

The Impact and Profound Influence of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 on the Modern International Pattern

Jialei Nie¹, Jianghan Wang^{2,*}

¹Jiangsu Ocean University, Lianyungang 222005, China

²Suzhou Vocational College of Agriculture, Suzhou 215008, China

*Corresponding email: 1340123839@qq.com

Abstract

This paper takes the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 as the research core, aiming to objectively analyze the impact and long-term influence of the war on the modern international pattern in East Asia and the whole world. Adopting the historical document research method and the pattern evolution analysis method, it sorts out the evolution of the traditional East Asian order, the power layout of the great powers in the Far East and the rules of the international order before and after the war, and carries out a systematic study combined with relevant treaty texts and authoritative historical materials. The results show that the Sino-Japanese War completely disintegrated the traditional East Asian tributary system, promoted a fundamental shift in the status of China and Japan in East Asia, triggered the restructuring of forces and interest games among the great powers in the Far East, prompted the Western-dominated treaty system to replace the traditional regional order, and profoundly changed the development trend of the modern international pattern. It is concluded that the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 is a key watershed in the evolution of the modern international pattern. The order change and power restructuring triggered have exerted a profound effect on the development of modern history and provided an important historical reference for the contemporary understanding of the laws of the evolution of the international pattern.

Keywords

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Modern international pattern, East Asian order, Power restructuring, Treaty system

Introduction

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 was a regional war of milestone significance in the historical process of modern East Asia and also a key event affecting the evolution of the modern international pattern. Before the war, the East Asian region had maintained a regional order centered on the traditional suzerain-vassal relationship for a long time. Although the Qing Dynasty had been impacted by the two Opium Wars, it still retained the core position in the East Asian regional order. At the same time, Japan launched the modernization transformation through the Meiji Restoration, gradually completed the accumulation of national strength, and signs of changes began to appear in the regional development pattern. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War was essentially a game between the two countries for the dominance of regional development in East Asia under different development

paths in the process of modernization transformation. The outcome of the war not only affected the development direction of China and Japan, but also triggered a chain reaction in the international pattern in East Asia and even the whole world [1,2].

At present, academic research on the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) mostly focuses on the war process itself and its impact on the domestic development of the two countries [3,4]. Research on its role in promoting the systematic evolution of the modern international pattern still has room for further deepening. Based on this, from an objective and neutral historical research perspective, this paper systematically analyzes the impacts and profound influences of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) on the modern international order. The analysis is conducted from three dimensions: The transformation of the East Asian

regional order, the readjustment of major powers' power configuration in the Far East, and the evolution of international order rules. It clarifies the internal logic between the war and the evolution of the international pattern and fills the detailed gaps in relevant research. It provides a complete historical context for the objective understanding of the formation and development of the modern international order. It also offers a historical reference for grasping the laws governing the evolution of the international pattern in the contemporary era.

Research methods

This paper adopts two core research methods to ensure the objectivity, rigor and systematicness of the research, as follows:

Historical document research method: This study comprehensively sorts out original treaty texts such as the Treaty of Shimonoseki and modern official archival documents. It also collates authoritative research from domestic and foreign scholars on the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the modern East Asian order, and the evolution of the international pattern. Extract the key clues of the evolution of the international pattern before and after the war, provide solid historical support for the research, and ensure that the research conclusions are traceable and evidence-based.

Pattern evolution analysis method: Taking the East Asian region as the core and the global perspective as the extension, this method objectively analyzes the multiple impacts of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) on China, Japan, the Western powers and the overall modern international order. The analysis focuses on three core aspects: Changes in the balance of power, restructuring of the regional order, and international interest games. It clarifies the internal connection between the war and the evolution of the international pattern and ensures the comprehensiveness and logicity of the research conclusions.

Research results

Disintegrating the traditional East Asian tributary system and realizing a fundamental shift in the regional status of China and Japan

Before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the East Asian tributary system linked by suzerain-vassal relations had existed for a thousand years. The Qing

Dynasty formed a stable hierarchical relationship with surrounding countries such as Korea and Vietnam, and was the core leader of the East Asian regional order [5]. After the Qing army's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War, the Qing government signed relevant treaties with Japan and was forced to recognize Korea's secession from the traditional suzerain-vassal system. This marked the complete disintegration of the millennium-long East Asian tributary system.

After the defeat in the two Opium Wars, the late Qing government realized the importance of developing the navy [6]. Therefore, the Westernization Faction in the Qing government launched the Westernization Movement with the slogan of "Strengthening the Country and Enriching the People", and officially established the Beiyang Fleet in 1888. It was the most powerful and largest among the four naval fleets of the Qing Dynasty at that time. However, no new warships were added after its establishment, and even the Qing court embezzled naval military expenditure to build the Summer Palace. This led to the gap in the speed and firepower of warships between the Beiyang Fleet and the Japanese navy in the later period. The fleet was finally completely annihilated in Weihaiwei, marking the failure of the Westernization Movement.

