# Chang Hsüeh-liang and the Japanese

AKIRA IRIYE

THE Nationalist unification of China was nominally completed on December 29, 1928. On that day Manchuria, under the leadership of Chang Hsüeh-liang, accepted and hoisted the Revolutionary flag. Historians have tended to emphasize the role of nationalism in the union of the Three Eastern Provinces with the Kuomintang domain after the death of Chang Tso-lin on June 4, 1928. According to the general view, Chang Hsüeh-liang, having grown up in the period of the May Fourth Movement, shared many of the national aspirations of the younger generation, and desired to stop civil warfare in China and assist the Kuomintang in the policy of unification. Moreover, he is represented as being violently hostile to Japan, suspicious of the Japanese in the killing of his father, and determined to put forth every effort to bring Manchuria and Nationalist China together, so that the unified nation could resist the ambitions of its imperialistic neighbor. Japan, under the "positive policy" of the Tanaka ministry, is pictured as attempting to keep the Three Eastern Provinces separate from the Nationalist South; to delay, if not halt, an eventual union.[1]

This broad account is only partially accurate. Chang Hsüeh-liang did express himself frequently in nationalistic terms.[2] He did suspect a Japanese plot in the explosion of his father's train.[3] And Japan did attempt to stop the union of Manchuria and the South. There are, however, certain difficulties in this picture. For one thing, direct Japanese pressure to keep Manchuria separate was confined to the months of July and August, whereas Manchuria did not become part of Nationalist China until the end of December. This time gap must somehow be explained. More important, the usual view glosses over the complex political conditions within China and Japan. It ignores the power struggle within the Three Eastern Provinces, the instability of the Nanking regime, and the diverse currents in Japanese foreign policy. My attempt here is to

The author is a Teaching Fellow in History, Harvard University.

Most relevant Chinese materials on this subject are unavailable to the historian, while Chinese, Japanese, and Western newspapers of the period covered by this article give unreliable and contradictory pictures of warlord politics and diplomacy. For this reason it is necessary to rely upon Japanese and American archives. I have used diplomatic and military sources listed in Cecil H. Uyehara, *Checklist of Archives in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (Washington, 1954), and John Young, *Checklist of Microfilm Reproductions of Selected Archives of the Japanese Army, Navy, and other Government Agencies* (Washington, 1959). I have used the document classifications adopted in these checklists. The State Department archives in Washington, D. C., abound in embassy and consular reports from China and Japan which supplement information obtained from Chinese and Japanese sources.

[1] The report of the Lytton Commission is a good example of this view. See its Ch. ii, sec. 2, and Ch. iii, sec. 2. Among secondary works see, for example, Paul H. Clyde, *The Far East,* 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1958), p. 546; G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, *A Short History of International Affairs,* 4th ed. (London, 1952), p. 253. A typical Chinese view is expressed by Wang Cho-jan, *Chang Hsüeh-liang* (Peiping, 1937), pp. 7–8.

[2] "The will of the Chinese people must be my will" was one of Chang's favorite expressions. See *China Weekly Review* (henceforth cited as *CWR*), August 28, 1928. (Henceforth all documents cited are dated 1928, unless otherwise noted.)

[3] Morishima Morito, *Imbō, ansatsu, guntō* [*Conspiracy, Assassination, Sword*] (Tokyo, 1950), p. 22.

take into account these difficulties and supplement the generally accepted picture of the union of Manchuria and Nationalist China.

It is possible to divide the interval between June 4 and December 29 into three periods: 1) from June 4 to the middle of July; 2) from the middle of July to the end of August; and 3) from the end of August to December 29. I shall show how, in each of these periods, Chang Hsüeh-liang dealt with the problem of union, and the role Nationalists and the Japanese played in his struggle to establish his own power.

The first period, immediately after the death of Chang Tso-lin, was characterized by an intense struggle for power, both within Manchuria and south of the Wall, in which Chang Hsüeh-liang was directly involved. The Young General was far from being the undisputed successor to the authority of his father. He was, to be sure, appointed military governor of Fengtien Province in the middle of June, and early in July assumed the office of Commander-in-Chief of Peace Preservation in the Three Eastern Provinces, the highest military office in Manchuria.[4] But the problems facing him were many. The three provinces had been united under the strong hand of Chang Tso-lin, but regional differences and personal cliques had existed here just as in the South. The military governor of each province, as well as the commander-in-chief of the Chinese Eastern Railway Guards Army, held sway over his own troops. Heilungkiang Province, which bordered Siberia, and Kirin Province, which had absorbed a majority of Chinese immigrants from south of the Wall, had developed different sympathies and interests from those of Fengtien Province.[5] There were indications that Kirin might proclaim independence under its military governor, Chang Tso-hsiang, or that both Kirin and Heilungkiang might join the South.[6] Even within Fengtien Province, Chang Hsüeh-liang had to reckon with the strength of Yang Yü-t'ing, the Old Marshal's chief of staff and director of the Mukden Arsenal. Many observers regarded the Young General as General Yang's puppet.[7] If the three provinces were to be unified under a single commander, Chang Tso-hsiang and Yang Yü-t'ing were equally as plausible candidates for the position as Chang Hsüeh-liang. In fact, it had at first been believed that Tupan Chang of Kirin Province, who was also a brother-in-law of the late Marshal, would be the next ruler of Manchuria.[8] It was only after he declined the appointment that Chang Hsüeh-liang was made commander-in-chief of the Three Eastern Provinces.[9]

