Development of Important Ports and Sea Areas in the Territorial Expansion of Modern Japan

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Received June 18, 2015; Accepted October 27, 2015

Abstract After the opening of Japan and the Meiji Restoration in the 1850s–1860s, the Japanese land space changed drastically with domestic restructuring and the expansion of overseas colonies. In the process, the stronger presence of Japan in Northeast Asia was accompanied by the reinforcement of the ports on the shores of the Japan Sea and the East China Sea. Some good natural ports on the mainland competed with rival ports in supplying services for the continent and in harbor improvements, and became positioned as pivotal nodes for international trade or passenger transit in the Northeast Asian network. This paper focuses on two successful ports, Tsuruga and Nagasaki, and explores two problems from the perspective of ‘realism-structuration.’ One is how locally influential individuals as special human agencies contributed to the regional formation of these ports through their time-space practices in the expansion process. The other is how they recognized and understood or experienced the sea areas surrounding the Japanese mainland and the continental area. Two key people, Owada in Tsuruga and Suzuki in Nagasaki, actively visited the continental area, and insisted on and practiced development of their localities in close relationship with the continental area. In this sense, they were special human agencies precisely embodying the structure that provided regional formation. Finally, the following inference is made: In a multilateral area as an actor-network, from the viewpoint of Actor-Network Theory, the sea areas became involved in the networking as non-human actors.

Key words important port, Tsuruga, Nagasaki, Japan Sea, East China Sea, modern Japan, special human agency

Introduction

Japanese modernization and historical geography of international ports

Modern Japan expanded the nation-state sovereign territory beyond the pre-modern area of its three main islands—Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu—and a part of Hokkaido Island. The territorial area continued to expand, eventually including colonized regions of the Ryukyu Islands, the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, South Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, Taiwan, Micronesia, etc., up until the end of the World War II. Figure 1 shows the geography of Imperial Japan and the locations of important places referred to in this study.

In pre-modern Japan before the mid-19th century, only the four ports of Nagasaki, Tsushima, Satsuma, and Matsumae, located at the margins of the national territory, had been ports of ‘international’ exchange under control of the Edo Shogunate of Japan. After the opening of Japan, Nagasaki and some new ports were designated to be gateways for international trading within the main islands.¹ The Meiji government later added new international ports to that list.

At the beginning of the modernization process, Japan was surrounded by four sea areas² (Arano 2012). The historical-geographical significance of these sea areas for modern Japan will be considered in the following chapters. In the course of modern Imperial Japan’s expansion, some sea areas around the mainland became ‘Inland Seas’ within the Japanese imperial territory. Connections between the Japanese mainland and the continental area including modern Japanese colonies were gradually built up. The East Asian traffic network in ca.1930s is shown in Figure 2.³ Some important nodal ports were interconnected in the transport network across the sea area. Tsuruga was one of them, and the most integral node on Japan’s mainland in the marine traffic system of the Japan Sea, because it had the most shipping routes for the ports on the opposite shore, Vladivostok in Russia, and Unggi, Najin, Chongjin and Wonsan in northern Korea. On the other hand, Nagasaki was the pivotal port for Shanghai and Taiwan across the East China Sea during that era. Both of the port towns had grown economically under the national policy of outward advance toward the continent during that period.
Historical geographical explanation and social theoretical framework

Regarding this study, we should keep in mind two historical-geographical facts about Imperial Japan. One is that the national territory gradually expanded from the original four islands to include much of Northeast Asia up until the end of WWII. Another is that the Japan Sea and the East China Sea as the open seas of pre-modern Japan had been partly incorporated into Japanese territory in modern times. Tsuruga and Nagasaki had rebuilt themselves as modern international port towns in the process. The author hypothesizes that these sea areas played a positive role as producers and supporters of places with special functions as international trading and passenger portals located along the coastal area. This perspective on modern Japanese ports is based on the theory that renders all human and non-human actors as constitutional factors of the networked world around human beings, Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005; Bingham 2009). The sea area is in itself an actor-network constructed of some actors like the sea and ocean, the land, ports, towns, sea routes, the Law of the Sea, other human works, etc., and also an actor in the larger region such as the Northeast Asia and the pan-Pacific region.

In historical-geographical studies, there has never been consideration of how the principal portals in modern Japan developed within international trading networks and what kinds of positive effects the ‘sea areas’ contributed to the locations and the later growth-maintenance-and-decline changes of the modern ports in the coastal area. This paper finally aims at exploring the answer to the above questions.

