

Research Visit Report

20th Oct 2012

Personal Information

Name: Fumi Yoshii (PhD. Student, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, The University of Tokyo)

Major: Japanese History

Title of Research

Anglo-Japanese and Anglo-Chinese Relations Reflected in Documents at the National Archives, 1937~1945

Research

Country: United Kingdom

Institute:

The National Archives

Cambridge University Library,

Bodleian Library, University of Oxford,

SOAS Library, University of London

HSBC's Archives

Research Period

5th Sep 2012 ~ 2nd Oct 2012 (28days)

Plans and Outcome

(1) Overview of Plans

My initial plan was to examine how British-run companies that had been engaged in business activities in China were affected by Japanese military and administrative affairs when Japanese nationals greatly increased their involvement in the economy, politics, and formation of order in China following the Manchurian Incident, and how international relations surrounding East Asia, including those between Japan and Britain, were transformed as a result. The purpose of this research visit was to read diplomatic documents owned by the National Archives (FO371, 410, 405 etc.) as an initial step to examine how the voices of those British-run companies calling for protection of the treaty rights in China reached the Foreign Office and were reflected in British policies toward Japan.

(2) What I Achieved

During the research visit I went through several original documents, used a digital camera to photograph the pages that had been difficult to read without the original, and saved the data. Although the work at the National Archives was the main objective of the visit, I learned that more historical material related to the companies I had in mind were available elsewhere, and I changed my plans by allocating half of my time to the viewing and photographing of those materials. Hence the title and the outcome of this visit is not an exact match. Following are the documents I read in addition to the Foreign Office series.

Jardine Matheson Archives (Cambridge University Library)

John Swire & Sons Archives (SOAS Library, University of London)

China Association Archives (SOAS Library, University of London)

Nathan Paper (Bodleian Library, University of Oxford)

HSBC Archives

As for these documents, I mainly read dispatches between their head office and local branches in China as well as political reports from the branches in China.

(3) Plans for further research

I am going to read what I collected on British companies, analyze how employees in China viewed the changes in society due to the Japanese invasion of China and reported those changes to the head office in Britain, and then clarify how the head offices understood the situation in China and what measures they took. Next, using historical materials from the British Foreign Office, I will study British diplomatic responses to infringement of treaty rights. I also plan to look into changes in international relationships in East Asia by perusing additional documents from Japan and China.

During the visit I met several researchers who generously provided information on archives that house very rich collections of company-related documents. I hope to get a chance to go through them in the future in order to make use of the materials on British companies that were engaged in business activities in China. Furthermore, it is probably necessary to look at documents from the British Treasury and take into consideration how Britain's financial standing influenced its East Asia policies.