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The History of Asia in the 20th Century -The Origins of Prosperity and Stability-

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Yoshiji Nogami	
Yoshiji Nogami is President and Director General of the Japan Institute of International Affairs and Executive Advisor to Mizuho Bank, Limited. From 2004 to 2008, he was Japanese Ambassador to the UK. After graduating from the University of Tokyo in 1966, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he served as Director-General of the Economic Affairs Bureau, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. His overseas posts include Consul-General in Hong Kong and Ambassador to the OECD in Paris. He was a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.	
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Akihiko Tanaka	
Akihiko Tanaka is President of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS). Before assuming the current position, he had been Professor of International Politics at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo, for many years. He served as President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) from April, 2012 to September, 2015. Mr. Tanaka was also Executive Vice President of The University of Tokyo (2009-2011). He obtained his bachelor's degree in International Relations at the University of Tokyo in 1977 and Ph.D. in Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1981. He has numerous books and articles on world politics and security issues in Japanese and English including <i>The New Middle Ages: The World System in the 21st Century</i> (Tokyo: The International House of Japan, 2002) and <i>Japan in Asia: Post-Cold-War Diplomacy</i> (Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2017). He received the Medal with Purple Ribbon in 2012 for his academic achievements.	
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Brahma Chellaney is a professor of strategic studies at Center for Policy Research (CPR). As a specialist in international security and arms control issues, Professor Chellaney has held appointments at Harvard, the Brookings Institution, the School of Advanced International	

Studies at the Johns Hopkins University, and the Australian National University. He is the author of nine books, and has served as a member of the Policy Advisory Group headed by the foreign minister of India. Until January 2000, he was an advisor to India's National Security Council, serving as convener of the External Security Group of the National Security Advisory Board. Professor Chellaney is a frequent contributor to public conversation about international security on television and in print. He writes opinion pieces for Project Syndicate, the Wall Street Journal, the Japan Times, Nikkei, the Economic Times, and the Times of India. Professor Chellaney has a PhD in international studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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Valerie Niquet

Valérie Niquet, Head of the Asia Department at Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, Senior Visiting Fellow, the Japan Institute of International Affairs and former Director of Asia Center at Ifri (French Institute of International relations) works on strategic issues in Asia and the interaction between economic development, political transformation and security policy in China. Her last publications include *Chine-Japon : l'affrontement* (in French). She also teaches a course on *Sino-Japanese Relations in Perspective* at Keio University.

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Nobukatsu Kanehara

Nobukatsu Kanehara is Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary/Deputy Secretary-General of National Security Secretariat. Mr. Kanehara was born in 1959. After graduating from the University of Tokyo with a degree in Law, he entered Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 1981. He has held various key postings in MOFA and the Cabinet Secretariat. These include Minister for Political Affairs, the Embassy of Japan in the United States of America (2004-2006), Minister for Political Affairs, the Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Korea (2011-2012), Deputy Secretary-General of Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office (2012), and Director-General of the International Legal Affairs Bureau, MOFA (2012). He has served in his current position since 2014.

Preface

Yoshiji Nogami

The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), founded in 1959, is an independent nonpartisan policy think-tank specializing in foreign affairs and security policy. On top of a wide range of research programs the institute promotes dialogues and joint studies with other institutions and experts at home and abroad, makes foreign policy proposals to the government, and disseminates information on international relations to the public.

JIIA has launched a new English-language journal, *Japan Review*. This initiative is a part of our multi-faceted effort to make available in English researches and arguments, originally presented and only available in Japanese, on issues of relevance to Japan's international relations. It is hoped that rectifying this deficiency of information in English would lead to a more constructive discourse outside Japan on these issues.

Three times a year, *Japan Review* will be presenting diverse views of experts on foreign policy issues confronting Japan.

This inaugural issue will feature the discussions of panelists at the symposium "The History of Asia in the 20th Century—The Origins of Prosperity and Stability" organized by JIIA in March 2017. This symposium took a new look at the history of the 20th century to discern the origins of Asia's current peace and stability. It represented a valuable attempt to add new perspectives on 20th century history.

Future issues of *Japan Review* will continue to provide new perspectives on increasingly complex issues. JIIA believes that *Japan Review* will be an indispensable source of information and ideas for anyone interested in Japan's foreign relations.

The History of Asia in the 20th Century – The Origins of Prosperity and Stability –

Akihiko Tanaka
President, National Graduate
Institute for Policy Studies

Abstract

Looking back from our 21st century vantage point, we must re-examine and re-think the history of Asia in the 20th century. Asia today, and East Asia in particular, enjoys relatively peaceful international relations and economic prosperity. The region has two major characteristics politically: a great diversity in political systems, and no failed states. To analyze these features by examining 20th century Asian history, the two concepts of nation building and international relations will be important. The absence of failed states in Asia means the state-building process in East Asia, including countries with a colonial past, has proceeded relatively smoothly. Individual countries have undergone their own historical development through interactions involving the state, society and markets within the context of dynamically changing international relations.

As President Nogami has explained, this symposium is being held under the aegis of the Joint International Research Project on History consigned to the Japan Institute of International Affairs by the government of Japan. This project was launched in July 2016 as a very ambitious attempt to re-examine and re-think the history of Asia in the 20th century.

Needless to say, a very large body of research on 20th century history of Asia already exists thanks to many decades of exhaustive research. We nevertheless believe that it is now necessary to revisit the history of Asia in the 20th century. As history is a conversation between the present and the past, each age needs a new history of the past. The 21st century needs a history of the 20th century different from the history of the 20th century written for the 20th century. In addition to such general needs of a new history for a new age, however, Asia in the 21st century appears to require special needs to revisit its 20th century history; fundamental rethinking of history rather than fine-tunings appears necessary due to the circumstances described in the following.

First, even a cursory look at contemporary Asia, and East Asia in particular, awakens us to the realization that Asia today differs significantly from the Asia that we had come to take for granted during the 20th century. For example, let us consider the conditions of Asia in the 1960s and 1970s. Asia then was suffering from many military conflicts and domestic instability, the Vietnam War, the September 30 movement in Indonesia, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution to name just a few. As far as economic development was concerned, Asia was counted among the least developed regions in the world. In terms of per capita GDP, most of the Asian region scored below Sub-Saharan Africa. Japan was the only advanced industrial country in the entire region.

Where does Asia stand today? Asia today, and East Asia in particular, is in relative peace. Although there are potential sources of instability, no inter-state wars have taken place in this region since the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979. Furthermore, there have been no large-scale civil wars in this area since the Cambodian Civil War ended with the Paris Peace Agreement of 1991.

In addition to peace, the region has achieved great prosperity. Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are at the highest levels of per-capita income in the world. Developing countries in the region, have traced a sharp upward slope. While some remain below the 10,000-dollar mark, there is no question that these countries are also enjoying rapid growth (Figure 1).

As a result, we have seen major changes in regional shares in the world economic scale. Figure 2 represents the changes of GDP shares of various regions since the beginning of the 19th century as estimated by Angus Maddison. Western Europe and the United States increased their shares in the 19th century and came to account for more than one-half of the world economy by the middle of the 20th century. However, we note a significant change beginning in the latter half of the century; the share of Europe and the United States began to decline. The opposite pattern holds for Asia. First, the share of China, India, Japan and other Asian countries declined considerably during the earlier period until it reached a bottom of about 20 percent by the middle of the 20th century. This was followed by a reversal toward the end of the century. According to Professor Maddison's projections, Asia's share in the world economy will exceed 50 percent by 2030.

World history after the Industrial Revolution was often written to account for the change that took place from the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century when the economic scale of Europe and North America (the West) overwhelmed that of other regions. Why was the West alone in achieving this amazing growth? Why did the rest of the world fail to keep up with the West? The dominance of the West and the gap between the West and the rest appeared almost eternal. Explicitly or implicitly, history, whether global, regional or national, was often written on the assumption of the dominance of the West. The task of Asian history, or, for that matter, history of any non-Western regions, then written was to explain why Asia failed to develop as much as the West. Causal reasoning differed; some attributed the failure to the Asian indigenous conditions and some, to the malicious impact of the West.

Classic Western view of Asian history that emerged in the 19th century, for example, was encapsulated in the Marxist theory of "Asiatic mode of production," which predicted that Asia would remain forever backward and stagnant under its imperial order. Many historians made counter arguments against such static view of Asia by detailed studies on traditional civilizations and cultures in Asia. The innumerable findings by such scholars as Joseph Needham demonstrated the technological achievements of China in the ages before the Industrial Revolution. However, when it comes to the history of the 19th century to the early 20th century, Asia was seen as losing such civilizational achievements and lagging behind the West.

As many parts of Asia were colonized by the Western imperial powers, Asian conditions became often explained by negative impacts of the expansion of the West: the Western imperialism and colonialism. The main theme of Asian history now became how Asian peoples liberate themselves from the shackles of the Western (and Japanese) imperialism. Even after the formal empires were gone after the second world war, the dependency theory, for example, tried to explain the underdevelopment of Asia by the structural dominance of the center on the periphery.

