



SINO-JAPANESE STUDIES

Volume 16 (2009), Article 8

<http://chinajapan.org/articles/16/8>

Mizuno Norihito 水野智仁. “Qing China's Reaction to the 1874 Japanese Expedition to the Taiwanese Aboriginal Territories” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 16 (2009), article 8.

Abstract: Mizuno Norihito reexamines the Qing diplomatic and military responses to the Japanese expedition to Taiwan in 1874. The article begins with a close evaluation of the skepticism of Qing officials in the face of warnings of an impending Japanese expedition, and efforts by them to solicit the aid and pressure of Western governments against Japan. Mizuno then reviews the progress of the negotiations between the Japanese envoys, including Ōkubo Toshimichi, Qing officials such as Li Hongzhang, and British mediators that led to a diplomatic resolution to the crisis.

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Qing China's Reaction to the 1874 Japanese Expedition to the Taiwanese Aboriginal Territories

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Introduction

Japan launched an expedition against the aboriginal territories of Taiwan in April 1874. The Japanese government claimed that the expedition was a punitive military action against Taiwanese tribes who had committed atrocities against Japanese subjects. The first case of atrocities occurred when the shipwrecked residents of the Ryukyu Islands were massacred by the Taiwanese aborigines in December 1871. The new Japanese imperial regime, established after the Tokugawa bakufu was overthrown in 1868, had hoped to claim Japanese territorial sovereignty over these islands in accordance with international law, which had recently been introduced by the West. The second case followed in 1873, when some shipwrecked fishermen from the Oda 小田 Prefecture (part of present-day Okayama 岡山 Prefecture) were maltreated by Taiwanese aborigines. Qing China had not anticipated the Japanese invasion of the aboriginal territories, and Sino-Japanese relations, which had been formally established by treaty in 1871, were plunged into a crisis.

The Qing response to the Japanese invasion of Taiwan has been the subject of many previous studies. The most detailed of these are the works by Sophia Su-fei Yen and Fujii Shizue, yet both are far from complete.¹ Yen's lengthy narrative of the details of the Sino-Japanese negotiations makes no evaluative argument regarding the Qing actions that were taken to deal with the Japanese invasion and the Sino-Japanese dispute. Fujii pays considerable attention to the responses of the local Qing officials in Fujian Province—Taiwan's administrative region—to the Japanese invasion, but does not adequately cover those of other Qing officials. Other studies are not as comprehensive as those of Yen and Fujii, and their evaluations of the Qing treatment of the crisis thus tend to be based on limited observations of partial aspects of the Qing countermeasures. Furthermore, previous studies have proposed conflicting views of the Qing diplomatic and military countermeasures. Sun Cheng, for example, regards the responses of the Zongli Yamen 總理衙門 and Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823-1901) to the Japanese invasion as "idle," "weak," and "concessive";² Shi Peihua condemns the Qing for not taking firmer measures against the Japanese invaders; while, regarding Sino-Japanese negotiations in Beijing, Ishii Takashi states that the Zongli Yamen was "incompetent" and "idle."³ However, these critical views have not won unanimous support from other scholars.⁴ Huang Dashou does not regard the Qing attitude toward the Japanese as weak.⁵ Reflecting on Li Hongzhang's response to the Japanese invasion, Kim Key-hiuk

¹ Sophia Su-fei Yen, *Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations 1836-1874*; Fujii Shizue, *Jindai Zhong-Ri guanxi shi yuanqi: 1871-74-nian Taiwan shijian*.

² Sun Cheng, "Yibaqisi nian Riben qinlüe Taiwan shulun," *Liaoning daxue xuebao* 3 (1983), p. 91.

³ Ishii Takashi, *Meiji shoki no Nihon to Higashi Ajia*, p. 110.

⁴ Shi Peihua, "Li Hongzhang yu Kindai Zhongri Waijiao," in *Li Hongzhang yu Zhongguo jindaihua*, p. 239.

⁵ Huang Dashou, *Taiwan shigang*, p. 187.

finds him to be pragmatic and realistic.⁶ Fujii takes a more balanced view, and shows both positive and negative aspects of the actions of Qing officials, mostly regarding local officials' treatment of the Japanese invasion of Taiwan.

This article reexamines the Qing diplomatic and military responses to the Japanese expedition and makes the following arguments. First, the Chinese actions taken and policies formed to deal with the Japanese invasion of Taiwan need to be examined and evaluated taking into account their treatment of the Taiwan issue before 1874. A narrow focus that looks only at the Chinese actions in 1874 does not aid an understanding of why Qing officials, especially the Zongli Yamen, behaved as they did when they faced the Japanese invasion of Taiwan that year. Qing China's pre-1874 treatment of the Taiwan issue disadvantageously conditioned its response to the Japanese invasion. Second, the Qing officials' occasionally slow and insufficient responses to the Japanese invasion have to be critically evaluated. Especially during the early stages, their responses to the news of a Japanese planned expedition to the aboriginal territories will inevitably carry an impression of laxness, in comparison to Li Hongzhang's more prompt response, for example. Third, all of the Chinese actions that were taken to deal with the Japanese invasion do not necessarily deserve severe condemnation, much less unreserved praise. While the Qing officials cannot be free from criticism that they exhibited idleness or weakness, these are not the only terms that characterize Chinese diplomatic and military countermeasures to the Japanese invasion. Qing officials carried out a variety of diplomatic and military measures to deal with the crisis caused by the unexpected Japanese invasion. Their weakness in terms of Chinese military inferiority prevented them from taking up arms, but this should not necessarily be regarded as evidence of faintheartedness when one considers that their view of the situation was shared by influential Westerners in China. The final concessions made to the Japanese were certainly humiliating. However, this does not necessarily prove the validity of the condemnatory opinions voiced above, given that China had to deal with the Japanese invasion under unfavorable conditions caused not only by their own pre-1874 actions, but also by the international environment at that time.

The Zongli Yamen and the Soejima Mission in 1873

Cries for a punitive expedition against the Taiwanese aborigines who had maltreated and massacred shipwrecked Ryukyu sailors in December 1871 began to rise within the Japanese government in late 1872.⁷ Those who were interested in an overseas military campaign were supportive for different reasons. Some were in favor of the planned expedition because of their concern for Japan's national prestige and security. Among these, those from Satsuma 薩摩—who had exerted influence over the Ryukyus since its military conquest in 1609—thought that chastising the Taiwanese aborigines was necessary to demonstrate Japanese sovereignty over the southern archipelago kingdom, thus terminating its dual subordination to both China and Japan. Those Japanese leaders who were apprehensive about the safety of their country also believed that they needed to prevent Western seizure of the Taiwanese aboriginal territories, whose legal status had been under question among some Westerners, by seizing the land in advance. Some hoped that the expedition would ease mounting discontent among the ex-samurai, especially those in the military, toward the new Meiji

⁶ Kim Kei-hiuk, "The Aims of Li Hung-chang's Politics toward Japan and Korea, 1870-1882," in *Li Hung-chang and China's Early Modernization*, p. 150.

⁷ *The Archives of the Japanese Navy Ministry* (hereafter, JN-R), JN-R34-F44843; Kabayama Aisuke, *Chichi Kabayama Sukenori*, p. 184.

regime. This point of view held that the explosive domestic unrest was crucially connected to Japan's national survival, which they believed depended in turn on the new regime's stability and success in modernization.⁸

Immediate execution of the plan was hampered, however, by the objections and hesitation of others, and the Japanese government decided to dispatch a diplomatic envoy to China. Opponents of the expedition were not convinced of Japan's ability to carry out the overseas campaign, and they also questioned the supposed absence of Chinese sovereignty over the aboriginal territories.⁹ The formal mission that was given to the envoy, which was led by Foreign Minister Soejima Taneomi 副島種臣 (1828-1905), was the ratification of the 1871 Sino-Japanese Treaty and an audience with the Tongzhi 同治 Emperor (r. 1861-75). The underlying mission that the envoy carried, however, was to clarify the legal status of the aboriginal territories.¹⁰ Soejima left Japan in mid-March 1873 and arrived in Beijing in early May.¹¹

The meeting between the Soejima mission and the Zongli Yamen produced crucial results for both countries. In the middle of the arduous negotiations with the Qing dynasty about the audience with Emperor Tongzhi, on June 21, Soejima dispatched members of his entourage, Yanagihara Sakimitsu 柳原前光 (1850-94) and Tei Einei 鄭永寧 (1829-97), to the Yamen to discuss the issue of the Taiwanese aboriginal territories. Yanagihara stated that the Chinese "had no jurisdiction over the aboriginal territories" (*doban no chi e wa mattaku seiken o shikyū sezu* 土蕃之地へハ全ク政權ヲ施及セス), and notified the Yamen ministers, Dong Xun 薰恂 (1807-92), Mao Changxi 毛昶熙 (1817-82), and Sun Shida 孫士達 of the plan to dispatch expeditionary forces there. However, Yanagihara's reference to the Ryukyu shipwreck incident as being a pretext for the expedition caused some discussion. The Yamen ministers stated that they had been informed of the massacre of the Ryukyuan, who had been subordinated to China, but not of any massacre of the Japanese. After claiming that the Ryukyus belonged to Japan, and that it was thus under an obligation to protect the islanders as Japanese subjects, Yanagihara shifted the topic to the Taiwan issue.¹²

The Japanese diplomatic document contains the following story. When Yanagihara raised a question about the Chinese treatment of the aboriginal territories, the Yamen ministers replied that there were two kinds of aborigines: those called "ripe barbarians" (*jukuban* 熟蕃), who came under the Qing administration; and others "beyond the influence of [Chinese] civilization" (*kegai* 化外), and also "well beyond their jurisdiction" (*hanahada risuru o nasazaru nari* 甚タ理スル事ヲ爲不ルナリ),

⁸ For more on the causation of and motives for the Japanese expedition, see Norihito Mizuno, "Japan and its East Asian neighbors: Japan's perception of China and Korea and the making of foreign policy from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century."

