

The Bottleneck in the Formation of “Imperial Japan” under the International Cooperation Principle after WWI: Focusing on the Tanaka Giichi Cabinet’s Concept of Establishment of the Takumushō

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Abstract:

A new ministry for dealing with colonial affairs called the *Takumu* Ministry, or *Takumushō* was established in June 1929 by the Tanaka Giichi Cabinet, a political party cabinet in pre-war Japan. This Ministry has received no small amount of attention in previous studies because it was envisioned not only as an attempt to consolidate colonial administration, but also as a threat to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, while the process by which the original plan was undermined by the opposition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been examined in detail, it is not clear why the Tanaka Cabinet sought to fundamentally reform not only the colonial administrative structure but also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ structure. By also focusing on consuls stationed in neighboring colonial areas (South Seas and Manchuria) after World War I, this paper clarifies the problem pre-war Japan faced in its overseas administration. This was a contradiction with the international cooperation principle faced by the Tanaka Cabinet, which sought to establish “Imperial Japan” in its fullest form under the development of party politics. In other words, reexamining the concept of establishing the *Takumushō* will clarify the contradictions between pre-war Japan’s colonial administrative policies and its international relations, and point out the limitations of the party cabinet system in resolving these issues.

Keywords: *party cabinet, development projects toward overseas, South Seas, Manchuria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Takumushō*

1. Introduction

As a result of its victories in the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and World War I (hereafter, WWI), pre-war Japan took possession of areas adjacent to the Japanese mainland as official or de facto colonies (Taiwan, Korea, South Sakhalin, the Kwantung Leased Territory, Micronesia, and

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the areas immediately adjacent to the South Manchurian Railway line)¹. The greatest characteristic of Japan’s imperialist rule was the expansion of its interests toward the continent by establishing administrative offices in each of these areas (Peattie 2012: 28). Among Japan’s continental orientations, its Manchurian interest was a particular concern, but Manchuria remained a Chinese territory and a “foreign country” in its own right. For this reason, the administration in Manchuria was basically under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter, MOFA), and was clearly distinct from that of Korea, Taiwan, and other “colonies” that had been acquired through the official procedures. In particular, from the 1920s to 1931, the Japanese government was often involved in serious conflicts with China over its interests in Manchuria, but the solution to such problems was left entirely up to the MOFA. However, the issue was never finally resolved through diplomatic negotiations, and the only fundamental solution was the use of force by the Kwantung Army in September 1931. Although this Manchurian Incident brought Manchuria under Japan’s complete control, it ultimately led to a decisive deterioration in international relations. Therefore, it is no surprise that previous research has concentrated on the diplomatic negotiation process at the MOFA.

However, what must not be forgotten here is that during this period, political parties were in charge of the government policy in Japan. In pre-war Japan, from 1924 to 1932, there was a period referred to as the “party cabinet period,” during which the two major political parties (Rikken Seiyūkai and Kenseikai - after 1927, renamed Rikken Minseitō) alternated in government. For this reason, the political issues of Manchuria were strongly intertwined with the context of the development process of party politics, not merely the diplomatic context. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the characteristics of pre-war Japan’s imperialist rule from the perspective of the development of party politics.

Hence, this paper focuses on the process of establishing the *Takumushō* (*Takumu* Ministry), which was founded in June 1929 by the Tanaka Giichi Cabinet, whose ruling party was the Rikken Seiyūkai. Although *Takumushō* translates into English as “the Ministry of Colonial Affairs,” it was not simply in charge of colonial affairs. It was authorized to handle colonial administrative affairs, as well as emigration policies and the guidance and encouragement of overseas economic projects, and was intended to exert influence beyond Japan’s actual colonies². In fact, the original government regulation of *Takumushō* was designed to force fundamental changes to the authority of the MOFA, which had centralized jurisdiction over the overseas administration. In other words, this concept can be evaluated as a challenge to the authority of the MOFA in overseas administration by the Tanaka Cabinet. This concept was unique to Japan with no precedent in any other country³, and moreover, since the

1 The term “colony” as defined by this paper refers to these areas.

2 In fact, government officials seemed to have adopted the translation “the Ministry of Overseas Affairs” (Mitani 2017: 188), and based on the reality of the *Takumushō*, which will be clarified in this paper, “Ministry of Overseas Affairs” would be a more accurate translation.

3 In fact, Foreign Minister Tanaka Giichi ordered each ambassador and minister stationed in Western countries to investigate precedents related to the *Takumushō* plan. The ambassadors and ministers responded with a wide variety of messages, but none of them were precedent-setting regarding the core authority of the *Takumushō* concept, which was for a minister other than the Foreign Minister (i.e., the *Takumu* Minister) to direct and supervise consular officials (*Takumushō Secchi Kankei Ikken (One Matter Relating to the Establishment of the Takumushō)*, First Vol-2, held by Diplomatic Archives of the MOFA of Japan (hereafter, DAF), Digitized copy in JACAR, ref. code: B14090108600). It is clear that the Tanaka Cabinet’s plan to establish an administrative lineage different from that of the MOFA was extremely unique.

Kenseikai Party envisioned the establishment of the *Takumushō* to be in charge of colonial affairs only⁴, it can be evaluated as a unique concept of the Rikken Seiyūkai Party⁵.

Why, then, was a peculiar ministry envisioned and established in the 1920s, when international cooperation became mainstream? Was it to force a change in the centralized overseas administrative structure of the MOFA? Moreover, what were the factors that created the uniqueness of the *Takumushō* in linking overseas industrial and colonial policies? The reasons are thought to be the result of the intersection of two factors, which were the international situation and the domestic situation. In order for Japan, which did not have a promising market within its empire like the Western powers, and which had a small land area and scarce resources, to compete in the international situation of the global economic competition after WWI, it was considered essential to improve national power and to develop economically not only in the official colonies but also in the areas adjacent to the colonies. However, the previous system of centralizing overseas administration under the authority of the MOFA was reaching its limits in the 1920s, despite the fact that under the system of international cooperation after WWI, imperialist expansion abroad through colonial administrative authorities⁶ was being denied (to be analyzed in Section 3, Part 1). On the other hand, in the domestic context, under the pre-war Japanese political system, characterized by a strong bureaucracy under the Emperor (*Tennō*), it was essential to integrate a bureaucracy with autonomy in order for a party cabinet to be firmly established. In fact, at this time, there were serious problems in the overseas territories, where the administrative structures of each colony and the MOFA did not cooperate with each other and moved independently, resulting in mutual conflicts. It is the hypothesis of this paper that the *Takumushō* might have been the concept that was put forth to overcome these problems.

2. Literature Review, Methodology

The process of establishing the *Takumushō* has been the subject of excellent research by Shimizu Hideko and Katō Kiyofumi, and even today theirs remains the commonly accepted theory in understanding it (Shimizu 1967; Katō 1998). These studies evaluated the Tanaka Cabinet's *Takumushō* concept as one that aimed to unify the chain of command in Manchurian-Mongolian administration⁷

4 *Takumushō* as originally conceived by the Kenseikai Party, is aptly translated as “the Ministry of Colonial Affairs.”

5 For this reason, this paper will not use the term “the Ministry of Colonial Affairs,” but will instead use the term “*Takumushō*” in the following discussion. It should be noted that until April 1929, the ministry was to be established under the name “*Takushokushō*,” but the Tanaka Cabinet considered criticism for treating Korea as a colony, so it was ultimately established under the name “*Takumushō*.” However, in the text, to avoid confusion, we use the term “*Takumushō*” in a unified manner.

6 Here, we specifically refer to the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan, the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, and the Kwantung Agency as administrative agencies that had the potential to create conflicts with foreign countries. Furthermore, although the South Manchurian Railway Company also had administrative capabilities and often caused conflicts with China, it was not denied economic advancement under the Washington system, since it was just a company, albeit a national policy company. This point is detailed in (Katō 2000) and is also important for understanding this paper.