Equally complicated was the situation in the South. It should be remembered that the military unification south of the Wall had not put an end to the existence of fac-

[4] The Fengtien Provincial Assembly elected him military governor on June 12, and six days later the appointment was confirmed by the Tayuanshuaifu, or the Office of the Generalissimo. On July 3 he was appointed commander-in-chief. On July 19, when the Peace Preservation Committee was created to replace the Associated Provincial Assembly of the Three Eastern Provinces, Chang was made its chairman.

[5] Hanson to Kellogg, June 15, the State Department Archives in the National Archives (henceforth NA) 893.00/10144. *CWR*, June 23.

[6] *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* (henceforth *Asahi*), June 16. Hanson to Kellogg above.

[7] *North China Herald* (henceforth *NCH*), June 23.

[8] Hsing Shih-lien and Yü Chen, the earliest peace negotiators with the South, believed that Manchuria should be unified with Chang Tso-hsiang as commander-in-chief. *Asahi*, June 22. See also Hanson to Johnson, NA 893.00/10166; *Nisshi Kōshō Gaishi [Inside History of Japanese-Chinese Relations]*, ed. Kokuryūkai [Black Dragon Society] (Tokyo, 1939), II, 373–374.

[9] It was reported in the press that Chang Hsüeh-liang himself persuaded Chang Tso-hsiang to accede to the position made vacant by the death of Chang Tso-lin. *Asahi*, June 25. Regarding some speculation as to why Chang Tso-hsiang refused the offer, see *Asahi*, June 25; *Kokuryūkai*, p. 374.

tions. On the contrary, the victory over the Ankuochun had been dependent upon the alliance of Kuomintang military leaders such as Chiang Kai-shek and Ho Ying-ch'in, and former warlords such as Feng Yü-hsiang, Yen Hsi-shan, and Li Chai-sum.[10] China was now divided into several political units, under their respective political councils, which were headed by these militarists. The Nanking government had effective control over only five provinces. As the American minister MacMurray reported, "While rendering lip service to the Nanking Government [the] Generals are as a rule only obeying such of its orders as suit their own interests. In general the present equilibrium is an unstable one and liable to be suddenly upset by any unexpected development."[11] Moreover, the Southern militarists were not agreed as to the best means of dealing with the Three Eastern Provinces. Feng Yü-hsiang and the Kwangsi generals, Li Tsung-jen and Pai Ch'ung-hsi, were said to be in favor of pushing the Nationalist victory northward, while Yen Hsi-shan and Chiang Kai-shek were inclined to terminate military action and arrive at a compromise with the leaders of Manchuria.[12]

Such was the situation in Manchuria and China following the death of Chang Tso-lin. Chang Hsüeh-liang's peace negotiations with the Nationalists must be understood within this context. At first Chang showed only moderate interest in the prospect of peace with the South. While things were still unsettled, a hasty action on his part might precipitate his own downfall. For one thing, Japan was at this time the only reliable support on which he could count. The Japanese military had early decided on a policy of backing the Young General as successor to his father.[13] Chang Hsüeh-liang, therefore, was anxious not to antagonize them by acting rashly in the matter of compromise with the South. Toward the end of June, after holding several conferences with Fengtien leaders, he was reported to have decided on a policy of friendship with Japan.[14] In early July he stated that it was imperative for the Three Eastern Provinces to arrive at some concrete understanding with Japan "in order to obtain their own independence."[15]

There were two other reasons why Chang Hsüeh-liang might at first be unable to take a definite position vis-à-vis the South. Manchurian leaders were divided between those who advocated a union with the Nationalists and those opposed to it. Two of his strongest rivals, Chang Tso-hsiang and Yang Yü-t'ing, were at this time in favor

---

[10] A good summary of the Southern military factions at this time is found in Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1928* (London, 1929), pp. 375–379.

[11] MacMurray to Kellogg, June 28, NA 893.00/10118.

[12] MacMurray to Kellogg, June 13, NA 893.00/10081, and July 3, NA 893.00/10127. It was Chiang and Yen that Hsing Shih-lien first saw in connection with a possible peace. *Asahi*, June 19.

