

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Interwar Period

: The Significance of the Establishment of the Asian
Affairs Bureau and Its Diplomacy towards China-

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Introduction

This paper focuses on organizational reform within the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter shortened to MOFA) in the interwar period. It examines the impact that the newly established bureau, the Asian Affairs Bureau, had on the character of the MOFA's leadership and its diplomatic policy towards China in the period.

There has been a lot of scholarly research on Japanese diplomatic history in the interwar period. Generally speaking these studies have been based on the following three points of view.⁽¹⁾ The first is the recognition that East Asia's international order coming from the Washington Treaty System.⁽²⁾ The second is the argument about the Japanese diplomacy towards China, from the viewpoint of 'Shidehara Diplomacy' and 'Tanaka Diplomacy'.⁽³⁾ The third is the examination of the relationship between the Japanese government and the Japanese army. In addition to that, recently Tetsuya Sakai has proposed

that Japan's invasion of China should be considered from the twin viewpoints of 'the Empire Order System' and 'the International Order System'.⁽⁴⁾ Similarly Isao Chiba has showed that Japan's diplomacy of the interwar period was founded on the 'Old Diplomacy' and 'New Diplomacy'.⁽⁵⁾ In addition, *Jinbutsu de Yomu Kindai Nihon-gaikō-shi* [Japanese diplomatic history in modern times: Description based on the person]⁽⁶⁾ was published in 2008. The description of the history based on a person is an attractive concept, and it can be an effective method.

On the other hand, Sakai pointed out twenty years ago the importance of the study of the MOFA's organization. He argued that the problem is that most of the studies of Japan's intervention in China, especially after the Manchurian incident, treated the MOFA as a whole organization, even though the departments of MOFA had had their own individual opinions. Moreover Sakai has also pointed to significance of the policies of Diplomats, so he analyzed the policies of Mamoru Shigemitsu and Shigeru Yoshida, who both served in important position in China.⁽⁷⁾

I accept these explications, but I want to propose a different method in this presentation. The method consists of the following three viewpoints. The first is to look at the reorganization of MOFA in 1920, namely the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau. The second is to investigate the three processes of dealing with documents —obtaining sanction, enforcement, and preservation. Finally the third is to consider the personnel affairs of the councilors. By analyzing these three viewpoints, I want to describe the organized correspondence of the diplomatic policy towards China by MOFA in the interwar period. I would like to state that this method is worthy if attention is paid to the fact that MOFA, which had been worried about ensuring human resources, had changed the management of its bureaucracy after introducing a more rigorous civil servant examination in 1894.⁽⁸⁾ In addition to that, I also want to pay attention to Nakatani's study

which states that the interwar period is a turning point of Japanese diplomacy. His argument which analyzes the division's or bureau's opinions is convincing.⁽⁹⁾ As described above, it is important to clarify Japanese diplomatic policy at an organizational correspondence level, and to consider the significance of the organizational reform in the interwar period.

First of all in section 1, I will outline the new organization establishment concept raised as a solution for the problem in the Political Affairs Bureau order, which the MOFA held in 1919, and, subsequently in section 2, I will consider the personnel system, especially Councilor Meeting, which was installed in order to solve the above mentioned problem, under the Asian Affairs Bureau order in 1920.⁽¹⁰⁾ Finally in Section 3, I will try to clarify the meaning in diplomatic history of the Asian Affairs Bureau's establishment as a regional department, introducing the viewpoint of public administration study and a "historical-records study approach", taking note of the change of the systematic correspondence of diplomacy towards China by MOFA.⁽¹¹⁾

1. Proposal of reorganization in 1919

In this section, I want to clarify the proposed reorganization of the MOFA, before the Asian Affairs Bureau was established in 1920. First of all, I will analyze the opinion stated by Kenkichi Yoshizawa, who was the Director-General of the Political Affairs Bureau in those days. I will deal with the following—'Shinkyoku zōsetsu ni tomonau shōmu no bunpai ni kansuru iken' [The opinion about the distribution of the departmental affairs concerning establishing a new bureau].⁽¹²⁾ Although the documentation date of this statement is unknown, the description on the written document is that the "Shinkyoku zōsetsu ni kansuru yosan no satei shūryō" [budget assessment had ended], so I can suppose that it was written in the 1919

fiscal year, in view of the deliberation of the budget with the Ministry of Finance in the previous fiscal year. In it, Yoshizawa proposed that it was very important to give ministry executives, namely the Minister, Vice-Minister, and the Director-General of the bureau, sufficient time and opportunity to concentrate on both key issues of the day and of the future. It was the main reason why he proposed the establishment of a new bureau. Yoshizawa pointed out that the distribution of affairs should be reconsidered thoroughly, and accordingly proposed the establishment of the 'General Affairs Bureau'. According to his proposal, the 'General Affairs Bureau' should handle the following five points, 1): to arrange unified and continuous investigative activities in order to contribute to decisions on foreign policies, 2): to gather information and to analyze it, 3): propaganda activities, 4): other works that the Political Affairs Bureau, the Commercial Bureau, and the Treaties Bureau did not deal with, 5): non-important work concerned with the Personnel Division and Financial Affairs Division which the Vice-Minister had managed instead of the Deputy Vice-Minister in the past.

The members of the Political Affairs Bureau had the same opinion as Yoshizawa's as mentioned above. For example, Nagakage Okabe, who belonged to the same bureau and who held the position of the Director of the Second Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau thereafter, stated that "There are two problems to be solved as soon as possible. One is to establish the 'General Affairs Bureau'. This bureau should deal with the personnel, financial affairs, document-archives management which the Vice-Minister has handled previously and also propaganda. This would make the Vice-Minister's responsibilities decrease"⁽¹³⁾.

According to Okabe's opinion, Japanese diplomatic policy towards China was quite different from that towards the US or Europe. The reason why Okabe stated this is that diplomatic policy towards China contained two aspects, namely politics and commerce. He stated that the commercial

aspects included not only trade problems but also difficulties regarding investment, and insisted that they were the most important. Therefore he demanded the establishment of a special bureau called the 'Far East Bureau', to exclusively deal with these investment problems. Besides, Okabe explained as follows— "The diplomatic policy towards China should be considered from the viewpoints of both investment and geography. It is important to create a balance of both of these as in a warp and woof of a textile weaving"⁽¹⁴⁾. I can indicate that this was characteristic of Okabe's opinion and what he expected from the 'Far East Bureau'. In addition to that, Yoshizawa also understood the importance and peculiarity of the diplomacy towards China. Yoshizawa mentioned the following: "Since investment problems in China strongly include political aspects, it is important not to regard these problems in the same light as other commercial ones"⁽¹⁵⁾.

