

# **A Study on the Japanese Policy towards Inner Mongolia**

---The Inner Mongolian Autonomy Movement and Japanese Diplomacy, 1933-1945---

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## **Summary**

This book is to verify the policies taken by Japan regarding the Inner Mongolian Autonomy Movement led by Prince Demchugdongrob (De Wang) in the 1930's. Since the approach is from a multinational relations perspective, the study is not restricted to Inner Mongolia, rather it includes Japan-China, Japan-Soviet and Japan-US relations. In an attempt to analyze the historical context of events unfolding in this region, the author has paid special attention to

reposition the historical role which was achieved by the Inner Mongol nationalists at the time and attempt to clarify the question of how the Inner Mongolia Question became an international issue from a regional issue through the mediation of the Japanese diplomacy.

This historical study, with its ten chapters in entirety explores the progress of the autonomous movement, the shift in international emphasis and the specific context of Japan's foreign policy transition. The contents of the chapters include the following:

#### Introduction: Awareness of Issues and Research Design

In this introduction, the author examines previous research and establishes the research task regarding contemporary Inner Mongolia in the context of international relations. Furthermore, the author analyzes the Japanese Man-Mo (Manchuria and Mongolia) policies and the background of Inner Mongolian autonomy movement.

#### Chapter 1: Beile-yin Sume Autonomy Movement as a National Liberation Movement

In this chapter, the author examines the involvement of Japan in the “Beile-yin Sume autonomy movement” which gave rise to the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement. This problem is the most important subject in historical studies related to the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement and it is not an overstatement to claim that discussion of this problem is a prerequisite to conducting any research on the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement. That is because this problem is related to the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement’s initiative and, later, to the Mongolian Allied Autonomous Government and, it can provide us with some clues regarding how the Mongolian Autonomous State should be perceived.

The Inner Mongolian autonomy movement was a movement that was initiated by Mongols and on this point, it essentially differs from “Manchukuo”, which was unilaterally created by the Kwantung Army. At that time, the Nationalist government mistakenly suspected that Japan’s instigation might be in the background. The movement did, however, cooperate with Japan for the following two reasons: The first is that the Nationalist Government did not give enough autonomy to the Mongolian side, while it continued its oppressive policies. Another reason is that the Nationalist Government neglected to take proper measures against the Japanese government’s policy toward Inner Mongolia.

## Chapter2: Structure of Japan's Inner Mongolia Policy Seen from the Suiyuan Incident

In this chapter, the author uses the Suiyuan Incident as an example to clarify the structural mechanism of the Japanese government's Inner Mongolia policies and examines how this incident impacted the Inner Mongolian Autonomy Movement and Chinese-Japanese relations.

The Suiyuan Incident was a military action which occurred in mid-November of 1936 when Prince Demchugdongrob attempted to drive away the influence of the Nationalist Party from Suiyuan city and this action had an impact not only on the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement but also on the Chinese-Japanese relations. Nevertheless, most of the studies done previously have been written from the perspective of Chinese-Japanese relations and these studies have failed to mention how this incident affected the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement.

In the early phase of the Japanese policy vis-à-vis the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement, both the Japanese government side and the Kwantung Army side were dismissive of the prospect of independent Inner Mongolia. With the advance of the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement, however, the Kwantung Army gradually changed its policies to actually support the Inner Mongolia independence and this transformation is finally linked to the occurrence of the Suiyuan Incident. The Japanese government, on the other hand, was dismissive of the Inner Mongolia independence from the beginning to the very end.

Since the Suiyuan Incident ended up with the defeat of Mongolian side, the Kwantung Army was no longer acting independently but rather taking side with the Japanese government. At the same time, it changed its policy from supporting the independence of the Inner Mongolia to that of consciously limiting its independence. These policy changes were a crushing blow to the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement.

## Chapter3: Start of the Sino-Japanese War and Japan's Inner Mongolia Policy

This chapter, described from the Japanese foreign policy's point of view, argues how Japan's Inner Mongolia policy was structured and how it evolved and took a new dimension after the Sino-Japanese war broke out.

Even though with the end of the Suiyuan Incident, the Japanese government and the Kwantung Army's mutual antagonism regarding the Inner Mongolia policies started to show a peaceful trend, after the breakout of the Sino-Japanese war it started to re-surface and this time it emerged with the problem that which side should take control of the Mengjiang (Mokyo) region.