[13] *Tanaka Giichi denki* [*The Biography of Tanaka Giichi*], ed. Takakura Tetsuichi, II (Tokyo, 1960) 958–959. See also the diary kept by the chief of staff of the Kwantung Army, in Usui Katsumi, "Chang Tso-lin bakushi no shinsō" ["The Truth about the Explosion and Death of Chang Tso-lin"], *Himerareta Shōwa-shi* [*A Secret History of the Showa Period*] (a special issue of the *Chisei* [*Intellect*], Tokyo, 1956), pp. 30–37. Some Japanese officers, however, especially among the advisory corps to the Fengtien Army, are said to have been in favor of establishing Yang Yü-t'ing as the next ruler of Manchuria. See Nashimoto Yūhei, *Chūgoku no naka no Nihonjin* [*Japanese in China*] (Tokyo, 1958), I, 21; Hirano Reiji, *Manshū no imbōsha* [*A Conspirator in Manuchuria*] (Tokyo, 1959), p. 91.

[14] Hayashi to Tanaka, June 26, PVM 52. The document classification PVM stands for the papers of Matsumoto Tadao, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs during 1937–1939, which contain copies of original diplomatic despatches.

[15] Mukden Intelligence Officer to Hata, July 4, T 845, and July 6, T 845.

of an early compromise with the Nanking regime and of resisting Japanese pressure on Manchuria in unity with the South.[16] At the same time, there was the "old school," represented by men like Yüan Chin-k'ai, later vice-chairman of the Committee for Peace Preservation, who cautioned against playing into the hands of the Southern militarists and emphasized the need of first stabilizing the internal conditions and maintaining good relations with Japan.[17] Chang Hsüeh-liang, whose authority was dependent on the equilibrium of all the factions in Manchuria, could not readily identify himself with either the new school or the old school.[18] Secondly, the instability of the Kuomintang impeded a North-South compromise. As Chang himself stated to the press, "the main difficulty in the way of an amicable agreement was that the Nationalists had no definite proposals to offer, their attitude changing from day to day according to whose influence dominated."[19] Moreover, should Feng Yü-hsiang gain control of the Nationalist government, as appeared probable, Chang Hsüeh-liang and his Manchuria would be relegated to a position of insignificance in a unified China.[20]

These very obstacles, however, gradually transformed themselves in such a way as to cause Chang Hsüeh-liang to become more and more drawn to the idea of settlement with the Nationalists. Within the Three Eastern Provinces, advocates of peace grew steadily in strength and popularity, and memorials poured in from citizens of Manchuria, ardently requesting the raising of the Revolutionary flag.[21] On July 16 Chang saw Hayashi, the Japanese consul-general at Mukden, and told him, "as a personal friend," that the officials in provincial governments and assemblies were inclined toward accepting the Three People's Principles. If he refused their demand, Chang said, "he would be in a very embarrassing position, and might perhaps be forced to resign."[22]

If the internal conditions of Manchuria gradually disposed Chang Hsüeh-liang to a settlement with the South, the unstable conditions there also suggested the advantage of such a peace. He might play a role in Nationalist politics and ally himself with some generals against others. With an apparently growing rift between Feng Yü-hsiang on the one hand and Chiang Kai-shek and Yen Hsi-shan on the other, Chang Hsüeh-liang was in a position to bargain for a profitable alliance with the latter against Feng. Such a scheme, which Chang was already contemplating in early July, would not only safeguard Manchuria against possible attack from Feng Yü-hsiang, but would also be highly useful for General Chiang's Nanking government. If the alliance was successfully consummated, it would be advertised as Chang Hsüeh-liang's peace, and his power and prestige would be enhanced accordingly.[23]

In this connection, the terms of peace Chang offered are highly suggestive.[24] He

---

[16] *NCH*, June 23. Saitō to Hata, July 4, T 845, and July 6, T 845.

[17] Mukden Intelligence Officer to Hata, July 3, T 845.

[18] *Asahi*, July 17.

[19] *Kuowen choupao* (henceforth *KWCP*), June 24.

[20] MacMurray to Kellogg, July 3, NA 893.00/10127.

[21] The Kwantung Army attributed the growth of peace sentiments to the machinations of Yang Yü-t'ing and his clique. Saitō to Hata, July 6, T 845. A memorial from Kirin educationists is printed in *KWCP*, July 15.

[22] Hayashi to Tanaka, July 16, PVM 53.

[23] Mukden Intelligence Officer to Hata, July 6, T 845. MacMurray to Kellogg, June 28, NA 893.00/10118. *NCH*, July 21.

[24] It is difficult to determine precisely what terms were offered at which time. Those mentioned here,

was to be head of a Manchurian political council which would be established as the central organ of the Three Eastern Provinces. After the unification, the Nationalist government was not to interfere with Manchuria's political and military appointments. No Kuomintang branches or propaganda organs were to be established in the three provinces. Finally, Jehol Special District, over which the Peking Political Council had taken control, was to be incorporated into Manchuria as a fourth Eastern Province. When these conditions were met, the Nationalist flag was to be accepted north of the Wall.