⁹ Nihon kokusai kyōkai ed., *Dai Nihon gaikō bunsho* (hereafter, DNGB), 7: 13-15; Inoue Kaoru-kō Denki Hensankai, ed., *Segai Inoue-kō den*, 1: 475-476; Kokuryūkai, ed., *Seinan kiden*, 1: 478; Kobayashi Takao, "Rusu seifu to sei-Tai ronsō: Rujandoru oboegaki ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu," *Seiji keizai shigaku* 296 (December 1990), pp. 1-25; Zhang Hu, "Soejima tai-Shin gaikō no kentō," in *Meiji ishin to Ajia*, pp. 30-60.

¹⁰ Iwakura Tomomi kankei monjo (hereafter, ITKM), 5: 210; Tei Einei, "Soejima Taishi teiki-Shin gairyaku," in *Meiji Bunka zenshū* 25 (Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha, 1968), 25:75; JN-R34-F44855-44858; Kunaishō rinji teishitsu henshūkyoku, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki*, 3:58.

¹¹ DNGB, 6:127, 131; 7:5.

¹² Ibid., 6:177-79.

who were called “raw barbarians” (*seiban* 生蕃).¹³ Subsequently in the conversation with Yanagihara, following the remarks, they rephrased their position thus: “The absence of control over the atrocities committed by the aborigines is because they were beyond our administration and enlightenment” (*seiban no bōō o seisezaru wa waga seikyō no taikyū sezaruru tokoro nari* 生蕃ノ暴横ヲ制セ不ルハ我政教ノ逮及セ不ル所ナリ).¹⁴ Those who committed the atrocities were therefore the “raw barbarians.” Yanagihara responded to this by highlighting the potential risk associated with the obscure status of the aboriginal territories to the national security of both China and Japan. He then informed the Yamen ministers that the “Japanese government intended directly to launch an expedition” (*waga seifu tadachi ni kore o seisen to hakaru* 我政府直チニ之ヲ征セント謀ル) to the aboriginal territories “to chastise” (*monzai* 問罪) the tribes who had committed the atrocities, adding that military action would be restricted to those territories that were outside of Qing jurisdiction.¹⁵

The Zongli Yamen claimed that there had been no Japanese prior notification of the expeditionary plan when they received news of the expedition in the following year. The Yamen insisted that the Japanese “had spoken not of a military action...but of the dispatch of officials to the aboriginal territories of Taiwan” (*ruo Taiwan shengfan difang zhi yi qianren gao...qiyi jie fei wei yongbing zhuyu* 若臺灣生番地方祇以遣人告...其意皆非為用兵諸語).¹⁶ The letter sent almost simultaneously to the Manchu General of Fuzhou, Wenyu 文煜 (d. 1884) also revealed that the Yamen were discomfited by the news of the unexpected Japanese military action.¹⁷ The Japanese diplomatic document, meanwhile, stated that when Tei Einei visited Sun Shida, the Chinese official (the Intendent of Customs in Shanghai) who attended the meeting with Yanagihara on the evening of June 21, along with the two Yamen ministers, Sun confessed that he was shocked by Yanagihara’s sudden reference to the expedition. He believed that the Japanese diplomat had brought up the Taiwan issue in order to force the Chinese to surrender to the Western and Japanese requests for an audience with the emperor.¹⁸ Tei denied Sun’s conclusion, and stated that “a punitive expedition” (*monzai no kyo* 問罪ノ舉) would surely be carried out after the Soejima mission returned to Japan.¹⁹ In a conversation with Sun two days later, Soejima also stated that Japan would continue to pursue the “chastisement of the aborigines” (*batsuban* 伐蕃), even after the issue of an audience with the emperor was settled.²⁰ Based on the communications between the Yamen and Li Hongzhang, it is also possible to infer that the former should have entertained at least some apprehension of the Japanese intention to take military action against the aborigines shortly after the June 21 conversation. When he was informed of the conversation, in a written response to the Yamen on July 9, 1873, Li referred to the possibility of a Japanese expedition, although he observed that it would be unlikely

¹³ Ibid., 6:178-79. The English translations “ripe” and “raw barbarians” are borrowed from Yen (p. 188).

¹⁴ DNGB 6:179.

¹⁵ Ibid., 6:178-79.

¹⁶ Gugong bowuyuan, ed., *Chouban yiwu shimo* (hereafter, YWSM), *Tongzhichao* (hereafter, TZ) (Beiping: Gugong bowuyuan, 1929-1930), 93:29b-30b; DNGB, 7:72-77.

¹⁷ Wang Yuanzhi, ed., *Jiaxu gongdu chaocun* (hereafter, JGC), p. 20.

¹⁸ DNGB, 6:179-80.

¹⁹ Ibid., 6:209.

²⁰ Ibid., 6:180.

because of Japan's limited military capabilities.²¹

Some questions about these conflicting stories found in the Chinese and Japanese documents clearly remain. Do either the Chinese or the Japanese documents give us incorrect information? Or did a language barrier cause a miscommunication between the two parties? The aforementioned Japanese diplomatic document indicates that the Soejima mission made a clear reference not to mere inspection, but to punitive action. Nevertheless, the absence of any Chinese record on the details of their conversations with the Japanese makes it difficult to confirm the credibility of these stories. Likewise, there is no way to prove that the Zongli Yamen's denial of Japanese prior notification is truthful, and furthermore it is not known how the Yamen informed Li Hongzhang of their conversation with the Japanese. If both the Japanese and the Yamen were not telling a lie, there is the possibility that a miscommunication between the two parties caused the discrepancy, despite the presence of Tei Einei as an interpreter.

Regardless of these unsolved questions regarding the Japanese prior notification of a punitive expedition to the aboriginal territories, a more important point is that the Zongli Yamen failed to notice the gravity of its own statement on the status of the aboriginal territories in the meeting. Again, one might question the credibility of the statement because it can be found only in the Japanese diplomatic record. However, the Yamen made similar statements in the following year. When the British brought information of the Japanese expedition plan in April 1874, Dong Xun's answer to the question about the status of the aboriginal territories agreed with the Yamen's statement found in the Japanese record. First he confessed his ignorance of the location of the aboriginal territories, and stated that they were beyond Chinese administrative control and belonged to no one. However, he went on to state that the entire island of Taiwan belonged to the emperor, and that the aborigines could enjoy autonomy so long as they were not hostile towards the Chinese residents of the island.²² The Yamen sent a note to the Japanese Foreign Minister Terajima Munenori 寺島宗則 (1832-93) in May. Before claiming that the aboriginal "territories were remote regions of China belonging to China" (*ditu shi xi Zhongguo suoshu Zhongguo bianjie difang* 地土實係中國所屬中國邊界地方), the Yamen stated that the "aborigines were beyond Chinese legal and administrative control" (*shenfanrendeng xiang wei sheng yi fali guo wei sheli junxian* 生番人等向未繩以法律故未設立郡縣).²³ The Japanese understood the Yamen's statement to be evidence that the aboriginal territories were *terra nullius*, and thus the basis of a rationale to legitimize their expedition. According to their interpretation of international law, the Chinese acknowledgement of an absence of jurisdiction indicated the absence of territorial sovereignty over the aboriginal territories. Moreover, for the Japanese, the Chinese remarks substantiated the American view of the aboriginal territories. In their meetings with Soejima in 1872, Charles E. Delong (1832-76), the U.S. Minister to Japan, and Charles LeGendre (1830-99), the ex-U.S. consul-general to Xiamen (Amoy), indicated the uncontrolled state of the aboriginal territories based on the American experience of dealing with a similar case of atrocity, known as the *Rover Case*,

²¹ Li Hongzhang, *Li Wenzhong-gong quanji* (hereafter, LWZG), *Yishu hangao* 訖署函稿 (hereafter, Zongli Yamen letters), 1:48b-50b.

²² *Foreign Office Records* (hereafter, FO), 17:673 (Wade's memorandum, April 18, 1873); YWSM-TZ, 93:25b-28b.

²³ DNGB, 7:72-73.

against American citizens in 1867.²⁴ However, the Chinese were unaware of the Japanese logic, and were unprepared when they received news of the Japanese expedition.²⁵

The Qing Encounter with News of the Japanese Expedition

The first news that Japan was actively preparing for a military expedition to Taiwan was brought to the Qing government by Westerners. Since China and Japan had not yet exchanged diplomatic representatives, these foreigners were virtually the only source of such information. On April 18, the British Minister in China, Sir Thomas F. Wade (1818-95), dispatched the Chinese Secretary of the British Legation, William F. Mayers (1831-78), to the Zongli Yamen with the news.²⁶ The source of Wade's information was a telegram which had been dispatched by the British Minister in Japan, Sir Harry Parkes (1828-85), on April 4, and which reached Beijing eleven days later.²⁷ The French and Spanish diplomats and the Inspector-General of Maritime Customs, Sir Robert Hart (1835-1911), followed the British example and passed the Yamen the same information.²⁸

At first, the Zongli Yamen responded to the news with skepticism. When Mayers visited the Zongli Yamen on April 18, it refused to believe that the British information was correct. Dong Xun said in conversation with Mayer that the Qing dynasty had not received any such information. He continued that they had not heard any Japanese announcement of the expedition, nor had they given the Japanese permission to land in Taiwan.²⁹ It was after this, as mentioned above, that Dong talked about the status of the aboriginal territories. The Yamen's hesitation to believe the information about the Japanese expedition is also evidenced by the aforementioned letter to the Manchu General Wenyu, which stated: "Japan has just ratified the treaty with China and had an audience with the emperor. They are friendly to us as usual. We have never negotiated about the Taiwanese aborigines. Why would they all of a sudden send troops? Why wouldn't they first announce it to us? It is accordingly reasonable to assume that the information of Japan's dispatching of troops is doubtful and uncertain."³⁰

The Viceroy of Zhili and the Superintendent of the Northern Ports, Li Hongzhang, also did not trust the information concerning the Japanese plan for an expedition to Taiwan, but for different reasons. According to his letter to the Zongli Yamen on April 28, he received the information from Robert Hart and from a Shanghai newspaper report dated April 27.³¹ As mentioned above, when he was informed of the results of the

²⁴ Ibid., 7:5-8. Regarding the *Rover* Incident and the subsequent American expedition to the Taiwanese aboriginal territories, see Sandra Carol Tayler Caruthers, "Charles LeGendre, American Diplomacy and Expansionism in Meiji Japan, 1868-1893" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 1966), pp. 31-57.