Japan was the exception to prove the rule under these historical circumstances. This gave rise to the question of why Japan alone was able to achieve economic development. The prevailing explanation for Japanese exceptionalism was that Japan differed from other Asian countries in that it possessed an environment and culture that allowed it to follow the European pattern of modernization. Some argued that Japan had a feudalism very similar to that of Western Europe. Others argued that Japan's ecological situation was very similar to that of Western Europe. And still others argued that Japan had a similar ethics with that of Protestantism. But for us living in the 21st century and well aware of the course of Asian development from the 1970s to the present

century, the whole question of why only the West developed and why Japan was the exception does not accord with the facts of the late 20th century and the 21st century.

The age of the Western dominance in the world economy is coming to an end. The dominance of the West is not eternal and the gap of the West and the rest is not eternal. The age when Japan was the only exception was over. History is now tasked to respond to questions such as: Why did the reversal of economic share take place in the latter half of the 20th century? Why did Asia and East Asia in particular achieve significant growth? What are the dynamics that explain both the rise of the West as well as its fall and the fall of Asia as well as its rise?

Economic share is not the only indicator of development. Many other conditions change as history develops. As economy develops, political institutions change. Max Weber assumed that bureaucratization was the hallmark of political modernization. Modernization theorists believed that democratization would follow economic development. Marxist theorists predicted that a communist (world) government was to replace capitalist states. The communist theory appears to have lost attraction academically as well as practically after the end of the Cold War. Virtues of democratization are widely shared by many in the 21st century but its historical connection with economic development appears highly complex if not totally unrelated. Could we say anything about political institutions when we observe Asian experiences from the vantage point of the 21st century?

Figure 3 depicts the positions of countries defined by political freedom as measured by the Freedom House score and prosperity as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI). The colored points represent East Asian countries. Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are situated at the top of the right hand portion, where virtually all countries of Western Europe and North America are situated. As we move to the left, we come to Hong Kong and Singapore. While both outperform Japan and South Korea in terms of HDI, they linger around the middle in terms of political freedom. A little further to the left and we come to Brunei. Somewhat lower in terms of HDI, we have China, followed by Vietnam with their low ratings of political freedom. Thailand and Malaysia are in the middle in terms of political freedom and Indonesia and the Philippines have more political freedom though at somewhat lower HDI. Moving further down along the HDI axis, we come to Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar with still lower political freedom. In other words, countries in East Asia show extreme diversity in terms of political freedom. Even among countries with high economic performance, there are different degrees of freedom. Among similar economic performance, some are experiencing increasing freedom but some others remain within authoritarian political systems.

These features of East Asia appear to justify the necessities of revisiting our view of history of the 20th century. What further justifies the necessity of our inquiry is the fact that we do not know how stable these features are. There is considerable divergence of opinion on this point. Some international political scientists question the stability of peace in East Asia. With North Korea and China in mind, it is not surprising that some have emphasized the instability of this peace. The same applies to prosperity, where the question is how long the region can continue to enjoy stable economic growth. Particularly in the case of developing countries, I believe there is a wide range of arguments that can be made on whether these countries can avoid the middle-income trap and achieve sustained development.

As Figure 3 indicates, political diversity in this region covers a considerable range of levels of freedom. Here again, it is very difficult to predict whether this pattern will continue unchanged into the future. China and Vietnam may eventually move toward the right and embrace greater freedom, or perhaps they will stay where they are today. The Modernization theory that prevailed in the 1950s posited that economic prosperity would eventually bring about democracy. In fact, South Korea and Taiwan in the latter part of the 20th century actually followed the pattern

suggested by the Modernization Theory¹. But the current situation in East Asia shows that things do not necessarily happen as assumed by the Modernization Theory.

In any case, it seems clear that revisiting the history of Asia, and the history of East Asia in particular, presents an extremely interesting intellectual exercise. From a policy perspective, re-examination of history of East Asia could contribute significantly to the debates about development in the world. If the West and Japan are not exceptions in political, economic and social development, what can Asian development in the 20th century add to our understanding of development in general? To the extent that there exist uncertainties about East Asia's future, what further lessons can we draw from experiences of East Asia in the 20th century for the rest of the world?

There are no ready approaches to examine these questions posed above. Among many potentially useful concepts and hypotheses, I would like to briefly mention two that I believe would be significant in our examination of the history of Asia in the 20th century: state-building and international relations. As I stated before, despite the significant diversity of political systems in Asia, it seems quite apparent that most East Asian countries have created and maintained relatively strong state structure. Poorest countries in East Asia such as Cambodia and Laos appear to have less fragile state structure than many least developed countries in the rest of the world. We believe that it is worthwhile to investigate historical development of state-building in the region. How significant political institutions such as civilian bureaucracy, military, and political parties have been developed relative to the development of market and non-state civil society should become a renewed focus of historical investigation.

Another concept that this project will focus on is international relations. Individual countries undergo their own historical development through interactions involving the state, society and markets. However, this historical development certainly does not occur in isolation. In all countries, the interaction between the state, society and markets takes place within the context of dynamically changing international relations. In many cases, a decisive turning point in the historical development of a nation has been triggered by a major incident, a crisis or a watershed event in international relations. In this respect, war played an extremely important role between the 19th and 20th centuries. Similarly, in the realm of economics, such developments as trade expansion and economic depression have significantly influenced political and economic developments in individual countries.

Therefore, our project will be roughly organized as follows. Our study will start with a chapter describing developments in international relations in Asia between the second half of the 19th century and the 21st century. This will be followed by 20th century histories of individual countries featuring the description and analysis of the interaction between the state, society and markets, with special focus on the processes of nation building and the formation of the state.

This symposium today does not necessarily adopt the same analytical framework as would be found in a history book representing the output of this project. Similarly and needless to say, the views presented by the panelists will represent the personal views that are freely expressed by them. On the other hand, those of us participating in this project are certain that this valuable opportunity to participate in discussions with world-class panelists will contribute very significantly to our final analysis and output.

This concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

¹ East Asia appears to pose several counter examples to Acemogru and Robion's argument that inclusive political system has been conducive to economic development. Korea and Taiwan presented a reverse pattern and China presented a case of economic development without inclusive politics.