After a series of negotiations the Nationalists apparently gave in to all these demands, and it was reported in the press that the Revolutionary flag would be raised in Manchuria on or around July 22.[25] Just at this juncture, however, new developments in Sino-Japanese relations necessitated a suspension in the peace arrangements. Japan suddenly and formally warned Chang Hsüeh-liang against joining the South, and the Nationalist government unilaterally abrogated the existing commercial treaty between China and Japan. Thus we enter the second period, which begins in the middle of July and lasts roughly till the end of August.

On July 7, the Kuomintang government issued a mandate declaring its intention to replace all "unequal treaties" with new arrangements. The declaration was communicated to the Japanese government on July 13. The Sino-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1896 was to expire on July 20, and all negotiations for its revision had been a failure. Consequently, it was expected in Tokyo that the Nanking government would unilaterally terminate the treaty when the time came. The anticipated happened. On July 19 the Nationalists communicated a note to the Japanese minister at Peking, abrogating the treaty of commerce.[26]

On the very same day the Japanese consul-general at Mukden warned Chang Hsüeh-liang against hastily accepting the Southern flag and thereby permitting the infiltration of extremists. If he heeded this advice and persisted in the policy of neutrality and preservation of peace within the borders of Manchuria, Japan was willing "to consider sympathetically measures to strengthen his position." This advice was given by the specific direction of Prime Minister Tanaka.[27] Toward the end of July, Tanaka elaborated his China and Manchuria policy to Baron Hayashi, who was leaving for Mukden to attend the funeral of Chang Tso-lin as a personal representative of the Japanese premier.[28] Tanaka said that his wish was to make Manchuria the most advanced and safest area in China, where Japanese as well as foreigners could engage in business under the principles of the open door and equal opportunity. For

---

however, were constantly reported in diplomatic and military despatches and in the press throughout June and July. For details see Hayashi to Tanaka, June 26, PVM 52, and July 9, PVM 52, and July 16, PVM 53; MacMurray to Kellogg, July 3, NA 893.00/10127; Myers to Kellogg, July 6, NA 893.00/10168; *KWCP*, July 29; *NCH*, June 30 and July 7; *Asahi*, July 5, July 9, July 17, July 19, and July 20.

[25] *KWCP*, July 29. *Asahi*, July 19 and July 20. I have not been able to trace the authenticity of these reports in the Japanese or the American archives. It is possible that no definite conditions of peace had been worked out when the Japanese warning came. The Chinese and Manuchurian officials concerned, however, affirmed that a final accord had been reached by around July 20. The American consul at Mukden reported that the peace negotiations were probably "on the point of being completed—it has been stated that they were 97% completed—when the Japanese 'advice' was given." (Myers to Kellogg, July 27, NA 893.00 PR Mukden/10).

[26] *Asahi*, July 17–20.

[27] Tanaka to Hayashi, July 18, PVM 53. Hayashi to Tanaka, July 19, PVM 53.

[28] The memorandum of conversation as well as Tanaka's written instructions to Hayashi are in Yoshida to Hayashi, July 31, PVM 53.

this purpose "communistic elements" must be excluded from this region and the influx of Kuomintang influence prevented. If Chang Hsüeh-liang would concentrate on maintaining order within the Three Eastern Provinces, Japan could provide him with advisors and other measures of assistance. Baron Hayashi accordingly delivered Tanaka's message to Chang on August 8.[29]

It was not an accident that the Japanese intervention in Manchurian affairs occurred simultaneously with the Nationalist abrogation of the treaty.[30] From the point of view of the Tanaka ministry, the treaty-rejecting South was not proving itself "capable of affording adequate protection of life and property." Under the circumstances, "it would be extremely unfortunate if the chaotic conditions which prevailed in other parts of China should extend to Manchuria." The rights and interests of Japan would then be subjected to the onslaught of irresponsible anti-foreignism. This was why Japan could not countenance the union of Manchuria and the South at this time.[31] On the other hand, the possibility of losing the Three Eastern Provinces might cause the Nationalists to modify their uncompromising stand regarding Japanese treaties.[32]

Here were merged the two distinguishable goals of traditional Japanese policy toward China—economic expansion through legitimate means and paramount interest in Manchuria as distinct from the rest of China. The military had always emphasized the second policy and regarded Manchuria as a separate domain, an "outer zone" of Japan.[33] Japanese diplomats and consuls in China, on the other hand, had been more interested in the first policy, namely safeguarding Japan's economic interests through existing treaty rights. As long as these rights were respected and legitimate business activities protected, it did not matter much who controlled Manchuria, or whether Manchuria was part of China.[34]

The so-called "positive policy" of the Tanaka ministry was ambiguous, and its implications were never very clear.[35] To the Japanese military in China it did mean an

---

[29] Hayashi to Tanaka, August 8, PVM 53.