²⁵ DNGB, 6:160-61; Kabayama, p. 215.

²⁶ FO, 17:673; YWSM-TZ, 93:25b-28b. The same document is found in Yi Ming, ed., *Tongzhi jiaxu Ribing qin-Tai shimo* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1959), pp. 1-3; and JGC, pp. 26-28.

²⁷ FO, 17:673, Wade to Derby; YWSM-TZ, 93:25b-28b. Wade had already received another telegram, sent by Foreign Minister Terajima Munenori to the Japanese consul in Shanghai on April 4, from the German diplomat, de Holleben, on April 10. No specific terms referring to an expedition could be found in the telegram. See FO, 17:673, Wade to Derby.

²⁸ YWSM-TZ, 93: 25b-28b., JGC, p. 11.

²⁹ FO, 17:673, Wade's memorandum, April 18, 1873; YWSM-TZ, 93:25b-28b.

³⁰ JGC, p. 20.

³¹ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:20a-22b.

conversation with Yanagihara in June 1873, Li judged that limited military capability would prevent the Japanese from launching an overseas military campaign. His view depended on the observations of the Chinese naval officer who had accompanied a U.S. expedition to the aboriginal territories in 1868.³² Li did not abandon his belief that a Japanese expedition was unlikely even after he received information about it from Westerners in April 1874.³³ Another reason why he did not believe that Japan's economy could handle overseas military action was the domestic insurrection, the Saga 佐賀 Uprising, brought about by discontented ex-*samurai* in February 1874.³⁴ He also observed that the Japanese would be more likely to use military power against Korea than the Taiwanese aborigines, if they truly did intend to undertake military action overseas. From the late 1860s, Korea's persistent refusal of the new Japanese regime's request to establish diplomatic relations had created tension between the two countries. Understanding Korea's indispensability to China's national security, Li hence warned that the Yamen should be more cautious of possible Japanese action against Korea, rather than against Taiwan.³⁵ Moreover, his difficulty in believing the news may have been due to his own conversation with Soejima Taneomi, when the envoy stopped off in Tianjin before going to Beijing the previous year. Before the meeting with the Japanese minister, Li had already heard the rumor of possible Japanese military action against Taiwan. According to Li's report to the Yamen, however, Soejima had made no reference to the Ryukyu shipwreck incident of 1871 but instead talked about the dispute with Korea over the establishment of formal relations.³⁶ Thus, his insight into Japanese domestic conditions was still not sufficient to make an accurate estimation of Japan's true target, though it seemed to be better than the Yamen's into Japanese domestic conditions.

Local officials in Fujian, to which Taiwan administratively belonged as a prefecture (*fu* 府), had obtained unconfirmed information of a possible Japanese expedition even earlier than the Zongli Yamen and Li Hongzhang. The Circuit Intendent of Taiwan, Xia Xianlun 夏獻綸 (d. 1879), had been informed by officials in Taiwan on April 12 that some Japanese, including Kabayama Sukenori 樺山資紀 (1837-1922), had arrived at Langjiao 琅嶠 in late March and had made investigations at Mudanshe 牡丹社 and Guizijiao 龜仔角.³⁷ Xia received a telegram from Henry Edgar, the Commissioner of Customs in Taiwan, on April 15. In this, Edgar reported that the Acting Commissioner of Customs in Xiamen found that a Hong Kong newspaper, *Xianggang xinbao* 香港新報, reported on a proposed Japanese expedition to Taiwan. Xia also reported to the superior provincial officials that he had received news of the arrival of a large Japanese warship in Xiamen on April 30.³⁸ This information reached the Zongli Yamen through the Viceroy of Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces, Li Henian 李鶴年 (1827-90), on May 4.³⁹

³² Ibid., 1:48b-50b.

³³ Ibid., 2:20a-22b.

³⁴ Ibid., 20a-22b, 25a-b.

³⁵ Ibid., 1:13b-16a, 48b-50b.

³⁶ Ibid., 43a-46a.

³⁷ JGC, pp. 2-5.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 11-13, 19.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 11-13.

The Qing Diplomatic and Military Countermeasures

When the Zongli Yamen finally took its first diplomatic action, more than three weeks had elapsed since it had first received news of the Japanese expedition from the British Minister on April 18. On May 11, the Yamen sent a communication to the Japanese Foreign Minister, Terajima Munenori, who had taken over the position after Soejima's resignation in October 1873, to confirm the reports of a Japanese punitive expedition against the Taiwanese aborigines. Referring to the conversation with the Soejima mission in 1873, the Yamen stated that the Japanese had indicated they would send officials to Taiwan to investigate the atrocities committed by the aborigines, but had not said that they would send troops. After claiming that the aboriginal territories were part of Chinese territory, the communication then warned that, if news of the expedition were correct, Japan should consult in advance of any action.⁴⁰

Fujian Province made the first contact with the Japanese at almost the same time as this communication was being sent. Li Henian received a communication dated April 13 from the Japanese Lieutenant General Saigō Tsugumichi 西郷從道 (1843-1902), the commander in chief of the Japanese expeditionary forces, on May 8. This letter explained that the Japanese were to chastise the Taiwanese aborigines who had massacred and looted Japanese subjects in previous years.⁴¹ Li responded to the letter three days later using firmer words than the Yamen. He condemned the Japanese expedition that had been undertaken without prior notification to the Zongli Yamen as a violation of international law and Articles One and Three of the 1871 Sino-Japanese Treaty. He also stated that Taiwan was a Chinese territory; and that “the whole of Taiwan had belonged to the Chinese territories for a long time” (*Taiwan quantu jiuli woguo bantu* 臺灣全土久隸我國版圖). Referring to international law and Emmerich de Vattel (1714-67), the Swiss legal philosopher famous for his work on international law, he repeatedly insisted that the aboriginal territories belonged to China. He then concluded the letter by demanding that Saigō withdraw Japanese troops from Chinese territory.⁴²

The argument that Li Henian made about the status of the aboriginal territories agreed with that made by the Zongli Yamen but contradicted the Japanese understanding. In his letter, Li stated that the “remote aborigines who inhabited distant mountains assumed a wild nature and habits, while civil behavior and state ordinances might not still have reached them” (*shengfan sanchu shenshan zhenpi chengxing wenjiao huoyou weitong zhengling ouyou weiji* 生番散處深山獐狉成性文教或有未通政令偶有未及). However, he still claimed that the land they occupied was “within Chinese territory” (*dan ju wo jiangtu zhi nei* 但居我疆土之內). This indicates that the Chinese did not consider effective control on land to be an integral factor to their claim on it as their own “territory” (*bantu* 版圖 or *jiangtu* 疆土).⁴³ On the other hand, the Japanese regarded the absence of any evidence of effective control as a manifestation of the land's belonging to no nation.

The Zongli Yamen's initial move does not eliminate an impression of slowness and insufficiency. The seemingly slow reaction may have been caused by a lack of means to collect and confirm information, as there was still no legation in Japan at that time. On May 14, three days after dispatching an inquiry to the Japanese foreign ministry, the Zongli Yamen made its first report to the imperial court on the information

⁴⁰ YWSM-TZ, 93:29b-30b; DNGB, 7:72-77.

⁴¹ YWSM-TZ, 93:40b-41b.

⁴² Ibid., 94:25b-27a; DNGB, 7:77-82.

⁴³ DNGB, 7:77-82.

received about the Japanese military expedition to Taiwan. In this report, the Yamen confessed that it had still not confirmed the news about the Japanese expedition. It stated that the Soejima mission had discussed three matters: whether Xiamen was under China's jurisdiction; whether China would intervene in Korea's domestic and foreign affairs; and Japan's intention to send officials to Taiwan in order to investigate the atrocities that the aborigines had committed against the Ryukyans. The report claimed again that the Japanese had not mentioned the dispatch of troops to Taiwan.⁴⁴ Li Hongzhang's letter to the Yamen on May 17 indicated that he did not know that Japanese expeditionary forces had already left Japan in late April, and that the advance party had landed in Taiwan on May 10.⁴⁵ According to another letter from Li to the Yamen on May 19, it was only then that Li was finally convinced that the destination of the Japanese troops gathering in Nagasaki would be Taiwan.⁴⁶ The Yamen confirmed the reliability of the news about the Japanese expedition no later than May 22, when Wade brought news of the Japanese arrival in Langjiao.⁴⁷ Seven days after this, the Yamen reported to the court about the Japanese landing on Taiwan.⁴⁸ The limitations of intelligence capability may not have been the only reason for the Zongli Yamen's slow reactions. The Yamen ministers' indulgence of their blind belief in the unlikelihood of a Japanese expedition may have been another reason. In a meeting with Dong Xung on April 18, the British received this impression, even pointing out to Dong his apparent prudence.⁴⁹

The officials of Fujian Province, including Taiwan Prefecture, also cannot be exonerated from a similar charge. They had received a variety of pieces of unconfirmed information regarding a possible Japanese expedition even before the British brought the news to the Yamen on April 18; yet it was not until May 4 when their first report arrived in Beijing. This slow handling of the information caused the Qing court to repeatedly reprimand Li Henian for his failure to report promptly and his lack of a sense of crisis.⁵⁰ The Fujian officials also failed to take prompt and sufficient precautionary and preventive measures. As mentioned above, although the local officials discovered the arrival of the Japanese investigative group, including Kabayama, in late March, weeks had passed before the information reached Xia Xianlun. In mid-April, apparently having received the local report, Xia proposed that Li, Wenyu, and Shen Baozhen 沈葆楨 (1820-79), director of the Fuzhou dockyard, send steamers under repair back to Taiwan, asked them to dispatch a steamer for defensive purposes, and started to consider the necessary defensive measures.⁵¹ However, those top-ranking Fujian officials did not take any action before the Japanese forces arrived in Taiwan. On May 12, the British Consul in Dagou 打狗, William Gregory, informed Xia that the advance party of the Japanese expeditionary forces had reached the southwestern part of the island two days earlier.⁵² Xia then asked a local military official stationed in Taiwan, Zhang Qiguang 張其光 (1831-96), to dispatch a battalion from Zhanghua 彰化 to Fengshan 鳳山, and again asked Li Henian and Wenyu to dispatch steamers to Taiwan.⁵³ When the Japanese

⁴⁴ YWSM-TZ, 93:25b-28b.