Figure 1: GDP Per Capita

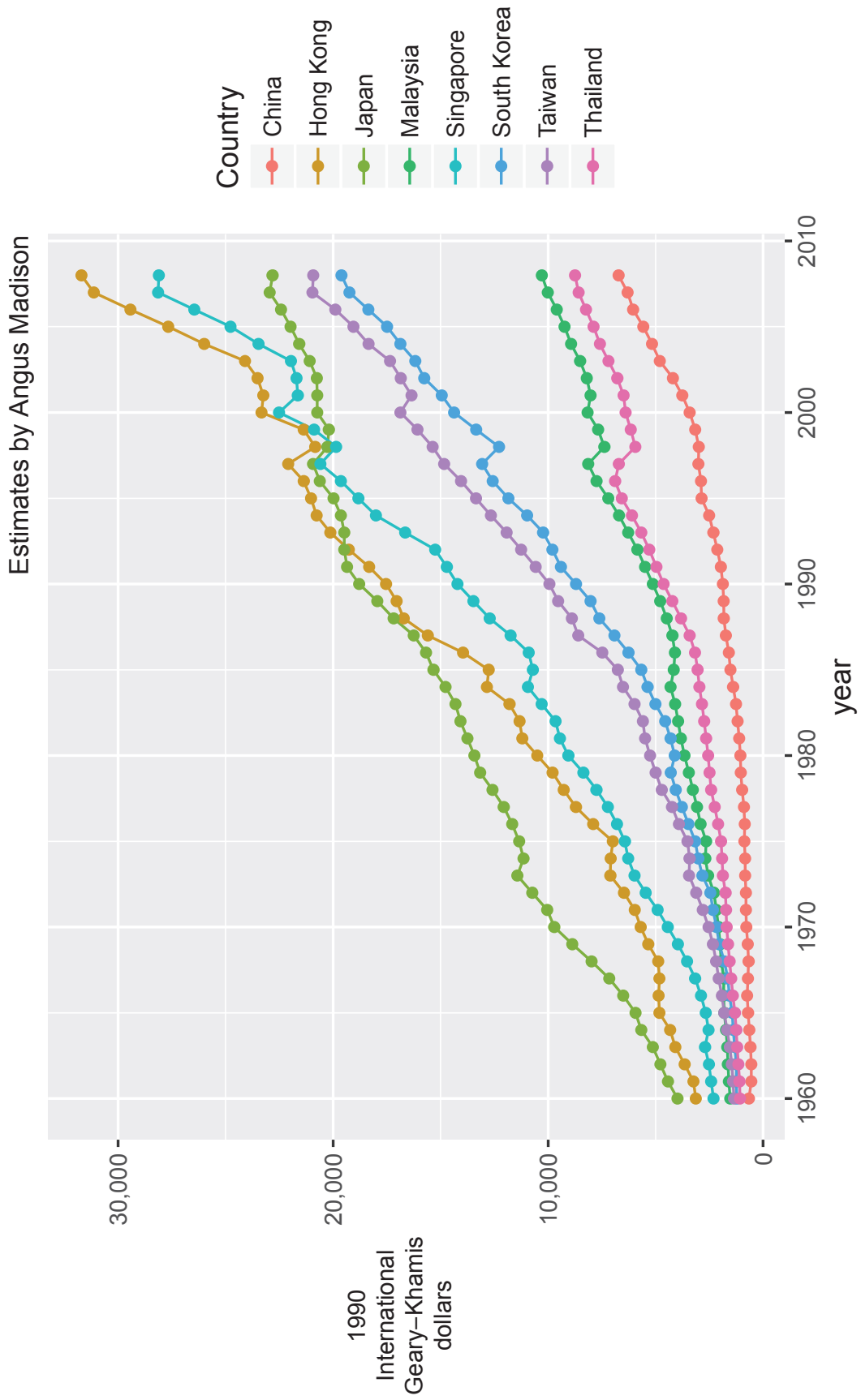
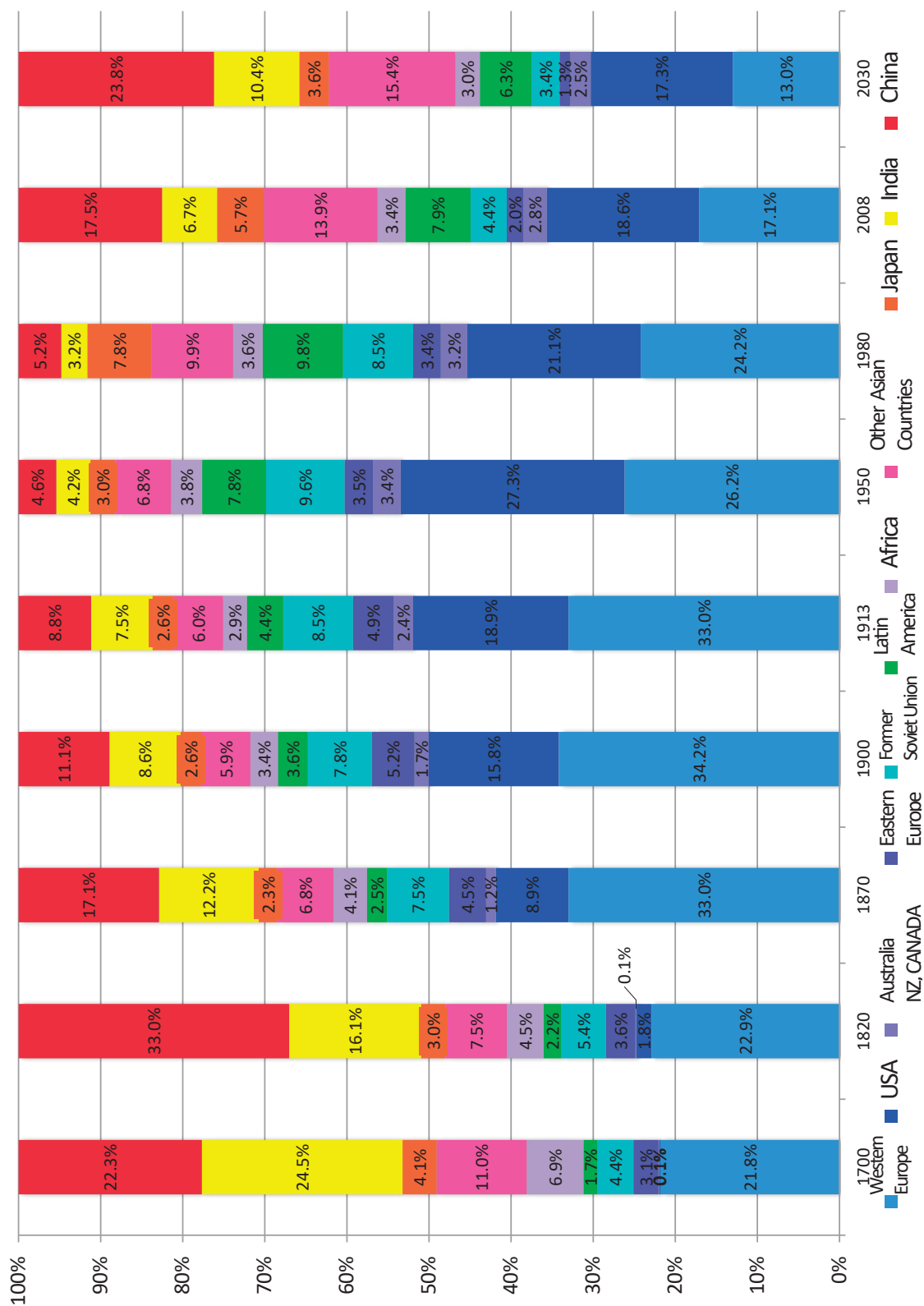
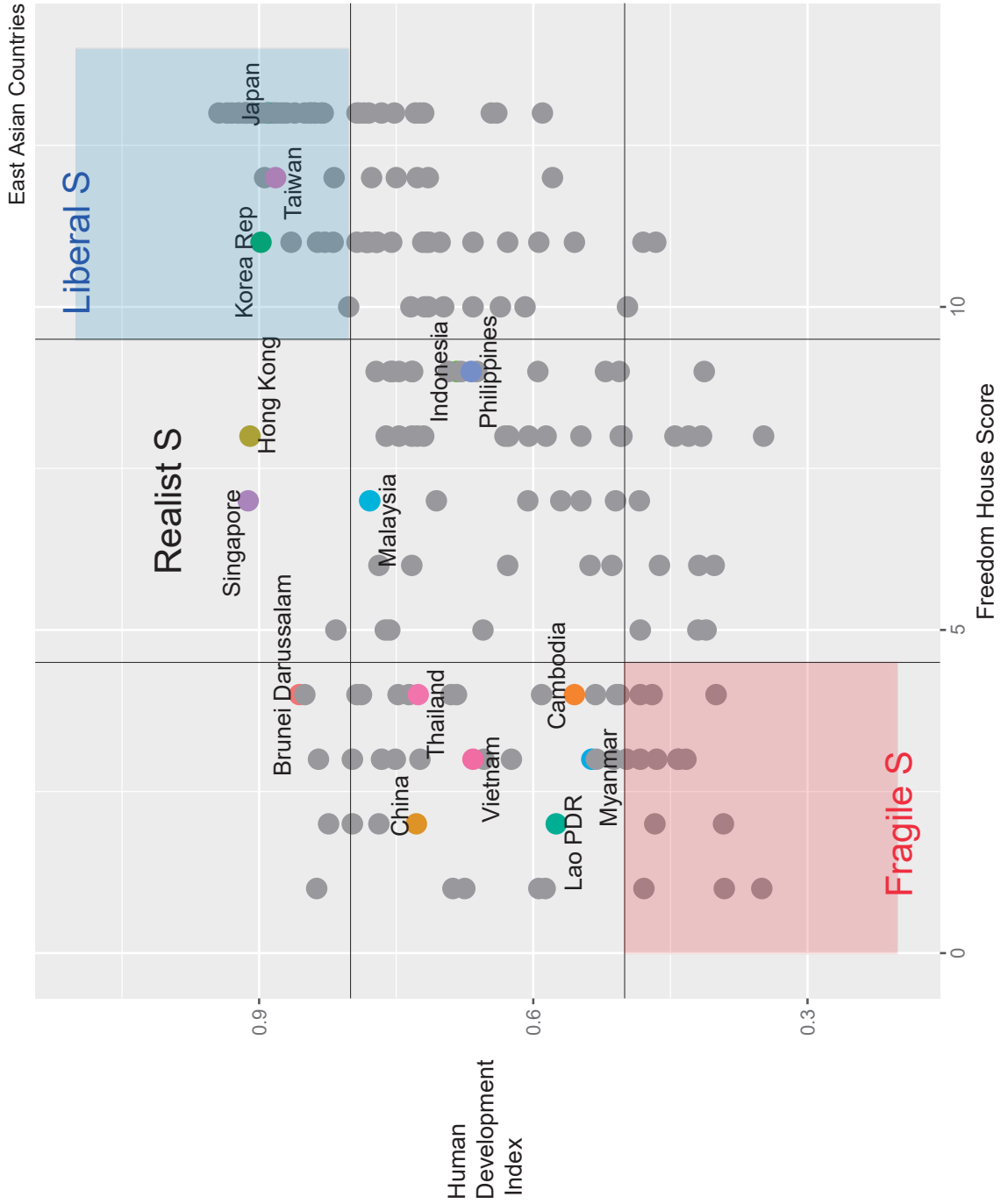


Figure 2: GDP Estimates by Angus Maddison (1700-2030)



Data: http://www.ggdpc.net/maddison/Horizontal_Statistics/horizontal-file_02-2010.xls and Angus Maddison, "Shares of the Rich and the Rest in the World Economy: Income Divergence Between Nations, 1820-2030" Asian Economic Policy Review, Vol. 3, Issue 1, June 2008, p.74.

