

Impact of the 1st and 2nd Sino Japanese War on the Development of Mainland China

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Abstract

This paper examined the impact of the 1st and 2nd sino Japanese war on the development of mainland China. The First Sino-Japanese War (25 July 1894 – 17 April 1895), also known as the First China–Japan War, was a battle between the Qing dynasty of China and the Empire of Japan, principally concerning dominance over Korea. While the Second Sino-Japanese War occurred between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan from 1937 to 1945, succeeding a conflict in Manchuria that began in 1931. The paper adopted The Modernisation Theory as the theoretical framework the findings shows that The First Sino-Japanese War revealed the weakness of the Qing rule on a structural level, and heralded the breakdown of the ancient imperial system in China. While the Second Sino-Japanese war had even greater effects on the development of mainland China. The study recommends that there is a need to continue investing in historical reconciliation and regional diplomacy that will minimize all the long-term political and psychological legacies of the wartime between China and Japan. Chinese state must keep up with the policy of inclusive development that will alleviate the regional inequalities on the basis of the destruction during war.

Key words: Sino-Japanese Wars; Mainland China; Nationalism; State-building; Economic Development

Introduction

The influences of the first Sino-Japanese war, (1894-1895) and the second Sino-Japanese war, (1937-1945) are still focal to the topic of political, economical and social development of mainland China. Both wars were turning points, which transformed the national identity of China, the state-building course and place in the international system. The First Sino-Japanese War showed the ineffectiveness of the Qing dynasty as there were great military, administrative and technological deficiencies at the period when Japan had already modernised its own state institutions during the Meiji reforms. The defeat of China and the treaty of Shimonoseki added to the humiliation of the country and the rapid growth of internal reformist calls, which led to the emergence of modern nationalist movements and intellectual turmoil, which in turn contributed to the key political changes (Wang, 2021). The war also helped weaken the imperial authority, which started to create the grounds under which revolutionary forces could undermine the rule of an emperor, a fact that eventually resulted in the 1911 Revolution and the fall of the Qing dynasty (Esherick, 2022).

The Second Sino-Japanese War enhanced structural reforms in mainland China further. The second war, in contrast to the first, took place in the face of intensive ideological rivalry, nationalists, communists and alien nation with the ambitions of expansion. The long war had destroyed the economic foundation of China, damaged infrastructure, displaced people and ruined traditional agricultural and trading systems (Rana, 2023). Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) grew stronger with the war and extended its territorial influence, mobilised rural inhabitants and reinforced the authority through the presentation as the most determined anti-Japanese movement (Van de Ven, 2020). This war time unification contributed greatly in the ultimate triumph of CCP in 1949 and establishment of the Peoples Republic of China.

In addition to the political consequences of the wars, the wars also affected the development path of China in the long term. The lessons of national humiliation, foreign aggression and internal fragmentation prompted post-1949 leaders to make state-led industrialisation, strengthening of military and the unity of nations as the guiding principles of national development (Chen, 2023). The wars strengthened a long held narrative of resistance and survival that determined the foreign policy orientation and culture of China. Both wars thus do not just constitute military conflicts but are events that transformed China and propelled the state-building, nationalism and modernisation processes in the country.

The First Sino-Japanese War (25 July 1894 – 17 April 1895)

The First Sino-Japanese War (25 July 1894 – 17 April 1895), also known as the First China–Japan War, was a battle between the Qing dynasty of China and the Empire of Japan, principally concerning dominance over Korea. In Chinese, it is referred to as the Jiawu War. Following nearly six months of continuous victories by Japanese land and naval forces and the capture of the ports of Lüshunkou (Port Arthur) and Weihaiwei, the Qing administration sought peace in February 1895 and subsequently signed the inequitable Treaty of Shimonoseki two months later, concluding the conflict.

During the late 19th century, Korea was a vassal state of the Qing dynasty, whilst Japan regarded it as an objective for imperial expansion. In June 1894, the Qing government dispatched 2,800 troops to assist in quelling the Donghak Peasant Revolution at the behest of Korean Emperor Gojong. The Japanese deemed this an infringement of the 1885 Convention of Tientsin and dispatched an invasion force of 8,000 troops, which landed at Incheon. This military force advanced to Seoul, captured the Korean emperor, and established a pro-Japanese administration on 23 July 1894 during the occupation of Gyeongbokgung. The Qing government opted to withdraw its forces but refused to acknowledge the pro-Japanese administration that had authorised the Imperial Japanese Army to remove the Qing's Huai Army from Korea. Approximately 3,000 Qing forces remained in Korea, reliant solely on maritime supply; on 25 July, the Japanese Navy achieved victory in the Battle of Pungdo, sinking the steamer Kowshing, which was transporting 1,200 Qing reinforcements. A declaration of war ensued on 1 August.