In explaining the development of special functional places in modern Japan, the author has depended on the framework of the structuration theory as presented by Gregory (1981) and Giddens (1984) and realism as elucidated by Sayer (1984). These social theories are useful in explaining what ‘structures’ cause the ‘event’ of the creation of a place and how individuals or human actions contribute to the formation of a place in the interreproductive process for the social structure. The concept of ‘special human agency’ (Yamane 2009) is introduced in this paper. It expands the concept of ‘human agency’ used in the framework of Gregory’s structuration theory.
Human agency is defined as the agency of the independent actions by individuals in a society. And it is a concept applied really to the totality of everyday actions repeated by individuals or the general public belonging to a society. In the structuration process, human agency and social ‘structure’ inter-reproduce each other in their effects. ‘Special human agency’ means a special influential person and his/her actions to (re-)produce the society and region while understanding or sometimes creating the social-regional structures (Figure 3). It is different from the general public and ordinary persons who are the subject of ‘human agency.’ Who is the person who can be and exercise this special human agency? Such a person is a nationally/locally extremely influential man or woman like a statesman, a captain of industry, social leader, influential journalist, etc. They are able to understand and embody the social structure of the region and have the power to (re-)produce and change the region.
This study first assumes that the territorial expansion policy of modern Japan brought to some ports located on the coast of the Japanese mainland political-economic development as international pivotal portals connecting to the countries and colonial regions on the other side of their adjacent sea areas. It is clear that such 'events' were the results of the national policy. Given this assumption, case studies of Tsuruga and Nagasaki illustrate that there were principal human actors who immensely contributed to the development of those port towns, and that the local power including the main actors had recognized that the region or city/town on the opposite shore across the sea could be a valuable partner in attaining the development of their own region. These 'recognitions' of the opposite shore by the locals reflected local development policy and plans and were realized in the opening or the increase of regular service between the mainland and the opposite shore, port renovations, etc., several years later. These localities had special functions as international ports and enjoyed political and economic prosperity.

**Purposes and method of the study**

This paper pays attention to the construction of close relationships between two regions bordering the sea areas, especially from the viewpoint of the port on the Japanese mainland. When and how were the places on the opposite shore recognized by human actors in the Japanese ports of Tsuruga and Nagasaki? What discourses about the ports and the opposite areas were circulated in the port town? What plans or practices for local development had the influential persons as special human agencies, recognizing these discourses, engaged in? How did the human actors take part in the formation of each region (port town) within the international, the national, and the local world? The purpose of this paper is to attempt to answer these questions.

For this purpose, various 'regional' activities of special human agencies in the principal international ports of Tsuruga and Nagasaki are traced historically-geographically, and the formative process of recognition for the opposite shore area and the sea area by the local person and society in these ports is analyzed. The analysis is based on the social theories of 'structuration' and 'realism.' The sources for this study are maps of the period, chronicles, newspapers, biographies, statistics, local history books, etc.

In the paper, human actors' contribution to modern regional development of each place is focused on and emphasized. But such regional formations hadn't been caused only by their intentions, actions and efforts. Of course, without their leadership and actions, those regional formations and growths wouldn't have been realized. There were, however, various other factors that made up the unique and specially functioning regions, ex. natural environment, historical condition, local political-economic system, local society and culture, many other local residents and national policy etc. Such factors are also indispensable to explain perfectly the modern historical geography of those places. This study doesn't consider all aspects of regional formation process in the two modernized places but focuses on the relationship between modernized regional formation and human agency on the making process of the connections of the port towns with the continental places, using the framework of the so-called “realism-structuration-locality” school (Peet 1998).

Finally the author tries to elucidate how the 'sea area' of the Japan Sea and the East China Sea played a positive role in the formation and growth of the coastal ports in support of Actor-Network theory (ANT). Why must the sea area be a focus of attention in this study? The author hypothesizes that a sea area played an aggressive role as an 'actor' in the formation process of international region crossing the sea as an 'actor-network.' Since the opening of the country in the last days of the Tokugawa shogunate, in the mid-19th century, Japan and the Japanese first recognized the environing sea areas around their mainland and the North East Asian continent. After this, Japanese positively advanced to the sea area and the continent under the national policies. The author understands that the rediscovery of the sea area by the nation caused historical-geographical changes in the international area through outward expanding activities of people and society in Japan. From the viewpoint of ANT, we can comprehend that the sea area actively worked upon the nation of Japan in providing opportunities to advance to the sea area. And so, the sea area as an actor positively brought out the outward activities of the nation and contributed to the formation of the modern international area as an actor network.

In the next chapter, the formation of human or social recognition about the East Asian continental area and the Japan Sea area is explored through the use of a biographical approach to an influential merchant in Tsuruga. The third chapter, about modern Nagasaki, aims at investigating the discourse about Shanghai and the East China Sea from the viewpoint of Nagasaki, mainly by interpreting local and national newspaper articles of the time and local chronicles and history books. Finally, the conclusion discusses the relationship between the sea areas and the coastal port towns using Actor-Network theory.
**Tsuruga as an International Port Town and Shoshichi Owada as an Influential Merchant: The Development Process of the International Port**

**Location and development process of modern Tsuruga**

Tsuruga was an old local port located in an area surrounding the Japan Sea in central Japan (Figure 1). When the railway from Nagahama to Tsuruga was finished in 1884, Tsuruga gained the position of a Japanese portal for the Asian continent for the first time. Because of the continual opening of new sea routes across the Japan Sea, this port eventually developed to rank with the most important ports of Kobe and Yokohama. Tsuruga took advantage of its designation as a Japanese special major port (class 1) in 1907. After that, Tsuruga continued to develop as the nodal port in the Japan Sea-Rim as Figure 2 shows. This section has been revised, referring to Yamane (2015) who deals with the similar theme of modern Tsuruga.

