

How did Japan decide to sever the diplomatic relations with Taiwan?

The normalization of Sino-Japanese relations and the Taiwan issue,

1971-1972

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Introduction

In the Sino-Japanese relationship today, the Taiwan issue remains a potential point of dispute. Taiwan's international legal status continues to be uncertain while the People's Republic of China (PRC) maintains that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. The Government of Japan (GOJ) recognizes that the Taiwan Strait is an important factor in the peace and security of Japan under the US-Japanese alliance regime.

The origin of the modern Taiwan issue between Japan and China dates back to the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations on September 29, 1972. Both nations declared their own position on the Taiwan issue in the Sino-Japanese joint communiqué as the following passage suggests:

The Government of the People's Republic of China reiterates that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Government of Japan fully understands and respects this stand of the Government of the People's

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Republic of China, and it firmly maintains its stand under Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation².

As a result of the Sino-Japanese normalization, the GOJ put an end to diplomatic relations it had previously held with the Republic of China (ROC), yet could maintain practical relations with Taiwan.

No issue has presented more difficulties than the Taiwan issue between Japan and the PRC in the postwar period. PRC leaders have consistently insisted that Taiwan was an inalienable part of the territory of China and could not retreat from this basic position. Therefore, for Japanese leaders, the biggest issue within Sino-Japanese negotiations has been how to develop a modus vivendi with the PRC over Taiwan without provoking damaging practical relations between Japan and Taiwan.

Although many studies have already examined the process underpinning the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations³, many of them emphasized the “political leadership” of Premier Tanaka Kakuei (田中角榮). It is surely fact that Tanaka’s bold decision to break off its relations with Taiwan was indispensable for the Sino-Japanese rapprochement, therefore, the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations has generally been

² Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China, September 29, 1972.

³ See, Ogata Sadako, *Normalization with China: a comparative study of U.S. and Japanese*, Berkeley : Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1988; Soeya Yoshihide, *Japan's economic diplomacy with China, 1945-1978*, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1998.

considered as a typical example of diplomacy by the politician leadership⁴. However, Tanaka's "political leadership" and his initiative aimed at Sino-Japanese normalization have been exaggerated by journalists and his former aide. More recent studies on the Sino-Japanese normalization process, drawing on interviews and newly declassified documents, provide a fresh perspective on policy changes concerning the Taiwan issue and the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in the Sino-Japanese normalization negotiations⁵.

This paper focuses on the period following arguably the most significant "Nixon shock" (Kissinger's dramatic visit to China) in July 1971 and examines how Japan's policy on the Taiwan issue changed and the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations gathered pace, from the viewpoint of the MOFA. Some previous studies have discussed the Sino-Japanese normalization process and critically pointed out that the GOJ paid little attention to the security of Taiwan and the balance of power in Asia; therefore criticizing the 'rush toward Beijing' following US-China rapprochement⁶. However, newly declassified primary documents fail to support this argument. These documents show how the GOJ attempted to

⁴ Hayasaka Shigezo, *Seijika Tanaka Kakuei* [Politician Tanaka Kakuei], Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1987; Nakano Shiro, *Tanaka Seiken 886nichi* [886 days of the Tanaka cabinet], Tokyo: Gyoseimondaikenkyusho, 1982.

⁵ See, Inoue, Masaya, *Nicchu Kokko Seijoka no Seijishi* [The Political History of the Sino-Japan normalization], Nagoya: Nagoya UP, 2010; Hattori Ryuji, *Nicchu Kokko Seijoka* [the Sino-Japanese normalization], Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 2011.

⁶ Okazaki Hisahiko and Nakajima Mineo, *Nihon ni Asia Senryaku ha arunoka* [Does Japan have the Asian strategy?], Kyoto: PHP Kenkyusho, 1996, 33; Okazaki Hisahiko, *Taiwan Mondai ha Nihon Mondai* [Taiwan issue is Japanese issue], Tokyo: Kairyusha, 2008, 47-62.

maintain working relations with Taiwan even after the realization of Sino-Japanese normalization and they carefully avoided deciding the legal status of Taiwan which could have led to a claim over Taiwan by the PRC. The purpose of this paper is to show how the GOJ attempted to establish a *modus vivendi* over the Taiwan issue with the PRC during Sino-Japanese normalization⁷.

Before commencing this paper, some comments need to be made concerning the primary sources used in this research. This paper uses recently declassified MOFA documents under the Information Disclosure Law. Following the enforcement of the Information Disclosure Law in 2001, MOFA declassified both summit and foreign ministerial records of conversations on the Sino-Japanese normalization negotiation in 1972 (these records were published in 2003⁸). Moreover, researchers could access declassified MOFA documents on Sino-Japanese relations in the 1960s and 1970s. As well as primary documents, personal interviews with former MOFA officials fill in the gaps that are sometimes present in official documentation. This declassification exercise over the past decade has released a large

⁷ With respect to the Taiwan issue in the Sino-US rapprochement, Robert Accinelli examined from the viewpoint of pursuit of a *modus vivendi* between US and PRC. Robert Accinelli, "In Pursuit of a *Modus Vivendi*," in *Normalization of U.S.-China Relations: International History*, eds. William C. Kirby et al., Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2005, 9-55.