Later on, the Kwantung Army opposed the Japanese government policies and established the Joint Committee of Mongolian Territories. On the other hand, since the Mongolian side represented by the Prince Demchugdongrob was inclined to reconstruct the country, this brought about their fierce opposition and in return became a reason that the Japanese government at one time introduced a draft titled “the Policy for Inner Mongolian Independence” which was later rejected for the sake of introduction of a new plan titled “the Guideline for Policies towards Mongolia”.

The background of why it was rejected was because of the constructed mechanism of the Japanese policy vis-à-vis Inner Mongolia. More specifically, at that time, Japan’s Inner Mongolia policies were constructed in consideration of its China policy which itself had lacked a clear vision from the beginning and it changed constantly. This was one of the reasons why the Japan’s Inner Mongolia policy became volatile. In relation to Japan’s China policy, the policies became even more volatile after two lines for Wang Zhaoming’s maneuvering and for the Nationalist Government were set up.

At the end, Wang Zhaoming’s maneuvering became a mainstream and becoming a national policy, because of his assertion, the problem of Inner Mongolian independence was once again rejected.

#### Chapter4: Tactics of China and Japan and Mongolia regarding the Establishment of the Mongolian Autonomous State

In this chapter, while focusing on the Mongolian Autonomous State which has not been paid attention to so far, the author explains its development from the international regional interrelation perspective through countries such as Japan, China, and Inner Mongolia, and with that author has investigated the significance of the Mongolian Autonomous State in the modern Inner Mongolia.

In the researches done previously, there has not been any indication regarding the dissimilarities between the Mongolian Allied Autonomous Government and the Mongolian Autonomous State. Uniform conclusions from previous research proved conspicuous and contentious. However, when comparing the two governments, it becomes relatively apparent that they are different.

First, the Mongolian Allied Autonomous Government was a government that was under the

influence of the Japanese side's opinions, whereas the Mongolian Autonomous State was an administration composed of different factions which had reached compromise amongst themselves. Thanks to Prince Demchugdongrob and the Mongol side's vigorous actions, there was compromise from the Japan side and as a result the Mongolian Autonomous State was established. But within this compromise, the huge brakes of "Wang Zhaoming" were put on. It suffices to mention that while accepting the usage of the name "the Mongolian Autonomous State", it had set the condition that the name should not be used externally for propaganda purposes.

During the Mongolian Autonomous State period, the Mongol region differed with the Han Chinese region in the respect that the Mongol region had gained and enjoyed self- rule. In addition, thanks to the Mongolian Rehabilitation Committee's great success they were able to achieve some success in Mongolian Banners' construction work.

In the history of Inner Mongolia, since the Mongolian Autonomous State enjoyed more "autonomy" and "recovery", we can say that its formation was a much more important event than the formation of the Mongolian Allied Autonomous Government.

#### Chapter5: The Formation of the Mongolian Rehabilitation Committee and Mongolian Banners Region's Reconstruction Project

This chapter clarifies the characteristics, purpose and background of the formation of the Mongolian Rehabilitation Committee as an organization. The latter became a leader in the reconstruction project of Mongolian Banners region during the Mongolian Autonomous State period. The author discusses the role of the Mongolian Rehabilitation Committee in the Mongolian Autonomous State.

The Mongolian Rehabilitation Committee was an administrative organization which was established by the Mongolian Autonomous State. It administered nearly the entirety Mongolian Banners region. Although the purpose of its establishment was to reconstruct the Mongolian Banners region, in the context of the reconstruction, this coincided with Japan's international strategy.

Upon the establishment of the Mongolian Rehabilitation Committee, "economic establishment, promulgation of education and improvement of the quality of life" became the three goals of the commission and they began a full-scale reconstruction project. Even though, due to the

complicated international climate during the time, the reconstruction project was weak and short-lived, it showed us a very important direction which merits discussion about the Inner Mongolian history during the Mongolian Autonomous State period. That is because the Mongolian Autonomous State had incorporated the two characteristics of “autonomy” and “recovery”, distinguishable from its predecessor the Mongolian Allied Autonomous Government.

#### Chapter6: Japan-Soviet Relations and the Inner Mongolia Autonomy Movement

In this chapter, analysis is proposed concerning Japanese-Soviet relations and the change which took place in international affairs in which the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement had been placed.

The Soviet-Japanese (Mongol and Manchukuo) border conflicts, as it is symbolized by the Halha Sumu Incident, increased rapidly in 1930. The Manjuur Conference was set and even though it tried to find a solution to the problem, but because of the difference of opinion among the participants, it ended in failure and it brought about the worsening relations between Japan and Soviet Union.

