

## From Taiwan to Korea: Japanese Entrepreneurs in the Colonial Economy

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# From Taiwan to Korea: Japanese Entrepreneurs in the Colonial Economy<sup>1)</sup>

JANG Yoongoal\*

## 1. Introduction

This paper aims to explore how Japanese entrepreneurs of the Imperial period perceived overseas colonies, designated as “outer territories” and what principles guided their actual business activities. As a case study, it introduces the career of Kinzaburo Kada (賀田金三郎, 1857-1922; hereafter referred to as Kada), who contributed significantly to building the economic foundations of colonial Taiwan and Korea.

After achieving considerable success in various enterprises in Japan and Taiwan, Kada invested substantial capital in Korea around the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910, with the cooperation of the Government-General of Korea. He played a prominent role in the early colonial economy of Korea, engaging in a diverse range of agriculture-related industries, such as leather and tanning businesses, mining, ranching, forestry lending, and real estate management. Moreover, his son-in-law, Naoji Kada (賀田直治), inherited his ventures in Korea and further expanded their influence. By the 1930s, Naoji had grown into a major figure in Korea’s economic sphere, eventually serving as President of the Chosen Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Keijo Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It is noteworthy that Kada, as a first-generation entrepreneur entering Korea, laid the groundwork for colonial development and expanded his businesses in ways that could be passed on to future generations. This approach was fundamentally based on the expertise he had accumulated in colonial Taiwan.

In connection with this, research on the so-called “Japanese in Korea” entrepreneurs and elites, who settled and operated in colonial Korea, has been conducted in earnest since the 2000s, yielding a significant body of accumulated scholarship. However, if the focus is narrowly confined to the Korean region, perspectives on these individuals may become limited. This approach risks restricting the understanding of the personal experiences and processes that shaped their values to the colonial locale, making it difficult to discern their motivations and evolving consciousness. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the realities and contradictions of Japan’s colonial rule by consistently considering the relationships between Japan and its surrounding regions, focusing on the socio-economic context. By examining individuals’ trajectories from the perspective of the empire as a whole, new insights into various aspects of their experiences can emerge.

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1) This paper is a revised version of the presentation titled “日本人企業家の植民地経験—賀田金三郎の台湾・朝鮮活動を手掛かりに—” delivered at the symposium “傳承與創發: 王世慶先生與臺灣史研究” hosted by the Center for Haishan Research at National Taipei University on November 25, 2023.

However, previous research on Kinzaburo Kada is limited, although studies focusing on his activities in colonial Taiwan and the companies he established in Korea have been published. By concentrating on specific regions, such as Taiwan and Korea, these studies have successfully elucidated the detailed realities of his activities, providing valuable insights into his business development. However, considering that Kada's ventures spanned Imperial Japan's entire sphere of influence, it is also feasible, as previously mentioned, to reinterpret Kada's colonial expansion and understanding of business development from the broader perspective of Imperial Japan's colonial management. This approach provides new insights into colonial Taiwan and Korea.

Based on this understanding, this paper aims, as a preliminary attempt to reconstruct the process by which Kada developed his unique perception of Korea through his experiences in Japan and Taiwan, subsequently expanding there and engaging in business development. To achieve this, the study utilizes a biographical record inscribed with the rank of Junior Sixth Court Rank that was awarded to Kada at the time of his death in 1922, as well as historical materials that document his activities<sup>2)</sup>. Through the example of a contemporary entrepreneur, this study seeks to reassess the nature and significance of the expansion and development of colonial Korea from a novel perspective.

## 2. Growth Under the Influence of Political Entrepreneurs

Kinzaburo Kada was born in 1857 to a common family in Hagi, in the present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan. Until his late twenties, Kada's life was not very noteworthy. In March 1885, he moved to Tokyo and began to establish himself. Soon after, on April 1, he joined the Tokyo branch of the Fujita Corporation (藤田組)<sup>3)</sup>, one of the prominent political-commercial enterprises of modern Japan<sup>4)</sup>, marking the beginning of his professional career. At the time, Kada's younger brother, Tomijiro Kada, had already moved to Tokyo and was working for Okura Corporation (大倉組)<sup>5)</sup>. However, Fujita Corporation sought young clerks familiar with the business circumstances of the Mori family in Yamaguchi, which led Tomijiro to transfer here and also arrange

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2) "JACAR (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records) Ref.A11113045700, 賀田金三郎特旨叙位ノ件 (National Archives of Japan)" was a document written in 1922 by Kenjiro Den, who was then the Governor-General of Taiwan, to request a special conferment of rank from the Japanese central government. This request was made in recognition of Kada's achievements in private enterprise management since Taiwan became a Japanese territory and his significant contributions to the administration of the Taiwan Governor-General's Office. Other sources include 芳誼会編 (1923), 賀田組内芳誼会 (1935).