7 The Issue of Manchuria-Mongolia refers to the situation in Manchuria where the Fengtian Consulate General, the Kwantung Agency, the Kwantung Army, and the South Manchurian Railway Company could not implement unified policies because they existed without coordination with each other (Katō 2000). In fact, it was this jurisdictional rivalry that spurred the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations leading up to the Manchurian Incident (Esselstrom 2009).

and clearly define responsibility for colonial administration. It then reveals the process by which the *Takumushō* was not given as much authority as initially envisioned due to strong opposition from the MOFA. However, these studies do not actually get to the fundamental reason why the Tanaka Cabinet challenged the authority of the MOFA, since they focus their analysis on how the MOFA succeeded in undermining the authority of the *Takumushō*, which was clearly stated in the original draft of the government regulation, rather than on what problems the *Takumushō* was conceived to overcome. What is needed to resolve this problem in the previous research is to clarify the actual conditions and issues that arose in the colonial-adjacent areas in the 1920s, and then to recapture the intentions of the early *Takumushō* concept.

What is important, then, is an analysis from the perspective of the problem of overpopulation, which has been the subject of much research in recent years. Kobayashi Michihiko regarded the difference between the cooperative diplomacy of Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijuro, and the aggressive diplomacy of Premier Tanaka Giichi, who concurrently held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, as the “gap” between the Seiyūkai and the Kenseikai over the overpopulation issue, and evaluated the Tanaka Cabinet’s colonial management as a means of solving that issue (Kobayashi 1999; 2005). Inoue Masafumi, succeeding Kobayashi’s viewpoint, evaluated the significance of the establishment of the *Takumushō* from the perspective of emigration policy⁸ (Inoue 2020). Thus, it can be said that recent studies have tended to examine the policy slogan of “Industrial Nationalism (*Sangyō Rikkoku*)”⁹ in relation to the problem of overpopulation and to reevaluate the Tanaka Cabinet’s foreign policy and colonial governance concept. However, while these studies focus on emigration policy, a problem remains in that, as analyzed in this paper, they overlook the more important objective of the Tanaka Cabinet, which was to encourage development projects overseas¹⁰.

Furthermore, this paper deals with problems in the areas adjacent to the two major colonies (Taiwan and Korea), such as South China, the South Seas (*Nanyō*), and Manchuria. This is because there has always been a potential conflict between the MOFA and the colonial administrative structure in these regions, and the *Takumushō* was the very concept that aimed to resolve this conflict. In other words, the issue was the nexus of foreign policy and colonial rule. Therefore, it is necessary to organize research that clarifies the actual situation in these areas.

First, the relationship between Taiwan and the South China/South Seas region has been revealed in detail, as the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan was aggressively planning economic and cultural expansion to the south (Shimizu 1986; Cao 2007). More recently, it has been empirically shown that the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan’s policy of taking advantage of the ethnicity of the Taiwanese people to promote a policy of southward expansion had caused various frictions with the consuls in the South Seas (Wang 2018; Shirane 2022). Although the above illustrates that, at the local level, there was constant tension between the colonial institutions that aimed for imperialist expansion and the MOFA, which sought to prevent this from the perspective of international relations, little attention has been paid to attempts by the central government (especially entities other than the

8 For more on the development of emigration policy in the 1920s, see (Takino 2020).

9 Specifically, it refers to the Tanaka Cabinet’s plan to solve the overpopulation problem by promoting industrialization of the heavy and chemical domestic industries and economic expansion into the colonies and Manchuria with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency in raw materials.

10 Moreover, the separation of the policy of encouraging development projects from emigration policy will itself be a feature of this article.

MOFA) to overcome this problem through consolidation by the administrative authority.

Next in importance is the issue of Koreans in Manchuria. This is because there was a more serious conflict between the MOFA and the Office of the Governor-General of Korea over this issue, which came to the fore around 1930. The issue of Koreans in Manchuria has been the focus of interest mainly in the fields of diplomatic history and colonial studies. Recent achievements of the former have tended to focus on the diplomatic negotiation process of the MOFA, which aimed to resolve the usufructuary right of land issue in Manchuria (Kitano 2020a, b; Taneine 2020). Certainly, from the perspective of the collapse of the Washington system, these results are important because they revealed the peculiarities of Japan-China relations that cannot be explained by international cooperation with the West, and the many aspects of Japan's diplomatic stance. In contrast, this article emphasizes that the strategies of the colonial administrative office, local consuls, and the Cabinet's Colonial Bureau (*Naikaku Takushokukyoku*) had a different policy inclination than the line of the MOFA, which attempted to resolve the issue of Koreans in Manchuria through diplomatic negotiations¹¹.

In the field of colonial studies, what this paper should pay attention to here is the existence of a desire within the Japanese government to promote the economic development of Koreans in Manchuria (Mizuno 2007). This idea can be found in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, the local consuls in Manchuria, and the Cabinet's Colonial Bureau. Of further noteworthy reference are the results of Erik Esselstrom's investigation (Esselstrom 2009). He reveals that the local consuls in Manchuria prioritized the crackdown on Korean communist groups by increasing the consular police's jurisdiction over international relations, an opinion that was more hardline than that of the MOFA or the Office of the Governor-General of Korea. In other words, in Manchuria, there were quite serious conflicts between the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, the MOFA, and the local consuls. Therefore, only a political power different from that of the concerned parties could resolve these complex power struggles (Katō 2000). This is why the concept of the Tanaka Cabinet as a party cabinet is so important.

As described above, while these local movements have been detailed, little attention has been paid to the central attempts to overcome the local issues. Moreover, the major problem is that these local issues have not been captured in the studies that have discussed the concept of the establishment of the *Takumushō*. Therefore, the analytical approach taken in this paper is to first identify the issues in the South Seas and Manchuria in Section 3, part 1, and then to shift the focus to the central government in Section 3, part 2 to discover the meaning of the concept of the establishment of the *Takumushō*.

3. Analysis

(1) Limitations of the Centralization of Overseas Administration by the MOFA

1) Post-WWI Issue for the MOFA as seen from the Perspective of its Policy toward the South Seas

This chapter reveals that in the South Seas and Manchuria regions, which were adjacent colonial areas in Imperial Japan, the policy of encouraging economic development projects by consulates had

11 It is important to note, however, that the *Takumushō* concept, which attempted to meet different demands from the MOFA, was indeed in line with international cooperation.

reached its limits and was unable to cope with the economic situation after WWI. This will allow us to clarify the reasons for the Tanaka Cabinet’s decision to establish a ministry in charge of overseas administration other than the MOFA, based on the actual situation on the ground.

Before moving on to the analysis, it is important to first confirm the importance of the policy of encouraging overseas entrepreneurship and economic development to the Tanaka Cabinet. Article 1 of the “Government Regulation of *Takumushō*” stipulates that the ministry “shall manage affairs related to emigration and matters concerned with the guidance and encouragement of overseas development projects,” indicating that the latter was also recognized as an important issue. Furthermore, the Tanaka Giichi Cabinet emphasized the policy of encouraging development projects rather than the policy of emigration. Under the Tanaka Cabinet, the following draft report prepared by the Investigative Committee of Overpopulation and Food Problems (*Jinkō Shokuryō Mondai Chōsakai*), one of the most important policy investigation bodies for the Tanaka Cabinet, was approved by the Cabinet Meeting held on October 3, 1928. Hatoyama Ichirō, Chief Cabinet Secretary, reported:

The fundamental measures to deal with the overpopulation problems of the regions outside of the Japanese archipelago, especially Korea and Taiwan, require more careful consideration. [...] The transfer of large numbers of Japanese people into these regions would only cause anxiety among their inhabitants and is practically impossible. Moreover, the reason for taking measures in Manchuria and Mongolia, Siberia, and the South Seas, which are closely related to these areas, is not to directly alleviate the increase in the domestic population, but to contribute to the development of our country by cultivating the land, and developing the resources and industries in those areas.¹²

In this way, the Tanaka Cabinet did not envision a solution to the overpopulation problem through the active encouragement of an emigration policy. Rather, the main objective was to advance Japan’s economic expansion overseas and increase its national power by promoting land and resource development in Manchuria and Mongolia, Siberia, and the South Seas, which had close ties with the colonies of Korea and Taiwan, and to accomplish this policy, it was necessary to overcome the problems that emerged after WWI. This will be discussed next.