⁸ Ishii Akira, Zhu Jianrong, Soeya Yoshihide and Lim Xiao Guang eds., *Kiroku to Kosho Nicchu Kokko Seijoka/ Nicchu Heiwa Yuko Joyaku Teiketsu Kosho* [Record and Historical Investigation: Normalization of Sino-Japanese relations / Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People's Republic of China], Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2003 [hereafter *RHINT*].

amount of MOFA documents, thus giving us a more complete and authoritative account of postwar Japanese diplomacy.

1. The failure of the Sato Administration's China approach

Following the end of the Korean War and almost two decades of US-China confrontation which characterized the Cold War in East Asia, this situation drastically changed when Henry Kissinger visited China in July, 1971. Shortly thereafter, following the passing of the Albanian UN resolution and the ROC withdrawing from the UN on October 25, 1971, the PRC occupied both a seat in the UN General Assembly and a Security Council seat. Japan tried to preserve the ROC's position in the UN via a dual representation resolution to both the ROC and the PRC but it failed to pass.

The PRC's entry into the UN was a turning point for Japan's China policy which had hitherto firmly maintained diplomatic relations with the ROC. On November 24, 1971, Haruki Mori, vice foreign minister in MOFA told US Ambassador Armin H. Meyer that "Japan's relations [with the two Chinas] would be the reverse of those at present," and that Japan would have a diplomatic relationship with the PRC but would also continue doing business with a "semi-independent" Taiwan⁹. The MOFA apparently had considered a

⁹ Meyer to Rogers, Nov. 24, 1971, Record Group (RG) 59, Subject Numeric File (SNF), POL CHICOM-JAPAN, National Archives II, College Park, MD, USA (NA).

reversal of its long held policy of “separation of politics from economics” (政経分離) which Japan had adopted as a policy for bilateral relations with PRC.

The biggest problem was how Japan was to begin negotiations with the PRC. Soon after the announcement of Sino-US Ambassadorial talks resuming in January 1970 the Sato Administration sounded out the possibility of Ambassadorial talks with the PRC in Paris, but the PRC refused this offer¹⁰. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai (周恩来) set out provisions that Japan must accept as a premise for normalization in June 1971. These three provisions were later called the “Three Restoration principles” (復交三原則). These principles suggested that:

(1) The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal Government of China.

(2) Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China.

(3) The Treaty of Peace between Japan and the Republic of China is illegal and invalid, therefore it must be abrogated¹¹.

In the "Three Restoration principles", the PRC placed the Taiwan issue as the central issue underpinning any diplomatic normalization with Japan. The PRC feared that Japan would expand not only its economic influence over Taiwan but also its security influence

¹⁰ Masuda Hiroshi, “Beichu Sekkin to Nihon[Sino-US Rapprochement],” in *Beichu Sekkin to Nihon* [Sino-Japanese Rapprochement and Japan], ed., Masuda Hiroshi, Tokyo: Keio UP, 2006, 118-133.

¹¹ Furukawa Mantaro, *Sengo Nicchu Kankeishi* [The Postwar History of the Sino-Japanese relations], Tokyo: Harashobo, 1988, 325.

following Sino-US rapprochement. If the US military presence in Taiwan was superseded by a substantial Japanese influence (following withdrawal of the US armed forces from Taiwan), the PRC saw additional difficulties in realizing the “liberation of Taiwan.” That is why Beijing attached great importance to letting Japan-ROC relations die out.

The Sato Administration, which witnessed drastic changes in the Sino-US relationship, adopted a serious stance to make contact with PRC through informal channels. On September 12, 1971, Premier Sato directly ordered Okada Akira (岡田晃), the consul-general in Hong Kong who had a wide range of networks in China, to make contact with Peking through these personal channels¹². Furthermore, Hori Shigeru (保利茂), the secretary general of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), made preparations for Minobe Ryokichi (美濃部亮吉) to hand Zhou Enlai a letter suggesting he visit the mainland China. Minobe was the Governor of Tokyo and planned to visit Peking in November¹³. What is interesting is that Sato orally approved to accept the first and second clauses of “Three Restoration Principles.” Sato permitted Okada to tell the Chinese that the GOJ “was ready to accept that Taiwan is a part of the territory and single province of China.” Sato carefully avoided accepting the “Three Restoration Principles” as a bargaining position, while implying that Japan would finally accept it. The aim of Sato was to let the Chinese side sit down at the table for

¹² Okada Akira, *Mizutori Gaiko Hiwa* [The Untold Story of Waterfowl Diplomacy], Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1983, 146-148.

¹³ Kusuda Minoru, interview by author, Tokyo, July 16, 2003.

negotiations while keeping agreement to the "Three Restoration Principles" vague.