Subsequent to the Battle of Pyongyang on 15 September, Qing forces withdrew to Manchuria, enabling the Japanese to assume control of Korea. Two days later, the Beiyang Fleet experienced a significant setback at the Battle of the Yalu River, with its remaining vessels retreating to Port Arthur. In October 1894, the Japanese Army invaded Manchuria and seized Port Arthur on 21 November. On 12 February 1895, Japan subsequently seized Weihaiwei located on the Shandong Peninsula. This granted them dominion over the routes to Beijing, prompting the Qing court to initiate discussions with Japan in early March. The war ended with the Treaty of Shimonoseki on April 17, mandating the Qing to pay a substantial indemnity and give the island of Taiwan to Japan. Japan likewise attained a dominant position in Korea.

The battle illustrated the inadequacy of the Qing dynasty's efforts to develop its military and protect its sovereignty, particularly in contrast to Japan's successful Meiji Restoration. For the first time, regional supremacy in East Asia transitioned from China to Japan; the Qing dynasty's reputation, along with China's classical culture, experienced a significant setback. The defeat in China served as a trigger for political upheavals spearheaded by Sun Yat-sen and Kang Youwei, culminating in the 1911 Revolution and the eventual termination of dynastic rule in China.

The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937 and 1945)

The Second Sino-Japanese War occurred between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan from 1937 to 1945, succeeding a conflict in Manchuria that began in 1931. It is deemed a component of World War II and frequently viewed as the commencement of World War II in Asia. It was the most significant Asian conflict of the 20th century. In China, it is referred to as the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression.

On 18 September 1931, the Japanese orchestrated the Mukden incident, a contrived occurrence designed to rationalise their invasion of Manchuria and the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo. This is occasionally designated as the commencement of the war. Between 1931 and 1937, China and Japan participated in conflicts, notably in Shanghai and Northern China. The Nationalist forces, led by Chiang Kai-shek, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao Zedong, have been engaged in the Chinese Civil War since 1927. In late 1933, Chiang Kai-shek besieged the Chinese Communists in a bid to annihilate them, compelling the Communists to undertake the Long March, which culminated in the loss of around 90% of their forces. As a Japanese invasion loomed, Chiang continued to reject the formation of a united front until he was placed under house arrest by his subordinates, who compelled him to establish the Second United Front in late 1936 to collectively combat the Japanese incursion.

The comprehensive war commenced on 7 July 1937 with the Marco Polo Bridge incident near Beijing, which sparked a complete Japanese invasion of the remainder of China. In 1937, the Japanese seized the capital of Nanjing and committed the Nanjing Massacre. Following the unsuccessful attempt to prevent the Japanese seizure of Wuhan in 1938, which was then China's de facto capital, the Nationalist government moved to Chongqing in the heartland of China. Subsequent to the Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Soviet assistance strengthened the National Revolutionary Army and Air Force. By 1939, with Chinese triumphs at Changsha and Japan's extended supply lines into the interior, the conflict reached a stalemate. The Japanese could not overcome CCP soldiers in Shaanxi, who conducted a campaign of sabotage and guerrilla warfare. In November 1939, Nationalist forces initiated a significant winter attack, and in August 1940, CCP forces commenced the Hundred Regiments attack in central China. In April 1941, Soviet assistance ceased due to the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact.

In December 1941, Japan executed a surprise assault on Pearl Harbour and formally declared war on the United States. The United States extended its assistance to China through the Lend-Lease Act, establishing itself as its primary financial and military benefactor. Due to the blockade of Burma, the United States Army Air Forces conducted an airlift of supplies over the Himalayas. In 1944, Japan initiated Operation Ichi-Go, targeting the invasion of Henan and Changsha. In 1945, the Chinese Expeditionary Force renewed its march in Burma and finalised the Ledo Road connecting India to China. China initiated significant counteroffensives in South China, thwarted a failed Japanese incursion into West Hunan, and reclaimed Japanese-occupied territories in Guangxi.

