

Continuity and the Discontinuity
From the League to the UN:
The East Asian Context
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Shin Kawashima, Hokkaido University

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Session 3: Modernity and the League of Nations and United Nations

Continuity and the Discontinuity from the League to the UN: the East Asian Context

KAWASHIMA, Shin

Hokkaido University; shin@juris.hokudai.ac.jp

There are various views, in which one can consider the League of Nations or the United Nations: as an arena for power games between the Great Powers and major countries; as an arena for discussion and resolution regarding issues in international politics; as an institution which sustained limitations for the purpose of security; or as a place where it embodied the elements of the ideals of international politics, but at the same time, where a great deal of realistic measures took place. However, the views stated above are those of the Great Powers and major countries, but it is possible that there could be different viewpoints, that of countries and regions other than the Great Powers or major countries. This is something that the League of Nations or the United Nations may have intended to consider, or at times, may have not.

In this presentation, I intend to, first, illustrate the general overview of the relationship of the Republic of China (ROC) with the League of Nations and United Nations between the late 1910's through 1970's, with an emphasis on "what the League of Nations and/or United Nations meant to the ROC", and second, to consider the role of the League of Nations and the United Nations in general.

1. Expectations through the Membership in the League of Nations: 1910's, 1920's

As one of the victor nations of World War I, the Republic of China (ROC) became the original member state of the League of Nations, and the treaty-based grounds for their membership can be traced back to the first article of the Treaty of Saint-Germain, signed between the Allied Powers and Austria, because the ROC did not sign the Treaty of Versailles at the Paris

Peace Conference¹.

The League of Nations was an arena that embodied one of the ideals of the people of the ROC in the 1910's. In the late 1910's in the ROC, there was a strong influence of Wilsonism, and in the coming peace conferences, various "absurdities" were resolved, and there was heightened hope for the embodiment of "reason and justice 【公理・公道】". The more specific expectations were, to free ROC from a "quasi-colonial condition," as well as to resolve specific issues, such as the issue of the unequal Treaty of Twenty-one Demands. Even though such expectations were not realized, the tendency to see the League of Nations as an "ideal" continued thereafter, to a certain degree.

Obviously, the authorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROC desired the membership to the League of Nations. At the Paris Peace Conference, the Representative Plenipotentiary of the ROC was highly cautious on becoming the original member state of the League of Nations, if and when they did not sign the Treaty of Versailles². At the time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peking Government of the ROC also had high expectations of the League of Nations. The expectations can be explained in terms of the following:

- 1) As an arena for resolutions to pending diplomatic issues
- 2) As an arena for raising their international status

With respect to the first point, it was more or less influenced by President Wilson's advice to the ROC. The issues of the Treaty of Twenty-one Demands and the Shandong Province were not resolved at the Paris Peace Conference, thus President Wilson advised the ROC to present these issues to the League of Nations for resolution. Therefore, the ROC expected the League of Nations to resolve pending diplomatic issues. However, Persia failed when they presented the issue of eliminating the influences of British and Soviet Union, therefore, in short, the League of Nations did not function as an arena where individual nation-states could submit and present their pending issues.

¹ Please refer to 川島真「中華民国北京政府の国際連盟外交」(『史学雑誌』104 12、1995 年 12 月、p.102) (trans. Shin Kawashima, "League of Nation Diplomacy of the Peking Government of the Republic of China" in *Journal of History*) For a more specific reference, the author referred to 「国際联合会」(外交部档案、03 38) .

² The membership of ROC to the League of Nations was not ratified even after signing the Treaty of Saint-Germain, and formal membership was finally ratified in 1920.

However, even though the League of Nations did not resolve specific issues, the ROC still hoped for membership to the League of Nations. This is because, on the one hand, as stated earlier, the ROC believed that the League of Nations was an arena that was influenced by Wilsonism and embodied “reason and justice【公理・公道】” but, on the other hand, it may be because within the League of Nations, ROC was “a nation,” and it insured the self-determination of peoples, as well as the independence and integrity of the nation. The League of Nations was recognized as an arena that stood not for “a world where the weak are victims of the strong 【強者必勝・弱者必敗】,” but of “becoming one【大同】” through the realization of international equality.