To summarize, Yoshizawa and Okabe made an attempt to establish a new system, to invest in China from a political viewpoint, and arranging foreign policy synthetically. It could be said that it was an attempt to establish a new system which could take over the responsibilities that the Political Affairs Bureau and Vice-Minister had previously assumed.

2. 'Revival' of the Councilor Meeting in 1920

In this section, I want to clarify the function of the Councilor Meeting established in 1920. This meeting was held from 1920 to 1924, almost once a week. The sum total of the meetings was 171 times.

There had been a plan to establish a 'General Bureau' or a 'Far East Bureau,' nevertheless neither bureau had been established. Instead in 1920, the MOFA established an Asian Affairs Bureau and a European and North American Bureau. It was an outcome of the division of the Political Affairs

Bureau. The Asian Affairs Bureau had three divisions. The First Division was to handle two matters, as follows: 1) general policies and agreements (including revision) of treaties regarding political matters in China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Thailand, 2) matters concerning military affairs. The Second Division was to deal with matters regarding finance, loans, joint enterprises, railway enterprises, mine development, and communications industries. In brief, the First Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau handled political matters, and the Second Division handled investments and financial matters. The Asian Affairs Bureau was just an equivalent body to the European and North American Bureau in the regulations for governmental organization. In consequence it did not have any function to unify the policies of the MOFA, and there was no function to deal with the responsibilities of the Minister's Secretariat, which was proposed by Yoshizawa and Okabe in the original plan to establish a 'General Bureau'.

It is worth noticing that the Asian Affairs Bureau and the European and North American Bureau had no functions to administer MOFA's unified policies, as mentioned previously. In fact, Yoshizawa had been worried about this matter. In his foregoing opinion, he had pointed out that if the reorganization was carried out from the viewpoint of a 'regional concept', the MOFA would be without coordination to make and administer unified policies. Moreover, he had indicated that since the diplomacy of the MOFA at that time had been centered on China, the responsibilities would be concentrated at the Asian Affairs Bureau, and it would go against the purpose of the reorganization. In this way, Yoshizawa insisted on the establishment of a 'General Bureau' and the continuance of the Political Affairs Bureau and the Commercial Affairs Bureau, and was strongly against the proposal for a regional bureau. In spite of his opinion, the proposal of the establishment of the 'General Affairs Bureau' was rejected. The reason for this, which surpassed Yoshizawa's opinion in the MOFA at that time, was

the following point - “It is impossible to treat both political and commercial matters. … It seems to be difficult to deliver a Director-General of the bureau who can manage both matters well⁽¹⁶⁾”. Besides which there had been the following consideration - “It is important to remove harmful effects in the order of the Political Affairs Bureau and the Commercial Affairs Bureau. A New order should be established by expressing a respect to install a regional concept⁽¹⁷⁾”.

In that case, is it really correct to say that the MOFA lost the function to administer unified policies thoroughly after 1920? I would like to argue that it is not correct. It seems that the MOFA tried to correspond to this problem by the establishment of the Councilor Meeting. It was proposed by Michikazu Matsuda an Embassy Councilor of Italy on 8th April 1918. He made a draft titled ‘Shōnai kaku-kyokuka no jimu tōitsu narabini sanjikan-kaigi fukkō no hitsuyō ni kanshi shōgi-kettei no ken’ [The decision of the Ministry Council of the necessity of a revival of the Councilor Meeting to arrange unified policies in the MOFA]⁽¹⁸⁾. His draft received the sanction of Vice-Minister Kijuro Shidehara on 10th April. There are signs of the draft’s circulation, namely among Vice-Minister Kijūrō Shidehara, Takashi Nakamura the Director-General of the Commercial Affairs Bureau, Yukichi Obata the Director-General of the Political Affairs Bureau, Toshiro Fujita the Director of the Financial Affairs Division, and two councilors, Komaji Kikuchi and Eiichi Kimura. I can indicate that the draft had been accepted at the highest level of the MOFA. Since it was September 1919 when the Kakushin-Dōshikai [The comradely conference to reform MOFA] submitted opinion paper, it means that Matsuda was one and half years in advance of the Kakushin-Dōshikai in submitting an opinion paper⁽¹⁹⁾.

The reason why Matsuda proposed the establishment of the Councilor Meeting was that he recognized the problems regarding MOFA’s administrative system. According to Matsuda’s arguments, he indicated as

follows: “Although the competent divisions should handle their matters while getting some help from the other divisions as the need arises, actually every division really works separately. It would not produce mutual understanding among the MOFA’s divisions.” Matsuda took a serious view of the lack of mutual understanding through the MOFA.

Then actually, how did the Councilor Meeting reflect Matsuda’s proposal? Originally, councilors were enrolled at the Minister’s Secretariat. On the other hand, they were also allowed to belong to other divisions and expected to work as ‘Staff’ members, as follows –“The councilor should be subject to the advantages of the MOFA, and belong to divisions to assist their responsibilities by receiving interim commands”⁽²⁰⁾ .