The outbreak of WWI temporarily reduced the dominance of Western powers in East Asia. The emergence of this gap prompted the various Japanese administrative agencies to take measures to expand their economic influence abroad. To cite one of the most symbolic examples, the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan and the Taiwan Bank had a plan to establish a large economic zone between Taiwan and the South Seas by establishing new banks and companies that would be the main players in finance, transportation, and industry, in order to counter the restoration of commercial rights by the Western powers after the end of WWI (Sogō 2018). Further, in the late 1920s, there was a growing demand to position the South Seas as a source of raw materials and a sales channel for products, and to revitalize trade with the South Seas by industrializing the main island of Taiwan (Namikata 2000; Sogō 2020). Katayama Saburō, Director General of the Industrial Bureau of the

12 Hatoyama Ichirō, Chief Cabinet Secretary, “Jinkō Shokuryō Chōsakai no Tōshin ni Kansuru Ken (A Matter Concerning the Report of the Population and Food Problems Investigative Committee),” October 3, 1928, *Kakugi Tou Kankei Bunsho*, held by National Archives of Japan (hereafter, NAJ), Digitized copy in Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), ref. code: A16110887400.

Taiwan Governor-General, made the following statement at the First South Seas Trade Conference (*Nanyō Bōeki Kaigi*) held in November 1926, which will be discussed later, and it clearly shows the scope of the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan's economic development project in the South Seas:

The conclusion of the survey conducted by the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan was that cultivation enterprises should be the first priority as promising enterprises in the South Seas, not only because of the generous land laws and vast scope for development, but also because of the considerable knowledge and experience of Japanese nationals. Rubber and coconut palms, of course, but also rice, cotton, sugar, spices, etc., are also possible. [...] We hope that Taiwan will become a foothold and a source of strategies to develop the South Seas in general.

The plan envisioned the following methods of supporting industrial development, with finance as the most fundamental and important one: “assigning overseas agricultural leaders, providing education and sanitation for residents, and organizing industrial associations¹³.” In short, in the South Seas, where restrictions on emigration by the West, particularly British and French, were strict, the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan sought to strengthen the economic ties between Taiwan and the South Seas by encouraging companies to expand into areas where regulations were relatively loose. Therefore, since WWI, the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan and the Taiwan Bank had been constantly observing and investigating the economic situation in the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, British Malaya, the French West Indies, and Siam.

Throughout the 1920s, however, these demands from the Taiwan side were not met to their satisfaction. Businessmen and bureaucrats of that period believed that the problem was the political system that could not cope with this situation. The first problem was the lack of administrative skills in industrial policy among consular officers stationed locally, as Tsukui Seiichirō, the general manager of Mitsui & Co., Ltd. Taipei branch, said, “I wonder if there is not something regrettable about the measures taken by our consular officers in various parts of South China and the South Seas¹⁴.” According to Motomiya Kazuo, in the 1920s, while the principles of free trade were becoming mainstream, the traditional trade policy of the MOFA was reaching its limits in terms of responsiveness, and it became necessary to incorporate the expertise of other ministries. This resulted in the creation of the Commercial Officer System, whose officers were recruited mainly from the private business community and dispatched to consulates in key overseas locations. The Trade and Commerce Bureau of the MOFA also expected the commercial officers to serve as the brains behind trade policy deliberations (Motomiya 1990; 1995)¹⁵. Since the commercial officers' objective was to promote the export of Japanese products, their main targets were Europe, the U.S., and India. Therefore, with reference to the above research framework of Motomiya, it will be necessary to identify the issues of the 1920s in terms of encouraging development projects.

13 “*Dai Ikkai Bōeki Kaigi Giji Yōshi (Miteikō) (Highlights of the First Trade Conference (not yet finalized) / 1926,*” held by DAF, JACAR, ref. code: B10070524100.

14 Tsukui Seiichirō, “Nanshi Nanyō ni Shōmukan Shinsetsu no Teishō (Proposal to Establish a New Commercial Officer in the South China and South Seas).” December 1923, *Taiwan Jihō (Taiwan Times)*, Taiwan: Taipei, 51, 22.

15 The commercial officers were established in Shanghai, London, New York, Singapore, and Buenos Aires, and continued to expand to Moscow, Berlin, and Mumbai after 1926, and to Constantinople and Batavia after 1928.

While the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan and the business community in Taiwan were dissatisfied with the situation in which the MOFA and the consular officer were centrally responsible for overseas development, the consular side also recognized this problem. The First South Seas Consular Conference (*Nanyō Ryōji Kaigi*) held in 1922 provided relief measures through low-interest loans to subsidize South Seas enterprises (especially rubber cultivation operations in the Malay Peninsula, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines). These were identical to the policy orientation of the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan, but the consuls were warned against the colonial authorities operating independently from the MOFA in terms of foreign relations. The conference further resolved that “since the South Seas and India are not suitable as emigration areas, we desire that the Japanese government establish a fundamental policy based thereon, since it has no choice but to concentrate all its efforts on economic development, especially peaceful development away from territorial ambitions¹⁶.” In other words, the second problem was that the local response was limited by the lack of sufficient understanding and assistance from the central government.

As an extension of these issues, the First South Seas Trade Conference was held under the MOFA in November 1926. Three topics were discussed at this major event: “Business and Investment in the South Seas and the Indies,” “Trade in the South Seas and the Indies,” and “Tariffs and Trade Treaties.” Therein, a question was raised as to the reason for the absence of representatives of Japanese companies in overseas territories, despite the seemingly excessive number of officers of administrative agencies for trade. Furthermore, it was also suggested that the central government should be responsible for this since it had been considered irregular for the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan to focus its efforts on the South Seas in the past¹⁷. It can be seen that the central government’s response was most important as a solution to the problem.

The above discussion can be summarized as follows. Under the circumstances of global economic competition after WWI, the MOFA itself felt the limitations of the conventional consular system, and the commercial officer system was designed to respond to this situation. However, this system was only designed to promote exports to Europe, the U.S., and India (the principle of free trade), and the issue of the developing project of subsidizing South Seas enterprises remained unresolved. Furthermore, as this situation developed, demands for the expansion of overseas economic influence arose from within the colonial authority of the Taiwan Governor-General, and this was a problem that inevitably conflicted with the centralized administrative system of the MOFA (and consular officers). The combination of the denial of such colonial institutions’ overseas expansion under the principle of internationalism and the chronic recession throughout the empire led to a period of stagnation in Japan’s southward expansion policy. As a result, the consular side and the business community demanded that the central government actively guide and encourage the economic development projects of the South Seas region. Considering the above, it can be understood that the document presented at the beginning of this paper in Section 1 above, concerning a cabinet meeting decision of the Tanaka Cabinet, was in response to such a demand from the local community. In fact,

16 “Dai Ikkai Nanyō Ryōji Kaigi Ketsugi (Resolution of the First South Seas Consular Conference) (1922),” *Dai Ikkai Bōeki Kaigi Ikken/Tsūshōkyoku Junbi Chōsho (One Matter Relating to the First Trade Meeting / Preparation Record by the Trade and Commerce Bureau)*, Vol.1, held by DAF, JACAR, ref. code: B10073832000.