With respect to the second point, Tang Qi-Hua states it precisely in his book, *The Participation of the Peking Government to the League of Nations (1919-1928)* (Dong Datushu Gongsi Publishing 東大圖書公司, Taipei, 1998). The ROC, as a nation, within the context of the League of Nations, put efforts in improving their international status, through the efforts of revising the unequal treaties. The strategies that Representative Plenipotentiary of the ROC adopted were, one, requesting regionalism as one of the condition for electing the members of the Security Council, and what they aimed for was the establishment of the condition in which an Asian country would be elected as one of the non-permanent member of the Security Council. The ROC succeeded in this, and as a result, from 1920 to 1923, the ROC was elected three times, as one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council. One of the reasons why the ROC adhered to the non-permanent member of the Security Council was their desire to improve their international status. The second strategy that ROC adopted was that, and this is partly due to the result of the responsibility of costs relative to population, the ROC would be responsible for the same amount of costs as Britain and France, which the ROC paid in full for three years. What the ROC paid made up for over 5% of the total expenditure of the League of Nations.

However, in the twelfth year of the ROC, the criticism against the corrupt election of Zao Kun, as well as the Lin Cheng Incident, resulted in the loss of their seat as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Also, due to the changes in the calculations of the costs responsible, there was an increase of 70% for the ROC. At the time, the ROC was

experiencing financial difficulties, therefore, could not make the payments. Thereafter, in the fourteenth year of the ROC, the ROC lost the election three times consecutively, and all costs were outstanding. In the fifteenth year of the ROC, the ROC is re-elected to the non-permanent member of the Security Council, but there was no improvement in terms of finance, therefore, the costs could not be paid. At the time, the ROC tried to maintain their integrity and improve their international status by utilizing both the Washington Regime which was centered around the US, as well as the League of Nations which was centered around Britain, however, the ROC experienced financial limitations, such as stated above³.

On the other hand, the Peking Government of the ROC was facing problems of legitimacy, due to the self-proclamation of other domestic governments, such as the Canton Government, as the central government of the ROC. Therefore, it was significant for the Peking Government of the ROC to send representatives to the League of Nations, in order to gain legitimacy from the international society. At the same time, in terms of missions sought by the League of Nations, for example the eradication of opium, the Peking Government actively initiated policies within China and carried out such “modern” missions, to demonstrate their legitimacy domestically. However, this gave way to new problems as well. When initiating missions to eradicate opium, in the regions where the Peking Government did not have effective control, this mission was extremely difficult, and by initiating the mission, this kind of reality surfaced to the public and outside world.

2. League of Nations as an Arena for Maintaining the “Integrity of China”: 1930’s, 1940’s

I do not have the knowledge nor have the sources to be able to present a thorough discussion on the issue of China and the League of Nations in the 1930’s and the 1940’s. The most reliable source in this area

³ During the Washington Conference, the issue of whether to continue the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was the key issue, in terms of the Far East. This implied a change in the relationship between Japan and Britain, but also, due to the establishment of the League of Nations, the content of the Charter of the League of Nations, and the content of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance conflicted, which resulted in the difficulty of maintaining the alliance. Therefore, the British created a new framework, which resulted in the Washington Conference.

would be the achievements of today's presenter, Professor Zhang Li's book 『國際合作在中國：國際聯盟角色的考察 1919-1946』(台灣、中央研究院近代史研究所、1999). In his research, the Republic of China (ROC) was not only a member of the League of Nations, but also, participated actively in all the activities of the League of Nations. The activities include, medical hygiene, technical cooperation, prohibition of opium, and labor disputes. In the above areas, the League of Nations actively gave assistance to China, and through the various actions of China, China itself improved their international status. As stated earlier, one can see this tendency in the Peking Government of the ROC, but even more so, in the Nanking Kuomintang National Government from 1928. The ROC's "League diplomacy" on the one hand, was a way for their effort to "modernity" to gain legitimacy from the international society, and at the same time, a way to maintain their voice in the international society.

However, the ROC had other expectations than the ones stated above. The ROC had high expectations on the League to function as an arena for the maintaining their integrity, which included the pending issues between ROC and Japan, regarding the Lytton investigation during the Manchurian Incident. Wellington Koo of the ROC, had a tendency to resort to resolution of Sino-Japanese issues in the international arena. The objective of the so-called Lytton investigation was to investigate the Manchurian Incident, but when the investigative committee of the League of Nations was established on January 21, 1932, the subject of investigation was basically the overall Sino-Japanese relationship. The subjects of investigation included the issues of anti-Japanese Movements, as well as textbook issues. The Japanese criticized the content of the Chinese textbook, by stating that there was a deliberate anti-Japanese education conducted by the ROC, and also pointed out that the textbooks did not pass the screening procedure of the Chinese Ministry of Education. To refute this, Representative Wellington Koo demanded the revision of the Japanese textbooks, which contained anti-Chinese sentiments.