**Development of Tsuruga from the viewpoint of the time-geographical lifetime path of Shoshichi Owada**

To consider the formative process of Tsuruga as a modern international port, this section focuses on Shoshichi Owada (1857–1947) as a local merchant who was born and lived for about 70 years in the town. He had really been an influential merchant in the town since 1879, and contributed to the development and prosperity of Tsuruga as a local political-economic leader for almost half a century. For about 50 years he expanded his business to various enterprises and regions and actively joined in the local politics of Tsuruga and Fukui Prefecture. In the process, he had intended to advance from Tsuruga into the East Asian continent on the opposite shore across the Japan Sea.

Figure 4 shows the lifetime path of Shoshichi Owada. He lived in Tsuruga, Kyoto, and Beppu and visited some other places in his lifetime. However, Tsuruga was the only place where he lived and actively worked for a long time. In his lifetime, Shoshichi Owada had expanded into new businesses such as a local bank, a colliery company, a trading company, etc. in addition to the Owada family’s wholesale cargo business. His enterprise activities were mostly based on the provincial town of Tsuruga. Owada was inaugurated as the first president of Tsuruga Chamber of Commerce in 1907 when it was founded, the second one in Fukui Prefecture. Then he became the leader of the local political-economic community both in name and reality, and this means he had risen to become a ‘special human agency’ in Tsuruga.

His activity space had been mostly within mainland Japan in the early years but later expanded to the opposite shore of the Japan Sea: to Korea (a colonial area of the Japanese Empire since Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910), and to Russia and Manchuria (the northeastern region of China and a puppet state of the Japanese Empire since the founding of Manchukuo in 1932). There were some key places in his activity space in addition to his home town of Tsuruga. They are Fukui, the prefectural capital, and Tokyo, the national capital, where Owada visited many times to negotiate with politicians and bureaucrats of the Meiji Government about the local develop-
ment of Tsuruga. Continental port towns were later added to the list of key places in Owada’s activity space. This expansion of his action space to distant areas on the opposite shore of the Japan Sea occurred in the latter half of his life. His main journeys changed according to his life stage, remaining in places relatively near to Tsuruga till his mid-thirties, but after that he visited the other domestic places mainly for his business. It was to Tokyo that he went many times after his mid-thirties. His visits to Tokyo increased with his own promotion in the local political-business circles in Tsuruga and Fukui Prefecture.

In undertaking regional promotion projects of harbor improvement, Owada seems to have already had interests in and relations to the continental area across the Japan Sea before his first visit to the area in 1900 when he was 43 years old. For example, he dispatched two people as trade inspectors to Vladivostok in 1895, when he was 38 years old. His second visit to the continent was a business trip to the Korean Peninsula in 1915. Though 15 years had passed from his first visit to the continent until the second one, he continued to devote his energies to the improvement and construction of Tsuruga port and the growth of trade with the opposite shore via the port during that period. We can understand that his activity space had expanded, finally crossing international borders, with his growth and promotion in the local and national political-economic circles as described above.

These varied realms of Owada’s activity space in his lifetime had been always reflected and restricted by the then spatially stratified ‘structures’ to Tsuruga on each occasion. In other words, Tsuruga and Owada had been located within the multi-level structures of local (an area of sub-prefectural or prefectural space: Tsuruga town and ‘Reinan’ area, and Fukui Prefecture), regional (an area under some common political or economic or cultural or natural circumstances: the coast area of the Japan Sea and the Southwest Japan), national (the area of the nation-state: Japanese nation-state), international (an international area involving colonial area: Japan Sea-area) and Northeast Asian (a multilateral area environing Imperial Japan and its neighboring area) structures, shown roughly in Figure 5. Each scaled spatial structure mentioned above and used in Figure 5 is derived from the structuration theory by Giddens (1984). However Giddens doesn’t concretely demarcate the spatial realms of the structure’s functioning area in his case study though he refers to the wide range of the spatial scale of ‘locale’ from ‘a room in a house’ to ‘the territorially demarcated areas occupied by nation-states’ (Giddens 1984: 118). These ‘structures’ did not unilaterally restrict human practices. There is the duality of structure. The reality is that his spatial practices also intensified and reproduced those structures. The relationship between social structure and human agency in these areas was interactive from the viewpoint of structuration.

Owada’s overseas forays for promotion of his business and the regional development of Tsuruga were encouraged by the accumulation of knowledge about the opposite shore, the creation of interests in that region and with the national policy of governing the continental area.