[30] Many contemporary observers saw the connection clearly. *KWCP,* July 29. Shimizu to Tanaka, August 21, PVM 53. Toynbee, p. 381, footnote 1. Neville to Kellogg, August 14, NA 793.94 Manchuria/29.

[31] The quotations are from the statement made by Tanaka to representatives of foreign governments on July 25. Neville to Kellogg, July 25, NA 793.94 Manuchuria/20.

[32] As early as June 13, the American consul at Mukden had foreseen that "unless the Nationalist Government . . . comes to an agreement over certain important issues, such as railroad construction . . . and others, an independent government [in Manuchuria] under Japanese protection will very likely be the outcome." (Myers to Kellogg, June 13, NA 893.00/10135).

[33] Excellent examples of this view can be found in Ugaki Kazushige, *Ugaki nikki* [*Ugaki Diary*] (Tokyo, 1954), pp. 108–116, and Saitō Tsune, "Shina kyūkoku saku" ["A Plan for Saving China"] (a memorandum written in 1927), in Usui, p. 31.

[34] There are a number of biographies of and autobiographies by Japanese diplomats, which illustrate these attitudes. For example, *Obata Yūkichi* (Tokyo, 1957); Yoshizawa Kenkichi, *Gaikō rokujū nen* [*Sixty Years of Diplomacy*] (Tokyo, 1958); Horiuchi Kanjō, *Chūgoku no arashi no naka de* [*In the Storms of China*] (Tokyo, 1950); and *Shidehara Kijūrō* (Tokyo, 1955).

[35] The term "positive policy" seems to have been employed primarily for political purposes by the Seiyukai Party. See *Tanaka Giichi,* II, 640–665. The diplomatic despatches from Tokyo to Washington show that the American embassy staff failed to discern anything "positive" in Tanaka's China policy throughout 1927. The military attaché wrote, for example, in September 1927, "Just what is meant by the Tanaka Ministry in the phrase 'a positive policy toward China,' is not precisely known. Apparently it can mean nothing more than the construction of a few well-known feeding lines to the South Manchuria Railway, the practical establishment of the right to lease land in Manchuria . . . , and the objection to the construction of certain Chinese railways that would parallel the South Manuchuria Railway." (Burnett to the Military Intelligence Division, the War Department, September 15, 1927, NA 894.00/261).

independent Manchuria.[36] Immediately after the death of Chang Tso-lin, which they themselves had caused in the hope of making this area more subservient to Japan,[37] they were unanimous in insisting on the wisdom and necessity of separating Manchuria from the rest of China. The chief of staff of the Kwantung Army, the military attaché at Peking, and advisers to the Fengtien Army all urged the War Ministry in Tokyo to carry out the "spirit of the Eastern Conference" with determination and force.[38] Prime Minister Tanaka himself had been a strong believer in a peaceful Manchuria under Japanese guidance. But his China policy was also influenced by the views of professional diplomats. By the middle of June, Consul-General Hayashi at Mukden had already felt that Manchuria would inevitably come under the Nationalist flag. Therefore, he wrote to Tokyo advising his government to study policy alternatives to be followed in such an eventuality.[39] On July 16 he stated that Japan should promise to support Chang Hsüeh-liang even after the latter came under the Nationalist regime, if Chang were willing to adhere to treaty stipulations regarding railroad and other Japanese rights.[40] Minister Yoshizawa at Peking expressed his complete agreement with this view.[41]

Tanaka was moved by all these ideas. He was at first opposed to taking any forceful measures in Manchuria, and repeatedly warned the military against unnecessarily irritating the Fengtien leaders.[42] But when the Nationalist intention of repudiating the treaty became clear beyond doubt, he adopted a policy of direct pressure upon Chang Hsüeh-liang. In this sense the shift toward active interference in the middle of July was a warning, not only to Chang, but also to the Nanking government.

Chang Hsüeh-liang's attitude during this period showed that he was still trying to consolidate his position in Manchuria. He continued the policy of prevarication, of waiting and seeing without committing himself to any uncompromising position. He talked softly both to the Japanese and to the Nationalists, thereby following the policy of "autonomy and compromise."[43] When Consul-General Hayashi saw him on July 19, Chang asked if Japan would intimate to Chiang Kai-shek that a North-South compromise would not be acceptable to her. When this was refused, he asked if it would be all right for him to telegraph General Chiang that a peace agreement could not be concluded because of Japanese opposition.[44] The next day Chang desired to see the commander-in-chief of the Kwantung Army in secret, and the meeting took place at the South Manchuria Railway office at Mukden. Chang Hsüeh-liang bitterly lamented that all conditions, in Manuchuria as well as in the South, conspired against him. Consequently, he said, he could not resist a further rapprochement with the

[36] Hirano, pp. 70–74.

