

## The governance of occupied northern China in the midst of Japan's "incident": The dilemma of educational administration and its clash with third country schools

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This article takes up the issue of how a region (Huabei) was formed in parts of northern China under military occupation as the result of what Japan referred to as an "incident" (*jihen* 事変), also known as the undeclared 2nd Sino-Japanese War, taking up the case of that region's educational policy and institutions. The question of what influence the fact that war was never declared (prior to the involvement of the World War II Allied Forces) exerted on the governance of Huabei has not been given much attention in the research to date, despite that fact that it is an important factor when examining the characteristic features of the Japanese occupation. In order to demonstrate that importance, the author takes up how education was administered throughout Huabei and the problems posed for third country operated schools.

To begin with, in order to continue its military activities in Huabei it was critical for Japan to explain its aggression as an "incident" short of declaring war on China, not only to implement military rule by the North China Area Army (NCAA), but also to legitimize the full scale adoption of the rules of engagement without giving third countries the impression of Japan's intention to open full scale hostilities. Consequently, a government was set up in Huabei manned by Chinese nationals assisted by Japanese advisors under the supervision of the NCAA.

This kind of indirect governance affected every attempt to administer education in the region, which took priority over every other aspect of governance (food supply, resource allocation, the maintenance of public order), due to its importance in training indigenous subaltern personnel acquiescent to de facto Japanese rule over the region. However, the "incident" was bound to cause serious friction between the occupation authorities and the interests of

third country (US, German, etc.) nationals who continued to reside in the occupied territory. In particular, trouble arose between the occupation authorities and institutions of higher learning operated by third country nationals over issues ranging from acceptance of the new occupation order to the recruitment of the elite who were earmarked as the region's future leaders. While the occupation authorities applied pressure on third country high schools through their mobilization of Japanese teachers and introduction of Japanese customs, the foreigners resisted through diplomatic channels between their home countries and Japan, succeeding in preserving both their social prestige and popularity.

It was in this way that the necessity of treating the 2nd Sino-Japanese War as an “incident” made it impossible for the Japanese Army to take direct control over administering occupied Huabei, enabled third countries to retain their interests under the occupation and thus significantly restrained the Japanese occupation of China until the outbreak of the Pacific War.