Figure 3: Three Spheres 2014



Data: Freedom House scores used above are calculated by reversing the original Freedom House ratings so that higher scores indicate higher freedom.
https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_Country_and_Territory_Ratings_and_Statutes_1972-2016_1.xls
 HDI is from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/>; Taiwan's HDI is from <http://eng.stat.gov.tw/public/data/dgbas03/bs2/gender/International%20Gender/人類發展指數.xls>

History as a barrier to charting a better future

Brahma Chellaney *

Abstract

The official history of any nation, however big or small, embodies a blend of fact and fiction. Besides such politicized construction of history, Asia must also deal with harmful historical legacies, revisionist history, and territorial revisionism that are threatening its peace and economic renaissance. The squabbles over history and remembrance have already cast a long shadow over Asia's extraordinary rise. Yet history problems are only intensifying, with growing nationalism among the major actors fueling disputes over everything from territory and natural resources to war memorials and textbooks. The time is overdue to draw a line under the past. Nations in the region must find ways to commemorate their past without alienating, insulting, or offending their neighbors. Asian nations cannot change the past, but they can strive to shape a more cooperative future — without, of course, forgetting history's lessons.

Introduction

Ever since Japan rose dramatically as an economic powerhouse in the 1970s, analysts have predicted the arrival of the “Asian century.” However, history, often linked to colonialism or past aggressions, remains a barrier. A potent mix of domestic politics, growing geopolitical competition, and military tensions has turned history into a driver of corrosive nationalism. Conflicting historical memories and narratives constitute one of the biggest impediments to political reconciliation.¹ This holds long-term ramifications for Asia, including its continued ability to spearhead global economic growth and gain centrality in international relations.

Make no mistake: whatever historians may say, history is never an objective chronicle. It is not uncommon for countries to create self-serving, sanitized narratives about their past to purge the wrongs they inflicted on others and to portray their historical opponents as rapacious foes always at fault. Many nations, in fact, openly blend historical fact with myth. As George Orwell said, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.”

Let us be clear: history is written by the victors. Japan, as a nation vanquished in World War II, remains under pressure to this day to make amends for its colonial history and activities during the war. However, there is no similar pressure on Britain, France, and other colonial powers that emerged victorious in that war, whose outcome shaped the current international institutional structure. The victors' atrocities in their colonies and during World War II, for example, have

* Brahma Chellaney is a professor of strategic studies at Center for Policy Research (CPR)

¹ Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel C. Snieder (eds.), *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (London, Routledge, 2013).

been whitewashed or simply forgotten.

The politicization of national commemoration

The squabbles over history and remembrance in Asia are particularly worrisome because they cast a long shadow over the region, reinforcing negative stereotypes of rival nations and helping to rationalize claims to territories long held by other states. With attempts to rewrite or sugarcoat history persisting to this day, history remains a principal obstacle to enduring peace and stability in Asia.

The paradox is that East Asia's history problems have been intensifying lately, with growing nationalism among major actors such as China, Japan, and South Korea fueling disputes over everything from territory and natural resources to war memorials and history textbooks. These bitter disputes over issues of historical memory are poisoning relations.

Take national commemoration, which is usually linked with national identity. Erecting memorials to newfound heroes is inciting greater regional rancor and recrimination.² Indeed, inter-country squabbles in Asia over remembrance are threatening to sow fragmentation and instability. They have also fueled Asia's more recent territorial disputes. The fact is that the politicization of history, including through textbook revisions along nationalist lines, makes it very difficult to establish institutionalized regional collaboration.

How did Yasukuni, a stately Shinto shrine in the heart of Tokyo, become the center of an international controversy? For an answer, it is more instructive to look not so much at the present but recognize how rival states in East Asia are using history as a geopolitical instrument. Moreover, unresolved historical grievances have constricted the diplomatic space for building reconciliation among China, Japan and South Korea. It is in this atmosphere of nationalist grandstanding over conflicting historical narratives in East Asia that Yasukuni has become an oversized issue.

Yasukuni, built in the 19th century to honor Japan's war dead, enshrines the spirits — not the bones or ashes — of Japan's 2.5 million war dead. It is not widely known overseas that Yasukuni honors Japan's war dead not just from World War II but also from earlier wars extending from the Satsuma Rebellion to World War I, when Japan was allied with the United States. Among the World War II dead the shrine honors are 14 individuals who were convicted as Class A war criminals by a military tribunal established by the World War II victors. The 14 include Hideki Tojo, the prime minister who ordered the attack on Pearl Harbor largely in response to the U.S. oil, steel and scrap-metal embargoes on Japan. The Pacific War was triggered not just by Imperial Japan's frenzy of territorial conquests but also by U.S. sanctions on Japan. As the U.S. political scientist Graham Allison has said in the context of the present U.S.-China tensions, "Could a trade conflict become a hot war that ends with nuclear explosions? As preposterous as that may sound, remember that Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor happened after the United States imposed crippling sanctions on Japan, bringing this country into a war that ended with atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki."³

In keeping with the dictum that history is written by the winners, the so-called International Military Tribunal for the Far East (which was established by a charter issued by U.S. Army General Douglas MacArthur) delivered "victors' justice," with its proceedings tainted by extreme arbitrariness not seen at the Nürnberg trials in Germany. In fact, one of the tribunal's justices, Radhabinod Pal of India, dissented from the other judges to contend that the trials were conducted unfairly as an exercise in retribution by the victors. While the Nürnberg tribunal tried

² Hiro Saito, *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016).

³ Graham Allison, "How Trump and China's Xi Could Stumble Into War," *Washington Post*, March 31, 2017.

twenty-two Nazi leaders, including one in absentia, and convicted nineteen of them, the trials under MacArthur's charter lasted two years (more than twice as long), with all the twenty-five Japanese defendants convicted. Seven of them were sentenced to hang, sixteen were given life imprisonment, and two were sentenced to lesser terms. However, with the Cold War heating up, the U.S. occupation authorities in Japan by 1958 pardoned or paroled the remaining convicts, further undercutting the credibility of the original trials (several of the convicts had died of natural causes earlier in prison). Today, Pal's sculpture adorns the gardens of Yasukuni.

It was only in 1978 that the names of the fourteen "war criminals" were added to the list at Yasukuni, which memorializes the collective memory of the fallen soldiers, and it was not until 1985, after more than twenty post-war visits by prime ministers to Yasukuni, that China raised the Yasukuni issue in the wake of then Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's official visit to the shrine to pray for peace and for the souls of the war dead. Nakasone turned what previously had been private visits to the shrine into an official visit as part of a pledge to make a "final accounting" of the taboos of Japan's postwar era. Not only were funds from the national treasury used to pay for the flowers that Nakasone placed at Yasukuni, but also he signed the shrine's visitor book as "Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone," unlike previous visits, when he had signed as "a man named Yasuhiro Nakasone who is prime minister."⁴

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, for his part, had long held back from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. Abe did not pray at Yasukuni during his first stint as prime minister from 2006-2007. However, Abe found little reason to restrain himself after Beijing in November 2013 aggressively established an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) that usurped international airspace over the East China Sea and covered the Senkaku Islands (which China claims sovereignty over but does not control). Abe's visit to Yasukuni in late 2013 was also a way to assert Japan's right to independence from external pressure, and it inflamed nationalistic passions in China and South Korea.

To China and South Korea, Yasukuni remains a spiritual symbol of Japan's prewar militarism, with its adjoining Yūshūkan war-history museum promoting the view that Japan waged aggression in Asia to liberate it from European colonial rule. Many foreigners contend that the museum presents a revisionist interpretation of twentieth-century history to portray Japan as the victim in order to rationalize its militaristic past. However, it is often overlooked that in contrast to war museums in a number of other countries, like Musée de l'Armée at Les Invalides in Paris, France, the Yūshūkan is a strictly private museum not officially endorsed by the state; it is administered by the Shinto organization that is in charge of Yasukuni. Since the end of the war, there is a strict separation between the state and religion in Japan that forbids the government from interfering or intervening in religious affairs.

All this, however, cannot obscure a key question: even if Japan still needs to atone for its past actions, doesn't it have the same right today as other nations to honor its citizens killed in World War II and the wars before? All nations, after all, honor their war dead, even if they were the aggressors, plundering distant lands, as European colonial powers did. The United States honors those who died fighting its wars of aggression, including in Vietnam and its decade-long occupation of Iraq.

Even as the values of pacifism and rejection of war remain largely dominant in today's Japan, the Japanese culture, with its martial traditions, places a high premium on honoring the war dead, with the spirits of the fallen soldiers deified. Indeed, the valor of Japanese soldiers is instilled by the belief that, even if they die in battle, they will live on in spirit. In the absence of any other commemorative monument, Yasukuni serves as Japan's war memorial. Japanese politicians, especially those on the political right, like to compare Yasukuni with the Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington D.C. that also honors and memorializes the war dead.