⁴⁵ LWZY Zongli Yamen letters, 2:26b-27b.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2:27b-28b.

⁴⁷ FO, 17:673, Wade's memorandum, May 22, 1874.

⁴⁸ YWSM-TZ, 93:37a-39a.

⁴⁹ FO, 17:673, Wade's memorandum, April 24, 1874.

⁵⁰ LWZY Zongli Yamen letters, 2:28b-29b, 39a.

⁵¹ JGC, pp. 12-13.

⁵² DNGB, 7:117; JGC, p. 8.

⁵³ JGC, p. 25.

commander, Saigō Tsugumichi, reached Sheliào 社寮 on May 22, Fujian officials also arrived aboard ship, but merely exchanged gun salutes with the invading forces.⁵⁴

Several hypothetical explanations can be given for the local officials' failure to take effective measures to prevent the Japanese invasion. On the one hand, their sluggish reaction to the Japanese landing in late March might show that they were simply incompetent and did not understand what they should do when upon receiving crucial information. On the other hand, more sympathetic reasoning is also possible. Busy dealing with a local disturbance in Zhanghua at that time, perhaps they could not afford to take appropriate and prompt measures.⁵⁵ Li Henian's aforementioned reply to Saigō Tsugumichi, dated May 11, is eloquent enough to indicate that he would not tolerate the presence of Japanese troops on land that he regarded to be part of his country. Despite having such a clear position, because he shared a belief in China's military deficiency with the Zongli Yamen and Li Hongzhang, as will be mentioned below, it is possible that Li and other high-ranking officials in Fujian might have been hesitant in their military deployment to avoid a clash.⁵⁶ In this case, the gun salute might have been a careful attempt to reconnoiter the Japanese expeditionary forces.

Li Hongzhang's stronger response to the unconfirmed news of a possible Japanese expedition contrasted with that of the Zongli Yamen and Fujian officials. He had also failed to read the seriousness of the Japanese about a military campaign in the previous year. However, on hearing the news, he started to move more promptly than others. In his letter to the Zongli Yamen of April 28, Li suggested that China begin military preparations. At the same time, he pointed out the necessity of employing traditional Chinese diplomatic means, namely the use of one barbarian to control another, by exploiting the pressure of the Western powers to undermine the Japanese plan. He had received information that American citizens and ships would be involved in the Japanese expedition.⁵⁷ This information was accurate: the Japanese government employed Charles LeGendre as an advisor to the Japanese Foreign Ministry in 1872, and then other Americans such as Douglas Cassel and James R. Wasson after deciding to launch the expedition.⁵⁸ It also chartered American ships such as the *New York*.⁵⁹ In his letter to the Yamen on May 10, Li stated that, if reports of American involvement were true, this would constitute a violation of international law and the Sino-U.S. Treaty of 1858, and accordingly American support would have to be withdrawn. He expected that, were the United States to end their commitment to the Japanese expedition, the Japanese would give up the plan because they lacked sufficient naval strength to undertake the overseas campaign on their own, although the expedition was in fact carried out despite foreign objections and declarations of neutrality.⁶⁰

The Zongli Yamen did act in response to Li Hongzhang's suggestions. On May 15, officials of the Yamen visited the United States legation and made enquiries of the acting U.S. Minister in China, Samuel Wells Williams (1812-84), concerning the involvement of American citizens and ships.⁶¹ On May 17, Prince Gong 恭親王

⁵⁴ DNGB, 7:107-9.; FO, 46:180, Vice Admiral Shadwell to the Secretary of the Admiralty, July 7, 1874.

⁵⁵ JGC, p. 25.

⁵⁶ YWSM-TZ, 93:42b-43b, 46a-47b; 94:3a-6a.

⁵⁷ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:22b-23b.

⁵⁸ Caruthers, Sandra Carol Taylor, "American Diplomacy and Expansionism in Meiji Japan," pp. 58-92; Huang Dashou, p. 285.

⁵⁹ Huang Dashou, p. 286.

⁶⁰ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:20a-22b.

⁶¹ Huang Jiamo, *Meiguo yu Taiwan: Yibachisinian zhi yibajiuwunian*, p. 285

(1933-98) also sent a letter to Williams, in which he stated that the aboriginal territories were under Chinese sovereignty; that ministers of foreign countries should prohibit their subjects and officials from supporting Japan's military action in Taiwan; and that Williams must withdraw the United States commitment to Japan, if the reports were true, in accordance with the provisions of Article One of the 1858 Sino-U.S. Treaty.⁶² The Yamen's effort was rewarded when Williams and Joseph J. Henderson, the U.S. Consul at Xiamen, began to ban U.S. citizens' involvement in the Japanese expedition in early June.⁶³

The Zongli Yamen's response to Li Hongzhang's suggestions was swifter than its reaction to news of the Japanese expedition. In his letter of May 10, Li suggested that the imperial court appoint Shen Baozhen as a special imperial commissioner and dispatch him to Taiwan.⁶⁴ Shen was a native of Fujian and had served the governor of the province. It may have been due to his long-term acquaintance that Li trusted Shen's qualifications and capability to manage the crisis.⁶⁵ Four days later, the Yamen submitted a report to the court, advising the emperor to appoint Shen as a special imperial commissioner to manage the Taiwan affair.⁶⁶ Within a day, the court issued an edict authorizing Shen to take control of the naval forces. It also issued an order to Li Henian and Wenyu to cooperate with Shen.⁶⁷ Both Li Hongzhang and the Yamen seemed to remain unsatisfied with the level of authority delegated to Shen. On May 17, three days after the edict, Li reemphasized Shen's qualification to deal with the Taiwan issue in a report to the court and warned that, along with other foreign powers, Japan was keeping a watchful eye on Taiwan.⁶⁸ On May 29, the Yamen asked the court to give Shen broader diplomatic and military authority to manage the Taiwan issue, to control local officials, and to requisition steamers from Jiangsu and Guangdong—enabling him to take immediate action if it became necessary.⁶⁹ The court fully sanctioned the Yamen's request and appointed Shen as special imperial commissioner with control over the civil and military officials in Fujian and the steamers in Jiangsu and Guangdong. It also repeated the previous order to Li and Wenyu to cooperate with him.⁷⁰

Li Hongzhang also devised military countermeasures against the Japanese threat immediately after he received news of the Japanese expedition in late April. His specific ideas for military measures can be found in his letter to Shen Baozhen. On June 15, he wrote that he intended to send thirteen battalions (6,500 soldiers) of his Anhui Army under Tang Dingkui 唐定奎 (1833-89) from Xuzhou to Taiwan. This plan was based on the suggestion of Prosper Giquel (1835-86), a Frenchman serving at the Fuzhou Dockyard.⁷¹ Giquel pointed out China's lack of modern armaments and the limitations of its combat capacity.⁷² Meanwhile, Robert Hart observed that the Chinese military

⁶² Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi. ed., *Taiwan duiwai guanxi shiliao*, pp. 73-74.

⁶³ *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1874*, pp. 318, 321.

⁶⁴ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:23b-25a.

⁶⁵ David P. T. Pong, "Li Hung-chang and Shen Bao-chen: The Politics of Modernization," *Chinese Studies in History* 24.1-2 (Fall-Winter 1990-91), p. 130.

⁶⁶ YWSM-TZ, 93:25b-28b.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 93:28b-29b.

⁶⁸ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:26b-27b.

⁶⁹ YWSM-TZ, 94:37a-39a.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 93:39a-40a.

⁷¹ LWZG *Pengliao hankao* 朋僚函稿 (hereafter, Letters), 14: 6b-7b. See Kwang-ching Liu, "Li Hung-chang in Chili: The Emergence of a Policy, 1870-1875," *Chinese Studies in History* 24:1-2 (Fall-Winter 1990-91), p. 80.