Japan officially capitulated on 2 September 1945, consequent to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Soviet Union's declaration of war, and the ensuing invasions of Manchukuo and Korea. The conflict led to around 20 million fatalities, predominantly among Chinese civilians. China was acknowledged as one of the Big Four Allied forces during World War II and designated as one of the "Four Policemen," which established the basis for the United Nations. It reclaimed all lost areas and became one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The Chinese Civil War recommenced in 1946, culminating in a communist triumph and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, while the Republic of China's leadership moved to Taiwan.

Japan's Strategy

Japan sought to seize all roads, railways, and urban centres to establish complete dominance. Although Japanese forces dominated the eastern coastal region, guerrilla warfare persisted in the occupied territories. The Chinese Nationalist administration was compelled to relocate to a provisional capital in Chongqing. Nonetheless, the Japanese lacked both the capacity and the will to exert direct authority over all of China. Consequently, they established amicable "puppet" administrations that would advance their goals. These governments were largely unpopular, particularly following Japan's refusal to engage in negotiations with China's Communist Party.

China's Strategy

Conversely, China was unprepared for conflict. Furthermore, she possessed limited mechanised divisions, lacked substantial military industrial capacity, and had little armoured backup. China predominantly relied on the League of Nations for assistance and to provide countermeasures against Japan's aggression. Moreover, the Kuomintang, or the Chinese Nationalist Party, was embroiled in an internal conflict with the Communists. Consequently, the Chinese were compelled to devise a strategy focused on maintaining their military power. Furthermore, captured regions would persist in demonstrating resistance to disrupt Japanese forces and complicate their dominion over China.

Foreign Aid for China

Subsequent to Japan's departure from the League of Nations in 1933, the nation adopted an assertive foreign policy aimed at establishing the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. This posed a significant threat to the economic interests and influences of European powers and the United States in Asia. Upon the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the United States government enacted economic penalties against Japan. In 1940, Japan allied with the Axis Powers by signing the Tripartite Pact with Italy and Germany. Japan successfully occupied French Indochina in mid-1941, while the United States maintained a stance of non-confrontation. Nevertheless, Japan's imperial ambitions in the Pacific resulted in an unfortunate confrontation with the United States. The United States retaliated by instituting an oil embargo that would stifle Japan's economy. Consequently, Japan devised a strategy to expel the United States from the Pacific region in order to dominate Southeast Asia.

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the United States and China declared war on Japan. This integrated the Second Sino-Japanese War into World War II. China declared war on Italy and Germany. Eight hours subsequent to the bombing, Japan assaulted Hong Kong and obliterated the planes of the Allied forces. Britain and the United States provided financial assistance to China and established military air bases on the mainland. The assistance from Britain and the United States alleviated China's concerns and compelled Japan to reallocate its forces. Nevertheless, China's military capabilities continued to deteriorate until April 1945. The Japanese appeared invincible, particularly after the destruction of Britain's two largest battleships in Singapore during an aerial assault on December 10, 1941.

Japan's Surrender

Assisted by the Western allies, China executed a successful offensive on August 14, 1945, at Zhijiang. This constituted a significant setback for the Japanese, who had been achieving continuous triumphs. The United States detonated an atomic bomb over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Three days later, the Soviet Union launched an assault on the Japanese in Manchuria. On August 9, 1945, the United States deployed a further atomic bomb, targeting Nagasaki. Emperor Hirohito of Japan formally capitulated to the Allies on August 15, 1945. The Soviet Union, conversely, persisted in its assault against the Kwantung Army (the principal Japanese military force) and obliterated it entirely within a fortnight. The official surrender of Japan to the Allies was executed on September 2, 1945, onboard the USS Missouri battleship.

Following the Allied Forces' victory in the war, General Douglas commanded all Japanese troops in China (except those in Manchuria), French Indochina, and Formosa to capitulate to Chiang Kai-Shek. The Japanese military in China formally capitulated on September 9, 1945, signifying the conclusion of the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II. Furthermore, Taiwan, the Pescadores, and Manchuria were returned to

China in accordance with the stipulations of the Cairo Declaration.

Major causes of the War

Since 1868, Japan has seen a fast modernisation known as the Meiji Restoration, establishing itself as a dominant power in East Asia. This concerned the Qing dynasty of China, which perceived Japan as a challenge to its regional dominance.