17 Mentioned above, “Dai Ikkai Bōeki Kaigi Giji Yōshi (Miteikō) (Highlights of the First Trade Conference (not yet finalized) / 1926.” Both statements were made by Soejima Yasoroku, Executive Director of the Japan-India Society.

that historical document describes the following solution:

To cooperate in the promotion of the production of food and raw materials in the South Seas region in full agreement with the relevant countries, and to take measures for the protection of emigrants, the encouragement of enterprises, the lending of funds, etc., and to subsidize the establishment of agricultural research institutes in the region, and to improve the industrial laboratories in Taiwan, and to provide other facilities.¹⁸

2) The Issue of Koreans in Manchuria from the Consular Officer's Perspective

In this section, the issue of Korea, which was one of Japan's major colonies, together with Taiwan, and its neighboring region of Manchuria, will be reviewed from the consular side. It was during the spring and summer of 1928 that the demands for institutional reform from consular officials in Manchuria increased sharply. Although the Tanaka Cabinet's plan to establish the *Takumushō* was already in full swing, this section should be discussed first because the intention of the concept of the establishment of the *Takumushō* can be grasped only after an analysis of the situation in Manchuria.

In the background of the issue of Koreans in Manchuria, there were deep-rooted complex problems in the development process of modern Japanese diplomacy for dealing with China, which cannot be explained in detail here. It is important to note, however, that most of the factors causing the issue of Koreans in Manchuria are to be found in the fact that although Manchuria was a "foreign country" on Chinese territory, several colonial administrative agencies were involved due to the large number of "Koreans" living there. It is important to note that during the Hara Takashi Cabinet (1918-1921), it was decided that the Office of the Korean Governor-General would be entrusted with the responsibility for supporting the active economic activities and migration of Koreans in Manchuria, while the MOFA would be responsible for their protection and security. However, it was hard to officially promote the policy of supporting the development of the Korean residents, since the Korean Governor-General had no legitimate jurisdiction within sovereign Chinese territory¹⁹.

Then, the Nationalist Party in China led by Chiang Kai-shek launched the "Northern Expedition," dealing with the infringement of Japan's special interests in Manchuria and "protecting" the livelihood of Japanese (including Koreans) residents in north China emerged as a top priority for the central government²⁰. In this delicate international environment, a committee was convened at the MOFA on April 19, 1928, to discuss measures to deal with the large-scale oppression of Koreans in Manchuria by Chinese officials that had occurred in December 1927. It was an informal committee that was held to "research whether or not there was a need to make any changes in the existing facilities and plan for Koreans, and to establish a definite policy for their stabilization and strict control in Manchuria." Under the MOFA, the relevant authorities, including higher officials from the Cabinet's Colonial

18 Mentioned above, "Jinkō Shokuryō Chōsakai no Tōshin ni Kansuru Ken (A Matter Concerning the Report of the Population and Food Problems Investigative Committee)."

19 However, through its support for private organizations such as the Korean People's Association (*Chōsenjinminkai*), the Office of the Governor-General of Korea was promoting this policy from behind the scenes (Sim 1993: 175-182).

20 The "non-interference in internal affairs" policy of Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijūrō and the diplomatic policy of Tanaka Giichi, who twice attempted to invade Shandong to protect Manchurian interests and the Japanese residents through his alliance with Zhang Zuolin, ruler of the Northeast, are contrasted as "internationalism diplomacy" and "aggressive diplomacy."

Bureau, the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, the Kwantung Agency (*Kantō chō*), the Ministry of War, and the General Staff Headquarters, gathered at the site. There, a basic draft prepared in advance by a committee within the MOFA consisting of the Political Vice-Minister, the Administrative Vice-Minister, the Director-General of the Asian Bureau, the Director-General of the Treaty Bureau, the Director-General of the Trade and Commerce Bureau, and the Directors of the First and Second Sections of the Asian Bureau was presented for discussion.

In that draft, there were five proposals²¹. However, the MOFA’s final position was as follows:

As has been explained above, there are circumstances that make it difficult or impractical to implement any of the above-mentioned plans, so there is no alternative but to let the issue of Koreans in Manchuria be handled by our government officials in accordance with conventional policy, at least until the implementation of the above Article (5) becomes feasible.²²

In short, the conclusion of the MOFA was that, although various solutions to the issue of Koreans in Manchuria had been devised, they were all to be put off until a later date and left to be handled individually by the local consular police, as had been the previous policy. The past policy was to “avoid aggressive measures as much as possible, in consideration of the fact that the protection, favoring, and control of Koreans in Manchuria could easily cause undesirable problems with the Chinese side.” Furthermore, regarding the administration of development of the Korean economy, it was stated that “while the aforementioned policy of protection and control is being pursued, [...] it is better for the Imperial Government to avoid the appearance of being directly involved in this matter.” The MOFA, which put the highest priority on international relations, indicated that it would shelve a policy-based solution to the issue of Koreans in Manchuria. In the end, since neither the Cabinet’s Colonial Bureau, the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, nor the Kwantung Agency could come up with an effective counterproposal to this suggestion, the “preservation of status quo” was decided upon as an agreement between the Korean and Manchurian governing bodies²³.

What is noteworthy here, however, is the opinion of the Kwantung Agency. Not only did the Kwantung Agency advocate active protection of Koreans in Manchuria, but it also called for the government to actively subsidize the development of capital-based agricultural operations in Manchuria in order to achieve the objectives of procuring food and raw materials²⁴. It is notable that the Kwantung Agency, which at this point held primary supervisory authority over the South

21 Contents were as follows: (1) To attempt to resolve the issue of usufructuary right of land through negotiations with China. (2) To recognize China’s right to the policing and taxation of Koreans and to have jurisdiction over lawsuits on their land in exchange for allowing Koreans the right to use their land in Manchuria. (3) To enforce the nationality law in Korea and allow Koreans to live as naturalized Chinese. (4) To abolish the extraterritorial rights of Koreans in Manchuria and open the interior of Manchuria to Koreans. (5) To abolish the extraterritorial rights for Imperial subjects in Manchuria and to open the interior of Manchuria to Japanese and Koreans.

22 All the above quotations are from the following document: “Zai Man Chōsenjin Mondai Chōsaiinkai (Committee for Investigation of the Issue of Korean in Manchuria),” *Saikin Shina Kankei Shomondai Tekiyō (Summary of Recent Various Issues Relating to China)* Vol.5, held by DAF, JACAR, ref. code: B13081179500.

23 Mentioned above, “Committee for Investigation of the Issue of Koreans in Manchuria.”

24 “Zai Man Chōsenjin Mondai Chōsaiinkai/Besshi Kō Otsu Hei Gō (Committee for Investigation of the Issue of Korean in Manchuria/Appendix A, B, and C),” *Summary of Recent Various Issues Relating to China*, Vol.5, held by DAF, JACAR, ref. code: B13081179600.

Manchurian Railway Company (hereafter, SMR), sought to carry out an aggressive development policy in this manner. Meanwhile, the MOFA was extremely concerned about the situation in which the colonial administrative office, the Kwantung Agency, was expanding not only into Kwantung Province, but also into Manchuria, both administratively and economically (Katō 2000).