As one can see from the examples stated above, in the 1930's and the 40's, there was a trend to continue the tradition of the previous decades, and added to that, an inclination to pursue resolution of Sino-Japanese issues on the international stage. Moreover, after Japan withdrew from the League, and while there was a significant decrease of members, the ROC actively

pursued the role as the original member state of the League, until the abolishment of the League in 1946. It can be inferred that the two crucial objectives for the ROC to actively pursue their role were, one, to improve their international status, and two, to utilize the “modernity” of the League, in order to maintain its legitimacy within their country. Thus, the ROC was confident that it would be recognized as a “world power” or “great power” after the victory in WWII.

3. From the League of Nations to the United Nations

(1) The Path to the “Five Great Powers”

The United Nations formerly took its course after Roosevelt and Churchill signed the Atlantic Charter in 1941, and the establishment of an international organization was proposed from the Declaration of the Allied Powers signed in Washington on January 1st, 1942. The ROC took part in this, and with the support of the U.S., it started off as one of the five Great Powers in the post war era⁴. When the U.S. proposed to commence a meeting in May 1944 among the four countries—U.S., Britain, Soviet Union, and China—regarding the issues of security, General Jiang Kai-Shek responded positively that he would attend. For the ROC, it wanted to demand the strengthening of the function in terms of security within the newly established international agency, which stemmed from their discontent towards the League of Nations that could not stop the Japanese. Thus, Zhou Gengsheng prepared the draft of Article 29 of the Charter of the United Nations, and Wang Shijie submitted it to Jiang Kai-Shek on July 13th, 1944. Even before WWII was over, Wang Shijie claimed that an organization for security, or the peace agency should be established. However, in reality, the opportunity for the ROC to participate in the decision-making was limited. Although there was a general notion of the “Great Four” or the “Great Five,” in essence, decisions were made among the three countries, U.S., Britain, and the Soviet Union. It is evident that the reason why there was discontent in the participation of the ROC in decision making was due to the neutral treaty between Japan and the Soviet Union, that still remained at the time. However, due to the efforts of Wellington Koo, the names of the four countries, the U.S., Britain, Soviet Union, and the

⁴I referred to⁷ 中華民國與聯合國 資料彙編及籌設編、國史館、2001 年 for the relationship between the ROC and the United Nations during this time.

ROC, were on the invitation to the San Francisco Conference on April 25th, 1945, where the United Nations Charter was adopted.

ROC was clearly a member of the “Great Five,” and was a central member of the Security Council. However, the status of the ROC still remained ambiguous. The San Francisco Conference takes place from April 25th, to June 26th, 1945, and while it was thought that the ROC would proceed to a style of diplomacy that would follow in the footsteps of the American and the British, however, during the conference, it is said that the ROC took a “moral and independent stance”.

(2) Specific Issues and the Republic of China (ROC)

During the two months of the San Francisco Conference, proceedings for the deliberation on the United Nations Charter took place, but several other points were at issue. In the following, I would like to point out three specific issues, and the stance of the ROC to these issues.

First, there was the problem of participating countries. The membership of Belarus and Ukraine was decided on at the Yalta Conference, however, there remained problems considering other nations, such as the membership of Argentina, Poland and Denmark. For the ROC, the membership of Argentina was especially a problem. The membership of Argentina was backed by the support of other South American countries, as well as the U.S, however, Argentina was one of the Axis Powers during WWII (Argentina cuts ties with the Axis Powers on January 27th, 1944; makes its Declaration of War on March 27th, 1945) and extended its diplomatic recognition to Manchuria⁵, therefore, the ROC stated that “the ROC did not have diplomatic relationship with Argentina” as a reason to abstain from the resolution. With regards to Poland, the ROC approved membership because it was a region that sustained the most damage by the German invasion. With regards to Denmark, the ROC foresaw a problem if they only supported the membership of Denmark, and not Korea, who also requested support of the ROC for membership to the United Nations at the time. However, the ROC decided that there was little possibility for the membership of Korea, thus at the end, instead of proposing the membership

⁵ Although the ROC was under the perception that Argentina gave diplomatic recognition to Manchuria, however, generally, Argentina is not included in the countries that extended diplomatic recognition to Manchuria.

of Korea, ROC supported the membership of Denmark.