3) A general trading company established by Denzaburo Fujita (藤田伝三郎, 1841-1912) from Yamaguchi Prefecture. The company accumulated capital through ventures in civil engineering, mining, and electricity, primarily in the Kansai region. Fujita expanded his business by leveraging close relationships with high-ranking officials from his hometown, such as Kaoru Inoue, who had risen to prominence within the Meiji government. (土屋喬雄, 1968: 247-248).

4) A political entrepreneur (政商) refers to a capitalist who gains profits by forming close ties with political power to secure various contracts. Particularly in modern Japan, political entrepreneurs adopted two primary approaches: first, accumulating wealth directly by serving as government-affiliated merchants or contractors reliant on state finances; and second, establishing a foundation for accumulation in private industries by receiving subsidies or various privileges from the government (大倉財閥研究会編, 1982).

for his brother Kinzaburo to join as well.

In 1887, the establishment of the Naigai Yotatsu Company (内外用達会社), a joint venture between the Okura Corporation and Fujita Corporation, marked a turning point in Kada's career. He became an employee of Okura Corporation and was appointed head of the Matsuyama branch in Shikoku in October of the same year. This promotion elevated him from a junior employee to a position of overseeing regional operations, significantly enhancing his responsibilities. While in this role, he primarily handled rice trading. Despite occasional unforeseen losses caused by market fluctuations and environmental changes, these experiences have allowed him to develop a broad range of practical skills.

In 1894, the outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese War caused further changes in Kada's career. He assumed the additional role of manager of Okura Corporation's Hiroshima branch. Hiroshima became the headquarters for Japan's wartime operations serving as the Imperial General Headquarters. The war, Japan's first large-scale total war, led to an unprecedented surge in the demand for military supply. Motivated by the prospect of making substantial profits from supplying war materials, Kada volunteered to assume the position in Hiroshima. Okura Corporation, which had been involved in supplying military goods to the government since the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877, had extensive experience in this field. It also maintained close ties with the military through projects such as construction work at naval bases across Western Japan. Kada's proposal to exploit this demand was, therefore, relatively easy to implement. He immediately established a base of operations at Ujina Port in Hiroshima, a key logistical hub for the Japanese military. His responsibilities include recruiting laborers for military logistics, procuring construction materials, and managing construction contracts. Kada's contributions extend beyond logistical operations. He oversaw the loading of military supplies, such as rice and canned goods, onto transport ships at ports<sup>6)</sup>. Furthermore, he was instrumental in directly constructing military facilities in war zones, including the Korean and Liaodong Peninsulas. These wide-ranging activities significantly supported the Japanese military's war efforts.

Military officials highly regarded Kada's ability to respond swiftly to military demands and flexibly adapt to changing circumstances. While direct references to historical sources are scarce, it can be inferred that Kada earned the trust of key military figures, such as Masatake Terauchi (寺内正毅), Minister of Transport and Communications, at the Imperial General Headquarters, and Soroku Kawakami (川上操六), Chief of Military Logistics. Terauchi later became the first Governor-General of Korea and actively supported Kada's ventures in Korea, suggesting that their relationship, established during the First Sino-Japanese War, had a lasting and significant impact on Kada's subsequent endeavors.

5) A general trading company founded by Kihachiro Okura (大倉喜八郎, 1837-1928), also known as the Okura Zaibatsu (大倉財閥). The company significantly expanded its operations through the supply of military goods to the Meiji government and through trade activities. Later, it became active in the mining and civil engineering sectors, establishing business ventures across various regions of East Asia.

6) In addition to the Okura Corporation, firms such as Arima Corporation, Tamura Corporation, and Aichi Corporation entered into direct procurement contracts with the Army, carrying out logistical operations at Ujina Port. This marked the first time the Japanese military mobilized multiple private contractors for the supply of goods during a war with foreign nations.

Meanwhile, after its victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan occupied the Liaodong Peninsula and sought to expand its sphere of influence. Seizing this opportunity, Okura Corporation began planning to extend its business operations. In April 1895, immediately following the war, Kada was dispatched to oversee preparations for such expansions. He initiated plans to establish branches in three key locations: Dalian (大連), Lüshun (旅順), and Jinzhou (金州). However, Japan's forced withdrawal from the Liaodong Peninsula due to the Triple Intervention compelled him to abandon these plans and return to Hiroshima in June of the same year.