In order to investigate this more deeply, at first I would like to present

Table 1 The number of the Full Service and Concurrently service Councillor in the MOFA (1898 ~ 1924)

date	imperial ordinance	full-time service (qota)	concurrently service	total number of councillor	the application of free appointment towards the councillor appointed by the Emperor
22/Oct/1898	258	2 (2)	3	5	×
17/Apr/1908	94	1 (4)	1	2	↓
29/Jul/1911	208	4 (4)	0	4	↓
13/Jun/1913	139	3 (3)	0	3	○
6/Oct/1914	208	2 (2)	0	2	×
31/Jul/1917	76	2 (2)	1	3	↓
13/Jun/1918	221	2 (2)	1	3	↓
2/Jul/1919	319	2 (2)	3	5	↓
24/Aug/1920	284	3 (3)	8	11	○
23/Oct/1920	492	3 (3)	8	11	↓
13/Aug/1921	383	3 (3)	8	11	↓
1/Jul/1922	335	3 (3)	8	11	↓
31/Mar/1922	102	3 (3)	7	10	↓
12/Aug/1924	177	2 (2)	7	9	↓
20/Dec/1924	312	0 (0)	0	0	the abolition of the councillor system

Table 2 Councilors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1904 ~ 1924)

name	appointment dismissal	official rank	regular post (additional post) / another appointment
<i>Mineichiro Adachi</i> ①	Feb. 1904 ~ Nov. 1906	3→3	/ Judge of the Sasebo prize court → Judge of the Yokosuka prize court
<i>Mineichiro Adachi</i> ②	Nov. 1906 ~ Oct. 1908	3→2	Secretary of the MOFA / ———
Keihiro Nabeshima	Jan. 1906 ~ Dec. 1909	2→2	/ Secretary of the Korean Residency-General → Parliamentary councillor of the Korean Residency-General
<i>Nobumichi Sakenobu</i>	Jul. 1908 ~ Jun. 1910	7→6	3rd Div. of PAB (1st Div. of PAB) (Press Div.) / ———
Goro Tsuda	Sept. 1908 ~ Sept. 1909	5→5	Director of 2nd Div. of PAB (Director of 3rd Div. of PAB) / Secretary of MOFA
<i>Sadao Saburi</i>	Oct. 1908 ~ Apr. 1912	6→5	1st Div. of PAB (2nd Div. of PAB) / ———
<i>Eiichi Kimura</i> ①	Dec. 1908 ~ Mar. 1912	7→6	1st Div. of CAB / ———
Moritaro Abe	Dec. 1909 ~ May 1912	2→2	—————
<i>Setsuzo Sawada</i>	Sept. 1910 ~ Oct. 1911	7→7	3rd Div. of PAB (1st Div. of PAB) / ———
Genjiro Moriya	Oct. 1911 ~ ? 1912	6→	3rd Div. of PAB (1st Div. of PAB) / ———
<i>Nobumori Ozaki</i>	May 1912 ~ Feb. 1917	6→4	2nd Div. of PAB (Translation Div.) / ———
<i>Kmetaro Iijima</i>	Jun. 1912 ~ Apr. 1913	3→3	—————
<i>Seiji Okuyama</i> ①	Aug. 1912 ~ May 1917	5→4	Research Div. → 1st Div. of CAB (Translation Div.) (2nd Div. of CAB) / ———
Iemasa Tokugawa	Jun. 1913 ~ Sept. 1914	6→6	1st Div. of PAB / Confidential secretary
Hajime Matsushima	Jan. 1917 ~ May 1918	4→4	TRD / Confidential secretary
<i>Eiichi Kimura</i> ②	Feb. 1917 ~ Jun. 1918	4→4	2nd Div. of PAB, TRD / ———
<i>Komaji Kikuchi</i> ①	May 1917 ~ Dec. 1919	3→3	1st Div. of CAB (2nd Div. of CAB) / ———
Nobutaro Kawashima①	Jun. 1918 ~ Sept. 1921	4→3	Director of the Treaties Bureau (2nd Div. of CAB) → TPTB / Secretary → Administrative official
<i>Seiji Okuyama</i> ②	Jun. 1918 ~ Aug. 1918	3→3	—————
<i>Akio Kasama</i>	Sept. 1918 ~ Mar. 1919	5→4	Minister's Secretariat / Administrative official
<i>Yotaro Sugimura</i> ①	Mar. 1918 ~ Jul. 1919	4→4	(2nd Div. of PAB) / ———
Yotaro Sugimura②	Jul. 1919 ~ Mar. 1923	4→3	Director of the 2nd Div. of the Treaties Bureau (TPTB) / Secretary → Administrative official
<i>Kin'ichi Komura</i>	Dec. 1919 ~ May 1923	3→3	PAB / ———
Takezo Okamoto	May 1920 ~ Feb. 1921	4→4	TRD, (TPTB) / Secretary → Administrative official
Komaji Kikuchi ②	May 1920 ~ ? 1922	3→2	Director of the 2nd Div. of TPTB / Embassy councillor
<i>Kiroku Hayashi</i>	Aug. 1920 ~ ? 1922	2→2	—————
Arata Aoki	Aug. 1920 ~ Jan. 1923	3→3	Director of the 2nd Div. of PAB (Director of the 3rd Div. of PAB) → Director of the 1st Div. of EAB (Director of the 3rd Div. of EAB) / Secretary → Confidential secretary
Eiichi Komura③	Aug. 1920 ~ Apr. 1923	3→3	Director of the 1st Div. of PAB → TPTB → Director of the 1st Div. of AAB → TPTB / Secretary → Administrative official
Setsuzo Sawada②	Aug. 1920 ~ May 1923	3→3	Director of the Telecommunications Div. (1st Div. of PAB) (TPTB) → 1st Div. of AAB / Secretary → Administrative official
Nobumi Ito	Aug. 1920 ~ Apr. 1921	4→4	TRD / Administrative official
Toshihiko Taketomi	Aug. 1920 ~ Jul. 1922	4→4	Director of the 2nd Div. of CAB → TPTB → TRD / Secretary → Administrative official → Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce
Hiroyuki Kawai	Feb. 1921 ~ Dec. 1923	3→3	Director of the 3rd Div. of the Treaties Bureau (Director of the 2nd Div. of the Treaties Bureau) / Secretary
Yasukichi Yatabe	May 1921 ~ Jun. 1924	3→3	TRD → Director of the 3rd Div. of the Information Analysis Dept. (Director of the 1st Div. of the Information Analysis Dept.) / Secretary
Mamoru Shigemitsu	Jul. 1921 ~ Dec. 1924	4→3	Director of the 1st Div. of the Treaties Bureau (Director of the 2nd Div. of the Treaties Bureau) / Secretary
<i>Masamoto Kitada</i>	Dec. 1921 ~ Dec. 1924	5→3	(1st Div. of the Treaties Bureau) / ———
Nobutaro Kawashima ②	Sept. 1922 ~ Dec. 1924	3→2	TRD, (TPTB) → Director of the 2nd Div. of TPTB / Secretary → Administrative official → Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce
Kensuke Horiuchi	Jan. 1923 ~ Dec. 1924	4→3	Director of the 2nd Div. of EAB / Secretary
Sotomatsu Kato	Jan. 1923 ~ Dec. 1924	4→4	1st Div. of TPTB → Director of the 2nd Div. of EAB / Secretary → Administrative official
<i>Masayuki Tani</i>	May 1923 ~ Dec. 1924	4→4	1st Div. of AAB / Confidential secretary
Ryoe Saito	Jan. 1924 ~ Dec. 1924	3→3	/ Administrative official → Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce
Tetsuichiro Miyake	Jan. 1924 ~ Dec. 1924	4→4	TPTB / Administrative official
Hitoshi Ashida	Jul. 1924 ~ Dec. 1924	3→3	Director of the 2nd Div. of the Information Analysis Dept. → (Director of the 3rd Div. of the Information Analysis Dept.) / Secretary → Administrative official