In 1894, hostilities between Japan and China escalated into overt warfare. The proximate cause of the conflict was the contention on the governance of Korea. China and Japan have always been interested in the peninsula, regarded as a significant strategic site. In 1876, Japan entered into a treaty with Korea that conferred specific advantages, including the authority to deploy troops within the nation. The conflict was partially instigated by the Donghak Peasant Revolution, which commenced in 1894 in Korea.

This was an insurrection against Korean leaders perceived as too influenced by foreign forces, namely China and Japan. The insurgents demanded the cessation of foreign influence and a revival of traditional Korean values. The insurgents received backing from China. Japan perceived this as a danger to its interests and deployed its own troops to Korea to oppose the Chinese presence. At the commencement of hostilities, Japan stationed more than 8,000 troops in Korea, far exceeding the Chinese forces. The Japanese forces were commanded by seasoned leaders, including Admiral Ito Sukeyuki and General Yamagata Aritomo. On July 23, 1894, the Japanese seized the Korean royal palace and designated Joseon King Gojong as Gwangmu Emperor, signifying his departure from Chinese dominion. On July 25th, 4,000 Japanese soldiers advanced southward towards the coastal city of Asan to expel the 3,800 Chinese troops.

Battle of Pungdo

On July 25, 1894, the inaugural confrontation occurred in the naval Battle of Pungdo off the coast near Asan, Korea. The Japanese naval forces intercepted a Chinese fleet transporting reinforcements and supplies intended for Qing army soldiers located in Korea. The Japanese possessed a considerable technological and tactical superiority over their Chinese counterparts, attributable to superior equipment and well-trained crews, despite the fleets being numerically comparable. The Japanese fleet outmanoeuvred the Chinese, sinking the cruiser Gaosheng and incapacitating the gunboat Jiyuan, which sustained significant damage and was compelled to escape. This victory interrupted a vital supply route for Chinese troops located south of Seoul, thereby hindering the arrival of crucial reinforcements and resources to the Chinese forces in Korea.

Battle of Seonghwan

This was followed by the first major land engagement of the First Sino-Japanese War at the Battle of Seonghwan on July 28, 1894. The Japanese forces, led by General Ōshima Yoshimasa, launched an attack against the Chinese garrison stationed near Asan, which numbered around 3,500 troops. With roughly 4,000 Japanese soldiers, including infantry, cavalry, and artillery units, the Japanese unleashed a series of surprise tactics, including night maneuvers and flanking strategies, which breached the Chinese defenses, as they caught the Qing forces off guard. After two hours of intense combat, the Chinese defenders, unable to hold their positions under the sustained Japanese assault, fled toward Asan. In doing so, they abandoned crucial weapons and supplies on the battlefield. They inflicted heavy casualties on the Chinese forces, who lost approximately 500 men. In contrast, Japanese losses remained significantly lower, with around 80 soldiers reported as wounded or killed.

Battle of Asan

After their triumph at Seonghwan, Japanese forces swiftly pursued the retreating Chinese troops and captured the city of Asan on July 29, 1894. This city held considerable strategic importance as a vital supply centre for Qing armies positioned south of Seoul. The assailants faced dispersed Chinese fortifications and a succession of formidable natural impediments. However, via systematic infantry assaults complemented by well-coordinated artillery bombardment, the Japanese troops captured the city with minor opposition. This rapid seizure resulted in over 500 casualties among the Chinese, although Japanese losses were very minimal, with fewer than 100 wounded reported. The capture of Asan by Japanese forces significantly impaired Qing military operations in Korea by disrupting vital supply routes for the Chinese and constraining the Qing army's capacity to replenish and maintain their positions in the area. The remaining Chinese forces, now isolated from essential resources, retreated northward towards Pyongyang. In reaction to these intensifying conflicts, both Japan and China formally declared war on August 1.