In place of this abandoned venture, a new challenge awaited Kada: undertaking the task of "development" in Taiwan, which had recently become Japanese territory as part of the war indemnity. Kada was tasked with conducting on-site investigations and establishing a business foundation in Taiwan. This urgency stemmed from the Japanese Army's decision to redirect its deployment from the Liaodong Peninsula to Taiwan, necessitating substantial infrastructure development on the island. On July 7, 1895, Kada departed from Taiwan, accompanied by several close aides, who had previously worked with him in military supply operations. He assumed the position of general manager of Okura Corporation's Taiwanese operations. Kada secured an exclusive position as a contractor for the Japanese Army and a key supplier for the Taiwan Governor-General's Office, thus establishing a dominant presence in colonial Taiwan.

### 3. Experiences in Colonial Taiwan

When Kada first arrived in Taiwan, Japan's administrative structure and authority had yet to take firm root across the island, and various political disturbances persisted. From Japan's perspective, these disruptions were caused by the so-called "local bandits" (土匪), indigenous groups resisting Japanese rule through guerrilla tactics, which posed significant challenges to the Japanese military. Consequently, the Japanese forces stationed in Taiwan prioritized suppressing and eliminating these resistance movements, which naturally led to an increase in Kada's responsibilities and accomplishments as a key supplier to the military. Kada was tasked with a wide range of duties to support the military, including transportation of ammunition, food, and construction materials, evacuation of wounded soldiers, and recruitment and deployment of laborers. Much like during the First Sino-Japanese War, he was heavily involved in various operations that directly supported the military's efforts in Taiwan.

It is worth mentioning that Keisuke Kaneko (金子圭介) played a crucial role in supporting Kada's activities in Taiwan. Kaneko, who had previously been acquainted with Kada's younger brother Tomijiro, joined the Naigai Yotatsu Company in 1887 and worked in its civil engineering division. During the First Sino-Japanese War, he cooperated primarily with the Navy, even traveling to Korea, to facilitate the recruitment of military laborers. In 1895, Kaneko, like Kada, was dispatched to colonial Taiwan as a part of the Okura Corporation. This long-standing trust, cultivated through earlier collaborations, became a cornerstone of their efforts in Taiwan.

In 1897, with Kaneko and Kada at the helm, they defied opposition from the Okura Corporation's founder, Kihachiro Okura, to establish the Ekidensha (駅伝社). This venture reflected the colonial administration's policy during Taiwan's early years of governance, which sought to delegate certain responsibilities to private enterprises to supplement the government's limited administrative capacity. At the time, the Taiwan Governor-General's Office recognized that rapid circulation of currency was nearly impossible without a network of banks across the island. Instead, they opted for a system for transporting cash to government offices, which would then distribute it across the island. However, frequent attacks by "local bandits" targeting cash shipments, coupled with poor roads connecting northern and southern Taiwan, posed significant challenges. Kada took the initiative to address these logistical issues, leading to the establishment of Ekidensha. The company's primary operations included the transportation of state funds, delivery of excess remittance funds from post offices, the collection and remittance of taxes, and the recruitment of railway personnel under the army's jurisdiction. In this way, Ekidensha focused on managing the funds and resources essential for colonial governance on behalf of the Taiwan Governor-General's office.

However, Kihachiro Okura in Tokyo remained firmly opposed to Kada's entrepreneurial ventures, citing the high business risk involved. Despite repeated orders to halt his initiatives, Kada refused, arguing that his contracts and trust-based relationships with the Taiwan Government General's Office were critical. In May 1899, Kada abruptly resigned from Okura Corporation and established his independent company, the Kada Corporation<sup>7)</sup>. Even after his departure, Kada refrained from interfering with the Okura Corporation's operations in Taiwan. His initial focus on the construction industry suggests that his relationship with Okura Corporation did not collapse entirely into hostility. For example, when Taiwan Bank was established in 1899, Kada encouraged others to invest in its stock, including his former superiors, Kihachiro Okura and Denzaburo Fujita, both of whom became shareholders. This indicates that Kada viewed these figures not as rivals, but as role models of "political entrepreneurs" or government-affiliated merchants. It can also be inferred that the relative stability of Kada's business ventures in Taiwan during their early stages owed much to the methods he learned from them and subsequently adapted<sup>8)</sup>.

