinji jianshe*, comp. Xue Yueshun, vol. 1 (Xingdian, Taiwan: Guoshiguan, 1993), 14.

²² Chen Shouzhi, "Zhongfang gongsi jieguan de Rizhi mianfangchang ziliao," *Zhongguo jindai fangzhi shi yanjiu ziliao huibian* 9 (September 1990): 46.

²³ Incidentally, Soong himself also had invested heavily in the textile industry. *Rongjia qiye shiliao* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehuikexueyuan Chubanshe, 1983) II.

²⁴ Hirajima Toshio, *Rakudo kara naraku e* (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 1972), 244.

American Responses

It did not take long for American policymakers to establish a linkage between the Japanese remaining in China and a potential resurgence of Japanese influence in its former empire. Continued monitoring and interception of Japanese diplomatic communication provided a steady flow of damaging evidence. In beginning of October, the Pacific Strategic Intelligence Section of Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations issued a confidential study titled "Sino-Japanese Relations: Japan's China Policy," in which the above-mentioned Outline and other secret Japanese correspondence were extensively quoted.²⁵ Although the Americans accepted the right of theater commanders to retain Japanese soldiers at their discretion, they soon became concerned that not only soldiers but also large numbers of civilian technicians were retained in China. In late 1945, the Far Eastern subcommittee of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) proposed that the U.S. reiterate support for including Japanese civilians in the repatriation. It warned that

it must be realized that any Japanese civilians remaining in China will be secretly striving for a resurgence of Japanese power and influence in the Pacific area to the exclusion of Western powers and will therefore directly jeopardize American interests in China. The danger is already apparent in the acquiescence by the Chinese Government to the retention of Japanese "technicians" in positions which they held during the war.

The SWNCC paper went on to cite reports of 400 such "technicians" working in the Chinese government agencies and thousands more employed in government bureaus, railroad transportation,²⁶ factories, and communication companies in the Shanghai area alone. Such suspicion was corroborated by reports from Americans in China. "We have reasons to believe, and evidence to show," pointed out a ranking American officer in China in early 1946, "that the Japanese have begun a long-range program in China designed to pit Orientals against Occidentals. Their new idea is to grow fraternal with the Chinese and turn our Allies against us."²⁷

²⁵ "Sino-Japanese Relations".

²⁶ Appendix "B" of SWNCC 258 (1 February 1946) "Repatriation of Civilian Japanese from China," in Congressional Information Service, *Occupation of Japan* (microfilm published by the Congressional Information Service and Maruzen Co., 1989).

²⁷ Quoted in Gillin and Etter, "Staying On," 508.

Such American concern was not only real, but served as the basis for U.S. policy for timely repatriation of *all* Japanese from China. During his visit to China, General Wedemyer told General Ho Yingting at their meeting in Nanjing in October 1945 that all Japanese in China should be repatriated by June 1946, with the exception of Taiwan, where some Japanese technicians were allowed to stay till January 1947. This policy, however, encountered resistance from the Chinese Nationalist government.

Opposition to the complete repatriation of Japanese technicians from Chinese government was understandable, especially from the standpoint of those responsible for industrial recovery programs. A report from Taiwan in March 1946 stated that the allocated quota of 1,000 Japanese technicians was far from sufficient for the various industries, and at least another 5,000 would be needed for at least five months. The report described the consequence of drastically reducing Japanese technicians in alarming terms: most manufacturing would stop and equipment would be stolen. "With reduced production," the report went on, "unemployment would increase and security deteriorate, perhaps even leading to riots."²⁸ As a result, the Nanjing government decided to allow temporary retention of 7,000 technicians and 28,000 thousand dependents in Taiwan alone.²⁹ As the National Resource Commission reiterated to General Ho Yingting a month later, retained Japanese technicians were indispensable to ensure continued operation of many factories and mining facilities. As if to ward off American concerns, it testified that over the months these Japanese "have been able to obey orders and work strenuously," and it was still necessary to utilize Japanese technology in this period of postwar reconstruction, as long as it did not harm the [China's] national interest.³⁰

Although America's position softened somewhat on the issue of remaining Japanese technicians in China, accepting the usefulness of Japanese technical expertise to China's postwar reconstruction, it nonetheless urged the Chinese government to retain only those Japanese whose presence was required on grounds of professional or technical abilities. At the same time, they had to demonstrate by their past records that they did not represent any threat to the peace and security of China and were not likely

²⁸ Ministry of Economy to National Resource Commission, quoting a report by Special Representative Bao Yonghe in March 1946, reproduced in *Ziyuan weiyuanhui*, 2.