In addition, what this paper would like to focus on here is that, in contrast to the passive stance of the MOFA and the colonial administration, it was the consuls stationed in Manchuria who voiced aggressive opinions. In August 1928, a three-day meeting of the Consulate-General in Manchuria was held in Fengtian (Mukden) by order of the MOFA. The issue of Koreans living in Manchuria was discussed here, and the following four items were resolved:

- (1) From now on, the MOFA will be in charge of all matters concerning Koreans in Manchuria, rather than maintaining the status quo.
- (2) From the viewpoint of (1) above, the Korean Affairs Section within the MOFA should be enhanced, and full-time officers dealing with Korean affairs should be increased or appointed at major consulates in Manchuria and Far Eastern Russia (possibly referring to Siberia) to take more effective and appropriate measures concerning affairs for Koreans in Manchuria.
- (3) Improvement of the investigation function of each consulate in Manchuria.
- (4) Negotiation with the MOFA on measures to improve the situation of Koreans in Manchuria, such as institutions for ideological guidance, emigration associations, low-interest loans, increased subsidies for associations of Korean residents which were responsible for the development of Koreans, the establishment of poor shelters, and the introduction of methods to encourage side jobs²⁵.

As is clear at first glance, the consular officers in Manchuria recognized that while strengthening protection was a major premise, an even more important issue was how to promote the economic development of the Koreans in Manchuria. In fact, Hayashi Kyūjirō, Consul General of Fengtian, who was a representative of the Consular Conference in Manchuria, negotiated with Foreign Minister Tanaka Giichi, stating that “For control of the dissidents and the communists among Koreans in Manchuria it is not sufficient merely to crack down on the independence of Red Movements, but it can only be achieved by stabilizing their lives and guiding their ideas²⁶.” It should be clear that this resolution is opposed to the previous MOFA’s policy of not actively assisting the government with regard to the development of Koreans in Manchuria.

Although the situation differs in some respects from the issues in the South Seas²⁷, it can be said

25 “Zai Man Chōsenjin Mondai ni Kansuru Kaigi (Conference on the Issue of Korean in Manchuria),” *Ryōji Kaigi Kankei Zakken/Zai Man Ryōji Kaigi (Miscellaneous Matters Relating to the Consular Conference / Consular Conference in Manchuria)*, Vol.2, Enacted in 1928, held by DAF, JACAR, ref. code: B15100139100.

26 Telegram from Hayashi Kyūjirō Consul General of Fengtian to Foreign Minister Tanaka Giichi, August 25, 1928, *Miscellaneous Matters Relating to the Consular Conference / Consular Conference in Manchuria*, Vol.2.

27 The critical difference from the South Seas issue is that the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan had the economic development of the South Seas as its primary goal, which was shared with the consuls as a basic premise, and differences existed regarding the subject matter, while the Office of the Governor-General of Korea did not necessarily have the development of the Koreans in Manchuria as its main goal. The Korean Governor-General’s first priority was to ensure the stability of Korean rule, and therefore, strengthening police protection against the independence movement and “recalcitrant Koreans (*Futei Senjin*)” was more important (Esselstrom

that the problem was broadly the same in that the development of the Japanese people (including the inhabitants of its colonies) was hindered by a lack of government assistance in encouraging development projects, and that this problem had the potential to cause friction between the colonial administration and the consulates because of their proximity to the colonies. In fact, the Kwantung Agency and the MOFA had always been in a state of tension over the conduct of development affairs. This was one factor in the need for a responsible ministry that would combine effective economic development policies abroad with improved colonial administrative procedures. Once again, looking back at the document presented at the beginning of this paper in Section 1 above, the following measures were proposed: to establish land relationships in Manchuria and Mongolia and to improve agricultural financial institutions through mutual consultation between Japan and China; to promote the development of Manchuria and Mongolia’s mine of wealth, especially food and raw material production, through Sino-Japanese joint ventures; to take measures to develop the mine of wealth in the Siberian region and to stabilize the lives of Japanese and Koreans in that region through mutual consultation between Japan and Russia²⁸.

(2) The Tanaka Giichi Cabinet’s Challenge to the MOFA

1) The Issue to be overcome by the Party Cabinet

The Washington system, which defined international politics in the 1920s, was a rejection of the explicit expansion by imperialist interests in its previous form. This means that the method of external expansion through colonial administrative agencies should be rejected from the perspective of internationalism (Katō 2000). In this context, it was appropriate that the intention behind the Taiwan Governor-General’s promotion toward South development policy was pointed out as “irregular” at the First South Seas Trade Conference. Therefore, in order to increase national power while conforming to the form of internationalism, it was necessary to reduce the power of the colonial administrative authorities while at the same time stimulating economic activity toward overseas.

However, as discussed in the previous section, both in the South Seas and in Manchuria, the limitation of economic development under a unified consular system had been pointed out. Viewed only from the perspective of international cooperation, the most appropriate approach would have been to reduce the authority of the colonial administration and expand the functions of the consulates as much as possible, such as advocated by the Consular Conference in Manchuria. However, there were factors in the political situation in pre-war Japan that prevented this approach from being taken.

In pre-war Japan, party politics was required to fulfill two roles: (1) to realize “politics through democratic procedures” in order to respond to the trend toward democratization (Taishō democracy) since the Taishō era (1912-1926); (2) to be an integrated body of the constitutional system of the Empire of Japan (Meiji Constitutional System) characterized by a high degree of division of power in order to build a strong political system that could respond to global economic competition after WWI. It was constitutional scholar Minobe Tatsukichi who theoretically explained party politics as a political system that could simultaneously fulfill both of these roles. Minobe put forth the logic that the

2009: 73). This could also be the reason why the Office of the Governor-General of Korea basically did not object to the MOFA’s proposal.

28 Mentioned above, “*Jinkō Shokuryō Chōsakai no Tōshin ni Kansuru Ken* (A Matter Concerning the Report of the Population and Food Problems Investigative Committee).”

Ministers of State were superior to other powers because they had the responsibility to the Imperial Diet as well as to the Emperor, as opposed to the various authorities that were responsible only to the Emperor (The Responsibility of Counseling the Emperor). He then positioned the Cabinet, composed of Ministers of State, as the highest decision-making body, and stated that a party cabinet made up by including like-minded party members would provide the most stable political management, since Cabinet decisions would be unanimous²⁹. Moreover, the Rikken Seiyūkai Party, one of the two major political parties in pre-war Japan, had been trying to build a political system centered on Ministers of State based on Minobe's logic, and the Tanaka Cabinet was the culmination of this effort (Sogō 2022).

However, there remained some crucial issues to be addressed. Even during the period when party politics was customarily established, Foreign Ministers were basically appointed from the foreign affairs bureaucracy outside of the party. This was due to a problem peculiar to Japan, in that the supreme diplomatic power of the Emperor was the basis for preserving the independence of the MOFA, and there was a tacit understanding that the Ministry should basically be aloof from political parties and factions. Thus, the autonomy of the MOFA in foreign policy was consolidated at the end of WWI (Chiba 2008: 3-55). Nevertheless, during the Seiyūkai government, the Prime Minister also served as Foreign Minister in the Tanaka Cabinet, and Yoshizawa Kenkichi, a member of the Seiyūkai party, was appointed to the post in the Inukai Tsuyoshi Cabinet. In other words, the Seiyūkai was oriented to appoint party members as Foreign Ministers as well.

The second problem was that, because of the lack of a competent ministry, there was no basis for integrating colonial administration into the Cabinet. Therefore, after 1924, when party politics was in full swing, both the two major political parties (the Seiyūkai party and the Kenseikai party) began to consider establishing the *Takumushō*.

The third, and perhaps most serious problem was that there were limits to the ability of individuals such as Ministers of State or Governor-Generals to consolidate a bureaucracy that had expanded dramatically as a result of the increased administrative demands since WWI. In fact, the result of this was that party politics ultimately lost its executive power due to the reduced ability of the Ministers of State to consolidate (Wakatsuki 2014; Sogō 2021). Therefore, in order to maximize the inherent strengths of the Party Cabinet System, it was essential to reform the existing system within the bureaucracy (Sogō 2022).