⁴ Sam Jameson, "Nakasone's Visit to Wartime Shrine Criticized," *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1985.

Given that a prime ministerial visit to Yasukuni now ignites nationalistic passions in China and South Korea, would these countries accept an alternative war memorial in Japan? What if Tokyo proposed building a national war memorial where Japan's leaders could pay respects to the collective memory of the fallen soldiers without igniting international controversy? Such a proposal would most likely come under immediate attack from China and South Korea as a new Japanese project to honor past militarism. In other words, no war memorial, given Japan's imperialist history, would be free of controversy in today's geopolitical environment.

Another classic example of resurgent history issues linked to colonialism is the century-old case of Korean activist Ahn Jung-geun. The case exemplifies history's divisive hold. Considered a terrorist in Japan, where Ahn was hanged, but a hero in South and North Korea, Ahn assassinated a top Japanese leader, Hirobumi Ito, in 1909 at the Harbin Railway Station in China. Ito was a highly decorated, four-time Japanese prime minister and the first resident-general of Japanese-ruled Korea. In recent years, that case has resurfaced after China opened a memorial hall at the Harbin Railway Station in 2014 to commemorate Ahn. Indeed, as if to cement Ahn's status as a hero in Korea,⁵ his image has appeared on a 200-won postage stamp in South Korea, while Ito's image can be seen on Japan's 1,000-yen note.⁶

The new Ahn memorial in Harbin is actually part of the larger geopolitical tug of war in East Asia. The hall was built at the suggestion of South Korea's now-impeached president, Park Geun Hye, during a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in the summer of 2013. Xi, seizing the opportunity to drive a wedge between America's two main Asian allies, quickly built the memorial to Ahn. Japan responded by blasting China for lionizing a terrorist and propagating a "one-sided" view of history — a move that, Japan asserted, was "not conducive to building peace and stability."⁷

The irony is that China, while portraying the Yasukuni Shrine as a symbol of Japan's unrepentant view of past militarism, found no contradiction in opening a memorial hall honoring an assassin. "History is the teacher of life," China's official news agency, Xinhua, said on the occasion of the opening of the memorial glorifying a murderer.⁸ "With Japan treading a dangerous path once again, the need for vigilance and a joint international effort is clear if we are to prevent a Japanese militarist resurgence," it added. The construction of the Ahn memorial has been likened by some to building a statute in Dallas to President John F. Kennedy's killer, Lee Harvey Oswald.⁹

The Ahn memorial — intentionally designed to be antagonistic to Japan — is just one example of how national commemoration can be manipulated to serve narrow geopolitical agendas. Of course, there is no dearth of cases where one country's heroes are villains for another.

Varied experiences, varied reactions

If one examines China, South Korea, India, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia, it is apparent that national feelings and reactions to historical, especially colonial, experiences vary significantly across the Asian region.

South Korea, where hyper-nationalism is also a way to erase the memories of close cooperation of the Korean elites with Japanese colonial rulers, has sought to purge all vestiges of Japanese colonial rule. On both sides of the divided Korean Peninsula, Korean nationalism is roused by a common factor — a deep sense of historical victimization by larger powers that

⁵ Ahn Jung-geun's image on 200-won postage stamp, <https://goo.gl/4EkgfX>.

⁶ Bank of Japan, "Banknotes, The Bank's Treasury Funds and JGS Services," <https://goo.gl/joqd5X>.

⁷ Alastair Gale, "Chinese Shrine to Korean Assassin Irks Japan," *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 2014.

⁸ Xinhua, "Memorial of Korean Patriot, Reminder of History," January 19, 2014.

⁹ Jennifer Lind, "When History Humiliates Former Enemies," CNN, January 3, 2014.

treated Korea in the past as a vassal state or even annexed it during different periods of its history. North Korea boycotted the 1988 Summer Olympics because they were held in Seoul, yet such is the underlying cross-border Korean nationalism that people in one Korea cheer for the other Korea when it competes with any other country, especially Japan. Against this background, South Korea still insists that Japan address lingering issues over its annexation of Korea more than 100 years ago.

Not all Asian countries, however, seek to obliterate their colonial pasts. They include the Philippines, Singapore, and Indonesia, which were also victims of Japanese aggression. India, which fell prey to British colonialism, has also largely moved on.

In fact, India continues to transact much of its key government business from British-era edifices, and some of its major criminal and civil laws date from the colonial period. In fact, after independence, India voluntarily adopted British-style parliamentary democracy, although this system is rife with inefficiencies and other drawbacks, as the experiences of not only India but also Britain show just in recent years. The parliamentary system might suit a small, homogenous nation but, in a large, diverse country like India, it is at the root of many political ills, besides fostering a fractious polity. It speaks for itself that the U.S. occupying authorities imposed a parliamentary system on Japan, rather than the American-style presidential system. This was done apparently in order to preclude a strong federal government in charge of Japan's destiny. The U.S. president has immense executive powers and can, for example, tear up long-standing trade agreements or wage wars in secret, without Congress and the courts being able to stop him. By contrast, the parliamentary system has fostered coalition governments in India and elsewhere.

Whether it be from strength or weakness, the fact is that India has long declined to hold any grudge against Britain for its nearly 200 years of colonial exploitation and plunder of the Indian subcontinent. Around the start of the 18th century, as the Mughal Empire began to gradually fragment across the subcontinent — a development that led to European imperial powers initially eyeing India and then intervening, one by one — India's share of world GDP stood at 27 percent, according to the British economist Angus Maddison.¹⁰

When the British seized India, India was clearly one of the richest societies in the world. Not surprisingly, the British labeled India, with its size and wealth, as the “jewel in the crown” of the British Empire. By the time the British left India, though, they had reduced it to one of the world's poorest. According to Maddison, India's share of the global GDP stood at just 3.8 percent in 1950, just after independence.¹¹ In the words of the award-winning Indian author Shashi Tharoor, “The British conquered one of the richest countries in the world and reduced it, after over two centuries of looting and exploitation, to one of the poorest, most diseased, and most illiterate countries by 1947.”¹²

Britain's brutal colonial past in India included engineering a famine in Bengal that led to millions of deaths, punitive expeditions, scorched-earth policies, and even concentration camps.¹³ By diverting Indian resources to support Britain's role in World War II, Winston Churchill not only presided over the hideous Bengal famine in 1943 that left some three million Indians dead, but he also mocked the Indian suffering, saying the starvation was “merrily” culling the

¹⁰ Angus Maddison, *The Economic and Social Impact of Colonial Rule in India in Class Structure and Economic Growth: India & Pakistan since the Moghuls* (London: Routledge, 2006), chapter 3.

¹¹ Angus Maddison, *The Economic and Social Impact of Colonial Rule in India in Class Structure and Economic Growth: India & Pakistan since the Moghuls* (London: Routledge, 2006), chapter 3.

¹² Shashi Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India* (New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2016).

¹³ Madhusree Mukerjee, *Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravaging of India during World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

Indian population.¹⁴ In truth, this was a major atrocity, but since Churchill was on the side that won World War II, the blood on his hands mattered little in the victors' historical narrative that prevailed globally with the war triumph.

In this light, it is remarkable that India, which prides itself as the world's largest democracy, remains a member of the Britain-led Commonwealth of Nations. India's equanimity and lack of rancor vis-à-vis Britain stand in stark contrast to South Korea's unforgiveness about its suffering under Japan's colonialism. Like India, Taiwan — a former Japanese colony — also displays a more tolerant view of its period of colonial subjugation.

China, for its part, still harps on its "century of humiliation" and colonial degradation that began with Britain's victory over Manchu-ruled China in the First Opium War in 1839. In this "century of humiliation," Western powers intervened and imposed unequal treaties on the Qing dynasty in Beijing and Imperial Japan invaded and occupied parts of China. Sun Yat-sen, who founded the Republic of China, once said that China's nineteenth-century fate was worse than India's because "India was the favored wife of Britain while China was the common prostitute of all the foreign powers."¹⁵ In reality, the Qing dynasty was not Han Chinese; it was established in the seventeenth century by the Manchus who seized Beijing. Remaining in power until the early twentieth century, the Qing conquered the lands of other non-Han Chinese people, trebling the size of the empire's territory as compared with the preceding Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Like the Mughal integration in India, the Qing respected the Confucian political tradition and Sinicized non-Chinese minorities in their empire, even as their rule left a "Manchufied" imprint on Chinese politics and society.

Still, China's experiences under Japanese and Western colonialism were a key factor in the rise of the Chinese Communist Party, which convinced many Chinese that only it could restore the country's pride and which today still harps on its "heroic" role in "the people's War of Resistance against the Japanese aggression." The paradox here is that China today is itself using colonial-era principles to create a Sino-sphere of client or tributary states. With the intent to corner natural resources in distant lands, dump goods in their markets, and serve its other interests, it is employing predatory finance to ensnare states in a debt trap. In essence, this is an imperial project aimed at making real the mythical Middle Kingdom.