The Battle of Pyongyang

The next major battle of the war was the Battle of Pyongyang, which took place on September 15, 1894. The Japanese army, still under command of General Oshima Yoshimasa, launched a determined assault on the fortified Chinese positions in the city. They approached from three sides using approximately 15,000 troops against the Qing army's force of around 13,000 soldiers. Once more, coordinated artillery and ground attacks helped the Japanese forces swiftly breached the Chinese defenses. By the end of the day, the Japanese gained full control of Pyongyang, inflicting substantial losses on the Qing army, which counted around 2,000 dead and 4,000 wounded or missing. Japanese forces, meanwhile, sustained notably fewer casualties, with official reports listing 568 soldiers as dead, wounded, or missing. The fall of Pyongyang effectively eliminated Chinese influence in Korea, allowing Japan to assert full control over the peninsula by early October. The Chinese forces abandoned the region and retreated northward.

Battle of Yalu River

Following the acquisition of Korea, Japan focused on incapacitating the Qing fleet. On September 17, 1894, the Japanese navy confronted the Chinese Beiyang navy in the Battle of the Yalu River. The display included Japan's fleet of 12 contemporary warships, comprising 8 protected cruisers, including the flagship Matsushima, and 2 ironclads, among others. They opposed China's Beiyang Fleet, one of the nation's four regional naval forces, which had 14 warships, including 2 battleships (Dingyuan and Zhenyuan), many cruisers, and lesser craft. Despite comparable dimensions, the Japanese fleet possessed a technological superiority over the Chinese, chiefly due to the implementation of sophisticated quick-firing artillery. Within a just five hours, the Japanese fleet exhibited its tactical prowess by rapidly outflanking the Qing vessels and exploiting weaknesses in their formations. Upon completion, the Japanese successfully sank five Chinese vessels, including the flagship Zhiyuan, while inflicting substantial damage on others, resulting in around 850 fatalities. In comparison, Japan reported approximately 90 casualties and did not lose any ships. This triumph significantly diminished China's naval prowess and rendered its maritime channels susceptible to Japanese dominance. By neutralising the Qing fleet, Japan significantly obstructed the resupply of Chinese ground forces in Korea. Subsequent to the swift setbacks at Pyongyang and the Yalu River, China retreated from Korea and commenced preparations to safeguard its domestic borders.

Battle at Jinzhou

By late October 1894, Japan commenced its incursion into China. The primary objective was the acquisition of Jinzhou, situated on the Liaodong Peninsula. On October 24, 1894, Japanese forces initiated their assault on the region, encountering no effective opposition because to inadequate coordination and low morale among

the Chinese defenders. Within days, the Japanese captured Jinzhou, and by November 6, they progressed to seize Dalian—a vital port city that functioned as a conduit to the strategically significant naval base at Lüshunkou, also referred to as Port Arthur.

Battle of Port Arthur

The Battle of Port Arthur commenced on November 21, 1894, when approximately 18,000 Japanese soldiers executed a formidable attack against the Qing defenders, who numbered around 13,000. The defenders were inadequately commanded and poorly equipped, resulting in the Japanese seizing possession of Port Arthur within two days. This signified their acquisition of essential military resources and the establishment of a crucial operational base for Japan to initiate more incursions into mainland China. The most infamous incident occurred on November 21, 1894, when Japanese forces slaughtered thousands of Chinese civilians in what is referred to as the Port Arthur Massacre.

Siege of Weihaiwei

After their triumph in the south, Japanese forces readied for a pivotal assault on Weihaiwei, a major port on the Shandong Peninsula, where the remains of the Beiyang Fleet had taken refuge. On January 20, 1895, the Battle of Weihaiwei commenced, as Japanese forces initiated a concerted land and naval offensive. The Japanese command deployed more than 25,000 troops to encircle the city, while their navy obstructed all escape routes for the Chinese fleet. This effectively ensnared the remaining Chinese warships and isolated Qing forces within the harbour. In the subsequent weeks, Japanese soldiers methodically demolished the Chinese defences surrounding Weihaiwei, seizing critical strongholds sequentially, while Chinese forces endeavoured to uphold their positions amid relentless siege. On February 12, 1895, Admiral Ding Ruchang, commander of the Chinese fleet, evaluated the critical circumstances and opted to surrender, acknowledging that continued fight was pointless. With the loss of Weihaiwei, Japan effectively dismantled the Beiyang Fleet, inflicting a critical setback on China's naval power and eradicating its ability to safeguard the coastline. The triumph at Weihaiwei rendered China susceptible to other military invasions. In actuality, it provided little alternatives for substantial opposition. By April, Japanese forces progressed towards Beijing, prompting China to want peace.