²⁹ Minutes of the second meeting on retained Japanese (21 March 1946), in *Zhengfu jieshou Taiwan shiliao huibian* (Xindian, Taiwan: Guoshiguan, 1990), 609–10.

³⁰ National Resource Commission to Commander Ho (April 1946), 2(1)/8837, The Executive Yuan Papers, The Second Historical Archives, China. (Hereafter as Executive Yuan Papers).

to serve as an entering wedge for the resurgence of Japanese influence on the Continent.

Given the persistent pressure from the United States, the Chinese government made further concessions. In June 1946 the Chinese notified the American government that it would retain some 12,000 Japanese in China proper, excluding Taiwan and Manchuria. On 21 October 1946, an inter-ministerial meeting was held at the Department of Defense to address the matter of Japanese technicians in China. As various ministries that employed Japanese technicians voiced the desire to continue such employment, the Foreign Ministry reminded them that due to prior agreement with the American government, the total number of Japanese technicians should be kept at no more than 12,000 and only on a temporary basis. The meeting did not produce new policies, but concluded that employment of Japanese technicians should be made on a voluntary basis and their reimbursement should be brought to the same level as the Chinese.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technicians

The total number of Japanese technicians and skilled workers in China immediately after the war is difficult to ascertain. American records show that at the end of 1946, after nearly three million Japanese had been repatriated from China, slightly over 90,000 Japanese still remained in the country (including Taiwan and Manchuria). Needless to say, not all of them were technicians or skilled workers, since many were dependents. There were also a significant number of military personnel. A nationwide survey by the Nationalist government around the same time put the number of Japanese technicians at slightly over 14,000.³³ This survey was by no means inclusive, however, since many local authorities either failed to report or gave the smaller figure. Moreover,³⁴ it did not include those Japanese in areas under communist control. (See Appendix. Japanese Technicians in Postwar China [December 1946])

³¹ Enclosure in SWNCC 258/5 (revised 25 June 1946) in *Occupation of Japan* microfilm.

³² "Guofangbu zhaokai zhengyong Riji jishu renyuan taolunhui jilu" (21 October 1946), 2(1)/8838; see also Minister of Defense Bai to Premier Song (12 November 1946), 2(1)/8837, Executive Yuan Papers.

³³ See Appendix in Reuther, "Reparation of Japanese," 2.

³⁴ Despite their rhetoric condemning the collusion between the Nationalists and Japanese militarists, the Chinese communists regarded the capture of some 100 Japanese technicians when the communist troops took the Anshan coal mine as

In terms of geographical distribution, the largest concentration of Japanese technicians were found in northeastern China, which was on its way to become a major industrial base during the fourteen years under Japanese control. Over 10,000 Japanese technical personnel, together with some 33,000 dependents, remained in that region after the first wave of repatriation in 1946.³⁵ Nearly 1,000 Japanese worked on the railway alone. All of the Japanese technicians were organized under a special office (*Riji lianluo chu*), set up in May 1946 by the Chinese Nationalists within the overall liaison office. Headed by Hirayama Fukujirō, a high official from the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR), it had branch offices in several cities.³⁶ A large number of Japanese were also retained in Taiwan, which had been ruled by Japan as a colony for over half a century. Within China proper, Shanghai saw the highest number of Japanese technicians because of its status as the largest commercial city, followed by other major cities like Peiping and Hankow, as well as such industrial centers like Datong and railway nexus like Xuzhou.³⁷

Those who did stay behind had different reasons. Many had lived in China for decades and were optimistic for its future. Some considered their service as a form of reparation for Japan's invasion of China. Especially during the early period, many Japanese were not particularly eager to return to their devastated homeland and preferred the relatively good pay as promised by the Chinese government. A significant portion of these Japanese perhaps stayed in China against their will, although the actual use of force on the Chinese part was rare. Many simply resigned to the reality that Japan had to pay for its defeat, and some accepted to stay so that hundreds of thousands of other Japanese could be swiftly repatriated. No doubt, efforts of persuasion by the Chinese as well as by Japa-