(1) Gothic: Shows the councillor appointed by the Emperor

(2) Italic: Shows the full service councillor

(3) The abbreviations of this table individually show the meaning as follows:

AAB: the Asian Affairs Bureau / EAB: the European and American Bureau / CAB: the Commercial Affairs Bureau / PAB: the Political Affairs Bureau / TPTB: the Temporary Peace Treaty Bureau / TRD: the Temporary Research Dept.

my research about the councilors in the MOFA at that time. From table 1, I can state that the MOFA increased the number of councilors after August 1920. The MOFA increased the number of full-time service councilors from two to three and concurrently service councilors from three to eight. In addition to that, from table 2, I can clearly state that the MOFA assigned these councilors to divisions throughout the organization and appointed most of them as directors. Especially regarding the main bureaus, the Asian Affairs Bureau, the European and North American Bureau, and the Treaties Bureau, the MOFA assigned the councilor to the director of the first division (the head Division) and made them serve concurrently in the second or third division. The councilors, who were regularly placed in the Minister's Secretariat by the regulations for governmental organizations, were expected to help the other divisions with their tasks by provisional order.

To summarize, the MOFA tried to assign the 'Staff' councilors to directors and put them in 'Line' positions between the Minister's Secretariat and divisions. Therefore the MOFA tried to make councilors play the role of 'Pipe' between them. The significance of establishing the Councilor Meeting is that it administered the policies between the Minister's Secretariat and divisions. I can say that it is an embodiment of the 'General Affairs Bureau' plan that had not come true.

This point was reflected at the beginning of the meetings. As mentioned above, the MOFA decided to establish the Councilor Meeting on 10th April 1918. But the first meeting was held on 16th August 1920 -two years and four months later. This coincided with the time when the Asian Affairs Bureau and the European and North American Bureau were established. The subject for discussion of the second meeting held on 20th August 1920 was 'Gaimusho bunkakitei kaiseian' [The amendment of regulations governing the departmental organization regulations of the MOFA]⁽²¹⁾, regarding the establishment of the two bureaus. After only two months, they

were established. The remarkable point about this is that the MOFA decided to establish the Councilors Meeting, and put it on hold for two years and four months, when it became clear that the Asian Affairs Bureau and European and North American Bureau would be created.

I can indicate the value of the Councilor Meeting as follows, 1): ‘Staff councilors combined ‘Line’ positions, 2): because of this, they could play the role of ‘Pipe’ between the Minister’s Secretariat and divisions, 3): these two aspects solved the lack of ability to administer united policies. In this way, the MOFA could administer united policies by introducing the Councilor Meeting and the assigning councilors to divisions extensively at the MOFA.

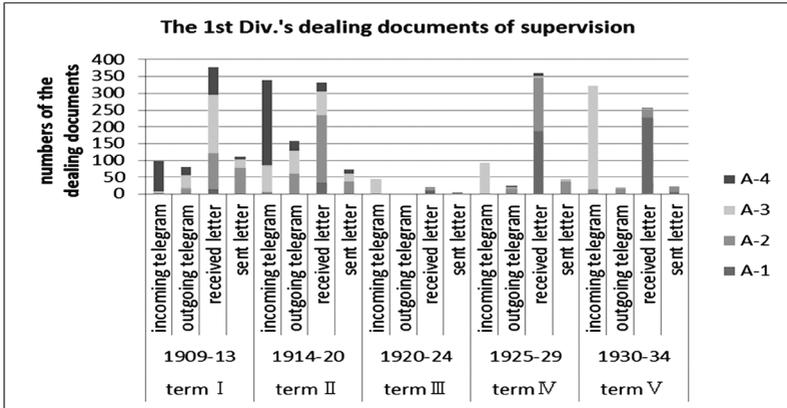
3. The change of the Asian Affairs Bureau’s function

But unfortunately, the Councilor Meeting could not achieve the purpose initially expected of it. I can assess this point from table 3. Table 3 shows the circulation of the Political Affairs Bureau’s documents and the Asian Affairs Bureau’s documents regarding Railways in China and Manchuria.⁽²²⁾

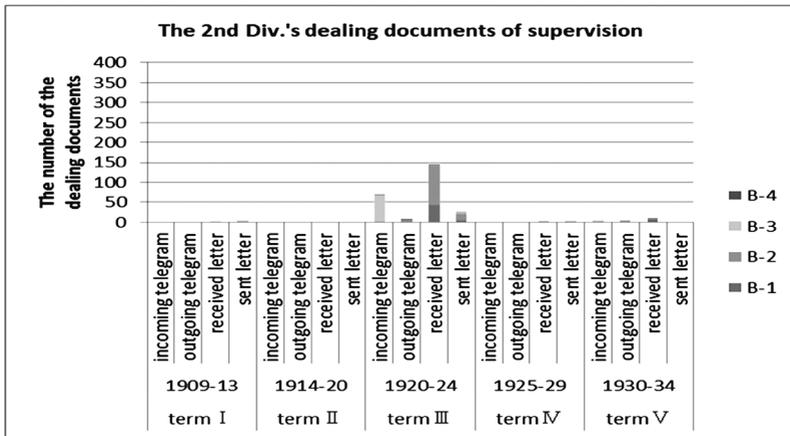
I would like to say that the term III is the most remarkable for finding the characteristics of document circulation in the Asian Affairs Bureau. In the term III, most of the documents were dealt by the Second Division, based on the regulations governing the departmental organization. I would like to pay attention to the fact that so many of these documents were not circulated to the First Division (A’-1 ~ A’-4). According to the circulation distribution system, most of the documents which the Second Division dealt with should have been circulated to the First Division, the head division of the Asian Affairs Bureau, but in this table, I can’t find anything to support this fact. The documents were directly circulated to the Director-General.⁽²³⁾

I would like to refer to table 2 again. The councilors who were increased

Table 3 The circulation data of the documents in the Political Bureau and Asian Bureau regarding Chinese and Manchurian Railways (Jan. 1909 ~ May 1934)



A-4 : Director of the 1st Div.⇔Director-General of the Bureau⇔Vice-Minister⇔Minister
 A-3 : Director of the 1st Div.⇔Director-General of the Bureau⇔Vice-Minister
 A-2 : Director of the 1st Div.⇔Director-General of the Bureau
 A-1 : Director of the 1st Div.