⁷² LWZG Letters, 14:4b.

forces were not sufficient to wage war with the Japanese.⁷³ Li stressed the need for the transfer of thirteen battalions in his letters to other officials besides Shen, such as those to Zhang Shusheng 張樹聲 (1824-84), the Governor of Jiangsu, Li Zongxi 李宗羲 (1818-84), the Superintendent of Southern Ports, and the Zongli Yamen.⁷⁴ He also wrote advising Shen that war supplies would need to be transferred from Nanjing and Tianjin to Taiwan. He further added that military defense of the coastal provinces close to Taiwan would need to be reinforced because he feared that these provinces would be attacked if war with Japan should break out.⁷⁵ On June 25, he again wrote to Shen advising that twenty-two battalions of the Anhui Army under Liu Shengzao 劉盛藻 in Shanxi should be sent to Jiangsu and Shandong to bolster the coastal defense.⁷⁶ On July 25, the court approved Li's proposals.⁷⁷

However, Li's military preparations did not mean that he had modified his original belief of a Chinese military deficiency and had shifted to a more confident attitude. He was quite consistent in seeking to settle the crisis peacefully. In letters to the Zongli Yamen of June 1 and to Shen Baozhen of June 2, he pointed out China's insufficiency in modern armaments, citing the comments of two influential Westerners on the Qing dynasty, Robert Hart and Prosper Giquel.⁷⁸ Li's letter to the Yamen of June 5 expressed his objection to a war with Japan, proposing the dispatch of a high-ranking official to Japan to maintain peace.⁷⁹ He understood that military preparations would not be completed soon; he wrote in a letter to Shen Baozhen on June 14 that China would have to wait eight or nine months to purchase foreign weapons such as Remington rifles and Krupp artillery, and that a couple of additional months would be needed to train Chinese soldiers in how to use them.⁸⁰ Li was aware of the possibility that Sino-Japanese relations would lapse and suffer a fatal rupture. Military preparation was thus necessary for the worst-case scenario; however, what he truly expected was that a military presence would lead to diplomatic negotiations taking a favorable turn for China.⁸¹

The series of reports that Shen Baozheng, Li Henian, and Wenyu submitted to the imperial court revealed that they shared the same beliefs and ideas as Li Hongzhang. On June 5, Li Henian observed that China was militarily inferior to Japan because of its lack of modern armament, and he proposed that they drill troops, purchase Western ships and weapons, and employ capable officers.⁸² The joint reports from the three officials of June 14 and 24 repeatedly emphasized China's military deficiency in comparison to Japan. In light of this observation, in the June 14 report they suggested four strategies to deal with the Taiwan issue: obtaining moral support from the Western powers by explaining the causes of the incident; strengthening China's defensive capability by purchasing modern weapons; employing capable officers, such as the Fujian naval commander Luo Dachun 羅大春, to assist Shen and the local officials; and improving the communication systems by setting up a cable between Taiwan and the mainland.⁸³

⁷³ Ibid., 14:6b-7b.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 14:7b-9a; Zongli Yamen letters, 2:33a-34a.

⁷⁵ Zongli Yamen letters, 14:6b-7b.

⁷⁶ YWSM-TZ, 94:9a-10b.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 95:13a-14a.

⁷⁸ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:28b-30a.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 2:30b-31b.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Letters 14:5b-6b.

⁸¹ Ibid., 4:4a-5a.

⁸² YWSM-TZ, 93: 43b-47b.

⁸³ Ibid., 94:3a-6a, 8b-9b.

The court approved all of their proposals.⁸⁴ On July 21, the three officials and Shen's assistant Pan Wei 潘霽 (1816-94) requested that the court dispatch 3,000 soldiers under the control of the superintendent of the northern ports and 2,000 soldiers under the control of the superintendent of the southern ports, all equipped with Western guns.⁸⁵ Shen made further efforts aimed at the reinforcement of China's defensive capability in Taiwan by constructing batteries and raising volunteer troops.⁸⁶ Li Henian and Wenyu seemed to be more concerned about the defense of the continental part of their jurisdiction than Taiwan, as they withdrew their previous proposal and proposed postponing the dispatch of Luo to Taiwan in July.⁸⁷ Because the court declined this proposal, Li eventually pledged that he would provide financial aid and military supplies for Taiwan.⁸⁸

Although one could say that the Chinese officials' perception of military incompetence was a misjudgment or evidence of defeatism, such an observation might be too harsh. Shi Peihua, a Chinese historian, questions whether the Chinese military strength truly was inferior to the Japanese at that time.⁸⁹ Sir Harry Parkes, the British Minister in Japan, observed at that time that the Japanese military capability was very limited and would not be able to match the Chinese, whose naval strength he believed was superior.⁹⁰ On the other hand, his fellow diplomat in Beijing, Thomas Wade, made an opposite observation, sharing the Chinese view concerning China's limited military capacity.⁹¹ These two conflicting British opinions show that, at that time—and even more so today—it was difficult to judge precisely which military power was superior. Significantly, other Westerners who could exercise a certain degree of influence on the Qing officialdom, such as Hart and Giquel, shared Wade's point of view.⁹² It was thus not strange that the Chinese officials estimated their combat capability, as did these Westerners who exercised great influence both near and inside the Qing government.

Prolonged Negotiations with the Japanese

When, on the basis of a lack of confidence in their armaments, the Chinese chose to avoid a military confrontation with Japan, diplomatic measures were the primary and virtually the only way left to settle the Taiwan crisis. First, the Chinese attempted to exploit Western influence to prevent or deal with the Japanese invasion. As mentioned above, they attempted to cultivate Western collaboration to put pressure on the Japanese. When they discovered that the Japanese had landed on the aboriginal territories, they continued to seek verbal and material support from Westerners to settle the crisis in their favor. Second, they simultaneously attempted to engage in direct negotiations with the Japanese to encourage them to withdraw from the aboriginal territories.

Negotiations could only be carried out under certain conditions. First, the Chinese had to conduct diplomatic negotiations given the undeniable fact that the Japanese partially occupied the aboriginal territories of Taiwan. When these negotiations began in early June, Japanese troops were already in the aboriginal

⁸⁴ Ibid., 94:6b-7b.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 95:3a-6b.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 94:20a-24b.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 94:28a-28b.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 94:29a.

⁸⁹ Shi, p. 239.

⁹⁰ Yen, p. 288.

⁹¹ FO, 17:674, Wade's memorandum, no. 138, July 10, 1874.

⁹² LWZG Letters, 2:28b-30a, 14:4a-5a.

territories. The Japanese expeditionary forces had finished their landing with the arrival of the commander in chief on May 22, and, according to their records, they had successfully completed military operations against hostile aboriginal tribes by June 4.⁹³ They remained stationed in Taiwan throughout the duration of the Taiwan crisis. Second, China wished to exploit the Western powers, but at the same time could not ignore their expectations and intentions. Because they were confident of winning international support for their claim on the aboriginal territories, the Chinese expected not only verbal support from the Westerners, but that they would actually settle the crisis in their favor. However, the primary concern of Western powers, especially the British, was to protect and promote their own interests by preventing the two East Asian countries from plunging into a ruinous war.⁹⁴

The Chinese accorded priority to a diplomatic settlement, while the Japanese also did not want to break the peace with their neighbors. The Japanese government had been cautious in designing the expeditionary plan, limiting military operations to the aboriginal territories which they believed were outside the area of Chinese sovereignty. The Japanese also decided to send Yanagihara Sakimitsu, the first minister to China, to Beijing to coincide with the dispatch of the expeditionary forces.⁹⁵ The initial purpose in dispatching the young diplomat was not to dispute with the Qing dynasty over the Taiwan issue, but to explain to the Chinese that the military action against the aborigines would not extend to the land under Chinese sovereignty in Taiwan to avoid causing unnecessary friction.⁹⁶ It is likely that, before Yanagihara left Japan on May 19, Tokyo already anticipated that China might not accept their justification for the expedition. In fact, Japan had been aware since late May that their understanding of the status of the aboriginal territories contradicted that of the Chinese. Based on information received from Wade on his conversation with the Zongli Yamen on April 18, Harry Parkes told Terajima Munenori on May 5 that the Chinese claimed that the aboriginal territories were integral parts of their empire and pointed out the discrepancy with the Japanese claim.⁹⁷ The U.S. Minister in Japan, John Armor Bingham (1815-1900), brought the same information, which had been passed to him from the US legation in China, to Terajima on May 17.⁹⁸ After receiving this information from the Western diplomats, Yanagihara's primary mission remained continued peace with China, but he probably anticipated that a dispute with the Chinese government would be unavoidable.

The initial Chinese attitude threw negotiations, which eventually lasted five months, into confusion, and resulted in a failure to settle the crisis. Sino-Japanese negotiations between Pan Wei and Yanagihara started in Shanghai on June 6. Pan was sent by Shen Baozhen but was not the only negotiator with the Japanese minister.⁹⁹ Other local officials and the Zongli Yamen simultaneously approached Yanagihara both face-to-face and through written communications.¹⁰⁰ Shen did not simultaneously regard Yanagihara as the only Japanese negotiator, as he also dispatched Pan to Taiwan to negotiate with Saigō Tsugumichi to whom the Japanese government granted no authority

⁹³ DNGB, 7:107, 109, 115-25.

⁹⁴ FO, 17:674, Wade's memorandum, no. 139, July 10, 1874; 17:675, Wade's memorandum, no. 195, September 16, 1874; DNGB, 7:187-88.

⁹⁵ Ōkubo Toshimichi, *Ōkubo Toshimichi monjo* (hereafter, OTM), 5:344.

⁹⁶ DNGB, 7:1-3, 22; OTM, 5:343-48; Ōkubo Toshimichi, *Ōkubo Toshimichi nikki* (hereafter, OTN), 2:207.

⁹⁷ DNGB, 7:65-67.

⁹⁸ Ishii, p. 71.

⁹⁹ Yen, p. 222.

¹⁰⁰ Banchi jimukyoku, ed., *Shoban tenyō*, 4: n. p.; DNGB, 7:104-7, 112-15.

to conduct negotiations with the Chinese.¹⁰¹ The fragmentation of the negotiation channels resulted in the exchange of inconsistent messages and a discrepancy in the understanding of negotiation details between both parties; this caused Yanagihara to feel that further negotiations in Shanghai would be pointless.¹⁰² Shortly before he left Shanghai on July 17, the Japanese minister observed that the Chinese negotiating stance was fragmented and vacillated between firm and reconciliatory.¹⁰³ He also wrote to a fellow diplomat about his suspicions that the Chinese conspired to confuse the Japanese to gain a more favorable settlement of the Taiwan issue, seeking to take advantage of the inconvenient methods of communication between Shanghai and Taiwan.¹⁰⁴

Both the Chinese and Japanese sought to settle the diplomatic crisis peacefully, but there were sharp divisions between the two parties to be overcome. The first point of contention was the status of the aboriginal territories of Taiwan. The Japanese claimed that they were proven to be beyond China's territorial sovereignty by the Qing's lack of response to the repeated atrocities committed by the aborigines against foreigners. The Qing claimed that its sovereignty extended over the entire land of Taiwan, including the aboriginal territories.¹⁰⁵ The second point concerned the evaluation of the Japanese expedition, and this was closely linked to the first disagreement. The Japanese justified the military campaign, which they insisted that the Soejima mission had announced in the previous year, as a righteous action to protect their own subjects, in accordance with international law. The Chinese countered this claim by denouncing the military action as being without prior notification and thus an encroachment on their terrain, and demanded the withdrawal of Japan's forces.¹⁰⁶ The third difference concerned how the Taiwan crisis should be settled. The Japanese had no desire to wage war with China over the Taiwan issue, but at the same time could not accept an empty-handed withdrawal from the aboriginal territories. They demanded that the Chinese recognize the expedition as a legitimate action on unclaimed land, and that, if the aboriginal territories were to be ceded to China, Japan would recognize Chinese jurisdiction in exchange for monetary compensation for the military expenses and a promise to prevent further atrocities in the future.¹⁰⁷ The Chinese refuted this view of the expedition and the status of the aboriginal territories and flatly refused the Japanese request for monetary compensation.