**Exploring Owada’s view to the opposite shore**

His own perspective on the opposite shore is suggested in his speeches in local meetings. Here is the record of his speech at the opening ceremony of the Tsuruga Prosperity Association in November, 1922 (Nakayasu 1934: 294–313). The speech stressed some points about Tsuruga at that time and in the future. First, Tsuruga was celebrated as the first port to start two important shipping services for Vladivostok and Korea in the country after the opening of the Hokuriku Line railway. But he continually pointed to the growth of the rival port of Fushiki as a threat to Tsuruga in the changing circumstances surrounding the ports along the Japan Sea. And so, the harbor renovation works and the construction of harbor-related facilities at Tsuruga were stressed as necessary tasks for the near
future. It was presented that the purpose of founding the Tsuruga Prosperity Association was to gather and mobilize the inhabitants of Tsuruga in order to maintain its advantages as a port compared with other rival ports. In other words, he also recommended the adoption of a new mercantile system such as ‘joint’ purchase of commodities by locals. He said that Tsuruga was not merely a ‘local’ port, but ‘an important trade port in the Great Empire of Japan,’ where wealthy national merchants closed big deals and contributed to the national interest. He also made an appeal saying that the Tsuruga harbor works should bring much profit not only to some merchants but also to all the inhabitants of Tsuruga. Because of this, the ‘agreement by everyone in the town’ (kyo-cho-itchi) was achieved and he inspired local patriotism in all the townspeople.

Owada gave another important address to the general meeting of the Fukui Prefectural Association for Business with the Opposite Shore (Fukui-ken Taigan Jitsugyo Kyokai),18 in February, 1924 (Nakayasu 1934: 322–329). This speech consisted of his opinions and ideals about the future development of Tsuruga. Table 1 shows his announcement of 24 recommendations. These included ‘invitation and set-up of a Russian consulate in Tsuruga,’ ‘improvement of Russian education at Tsuruga commercial school,’ ‘creation of an English and Russian evening school,’ ‘development of a Russian settlement in Matsubara Park,’ ‘allocation of commodity show rooms in Tsuruga, Vladivostok, and Korea,’ ‘publication of English and Russian guidebooks to Tsuruga,’ and ‘choosing people with both diplomatic knowledge and ability as local political-economic leaders,’ all showing special concern about the relationships with the opposite shore areas.

Owada’s messages in these two speeches were directed exclusively to local citizens and stakeholders in Tsuruga or Fukui Prefecture. And so, because Owada had always aimed for the development of Tsuruga port as the most prosperous international port on the Japan Sea coast, he naturally referred to the points mentioned above.

Table 1. The 24 Ideas for Tsuruga’s Development Presented by Shoshichi Owada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Idea</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shortening the term of Tsuruga harbor construction</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Double-tracking of the Maibara-Tsuruga railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Extension of a harbor branch railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Invitation for and establishment of a Russian consulate in Tsuruga</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Construction of a new hotel on the shoreline</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Construction of a pedestrian way for passengers landing at the port</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Installation of a coal landing place at the harbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Installation of a lumber landing place at the harbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Excavation of a canal between Tsuruga port and Tsuruga central station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Improvement of Russian education at Tsuruga Commercial School</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Establishment of an English and Russian evening school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Development of a Russian settlement in Matsubara park</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Foundation of a new workable organization to complete the port facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Allocation of commodity show rooms in Tsuruga, Vladivostok and Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Publication of English and Russian guidebooks to Tsuruga</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Recovery of direct connection at Kanagasaki of Vladivostok-Tsuruga passenger service with the passenger train from/to Tokyo</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Realization of joint purchasing and a department store at Tsuruga to keep commodity prices down</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Establishing an administrative organization for dockworkers</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Improvements of dinner and hospitality offered in Japanese inns</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Control of landing places on the shore</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Police crackdown on illegal Japanese guides for Russians landing on Tsuruga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Application to railway bureau for special handling of import/export commodities at Tsuruga port</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Establishment of a Tsuruga information bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Selection of people having both diplomatic knowledge and abilities as local political-economic leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nakayasu (1934).
concerning the opposite shore area in his speeches. He regarded the continental area across the sea as the new source for wealth for Tsuruga. But there were no more references to the sea area, the opposite shore, or the Northeast Asian continent in his discourses. Is it perhaps true that his recognition of the opposite shore area didn’t go beyond seeing it as a useful trading partner and a market for Tsuruga, or a target to be exploited by Tsuruga? The Japan Sea area from his viewpoint might have been only an obstacle to overcome. And it can be surmised that he had no idea that the sea area had actively caused the location and growth of Tsuruga as one of the Japan’s principal ports. However, by observing Tsuruga’s modernization process, we can explain it as follows: It is a fact that the network interconnecting some passenger routes and trade ports along the shoreline had been created within the sea area during the modernization process, as Figure 2 shows. It is also clear that the presence and operation of ‘the Japan Sea area’ had brought about the location and development of Tsuruga port and Owada’s activities contributing to regional development in his growing to become a special human agency.