[37] Usui's article above. Hirano, pp. 72–100. Paul A. Dull, "The Assassination of Chang Tso-lin," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, XI (August 1952).

[38] Saitō to Hata, June 7, T 861, and July 16, T 845. Tatekawa to Hata, June 13, T 864, and June 25, T 864, and July 6, T 845. The "Eastern Conference" referred, of course, to the meetings of diplomatic and military personnel at the inception of the Tanaka ministry (June–July 1927) to decide on concrete issues of China policy.

[39] Hayashi to Tanaka, June 20, PVM 53.

[40] Hayashi to Tanaka, July 16, PVM 53.

[41] Yoshizawa to Tanaka, July 17, PVM 53.

[42] Hata to Saitō, July 4, T 845, and July 14, T 845. Shirakawa to Muraoka, June 6, T 844.

[43] This phrase was used by Cheng Ch'ien, Chang Hsüeh-liang's chief secretary, as he was interviewed by the president of the Japanese *Peking Weekly* in early August. Washizawa Yoshiji, "Shina o mokugeki shite" ["Witnessing China"], *Peking Weekly* (henceforth *PW*), September 23.

[44] Hayashi to Tanaka, July 19, PVM 53.

Nationalists unless he resorted to a coup d'état, which he might do with Japanese military assistance. He wondered if Japan could not influence Southern attitude in order to ease the situation. Finally, he hoped that Japanese forces would remain in Mukden to protect him from an unforeseeable danger.[45] The following day, on July 21, Chang inquired if Japan could help him by suppressing Kuomintang agents in the Kwantung Leased Territory who were disturbing the peace and order of Manchuria.[46] At the meeting of the Peace Preservation Committee on July 25, it was decided temporarily to suspend compromise talks with the South. Meanwhile, Chang Hsüeh-liang sent his secretary to Japan to talk over the situation with Tanaka and the government personnel.[47] When Baron Hayashi saw him in August, Chang intimated that he could not act against "public opinion" in the matter of compromise with the Nationalists. However, he said, he fully recognized the necessity of protecting Japanese treaty rights in Manchuria.[48] Finally, at the meeting of the Peace Preservation Committee on August 10, it was decided to postpone negotiations with the South for three months.[49]

Meanwhile, Chang Hsüeh-liang had telegraphed the Nationalist authorities that he sincerely desired an early union but that some delay in that direction was inevitable due to new "diplomatic developments."[50] In response Chiang Kai-shek bitterly attacked the Japanese intervention and urged Chang immediately to accept the Revolutionary flag and the Three People's Principles.[51] In early August, General Chiang was reported to have promised that the Nationalists would not meddle with Jehol if the Three Eastern Provinces consented to the hoisting of the flag.[52] In the middle of the month Chang Hsüeh-liang sent Hsing Shih-lien and others to Nanking and Shanghai to talk with Chiang Kai-shek, T'an Yen-k'ai, and Yen Hsi-shan. They were soon engaged in peace negotiations, despite the decision of August 10. Also around this time, Chang asked Pai Ch'ung-hsi to exterminate the remnants of the former Ankuochun who, along the Luan River south of the Wall, were still clamoring for war against the Southern "Reds."

In this way, while relations between Tokyo and Nanking entered a moment of crisis, Chang Hsüeh-liang managed not only to weather the storm but also to keep the door open for a future settlement with the South. During this period, the struggle between the "old" and the "new" schools in Manchuria continued to be intense, the latter under Yang Yü-t'ing constantly pressing for an immediate union with the

---

[45] Muraoka to Suzuki, July 21, PVM 53. It is not improbable that the commander-in-chief of the Kwantung Army was somewhat exaggerating Chang's helpless situation, in thus reporting his interview. Muraoka was for setting up the Young General as the ruler of Manchuria, separate from the South, and needed to play down the latter's pro-Southern inclinations, if there were any. In view of the existence of similar records of various interviews, I believe that this document correctly conveys Chang Hsüeh-liang's sentiments.

[46] Hayashi to Tanaka, July 21, PVM 53. *Asahi*, July 21.

[47] *Asahi*, July 24, July 26, July 28, and August 3.

[48] Hayashi to Tanaka, August 9, PVM 53.

[49] Hayashi to Tanaka, August 10 and 11, PVM 53. The Japanese political conditions may have provided an added incentive for this decision. The opposition Minseito party, momentarily stiffened its attitude toward the Nationalists when one of its leading members, Tokonami, dissatisfied with its peaceful policy toward China, left the party on August 1. *Tanaka Giichi*, II, 964.

[50] *KWCP*, August 5. Some observers believed that Japan's warning was a godsend to Chang who could use it as a pretext for delaying action. *KWCP*, August 5.

[51] Hayashi to Tanaka, July 23, PVM 53.