B-4 : Director of the 2nd Div.⇔Director-General of the Bureau⇔Vice-Minister⇔Minister
 B-3 : Director of the 2nd Div.⇔Director-General of the Bureau⇔Vice-Minister
 B-2 : Director of the 2nd Div.⇔Director-General of the Bureau
 B-1 : Director of the 2nd Div.

- (1) **term I**: Jan.1909 ~ Dec.1913, **termII**: Jan.1914 ~ Sep.1920 (= The Political Affairs Bureau's period)
- (2) **termIII**: Oct.1920 ~ Dec.1924, **termIV**: Jan.1925 ~ Dec.1929, **termV**: Jan.1930 ~ May.1934 (= The Asian Affairs Bureau's period)
- (3) This table's data is based on the analysis of the diplomatic documents possessed in the DRO. The number of documents is 4,336. For more information, please have a look at pp.94-97 of my book.

in August 1920 were assigned to the First or Third Division, but not to the Second Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau. This means that the councilors assigned to the First or Third Division could not check or analyze the documents being dealt with by the Second Division. For instance, I suppose that Eiichi Kimura who was the councilor and the Director of the First Division could not take part in the decisions regarding Railways in China and Manchuria in depth because of the lack of document circulation. Since it was thought that this situation had been going on for a long time, I suppose that the councilors Kimura could not have played the role of 'Pipe' with the Minister's Secretariat and the other divisions.

What I mentioned above reminds me that the Councilors Meeting would not work so well. As a matter of fact, it was abolished in December 1924. Needless to say, the principal reason for its abolition was the cessation of the system of councilors through the reformation of the governmental organizations regulations.⁽²⁴⁾ But I want to point out that the dysfunction of the meeting is also important for the reason. This is because the MOFA had attempted to make the function of the Councilor Meeting stronger than before. A proposal 'Sanjikan kaigi kaizo-an' [Drafts on the reform of the Councilor Meeting]⁽²⁵⁾ was submitted to the 171st Councilor Meeting, which was held on 18th December 1924. This proposal consisted of three drafts. The third draft in particular was remarkable. It proposed that the Vice-Minister should serve as Speaker, and that the Directors of the Document and Archives Division, Personnel Division and Financial Affairs Division should all serve as managers of the meeting. In short, the MOFA admitted the lack of the function of the meeting. So the MOFA tried to make it stronger. It meant that the previous meeting's function had not been sufficient.⁽²⁶⁾ However, despite these proposals, the MOFA abolished the Councilor Meetings. The MOFA had to reconsider and try to establish a new system instead of the Councilor Meeting.

The MOFA then tried to establish a system where each regional bureau handled its own matters by itself. It meant to establish a system of exclusive responsibilities among bureaus, so for instance the Asian Affairs Bureau had to handle matters concerned with the East Asia area, especially China, exclusively. I would like to analyze this point further by verifying the change of the system for supervision of the Railways in China and Manchuria.

Table 4 shows the system of supervision regarding the 41 railways in China and Manchuria during 1920-1926. From table 4, I can indicate that in 1920 — just after the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau —, the First Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau supervised 13 railways and the Second Division supervised 28 railways. As I mentioned above, the railways in China and Manchuria were supposed to be supervised by the Second Division. So the First Division's supervision of the railways for its own sake is very interesting, but I would like to indicate a more important fact, that the supervisions of 17 railways were exchanged between the First Division and the Second Division during that period. Please have a look at table 4 and the railways within the bold lines. I can point out the following two facts. At first, there was only one railway that changed its management from the Second Division to the First Division. On the other hand, there were 16 railways that changed management from the First Division to the Second Division. Is it possible to explain this?

I would like to explain it by introducing the following two viewpoints. 1): The 16 railways were almost all Manchurian railways and they were closely concerned with the management of Manchuria. 2): There was a tendency that the First Division supervised railways that included political problems and the Second Division supervised railways that did not include them. For example, the railways concerned with the Manchurian parallel railways problem were supervised by the First Division. Besides, the Shantung Railway, which was concerned with the management of Manchuria, was

Table 4 The supervision between the First and the Second Asian Affairs Division about Chinese and Manchurian Railways (1920 ~ 1926)

[Railways of the First Divison's supervision at tne time of establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau]

Railway	ground breaking	start of operation	a credit nation	railways 1	railways 2	railways 3	remarks
1 Heilong R.	黑竜	1911	1916	R			
2 Taonan-Qiqihar R.	洮齊	1925	1927	R			supervision : up to Jun. 1922
3 Shantung R.	山東	1899	1904	G→J			
4 Jilin-Hailung R.	吉海	1927	1929	C/J	○	○	
5 Canton-Kowloon R.	広九	1907	1911	Br			
6 Lienyuchiang-Lanchow R.	海蘭	1904	1936	Be/R/F			
7 Taonan-Solun R.	洮索	1929	1931	J			
8 Chinchou-Pitzuwo R.	金福	1926	1927	J			
9 Tahushan-Tungliao R.	打通	1926	1927	Br	○		
10 Shanghai-Hangchow-Ningpo R.	滬杭甬	1908	—	Br/A/J			
11 Chita-Hjaagta-Kulun R.	蒙古	1935	1940	S			
12 Shansi R.	正太	1904	1907	F/R			
13 Canton-Samshui R.	広三	1891	1892	A			

[Railways of the Second Divison's supervision at the time of establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau]