Thus, the *Takumushō* was planned precisely in the context of solving these problems. It was conceived not only to provide the Cabinet with a foothold from which to unify the policy of colonial affairs, but also to undermine the independence of the MOFA. The fundamental purpose of this policy was the guidance and encouragement of overseas economic development projects, which were mentioned in the previous section. From the time he formed his Cabinet, Prime Minister Tanaka believed that "Economic Diplomacy" would be the focus of foreign policy from then on, and although he failed, he was willing to appoint Inoue Junnosuke, who had served as Governor of the Bank of Japan and Minister of Finance, as Foreign Minister. The Tanaka Cabinet's personnel decisions were clearly unique compared to other regimes in that party members from the business community who were experienced in running businesses in China were selected for key positions (Matsuura 2020)³⁰.

29 Minobe Tatsukichi. 1912. *Kenpō Kōwa (Constitutional Lecture)*, Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 148-150.

30 For example, Nakahashi Tokugorō, Minister of Commerce and Industry; Yamamoto Jōtarō, President of the SMR; Mori Tsutomu, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs; Kuhara Fusanosuke, Minister of Communications, etc.

Moreover, the most distinctive feature of the Tanaka Cabinet, as Satō Motoei’s study pointed out, was its diplomatic methods that bypassed the MOFA, such as the railroad negotiations with Zhang Zuolin through Yamamoto Jōtarō, the president of the SMR (Satō 2000ab). In fact, Prime Minister Tanaka himself believed that the MOFA’s traditional diplomatic policy (“*Kasumigaseki Gaikō*”) could not enhance Japan’s national strength, and stated that he would reform and rebuild the MOFA. Koyama Toshiki described Tanaka’s approach as “Diplomacy led by the Prime Minister’s Office” (Koyama 2018).

Considering Prime Minister Tanaka’s orientation described above, the true purpose of the establishment of the *Takumushō* emerges. The Tanaka Cabinet aimed to establish a centralized administrative structure based on a proactive industrial promotion policy by incorporating the guidance and encouragement of economic development projects into the *Takumushō*, thereby joining the colonial industrial system with the economic development policies of adjacent overseas regions. Moreover, it is critically important to note that it was conceived in close association with the purpose of fundamentally improving the internal structure of the MOFA, which was essential for the healthy functioning of the Party Cabinet System under the Meiji Constitutional System.

For this reason, the framework for the establishment of the *Takumushō* forced a fundamental change in the existing structure of the MOFA and the consular officers. The Tanaka Cabinet’s intention was to place consular officers under the direction and supervision of the Colonial (*Takumu*) Minister, and to open the way for officials of the *Takumushō* to serve as consul general and consular officers at the same time³¹. This was, in the words of the Asian Bureau of the MOFA, “like turning Consular Officers into Colonial Officers³².”

2) The Challenge of the Tanaka Cabinet in the Process of Establishing the *Takumushō*

On November 29, 1927, the Tanaka Cabinet approved the “Report on the Improvement of the Administration in Manchuria and the Establishment of the *Takumushō*,” which had been deliberated by the Administrative System Council (*Gyōseiseido Shingikai*). Its main characteristic was to put the SMR at the core of the Manchurian-Mongolian administration, as it was called “Great SMR Centralism (*Daimantetsushugi*)³³.” Therefore, the report was planning to have the Consul General of Fengtian under the control of the SMR by investigating “whether or not a vice president or director of the SMR could concurrently serve as Consul General of Fengtian while in office.” In addition, the report also proposed that one or two SMR directors were to be stationed in Fengtian constantly. Since it originally had only administrative authority over the areas immediately adjacent to the SMR line, there were limits to the scope of SMR’s leadership of economic development policies in Manchuria. However, if the Consul General of Fengtian were to be positioned as the center of the entire

31 Telegram from Foreign Minister Tanaka Giichi to Ambassador Ariyoshi Akira in Brazil, August 31, 1928, *Nihon Gaikō Monjo (Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy)*, Showa Period 1, Part 2, Vol.4, 278-279. In this telegram, Tanaka stated, “Regarding the basic policy, the situation in Japan is difficult to change at this time, and the original plan to direct and supervise consular officer is quite influential, and therefore this point should be considered.”

32 The Asian Affairs Bureau of the MOFA, “Takushokushō Secchi An ni Kansuru Ken (A Matter Relating to the Draft of the Establishment of the *Takushokushō*),” November 24, 1927, *Takumushō Secchi Kankei Ikken (One Matter Relating to the Establishment of the Takumushō)*, First Vol-1, ref. code: B14090108500.

33 The SMR which was able to control many administrative functions, including industrial policy, as well as the space of public discourse through the “*Manshū Nippō* (Manchurian Daily)” was an extremely important institution for the political parties to expand their influence in Manchuria (Revelant 2021).

Manchurian region and controlled by the SMR, the influence of the SMR would expand greatly. Hence, the report stated that “the position of the Consul General of Fengtian should be raised” and that “the consular officers in Manchuria should be directed and supervised by the Consul General of Fengtian³⁴.” From the above, it can be clearly seen that the Tanaka Cabinet’s aim was to make economic inroads toward Manchuria through “economic diplomacy” centered on the SMR³⁵.

The report entitled “A Matter Concerning the Establishment of the *Takumushō*” stipulated that the Ministry would take charge of administrative affairs related to Korea, Taiwan, the Kwantung Leased Territory, Micronesia and the areas immediately adjacent to the SMR line, affairs related to the SMR, emigration affairs, and affairs related to guidance and encouragement of overseas development projects. The definition of “development projects (*Takushoku jigyō*)” by the Cabinet’s Colonial Bureau was as follows: The term “foreign development projects” means projects operated by Japanese subjects in foreign countries, which belong to native industries or industries mainly using local products as raw materials, as well as projects directly incidental to such industries³⁶. Thus, it can be said that the key to the Tanaka Cabinet’s plan was to integrate the development policies related to economy and industry by the Japanese living overseas and the administration of the colonies by bringing them under the authority of the same ministry.

Furthermore, it also provided that the *Takumu* Minister should, to the extent necessary, be given supervisory authority over consular officers about the affairs under its jurisdiction. Moreover, it also stipulated that officials of the *Takumushō* would be stationed in key regions overseas to engage in affairs related to the guidance and encouragement of overseas emigration and development projects.

The places where these officials would be working were Singapore, Manila, Davao, Batavia (Jakarta), Medan, Mazatlan, Lima, Sao Paulo, Riveirao Plate, and Bauru. While the aforementioned Commercial Officer System covered Europe, the United States, and India, it is clear that the South Seas and South America were envisioned here. The purpose of South America might have been to encourage emigration, while the main objective of the South Seas was undoubtedly to provide guidance and encouragement for the economic development projects described in Section 1, paragraph 1. In fact, the Cabinet’s Colonial Bureau insisted on the following opinion:

The only way to protect and manage overseas residents was to have consular officers take charge of this task, but since consular officers were not accustomed to providing administrative support and had many regrets regarding the guidance and encouragement of development projects, the *Takumushō* should direct and supervise them, and at the same time newly station officials of the *Takumushō* in key areas to contribute to the operation of the overseas development affairs.³⁷

34 Gyōsei Seido Shingikai Kanji (Organizer of the Administrative System Council), “Manshū Gyōsei Kaizen ni Kansuru Ken (A Matter Relation to the Improvement of Manchurian Administration),” *Gyōsei Seido Shingikai Shorui (Documents of the Administrative System Council)*, Vol.3, held by NAJ, JACAR, ref. code: A05021093900.

35 In fact, at the same time, Tanaka Cabinet was also attempting to reduce the authority of the Kwantung Agency. Thus, the move to reduce the authority of the colonial government and to make economic expansion by the SMR the central policy was in itself a move in accordance with the principle of international cooperation.