The Modernization of Nagasaki and its Relationship with Shanghai

Growth and decline of modern Nagasaki

Nagasaki had been the most important port among the exclusive international trading ports under the sakoku regime (the national isolation policy from the 17th century to the mid-19th century) during the long pre-modern era in Japan. What had caused the growth and the decline of Nagasaki after the Meiji Restoration? Three sets of data about modern Nagasaki indicate the trends


![Figure 7. Changes in the value of trade going through Nagasaki port.](source: Shisei-hyakunen Nagasaki-nenpyo hensan-iinkai (1989), Yamane (2007).
of population and change in international trade. Figure 6 and Figure 7 illustrate its urban growth during modern times though they include some temporary declines in the trends. On the other hand, Figure 8 shows the serial decline of the relative position of Nagasaki among the top five Japanese large trading ports. Kobe and Yokohama grew as the outer ports of Osaka and Tokyo, the largest economic centers in modern Japan, and 70 to 90% of the gross national trading value had concentrated in those two ports since the 1870s. The time when Nagasaki had exceeded 10% of gross national trading value was only before 1870. This suggests that modern Nagasaki’s population and economy expanded but that it experienced a decline or loss of its most important function as an exclusive international trading port in pre-modern times. Nagasaki was reduced to being a second-class trading port town.

These “decline” problems of Nagasaki in the modernization process were at times discussed in the newspapers. Many articles in the national and local papers published in Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, and Nagasaki depicted aspects of mainly economic decline which had happened to the port through being deprived of its exclusive function as an international port. They indicated some reasons for the absolute and relative declines as follows: 1) the loss of the privilege of international trading; 2) the rapid growth of the other ports; and 3) the locational disadvantages of having a poor hinterland.

Tengan Suzuki and modern Nagasaki

We focus here on a key person who described and discussed the contemporary local situation in modern Nagasaki in detail in his book and newspaper articles. Tengan Suzuki (1867–1926) was a famous newspaper editor and writer from Nihonmatsu Town in Fukushima Prefecture, the Tohoku Region. He left his country town for Tokyo in his youth and studied the Chinese classics, Kan-seki. After that, Suzuki stayed in Nagasaki to recuperate from an illness and published his book Shin-shin Nagasaki Miyage (‘the latest travel guidebook to Nagasaki’ in English) in 1889. In this book, probably on the basis of his own observations, experiences, and thoughts on the traditional port town during his stay, Suzuki described the regional and cultural geography of Nagasaki and praised the special qualities of Nagasaki culture. However, he pointed out the reasons why contemporary Nagasaki had stagnated or declined in political, economic, and social aspects. According to his writings, the decline and stagnation of Nagasaki were caused by some negative characteristics of its citizens: a firm conservatism, lack of enterprising spirit, and limited views of society and the world. These might have been important human and social factors in checking the growth of Nagasaki in the Japanese modernization process, though the downfall of the town from its premier position in the national urban system to a relatively lower position was the result of structural changes that came with strong centralization of the national system of politics and economics.

After he returned to Tokyo, he published his own books, and founded the periodical magazine Katsu-Sekai (‘active world’ in English) with his nationalist comrades in 1890. In 1893, Suzuki was introduced to the newspaper company that published the Niroku Shinpo by Teisuke Akiyama, a founder of the paper, and began his career as a newspaper editor. Some years later, Suzuki visited Korea to join in political activity with his comrades as a nationalist in the Ten’yu-kyo organization.

In 1898, Suzuki returned to the mainland of Japan...
from Korea and started to work as the editor of a local newspaper, *The Kyushu Hinode shim bun* in Nagasaki. It was in 1902 that he went on to start his own local newspaper, *The Toyo Hinode Shim bun* in Nagasaki. He was the founder, manager, editor, and writer of the paper. This paper was locally published in Nagasaki but had a tendency to take up especially the political problems of East Asia and the surrounding area. It was a rare case among the newspapers published in Japan. He was also well-known as a famous and eager advocate of Sun Wen (or Sun Yat-sen: 1866–1925) who was called “the father of the Chinese Revolution.” In the beginning of his newspaper company, Suzuki called together some comrades who were Japanese nationalists to Nagasaki which was located at a relatively central position for Northeast Asia, which consisted of Japan, Korea and China. This geopolitical location of Nagasaki at that time may have been reflected in the nature of the discourses in this particular paper.

Here is a newspaper lead written by Yui-Ku-Sei whose name seemed to be the pen name of Tengan Suzuki or his colleague as editor. This article’s headline is “Nagasaki-ko no konpon-tekki hanei-saku wo ronzu” (*Toyo Hinode* 1913.3.11); in English, “We discuss the fundamental policy for the future prosperity of Nagasaki port.” His notable insistence along with other points about the port was that the setting-up of a direct Nagasaki to Shanghai connection was important as one of the basic factors for the economic development of the East Asian continent. The writer described in the article that “Nagasaki can become the branch office with Shanghai as the head office through establishing this connection.” We can interpret the discourse as meaning that the strengthening of a direct international urban relationship makes a domestic city rise in position in the modern Japanese national urban system, a centralized system based on the capital city of Tokyo. In that era, Nagasaki simultaneously belonged to two different regional systems, the East Asian system referred to in a later part of this paper, and the national urban (regional) system of modern Japan (Figure 5).