In examining the activities of the Kada Corporation, it is crucial to acknowledge the strong support Kada received from the Taiwan Governor-General's Office. During the early colonial period, Taiwan's infrastructure was still underdeveloped, prompting the Governor-General's Office to prioritize awarding government

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7) At the time of its establishment, Kada himself served as the president, managing operations in Taiwan, while his younger brother, Tomijiro, took on the role of vice president, overseeing the branch in Japan. Later, the business transitioned from a sole proprietorship to a partnership under the name Kada Corporation. In 1926, it further evolved into a joint-stock company. ("JACAR (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records) Ref.B08061272100, 分割2 (E-2-2-1-3\_22\_001) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan").

8) Regarding the business strategy of the Kada Corporation (Chung Shumin, 2004) explains that it resembled the shift made by Okura Corporation during Taiwan's early colonial period. Initially focused on military supply contracting, Okura Corporation adapted to align with the Taiwan Governor-General's governance policies, transitioning to a "promotion of industry and production" approach. This can be seen, in a sense, as a survival strategy for political entrepreneurs, constantly responding to government demands.

projects to cooperative entrepreneurs, such as Kada, to address capital procurement challenges. This policy was implemented more comprehensively under the leadership of Gentaro Kodama (児玉源太郎)<sup>9)</sup>, who became Governor-General of Taiwan in 1898, and Shinpei Goto (後藤新平)<sup>10)</sup>, the Chief of Civil Affairs. These two figures were central to the colonial administration and viewed Kada as an indispensable political entrepreneur for the development and governance of Taiwan, as well as a reliable and loyal executor of their plans. As Kada strengthened his ties with the Taiwan Governor-General's Office, his business ventures expanded in Taiwan<sup>11)</sup>. Beyond his primary operations in construction and transportation, he invested in a wide range of industries, including sugar production, media, finance, and coal mining, contributing significantly to the colony's industrial development<sup>12)</sup>.

Specifically, Kada financially contributed to the launch of Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpo (台湾日日新報) in May 1898. This initiative aligned with the Taiwan Governor-General's recognition of the necessity of a propaganda tool to represent colonial authority and quickly disseminate its influence throughout Taiwan. Kada also played a significant role in the financial sector by injecting substantial investments in the establishment of the Taiwan Bank and serving as an auditor. When the Taiwan Government-General's Office actively started promoting the sugar industry from 1900, Kada provided considerable funding for the formation of the Taiwan Sugar Company and participated as a senior executive. Regarding coal mining in northern Taiwan, Kada planned the mechanized extraction of coalfields reserved by the Navy for military purposes. With military approval, he developed these fields on a large scale and successfully privatized them. These ventures demonstrated Kada's ability to align his industrial activities with the colonial administration's policies, further solidifying his position as a pivotal political entrepreneur in Taiwan.

*“When Taiwan was incorporated into the Japanese empire, the development of the indigenous territories (蕃界) became a central focus of both governmental and civilian efforts. Among these, the extensive mountain forests and wilderness in the Taitung and Hualien areas of eastern Taiwan, including the Puyuma (卑南) and Hualien (花蓮) Port regions, were highly anticipated for cultivation and forestry development. However, due to the instability of the indigenous territories and the difficulty of transportation, effective measures could not be*

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9) The close relationship between Kada and Kodama was carried on by Kodama's son, Hideo, who later became an official in the Government-General of Korea and actively supported Kada's business ventures.

10) In colonial Taiwan, it is said that the Taiwan Governor-General's office official who had the closest relationship with Kada was Shinpei Goto. Goto provided numerous conveniences to Kada, who in turn actively cooperated with raising the funds necessary for managing Taiwan's development.

11) At the time, the Taiwan Governor-General's policy toward the “local bandits” was also closely related. To stabilize governance, it was deemed most urgent to establish a sustainable livelihood for these resistance groups, encouraging their transition or surrender.

12) Regarding Japan's approach to colonial development (Tsai Lungpao, 2015) argues: “Firms that had cooperative relationships with the government in the mainland played a crucial role in colonial management. This is because their experience and foundations in the mainland served as valuable tools for the Taiwan Governor-General's office in replicating industrial and agricultural promotion in Taiwan. This also represented the transplantation of the hierarchical structure of top-down communication, which underpinned the relationship between the government and these firms.” (Sunaga, 2015: 114).