36 The Cabinet’s Colonial Bureau, “Ketsugi An (Resolution),” *One Matter Relating to the Establishment of the Takumushō*, Vol.2-1, held by DAF, JACAR, ref. code: B14090109100.

37 The Cabinet’s Colonial Bureau, “Takushokushō Secchi no Riyū (The Reason for the Establishment of the Takushokushō).” *One Matter Relating to the Establishment of the Takumushō*, Vol.1-1.

Crucially, this plan to force a change in the MOFA was based on the belief that the reason why the advancement of Japan’s development projects had been so sluggish compared to Western countries was due to the fact that the government had been almost completely neglectful in the past about providing guidance and encouragement for such projects³⁸. It can be understood that the *Takumushō* was conceived as a measure to overcome the issue of the centralized overseas administration by the MOFA and consular officers, which had been highlighted in the post WWI situation.

For this reason, the Trade and Commerce Bureau of the MOFA was of the opinion that there was no objection to having officials of the *Takumushō* take charge of administrative affairs under a consular officer, as this was a trend that would naturally result from the development of national institutions³⁹. In other words, for the Trade and Commerce Bureau of the MOFA, which had recognized the limitations of the existing consular system, it could be an advantage in the conduct of “economic diplomacy” as long as the consular officer could adequately supervise the officers of the *Takumushō*. Still, this was fundamentally incompatible with the idea of the *Takumushō* as the controlling authority for overseas industrial policy, since consular officials from the MOFA would supervise the newly established officials from the *Takumushō*. It should be noted that the MOFA was unanimous in its rejection of the most important objective of the Tanaka Cabinet’s plan.

However, the MOFA’s draft of Higher Decision stated that it had no objection to including such affairs of emigration as the authority of the *Takumu* Minister, while it expressed opposition to the inclusion of the affairs of development projects in foreign countries⁴⁰. Thus, the MOFA as a whole maintained its conventional stance of being reluctant to provide guidance for the development projects, and there were still many factions that sought to maintain the traditional style of the MOFA.

The above was mainly aimed at consular officers in the South Seas and South America, but the Tanaka Cabinet’s intention to more directly control Japanese and Koreans in China and Siberia by encouraging development projects was expressed in the draft of the official regulations of the *Takumushō*. This was clearly demonstrated by the division of duties between the Colonial Bureau (*Takushokukyoku*) and the *Takumu* Bureau (*Takumukyoku*) within the *Takumushō*. It is noteworthy that in the original draft of the official regulations, the following affairs were placed under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Bureau of the *Takumushō*: 1) duties related to industry, transportation, communications, finance, taxation, and monopoly in Korea, Taiwan, South Sakhalin, the Kwantung Leased Territory, Micronesia and the areas immediately adjacent to the SMR line⁴¹; 2) duties related to the supervision of the operations of the SMR and the Oriental Development Company (*Toyo Takushoku Kabushikigaisya*); and 3) duties related to the protection and guidance of the development projects in China and Siberia⁴². In other words, the aim of the concept of establishing the *Takumushō* was to create a unified leadership system for industrial policy in the colonies and their neighboring areas

38 Mentioned above, “The Reason for the Establishment of the *Takumushō*.”

39 Taketomi Toshihiko, Director General of the Trade and Commerce Bureau of the MOFA, “*Takushokushō Secchi ni tomonau Gaimushō Tsūshōkyoku Jimu Kengen...* (Personal Opinion on the Affairs and Authority of the Trade and Commerce Bureau of the MOFA with the Establishment of the *Takushokushō*).” *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy*, Showa Period 1, Part 2, Vol 4, 273-274.

40 Decision of the MOFA at the end of 1927, “Kosai An (Draft of Higher Decision).” *One Matter Relating to the Establishment of the Takumushō*, Vol.1-2, JACAR, ref. code: B14090108600.

41 In other words, these are areas that were subject to Japanese jurisdiction, and are defined as “colonies” in this paper.

42 Mentioned above, the Cabinet’s Colonial Bureau, “Resolution.”

through a policy of the guidance and encouragement of development projects. The fact that development projects in other regions (e.g., the South Seas and South America) were not under the jurisdiction of the *Takushoku* bureau, but that of the *Takumu* bureau, indicates that the Tanaka Cabinet intended to treat the development projects in China (specifically, Manchuria and Mongolia) and Siberia as an extension of the colonial administration⁴³.

Importantly, this concept sought to resolve the conflicts between the colonial authorities and consular officers that had emerged after WWI, to establish a system compatible with internationalism, and to actively pursue industrial development overseas. For this reason, the Tanaka Cabinet strongly emphasized the legitimacy of clarifying its responsibilities to the Imperial Diet and the Emperor, as well as envisioning a radical institutional reform regarding the overseas and colonial administration system, challenging the MOFA. It was an essential procedure for party politics to establish a unified system centered on the Minister of State, which was its strength. In this sense, the Tanaka Cabinet was the purest party cabinet in terms of its formation.

If the *Takumushō* had been established as originally envisioned, it would probably have created a powerful bureaucracy with a strong authority in overseas administration. If so, the challenge would now be to integrate the *Takumushō* in place of the MOFA, and it is undeniable that this may have contributed to the weakening of the party cabinet's consolidation ability. In fact, it was precisely to prevent such a situation that the Kenseikai Cabinet, guided by Shidehara Kijūrō's policy of international cooperation, opposed the inclusion of emigration and overseas economic development affairs in the *Takumushō* and envisioned it simply as a ministry in charge of colonial administration (Sogō 2021). What was the Tanaka Cabinet's view on this point?

A clue to this can be found in the Tanaka Cabinet's move to revise the civil service appointment ordinance. According to Wakatsuki Tsuyoshi, the Tanaka Cabinet placed emphasis on the ability to oversee overall affairs (political affairs) in the appointment of higher civil service (imperial appointees: *Chokuninkan*) posts, unlike middle to lower-ranking civil officials (*Sōninkan*) whose expertise was respected, and furthermore, sought to procure personnel from outside each ministry (Wakatsuki 2014: 112). Thus, although respecting a certain degree of specialization within the bureaucracy, a major characteristic of the Seiyūkai was its emphasis on the integration capabilities of higher officials. Based on this, it is clear which ministry was easier for a party cabinet to control: the MOFA, which requires a high level of specialization compared to other civil servants' posts, such as independent examination subjects; or the *Takumushō*, which has little specialization in Japan, and where even a system for training colonial bureaucrats had not been established. Although the Tanaka Cabinet had considered abolishing the diplomatic examination system, they remained doubtful about the possibility of realizing such a move. In short, it is fair to say that, with the increasing specialization of existing ministries in accordance with the increase in administrative tasks, there was great value in placing a colonial and newly established government agency, which was required to have a generalist orientation, at the center of overseas administrative integration.

However, the Meiji Constitutional System made it extremely difficult for a party cabinet to have authority over the other bureaucracies by seizing control of personnel matters. The Tanaka Cabinet's

43 The reason for renaming the "*Takushokushō*" to "*Takumushō*" in the final stage was to consider the opposition from the Korean people to treating Korea on the same level as other colonies (Mitani 2017: 167-169). This indicates that the character for "*shoku* (殖)" was understood to include the meaning of colony. It is therefore significant that the *Takushoku* bureau was intended to encompass the affairs of Manchuria and Siberia.

personnel policies had already been criticized from various quarters as arbitrary, and the Showa Emperor, who held supreme authority, was extremely concerned about this situation. As a result, the Tanaka Cabinet was unable to carry out its initial personnel policy (Nagai 2003). Furthermore, as many previous studies have already pointed out, the Tanaka Cabinet had fatal flaws in its leadership, especially in its relations with the Seiyūkai. The failure to obtain an absolute majority in the 16th general election for the House of Representatives in February 1928 led to a serious split in the Seiyūkai. Furthermore, while Prime Minister Tanaka had been building a relatively stable, army-controlled government, this split led to a rapid decline in his influence over the Army (Kobayashi 2010). Thus, Tanaka’s diplomacy, without fully integrating the will of the nation, activated the Kwantung Army, which argued for the possession of Manchuria and Mongolia in contrast to the “economic diplomacy” policy of the Tanaka Cabinet, and eventually led to the Incident of Zhang Zuolin’s assassination by bombing (Koyama 2018; Matsuura 2020). As a result, Tanaka’s leadership in the MOFA rapidly declined, which contributed to the incompleteness of the original concept of the establishment of the *Takumushō*. In sum, Tanaka failed to seize power in the fundamental area of securing a strong coalition of political parties, which was indispensable as a prerequisite for the *Takumushō* concept discussed in this paper and for the establishment of a party cabinet system and thus for creating a responsible cabinet system under the Meiji Constitution.