Suzuki’s ‘Pan-Asianism’ lies in the background of the above discourse in the newspaper. However, this seems to have been not just his original view but the one shared by Nagasaki citizens who had continued to co-memorize the traditional close relationship between China and Nagasaki for a long time. The serious decline of Nagasaki port as a result of the catching-up of other international ports must also have encouraged the establishment of the direct international service.

**Another newspaper’s opinion about the development of modern Nagasaki**

Development plans for Nagasaki were also offered by people besides Tengan Suzuki. We can find similar arguments in the local newspaper *Kyushu Hinode Shim bun* published in Nagasaki in 1914. The column ‘Hikyaku-yojin’ meaning ‘embers of an express messenger’ had appeared serially. In the column, the writer ‘Tei-shusei’ treated and discussed the themes of ‘the position of Nagasaki port,’ ‘harbor improvement,’ ‘trade with China,’ and ‘Nagasaki’s prosperity plan’ from October to November. The intent of the serial columns was to understand the current state of the international port and to present plans and policies that would contribute to the effective promotion of Nagasaki. The writer referred frequently to the place-names of ‘Nagasaki port’ and ‘China,’ and especially ‘Shanghai,’ in each column. There was the idea that Shanghai and China would influence the destiny of Nagasaki as a modern city in Japan in the near future. In truth, Shanghai had already been a business partner with Nagasaki through many years because many persons had moved from Nagasaki to Shanghai since the 1860s and engaged in commerce and trade in the city (Yokoyama 2014). Nagasaki city also had included a considerable number of overseas Chinese since the pre-modern era (Chen and Yokoyama 2014). The writer also insisted that there were good conditions for the industrialization of Nagasaki through locally accumulated capital, the positive support activities of the local society, and the locational advantages and uniqueness of Nagasaki, against the background of its accessibility to Shanghai.

**The intensification of the Nagasaki-Shanghai connection**

Before and after these newspaper articles about Nagasaki’s development were published, there were some movements to require the opening of a regular line in Nagasaki. The Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce resolved that a regular passenger service between Nagasaki and Shanghai and a Tokyo-Nagasaki direct express train should be set up. It submitted the written resolution to Shinpei Goto, the Minister of Communications, in 1910. In 1918, the Chamber of Commerce petitioned the governor of Nagasaki Prefecture and the mayor of Nagasaki City to hasten the opening of regular service between Nagasaki and Shanghai for the purpose of developing Nagasaki port as a commercial harbor. In 1920, the Nagasaki inspection group organized by the mayor of Nagasaki, the chairman of the Nagasaki City Assembly, and the executives of local
newspaper companies visited Shanghai, Suzhou, Nanjing, and Hangzhou in China to talk with the Chinese authorities about the new sea line.

Almost 10 years after the above-mentioned article in the *Toyo Hinode* was published, the Nagasaki-Shanghai Service was in reality inaugurated on February 11, 1923. This was an epoch-making event for both the local economy and the citizens of Nagasaki, because it enabled a significant reduction in the time and distance between two pivotal cities. The above argument in the paper had produced results at last, and then this port town experienced its most prosperous time through the active international exchange between the two cities. The number of passengers on this international line between Nagasaki and Shanghai was first about 10,000 each way per year (Figure 9). But the number especially increased in 1938. The number of passengers from Nagasaki to Shanghai greatly exceeded 50,000 in 1938, and was more than 50,000 each year until 1943. On the other hand, the number of passengers from Shanghai to Nagasaki continued to increase from 1937 on and reached a peak of about 58,000. In 1943, this service was abolished with the deterioration of the war situation between Japan and China. But this line brought Nagasaki the strengthening of Nagasaki-Shanghai relationships and

![Figure 9. Change in numbers of passengers per year on the Shanghai-Nagasaki international sea line, 1931–1943.](source)

![Figure 10. Realism schema of regional formation process in modern Nagasaki.](source)
the upgrade of Nagasaki in the national regional system, though the city was later destroyed by the atomic bombing on August 9, 1945.

Figure 10 shows the realism schema consisting of three layers of event-mechanism-structure, which is presented in Yamane (2007).24 According to the figure, the 'events' appearing as the various places or localities like modern Nagasaki and many other places are produced as a result of operation and functioning of various systems of social practices ('mechanisms') on various 'structures' of social relations. And consequently, there are also reverse relations among 'events,' 'systems' ('mechanisms') and 'structures' on the realism schema.