Railway	ground breaking	start of operation	a credit nation	railways 1	railways 2	railways 3	remarks
14 Jilin-Changchun R.	吉長	1907	1912	J			
15 Chefoo-Weih sien R.	煙灘	—	—	J			
16 Kaiyuan-Hailung R.	開海	1915	1926	J	○		supervision : up tp Dec. 1924
17 Tatung-Chengt u R.	同成	—	—	Be/R/F			
18 Nanking-Shanghai R.	寧湘	1914	—	Br			
19 Taonan-Jeho R.	洮熱	—	—	J	○	●	
20 Beijing-Jeho R.	京熱	—	—	J			
21 Harbin-Heiho R.	賓黑	—	—	R&J			supervision : up tp Nov. 1924
22 Lienyunchiang-Chinan R.	道濟	—	—	J			supervision : up tp Jan. 1924
23 South Manchuria R.	南滿州	1898	1902	R→J		○	
24 Canton-Hankow R.	粵漢	1906	1936	Br/A/F/G			supervision : up to the beginning of 1925
25 Szechwan-Hankow R.	川漢	—	—	Br/A/F/G			
26 Beijing-Hankow R.	京漢	1898	1905	Be/Br/F/J			supervision : up to the beginning of 1925
27 Jilin-Huining R.	吉會	—	—	J		○	supervision : up to 1922 → resupervision: from 1932
28 Beijing-Mukden R.	京奉	1898	1904	Br/J			supervision : up to Dec. 1924
29 Sze pingkai-Taonan R.	四洮	1917	1923	J		○	supervision : up to Dec. 1924
30 Kiangsi R.	南潯	1916	1915	J			supervision : up to Dec. 1924
31 Peiping-Suiyuan R.	平綏	1909	1909	J			supervision : up to Dec. 1924
32 Tianjin-Pukow R.	津浦	1909	1912	G/Br			supervision : up to Dec. 1924
33 Tsangchow-Shihkiachwang R.	滄石	1925	—	G/Be/J			
34 Chaochow-Swatow R.	潮汕	1904	1908	J			supervision : up to the beginning of 1925
35 Chinchow-Chung R.	欽渝	—	—	F			
36 Chengtu-Chongqing R.	成渝	—	—	F			
37 Jilin-Dunhua R.	吉敦	1926	1928	J		○	supervision : up tp Apr. 1924
38 Mukden-Hailung R.	奉海	1925	1928	C	○		supervision : up to Nov. 1924
39 Hulian-Hailun R.	呼海	1925	1927	R			supervision : up to Mar. 1923
40 Jilin-Wuchang R.	吉五	1931	—	C			
41 Changchun-Tailai R.	長大	—	—	J	○	○	

(1) The railway to which I attached a bold frame shows that MOFA has changed the supervision between Section 1 and 2.

(2) A: US / Br: Britain / Be: Belgium / C: China / G: Germany / J: Japan / R: Russia

(3) railways 1: Pararel railway with Manchurian R: Railways which were agreed between Japan and Qing dynasty based on the "Supplementary Agreement to the Sino-Japanese Treaty Concerning Manchuria of 1905" in Dec 1905, and Qing was required not to build railways being pararel with Manchurian R.

(4) railways 2: Four railways treated between Japan and China in 1918: Railways which were agreed between Japan and China based on "Exchange of Notes Regarding four Railways in Manchuria and Mongolia, September 24 1918" in 24th Sep. 1918

(5) railways 3: Converted by the New Four Power Consortium ○: Railways which were agreed to be excluded from the "Joint area" of the New Four Power Consortium

Converted by the New Four Power Consortium ●: Railways which were agreed not to be excluded from the "Joint area" of the New Four Power Consortium

supervised by the First Division. On the other hand, all the railways that had been part of the New Four Power Consortium's consultation, except for the Jilin-Hailung Railway: which had been concerned with the Manchurian parallel railways problem, were supervised by the Second Division in 1920. After the decision of consultation by the New Four Power Consortium, railways concerning the "Co-range" were not necessarily regarded as political problems any longer. In short, the MOFA made the First Division supervise the railways, including political problems: Manchurian parallel railways or Shantung Railway, and made the Second Division supervise the railways, not including political problems.

Furthermore, the timing of the exchange of supervision is important. Most of the exchanges were implemented in December 1924 (see table 4, reference column). From November 1924 to the beginning of 1925, it can be noted that 11 railways of the 17 were exchanged. This was the time of the abolishment of the Councilor Meeting. In short, the time of the exchange of the supervisions and the time of the abolishment of the Councilor Meeting are correspondent.

These exchanges were reflected in changes of circulation and the way in which documents were dealt with among the divisions. In the term IV of table 3, I can indicate that most of the documents were dealt in the Line of the First Division (see table 3, A1~A4), and they were not circulated to the Second Division or other divisions. The MOFA established a policy-making process on the railways in China and Manchuria, which made the First Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau supervise them after December 1924. This tendency becomes more evident after the term V seen in table 3.

To summarize, according to the analyses as mentioned above, the MOFA made the Asian Affairs Bureau independent as an administrative unit for implementing the 'Asian Diplomacy' by supervising all matters concerned with Asia and it established a system of 'Regional Diplomacy' in December

1924. This was the response of MOFA on how to invest in China politically. The establishment of regional bureaus produced a system where the head division of the bureau handled the political matters and strengthened the function of making plans. That led to the independence of 'Asian Diplomacy'. This is the significance of the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau in 1920.

Conclusions

Finally I want to summarize this article, and confirm the significance of the Asian Affairs Bureau's establishment as a regional bureau in Japanese diplomatic history.

In 1919, there had been several opinions regarding the systemic reconstruction of the Political Affairs Bureau. This concerned how to go about solving the problems the Political Affairs Bureau had: 1) how to distinguish between political matters and routine matters, 2) how to invest in China from the political viewpoint. The plan to establish a 'General Bureau' was supposed to solve the former problem. It meant to establish a new system which could take over the responsibilities that the Political Affairs Bureau and Vice-Minister had assumed. At the same time, the 'General Bureau' was expected to administer the whole of the policies in MOFA. And it was felt necessary to build a 'Far East Bureau' in order to solve the later problem.