Nevertheless, the Ministry responsible for the policy of guiding and encouraging development projects was indeed established. The *Takumushō* was then given the authority to direct and supervise regarding such policy, even though it would be via the supervision of the MOFA. However, this meant that the issue of administration in the external regions was not limited to foreign countries, but also invited the possibility of developing into an internal conflict within the Cabinet. Eventually, the *Takumushō* was established in June 1929 in an incomplete form, with its authority greatly reduced from what was originally envisioned, and the Tanaka Cabinet resigned the following month. The baton of integration was passed to the Minseitō Party Cabinet under the leadership of Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijūrō, who focused his efforts on a trade promotion policy based on the principle of free trade, rather than on development administration. This policy of consolidation in the Hamaguchi Cabinet was closely related to the characteristics of the Minseitō Party, which prioritized the establishment of stable political management based on the independence of each bureaucracy rather than penetration of the bureaucracy through partisan appointments, and its signature policy of austerity. In this policy, it was the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, rather than the MOFA or the *Takumushō*, that was placed at the center of the Cabinet’s overseas industrial policy. Thus, the groundwork was laid for the ministries and agencies to become divided over the subject of economic expansion overseas. The discussion in this paper was a prelude, so to speak, to the problem of “inter-ministerial rivalry” which intensified in the 1930s.

4. Conclusion

While previous studies have shown that a conflict existed between the Tanaka Cabinet and the MOFA in the process of establishing the *Takumushō*, it has remained unclear why the Tanaka Cabinet had sought to fundamentally reform the institution of this Ministry. This paper has clarified the significance of the concept of establishing the *Takumushō* from the perspective of the policy of the guidance and encouragement of development projects, by analyzing the issues after WWI and the various trends in attempts to address them.

The establishment of the Washington system and the transition to global economic warfare following the end of WWI triggered a shift of economic policy in Japan. Under these circumstances, the development of economic resources in foreign countries emerged as a critical issue, but the MOFA Consular Officer was still the main executor of overseas administration. For this reason, there was always tension between the local consular offices under the authority of MOFA and the colonial administrative authorities⁴⁴. However, while the consular officers resisted these authorities' attempts to expand their economic presence into adjacent areas, they recognized the limitations of leading economic development policies with the existing consular structure intact. The consular officers then had to eliminate the colonial authorities and expand the organization of the consulates. The opinions expressed at the South Seas Consular Conference and the Consular Conference in Manchuria were quite natural, but the MOFA, which considered the stability of international relations its first priority, was indifferent to these appeals by the consuls.

In fact, the limitation of Shidehara's Manchurian-Mongolian diplomatic policy pointed out by Katō refers to the difficulty of reaching a consensus within the MOFA and the organizational limitations of that ministry, which could not achieve fundamental reform without the cooperation of other political forces (Katō 2000). The MOFA also had difficulty overcoming the division of authority in modern Japan's foreign affairs administration without relying on the consolidated power of the political parties and their cabinets.

However, from the perspective of the political party cabinet, it was essential to undertake fundamental structural reform across ministries and agencies in order to achieve the major goal of consolidating the political party cabinet regime under the Meiji Constitutional System. It was the Tanaka Seiyūkai Party Cabinet that attempted to demonstrate the executive power of a party cabinet for overseas administration by controlling consuls, from a different line of government than the MOFA through the process of developing economic affairs overseas, as well as controlling colonial administration. This was the essence of the concept of the establishment of the *Takumushō*, and for this reason, it was necessary to challenge the organization of the MOFA, which had strong autonomy from the internal administration. In this sense, the establishment of the *Takumushō* truly symbolized the development of the party cabinet system. It was also certainly a consideration of international relationships in that it curbed the previous situation in which each colonial government agency was individually expanding overseas. Therefore, it can be positioned as a concept brought about by two contradictory characteristics of the international environment of the 1920s: international political cooperation and international economic competition.

However, even if the Tanaka Cabinet had gained an absolute majority and secured strong party unity, it is not easy to determine whether it would have been able to resolve the contradictions between the colonial administration, the international cooperation system, and the Meiji Constitutional System all at once, as originally envisioned. Although it is difficult to fully answer this question at the present stage, the results of Sakai Tetsuya's research are important in considering this point. Sakai defined the "Taisho democracy system" as cooperative diplomacy in collaboration with the Minseitō line that centered on the so-called "*Kasumigaseki* diplomacy" by the MOFA and examined the process of collapse after the Manchurian Incident, based on the premise that this system was strong (Sakai 1992). Indeed, from the perspective of building a stable political system, diplomacy based on such a stable

44 It refers to the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan, the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, the Kwantung Agency and the SMR.

relationship with the MOFA might have been a viable option to resolve the contradictions discussed in this paper.

However, the Shidehara diplomacy, which was the embodiment of this “Taisho democracy system,” did not resolve the dissatisfaction of local consuls and colonial authorities. For this reason, it is important to note that the Manchurian Incident, a challenge to the “Taisho democracy system” that emerged from Manchuria region, was clearly triggered by the collapse of this system, and led to the collapse of the party cabinet system. On the other hand, the second Wakatsuki Reijirō Cabinet, which sought to distance itself from Shidehara in comparison with the Hamaguchi Cabinet, sought to abolish the *Takumushō* and to place the authority for overseas economic development policy not under the MOFA but under the Ministry of Industry (*Sangyōshō*), which was planned to be newly established (Sogo 2021). Although this concept was frustrated in the face of the structure of “inter-ministerial rivalry,” it is clear that the issue of the limitations of the MOFA in overseas industrial policy was indeed inherited by the Minseitō Cabinet. Furthermore, along with the stalemate over Shidehara’s diplomacy, dissatisfaction erupted within the Minseitō party concerning the way the Minseitō Cabinet was formed, with a person from outside the party at the center of power (e.g., Foreign Minister Shidehara and Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke), and this led to the collapse of the Minseitō government (Inoue 2013). Furthermore, after all these attempts failed, rather than returning to a party cabinet system, the Minseitō actively pushed for the status quo to be maintained by a national unity government. In this way, the Minseitō also faced a major dilemma between the development of the party cabinet system and international cooperation principle. However, the framework of the “Taisho democracy system” leaves out the perspective of the development and collapse of the party cabinet system, and this seems to be the limitation of Sakai’s approach.

Although the politics of the Tanaka Cabinet appeared to be a disturbing factor for the system in terms of its results, and this might have been true, it was a logical consequence of the development process of the party cabinet system under the Meiji Constitutional System. With the collapse of the Tanaka Cabinet, the possibility of building a political system that could maximize the strengths of political parties was greatly diminished. By taking into consideration the historical background described above, the Tanaka Cabinet’s *Takumushō* concept, which aimed to resolve various contradictions in the international environment that emerged in the 1920s by maximizing the unifying power of political parties and establishing a unified will for internal and external politics, can be evaluated as a concept that explored the ideal system originally intended for a party cabinet.

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