In the military aspect, there was an increase in the number of troops along the border, and in the diplomatic aspect, it appeared as the structuring of the Alliance camp. Both the establishment of the Soviet-Mongolian Friendship and Mutual Assistance Protocol of 1936, and the completion of Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1937 testify to this. As a countermeasure, Japan, following the Three Principles of Hirota, designed the measure to block the “Spread of Communism Route” by establishing the “Anti-Comintern Line”, and signed Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany in 1936, and later with Italy in 1937. That is how the Japan-Soviet confrontation axis was constructed, and because the Inner Mongolia region was then geopolitically located exactly in the center, it absorbed the energy of clash between both camps, and finally, inside Japan's international strategy, the Inner Mongolia region suddenly surfaced as an Anti-Comintern base. As a result, the Inner Mongolian Question in Japanese foreign policy became more important and there was a burst in the movement for separation and independence. In Seishiro Itagaki's speech regarding Inner Mongolia's independence, and in the background of the establishment of the Mongolian Military Government whose ultimate goal was to construct an independent country, existed a dynamic international situation.

However, because of the consequences of the Nomonhan (Halhiin Gol) incident, Japan's

international strategy turned into a tipping point. The Nanshinron (Southern Expansion Doctrine) policy surfaced, and because of it, Japan's interest turned from Inner Mongolia region to the Pacific particularly to Southeast Asian region, resulting in a change in the geopolitical meaning of the Inner Mongolia Question.

Up to that point, the body of international situation regarding the East Asian region was absorbed as having a positive effect on the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement, but at this stage, it turned into negative. As a consequence of the establishment of the Mongolian Allied Autonomous Government, we can say that the international factor that contributed to the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement was heading toward a sluggish period. With the establishment of the “Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact”, we can say that the reason why Yosuke Matsuoka, the Japanese foreign minister, requested Soviet Union to accept Japan's sphere of influence in Mengjiang Region (including Western Inner Mongolia), was in fact due to the feeling that Japan did not want to get more involved in the Inner Mongolia Question.

To put it simply, the Nomonhan incident changed the geopolitical meaning of Inner Mongolian Question in international relations, and as a result, it is not an exaggeration to say that it sealed the fate of Inner Mongolia autonomy movement into failure. Conversely, the National liberation movement in Southeast Asian took its place and as a result, we can say, it led to its independence.

#### Chapter 7: Start of the Pacific War and the Japanese Government's Inner Mongolia Policies

This chapter deals with how Japan's policies towards Inner Mongolia were incorporated during the outburst of the Pacific War and the confusion that this war added to the international situation. The direct reason for the outburst of the Pacific War was the rupture of negotiations between Japan and the US but “the Uniqueness of Mengjiang Region” and the problem of securing “the Right to Station Troops” was also a reason. The Japanese side, the Japanese army in particular, insisted upon securing the continuation of stationing troops in the Mengjiang region and the last negotiations demanded an interval of 25 years for stationing the troops. For the Inner Mongolian autonomy movement, the mentioned 25 years was linked to the Mongolian Banners region's autonomy and its reconstruction but it led to plunge into war.

Later, after 1943, because of Japan's disadvantage in the battlefield, Japan had no other choice but to change its policies towards China and as a result the Treaty of Alliance between Japan and

China was finally concluded. The articles which were related to “the Uniqueness of the Mengjiang Region” and “the Right to Station Troops” in the Mengjiang Region which were part of the Treaty Concerning Basic Relations between Japan and China were eliminated as a result. The Mongolian Banners region’s advanced autonomy was eliminated as well and Wang Zhaoming administration’s emphasis on “Restoration of Sovereignty” and “Respect for Territorial Integrity” took its place. Once again, Wang Zhaoming’s contentions started being reflected in Japan’s policies vis-à-vis Inner Mongolia.

#### Conclusion: The Historical Significance of Mongolian Autonomous State

In the Conclusion, an overall analysis of this book is conducted and the historical significance of Mongolian Autonomous State in the modern history of Inner Mongolia is emphasized.

#### Addendum: “Nomadic Merchant Trade in the Grasslands” in the Prewar Period in Inner Mongolia

In the addendum, the topics regarding the Inner Mongolian society and the economic situations, which were left out in the main discourse are discussed in depth by focusing on “Nomadic Merchant Trade in the Grasslands” which was a special method of trading that thrived in the pre-war period of Mongolia.