Li Hongzhang's brief conversation with Yanagihara merely reconfirmed their sharply divided views over the aboriginal territories and the Japanese expedition. Before Yanagihara arrived in Tianjin on July 24, Li had received information on June 23 that Tokyo had decided to initiate hostilities and had ordered Yanagihara to return to Japan soon after submitting his credentials to Beijing. This false information and the abortive result of the negotiations in both Shanghai and Taiwan caused Li to consider the situation critical. He expressed his desire to the Zongli Yamen to take charge of negotiations with Yanagihara to settle the crisis on July 22.¹⁰⁸ Li had a chance to meet with the Japanese minister on the day he arrived in Tianjin. However, their conversation generated nothing new, and this was ultimately the only opportunity that Li had for direct involvement in the negotiations on the Taiwan issue. Yanagihara, who had no intention

¹⁰¹ YWSM-TZ, 94:25b-27a, 95:3a-6a; DNGB, 7:128-34, 139.

¹⁰² DNGB, 7:144-54, 157-59.

¹⁰³ *Shoban teiyō*, 5: n. p.

¹⁰⁴ Kuzuu Yoshihisa, *Nis-Shi kōshō gaishi*, 1:91-92.

¹⁰⁵ *Shoban teiyō*, 4: n. p.; DNGB, 7:104-7, 133-34.

¹⁰⁶ DNGB, 7:104-7.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 7:136-40, 144-47.

¹⁰⁸ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:35b-39b; 40a-40b.

of staying any longer in Tianjin, stated that he would travel to Beijing as a Japanese minister in order to have an audience with the emperor and submit his credentials. Having previous experience in negotiations with Li on the 1871 Sino-Japanese Treaty, Yanagihara may have wanted to avoid further talks with the experienced Chinese official. Li tried to persuade Yanagihara to stay longer by referring to the resentment of the imperial court against the Japanese invasion and the unlikelihood of an imperial audience, but he could not detain him.¹⁰⁹

Sharp divisions remained in the new phase of the negotiations which began shortly after Yanagihara's arrival in Beijing on July 31. The Zongli Yamen maintained their stance that the aboriginal territories belonged to China and continued to condemn the Japanese expedition. Yanagihara, for his part, did not withdraw the Japanese claim that the punitive expedition was a legitimate action on the grounds of Japan's right to protect "Japanese subjects" and the absence of Chinese sovereignty in the aboriginal territories according to international law. Yanagihara also repeatedly requested that the Yamen ministers answer the question concerning a Chinese plan for preventing any recurrence of the atrocities committed by the aborigines, while they persisted in demanding the immediate withdrawal of Japanese troops without providing a definite answer. Neither the Chinese nor the Japanese could find a way of settling the dispute in their own favor, and the negotiations in Beijing reached an impasse by the end of August.¹¹⁰

While the negotiations were ongoing, jingoist voices sporadically arose both inside and outside Beijing. On June 24, shortly after the imperial court had stated in an edict to Li Henian that hostilities should not be opened, it suddenly ordered officials to subjugate the Japanese as soon as possible for their "insolent" behavior.¹¹¹ In late summer, Shen Baozhen also shifted to a hard line. He had originally shared a discouraging view of Chinese military capability and had prioritized settling the crisis through negotiations with the Japanese, as he stated in his report to the court on July 8.¹¹² However, he came to the conclusion that military preparations had developed sufficiently to expel the Japanese from Taiwan by the end of August.¹¹³ In addition to this renewed military confidence, he may have known that the Japanese troops were losing their combat capability because of their suffering in the severe heat and endemic diseases of the strange land.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, a military solution never gained sufficient support. The Zongli Yamen may have tried to discourage the imperial court from taking a hard line. In a report of July 13, it expressed its opposition to breaking off diplomatic negotiations. It then proposed that further fortification of the coastal provinces was still necessary, and that the court should order officials in those provinces to inspect the defensive conditions at strategic points and to cooperate with each other in furthering defensive military

¹⁰⁹ Ibid; DNGB, 7:175.

¹¹⁰ For details of the negotiations between the Zongli Yamen and Yanagihara, see YWSM-TZ, 96:27a-32a, 34a-34b, 36a-47b; DNGB, 7:174-75, 177-80, 185-88, 191-201, 203-4; JN-R34-F44843; *The Archives of the Japanese War Ministry* (hereafter, JW-R), JW-R119-F32834-37, 32839-42, 32856, 32865-67, 32869-75, 32877-80, 32885-91, 32899-900.

¹¹¹ YWSM-TZ, 93:45b, 94:8b-9b.

¹¹² JGC, pp. 11-12.

¹¹³ YWSM-TZ., 95:24a-26b, 96:13a-16a.

¹¹⁴ Regarding the military preparations in Taiwan, see the documents of Sheng Xuanhuai 盛宣懷 (1849-1916) in *Qingji waijiao yinying handian ziliao*, pp. 12-19. Regarding the situation of the Japanese expeditionary forces, see *ibid.*, p. 18.

preparations.¹¹⁵ The court approved this proposal and asked local officials about the state of coastal defense and their prospects for victory in the case of war. The reports from local officials, which confessed a deficiency in the defensive installations, seemed to persuade the court to avoid a hard line approach.¹¹⁶

Shen's old friend, Li Hongzhang, consistently believed that the Sino-Japanese dispute should be settled peacefully. Li stated in a letter to Shen on July 29 that it would not be in China's interests to wage war, although defensive preparations were necessary. Li acknowledged that the coastal provinces that lacked adequate defensive capacity would suffer in a Japanese attack once war broke out.¹¹⁷ In a report to the Yamen on July 31, Li repeated that China should not open hostilities to expel the Japanese from Taiwan.¹¹⁸ The Yamen favored his pacifist stance and reported to the court on September 5.¹¹⁹ On August 16, Li suggested a new diplomatic device to Shen that China should send a high-ranking official to Japan in order to negotiate with the Japanese government, or should use foreign pressure against the Japanese.¹²⁰ In mid-September, he cautioned the officials in charge of the coastal defense that they should not open hostilities hastily, but should continue to concentrate on military preparations.¹²¹

In order to break the impasse in the negotiations in Beijing, Li Hongzhang began to consider that compromises were necessary to settle the Taiwan crisis peacefully. In a letter to the Zongli Yamen of August 27, he suggested that China admit its responsibility for the atrocities against the shipwrecked Ryukyans because of the failure of local officials—which had become evident after a thorough investigation of the incident three years earlier. He then suggested that China would need to compensate the victimized Ryukyans and the Japanese soldiers who had suffered in Taiwan. He continued by proposing that China should not pay money because of any Japanese demand, but should do so of its own free will, and that this settlement was intended to save face, rather than constitute capitulation.¹²² His suggestion of monetary settlement did not mean that he intended that China pay everything expected by the Japanese. He had no intention of paying for Japanese military expenses. For this reason, he declined the offer of mediation from the French Minister in China, Francis Henri Louis de Geofroy (1822-89), on August 6. He explained to the Yamen that he was afraid foreign mediation would make it inevitable that China would have to grant monetary compensation for Japanese military expenses.¹²³

The following story from W. N. Pethick, the United States Consul in Tianjin, might have given Li hope that his settlement idea would work out. Ōkubo Toshimichi 大久保利通 (1830-78), another Japanese negotiator, arrived in Tianjin on August 31 and spent several days in the United States consulate. Pethick discovered from the talks with Ōkubo that the Japanese sought a peaceful settlement rather than war. He informed Li that the Japanese were seeking monetary compensation to honor their military action in exchange for their withdrawal from Taiwan. Having been informed of the Japanese intentions by the American diplomat, Li reported to the Zongli Yamen on September 4 that Japan's true intentions were to maintain peace, and advised that Ōkubo would not

¹¹⁵ YWSM-TZ, 94:30b-31b.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 94:20b-21b, 95:1a-2b, 34b-37a, 96:1a-3a, 9a-11a.

¹¹⁷ LWZG Zongli Yamen Letters, 14:18b-19a.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 2:23b-25a.

¹¹⁹ YWSM-TZ, 96:27a-32a.

¹²⁰ LWZG Zongli Yamen Letters, 14:19b-20b.

¹²¹ Ibid., 14:20b-23a.

¹²² Ibid., 2:41b-42b.