However, Okada's contact did not produce a result while Zhou Enlai also refused to receive Hori's letter. In the meeting with Minobe on November 10, Zhou criticized the sentence which stated that "the [GOJ accepts that] the PRC government was the government on behalf of China" in his letter. He denounced that Japanese did not accept the first principle and its statement was simply a conventional "two Chinas" idea, because the ROC also insisted on being "the government on behalf of China." Furthermore, as for the sentence that "Taiwan is a territory of the Chinese peoples" in the same letter, Zhou denounced that "Chinese peoples" failed to specifically identify the PRC people¹⁴.

On New Year's Day of 1972, Sato wrote it down in his diary that "we must establish diplomatic relations with China this year, but the treatment of the Nationalist Government is a disturbing problem for me. It is necessary for me to visit Beijing to settle this¹⁵." Sato who was not able to attain a result through an informal approach the previous year was now going to make a significant change to his stance on the Taiwan issue. At the US-Japan summit meeting in San Clemente of January 6, Sato spoke frankly to President Richard Nixon and laid out Japan's future path in noting that:

Japan has separated economics and politics in dealing with China up to now -it has

¹⁴ Furukawa, op cit., 352-353.

¹⁵ *The Diary of Sato Eisaku*, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1997, 5: January 1, 1972.

political relations with Taiwan and economic relations with both Taiwan and the PRC.

Now, if Japan's normalization policy succeeds, it will have its principal political and economic relations with Peking, and only economic relations with Taiwan¹⁶.

His remarks showed that Sato himself had reached the conclusion to give up diplomatic relations with the ROC much like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' view.

Following President Nixon's historic visit to China on February 20, 1972, a joint communiqué between the PRC and the US (the Shanghai communiqué) was announced on February 27. It stated that the US government "affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan." However, the US succeeded in avoiding a real change in its official position on the Taiwan issue by adopting the following expression:

"The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position".

While the US didn't change its legal position on the Taiwan issue, the PRC received an American pledge to object to Taiwanese independence. Both sides finally reached a modus

¹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, Nixon, Sato, et al., Jan. 6, 1972, Nixon Presidential Materials (NPM), National Security Council Files (NSCF), NA.

vivendi over the Taiwan issue¹⁷.

The day after the Shanghai communiqué announcement, Sato showed a more positive stance on the Taiwan issue than before. In a meeting of the Lower House of Representatives Committee, he made clear that “Taiwan belongs to the PRC in terms of the “one China” principle, since the PRC had achieved a return to the United Nations”. Sato also formally accepted the second clause of the “Three Restoration principles” for the first time¹⁸.

The MOFA, however, became cautious of Sato’s imprudent remark which could legally contradict the GOJ’s official stance on the Taiwan issue. Although the Asian bureau at MOFA, which was working towards a breakthrough was more ambitious, MOFA as a whole was insisted that the “GOJ must decide whether it pronounces Taiwan is a part of China in order to begin official Sino-Japanese negotiations.¹⁹” Executive officers such as Yasukawa Takeshi (安川壯), deputy minister for foreign affairs and Igawa Katsuichi (井川克一), chief of treaties bureau, were most reluctant to confirm Taiwan was part of China, being afraid of Japan setting a precedent for legally recognizing Taiwan as part of china.²⁰ Adding to the political and legal difficulties was the “abrogation” of the Treaty of Peace between Japan and

¹⁷ Joint Communiqué between the People's Republic of China and the United States, *the Department of State Bulletin*, March 20, 1972, pp. 435-438.

¹⁸ “The minutes of the Committee on the Budget in the House of Representatives No. 5,” February 28, 1972 (<http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>: 2011/6/21).

¹⁹ China Section, “Nicchu Kankei no Mondaiten [Problems of Sino-Japanese relations],” Nov. 4, 1971, MOFA documents declassified by the Information Disclosure Law (hereafter IDL), Declassified Document Number 2005-97.

²⁰ China Section, “Chugoku Mondai Kentokai [Reviewing meeting of China problem],” Nov. 5, 1971, IDL (2005-97).

the Republic of China(日華平和条約: hereafter the Peace Treaty with Taiwan) which the PRC demanded. Some diplomats firmly opposed to abrogate the Peace Treaty with Taiwan unilaterally in order to instigate negotiations with Beijing²¹.

Although assuming that a severing of diplomatic relations with the ROC was inevitable, the MOFA was still keen to establish a policy of keeping de facto relations with Taiwan after the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations. However, MOFA also viewed Sino- Japanese negotiations quite pessimistically. They expected it to take some years to arrive to an agreement with which the GOJ side could be satisfied with, even if governmental talks could start²². The MOFA judged that the Sino-Japanese normalization was unfeasible as long as the Sato cabinet was in power; therefore they were concerned that Sato gave the PRC an unnecessary concession over the legal status of Taiwan along with an unequivocal official commitment to hurry negotiations²³. MOFA announced the official Japanese view over the Taiwan issue on March 6, 1972 to clarify any possible misunderstandings.²⁴ In this official view, the GOJ showed an opinion to "be able to understand" the second clause of the "Three Restoration Principles" while sticking with its conventional position that the "legal status of

²¹ For example, Suzuki Takashi (Ambassador to the Burma) to Foreign Minister, May 27, 1972, IDL (2005-98).