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*implemented. This situation was a major source of frustration for the administrators of the time. In 1901 (Meiji 34), Kada received a large-scale permit for land reclamation in the Puyuma and Hualien Port areas. Taking the initiative, he personally entered these indigenous territories to independently manage reclamation and camphor production projects. Despite significant challenges and financial burdens, Kada invested an estimated one million yen in these ventures, which spanned a period of three years. As such, Kada became the first Japanese imperial subject to invest in and manage the development of eastern Taiwan, marking him as a pioneering figure in the region's colonial expansion."*

Furthermore, one of Kada's most "adventurous" endeavors was the development of eastern Taiwan and the agricultural settlement projects described above. These efforts were implemented amid ongoing conflicts with indigenous forces in eastern Taiwan, which the Taiwan Governor-General's Office had yet to completely pacify. Settlers recruited from various parts of western Japan faced significant challenges in establishing themselves in this unfamiliar and unstable environment<sup>13</sup>. As the colonial administration in Taiwan gradually stabilized, government-led migration programs and investments by the Taiwan Development Company were reintroduced under the Governor-General's leadership. However, Kada had already taken the initiative at an early stage, forming settlement villages in the region and implementing a comprehensive development plan with agriculture as the cornerstone. Though this approach was not likely to yield immediate financial returns, reflected Kada's strategy of pioneering new industrial foundations. His methods, particularly in tackling challenging and underdeveloped areas, were later directly transplanted into colonial Korea and utilized by practical experts in colonial development.

#### 4. Formation of Kada's Values and Networks

As observed in the preceding sections, Kada's career was deeply rooted in his cooperative relationship with the (colonial) government and the military. While it is unlikely that he disregarded the profitability and viability of his ventures as a private entrepreneur, his approach can be understood as prioritizing swift responses to governmental and military demands. In doing so, he established a solid business foundation, upon which he built his own independent ventures. When invited or encouraged by powerful political and military figures to enter new industries, Kada consistently adopted a "state-centered" approach, prioritizing national interests over personal or corporate profit. This perspective aligns with the general attitude of Japan's political entrepreneurs during the Meiji era, who often placed state needs above private interests. Kada's strategy of aligning his activities with the demands of those in power not only secured opportunities, but also allowed him to expand his influence and establish a unique position in the colonial economy.

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13) Kada attempted to recruit settlers from his home region of Yamaguchi Prefecture, offering transportation expenses and remuneration to support their settlement in the area. However, the effort reportedly failed due to a lack of applicants.

*“There seem to be people in this world who do not understand why they were born. I think about this every day. People must work tirelessly for the nation until they die; surely, they were not born to live in comfort. I began the land reclamation project in Taiwan because I believed it was my duty to serve the nation. With one million yen, I could have easily made significant profits by lending money. If I had wished to simply rest and indulge, who would willingly take on the risky venture of land reclamation? The wealth I have accumulated is the result of my own diligence and effort. Moving forward, I will never cease my activities as long as I live, striving to maintain and grow my modest fortune. Moreover, I intend to contribute to national projects to the best of my ability, even if only to a small extent, and exert myself to the utmost limits.”*

A representative example of Kada's values is his acceptance of the Tokyo Leather Manufacturing Partnership Company (東京製皮合資会社) in August, 1900. At the time, Kada was focusing on expanding his business venture in Taiwan. However, he received a request from the Ministry of the Army to manage the bankrupt Dan-Kitaoka Leather Manufacturing Company (彈-北岡組製革所) in Japan. The company primarily supplied goods to military facilities, such as the Army Clothing Depot the Artillery Arsenal, rather than producing items for the private sector. This business model was strikingly similar to the leather manufacturing operations previously encountered by Kada at Okura Corporation. Therefore, it was not an unfamiliar field<sup>14</sup>. Historical records note that “Kada's activities in Taiwan, driven not by personal gain, but with national interests in mind, were well recognized by the military authorities. Consequently, Director Noda sent a telegram to Taiwan to invite Kada and persuade him that achieving national independence in military supplies was paramount for Japan to secure its position in the world.” This decision to enter the leather industry was a “political” judgment, rooted in the longstanding relationship Kada had cultivated with the army.

In retrospect, the companies wherein Kada worked as an employee achieved remarkable growth during times of national crises, such as wars, through their close ties with the military. His network of connections often included figures from his native Yamaguchi Prefecture, which played a significant role in his success. For instance, influential army leaders, such as Masatake Terauchi and Gentaro Kodama, also from Yamaguchi, provided critical support for Kada's business ventures. When he took over the Tokyo Leather Manufacturing Partnership Company, he not only maintained his base in Taiwan, but also sought to bolster his relationship with the Japanese government. To this end, he had his younger brother establish a branch office in Tokyo, and used the new company as a platform to strengthen his ties with the military. This move was a logical choice for a political entrepreneur like Kada, ensuring his continued influence and alignment with state priorities.