"a cause for celebration." See Hirajima, *Rakudo kara*, 170. For experiences of Japanese technicians retained by the Chinese communists, some of whom remained till 1954, see also Marusawa Tsuneya, *Shin Chūgoku kensetsu to Mantetsu Chūō Shikenjo* (Tōkyō: Nigatsusha, 1979); Hirota Kōzō, *Mantetsu no shūen to sono go* (Tōkyō: Seigensha, 1990). Official histories include *Man-Mō shūsenshi*, 708–22; Kan Hiroshi et al., "Chūkyō chiku no kinkyō," (September 1949), in *Zoku-Hikiage engo no kiroku*, comp. Kōseishō Hikiage Engokyoku (Tōkyō: n.p., 1955), 55–58; Kaneko Hakase, "Darian chiku kara no hikiage ni kasuru mondai ni tsuite," and "Manshū chiku sanryūsha no ippan jōkyō." See also Wakatsuki, *Sengo hikiage*, 194–95.

³⁵ Wakatsuki, *Sengo hikiage*, 193.

³⁶ Hirajima, *Rakudo kara*, 225.

³⁷ "Quanguo ge diqu jieguan gongchang zhengyong Riji jishu ren yuan renshu ji jishu zhongrei tongjibiao" (December 1946), 2(2)/2868, Executive Yuan Papers.

nese like Horiuchi and Takazaki changed many minds among those who had wanted to leave.

What is relatively clear is that the tens of thousands of Japanese were employed in China in a wide range of fields, ranging from manufacturing, railway, mining, to hospitals, schools, and even government agencies. In other words, what is generally grouped together as technicians—*jishu rennyuan* in Chinese, *gijutsusha* in Japanese—in fact consisted of different professions. While nearly a quarter of all Japanese technicians in early postwar China worked in factories, many were administrators or economists. Their functions also varied considerably. Many Japanese stayed on to manage the transition from Japanese to Chinese (in Manchuria and for a brief period, Soviet) control. Some were retained simply because there was a lack of skilled persons in such fields as medicine. Although small in total number, Japanese medical personnel was most widely distributed and found in all parts of China. Some Japanese worked in liaison offices that coordinated activities of the remaining Japanese with the Chinese authorities, others taught in schools, as not a few Japanese families had children of school age. Finally, a number of Japanese stayed on to conduct research, to teach and pass on their knowledge to the Chinese.

Anatomy of Assistance

To better understand the activities of retained Japanese technicians, it is helpful to go beyond generalizations and examine Toyoda's engineers headed by Nishikawa Akitsugu in Shanghai.³⁹ Between April and June of 1946, Nishikawa, who had been selected to head the Association of Japanese Technicians in Shanghai, held a series of frequent meetings—over sixty in all—with the new Chinese president of the CTMM. After some initial discussion, Nishikawa and seventeen other Japanese technicians from Toyoda agreed to stay on to work for the newly founded CTMM. In August 1946, CTMM was formally granted permission from the Chinese Defense Ministry to employ these Japanese technicians.⁴⁰

³⁸ Hirota, *Mantetsu no shūen*, 182–84; Wakatsuki, *Sengo hikiage*, 193; Hirajima, *Rakudo kara*, 225–26; Horiuchi, *Chūgoku no arashi*, 205–6; Marusawa, *Shin Chūgoku*, 55–56. A number of publications in Japan used the term “forced” (*kyōsei*) to describe some circumstances, but in general, they tend to make a clear distinction between those taken to Siberia by the Soviet Union and those who stayed in China. Mantetsukai, *Mantetsu shain shūsen roku* (Tōkyō: Mantetsukai, 1997), 660.

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion, see Daqing Yang, “Technical Cooperation and Postwar Sino-Japanese Cooperation: Toyoda in China, 1945–1949,” *Transactions of the International Conference on Eastern Studies* No. XL (1995): 132–41.