²² China Section, "Nicchu Seihukan Kosho ni saishiteno Yochuui Jikou [Special Notes on the governmental negotiations between Japan and China]," Oct. 5, 1971, IDL (2005-300).

²³ Meyer to Rogers, Mar. 23, 1972, RG59, SNF, POL CHICOM-JAPAN, NA.

²⁴ *Kusuda Minoru Diary*, Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 2000, March 4, 1972.

Taiwan is undecided²⁵.”

In spite of passive posture of the MOFA, Sato continued counting on Sino-Japanese unofficial contact until the end of his term. According to his diary, Sato seems to have got the impression that his own visit to China was possible if he expressed the approval of "Three restoration principles" through unofficial contact with Beijing²⁶. Sato, however, pertinaciously objected to the "abrogation" of the Peace Treaty with Taiwan. In his meeting with Robert Murphy, former ambassador to Japan on May 10, Sato told him that the first and second clauses of the three principles could be accepted by the GOJ, however, the third clause demanding the abrogation of the Peace Treaty with Taiwan was seen as a real problem by Sato and one which must be considered in a "historical context." Sato stated that the "possibility of the PRC acceding to it [the Peace Treaty with Taiwan] and therefore maintaining this aspect of the relationship, should be a subject for governmental talks between the GOJ and PRC²⁷." In fact, Sato tried to visit China and negotiate with Zhou Enlai to retain the Peace Treaty with Taiwan in one way or another. It seems that his aim was to let the PRC accept the continuation of economic relations with Taiwan rather than keeping official relations with the ROC, but this hope was ultimately unattainable.

²⁵ Foreign Minister to Ambassador to the US et al., March 6, 1972, IDL (2005-97).

²⁶ *Sato Eisaku Diary*, op cit., May 6, 1972.

²⁷ Ingersoll to Rogers, May 12, 1972, RG59, SNF, POL CHICOM-JAPAN, NA.

2. The road to Beijing

When the Tanaka Kakuei Administration started on July 7, 1972, the new foreign minister Ohira Masayoshi (大平正芳) had already set his mind to resolving the major impediments to diplomatic normalization with the PRC. On the first day of government, Ohira ordered Hashimoto Hiroshi (橋本恕), MOFA's China section chief to commence secret preparations for negotiations with China. Hashimoto started work alone on this process but later enlisted the assistance of a key MOFA director Takashima Masuo (高島益朗) and the Treaty section chief Kuriyama Takakazu (栗山尚一)²⁸. The reason why Ohira ordered preparations in secrecy was concern over leaks to the pro-Taiwan group in the LDP²⁹. He thought that the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations would become impossible if he considered the claims of the pro-Taiwan group who had firmly objected to abrogating the Peace Treaty with Taiwan.

The problem for Ohira was the discrepancy between the second clause of “Three Restoration principles” and the Taiwan clause in the US-Japan Security Treaty. In the US-Japan Joint Statement that promised to return the administrative rights of Okinawa on November 21, 1969 to Tokyo's control, however, the GOJ had also publicly expressed that “the maintenance of peace and security in the Taiwan area [was an] important factor

²⁸ Hashimoto Hiroshi, interview by author, Tokyo, Nov. 8, 2008.

²⁹ Hashimoto Hiroshi, interview by author, Misato, Saitama, Apr. 10, 2006.

for the security of Japan³⁰.” With respect to the Taiwan clause that made clear Japan’s commitment to the security of the Taiwan Strait, there was an internal division of opinion not only within the LDP but also MOFA. MOFA’s China section chief Hashimoto insisted that the GOJ needed to correct or delete the Taiwan clause to attain Sino-Japanese normalization³¹. On the other hand, ex-deputy minister Yasukawa, who was close to Ohira, and some politicians in the LDP’s pro-Taiwan group, strongly objected to excluding the Taiwan area from the territory covered by the US -Japan Security Treaty, because they believed it would cause the US government to distrust the GOJ³².

New foreign minister Ohira was one of key LDP politicians who made much of good relations with US. He gave vice foreign minister Hogen Shinsaku (法眼晋作) an order to contact US ambassador Robert Ingersoll just after the Tanaka cabinet was formed to explain Japan’s views on China. In secret discussions on July 15, 1972, Hogen told Ingersoll that the GOJ was prepared to “show the maximum degree of understanding” over the PRC’s claim in the Taiwan issue although it was not legally in a position to make a statement on the Taiwan issue. Hogen also informed him that the GOJ will do its best to explain to the

³⁰ Joint Statement of Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and U.S. President Richard Nixon, November 21, 1969, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Richard Nixon, 1969*, 953-957.

³¹ Hashimoto Hiroshi, “Chugoku Seisaku Youkou (An) [Draft of the outline of China policy],” Apr. 17, 1972, IDL (2005-301).