Since coming to power in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party has unfailingly played the history card to instill fear in Chinese society of foreign powers encircling China. As its ideological underpinnings have eroded, it has made ultra-nationalism the legitimating credo of its monopoly on power. Just as the United States presents itself as the world's indispensable nation, the Chinese Communist Party — inflating China's past achievements and capitalizing on the country's dramatic economic rise since the 1990s — presents China as central to global economics, politics, and culture. According to the Harvard University academic Graham Allison, China and the United States today share one similarity: "Both have extreme superiority complexes. Each sees itself as without peers."¹⁶

Indeed, no country plays the history card with as much relish and ingenuity as China. In recent years, for example, it has sought to draw attention to the atrocities committed by the Imperial Japanese Army before and during World War II. Through government projects and subsidies, China, among other things, has expanded and renovated war museums memorializing Japan's 1931-1945 invasions. As though to stir its people into a frenzy of patriotism, China in 2015

¹⁴ Sheila Musaji, "Winston Churchill's Bigoted Statements Prove Nothing," *The Muslim American*, June 9, 2013.

¹⁵ Shivshankar Menon, "The China Conundrum," *ICS Analysis* (May 2016).

¹⁶ Graham Allison, "How Trump and China's Xi Could Stumble into War," *Washington Post*, March 31, 2017.

introduced two new national memorial days to commemorate China's long battle against Japanese aggression in World War II: "War against Japanese Aggression Victory Day" on September 3 and "Nanjing Massacre Day" on December 13 (Japanese troops captured Nanking, or Nanjing, on December 13, 1937, and Japan officially surrendered to the Allied Powers on September 2, 1945). China has also other days dedicated to remembrance of its long conflict with Japan, including September 18, which marks the day Japanese forces entered Shenyang city, opening the path to a wider Japanese takeover of northeast China.

Such is China's widespread politicization of history that its official calendar, to be clear, is also dotted with days of commemoration for events and causes not linked with Japan. Such national days are not public holidays; rather the commemoration is marked by feisty speeches and essays. Yet no issue better illustrates China's use of history to whip up nationalism at home than Japan. For example, as the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II approached in 2015, China announced a grand military parade in Beijing on September 3, with the Communist Party's mouthpiece, the People's Daily, saying the parade would display China's military prowess and "make Japan tremble."¹⁷ An increasingly muscular China, however, is rattling not only Japan but also its other neighbors.

What if the victims of China's aggressions since 1949, such as Vietnam and India, emulated its example by dedicating days to commemorate Chinese attacks on them? China, while seeking to obscure its own aggressions and occupations since the communist "revolution," including the 1951 annexation of the sprawling Tibetan Plateau and invasions of India and Vietnam in 1962 and 1979, respectively, has long called on Japan to "take history as a mirror" and demonstrate greater remorse for its past aggressions. Should India designate October 20 as the "Day of Infamy" to remind itself of the lessons from the Chinese trans-Himalayan invasion, which began on that day in 1962?

In fact, China illustrates how historical denial is unabashedly selective. The Chinese Communist Party, for instance, seeks to shore up its legitimacy by harping on Japan's pre-World War II militarism but denying China's own post-1949 aggressions. A visit to the Military Museum in Beijing shows how China employs revisionist history both to portray itself as the victim even when it initiated war (such as against India and Vietnam) and to rationalize its assertive territorial claims today. Such is the enforced historical amnesia about China's invasions of India and Vietnam that few Chinese know about the attacks.

A Pentagon report has cited examples of how China engaged in military preemption in 1950, 1962, 1969, and 1979 in the name of strategic defense. The report, released in 2010, stated: "The history of modern Chinese warfare provides numerous case studies in which China's leaders have claimed military preemption as a strategically defensive act. For example, China refers to its intervention in the Korean War (1950–53) as the 'War to Resist the United States and Aid Korea.' Similarly, authoritative texts refer to border conflicts against India (1962), the Soviet Union (1969), and Vietnam (1979) as 'Self-Defense Counter Attacks.'"¹⁸ All these cases of preemption occurred when China was weak, poor, and internally torn, so China's rapidly accumulating power today naturally raises legitimate concerns in Asia. Indeed, China's seizure of the Paracel Islands from Vietnam in 1974, its 1995 capture of the Mischief Reef from the Philippines, and its 2012 seizure of the Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines are also examples of offense as defense.

Take Cambodia: while China insists that Japan "shoulder the historical responsibilities for crimes committed by past generations," as Chinese Premier Li Keqiang put it in 2015, Beijing's

¹⁷ Franz-Stefan Gady, "Parades to Fear, Not Celebrate," *New York Times*, March 20, 2015.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2010*, Report to Congress Pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2010), 24.

message to Cambodia is to forget the past. The reason? China has yet to acknowledge its role in one of the worst genocides in post-World War II history. In the 1970s, as part of the Mao Zedong-initiated effort to carve out a client state in the context of serious Sino-Soviet ideological conflict, China aided the rise to power of the Marxist leader Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, a development that led to mass starvation and mass slaughter. The brutal regime was overthrown by invading Vietnamese forces in 1979 but not before the Khmer Rouge claimed the lives of up to two million people in just four years of rule. Beijing, however, continued to recognize the Khmer Rouge as the legitimate rulers of Cambodia until 1992.

The Chinese Communist Party's gory history is also apparent from the domestic pogroms that occurred in the first decades of its own rule. Yet political power in China still rests with the same party and system responsible for the death of tens of millions of Chinese during the so-called Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution, and other state-induced disasters. The decade-long Cultural Revolution upheaval claimed the lives of one million or more Chinese, including China's head of state, Liu Shaoqi, who died in custody in 1969 after two years of abuse. The death toll from the Cultural Revolution could have been as high as eight million, according to Song Yongyi, who served five years in prison in that period and became a scholar of the Cultural Revolution — a research focus that led to a second incarceration in 1999 for stealing “state secrets.”¹⁹

In fact, it was Mao's quest to subdue nature that precipitated the greatest genocide in modern world history — the “Great Leap Forward,” a forced attempt at the collectivization of agricultural and industrial output that helped create one of the world's worst famines between 1958 and 1961. Some 36 million people perished (more than three times the number killed in World War I) in the supposed Great Leap Forward, according to the well-researched 2008 book *Tombstone* by longtime Chinese communist Yang Jisheng.²⁰ However, a Western scholar, Frank Dikötter, who accessed the Chinese Communist Party's files relating to the horror, estimates that the Great Leap Forward was responsible for at least 45 million deaths.²¹

Add to the picture the ruthless crushing of student-led, pro-democracy demonstrators at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of civilians were killed in the Tiananmen massacre, China's most significant political event in a generation. That the Communist Party continues to monopolize power despite its past gory excesses indeed is remarkable. China is now the oldest autocracy in the world. As an international newspaper put it, “Its constant demands that Japan square up to the past would be more convincing if it were not so wantonly dishonest about its own bloodstained history.”²²

As for Japan, its historical narrative is complex and difficult, especially in relation to China and South Korea, because in the last century Japan was a victor and a loser, as well as an oppressor and a victim. It was a colonizer, yet between 1945 and 1952 it was occupied by the United States. That occupation period has greatly shaped Japan's political, economic, and educational systems. It is extraordinary that Japan has not changed one word to this day in its U.S.-imposed Constitution, although constitutional reform is linked to national-security reform and national-security reform, in turn, is linked to the country's changing security environment.

To be sure, Japan's history problem with its neighbors goes back much farther than World War II. Japan decisively defeated Manchu-ruled China in 1895, only to be defeated and occupied by the United States fifty years later. In between those two great wars, Japan colonized Korea and

¹⁹ Verna Yu, “'Enemy of the People' Historian Song Yongyi Gives as Good as He Gets,” *South China Morning Post*, February 19, 2013.

²⁰ Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone* (Mùbēi), in Mandarin, vols. 1 and 2 (Hong Kong, 2008). The book has not been translated into English thus far. It has been banned in mainland China.

²¹ Frank Dikötter, “Mao's Great Leap to Famine,” *New York Times*, December 15, 2010.

²² *Financial Times*, “Asia Should Focus More on the Future Than the Past” (editorial), August 16, 2015.

invaded Manchuria and China, following the model of Western colonial powers of the time. It is thus no surprise that the baggage of history seriously weighs down Japan's relations with China and the two Koreas.

Even the Chinese-Korean relationship has a history problem, as underscored by China's revisionist historical claim to the ancient kingdom of Koguryo, founded in the Tongge River basin of northern Korea. This claim prompted U.S. Senate Republican staff members to warn in a December 2012 report that Beijing "may be seeking to lay the groundwork for possible future territorial claims on the Korean peninsula."²³ The Koguryo kingdom bestrode the period before and after Christ and, at its height, included much of Manchuria. The posting of the claim by the Chinese foreign ministry in 2004 was seen as an attempt to hedge China's options with a potentially unified Korea.

The factors at play

What explains the fact that China harps on the colonial ravages it suffered, South Korea is prone to dredging up historical grievances, and India, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia are more tolerant of their colonial pasts? Domestic politics, educational systems, regional geopolitics, and other factors contribute to these varying reactions in the different countries about their colonial experiences.