We do not acknowledge that Tengan Suzuki and his colleagues had been mainly interested in the improvement of the local city, Nagasaki, because the highest priority for them as nationalists and pan-Asianists, was the political development of Japan as the leader in Asia. In fact, their Toyo Hinode was not only a local paper that dealt with local affairs but also a political paper that discussed national and international affairs from the unique standpoints apart from other national and local papers (Yokoyama 2006; Ikizumi 2014). But precisely for that reason, Suzuki may have been able to understand the schema around the becoming of modern Nagasaki temporarily to some extent. Toyo Hinode had devoted adequate space to the urgency of strengthening the relations between Nagasaki and Shanghai. Thus, Tengan Suzuki, his colleagues, and many other politicians, merchants, journalists and ordinary citizens of modern Nagasaki had paid reasonable attention to the continental cities across the sea area, especially Shanghai. They might have regarded the 'land' places of Shanghai and the continent as a potential source of wealth for saving their declining port of Nagasaki.

**About the presence of sea areas to formation of port towns**

In contrast, the presence of the 'sea area' which we focus on in this study might have been overlooked by the people or society of modern Nagasaki. However, the viewpoint that the sea area played an important role in the regional formation of Nagasaki as the actor with both other human and non-human actors in Northeast
Asia should not be neglected in explaining the location of the modern port town. The author takes the view that the presence of sea areas like the East China Sea and the Japan Sea had caused the political-economic-cultural vicissitudes and the regional divisions of functions for Nagasaki, Shanghai, and other places located in the Northeast Asian world.

Figure 11 is redrawn on the basis of the map by Furuta (1997). Furuta reveals the fact that two portal networks had existed in Northeast Asia in the second half of the 19th century. According to her, when Nagasaki played the role as a transit port between China and Korea, Nagasaki had competed with Kobe in international trade in the two networks. But Kobe’s growth had gradually forced Nagasaki into being a minor port. The two networks suggest the sea area is a centric space functioning actively within Northeast Asia. Can we understand the networked region including both the land and the sea as the space of conflict and coexistence among some sea areas? Yes. In short, the sea areas are not only passive and dependent environments or media used by human agencies on the land, but also independent actors that influence the land area and the thoughts, intentions, actions, and behavior of society and individuals there. This perspective is based on Actor-Network theory.

Why can the sea area around modern Japan be considered as a non-human actor in actor-network? The answer to this question is as follows. The starting point of Japanese modernization goes back to the opening of Japan in the mid-19th century. The event of national opening that led to the start of international trade by the opening of some new ports had made Japanese and its society recognize all the sea areas around the country. The sea areas had become the open media or obstacles for human transports and activities between Japan and overseas areas. Rethinking the time-spatial development and expansion process of modern Japan, it is found out that ‘the sea areas around Japanese mainland’ opened by the radical turn of the international trading system had actively influenced various human and non-human actors in Japan and that multilateral space including land and sea as an actor-network had been reproduced as a result of networking various reactive and subjective actions by many actors.

Conclusion

This study focuses attention on the formative process of the modern ports on the Japanese mainland facing the sea areas leading to the Asian continent. The study areas of Tsuruga and Nagasaki developed as pivotal nodes in the network of close relations with the continental area. There was a Japanese imperialistic policy of outward land expansion in the background of the development and growth of these modern ports.

In explaining the formative process of these international ports in their respective sea areas, the involvement of human actors in the process is an important point. Influential human actors who understood and embodied various spatially stratified ‘structures’ that restricted human existence and actions, became ‘special human agencies’ and led the regional development and formation of their home places. In modern Tsuruga, Shoshichi Owada planned and brought about the development of the international port connected with the areas on the opposite shore. In modern Nagasaki, Tengan Suzuki and other local influential persons led the development of the port city by their contributions to reinforcing the connections between Shanghai and Nagasaki. These ports also achieved pivotal positions in the networking system developing across the sea area as a result. We can explain the regional formation process of modern Japan and the surrounding area by the use of the structuration-realism-locality framework (Peet 1998).

Finally, the role and significance of the sea areas in the regional formation process of modern Japan and the surrounding area are considered. On this theme, the author takes the view that the sea areas of the Japan Sea and the East China Sea played active roles in the growth and formation of the special places of Tsuruga and Nagasaki in their dependence on the international ports, although those places also actively influenced the existence of the sea area. It may be difficult to demonstrate the relational structure in actuality. On the basis of Actor-Network theory, however, we can redefine a sea area as an actor on the actor network of East Asia or as an independent actor-network.

Notes

1. The ports of Nagasaki, Hakodate, Shimoda, Yokohama, Kobe, and Niigata were opened as kaikojo (international treaty ports) in the late Edo period.
2. According to Arano (2012), the four sea areas surrounding the Japanese Archipelago are the China Sea-Rim area, the Japan Sea-Rim area, the Okhotsk Sea-Rim area, and the Pacific-Rim area. There are five ‘worlds’: the Southeast Asian world, the East Asian world, the Northern world, the American Continental world, and the Oceanian world outside of the five sea areas. These sea areas mediated between Japan and the five worlds on the other side.
3. It is drawn on the basis of the thematic map, ‘Japan-Manchukuo Transportation system’ (Nichi-Man kotsukei) (Moriya 1934).
4. Yamane explores the process in which Toshimichi Okubo (1830–1878) was promoted from a lower-classed warrior to finally being the ‘actual’ Prime Minister of the Meiji Government, the time-geographic career of this statesman of the Meiji government in his lifetime. Okubo engaged in the planning and practice of national land development in Japan. And Okubo, who drew up the development policy and plan, is regarded as a ‘special human agency’ who understood the social structure in Japan at the time and had the power to implement policies that embodied it.