One of the major problems facing CTMM was the fact that textile machinery in Chinese mills came from different countries and makers, thus following different standards. The lack of a common standard posed difficulty in repairs and maintenance. The CTMM would therefore begin with repairs and changes of the huge variety of spindles in Chinese mills, which were to be based on Toyoda's High Draft Alfa, or the so-called Japan Standard type. Then it would manufacture automatic looms as well as automatic parts. CTMM's ultimate goal was to produce an entire set of textile machinery including spinning equipment.

The production of Toyoda automatic looms in China had already been planned when the Toyoda machinery factory was set up in Shanghai in 1942. The looms were abandoned, however, in favor of hand grenades and other light ammunition due to the pressing demand of the war.⁴¹ Although CTMM was to use the designs and equipment from former Japanese factories in Shanghai and employ the remaining technicians, for Nishikawa, cooperation from Toyoda in Japan was essential to the production of Toyoda automatic looms in China. Nishikawa's plan was to request Toyoda in Japan to make key parts of the looms and send machine tools as well as some 100 technicians to Shanghai. As a veteran manager and lieutenant of the venerable Sakichi, Nishikawa had a certain amount of confidence in securing the deal. In mid-1946, Lu Chen, a Chinese engineer with many years of experience in the textile machinery industry, was dispatched to Japan ostensibly to work on reparations matters in the Chinese Delegation in Tokyo. In fact, he was to deal with Toyoda directly on issues relating to textile machinery production in China.

The cooperation between Toyoda and the Chinese envisioned by Nishikawa was soon encountering several obstacles. First, there were considerable differences between Nishikawa and his colleagues in Shanghai on the one hand and Toyoda's leadership in Japan on the other, a fact that was only exacerbated by the difficulty in communication between the two groups throughout the period.⁴² The Toyoda patent was one central issue under contention. From the very beginning, Nishikawa had indicated "Toyoda's willingness to contribute its high draft patent," which was "based on the hope that it will be immediately put to use in China." Since it is patented in Japan, he pointed out, its production in China will bring much profit to

⁴⁰ Minister of Defense (Bai) to CTMM (24 August 1946), CTMM Papers. Altogether, twenty-two Japanese employees requested monthly stipends for their families or relatives in Japan, ranging from 500 to 3,000 yen.

⁴¹ Toyoda Jidō Shokki Seisakusho Shashi Henshū Iinkai, *Toyoda Jidō Shokki Seisakusho Yonjūnenshi* (Nagoya: n.p., 1967), 278.

⁴² The correspondences, it appears, had all gone through Chinese eyes before they reached the other party, if at all.

keep CTMM in operation.⁴³ Upon hearing of similar attempts by other factories in China to make Toyoda high draft spindles, Nishikawa and his Japanese colleagues proposed “resorting to legal measures to ensure CTMM’s monopoly in using the Toyoda patent”.⁴⁴ He told the Chinese that “J-Alfa [spindle] is patented in Japan, and nobody is allowed to copy it. Our company received the patent and changed it to C.S.(Chinese Standard).” Although he was concerned that other domestic and foreign makers would also rush to follow suit, and consequently give Toyoda headquarters headaches, Nishikawa⁴⁵ nonetheless considered CTMM as the legitimate recipient of patent rights. On the other hand, the Toyoda leadership in Japan viewed the matter quite differently. Due to the changing conditions inside Japan, the company was undergoing reorganization and was to resume production soon under SCAP orders in 1946. Production of the best-selling automatic looms in China, let alone unconditioned use of its patented technology, was clearly not in the company’s interest.

In addition to the resistance from Toyoda in Japan, CTMM also faced a number of problems at home. Some were economic: spiraling inflation and a shortage of funds were causing production to be postponed several times. Low efficiency made things worse. In the meantime, this was not cooperation between equal partners. One could not ignore the fact that after the Japanese accepted defeat in China, public sentiment toward Japanese citizens was still largely negative, not without reason. The relationship between Japanese technicians and their Chinese counterparts were not always smooth. But it needs to be pointed out that Chinese leaders as well as top managers of CTMM treated the Japanese technicians with utmost courtesy. Nishikawa, on the other hand, was free to criticize as well as to advise. The relationship was thus far from that of one between the victorious and the defeated. In their discussions, Nishikawa gave opinions on a broad range of issues including the length of working hours, methods of payment (by piece, rather than by time), management-labor relations, workshop design, structure of the company, acceptance of orders, and price calculation.