The fact is that, in an economically integrated but politically divided Asia, relations between many countries remain trapped in a mutually reinforcing loop: the baggage of history weighs down interstate relationships, with poor political relations, in turn, helping to magnify and accentuate the history problem, thus reinforcing inter-country ties being held hostage to history.

There are at least three reasons why history issues have resurfaced with a vengeance in Asia. The first factor is that, within a few years of World War II's end, Asia fell into a Cold War freeze that precluded any serious discussion on history. Such a discussion became possible only after the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet blocs ended. The end of the Cold War was actually followed by the start of Asia's own cold war and the disinterring of the ghosts of history.

A second factor is Asia's economic rise. The vicious circle in which many Asian states find themselves has a clear catalyst: Asia's rising prosperity. As their economies have expanded, Asian countries have gained the confidence to construct and exalt a new past, in which they either downplay their own aggressions or highlight their resoluteness in the face of brutal victimization. This trend, by letting loose the demons of nationalism, has helped resurrect ugly questions of history.

The third factor is underlined by the rise of a powerful, revisionist China that plays the history card to justify its territorial creep in the South and East China seas and the Himalayas. China currently has unresolved land or sea border disputes with 11 of its neighbors, including one of the world's smallest nations, Bhutan, and its technical ally North Korea. In all the cases, China's claims are based not on international law but on purported history, including the contention that its merchants or sailors "got there first" or that Tibet enjoyed ecclesial or tutelary links with certain territories in the past. By building mega-dams and other hydro engineering structures in its borderlands, China is also disturbing the status quo on the cross-border flows of Asia's major rivers, which originate on the Tibetan Plateau.

To make matters worse, China has incurred no international costs for its revisionist activities or even for flouting the 2016 ruling of an international arbitral tribunal, which knocked the bottom

²³ Chico Harlan, "China Might Block Eventual Korean Unification, Report Says," *Washington Post*, January 18, 2013.

out of its expansive claims in the South China Sea.²⁴ In fact, Beijing has publicly ridiculed the tribunal's ruling, which held that China has no legal or historical basis to claim the South China Sea. Through its contempt for the ruling, China is saying that it should be the judge in its own cause. More significantly, it also highlights a "might makes right" strategy that aims to extend Chinese control to strategic areas and resources by gradually altering the status quo. The strategy focuses on a steady progression of steps to create new facts on the ground by confounding and outwitting neighbors while avoiding a confrontation with the United States, which sees itself as a geographically non-resident power in Asia.

To be sure, Asia's history problem extends beyond China. In fact, all countries' legitimizing narratives blend historical fact and myth. In some cases, though, historical legacies can gain excessive influence over present policies to the extent of overwhelming the capacity of leaders to make rational policy choices. Historical grievances should not be allowed to trump mutual economic and security interests between any two countries.

That history continues to hinder relations even between democracies is apparent from the strained relations between America's closest allies in East Asia — South Korea and Japan. South Korea clings to the past while Japan wishes to forget the past. Japan believes that it has acknowledged and apologized sufficiently for its war crimes, and that it is now time to move on. South Korea vehemently disagrees with that position. For example, the now-impeached former South Korean president, Park Geun Hye, called on Japan to face up to the historical truth by resolving the "comfort women" issue — referring to the sexual exploitation of Korean (and other) women by the Imperial Japanese Army. Indeed, Ms. Park persisted in raking up the past even at the expense of the bilateral relationship.

Beyond the history spats

In Europe, the more time that has passed from the bloody wars in the first half of the twentieth century, the more the historical animosities and ill will have lessened between traditionally rival countries. In Asia, paradoxically, the opposite is true: since the end of World War II, the antagonisms have only intensified with the passage of time, resulting in diplomatic relationships being held hostage to history. As a result, the history problem is now more dangerous than it has been for years.

Asian states have two ways essentially to deal with their history problems. One way can be called the minimalist or self-restraint approach, involving mutual commitments not to disturb the status quo or rake up historical grievances. Avoiding provocative statements or actions is the essence of this approach. The other way is a more challenging proactive approach, pivoted on initiating concrete healing. Such constructive action centers on building historic reconciliation through negotiations and by enhancing mutual trust.

Either approach is possible only if Asian states are willing to come to terms with history or at least to stop resurrecting the ghosts of history. Without sincere efforts to step out of the shadows of history, squabbles over remembrance, textbooks, and other issues will continue to spur competing and mutually reinforcing nationalisms and foster tensions and instability in bilateral relationships.²⁵ Such feuds will also be used to justify efforts to disturb the territorial or maritime status quo. To help build new bridges across the interstate divides, the politicization of history

²⁴ Permanent Court of Arbitration, Award by the Arbitral Tribunal in the Matter of the South China Sea Arbitration, PCA Case No. 2013-19, July 12, 2016, <https://goo.gl/twe9Nn>.

²⁵ See Mikyoung Kim (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia* (Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, 2016); Gerrit W. Gong (ed.), *Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia: Issues of Identity in International Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2001); and Jun-Hyeok Kwak and Melissa Nobles (eds.), *Inherited Responsibility and Historical Reconciliation in East Asia* (Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, 2013).

must stop.

Breaking out of the vicious cycle fostered by the history problems, of course, demands forward-looking governments and the will to pursue political reconciliation. Through sincere efforts, the adverse impacts of historical grievances and claims on bilateral relationships can be minimized. Honoring one country's heroes and history, for example, can be done without seeking to provoke, humiliate, or rub salt in the wounds of another nation. Nations should find ways to commemorate their past without alienating, insulting, or offending their neighbors.

It is past time to draw a line under the past. Asian nations cannot change the past, but they can strive to shape a more cooperative future — without forgetting history's lessons. To focus more on the future than the past, they should heed the wisdom of a pithy Russian proverb, "Forget the past and lose an eye; dwell on the past and lose both eyes."

History and Memory Issues: A Comparative Study of The Treatment of The Colonial Period in France And Japan

Valérie Niquet *

Abstract

Japan and France share similar experiences as former colonial powers. Both are confronted with the similar kinds of complex issues concerning history, education, and also share memories of conflict with their former colonized countries.

However, whereas heated debates on these issues are accepted as “normal” in France, there is little understanding of the similarities with Japan, maintained in its status of extreme “otherness”; and an uncritical acceptance of mainstream positions dominated by the PRC’s official discourse. This paper’s objective is to analyze that difference of attitude regarding Japan and France “historical culpability”, and better understand its motivation, that play an important role in the perception of Japan 70 years after the end of the second world war.

Introduction

As former colonial powers, France and Japan do face similar historical and memorial issues concerning colonization and the wars carried out by Paris and Tokyo in North Africa, Indochina, the Korean peninsula or China. In the case of France, the relationship with Algeria remains complex, and affects the treatment of the colonial period and decolonization, as well as the debates surrounding this treatment. In the case of Japan, 70 years after the end of the Second World War and the end of Japanese colonization in Asia, the issue is paradoxically becoming increasingly important in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and in Korea, for different reasons that we will analyze.

In spite of that similarity however, the position of many Western analysts or political actors regarding today’s Japan remains often partial, and the legitimacy of the debates that also exist in the archipelago on the questions of history and memory - very similar to those that have developed in France since the introduction of memorial laws at the beginning of the 1990s - is rejected.¹

It is also striking to note that, on very specific subjects, such as the comfort women issue in Asia, and the military prostitution (bordels militaires de campagne or BMC) organized by

* Valérie Niquet is the head of the Asia Department at Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, Senior Visiting Fellow, the Japan Institute of International Affairs

¹ For instance, in 2015, the Open Letter in Support of Historians in Japan “to express our unity with the many courageous historians in Japan seeking an accurate and just history of World War II” on https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/Contributed-files/japan-scholars-statement-2015.5.4-eng_0.pdf. The same historians did not express the same support for the “courageous historians in the PRC or in Korea” who try to work on the same issues but do not blindly follow the official position of their governments.

the army in French colonies or elsewhere, there is a constant determination to establish a fundamental distinction between two practices that are, indeed, very similar. Yet it is in France, rather than in Japan, that a certain romanticism of the colonial period has been preserved, if one thinks of movies like “Pépé le Moko”, or songs like “Ma tonkinoise” or “La fille du Bédouin”, that remain even today objects of amusement rather than of condemnation.²

The question, therefore, is to understand why there is this difference of attitude that makes Japan a more “guilty” culprit, condemned to an eternal ostracism. The issue of apologies, and the difficulties in accepting the reality of the abuses committed in China and South Korea by the Imperial Army, is often mentioned. We shall see however that, if these issues are legitimate, they are also not specific to Japan. On the other hand, the questions raised by the often-indiscriminate acceptance of the theses disseminated by the PRC or by some actors in South Korean society, are seldom confronted, in spite of the fact that in both these countries, to different degrees, the production of historical discourse remains under the exclusive control of political authorities.³

One can also conceive that, to former colonial powers such as France, but also the United Kingdom, the Netherlands or even the United States, there is a comfort in having in Japan a “guiltier”, and moreover a non-Western and “exotic” culprit, which relativizes these countries’ own experiences as colonial oppressors, despite very similar experiences.