Meanwhile, major leather manufacturing companies were advancing mass production and mechanization to stabilize the supply of military goods, and the Tokyo Leather Manufacturing Partnership Company was no

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14) Okura Corporation's leather manufacturing facility was established in Osaka in 1880 with the aim of supplying military boots. It was responsible for producing leather goods used by regional military bases, artillery arsenals, and clothing depots across the Kansai region (大阪新報社編, 1906; 日本皮革株式会社編, 1957: 58-59).

exception. The company sent Hikoshichi Goto (後藤彦七)<sup>15)</sup> and engineer Hidemitsu Sawatari (佐渡秀光) to study in Europe and the United States to acquire technologies for improving production capabilities. During this period, Kada began to connect with key figures in Japan's leather industry. Among these, Sawatari played a particularly significant role. After serving as chief engineer at Tokyo Leather and later as chief leather engineer in Japan, he oversaw the production of military leather goods in colonial Korea. Kada recognized Sawatari's importance, particularly his indispensable expertise in producing goods for the Army Clothing Depot. For example, during the Russo-Japanese War, Kada, acting as a representative of the army, submitted a petition to Masatake Terauchi to exempt Sawatari from conscription as an infantry sergeant. The petition emphasized Sawatari's irreplaceable role in manufacturing military leather goods and his extensive experience, arguing for the need to defer his conscription.

In 1907, Kada became an executive of Japan Leather Corporation (日本皮革株式会社), which was formed by the merger of four major leather manufacturing companies specializing in military supplies<sup>16)</sup>. While continuing his entrepreneurial success in Taiwan through the Kada Corporation, He remained actively involved in military-related businesses in mainland Japan. His growing prominence in the leather industry, as a political entrepreneur during the preparatory stages of the Russo-Japanese War, reflected his unwavering "state-centered" values. Kada's consistent adherence to his principle of "business as a service to the nation" was evident not only in his "development" initiatives in eastern Taiwan, but also in his management of military supply companies in Japan. Consequently, his ventures in colonial Korea followed the same philosophy and management approach, a seamless continuation of his established practices.

## 5. Entry into and Activities in Korea

There is limited historical documentation detailing when Kada first began to focus on Korea for business development, or when he commenced serious investment there. However, a clue can be found in the words of Naoji Kada, who succeeded his father-in-law's business venture in Korea. According to his account, the circumstances are as follows:

*"Kinzaburo Kada's entry into Korea began approximately thirty years ago, with a plan to sell Taiwanese salt there. As part of this endeavor, he established the Taiwan Salt Company in Busan and set up a salt refining factory on Mokdo Island, later adding a flour mill to the facility. Early on, to expand sales channels—particularly for the fishing industry—he dispatched personnel to northern Korea. This initial connection led Kada to invest in the following ventures during Korea's formative period: the Riyul Copper Mine, the Sudong Gold Mine, the Anbulsa Gold Mine, and the Seongjin Mica Deposits. Moreover, Kada supported Mr. Kadota in urban planning initiatives*

15) The younger brother of Shinpei Goto, he served as an auditor for Japan Footwear before becoming an auditor for Japan Leather Corporation in 1907.

16) For the establishment of Japan Leather Corporation, please refer to Jang, 2021.

*in Seongjin and assisted Mr. Ashihama in operating an electric power company in Wonsan. Additionally, he facilitated the Chosen Leather Company's efforts to begin forestry operations for tanning agents in northern Korea. Through these activities, Kada became a pioneering figure in the development of northern Korea during its early days of modernization."*

The "Taiwan Salt Company" mentioned above refers specifically to the Korea Taiwan Salt Trading Partnership Company (韓國台塩販売合資会社; hereafter referred to as "Taiwan Salt Company"). This company was established in Busan in September 1904, during the Russo-Japanese War, after receiving a permit for salt trading from the Taiwan Governor-General's Monopoly Bureau. Shortly thereafter, Kada took over the company and began to participate in its management. According to a contract signed between the Taiwan Salt Company and the Taiwan Government-General's Monopoly Bureau, the company was granted the right to transport table salt from the warehouses of the Monopoly Bureau in various locations in Taiwan to Busan Port and distribute it across Korea for 10 years. However, following the Japan's Annexation of Korea, the company could not sustain its operations due to losing out in price competition with Chinese salt and other imports. Although the business ultimately failed, it remains a rare example of early regional trade and distribution within Japan's sphere of influence, preceding the formal establishment of the imperial economic zone.

Around 1908, Kada also leased land from the Japanese Navy in Jinhae Bay in southern Korea, aiming to develop the area and profit from livestock farming<sup>17)</sup>. As in Taiwan, he appeared to recognize that securing as much land as possible, in conjunction with political colonization efforts, was essential for creating a stable foundation for colonial development.