The assistance by Nishikawa and his fellow Japanese technicians helped produce impressive results. Despite various difficulties and delays, in early 1947, CTMM announced its success in manufacturing automatic spindles—the Alpha High Draft based on the Toyoda model, which was re-designated as the Chinese Standard. A year later, CTMM produced China’s first automatic loom modeled after the famed 44’ G Type Toyoda Automat-

⁴³ Huang-Nishikawa meeting No. 7, CTMM Papers.

⁴⁴ Huang-Nishikawa meeting No. 59, CTMM Papers.

⁴⁵ Huang-Nishikawa meeting No. 57, CTMM Papers.

ic Loom. By the end of 1948, the company was producing 20,000 new spindles and 200 looms.⁴⁶ This was a remarkable achievement for a manufacturer that had been established less than three years before, and Nishikawa and his fellow Toyoda technicians played indispensable roles. Already orders for the looms were pouring in from numerous domestic and foreign mills. By February 1949, already some two months behind⁴⁷ schedule, the company had a standing orders for 1,300 automatic looms.

By early 1949, however, just as the cooperation began to bear results, it was also running into further difficulties. Peng Xuepei, Chairman of CTMM and its chief sponsor in the Nationalist Party's Central Committee, died in a plane accident, soon to be followed by the loss of CTMM president, Huang Bojiao, due to illness. Two of Japanese engineers had also died of illness. Beginning in late 1948, the remaining Japanese technicians returned to Japan one after another. When the People's Liberation Army began advancing toward the Nationalist heartland,⁴⁸ Nishikawa, too, took leave after nearly thirty years in Shanghai.

Closure and Causes

Repatriation of most Japanese technicians from China had already been under way by then. In addition to promises made to the Americans, there were other pressures on the Chinese government. As situations in China continued to deteriorate just as conditions in Japan began to recover, more and more Japanese demanded repatriation. In August 1947, the Government reiterated that unless there was a desperate need, Japanese technicians must be repatriated. Some enterprises were able to find Chinese replacements, thus no longer had to keep the Japanese. In Taiwan, many Japanese technicians were released from duty in early⁴⁹ 1947 and one report indicated the number of Japanese greatly reduced. In northeast China, most of the retained Japanese technicians were released from service by the Nationalist government by the end of 1947, partly because of Chinese replacements, but more likely for fear of leaving them to the advancing Chinese communists. The Japanese liaison office was disbanded in Sep-

⁴⁶ Horiuchi, *Chūgoku no arashi*, 200.

⁴⁷ "Zhiji Jiaohuo Jianbiao" (23 February 1949); Bunge Far East Agencies, Inc. to CTMM (27 September 1948), CTMM Papers.

⁴⁸ CTMM paid \$2,400 and 54,000,000 yuan respectively to their families. After returning to Japan, Nishikawa spent some time recuperating from illness before taking up work in a Toyoda-related trading company.

⁴⁹ Only 25 Japanese remained employed in petroleum, electric power, pulp, and cement production. See "Zai-Tai gedanwei jixu liuyong Riji ren yuan mindan," in *Ziyuan weiyuanhui*, 9-13.

tember 1947 and its members were repatriated in the following month.⁵⁰ By early 1948, the total number of Japanese technicians in Nationalist-controlled areas had dwindled to about 1,361 (with 4,092 dependents). The last group of sixty-six Japanese working on the railway or in power plants remained⁵¹ after August 1948, after which the Chinese communists took over. Horiuchi, a strong advocate in Japanese technical assistance to China, left for Japan at the end of 1948.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, quite a number of Japanese technicians continued to work in China. Many medical workers even participated the Korean War with the Chinese "Volunteer Army." A number of Japanese scientists from the SMR Central Laboratory supervised the construction of new plants and their initial productions. Almost all of them returned to Japan in 1956 by way of the first exchange of visits between the two countries.