¹²³ Ibid., 14:40a-40b.

accept Chinese demands for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Taiwan without some form of monetary compensation.¹²⁴

The American diplomat had accurately sensed Ōkubo's intentions. Ōkubo, the Interior Minister and most prominent Japanese political figure at that time, had come to China with plenary powers, including a right to commit to war.¹²⁵ The stagnation in the negotiations had increasingly caused both pessimism and jingoism among some Japanese leaders since early July, yet Ōkubo still prioritized efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement.¹²⁶ His negotiation strategy was to find an acceptable solution for "both the Japanese and the Chinese" (*ryōben no benpō* 兩便ノ辦法; *liangbian banfa* 兩便辦法), which meant that he was ready to agree a compromise with the Qing dynasty.¹²⁷ His plan was to solve the diplomatic crisis peacefully, without hurting his country's national honor, by obtaining Chinese recognition of the expedition as a righteous action and an indemnity from China. In exchange, he was ready to accept a Chinese request for the withdrawal of the expeditionary forces from the aboriginal territories.¹²⁸

Despite the fact that they were looking for a similar conclusion to the diplomatic dispute, the most prominent political figures of the two countries had no chance to meet throughout the Taiwan crisis. In fact, Ōkubo intentionally avoided meeting with Li, despite the diplomatic custom of honoring the Viceroy of Zhili with a visit, and left Tianjin for Beijing after a short stay.¹²⁹ When he arrived in Tianjin, he appeared to become uncertain about the seriousness of the Chinese regarding further negotiations, and he might have felt that negotiations with Li would be useless because of the reports from Yanagihara and the rumors he had heard. One rumor was that China had determined to go to war. Others said that Li had shifted to a hard line and had rejected the order from the imperial court to take charge of negotiations with the Japanese in the belief that further negotiations were futile.¹³⁰

These rumors were all false, as Li Hongzhang continued to pursue a compromise solution even after Ōkubo had left Tianjin. On September 15, a day after the negotiations began between the Zongli Yamen and Ōkubo, Li suggested that the issue of the status of the Ryukyus, which had been one cause of division between the two countries, should not be raised to avoid complicating the negotiations. He then suggested again payment of condolence money for the victims of the aboriginal atrocities and the Japanese soldiers who had lost their lives in the expedition, although he simultaneously rejected the idea of payment to the Japanese for military expenses. He did advise, however, that if Ōkubo made a demand for this money, the Yamen should not decline outright. His idea was to propose instead submission of the dispute to Western arbitration, this despite his rejection of the French offer of mediation in the previous month. When he wrote this letter, he had clearly become more confident of winning international support, and he observed that Japan would not be able to go to war because of its difficult domestic situation. For these reasons, he thought that the Yamen did not need to achieve a hasty peace settlement with the Japanese, but that prolonged negotiations would actually bring about a more favorable result for China.¹³¹

According to British sources, the Zongli Yamen had begun seeking Western

¹²⁴ Ibid., 14:42b-45a.

¹²⁵ OTM, 6:26-29.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 6:71-76; OTN, 2:286.

¹²⁷ DNGB, 7:263, 269.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 7:261-64.

¹²⁹ OTM, 6:61-63, 87-90.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 6:44-63, 61-63, 65-71.

¹³¹ LWZG Zongli Yamen letters, 2:43b-45b.

influence to settle the Sino-Japanese dispute earlier than Li Hongzhang. Thomas Wade reported to London that the Yamen had begun to speak with him about the Taiwan issue spontaneously, and had let him know that the Chinese were seeking Western arbitration and a supply of war materials as early as the end of July.¹³² On August 12, he again reported that the Yamen expected that the Western powers would arbitrate the dispute between China and Japan.¹³³ Li's change of mind and support for this might have encouraged the Yamen. Before the middle of September, Wade felt that the Yamen's desire to invite Western arbitration was premised on an optimistic expectation that the foreign powers would recognize the justice of the Chinese position and begin sales of arms.¹³⁴

The Yamen never brought up the issue of monetary compensation in their negotiations with Ōkubo, which started on September 14, but continued to circle around the legal status of the aboriginal territories.¹³⁵ Ōkubo did not refer to monetary compensation, either. The reason for this may be found in the instructions that were issued to Yanagihara Sakimitsu on July 15. The Japanese considered that it was not for them to initiate discussion on that particular issue, probably because of concern about their national honor. Instead, they hoped that the Chinese would bring up the topic.¹³⁶ The Yamen did not behave as the Japanese expected, however, and made no reference to the possibility of a monetary settlement despite knowledge of Ōkubo's settlement idea from Li Hongzhang's letter. As a matter of fact, when proposing his compromise scheme on August 28, Li pessimistically predicted that the proposal would encounter objections from the pure stream officials (*qingyi* 清議) on the Qing side.¹³⁷ Whether this prediction was correct or not, the Yamen, whose most prominent minister Wenxiang 文祥 (1818-76) was a leading *qingyi* figure, might have been repulsed by the idea of a monetary compensation, as Thomas Wade felt in conversations with the Yamen ministers that they regarded such a settlement as humiliating.¹³⁸

The Settlement of the Sino-Japanese Dispute

It was unfortunate for the Zongli Yamen that the Western powers were neither allies nor *bona fide* third parties for China. The rough passage of the negotiations had amplified the concerns that the Western powers already had before Ōkubo's arrival in China. Thomas Wade in particular was concerned about the dispute between the two East Asian powers in terms of the protection of British interests in China. He was afraid that a protracted crisis and a fatal aggravation, namely war with Japan, would worsen China's domestic instability and damage Britain's interests.¹³⁹ He wanted a chance to be involved in the Sino-Japanese negotiations in order to prevent the two countries from

¹³² *British and Foreign State Papers, 1874-1875*, 66:4; Mr. Wade to the Earl of Derby, November 16, 1874, p. 426.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

¹³⁴ FO 17:676, Wade's memorandum, September 12, 1874.

¹³⁵ For details of the negotiations between the Zongli Yamen and Okubo, see DNGB, 7:219-45, 247-48, 251-58, YWSM-TZ, 97:34b-62a; JN-R34-F45367-76, 45383-91, 45400-9, 45469-76, 45477-85, 45486-98, 45501-11, 45515-32.

¹³⁶ DNGB, 7:156.

¹³⁷ LWZG Zongli Yamen Letters, 2:41b-42b. See also Marianne Bastid, "Qingyi and the Self-Strengthening Movement," in *Qingji Jiqiang Yundong yantaohui lunwenji*, vol. 1, p. 874.

¹³⁸ FO 17:676, Wade's memorandum, no. 223; Ishii, p. 176.

¹³⁹ FO, 17:675, Wade's memorandum, September 16, 1874.

any military confrontation.¹⁴⁰ However, he had no intention of giving China his full support and casting all the blame on Japan; he thought that China would need to accept a monetary settlement in order to end the crisis peacefully as long as Japanese troops remained in the aboriginal territories, and that he could mediate between the two parties.¹⁴¹ Li Hongzhang's idea thus conformed to the reality of international power politics in East Asia. The British minister began to sound out the Yamen about monetary compensation in late September. In repeated talks with Yamen ministers, he warned that the Chinese combat capability could neither expel the Japanese from Taiwan, nor defeat them should hostilities commence. He also added that war with Japan would deteriorate the already unstable domestic conditions in China.¹⁴²

Having refused the British advice for a while, the Yamen eventually had to realize that China would not be able to obtain the desired support from Western powers and continue to resist a monetary settlement. On October 3, the Yamen responded to Wade's question about an acceptable compromise for China. It maintained an adamant stance against the payment of compensatory money to Japan, but indicated two possible points for compromise. First, China would not blame the Japanese for the expedition. Second, China would pay compensatory money to the families of the Ryukyans who had suffered aboriginal atrocities in exchange for Japanese military withdrawal.¹⁴³

It was Ōkubo Toshimichi who first referred to a monetary settlement, having spent weeks in Beijing. On October 5, Ōkubo declared he would return to Japan and broke off the prolonged negotiations.¹⁴⁴ On October 10, the Zongli Yamen received a letter from Ōkubo in which he asked the Yamen to suggest a set of conditions acceptable for both parties and sought to resume talks.¹⁴⁵ When the Yamen ministers including Dong Xun visited Ōkubo on October 18, they heard the Japanese negotiator's first request for monetary compensation. Ōkubo stated that China was obliged to pay compensation for the victims of the aboriginal atrocities, as well as Japanese expenses for the expedition.¹⁴⁶ This meant that he had renounced the original Japanese negotiation guideline that instructed him not to refer to monetary settlement first. His departure from this original line probably derived from a confidence that his settlement scheme had won Western support. Parallel to his negotiations with the Yamen, Ōkubo had attempted to discern the wills of the Western powers and to collect information. As a result, by the time of the meeting on October 18, he was sure that not only Wade but also other Westerners such as the French Minister to China, F. H. Louis de Geofroy, and the Russian Minister Eugene Bützow, except for the Acting U.S. Minister Williams supported his idea.¹⁴⁷ Since his Western attendants—LeGendre and the former British naval paymaster John Pitman—had contacted Robert Hart, Ōkubo might simultaneously have known that the Inspector-General of Maritime Customs also favored a monetary settlement, even including payment of Japanese expenses for the expedition, in exchange for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Taiwan.¹⁴⁸

In Ōkubo's visit on October 20, the Zongli Yamen gave its answer to the letter which he had sent ten days earlier. Wenxiang suggested the following guidelines to

¹⁴⁰ DNGB, 7:187-88.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² FO 17:675, Wade's memorandum, no. 198, September 16, 1874.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 676, Wade's memorandum, no. 223.

¹⁴⁴ DNGB, 7; 253-58.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 7:261-64.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 7:277-82.