In terms of national strength and regional status, Japan gained extensive territorial control and massive war reparations through the war. It invested these proceeds in military industries, infrastructure, and national economic development, achieving a leap in national strength. It completely got rid of its subordinate status in East Asia and emerged as a great power in the East Asian region, laying the foundation for its subsequent participation in regional and even global interest games. In contrast, the national strength of the Qing Dynasty was greatly damaged after the war. It not only lost the dominance of the East Asian region, but also fell into a situation of continuous decline in national strength. The traditional balance of power in the East Asian region was broken, and the regional pattern shifted from the original one centered on the Qing Dynasty to a new situation dominated by Japan. This change in status profoundly affected the subsequent development direction of the East Asian region.

Exposing the power vacuum in the East Asian region and triggering the carving up and restructuring of the great powers' forces in the far East

The outcome of the Sino-Japanese War completely

exposed the reality of the empty national strength and corrupt rule of the Qing Dynasty, breaking the wait-and-see attitude of the Western powers towards the East Asian region before. The Western powers took the opportunity to intervene in Far East affairs one after another, setting off a wave of carving up interests and dividing spheres of influence, and the international power landscape in the Far East was fully reshaped.

After the Triple Intervention in 1895, the great powers demanded privileges from the Qing government on various pretexts: Germany seized Jiaozhou Bay on the occasion of relevant missionary cases and designated Shandong as its sphere of influence. Russia leased Lushun and Dalian and gradually took control of the overall interests in Northeast China. France leased Guangzhou Bay and brought Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan into the scope of its power radiation. Britain further consolidated its inherent advantages in the Yangtze River basin by leasing the New Territories of Kowloon and Weihaiwei. Japan also took the opportunity to designate Fujian as its sphere of influence [7].

While dividing the spheres of influence, the great powers also deeply intervened in the economic development of the East Asian region. They controlled core rights and interests such as the right to build railways, the right to mine mineral resources, and the right to manage customs revenue, thus seizing the region's core economic lifeline. The original Far East order centered on the Qing Dynasty was completely transformed into an interest game field participated by both Western powers and Japan. The Far East became one of the core regions for the competition of great powers, the power layout of great powers in the Far East was fully restructured, and the international pattern of the Far East fell into an unprecedented period of change and adjustment.

Breaking the original balance of power in the far East, intensifying contradictions among the great powers and promoting the adjustment of the global order

The rise of Japan brought about by the Sino-Japanese War broke the balance of power built by the Western powers in the Far East before, triggering the escalating interest conflicts among imperialist countries. Such contradictions were not only limited to the Far East, but also extended to the global scope, promoting the

adjustment and restructuring of the modern global international order.

Among them, the contradictions between Russia and Japan intensified sharply due to the struggle for interests in the Northeast region. Russia had long tried to monopolize the interests in the Northeast, which was the core target of Japan's regional expansion strategy. The fundamental conflict between their interest demands finally led to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, which further reshaped the power pattern in the East Asian region. At the same time, as an emerging great power, the United States paid increasing attention to Far Eastern markets and interests. It put forward the Open Door Policy in 1899, advocating equal access to interests and equal opportunities for all great powers in China. In essence, it was to break the monopoly of the great powers on Far East interests and open a channel for its own commodities and capital to enter the Far East [8].

Although this policy slowed the process of the complete partition of the Far East to a certain extent, it also turned East Asia into an arena for common competition among global great powers. As a result, the status of the Far East in the global international pattern became increasingly prominent. In addition, as a large-scale war between Asian countries in modern times, the outcome of the Sino-Japanese War also broke the Western powers' monopoly cognition of the development of modernization and the dominance of wars. It indirectly inspired national awakening in colonies across Asia, Africa, and other regions. It laid the groundwork for the rise of a global-scale national liberation movement in the 20th century and promoted the gradual collapse of the global colonial system [9].

Promoting the evolution of international order concepts and making the western treaty system dominate the modern international pattern

The influence of the Sino-Japanese War on the modern international pattern is reflected not only in the restructuring of the power landscape, but also in the fundamental evolution of international order concepts. The traditional Chinese-centered Hua-Yi Order, founded on cultural identity and hierarchical relations, was completely replaced by the Western-dominated treaty system. The right to formulate the rules of the modern international pattern thus fell fully into the

hands of the Western great powers.

Before the war, the Qing Dynasty adhered to the traditional Hua-Yi concept, divided ethnic groups and national levels by cultural superiority and inferiority, and constructed the East Asian regional order. This order concept was essentially different from the Western treaty system based on the form of sovereign states and was difficult to integrate into the Western-dominated global order. After the Sino-Japanese War, the Qing government was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties, completely abandoned the traditional international order concepts in repeated concessions of interests, and fully integrated into the Western-dominated international system. After Japan emerged as a great power through the war, it also fully accepted the Western international order rules and became a practitioner of the Western treaty system in the East Asian region [10].