End of the war

On April 17, 1895, Japan and China executed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which officially concluded the conflict. According to the treaty, China acknowledged Korea's independence and relinquished Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan. Moreover, China consented to remit a substantial indemnity to Japan amounting to 200 million taels (about US\$600 million).

Practical reasons for Japan's victory

A primary factor in Japan's triumph was its advanced military technology. At that time, Japan was significantly more modernised than China and possessed superior weapons and equipment. A further factor contributing to Japan's triumph was the enhanced training and discipline of its forces. The Japanese military exhibited superior organisation relative to the Chinese troops, who frequently had inadequate leadership and a deficiency in discipline. Specifically, Japanese forces were armed with Miyamoto and Mauser rifles, which provided enhanced firepower relative to the antiquated, single-shot rifles utilised by several Chinese troops. Furthermore, Japan was fervently driven to achieve victory, intent on asserting dominance over Korea, while

China was satisfied with preserving the existing state of affairs. By the conclusion of the battle, Japan had deployed approximately 240,000 troops to bolster its operations in Korea and Manchuria.

The consequences of Japan's victory

The Sino-Japanese War was a pivotal event in the history of both nations. For China, it signified the conclusion of its prolonged supremacy in East Asia. For Japan, it marked the initial stride towards ascension as a significant global force. The Sino-Japanese War exposed the deficiencies of conventional Chinese military strategies and technologies, which would be capitalised upon by other foreign countries in subsequent years. For China, it was a devastating defeat that demonstrated the extent to which they had lagged behind Japan. The Qing dynasty experienced political weakening due to the war, resulting in a succession of rebellions that ultimately led to its downfall in 1911. The conflict ultimately illustrated Japan's ascendant dominance as the preeminent regional leader and initiated a sequence of events that would culminate in the nation's eventual supremacy over East Asia. Russia, Germany, and France opposed Japan's annexation of the Liaodong Peninsula, compelling Japan to relinquish it to China during the Triple Intervention of 1895. This was poorly received by the Japanese, who felt degraded by the other powers. Specifically, it resulted in heightened tensions between Russia and Japan, culminating in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).

Theoretical Framework

Modernization Theory

The paper adopted The Modernisation Theory as the theoretical framework. The theory is an effective tool in the analysis of the impact that the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) had on the political and economic growth of mainland China. The theory that societies undergo development through different phases of progression to being a traditional structure, followed by a modern industrial state through internal reforms, technological advances and institutional restructuring is a product of the 1950s scholarship of Walt W. Rostow and others (Rostow, 1960). Originally intended to elucidate economic development, the theory offers significant insights into how external shocks—such as military loss or foreign occupation can precipitate profound structural change.

The First Sino-Japanese War serves as a pivotal catalyst within this theoretical framework. The victory of Japan is the example of the effectiveness of rapid modernisation through state-controlled industrialisation, bureaucratisation, and professionalisation of the army. The loss was also an essential sign of an institutional stagnation within China, and the intellectuals and reformers demanded that the state, economy, and armed forces should be thoroughly modernised (Huang, 2021). The Self-Strengthening Movement and ensuing reform efforts can be viewed as initial yet inadequate measures in the modernisation trajectory, hindered by conservative opposition and the waning power of the Qing dynasty. Modernisation Theory elucidates how the conflict revealed internal vulnerabilities and incited calls for reform, ultimately leading to the 1911 Revolution and the dissolution of royal governance.

These transitional processes were aggravated by the Second Sino-Japanese War. Modernisation Theory states that one of the most common effects of long-term conflict is a speedy process of state-building that forces governments to mobilise resources, develop administrative capacity, and integrate national identity (Tilly, 1992). During the war, the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) strengthened bureaucracy, adopted mass mobilisation policies and increased political centralisation. The CCP, however, excelled in integrating itself into rural society, enhancing administrative efficiency and establishing an organisational framework suitable for post-war governance (Van de Ven, 2020). The wartime institutional innovations established the groundwork for a robust centralised state post-1949, along with the modernisation trajectory aimed at developing effective governance institutions.

The Modernisation Theory explains the relationship between the destruction during war and the developmental goals after 1949. The extensive devastation of infrastructure and industry created an immediate necessity for government-led restoration, leading to the implementation of significant industrialisation, military modernisation, and coordinated national planning (Chen, 2023). The wars served as catalysts that propelled China through multiple stages of institutional and economic upheaval.