In spite of these opinions, neither bureau was established. Instead in 1920, the MOFA established the Asian Affairs Bureau and the European and North American Bureau. Unfortunately both of them had no function to administer the MOFA's unified policies, which the Vice Minister and Director-general of the Political Bureau had done before. If the MOFA

neglected this situation, the MOFA would become an organization which had lost the function to make unified policies. The MOFA had begun to feel apprehensive about the situation.

So the MOFA decided to establish the Councilor Meeting in August 1920, and attempted to give it the function to arrange the unified policies and put councilors in 'Line' positions between the Minister's Secretariat and divisions. It meant that the MOFA tried to make councilors play the role of a 'Pipe' between them. However, unfortunately this attempt ended in a failure. The reason was the system for the circulation of documents and the lack of uniformity of information in the system. In this situation, the councilors could not play the role of 'Pipe'.

Then the MOFA tried to establish a system where each regional bureau handled matters by itself. I proved this fact in accordance with the Asian Affairs Bureau's supervision of the Railways in China and Manchuria. After the abolition of the Councilor system and the Councilor Meeting (December 1924), the MOFA made the First Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau supervise 16 railways — most of them included political problems —, by transferring their supervision from the Second Division. The First Division had begun to handle matters on not only the railways but also matters concerned with the Asian area especially China. The MOFA had established a new system where each regional bureau should handle matters by itself.

As for the context, I should look at the East Asia situation which surrounded Japan in those days, for instances, the New Four Power Consortium's economical offensive, the Rights Recovery Movement in Manchuria and Mongolia which occurred after 1924, the fears to lose the rights in Manchuria and Mongolia because of the Second Chihli - Fengtien War (第二次奉直戦争), and the financial crisis of the Three Eastern Provinces when the above-mentioned war was occurring. The MOFA had had so many difficulties and had needed to respond to them. In that situation,

'Asian Diplomacy', which meant the independence from other regional matters, might have been effective and efficient. This is the significance of the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau in 1920. I can name this regional system as an 'Asian Diplomacy'.

Thus, the reorganization was carried out through two stages as mentioned above. On the other hand, the establishing of the regional system caused the MOFA to lose adequate functions to administer unified policies, which the MOFA had had before. Actually, this problem was reflected by the correspondences or tasks of the East Asian Affairs Bureau, modified for the Asian Affairs Bureau June 1934. For example, the preceding problems were indicated in 'Gaimushō kikō kaisei iinkai hōkoku' [A report of the Committee of the reorganization in the MOFA]⁽²⁸⁾. Certainly, the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau as a regional bureau led to the independence of the 'Asian Diplomacy' from other regional matters, but it also caused the loss of the function of administration of the MOFA's unified policies. Some preceding research has indicated that the MOFA lost a Ministry Council after the 1920's and the Asian Affairs Bureau handled the Asian regional matters exclusively.⁽²⁹⁾ I want to indicate that the reason is to introduce a 'Asian Diplomacy' at the end of 1924, and after that time a tendency to give the right for the director or the director-general to make or decide policies was established, because of inadequate functions and the Ministry Council.

Besides, I have to indicate another aspect regarding the above-mentioned change. This change might have led to the situation in which the Army began to interrupt diplomatic policies, especially after 1925 (Showa Era). Although I will only give an example here, I can find the Army's interruption in the diplomatic documents circulation of the cultural diplomacy towards China; the Army began the Huabei Separation Activities (the North China Buffer State Strategy, 華北分離工作) in 1935, and consequently the cultural diplomacy was turned into the 'the new industrial and developmental

In sum, the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau produced an independence of ‘Asian Diplomacy’, but on the other hand, it deprived the function to administer the MOFA’s unified policies in compensation for it. It meant the end of the traditional Kasumigaseki-Diplomacy, a style which had administrated diplomacy by introducing an individual leadership with a unified policy, as called ‘Mutsu-diplomacy’, or ‘Komura-diplomacy’ in the Meiji era. I can estimate that one significant point about establishing the Asian Affairs Bureau is the change of a diplomatic style from emphasizing a unified policy based on the Ministry Council to devolution of power to the bureaus.

[Notes]

- (1) Kumamoto Fumio, *Taisenkanki no tai-chūgoku bunkagaikō: Gaimushō-kiroku ni miru seisaku kettei katei*, Tokyo: Yoshikawakōbunkan, 2013, pp. 1-25. Kumamoto ‘Research Trend on the Japanese Diplomacy in the Inter-war Period’, *Komazawa Shigaku*, 68 (2008), pp.131 ~ 167
- (2) For the preceding scholarly researches on the Washington Treaty System, see, for example, Mitani Taichirō, *Nihon seitō seiji no keisei*, Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1967, Irie Akira, *Kyokutō shi-nchitūjo no mosaku*, Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1968, Hosoya Chihiro, *Ryō-taisen-kan no nihon gaikō*, Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1988, and Hattori Ryūji, *Higashi-ajia kokusai-kankyō no hendō to nihon gaikō 1918-1931*, Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 2001.
- (3) For the preceding scholarly researches on the Sidehara-gaikō and Tanaka-gaikō, see, for example, Usui Katsumi, *Nihon to Chūgoku: Taishō-jidai*, Tokyo: Harashobō, 1972, Satō Motoei, *Shōwa shoki tai-chūgoku seisaku no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Harashobō, 1992, Hattori, op. cit. and Nishida Toshihiro, ‘Dai-ichiji Sidehara gaikō ni okeru manmō seisaku no tenkai: 1926-1927 nen wo chūshin to shite’, *Nihon-shi kenkyū*, 514 (2005), pp1-12.