Thus, until the Japan's Annexation of Korea in 1910, Kada's ventures in Korea were limited to indirect investments aimed at establishing a foundation for future projects rather than personally managing companies in Korea. However, it is evident that he perceived Korea as offering greater business opportunities than Taiwan. From his perspective, most of Taiwan's resources had already been developed, whereas Korea remained largely untapped. This realization strengthened his resolve to focus on the development of Korea. Kada identified sericulture as a promising industry for Korea's future and, proposed a system wherein raw materials from Korea would be exported to industrialized Japan for silk production. This concept was later implemented as a direct operation of Kada Corporation in colonial Korea.

Meanwhile, Kada's networks with government and military officials continued to play a vital role in Korea. After the Russo-Japanese War, Korea's Resident-General, Hirobumi Ito (伊藤博文), devised a long-term plan for Korea's industrial development to prepare for its colonization. Part of this plan anticipated Yongsan becoming the center of Seoul (Keijo, 京城), with Yeongdeungpo (永登浦) set as a key industrial area to support its growth. This vision was later adopted and expanded by the Government-General of Korea after the annexation, establishing the foundation of Korea's colonial development policies. Given Kada's proven

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17) For a detailed account, please refer to Jang, 2016B.

achievements in Taiwan, he was considered one of the most suitable private entrepreneurs to participate in Korea's colonial development efforts. His experience and strategies in Taiwan made him an ideal candidate for implementing similar initiatives in Korea.

Masatake Terauchi, the first Governor-General of Korea, leveraging his long-standing relationship with Kada, provided numerous preferential measures to position him at the forefront of Korea's colonial development. In April 1911, shortly after the Japan's Annexation of Korea, the establishment of the Chosen Leather Company (朝鮮皮革株式会社) in Yeongdeungpo, Seoul, signified the expansion of Kada's expertise in military leather manufacturing into Korea and the transplantation of his developmental strategies from Taiwan<sup>18</sup>. Kada regarded this enterprise as a matter of national importance. The Chosen Leather Company secured a monopoly in the supply of leather goods, including military boots, backpacks, and belts, to Japanese troops stationed in Korea. The company experienced significant growth during World War I, as orders for military supplies flooded both the Japanese army and Russia. This expansion was driven by Kada's characteristic energy and dedication to facilitating these orders.

In 1918, Kada took over the struggling Chosen Agricultural Promotion Company, which had been established by individuals from Yamaguchi Prefecture under Ito Hirobumi's guidance but was facing severe financial difficulties. This period onward, he rapidly expanded his business operations, also venturing into real estate by engaging in land sales, lending, and entrusted management<sup>19</sup>. By consolidating various agricultural, forestry, and livestock industries under a unified management structure, Kada aimed to enhance operational efficiency and maximize profits. A noteworthy aspect of these enterprises was that most of their major shareholders were individuals from Kada Corporation's network, which Kada had cultivated in Japan and Taiwan. In the case of the Chosen Leather Company, nearly all its executives were former employees of the Kada Corporation who had worked alongside Kada in Japan and Taiwan. Notably, a significant proportion of these individuals hailed from Yamaguchi Prefecture, i.e., Kada's home region. This underscores the regional and personal networks that play a central role in the composition of a company's leadership.

Regarding Kada's personnel selection, the following account offers valuable insights:

*"In his various business ventures, Kada placed great trust in people and delegated responsibilities effectively, selecting dependable and meticulous individuals to manage operations. For example, in Taiwan, he entrusted key roles to individuals, such as Sankuro Yaji (矢次三九郎) and Seiichiro Sakai (酒井政一郎). During the challenging early years in Taitung, he appointed Shujiro Hara (原脩次郎), granting him full authority over operations. After successfully managing the projects in Taitung, Hara later advanced to prominent positions, such as Minister of Colonial Affairs and Minister of Railways, maintaining lifelong gratitude for Kada's support. In mainland*

18) For detailed information regarding the establishment and growth process of Chosen Leather Company, please refer to Jang, 2016A.

19) According to previous research, it is stated that the background for this undertaking was greatly influenced by Kada's accumulated experience in the development of immigrant settlements in eastern Taiwan (Kim, 2006).