[52] Hayashi to Tanaka, August 9, PVM 53.

Nationalists.[53] Chang's policy of waiting was, under the circumstances, the only course he could follow in order to maintain his own position within the Three Eastern Provinces. He could be induced to take a more definite stand only when the Japanese pressure was somewhat eased, or when political conditions south and north of the Wall persuaded him of the advantage of such an action. This was the situation in our third period, beginning roughly at the beginning of September.

Japan's policy of active interference had been a dismal failure. It had simply caused renewed economic boycotts throughout China,[54] aroused the suspicions of the powers,[55] and invited severe criticisms from political opponents at home.[56] In early October, moreover, Prime Minister Tanaka was definitely apprised of Japanese implication in the death of Chang Tso-lin.[57] All these developments made the Japanese government unwilling to employ force to prevent a further settlement between North and South. Consequently, the Tanaka ministry reverted to emphasizing the necessity of safeguarding Japan's treaty rights and interests. In this process, while negotiations were resumed between the Manchurian and Japanese authorities regarding the railway and other issues, Japan was forced more and more to turn to the Nanking government. The latter was being recognized as the *de facto* or the *de jure* government of China by an increasing number of nations, and Tanaka feared Japan's diplomatic isolation unless she followed suit.[58] The Nationalists, on their part, seemed somewhat to soften their stand on unequal treaties. As early as the middle of August, Chiang Kai-shek had intimated that the Nanking regime would recognize Japan's special position in Manchuria so long as she did not entertain any territorial ambitions.[59] In late September, Chiang sent his personal representative to Tokyo to express his willingness to resume discussions on outstanding problems between the two nations.[60] At about this time the Japanese government drafted its "Directives for the solution of Manchurian problems."[61] In these instructions it was indicated that Japan might negotiate such issues as land lease and railway construction in Manchuria with the Nationalist government, should the latter be willing to do so. Relations between Nanking and Tokyo were slowly taking a turn for the better.

Despite the easing of tension between China and Japan, however, a North-South

---

[53] This pressure of Yang and the pro-South faction was believed to have provoked a strong anti-Yang sentiment in Mukden toward the end of August, and also to resistance to a hasty union. *PW*, September 2.

[54] C. F. Remer, *A Study of Chinese Boycotts* (Baltimore, 1933), Ch. xi.

[55] Toynbee, p. 381, footnote 2. The American counsul-general at Mukden believed that the real desire behind Japanese intervention "obviously is creation of an autonomous state under Japanese influence." (MacMurray to Kellogg, July 31, NA 793.94 Manchuria/21).

[56] *Asahi*, July 22, 23, 25, etc.

[57] *Tanaka Giichi*, II, 1027–1030.

[58] One expression of Tanaka's effort to avoid diplomatic isolation was the sending of Uchida Yasuya to Europe and the United States in late August and September. While Uchida's ostensible mission was the signing of the Paris Peace Pact, he was instructed to talk with the various governments to explain Japan's position vis-à-vis Manchuria and Nationalist China. The instruction is printed in *Nihon gaikō nempyō narabi shuyō bunsho* [*Chronology and Main Documents of Japanese Diplomacy*] (Tokyo, 1955), II, 117–119.

[59] Okamoto to Tanaka, August 15, PVM 53.

[60] *Asahi*, October 13. MacVeagh to Kellogg, October 20, NA 793.94 Manchuria/41. In the middle of October, Tanaka was apprised that Chiang Kai-shek was willing to negotiate the solution of Manuchurian problems with Japan. The premier immediately despatched the chief of the Asia Bureau of the Foreign Office. Although this mission was a failure, it indicated Tanaka's willingness to approach the Nationalists. Arita Hachirō, *Bakahachi to hito wa yū* [*People Call Me Foolish Hachi*] (Tokyo, 1959), pp. 47–49.

[61] Tanaka to Hayashi, September 24, PVM 23.

compromise did not materialize until the end of December. Disagreements had steadily grown among the Nationalist leaders after the fifth plenary conference of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee convened in early August. Chiang Kai-shek seemed to antagonize the Wang Ching-wei and the Kwangsi factions and to ally himself with the Western Hill and other "conservative" cliques. As Chang Hsüeh-liang's peace delegates reported back these developments south of the Wall, Chang and his supporters in Manchuria were induced to be cautious in their attitude regarding union. They desired to avoid being involved in factional warfare and to observe the trends of Southern politics.[62]