³² Yasukawa Takeshi, “Nichibei Anpo Joyaku no kanten karamita Nicchu Kokkou Seijouka no mondai nado ni kannsuru Shiken [A personal opinion to relate to problems of the Sino-Japanese normalization from the viewpoint of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty],” IDL (2005-207).

Chinese side the following points: (1) Given the US-PRC rapprochement, Japan sees little possibility of armed conflict in and around the Taiwan area and, therefore, the use by US forces of military bases in Japan for the defense of Taiwan is essentially a theoretical issue, which should not become an obstacle to Japan-PRC normalization; and (2) Japan has no intention to allow the normalization to prejudice its commitments under the Japan-US security treaty³³. Japanese policy, Hogen therefore concluded, was to seek to compromise with respect to the question of the legal territorial disposition of Taiwan at the political level. As Hogen remarked: “the outcome would be at best most ambiguous,” it can be stated that the Tanaka and Sato Cabinets both shared the fundamental goal of reaching a *modus vivendi* over the Taiwan issue.

Although the Tanaka cabinet planned to receive US consent on its approach in managing the legal status of Taiwan, they were not convinced that the PRC would accept this position. In contrast to this uncertainty, the PRC government was well aware of Japan's new position. Against the context of the Sino-Soviet confrontation and an approach by the Soviet Union to Japan,³⁴ Zhou Enlai set up the “Japan group (日本組)” in the diplomatic

³³ Ingersoll to Rogers, July 15, 1972, RG59, SNF, POL CHICOM-JAPAN, *Japan and the United States: Diplomatic, Security and Economic Relations, 1960-1976* (Washington DC: National Security Archives, 2000) (JUDSE).

³⁴ Ozawa Haruko, “*Nicchukankei ni okeru Soren(Russia)* [The Soviet Union (Russia) in the Sino-Japanese relations],” in *Asia no nakano Nihon and Chugoku*[Japan and China in Asia], eds., Hatano Sumio and Masuda Horoshi, Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1995, 105-109.

service and permitted it to start preparations for diplomatic normalization with Japan³⁵. Zhou Enlai had already dispatched Sun Pinghua (孫平化), an old Japan hand in the Chinese Communist Party, as a messenger to Japan before the Tanaka cabinet was even formed. The first unofficial meeting between Ohira and Sun was held at the Hotel Okura in Tokyo on July 22, 1972. Sun told him that the PRC government welcomed a summit meeting and would not publicly embarrass Tanaka and Ohira if they came to Beijing. Furthermore, he told him the Chinese government would not demand that the GOJ “recognized it as a precondition for diplomatic normalization.” Through noting that the “Three Restoration Principles should be eventually solved,” Sun’s suggestion meant that the PRC had drastically changed its posture which had hitherto refused negotiations until the GOJ had fully accepted the “Three Restoration Principles”. Ohira welcomed the Chinese suggestion and replied that the GOJ wanted to negotiate in direct talks rather than through a third party.

However, Tanaka was still careful in contrast to Ohira. On July 23, 1972, Takeiri Yoshikatsu (竹入義勝), the chairman of the Komei party (公明党) prior to his planned to visit China was refused a briefing note by Tanaka on Zhou Enlai and the China question. He was

³⁵ Jin Chongji ed. *Zhou Enkai den* [Biography of Zhou Enlai], Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2000, 2:336-337.

still concerned that the pro-Taiwan group could disrupt these sensitive negotiations³⁶. Not only Tanaka but also MOFA could not to what extent the PRC would compromise in summit negotiations for lack of reliable information³⁷. What changed this situation was the “Takeiri memo”, the record of Conversation between Takeiri and Zhou Enlai which Takeiri took back to Japan. In the meeting with Takeiri from July 27, Zhou stated that the PRC promised the following two points in upcoming governmental negotiations:

(1) We [PRC] will not touch the US-Japan security treaty and will not mention the US-Japan joint statement of 1969 either; and

(2) We [PRC] will abandon the right to war reparations³⁸.

In addition, Zhou pronounced that the Chinese government would not include the Taiwan issue in the joint communiqué and suggested that both countries reach a “tacit agreement” on the following three points:

(1) The GOJ approves that Taiwan is a domestic issue of the PRC;

(2) The GOJ withdraws its embassy and consulates from Taiwan after the Sino- Japanese joint communiqué announcement; and

(3) The PRC will give favorable consideration to Japanese companies after liberation of

³⁶ *RHINT*, 198-199.

³⁷ Kuriyama Takakazu, “Nicchu Kokko Seijoukka [Sino-Japanese normalization],” *Waseda Hogaku*, 74-4(1999), 42.

³⁸ *RHINT*, 11.

Taiwan”.