*Japan, Kada relied on his younger brother, Tomijiro Kada, to manage the Osaka headquarters, and on Yoshio Ichikawa (市川義雄), who had worked at the Tokyo branch continuously since 1902. Other notable contributors included Genjiro Fujii (藤井源次郎), Sanjuro Aoki (青木三十郎), Juro Oshima (大嶋十郎), Hatsu Moribe (森部 発), Kiichi Nakamura (中村軌一), Kiichiro Saeki (佐伯喜一郎), Buntaro Hayashi (林文太郎), Kakutarō Kubo (久保覚太郎), Toraro Nishimura (西村虎太郎), Shigeji Fujita (藤田繁之), Michiyuki Takami (高見之通), Hiroshichi Goto, Isaburo Kadota (門田猪三郎), and Keisuke Kaneko, all of whom made significant contributions to Kada's projects. For operations in Korea, Kada strategically positioned himself as the central figure while appointing the experienced and trustworthy Shohei Toyota (豊田正平) and Manjiro Miwa (三輪満次郎) to key roles. Kada maintained a policy of absolute non-interference, trusting these individuals to manage operations independently."*

In a broader context, the companies wherein Kada played a direct managerial role, spread across territories within Imperial Japan's sphere of influence, including Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and mainland China. These companies predominantly focused on primary industries that were based on local raw materials. Moreover, the method employed by Kada to expand his businesses to various regions closely resembled Imperial Japan's broader strategies of overseas expansion and power consolidation. The experience gained by Kada in his youth, i.e., forming networks and accumulating practical knowledge through government projects in Japan, laid the foundation for his role as a pioneer of development in colonial Taiwan. This approach was subsequently transplanted in colonial Korea, where Kada and his affiliated companies accumulated capital and extended their influence.

Although Kada's death in 1922 led to the succession of his enterprises by the next generation, the region he considered for future business expansion was evident – it was Manchuria. This is highlighted by his frequent remarks to his successor, Naoji Kada, such as: "I have a fondness for Korea. Blood will flow again in Manchuria. I cannot personally extend my reach to Manchuria, but I will see Korea's work through to the end. I will leave Manchuria's business to you." This statement underscores Kada's firm belief in aligning his business expansion with Imperial Japan's continental ambitions. He viewed Manchuria as the next logical frontier for extending the Empire's reach and influence through his enterprises.

Focusing once again solely on colonial Korea, the Kada Corporation faced challenges from the economic downturn after World War I. However, after Naoji Kada assumed the responsibility for overseeing all Korean operations, the company gradually regained its original performance levels. Under his leadership, the business adapted to the shifting economic environment, stabilizing and restoring its profitability over time.

According to records, as of 1930, Kada Corporation's operations in Korea were primarily concentrated in agriculture, mining, and forestry. The organization maintained a structure whereby it directly managed land while operating affiliated companies, to utilize the resources derived from these lands as raw materials. The close interconnections between affiliated companies facilitated a chain of profitability. This structure reflects Kada's strategy for adapting his developmental experiences from colonial Taiwan to the specific conditions in

Korea. It demonstrates the efforts to maintain profitability through a well-coordinated and resource-focused approach, tailored to the colonial context.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

This paper seeks to slightly shift perspectives from traditional research by examining how Kada's experiences and values, shaped within the context of Japan's imperial colonial expansion, were transplanted in Korea, further developing his business ventures there.

Kada began his career at Fujita Corporation and Okura Corporation, two prominent political-commercial enterprises in modern Japan, where he gained valuable practical experience. Particularly during national emergencies such as the First Sino-Japanese War, he developed expertise and networks as a government-affiliated merchant, which proved crucial in his subsequent ventures. Following this foundation, Kada became independent in colonial Taiwan, emerging as a prominent political entrepreneur and engaging in various development projects promoted by the Taiwan Governor-General's Office. Kada's experiences in Taiwan evolved from prioritizing national interests over immediate financial gains to establishing his own business domain within the empire's sphere of influence over the long term. This approach did not change significantly when he expanded his activities to Korea, another recently acquired Japanese colony. Korea served as a new stage for transplanting successful strategies from Japan and Taiwan, while also acting as a base for future continental expansion into Manchuria.

Through Kada's case, we observe the reality of an entrepreneur who operated within the empire, using Japan, Taiwan, and Korea as business hubs, while collaborating with government and military officials. His business activities largely aligned with those of the colonial authorities, particularly the Governor-General's offices, and contributed to the stabilization of the imperial order through economic development in the colonies.

However, because of his simultaneous involvement in various projects across multiple regions after the 1900s, it was challenging to fully grasp the details, context, and scope of Kada's business activities. Additionally, a lack of sufficient historical records constrains an understanding of his personal networks and relationships with political and military elites. To address these gaps, future research should adopt a comparative approach to Taiwan and Korea, uncovering additional sources not only in Japan, but also in Korea and Taiwan. Field investigations can also enhance the empirical basis of such studies. These efforts represent a key task in advancing research on Imperial Japan and its colonial enterprises.

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