5. This schema represents the relation between “structure” and “human agency,” based on structuration theory. Though structure and human agency have interrelations with each other, they are basically independent. An ordinary person can contingently become an influential person. It also means a person accesses the structure or embodies it.

6. Nakayasu (1934) is the only evidentiary source for reconstructing Owada’s life history.

7. Kamejiro Yamamoto, later called Shoschichi Owada, was born in 1857 and was adopted into the Owada family as the son of Shoschichi Owada, the previous proprietor, a wholesaler of ship’s cargo, in 1878, and succeeded to the Owada line in the following year. He married Masuko Owada in 1881. It was in 1887 that Kamejiro took on the previous proprietor’s name, Shoschichi Owada.

8. The Owada bank was founded at Tsuruga in 1892. Advice about the necessity of a bank’s locating in Tsuruga, a trading port town, from Masayoshi Matsukata spurred him on to found the local banking system.

9. Predecessors to the Chamber of Commerce in Tsuruga had been founded several times through attempts by Owada and his colleagues before 1907, but no local chambers lasted long. The population of Tsuruga in 1907 was about 17,000, and in spite of that small population, the foundation of the Chamber of Commerce seemed to have been thought of as necessary for its special importance in Japanese trade and international traffic, and because of that, its early foundation may have been realized.

10. Owada met some national government politicians and bureaucrats, Nobuaki Makino, Masayoshi Matsukata, Masana Maeda, etc., at Fukui and at Tokyo.

11. These were specifically political-economic issues: opening of the sea line, foundation of the local bank, port renovation, construction of a port railway.

12. Tsuruga port in modern times was repaired and reconstructed three times. The first project continued from 1909 to 1914. The second project started in 1922 and after some trouble finished in 1932. Owada left all public office in 1925 because of the defeat of his party (Rikken Seiyukai: The Constitutional Party of Political Friends) in the Tsuruga town assembly election in the process of a local political conflict started by the opposite party (Kenseikai: The Constitutional Association), seeing his involvements in the Constitutional Association, seeing his involvements in


14. Reinan is the place name of the southwest area in Fukushima Prefecture. The area is constituted by old Wakasa Province and Tsuruga County in old Echizen Province.

15. This spatially multi-layered structure that is concentric with an inherent place is inspired by ‘ecopolitical hierarchy,’ the notion that Mofson (1999) uses to ‘represent the scales and attributes of environmental problems’ (Agnew 2002).

16. Locale is ‘a physical region involved as part of the setting of interaction, having definite boundaries which help to concentrate interaction in one way or another’ by Giddens (1984: 375).

17. Owada was the key figure in establishing this association and was elected as the president of the association.

18. It was established at Fukui City in 1920 in order to advance international and interregional commerce with the opposite shore areas of Vladivostok and Korea. Owada took over the Tsuruga branch office as the manager.

19. In this chapter, Shiisei-hyakunen Nagasaki-nenpyo hensan-iinkai (1899) and Nagasaki-shishi hensan-iinkai (2014) are mainly referred to grasp a rough outline of generally modern regional history of Nagasaki.

20. Tengan Suzuki’s career and activities in Nagasaki are described here with reference to Yokoyama (2006) and Ikizumi (2014).

21. Tengan Suzuki is said to have known Sun Yat-sen by name and to have sympathized with him after being introduced by Totten Miyazaki (1870–1922), a Pan-Asianist who aimed at the independence of Asian nations and countries out of the colonial domination by European countries and the USA, and a Japanese advocate for Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary activities. Suzuki published many articles about Sun Yat-sen and his political talks and activities in the Toyo Hinode Shimbun. Sun Yat-sen visited Nagasaki nine times for several purposes during his lifetime and formally visited Nagasaki and Tengan Suzuki’s home to acknowledge his good offices, in March, 1913 after the Xinhai Revolution (1911–1912) (Yokoyama and Chen 2011).

22. The Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce was founded on December 27, 1893, in Nagasaki by powerful local merchants. It was the pivotal driving force of the local economy in modern Nagasaki.

23. This line was serviced two times per week from both ports, Nagasaki and Shanghai. The duration of the one-way sailing between the two ports was about 26 hours. It was said that the line’s opening changed Nagasaki citizens’ feeling of the time and space distance to Shanghai and that the naming of ‘Shanghai City in Nagasaki Prefecture’ and ‘geta-baki-toshi’ were popularly used by Nagasaki citizens of former days. ‘Geta-baki-toshi’ means a city accessible to Nagasaki citizen. ‘Geta-baki’ means the wearing of wooden clogs (Yokoyama 2014).


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