Prolonged presence of large numbers of Japanese in China as envisioned by Japanese leaders immediately after the War did not materialize, largely because it was met with international pressure. The American insistence on removing Japanese influence from China stemmed from the fact that despite their civilian status, Japanese technicians in Asia were considered descendants of the empire. While employing hundreds of thousands of Japanese as forced labor in Siberia, Soviets also pressured the Chinese to release Japanese technicians from Dalian, where some 3,500 Japanese remained after the war. It was partly because America's insistence; partly because the Soviets were keen on replacing them with Soviet technicians.

International factors alone could not explain the remarkable case of Toyoda technicians in Shanghai, where changing domestic situations in both Japan and China were perhaps more crucial. The escalating civil war in China, while involving many Japanese on both sides, hastened the repatriation of the remaining Japanese and hence the early end of Japanese-Chinese technical cooperation. At the same time, the accelerated economic recovery in Japan under American occupation no doubt further attracted Japanese technicians from overseas. It also served as a new justification, as in the case of Toyoda in Japan, against transferring⁵² advanced Japanese technology and equipment to other Asian countries.

⁵⁰ Hirajima, *Rakudo kara*, 248–49, 275–78.

⁵¹ *Man-Mō shūsenshi*, 695–97.

⁵² For a discussion of implications of U.S. policy change, see Nishikawa Hiroshi, "Amerika no tai-Nichi seisaku no tenkan to Chūgoku no dōkō," *Keizai-gaku Kenkyū* 43, no. 4 (1994): 73–92.

SIGNIFICANCE

Although China probably had retained the largest number of Japanese technicians after the war, it was by no means the only country to do so. Japanese technicians were also found in other parts of the former empire in the immediate postwar era. In Pyongyang alone, for example, over 2,000 Japanese technicians and skilled workers were registered in early 1946. To coordinate their activities, a Japanese section was set up within the North Korean Industrial Technology Association (*Kita Chōsen Kōgyō Gijutsu Renmei Nihonjin Bu*). As of mid-1947, over 400 Japanese technicians, many with family members, were still working in mines, factories, hospitals, and schools in the northern half of the Korean peninsula.⁵³

Just as the repatriation of nearly seven million Japanese from overseas following the war was a logical consequence of Japan's collapsed empire, the continued presence of tens of thousand of technicians in various parts of Asia well after its demise must also be seen as one of its multifaceted legacies. What was its historical significance? Was retaining Japanese technicians an admission that the Chinese were not qualified to administer these areas, as George Kerr said about Taiwan?⁵⁴ Does it demonstrate that Japan was now dedicated to assisting its Asian neighbors? Or yet another example of the residual benefits of the Japanese Empire?

Though defeated in the war, Japan still possessed considerable technological strength compared to its Asian neighbors.⁵⁵ The presence of tens of thousands of Japanese technicians in China and Korea was a result of extensive economic and industrial development in the empire and reflected Japanese control of the industries and exploitation of the natural resources in occupied areas and colonies. Therefore, it was often impossible for these enterprises to function with the sudden withdrawal of Japanese technical experts.⁵⁶ In this sense, China continued to be dependent on Japan technologically even after its declared victory. Such technological dependence was obvious to Japanese and Chinese leaders as well as to the

⁵³ Morita Yoshio, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku* (Tōkyō: Gannandō, 1964), 758–808.

⁵⁴ George H. Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed* (New York: De Capo Press, 1965), 116.

⁵⁵ In fact, the Soviets also demonstrated much interests in the scientific research at the SMR Central Laboratory and a delegation from the Academy of Sciences visited the institute in 1946. See Marusawa, *Shin Chūgoku*, 15–31; Hirota, *Manitetsu no shūen*, 64–66. Similarly, the United States, Britain, as well as the Soviet Union, acquired much German technology during the early postwar period. See John Gimbel, *Science, Technology and Reparation: Exploitation and Plunder in Postwar Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), and John Farquharson, "Governed or Exploited? The British Acquisition of German Technology, 1945–1948," *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 1 (1997): 23–42.

⁵⁶ *Man-Mō shūsenshi*, 693.

Japanese technicians themselves, although they exploited it for different purposes.

Although the presence of Japanese technicians in postwar China was a short-lived one, two areas seem particularly fertile for future explorations.

Technological Legacies

Technology transfer, as Daniel Headrick has pointed out, was part of Western colonialism in the Third World. The experience of Nishikawa and other Japanese technicians in postwar China shows that the same process was at work after the demise of Japanese imperialism in Asia.

