

Visions for the future in Japanese-occupied China
during the 2nd Sino-Japanese War:
The assessments of current developments by leaders
of the Reformed Government of the Republic of China
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This article examines the Reformed Government of the Republic of China (RGRP), which was established in Nanjing in 1938 under the protection of the Japanese Army and was in power until 1940. The RGRP has been regarded in the research to date as a Japanese-controlled puppet regime, similar to that established in Manchukuo. There is no doubt that the RGRP did exhibit some features indicating puppetry; however, it would have been very difficult for that government to exist if it functioned solely as a Japanese tool. Therefore, the author has chosen to forgo the term “puppet” before determining the true nature of the RGRP.

By clarifying its aim and its political stance, the author intends to show that the RGRP did in fact function as a government of China. He begins by considering the RGRP’s leadership---Liang Hongzhi, Chen Qun, Wen Zongyao and Wang Zihui---in particular, how they defined the objectives of the new government, delineated visions of China’s future and articulated their positions. In fact, the RGRP could not have functioned according to the wishes of these leaders in the midst of any direct intervention on the part of the Japanese military. Moreover, government leaders like Wen Zongyao and Wang Zihui had their own individual political ideas and opinions, as shown by the articles they published, enabling us to grasp the whole picture involving Chinese political discourse during the era in question.

Such political ideas and opinions can be observed as having been well embedded within the China's historical experience from the latter half of 19th century through the first half of 20th, as exemplified by views concerning foreign diplomacy. By analyzing the ideas and opinions expressed by the

leaders of the RGRP, it becomes possible to learn its true significance in the modern history of China. While taking pro-Japanese, anti-Chiang Kaishek and anti-Nationalist and anti-Communist Party political stances, the RGRP leaders also objectively analyzed the current situation and requested the Japanese to restore the occupied territories to their former condition. The author shows that RGRP was far more independent compared to the previously established the Great Way Government of the Municipality of Shanghai.

That being said, the ideas and opinions adopted by the RGRP leadership were no doubt based on the premise that China had lost the Sino-Japanese War; therefore these ideas and opinions had to change as soon as Wang Jingwei of the Nationalist Party started peace talks with Japan at the end of 1938.