Secondly, there was the issue of the method of organization and the veto power of the Security Council. Regarding veto power, in the discussions at Dumbarton Oaks Conference that took place in August 1944, and also at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the U.S. presupposed a veto power with certain limitations, whereas the Soviet Union pushed for complete veto power. What resulted from the discussions was that the countries that are involved in a conflict must abstain from their veto power. The issue of veto power also became a point of issue at the San Francisco Conference as well. The ROC foresaw that the difference between the Great Powers would lead to disorder, thus while acknowledging the decisions of the Yalta Conference, the ROC took the same steps as other “Great Powers” at the San Francisco Conference. As for the powers of the Security Council, especially the issue of the allocation of powers between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the ROC followed in the same steps as the other four Great Powers⁶.

There were differences in the perspectives regarding the issue of trusteeship. With respect to trusteeship, US, Britain, and the Soviet Union wanted to allot the trusteeship—the US, through military and economic perspective, Britain through an economic perspective, and the Soviet Union through a political perspective (the final objective would be the independence and the autonomy of the people). The ROC never exercised trusteeship, however, it demanded that the organization, principle, and the method of trusteeship should have the trust and support of the local people. At the end, the American proposal became the standard, however, one can see that the ROC demanded an ideal proposal during the time.

4. The Issue of the CHI-REP

While the ROC's status rose to that of “Great Power” in the United Nations, there was a big problem in who to send as representatives from the ROC. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) requested that Zhou Enlai and Dong Biwu be sent as representatives. As a result of the adjustments between the Kuomintang Nationalist Party (KMT) and the CCP, adjustments with the U.S., and with the support of Zuo Shunshraeng, who

⁶ The Soviet Union wanted to expand the powers of the Security Council, however, the ROC supported the compromised proposal suggested by Australia.

the Americans had particular interest in, the party member of the CCP, Dong Biwu, was added to the group, and thus, the representative group was composed of party members from each party, and diplomats. The representatives included: the Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Song Ziwen, as well as Gu Weijun (Wellington Koo), Wei Daoming, Wang Chonghui, Hu Shi, Wu Yifang, Li Huang, Zhang Qunli, Dong Biwu, and Hu Lin.

Between April and June 1945, there was participation of various groups to the representative. This is due to the opposition between the Peking Government and the Canton Government, and this sort of participation was seen at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and in the Washington Conference in 1921. However, it was not possible to maintain participation of various groups for a long period of time, especially after the establishment of the de facto control of the People's Republic of China (PRC), when there was a heightening of skepticism of the ROC in the representative group, and following three factors was the backdrop to this: the issue of which China to acknowledge, the opposition between the liberalist camp and socialist camp, and the East-West Cold-War structure. However, this cannot be explained solely through the Cold War structure, therefore, it is important to note that within the Security Council, Britain acknowledged the PRC, as well as France, who broke off ties with the ROC in 1964 and supported the PRC. Soviet Union, needless to say, supported the PRC⁷.

On the other hand, the PRC expressed their legitimacy, while denying the legitimacy of the ROC. In 1949, Shou Enlai emphasized to the Secretary-General Trygve Lye, that the PRC was the only legitimate government of China, and the Soviet Union supported this statement. The ROC strongly opposed to this, however, the Soviet Union formally brought up the issue of the status of the ROC in the 459th meeting of the Security Council on January 10th, 1950. This was the beginning of the CHI-REP issue. At this time, the Soviet proposal was denied, and the Soviet representative exited the meeting, however, the PRC notified that they dispatched Zhang Wentian for their representative. The Secretary-General

⁷ The ROC's stance in the Far East was ambiguous. In the 1950's and the 60's, Taiwan, Korea, and South Vietnam united under a common "anti-communist" sentiment, however, their relationship with Japan, the ROC took its distance due to the Leftist Movement in Japan, as well as the problem of the war against Japan.

Trygve Lye separated the government recognition and membership recognition by preparing a memorandum concerning “the legal perspective and the CHI-REP issue of the member states”, and tried to open up the path for the membership of the PRC. However, with the outbreak of Korean War, the Soviet proposal was once again denied. The General Assembly of the United Nations organized a council comprised of seven countries, including Canada, Ecuador, India, Iran, Iraq, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, on September 19th, 1950, to “research” on the issue of the CHI-REP, however, the council was not able to propose anything of substance at the end. The CHI-REP became a point of issue, however, the trend was set for the times to come when Thailand proposed a moratorium at the General Assembly on November 6th, 1951.