Toyoda's technicians played just such a role. The lasting impact of this short period of technical cooperation could be seen in what has been described as the "astonishingly rapid recovery" of China's textile industry after 1949, despite the fact that imports of Japanese machinery were cut off due to trade restrictions. In fact, in the mid-1950s, the People's Republic of China even began exporting textile machinery to Southeast Asia and Eastern European countries. In 1958, for example, China agreed to help build textile mills in Burma and provide all the necessary equipment. Not surprisingly, it became a matter of concern in Japan.⁵⁷ It is possible to attribute the phenomenon of post-Second World War industrial growth to the existence of the Japanese textile industry in China before the war—the so-called Zaikabō.⁵⁸ Obviously, in the Toyoda episode at least, the early postwar years played an important link that is commonly underacknowledged. By using the Toyoda model as the basis for the new CTMM production, Nishikawa succeeded in bringing postwar Chinese textile machinery on a Japanese track, so to speak. Furthermore, Toyoda's conduits to Chinese textile industry by no means ended with the departure of its technicians. Personal ties formed before and during this period with Chinese textile industrialists who later moved to Hong Kong and Taiwan helped future Toyoda sales to those areas.

⁵⁷ Daniel Headrick, *Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Recently, the issue of technology transfer in the early postwar transition has also been raised by Japanese scholars. See Imura Tetsuo, "Sorengun no Tōhoku shinkō to sengo Chūgoku Tōhoku no sangyō," unpublished paper.

⁵⁸ Tōa Keizai Kenkyūkai, *Shin Chūgoku no kikai kōgyō* (Tōkyō: Tōa Keizai Kenkyūkai, 1960), 184–185.

⁵⁹ Kiyokawa Yukihiko, "Chūgoku sen'i kikai kōgyō no hatten to Zaikabō no igi," in *Keizai Kenkyū* 43, no. 1 (1983): 22–39.

Although further study of other industries are needed, Toyoda's experience was certainly not unique. For example, Japanese scientists from the South Manchurian Railway's Central Laboratory played important parts in utilizing their research in many chemical,⁶⁰ pharmaceutical, mining, and other industrial enterprises in China.

Political Implications

The other area worth further study is the impact of such technical assistance on the overall bilateral relations between Japan and China. To Horiuchi, for instance, the benefits of Toyoda's assistance on Sino-Japanese relations outweighed any possible negative repercussions on the Japan's textile machinery industry.⁶¹ The attempt to use Japanese technicians in postwar China as agents of resurgent Japanese influence in Asia, as envisioned by Okamura, Shigemitsu and other Japanese leaders, did not produce intended results. The short-lived technical cooperation certainly affected both Japanese and Chinese and their attitudes toward each other. In this sense, Japanese like Nishikawa were not only providing technical assistance to China; Nishikawa was also influencing postwar China's perception of Japan through his devotion to work and his belief in a special Sino-Japanese relationship. Although it is difficult to assess the exact impact, the fact that Chinese leaders such as T.V. Soong and other ranking officials were among his direct and indirect contacts is significant. According to Horiuchi, even the Chinese press reversed its earlier skepticism and offered favorable coverage when CTMM succeeded in producing the new looms, even publishing Nishikawa's photograph.⁶²

In terms of its long involvement in China and its closeness to China's government after the war, the Toyoda case was perhaps exceptional. But there is abundant evidence that in northeast China, ranking Chinese officials such as Zhang Gongchuan (Chang Kia-ngau) also regularly consulted Japanese experts on industrial, financial, and agricultural recovery after the departure of Soviet troops.⁶³ T.V. Soong, after touring Taiwan, was reportedly very impressed with the Japanese achievements and asked

⁶⁰ For details, see Hirota, *Mantetsu no shūen*, and Marusawa, *Shin Chūgoku*.

⁶¹ Horiuchi, *Chūgoku no arashi*, 200.

⁶² Horiuchi, *Chūgoku no arashi*, 206–7.