¹⁴⁷ Kobayashi, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 18-19.

settle the dispute, which did not significantly differ from the Yamen's answer to Wade's question on October 3. First, China would not regard the Japanese expedition as unjust because of Japan's lack of knowledge that the aboriginal territories were part of China. Second, China would recognize that the shipwreck incidents were the cause of the crisis. Third, China would investigate the shipwreck incidents and would punish the aborigines after the Japanese withdrawal. Fourth, the Qing emperor would mercifully grant condolence money (*fluxu* 撫恤) to the Japanese victims of the shipwreck incident(s) as an act of grace. Two conditions were set on the monetary payment: that China would not pay the money before it had completed the investigation into the atrocity cases and had punished those who had committed the atrocities; and that the money would be paid only to the victims of the shipwreck incident(s), not for the expenditures of the Japanese expedition. Regarding Ōkubo's question about the specific amount of money which China was ready to pay, and his request for documentation of a promise of payment, the Yamen refused to answer for the reason why the payment would take the form of the emperor's expression of his regret.¹⁴⁹ While some concessions, including monetary compensation to Japan, had become unavoidable under British pressure, the greatest concern that remained for the Chinese was how to preserve their honor. Receiving the visit of Tei Einei on the following day, the Yamen minister Shen Guifen 沈桂芬 (1817-81) stated that the payment could not take the form of compensation in consideration of China's national honor.¹⁵⁰

Although the monetary settlement was certainly a compromise from the Chinese point of view, the counterproposal was not sufficient to put an end to the Sino-Japanese dispute. One of the remaining issues was that Ōkubo did not withdraw his request for documentation, while another was the amount of payment. When Tei Einei visited the Yamen on October 21, Zhou Jiamei 周家楣 (1835-87), the secretary-general of the Yamen, questioned him about the Japanese expenses for the expedition. Tei replied that the total expenses had reached five million dollars, and the actual cost was three million dollars (two million taels), even excluding the purchase costs of military vessels amongst others. Shen Guifen then joined their conversation and stated that the amount was far higher than their estimate.¹⁵¹ Two days later, the Yamen received Ōkubo's visit and negotiated these two issues, but they could not come to terms. Ōkubo again declared his intention to return to Japan, and Shen responded by stating that China had no intention to make any further compromises beyond the aforementioned four guidelines. Over the following two days, Ōkubo visited Western ministers to notify them that he would leave Beijing on October 26, and he sent what amounted to an ultimatum to the Yamen on October 25.¹⁵² The Sino-Japanese negotiations had thus reached an impasse again.

When it seemed that the negotiations were about to rupture, Thomas Wade finally took a role as a mediator. He originally intended to take advantage of the dispute between the two East Asian countries to gain more interest for Britain in China. At this critical moment, however, his concern was solely directed at the protection of existing British interests by achieving a peaceful settlement.¹⁵³ He believed that a monetary settlement was the only way to convince the Japanese to withdraw from the aboriginal

¹⁴⁹ DNGB, 7:283-88.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 7:289-92.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.; OTN, 2:293-95.

¹⁵³ Kobayashi, p. 26; OTN, 2:328; DNGB, 7:308.

territories and put an end to the Taiwan crisis.¹⁵⁴ Receiving Ōkubo's visit on October 24, he discovered that the Japanese minister would not necessarily persist in demanding the same amount of compensation money.¹⁵⁵ He then visited the mansion of one of the Yamen ministers, Baoyun 寶璽 (1807-91), and suggested that China clarify how much it was willing to pay and how it would guarantee payment.¹⁵⁶

When Wade chose this way to end the crisis and avoid the worst case scenario for British interests, the Chinese could no longer resist the wishes of a minister of the most prominent Western power. In his conversation with Shen Guifen on October 25, Wade stressed that if China was not ready to open hostilities, monetary settlement was the only option for removing the Japanese troops from Taiwan.¹⁵⁷ The Yamen minister felt that the British minister had tried to force the Chinese to accept Japanese demands for monetary compensation by using intimidation and considered that concession on this point was inevitable.¹⁵⁸ In reply to Wade's question about the amount of compensation money, Shen answered that China would pay at most 500,000 taels (100,000 taels as a compensation for the victims of the shipwreck incidents, and 400,000 taels for miscellaneous expenses), and would document the amount of the payment.¹⁵⁹

The Chinese compromise brought a further compromise demand from the Japanese. Within a day, when informed of the content of Wade's meeting with the Zongli Yamen, Ōkubo said that Japan would accept the amount of money if China agreed to three conditions: China must recognize that the Japanese expedition was a righteous action; all evidence of the Sino-Japanese dispute must be erased; and all of the money, which would be divided so that 100,000 taels went for the condolence of victims of the atrocities and the rest for the expenses of construction and the like, must be paid before the Japanese troops withdrew from the aboriginal territories. He then worked with the British minister to draft a Sino-Japanese agreement.¹⁶⁰ His justification for the compromise was that he was concerned a war would plunge Japan into difficulties both domestically and internationally and would ultimately cause a loss of independence. Because Qing recognition of the expedition as a righteous action was the most important factor, he understood that, if China accepted the Japanese claim, he should not be particular about the amount of money.¹⁶¹ It is probable that he considered that an early withdrawal of the expeditionary forces would be necessary because of their aforementioned suffering in the aboriginal territories.¹⁶²

While the Japanese regarded Chinese recognition of their action as righteous to be of prime importance, the Chinese persisted in minimizing their humiliation, which would be documented in the agreement. The Zongli Yamen and Ōkubo spent several more days reaching a final agreement. The sticking point for the Yamen in the draft agreement that had been prepared by Ōkubo and Wade, based on Ōkubo's three conditions, was the stipulation of 500,000 taels and the means of payment. The Yamen thus drew up its own draft agreement. Generally following the Anglo-Japanese draft, the Chinese draft, which was sent to Ōkubo on October 27, therefore included no

¹⁵⁴ FO 17:676, Wade's memorandum, no. 223.

¹⁵⁵ DNGB, 7:298-300.

¹⁵⁶ FO 17:676, Wade's memorandum, no. 223.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ YWSM-TZ, 98:9b-17b.

¹⁵⁹ FO 17:676, Wade's memorandum, no. 223.

¹⁶⁰ OTM, 6:133-43.

¹⁶¹ OTN, 2:329-31.

¹⁶² Tokyo had received a report from Taiwan of the suffering of the Japanese expeditionary forces due to the heat and diseases in early June. See *Meiji Tennō ki*, 3:271.

reference to either the amount of money or the means of payment.¹⁶³ Two days after this, Ōkubo received the Chinese draft of the certificate of payment, appended to the agreement, which refused to pay the money before the withdrawal of the Japanese troops.¹⁶⁴ Wenxiang, who drafted the certificate, believed that the Japanese proposal for payment before withdrawal would reflect badly on China's honor.¹⁶⁵

On October 31 the Zongli Yamen and Ōkubo signed the Beijing Agreement.¹⁶⁶ The contents of the agreement consisted of a preamble and three articles together with the appended certificate of payment and were mostly identical with the Chinese draft. This indicates that Ōkubo finally accepted most of the Chinese proposal, probably because he judged that the Chinese proposals were not injurious to Japanese justice and honor. He may also have wanted to avoid further negotiations which might have worsened Sino-Japanese relations. The agreement first noted that the Japanese expedition was a "righteous action" (*yiju* 義舉) to "protect its subjects" (*baomin* 保民) and that China agreed not to denounce the Japan action. Second, China agreed to "give condolence money" (*fuxu yinliang* 撫恤銀兩) to the families of the Japanese victims who had suffered atrocities in Taiwan and to pay for the Japanese-built facilities that China would use. Third, both countries agreed to bury all of the disputes on the Taiwan crisis, and China promised to adopt measures to prevent any recurrence of the aboriginal atrocities against foreign sailors. The appended certificate stated that China promised to pay 100,000 taels for the families of the Japanese victims, and 400,000 more taels for the Japanese-built facilities after the withdrawal of the Japanese troops from Taiwan.¹⁶⁷

Conclusion

The Chinese reaction to the Japanese expedition to the Taiwanese aboriginal territories is open to criticism in some respects. Whether the Japanese gave explicit prior notice of the expedition remains unknown, but the Zongli Yamen certainly failed to realize that its own statement on the status of the aboriginal territories gave Japan a rationale that would justify military action according to international law. As a result, the Chinese had to encounter news of the Japanese expedition without precautions, measures, or preparations. There is no denying that the early Chinese response to the news that was brought by Westerners and local Qing officials was sluggish and inadequate, even considering their limited capacity for gathering and confirming information.

The Qing officials were by no means completely idle and incompetent in dealing with the crisis, especially once they had confirmed the news of the Japanese expedition. Li Hongzhang responded more swiftly than others, and began to endeavor to cope with the crisis by employing both diplomatic and military countermeasures even before news of the Japanese invasion was confirmed. The Zongli Yamen and the local officials in Fujian Province also tried to take measures necessary to deal with the Japanese invasion when they had finally confirmed the news.

The Chinese countermeasures were inevitably restricted by some existing conditions. The Chinese did not have sufficient confidence in their military capability to flex their muscles and encourage the Japanese to leave Taiwan. Although one might

¹⁶³ DNGB, 7:312-13.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 7:315-16.

¹⁶⁵ FO 17:676, Wade's memorandum, no. 223.

¹⁶⁶ Regarding the further negotiations on the agreement draft, see DNGB, 7:311-16.

¹⁶⁷ YWSM-TZ, 98:16a-17b; DNGB, 7:316-18. For an English translation of the agreement, see *Treaties, Conventions, etc.: Between China and Foreign States*, 2:585-87.

regard this as evidence of a weak or even defeatist attitude on the part of Qing officials, such an accusation would be overly harsh given the fact that Chinese military incompetence was a view shared by Westerners in China at that time. When the Chinese renounced a military solution, only diplomatic measures—direct diplomatic negotiations with the Japanese and the acquisition of support from Western powers—were left to deal with the crisis. Given the undeniable fact of Japanese occupation of the aboriginal territories, the Chinese had to labor at negotiations, which did not go smoothly. Not only could they not win as much Western support as they had expected, but they also had to comply with British pressure.

The result of the lengthy negotiations was a monetary settlement, which should not be simply viewed as China's surrender to Japanese demands. The Chinese did feel humiliation at the Beijing Agreement. It certainly put an end to the Taiwan crisis, but from their point of view, it was the result of their surrendering to British intimidation. However, there was another important fact that the agreement was not the result of China's one-sided diplomatic defeat. The content of the agreement indicates that it also involved Japanese compromises with Chinese desires and efforts to minimize their loss of face.

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