Zhou Enlai had therefore, used a significant bargaining chip before any major talks. That is, the PRC focused only on breaking off diplomatic relations with the ROC, while prepared to concede to other key issues such as the US-Japan security regime and war reparations in order to achieve normalization. On August 4, 1972, Takeiri who had returned to Japan handed his own memorandum to Tanaka and Ohira, convincing the former of China's desire to see talks through to a successful conclusion and prompting him to finally decide to visit China. Ohira was also determined to publicize the secret preparations and convened a “Task force of China problem (中国問題対策協議会)” which constituted all executive officers that were higher than bureau chief within MOFA. In the formation of this task force, Ohira told them that “Premier Tanaka and I have agreed to use an official route through MOFA without making a personal approach” as a means of promoting normalization with the PRC³⁹ which was in contrast with ex-Premier Sato who liked using unofficial routes. After four meetings of the task force by August 12, 1972, it was formally confirmed that the issue of the legal status of Taiwan should be “politically” settled through Sino-Japanese negotiations.

While Tanaka's directed this government approach, Ohira entrusted a Japanese draft of

³⁹ “Chugoku Mondai Taisaku Kyogikai Dai Ikkai Kaigi Yoroku[The record of the first Council on the China Problem],” August 2, 1972, IDL (2005-207).

the joint communiqué to Furui Yoshimi(古井喜實) and asked him to hand it to his PRC counterpart. Furui, a private adviser to Ohira had been long engaged in Sino-Japanese relations as a pro-Beijing politician of the LDP since the end of 1950s⁴⁰. This draft was in fact written by the aforementioned Treaty section chief Kuriyama who had drafted both the talking points and the draft joint communiqué over his summer vacation⁴¹. Also in this draft, he had indicated the bottom line where the GOJ could concede to in reference to the “Takeiri memo”. Nevertheless, MOFA authorities could not ascertain to what extent the PRC would demand the acceptance of “three restoration principles” in the summit meetings in Beijing. In fact, Kuriyama recollected “I didn’t have much confidence personally on whether these negotiations would really go well⁴².”

The potential sticking point as seen in Tokyo was the second clause of the “Three Restoration Principles.” The GOJ had already decided not to accept the PRC’s legal claim like many other Western countries, but what kind of phrase it could possibly adopt to achieve a satisfactory compromise with the PRC was a most vexing political issue. When both Canada and Italy recognized the PRC in the autumn of 1970, both countries declared that they would “take note” of the claim of the PRC over Taiwan in their joint communiqués.

⁴⁰ Furui Yoshimi, *Nicchu Juhachi nen*[the Eighteen years in Sino-Japanese relations], Tokyo: Makinoshuppan, 1978, 122-123.

⁴¹ Kuriyama Takakazu, interview by author, Tokyo Sept. 4, 2008.

⁴² Kuriyama, op cit., 42.

In the Sino-US Shanghai communiqué of February, 1972, the US government declared that the United States “acknowledges.....that Taiwan is a province of Chin..... [and] doesn't challenge the [Chinese] position.” In May, 1972, the Netherlands stated formal “respect” over the claim by the PRC and “recognized” that it was the sole legitimate government of China. These various expressions meant that the later Japan established diplomatic relations with the PRC, the more it was expected to adopt an expression that considered PRC's claims. The GOJ referred to the Dutch statement at the US-Japan summit meeting in Hawaii on September 1, 1972, when Ohira told President Nixon that “Japan must go to at least what the Netherlands had accepted but Japan would not clear this wall.” As Ohira's remarks show, the GOJ was going to devise wording on the basis of the Dutch method⁴³. Consequently, MOFA finally formulated the phrase “understand and respect” formulated by the China section chief Hashimoto⁴⁴. The GOJ had already shown “understanding” of the claim of PRC for Taiwan in the official view in March 1972. Hashimoto added “respect” to “understanding” in following the Netherlands.

Hashimoto, who was a core pillar of preparing for the Sino-Japanese negotiations in MOFA, thought that the controlling the various opinions within and outside the government was impossible. Therefore, he thought that he “could not but push” the agreement settled

⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation, Tanaka, Ohira, Nixon et al., Sept. 1, 1972, NPM, NSCF, NA.

⁴⁴ Kuriyama interview op cit.; Hashimoto interview op cit., Nov. 8, 2008.

in Beijing to these opposition groups⁴⁵. However, even Hashimoto failed to have conviction as to whether Premier Tanaka could reach an agreement with the PRC after just one visit. In a MOFA task force on August 9, 1972, Hashimoto insisted that, “with respect to the Taiwan issue, we should enter negotiations with the basic policy that the Treaty Section made, and we should return to Japan after promising to re-visit it in the near future if the PRC rejects our plans in Beijing⁴⁶.” Even Hashimoto thought Premier Tanaka should withdraw once and make a fresh start with negotiations if both sides failed to reach a consensus.

3. Normalization of Sino-Japanese relations and the Taiwan issue

On September 25, 1972, Premier Tanaka arrived in Beijing, and the first summit meeting started in the afternoon. In the beginning of the meeting, Tanaka insisted that “the Taiwan issue had blocked Sino- Japanese relations till now”, and emphasized the need for normalization that therefore considered the Taiwan issue. Foreign Minister Ohira continued to insist that “the GOJ wanted to get an understanding from the PRC that the Peace Treaty with Taiwan would finish serving its purpose at the moment of normalization” after showing “understanding” to the claim of the PRC and accepting that “the Peace Treaty with Taiwan

⁴⁵ Hashimoto interview op cit., Nov. 8, 2008.