Nevertheless, Chang Hsüeh-liang could not long persist in this passive policy. Within Manchuria the influence of Yang Yü-t'ing and Chang Tso-hsiang was, if anything, growing; and it became imperative for Chang Hsüeh-liang to ally himself with the Nanking government under Chiang Kai-shek.[63] The latter, on his part, in order to obtain Chang's adherence to his camp, was willing to offer attractive terms of peace. On October 3, the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang appointed Chang Hsüeh-liang a member of the State Council at Nanking, which was to be composed of sixteen members and act as the highest authority during the period of "tutelage" in the Nationalist revolution.[64] At the same time, Chiang Kai-shek wrote Chang urging him to accept the appointment and promising him the position of chairman of the Manchurian Government Council which was to be organized.[65] Chang Hsüeh-liang consented, and his delegates proceeded to put forth their effort to reach a final agreement with the Nationalists under the best possible terms. The main points of negotiation were, as in July, the mode of appointment to reorganized political offices in Manchuria and the future of Jehol.[66] With respect to the virtual political autonomy of the Three Eastern Provinces, Chang succeeded in having the Nationalists agree to the principle that all the members of the Manchurian Government Council, as well as the top officials of the three provinces, should be appointed in Manchuria. Regarding the establishment of local Kuomintang branches, it was decided that Manchuria should send a group of observers to Nanking to study Party affairs and then return and open local branches. The Jehol problem was solved by a compromise: it was to be made into a fourth Eastern Province under the Manchurian administration; but its political council was to include Nationalist appointees as well as those appointed by Jehol and Manchuria.

With these conditions settled, Manchuria became politically unified with the rest of China on December 29. Chang Hsüeh-liang did not inform the Japanese of this action, "being afraid of incurring public accusation."[67] This time, however, no hysterical protest was made by Japan. Tanaka simply warned that should Japanese treaty

---

[62] Myers to Kellogg, October 6, NA 893.00 PR Mukden/15, and November 9, NA 893.00 PR Mukden/17.

[63] Myers to Kellogg, December 24, NA 893.00 PR Mukden/19. *Shina ḳindai no seiji ḳeizai* [*Political and Economic Conditions in Recent China*], ed. Nikka Jitsugyō Kyōkai [the Business Association of China and Japan] (Tokyo, 1931), p. 580.

[64] It is noticeable that the Wang Ching-wei and the Kwangsi factions were excluded from the State Council.

[65] South Manchuria Railway President's Office to the Tokyo Office, October 18, PVM 52.

[66] Regarding the peace negotiations during this period, see Hayashi to Tanaka, December 8, PVM 52; Okamoto to Tanaka, December 19, PVM 52; Myers to Kellogg, January 7, 1929, NA 793.94 Manchuria/48; *Asahi*, December 17; and *KWCP*, October 17 and November 18.

[67] Hayashi to Tanaka, December 31, PVM 53.

rights be ignored in the future and order disrupted in Manchuria, Japan would be compelled to take "resolute action."[68] Edwin Neville, American chargé in Tokyo, correctly gauged the situation when he reported to Washington,

> Judging from the slight interest which the raising of the flag has apparently created in Japan, it would seem that the Japanese had come to regard it as inevitable. If they do not regard it as not necessarily inimical to their interests, at least they seem to realize that further opposition in this direction would only increase antagonism without advantage to Japan, at a time when promotion of negotiations with the Nanking Government is urgently desired.[69]

In this rough sketch of the three stages of the Manchurian-Nationalist peace, I have tried to show that the simplistic account which is usually given needs to be modified. Chang Hsüeh-liang was a young militarist who sought desperately to establish and maintain his own power within Manchuria and to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the rest of China. In this struggle for power he was willing to grasp at any means, Japanese or Nationalist, which he could utilize at an opportune moment. He was a nationalist in the sense that all warlords and militarists had become nationalists. But nationalism expressed itself through the medium of a power struggle—it was only one aspect of his quest for power. By virtue of having become a Nationalist, Chang could now expect to play a role in Chinese military politics.

Equally striking was the lack of a unified front in Japanese policy. The Tanaka government, pursuing now one and then another strand of the traditional Japanese policy toward China and Manchuria, ultimately gained nothing and reconciled itself to the inevitability of the Nationalist unification.

In this perspective, the union of Manchuria and Nationalist China takes on a new meaning. It meant, not the "unification of China" as a nation, but rather an alliance—a bargain on the part of Chang Hsüeh-liang. It meant not the failure of Tanaka's "positive policy" but the result of a shift in Japanese strategy. But the experience of these seven months had a lasting significance for both Chang Hsüeh-liang and the Japanese. Having witnessed the contradictory fronts presented by the Japanese military and civil officials, Chang was beginning to believe that the Japanese threat was never consistent. The union of December 29 gave him a convenient pretext to transfer the thorny issue of Japanese rights to the central government. The Japanese military in China, on the other hand, having been exasperated by the shifting diplomacy of the Tanaka ministry, wondered if their independent action would not really be necessary if they were to achieve anything permanent in Manchuria.

[68] Tanaka to Hayashi, December 30, PVM 53.
[69] Neville to Kellogg, January 12, 1929, NA 793.94 Manchuria/49.