At first, membership to the United Nations was through “selective choice,” therefore only the chosen countries could become a member, however, membership becomes “universal” and new independent countries start to participate. Amidst the following trend, the issue of the membership of the PRC was not being discussed, and there was a general awareness that the problem was getting more serious⁸. Under the Nixon administration of 1961, there was an end to the ten-year moratorium, and actions were taken to propose the issue of the CHI-REP to the United Nations. However, there was an opposition to this from Jiang Tingfu, the ROC Ambassador to the U.S., and what resulted was the following: in order to shift the status from the ROC to the PRC, it was necessary to have 2/3 of the approval of the General Assembly, which was in line with Article 18 of the United Nations Charter. The U.S. started to show their understanding of the membership of the PRC, however, both the PRC and ROC denied this, and acknowledged the “two China”.

In the 21st General Assembly in 1966, Italy proposed the organization of a research council for the CHI-REP issue, however, the ROC strongly opposed this, and even indicated withdrawing from the United Nations, but at the end, the research council was never actualized due to the support against it by the U.S. and African countries.

⁸ In the process, ROC approved of the “universalistic” aspect of the United Nations, however, in the 16th General Assembly, ROC vetoed the membership of Mongolia. The ROC and PRC put together, China used their veto power once, which is the least among the Permanent Members of the Security Council.

5. The Withdrawal of the ROC from the United Nations

The withdrawal of the ROC from the United Nations did not happen suddenly, rather one can say that it was the result of the gradual process as stated above⁹. However, if one limits the analysis to the American policy regarding the status of the ROC in the United Nations, 1971 was a significant turning point. In the 1970's, Italy and Canada acknowledge the PRC, and many other member states decline their acknowledgement of the ROC. During this time, the U.S. persuaded the ROC to accept the "double representation," however, ROC opposed the "two China" policy. On July 1st, 1971, when Shen Jianhong, the ROC Ambassador to Washington, met with Kissinger, the advisor to President Nixon, Kissinger could not make a judgment on the prospect for resolution to the issue of the ROC's seat for the Security Council, thus, for the time being, it was decided to add the PRC to the United Nations through "double representation" and protect the ROC's seat to the Security Council.

Three days after this meeting, Zhou Shukai, the Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROC, submitted a report to Jiang Kai Shek, stating that it was possible to accept the U.S. proposal if "double representation" did not mean the removal of the ROC for acceptance of the PRC 【排我納共】 and did not result in the loss of the seat in the Security Council. The reaction to this report remained uncertain, however, the ROC is told of the change in U.S. policy on July 23. Between July 9th, and 11th, Kissinger visits Beijing, and the year after, President Nixon was to visit Beijing. Within the United Nations, a proposal was submitted by Albania on July 15th, to restore the rights of the PRC in the United Nations. In this context, on the 23rd, W.P. McConaughty, the U.S. Ambassador to Taipei recommended to Jiang Jingguo, the Vice-Secretary of the Executive Yuan, to surrender the seat of the Security Council, as well as the "double representation." Moreover, on August 2nd, Secretary of State W. Rogers, presented a statement concerning the CHI-REP issue, acknowledging the membership of the PRC to the United Nations (without removing the ROC), however, leaving the problem of the seat of the Security Council to the decision of the General Assembly. The

⁹ For reference on this, please refer to 『中華民國與聯合國 資料彙編』（中國代表權、國史館、2001年）。

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, at the time, was George W Bush. The 26th General Assembly was to be held on September 21st, however, on September 18th, Secretary General of ROC, Huang Shaogu, gave orders to Zhou Shukai that the ROC would withdraw from the United Nations if the Albanian proposal was to go through.

On October 25th, the Albanian proposal is passed through voting, and the ROC loses its representation to the United Nations.

Conclusion

In the context of the post-war, I have centered the argument around the issue of representation in the United Nations, however, during this period, the ROC carried out various aid activities. This is indicated in 劉志攻『中華民國在聯合國大會敵參與 外交政策、國際環境及參與行為』(台灣商務印書館、1985 年) where there is a note on the agricultural aid to Africa.

The United Nations, for the ROC, was an arena to improve and maintain their international status, their legitimacy and their justification. In terms of content, the United Nations was a necessary source to back their “modernity” and “civilization.” For the ROC, who never once had the 90% control of their land, which was emphasized in their Constitution, the United Nations was crucial, but at the same time, it exposed to the international society, their problems with the necessary conditions to be a “nation,” especially the ability to implement treaties, as well as the ability of effective control.

But it is new experience for ROC in UN that faces questions of the representative China and seat of Security Council and has the controversy of One or Two China. These factors restricted ROC's activities in UN.