⁴⁶ “Chugoku Mondai Taisaku Kyogikai Dai Sankai Kaigi Yoroku[The record of the third Council on the China Problem],” August 9, 1972, IDL (2005-207).

was invalid⁴⁷.”

In the first foreign ministerial meeting on the morning of September 26, the director of the Treaty bureau Takashima explained the GOJ's opinion over the Peace Treaty with Taiwan from a legal position. Takashima handed the first Japanese draft of a joint communiqué and gave an oral explanation. Firstly, he stated that the GOJ could not take the position that the Peace Treaty with Taiwan, which stipulated to end the state of war is invalid, therefore we wanted to just “confirm a fact of the end of war”, without clearly specifying when the war ended. Secondly, with respect to the "Three Restoration Principles", Takashima suggested to include a clause referring to diplomatic recognition in the joint communiqué and separating the issue of the legal status of Taiwan and The Peace Treaty with Taiwan from the communiqué. Takashima stated that “the GOJ was not authorized to judge” the legal status of Taiwan; therefore it was best to “understand and respect” that Taiwan should be returned to China according to the Cairo and Potsdam declarations. Finally, with respect to “tacit agreement” on the Taiwan issue, Takashima asserted that the GOJ did not make a secret agreement with the PRC. He told the Chinese that the GOJ recognized that severing diplomatic relations with Taiwan would be seen as a proper conclusion of Sino-Japanese normalization” therefore expressing a desire for the “PRC to

⁴⁷ *RHINT*, 52-56.

trust the GOJ”⁴⁸.

Takashima showed the Japanese plan based on their in-house legal examination at MOFA, however, the PRC strongly refuted Japan’s claim that the Peace Treaty with Taiwan was valid and legal. The Chinese Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei (姬鵬飛) stated that the “Japanese idea could not persuade the Chinese people” and insisted it was necessary to make the end of the war clear. The PRC negotiators also handed a new draft of the joint communiqué to their Japanese counterparts, which was essentially based on the earlier Japanese draft that Ohira had passed through Furui⁴⁹ The Chinese side however, took issue with the GOJ’s “understands and respects” that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the PRC, instead suggesting new wording that the “GOJ accepted the position of the PRC based on the Cairo declaration”⁵⁰. In the second summit meeting of the afternoon of September 26th, Zhou Enlai reversed his earlier friendly stance and assumed a firmer posture by exclaiming that “millions of Chinese were sacrificed for the war” and also criticized the Japanese explanation of the disputed territory of Takashima⁵¹.

Ohira and his colleagues at MOFA had already started reworking the first draft following the first foreign ministerial conference. At the second foreign ministerial meeting on the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 110-116.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 120-122.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

evening of September 26th, Ohira told the Chinese delegation to prepare a new draft by the next meeting and ordered two amendments to the Chinese draft. The first amendment was about the declaration of the end of the war. The Japanese side drafted two possible alternative plans. One version was that the Chinese unilaterally declared the end of the war so that Japan could evade any legal difficulties. The second option hinged on the notion that both countries “declared there would be full-scale peaceful relations in the future between Japan and China”, without specifying when the war actually ended.

The second amendment concerned the legal status of Taiwan. Ohira reiterated the Japanese position on the Taiwan issue and suggested revised wording along the following lines: “The Government of Japan fully understands and respects this position of the Government of the People's Republic of China”, fully understanding this position under Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation⁵². This draft amendment was a suggestion by the Treaty section chief Kuriyama. He had therefore, prepared a second plan in case the PRC refused Japan’s first draft. What Kuriyama paid attention to was the text of Article 8 of the Potsdam Declaration, which prescribed the territory of Japan as such: “the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.”

⁵² *Ibid.*, 86-93.

Therefore, Kuriyama tried to show indirect support of the PRC's claim by mentioning the Potsdam Declaration which the GOJ had accepted, while avoiding reference to the Cairo Declaration which prescribed returning Taiwan to China⁵³. His amendment was intended to create a better political understanding of the PRC by Japan through denying the "One China, One Taiwan" policy, while avoiding legal acceptance of the PRC's claim over Taiwan. According to Kuriyama, he did not tell this idea to anyone except for the China section chief Hashimoto before departure, and only explained it to Ohira after the first Foreign Ministerial meeting⁵⁴. Notwithstanding these preparations, the Chinese did not accept the Japanese amendments, yet Foreign Minister Ji promised a reexamination but pointed out that "we took particular note of the ending of the state of war."

The new issue that emerged at the second foreign ministerial meeting was the preceding sentence of the joint communiqué. The Japanese draft avoided specification of "Three Restoration Principles," and divided its contents into the body of the text in the communiqué. On the other hand, the Chinese draft included the sentence that the Japanese Government was "committed to understanding the Three Restoration Principles" in the preceding sentence. The Chinese side insisted that the reason why they did not include the third principle in the body of the text was that the "GOJ would overall understand the Three

⁵³ Kuriyama interview, op cit.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Restoration Principles in the preceding sentence.” The difference between both drafts was big, and, at the end of the second day, the prospect of mutual agreement seemed impossible.