Prospects and Challenges

The Sino-Japanese War of the First (1894-1895) and Second (1937-1945) were critical and long-term events affecting the development of mainland China and conditioning its political process, economic structure, and capacity of a state. The First Sino-Japanese War revealed the weakness of the Qing rule on a structural level, and heralded the breakdown of the ancient imperial system in China. Japanese defeat weakened the belief in the Confucian rule, hastened the elite discussions on reform, and spurred early modernisation including military restructuring, industrial projects, and educational changes. Nonetheless, Japanese imposed indemnities depleted the state treasury, further reliance on the foreign side, and internal strife, which was a direct cause of the 1911 Revolution and the demise of the Qing state (Spence, 2013). The Second Sino-Japanese war had even greater effects on the development of mainland China. The invasion of Japan had an immense human cost, devastating infrastructure, a displaced population and collapsed economy mostly in the coastal and industrial areas. The destruction of rail, factories, and agricultural systems also reversed the economic development by decades (Mitter, 2014).

The political future of China too was changed by the war. The lengthy struggle empowered the Chinese Communist Party rural base, increased the mass mobilisation and undermined the legitimacy of the Nationalist government. The experience of the war by the year 1949 had provided the grounds that led to the triumph of Communism and the formation of the People Republic of China. Both wars unintentionally led to long-term consolidation of the state and nationalist consciousness in terms of prospects. The unified experience of resistance promoted the unity of politics, authorised firm centralism, and rationale post-1949 state-based development policies. The land reforms, the military organisation, and administrative penetration into the rural society also came about as a result of war mobilisation and later aided the process of industrialisation and social change (Naughton, 2018). The hardships were, however, harsh and very prolonged. Post-war recovery was limited by economic devastation, loss of human capital, psychological trauma and institutional disruption. Inequality increased in the region and the rule of dictatorship as a reaction to insecurity and disintegration. Therefore, although Sino-Japanese Wars hindered the short-term development of China, it ironically reformed political and institutional circumstances that defined the future development trajectory of mainland China.

Conclusion

The Sino-Japanese First and Second Wars were the turning points in the history of the mainland China, which determined the political transformation, the national image and the development priorities of the country. The First Sino-Japanese war revealed a deep institutional frailty of the Qing dynasty, and showed the necessity of modern state systems and technological progress. This defeat also heightened national humiliation and set ablaze reformist and revolutionary movements that ultimately destroyed the imperial rule. Along with the Second Sino-Japanese War, the changes in China accelerated as it necessitated political mobilisation, consolidation of administrative systems and the establishment of new relationships between the state and society. The Chinese Communist Party was also able to increase its organisational possibility during the

conflict and consolidated legitimacy and repositioned itself as a unifying force that enabled them to rebuild the nation after years of destruction.

The two wars also had an impact on the Chinese developmental agenda that came after 1949 that promoted the great dedication to state-led industrialisation, national security and centralised governance. The foreign assault memory supported a strategic culture that was anchored on sovereignty protection, military preparedness and solidarity. Combined, the two conflicts were not only instances of military confrontation but dramatic agents of structural change that defined the rise of China as a modern state and which are still subjectively defining its developmental and strategic decisions to this day.

Recommendations

1. There is a need to continue investing in historical reconciliation and regional diplomacy that will minimize all the long-term political and psychological legacies of the wartime between China and Japan. The enhancement of academic contacts, collaborative work of historians, and human-to-human cooperation will be useful in regulating the unsettled historical issues, which still shape the regional security and economic relations.
2. The Chinese state must keep up with the policy of inclusive development that will alleviate the regional inequalities on the basis of the destruction during war. Infrastructure investment, rural industrialisation and balanced urban rural development would be targeted in order to alleviate structural inequalities that were created in the conflict eras.
3. A high level of consideration should be given to human capital recovery during long-term development planning. The increased access to quality education, medical care and social welfare is still necessary to compensate the losses in generations due to displacement of people and erosion of the human capital as a result of the war.
4. The lessons that were learned during the war on state mobilisation should be implemented in a careful manner in modern governance. Although powerful institutions favored the recovery in the post-war period, transparency, accountability and the system of rule-oriented governance to avoid the abuse of centralisation and stable economic conditions in the peaceful atmosphere are the key to sustainable development.

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