- (4) Sakai Tetsuya, *Kindai Nihon no kokusai chitujo-ron*, Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2007.
- (5) Chiba Isao, *Kyū-gaikō no keisei: Nihon-gaikō 1900-1919*, Tokyo: Keisōshobō, 2008.
- (6) Hattori Ryūji, Sadō Akihiro and Komiya Kazuo (eds), *Jinbutsu de Yomu Kindai Nihon-gaikō-shi*, Vol. 1, 2, Tokyo: Yoshikawakōbunkan, 2008.
- (7) Sakai Tetsuya, 'Ei-Bei kyōchō' to 'Nichi-Chū teikei', in *Kyōchō sekai no genkai: Nichi-Bei kankei-shi 1905-1960*, Nenpō Kindai-nihon-kenkyū vol. 11, Tokyo: Yamakawashuppansha, 1989, pp.61-92.
- (8) Chiba, op. cit., *Kyū-gaikō no keisei*, see section I, chapter 1.
- (9) For the preceding scholarly researches on the role and function of the working level officials in the MOFA, see, Nakatani Tadashi, 'From cooperation among the great powers to cooperation with the U.S.A: The transformation of foreign policy vision in the Japanese foreign ministry, 1916-1919', in *The Dōshisha law review*, 58/4 (2006), pp. 1535-1601, and Kumamoto Fumio, 'Dai-ichiji-sekaitaisen ni okeru Gaimushō no tai-chūseisaku: "Keizai teikei" kara "Buka-teikei" heno tenkan', in *En marge de l'histoire*, 45 (2002), pp. 1-19.
- (10) For the preceding scholarly researches on the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau, see Inoue Yūichi, 'One Aspect on the Establishment of Regional Bureaus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan', in *Hōgaku kenkyū: journal of law, politics, and sociology*, 73/1 (2000), pp. 387-420. Inoue estimated that the establishment of the Asian Affairs Bureau was to correspond to the League of Nation, but I want to criticize this point of view and suggest that the estimate is done only by analyzing the level of regulations for governmental organizations.
- (11) What is the "historical-records study approach"? I would like to define it as the following: The method that makes the change of the function or administration of document-making organization clear, by analyzing the origin, structure, and form for the existence and circulation of the document-series (document-groups). For further detail about this, see Nakanome Tōru, *Kindaisiryō-gaku no shatei: Meiji-*

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dajōkan-bunsho kenkyū-josetsu, Toyo: Kōbundō, 1999, an introductory chapter.
- (12) Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: hereafter DA) Archives, 6.1.2.13, Teikoku gaimusho kansei zakken, vol. 5, Yoshizawa Kenkichi, 'Shinkyoku zōsetsu ni tomonau shōmu no bunpai ni kansuru iken', unknown on documentation day. Hereafter, when I refer to Yoshizawa's comments I cite them from this document.
- (13) DA Archives, 6.1.2.13, vol. 5, Okabe Nagakage, '(Non-title)', unknown on documentation day. Hereafter, when I show Okabe's insists, I cite them from this document.
- (14) Ibid.
- (15) Yoshizawa, op. cit., 'Shinkyoku zōsetsu ni tomonau shōmu no bunpai ni kansuru iken'
- (16) DA Archives, 6.1.2.13, vol. 5, 'Gaimushō no bunkyoku ni kansuru hiken', unknown on a documentation day and a writer. By the way, there is a signature written by Kuraki Tetsukichi, who served as a director of the Political Affairs Bureau, on the top page of the documents.
- (17) DA Archives, 6.1.2.13, vol. 5, Miyake Tetsuicirō, 'Shinkyoku zōsetsu ni tomonau shōmu no bunpai ni kansuru shiken', unknown on documentation day. Although the documentation date of this statement is unknown, the description written on the document is as follows: "Yosan no kankei ni kangami myōnendo ni oite sono jitugen kakusoku naki" [It is not obvious to realize this plan in the next year because of the budget.], so I can suppose that it was written in the 1919 (Taisho 8) fiscal year, in view of the deliberation of the budget with the Ministry of Finance in the previous fiscal year.
- (18) DA Archives, 6.1.2.5, Gaimushō shokisoku zakken vol.1, Matsuda Michikazu, 'Shōnai kaku-kyokuka no jimu tōitsu narabini sanjikan-kaigi fukkō no hitsuyō ni kanshi shōgi-kettei no ken', 8 April 1918, Matsuda prepared a draft, 10 April, Ministry Council gave the sanction to this. For the Councilor Meeting, see Fumio Kumamoto, op. cit., Taisenkanki no tai-chugoku bunkagaiko, chapter 2, paragraph

3. For the function of the councilors in those days, see Chiba, *op. cit.*, *Kyū-gaikō no keisei*, p. 35.
- (19) For Kakushin-Dōshikai, see Tobe Ryōichi, *Gaimushō kakushin-ha*, Tokyo: Chūōkōron- shinsha, Chūkō bunko, 2010, chapter 1.
- (20) Kokuritu kōbunshokan (National Archives of Japan: hereafter NAJ) Archives, Rui 1178, Kōbun ruishū, Paragraph 20 of Imperial Ordinance No. 207, 'Kakushō kansei tūsoku', 6 October 1914.
- (21) DA Archives, 6.1.2.75-1, Gaimusho sanjikan kaigi ikken, vol. 1, 'Sanjikan kaigi gijiroku', 20 August 1920.
- (22) In a subject of investigation, there is all permanent preservation document based on the regulation of document management of the MOFA, not including documents on insignificant routine work.
- (23) For the difference of the circulation and dealing systems between incoming telegrams and incoming public letters, see Kumamoto *op. cit.*, *Taisenkanki no tai-chūgoku bunkagaikō*, pp. 105-108.
- (24) NAJ Archives, Rui 1488, Kōbun ruishū, vol. 48/2, Imperial Ordinance No. 311, 'Kakushō kansei tsūsoku chū wo kaisei su', 20 December 1924.
- (25) DA Archives, 6.1.2.75-1, vol. 6, 'Sanjikan kaigi kaizō-an', 18 December 1924.
- (26) From this point, I can verify the fact that the MOFA should strengthen the function of the meeting because of not achieving the aim initially expected. By the way, there is a comment to consult on this proposal to the next vice-minister: Debhuchi Katsuji, in the 171th minutes, but it is not clearly recorded what happened after that.
- (27) See NishidaToshihiro, 'Daiichiji Shidehara gaiko ni okeru manmo seisaku no tenkai: 1926-1927 nen wo chushin to shite', *Nihon-shi kenkyu*, vol. 514 (2005), pp. 1-27.
- (28) DA Archives, H.0.0.0.1, Tōhō bunka jigyō kankei zassan, vol. 2, Horiuchi Kensuke, the chairman of a committee of the MOFA reorganization, handed to the Minister Arita Hachirō, 'Gaimushō kikou kaisei iinkai hōukoku', 4 November

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1936.

(29) See Tobe, *op. cit.*, *Gaimushō kakushin-ha*, p. 63.

(30) See Kumamoto *op. cit.*, *Taisenkanki no tai-chūgoku bunkagaikō*, chapter 5 and 6.

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