Since then, the modern international pattern has entered a new stage dominated by Western great powers, centered on the treaty system and taking strength as the basis for interest distribution. The game rule of the law of the jungle has become the mainstream of the modern international pattern. This order pattern lasted until the end of the Second World War and profoundly shaped the historical development track of modern global and East Asian regions.

Discussion

The core logic of the Sino Japanese War's influence on the modern international pattern

The Sino-Japanese War became a key watershed in the evolution of the modern international pattern. Its core logic lies in breaking the region's original order balance and triggering a chain reaction: Disintegration of the regional order, reversal of national status, intervention and rivalry of great powers, and adjustment of the global order. The disintegration of the traditional East Asian tributary system created a regional power vacuum, providing space for Japan's rise and the intervention of great powers. The fundamental reversal of the status of China and Japan changed the core power structure of East Asia. The carving up of interests and games among the great powers in the Far East extended the changes of the regional pattern to the global scope. Finally, this has driven the comprehensive transformation of the concepts and rules governing the international order,

thereby shaping a new modern international pattern.

In essence, this pattern shift is an inevitable outcome of power balance changes among countries at different modernization levels. It also reflects the expansion of the global colonial system dominated by Western great powers. The corruption and backwardness of the Qing Dynasty and the lag in modernization transformation made it difficult to maintain the traditional regional order. Japan's leap in national strength through modernization transformation inevitably sought regional dominance. The Western great powers inevitably took the opportunity to intervene in regional affairs in pursuit of maximizing interests. The game of multiple forces finally led to the reshaping of the modern international pattern.

The historical objectivity and long-term nature of the influence of the Sino-Japanese War

From the perspective of historical objectivity, the influence of the Sino-Japanese War on the international pattern is not one-dimensional. It not only promoted Japan's rise and the Western great powers' interest expansion in the Far East, but also made the Qing Dynasty realize its own backwardness and indirectly promoted the subsequent reform and exploration in China. It not only accelerated the disintegration of the traditional regional order, but also promoted the gradual integration of the East Asian region into the global modernization process. Its influence is diverse and complex, and it needs to be comprehensively understood from an objective perspective of historical development to avoid one-sided evaluation.

From the perspective of long-term nature, the East Asian power pattern and international order rules shaped by the Sino-Japanese War have profoundly affected the historical development for more than half a century since then. Relying on the strength accumulated from the Sino-Japanese War, Japan gradually implemented the foreign expansion strategy and became an important factor of unrest in modern East Asia. The Western great powers-dominated treaty system restricted the development of some backward countries for a long time. The intensification of interest games among the great powers on a global scale also laid a hidden danger for the outbreak of the subsequent world wars. Its influence transcended time and space and was not gradually eliminated until the international pattern

was reshuffled after the Second World War.

Research limitations and future directions

This study focuses on the macro impact of the First Sino-Japanese War on the international pattern. It lacks in-depth research on certain subdivided fields, including the specific details of great powers' interest games in China and the coping strategies of regional small and medium-sized countries. As a result, it has certain limitations. Future research can further refine the research perspective. It may conduct an in-depth analysis of the differentiated impacts of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) on various countries by integrating the specific development contexts of regional nations. Additionally, it can explore the practical reference value of historical experience for the contemporary era, in combination with the evolutionary trends of the current international pattern.

Conclusion

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 is a key watershed in the evolution of the modern international pattern, which has exerted an all-round and in-depth profound influence on the international pattern of East Asia and even the whole world. The war completely disintegrated the traditional East Asian tributary system and brought about a fundamental reversal of China-Japan relations in East Asia: Japan emerged as a regional power, while the Qing Dynasty lost its regional dominance. The regional power vacuum created by the war triggered a frenzy among Western great powers to carve up interests in the Far East, driving a comprehensive restructuring of their power landscape in the region. Meanwhile, it shattered the original balance of power in the Far East, intensified contradictions between imperialist countries, and spurred adjustments to the global international order, while also indirectly fueling the rise of the global national liberation movement. More importantly, it led to the Western-dominated treaty system replacing the traditional Hua-Yi Order, thereby establishing the dominant rules and developmental trends of the modern international pattern.

The restructuring of the power landscape and the evolution of order concepts triggered by the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) have profoundly shaped the historical trajectory of modern East Asia and the world at large. The historical insights it offers thus hold

significant practical significance for the contemporary era. To objectively understand the impact of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) on the modern international pattern is conducive to a clearer grasp of the laws and inherent logic underlying the evolution of the international order in contemporary times. It also provides an important historical reference for addressing the complex current international situation and safeguarding the stability of regional and global order.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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