Nevertheless, the Japanese side had expected difficult negotiations, while the Chinese had no intention of aborting the summit meeting. Zhou Enlai also wished for a “political” conclusion of the normalization negotiations like the Japanese side. Foreign minister Ohira and Ji entered into negotiations on the joint communiqué draft on the way to touring the Great Wall in the morning of September 27th⁵⁵. On the previous night Ohira and his MOFA colleagues had formulated a Japanese draft amendment. At first, with respect to the draft amendment, the Japanese side now included the framework of the “Three Restoration Principles” in the preceding sentence. Subsequently, the Japanese avoided specifying the end date of the war by simply using the ambiguous wording that “the unnatural state between Japan and China” was finished⁵⁶. In the working level meeting over the joint communiqué which started in the afternoon, the Japanese were able to hand over an amended draft⁵⁷. It can be assumed that the Japanese draft on the legal status of Taiwan was agreed to by the Chinese at this discussion because both sides didn’t discuss it since then. The Chinese finally accepted Japan’s view about the legal status of Taiwan and by the

⁵⁵ *RHINT*, 91-93.

⁵⁶ NHK Shuzaihan ed. *Zhou Enlai no Ketsudan* [Decision of Zhou Enlai], Tokyo: Nihon Hoso Kyokai Shuppansha, 1993, 160.

⁵⁷ *RHINT*, 91.

third Foreign Ministerial conference on the September 27th, Foreign Minister Ji had showed a Chinese counterproposal to Japan. With respect to the end of the state of war issue, Ji suggested putting the words “end of the state of war” in the preceding sentence and the words “the unnatural state” between both countries in the final body of the text. The Chinese side insisted that the end of the state of war was not subject to a limitation of time by this method which left room for nuances for interpretation on both sides⁵⁸. Ohira agreed to this, and the problem of the joint communiqué was concluded⁵⁹.

At the fourth and final summit meeting on the September 28th, the Taiwan issue was finally brought up for discussion. The Japanese side denied “tacit agreement” with the Chinese as suggested in the “Takeiri memo” and insisted on the method that Ohira had earlier issued. Ohira read the memo which the MOFA authorities had prepared and emphasized that Japan did not support “two Chinas” nor having did it harbor any ambitions on Taiwan. However, Ohira did note that that the GOJ could not suppress “various private interchanges including people exchanges and the trade between Japan and Taiwan” and argued that it was necessary to install a contact point for private exchange after the withdrawal of the Japanese Embassy in Taipei⁶⁰. According to Hashimoto’s record of the meeting, Zhou Enlai and his followers listened to Ohira with a stern look at first, but then

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 94-100.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

expressed relief after had concluded his remarks⁶¹. Zhou expressed his thanks for the good faith that both Tanaka and Ohira had upheld and they told the Japanese that the Chinese government would “carry out what was agreed by whatever means⁶².” The signing ceremony was held in the Great Hall of the People on the morning of September 29th with both premiers signing the Sino-Japanese Joint communiqué. At a press conference soon after the signing ceremony, Ohira announced that the Japanese government admitted that “the Peace Treaty with Taiwan was lost in the significance of the moment and was finished⁶³.” Clearly when both countries had overcome differences in viewpoint over the Taiwan issue the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations could occur.

Conclusion

The Taiwan issue as symbolized by the handling of the Peace Treaty with Taiwan and the legal status of Taiwan was the biggest issue in Sino-Japanese normalization negotiations. Previous studies have emphasized the political leadership of Premier Tanaka in this process and the breaking off of relations with Taiwan, however the basic policy of the GOJ, which was aimed keeping practical relations with Taiwan while putting an end to diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (ROC), had already been formulated by the Sato

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 71-72.

⁶³ Nakano, op cit., 143-145.

cabinet in its last days. The remaining issue therefore, was whether the GOJ accepted the “Three Restoration Principles” as a “premise” at the onset of negotiations or as a “result” of the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese normalization.

MOFA pessimistically thought that Sino-Japanese negotiations for aimed at normalization would take several years to arrive because of the polemic nature of the Taiwan issue. However, a drastic policy change by the PRC after the Tanaka cabinet was formed greatly reduced this concern. The only condition the PRC focused on as it pressed for normalization was for Japan to break off relations with Taiwan. “Political leadership” by Premier Tanaka was therefore premised by the PRC’s drastic policy change. In the Sino-Japanese negotiations in Beijing, both sides developed tactics over the Taiwan issue. While maintaining the claim that the legal status of Taiwan was undecided, the GOJ gave the PRC a “political message” that Japan did not support the independence of Taiwan by quoting the Potsdam Declaration. Thus a modus vivendi over the Taiwan issue, which still continues today, was successfully accomplished.