⁶³ See meetings of Zhang Gongquan (Chang Kia-ngau) with Japanese technical experts, recorded in his diaries dated 25, 27, 28, 30 June; 8, 12, 13 July; 14, 16, 17, 20, 28, 31 August; 2, 26 September; 10, 27 October; 17, 27, 29, 31 January; 13 February. Yao Songlin, comp. *Zhang Gongquan xianshen nianpu chugao* (Taipei: Zhuanji Wenxue Chubanshe, 1982). For a partial English translation, see *Lost Chance in Manchuria* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1994). Also *Man-Mō shūsenshi*, 693–722.

Horiuchi to organize a group of Japanese technicians to assist economic development of the Hainan Island.⁶⁴ On the other hand, a number of Japanese not only remained interested in Chinese affairs, but put their Chinese connection to use after returning to Japan. Takasaki Tatsunosuke, who oversaw Japanese technical assistance in former Manchuria during the years after the war, was one. After serving as minister of the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry, he would later play an important role in setting up what became known as the L-T memorandum trade between Japan and China.⁶⁵ Hagiwara Teiji, a chemist from SMR Central Laboratory who stayed on in China, became actively involved in postwar trade with China soon after his return to Japan in 1954.⁶⁶

Here one should not oversimplify the complex variety of circumstances. There also seemed to be considerable differences as to how such experience affected the Japanese. A Japanese government survey of repatriated Japanese from Manchuria in late 1946 revealed a wide range of views among those returned Japanese technicians. While a few acknowledged the Chinese (and Soviet) support, many complained about their conditions. On the issue of Sino-Japanese cooperation, the opinion was sharply divided. While many supported the idea and were willing to offer Japanese special skills, a few maintained that such cooperation could succeed only when Japanese were in positions of guidance.⁶⁷

Ultimately, then, this study suggests that the period immediately after the war was far from being “years of no significance,” but was instead filled with both opportunities and uncertainties. Though defeated in war, many Japanese—both government leaders as well as ordinary citizens—sought to construct new types of relationship with its Asian neighbors. Even though technical assistance to China was cut short due to a combination of domestic and international factors, Japanese technicians in postwar China were already making the transition to a post-imperialist world in which Japan would excel.

⁶⁴ Horiuchi, *Chūgoku no arashi*, 200–203. During the war, Japan had begun to develop its much-deeded resources, such as rice, rubber, sugar on the island, which, Horiuchi believed, continued to be important to Japan after the war.

⁶⁵ Soeya, *Nihon gaikō*, 162–67.

⁶⁶ See his reminiscence in Marusawa, *Shin Chūgoku*, esp. 188.

⁶⁷ Kanrikyoku Zaigai Hōjin-ka, “Manshū hikiagesha no kansō oyobi kibō ni tsuite no chōsa” (12 December 1947), 1103–14, in K-0001, frames 1103–14. Postwar Records. Undoubtedly, such sentiment had manifested in arrogance on the part of some Japanese technicians, which led to further friction with the Chinese. See an example of this reported in Gillin and Etter, “Staying On,” 509–10.

Appendix

Japanese Technicians in Postwar China

Area	Mining	Factory	Railway	Agriculture	Communi- cation	Health Care	Engineer- ing	Culture	Other	Subtotal
Nanjing	20	4				1				25
Shanghai		200	6	53	2	54	20	90	303	728
Hangzhou						2			7	10
Anqing	2			2						4
Hankou	4	105	12		9	14	11	4	142	301
Xuzhou	26	38	110		68	35		2	73	352
Haizhou		12				13			25	50
Jinan		69	29			41	1		10	150
Qingdao	5	27				16	1	3	12	64
Tianjin		26	10			8	15		31	91
Peiping	9	148	83		19	44		49	184	551
Datong	62	168				11	33		26	300
Baotou		3				5	6		10	25
Zhengzhou						9			7	16
Guangzhou		2				1			16	19
Hainan Island						1			24	25
Taiwan	20	304	60	125		18	27	239	261	1,054
Northeast (Manchuria)	781	2,176	976		480	105	201	715	4,833	10,267
Total	929	3,282	1,287	197	578	378	315	1,102	5,964	14,032

Compiled by the Second Department, ROC Ministry of Defense (14 December 1946)

Note: All figures based on reports by various military, governmental, and other agencies before 14 December 1946.

Source: RG2(2), File 2868, No. 2 Historical Archives, Nanjing, China.