France and Japan were also confronted, after 1945 for Japan and after the end of the Algerian war for France, to the same imperative of national reconciliation, which justified the occultation of the memory of the most controversial historical episodes. The objective was to rebuild the nation and the legitimacy of the powers in place, in the context of the Cold War, by “ignoring” the past. In France, the purpose of the Amnesty Act of 1968, was indeed to prohibit any search for responsibility for the abuses committed during the Algerian war, in the name of reconciliation and the unity of the nation.⁴

The Controversies about Memorial Laws in France

France has adopted, since the early 1990s, four “memorial” laws.⁵ The first one, the Gayssot Act in 1990 provides for the punishment of those who deny the existence of crimes against humanity and genocide. The objective of the Gayssot Act was to provide the legal means to control a burgeoning negationist movement that denied the existence of concentration camps and genocide. Later, the 2001 Taubira Act stated that “the French Republic recognizes that the transatlantic slave trade as well as in the Indian Ocean from the 15th century onwards, and slavery, constitute a crime against humanity”. The law also called for “educational and research programs to give the slave trade and slavery the place they deserve”.

When the memorial laws were adopted, that were supposed to address a lack of interest in these issues, a counter-argument emerged to denounce the popular belief that colonial history

² “Pépé le Moko”, Julien Duvivier, 1937 ; “Ma petite tonkinoise”, 1906 ; “La fille du Bédouin”, 1927.

³ The question of historical taboos in the PRC, where the regime is responsible for over 35 million deaths since 1949, rarely comes up in Western countries. Similarly, no statue commemorating the martyrdom of “comfort women” has been erected in front of the United States Embassy in Seoul, in spite of the fact that prostitution of Korean women at the service of American soldiers was authorized and officially organized after the Korean War until the 1980s. See Katherine Moon, *Sex Among Allies 1960-1980, Military Prostitution in US-Korea Relations*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.

⁴ Loi n° 68-697 du 31 juillet 1968 portant amnistie, JORF, O2 août 1968, p. 7521, on <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000693181> , the same pattern occurred in France after the second world war, with a long period of obliteration of the French State and administration collaboration and responsibility in the genocide.

⁵ The four memorial laws are: the Gayssot Act of July 13, 1990, the Armenian Genocide Recognition Act of January 29, 2001, the Taubira Act of May 21, 2001 and the Mekachera Act of February 23, 2005.

remained taboo. In fact, particularly since the 1980s, there was an abundance of production on French colonial history, including its most controversial aspects such as the use of torture during the Algerian War.⁶ The most famous work of Henri Alleg on the torture in Algeria had been widely circulated since its publication in 1958 in spite of its official interdiction, and the book by Yves Courrière on the history of the Algerian War was published in 1968, less than six years after the end of the war.⁷

The debate around these memorial laws in France also focused on the relations between historical research and political and moral standards. The purpose of the memorial laws, and more particularly of the Taubira Act, was to officially recognize the culpability of France as a colonial and slave country, but even more to repent for the difficult integration of migrant populations into French society since the end of the Algerian War. One of the issues raised by the Taubira Act in the debate that followed its adoption was that, by mentioning the temporal limit of the 15th century, it focused exclusively on French or Western culpability and excluded intra-African slave trade and the role of Arab traffickers from its field of condemnation.⁸

A connection can indeed be established between the adoption of these memorial laws and contemporary social and political issues in France, where a large migrant community of African or North African origin who are still confronted with integration difficulties despite becoming French nationals, do exist.⁹ The vote-seeking dimension of the initiative - which has long benefited political parties on the left side of the political spectrum - obviously played a role in the promotion of these memorial laws.¹⁰ This motivation is not significant in Japan, where the demography of descendants from former colonized populations is very different.¹¹

The Influence of Liberal History in Japan

In Japan, the questions of history and memory, and the teaching of the colonial period and the Second World War, have also been influenced by the post-World War II democratization movement, with the adoption of the Fundamental Law of Education in 1947. From the 1960s, the influence of progressive journalists and historians and of teachers' unions, hostile to the United States and to the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that dominated post-war political life, gradually became predominant. The issues of education, of the authorization of textbooks, and of the memory of the colonial period and of the Second World War in Asia, thus also became part of an internal political struggle involving the Japan Socialist Party and the Japanese Communist Party in the context of an ideologically virulent Cold War in Asia.

It was in Japan, therefore, that these issues were raised, far before they became significant

⁶ Romain Bertrand, *Mémoires d'Empire, la controverse autour du fait colonial*, Editions du Croquant, Broissieux, 2006 et Romain Bertrand, Jean Chesneaux, Michel Jiraud, Thomas Loué, « Les temps de la mémoire coloniale entre production d'un savoir scientifique et espace public de la controverse », *Temporalités*, 5.2006.

⁷ Henri Alleg, *La question*, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1958 ; Yves Courrière, *La guerre d'Algérie, Volume 1, 1954-1957, Volume 2, 1957-1962*, Fayard, Paris, 2001 (reprint) ; *Les débats autour de la guerre d'Algérie à travers le journal le Monde*, Maîtrise d'histoire contemporaine, Université de Bordeaux III, 2001.

⁸ Gilles Manceron, « Sur quelle base aborder le débat sur la loi, la mémoire et l'histoire? », *Tracées*, 09-2009 sur <http://traces.revues.org>

⁹ In 2005, urban riots erupted in French suburbs with a large population of migrant origin. The same year, the movement "Les indigènes de la République" was also launched. See Romain Bertrand, op.cit.

¹⁰ In 2012, François Hollande won 86% of the Muslim vote. *Le vote des musulmans à l'élection présidentielle*, IFOP, sur http://www.ifop.fr/media/pressdocument/482-1-document_file.pdf

¹¹ The number of *Zainichi Koreans* in Japan is about 800,000, whereas in France, the number of migrants of Muslim origin is estimated to represent almost 10% of the population. Most of them have dual nationality and the right to vote.

issues in China or in Korea. In the 1970s, Honda Katsuichi, a journalist with the *Asahi Shimbun*, visited China and published a series of articles on Japan's war crimes. Similarly, in the 1980s and 1990s, the *Asahi Shimbun* regularly referred to the “testimony” of Seiji Yoshida on his “hunts for comfort women” before retracting in 2014 all stories quoting this “testimony” that happened to be fabricated.¹²

Actually, the Japanese government fell in line with the movement and, in 1982, after a protest from Beijing regarding possible amendment of the vocabulary used in textbooks to qualify the Japanese offensive in China in 1937, the Japanese government adopted a “Respect for neighbouring countries” (近隣諸国条項 *kinrin shokoku joukou*) clause, still in force today, which requires textbook authors to take into account the feelings of neighbouring Asian countries on historical issues.¹³

Contrary to popular belief, numerous works have been published in Japan on controversial issues, as early as the 1960s, on the colonial period and the Second World War. For instance, 21 articles on the sole issue of “comfort women” (慰安婦 *ianfu*) were published in Japan before 1988, while during the same period, only one article was published on this issue in the Republic of Korea (South Korea).¹⁴

The Debate in France and in Japan on the Rights of the Historian

Indeed, confronted with the same type of memorial issues, France and Japan have also experienced the same controversies concerning the control of historical narrative at the service of political or strategic considerations.

In France, one of the consequences of the adoption of the memorial laws has been the creation in 2005 of the movement “Liberté pour l'histoire”, following an open letter published in the newspaper *Libération* on December 13, 2005.¹⁵ A wide debate also developed in the media on the concept of “national history”. For the association “Liberté pour l'histoire”, opposed to memorial laws and the intervention of the Parliament in the work of historians, whose counter-model was that of the control of the historical narrative in the Soviet Union and more generally in totalitarian regimes, “Historians cannot accept any limitations to their research”. The “Comité de vigilance face aux usages publics de l'histoire”, established in 2005 by Gérard Noiriel, an historian working on immigration in France, also disputes the use of history for political objectives.¹⁶

Moreover, the Mekachera Act of February 23, 2005, was also a reaction against prior memorial laws, perceived as negative for the construction of a more positive national narrative that could play a role in facilitating the integration of migrant-origin populations.

In other words, France also developed its own debate on the “masochistic characteristic” of history teaching in high schools. The Mekachera Act called for high school programs to “also present the positive role of colonization”, deploring the fact that school curricula did not

¹² Reiji Yoshida, “Asahi Shimbun Admits Errors in Past ‘Comfort Women’ Stories”, *Japan Times*, August 5, 2014.

¹³ Ibid. Beijing had protested against the change, reported by the *Asahi Shimbun*, of the term “invasion” (侵略 *shinryaku*) to that of “advance” (進出 *shinshutsu*) to describe the entry of Japanese troops into North China in 1937. The *Asahi Shimbun* later acknowledged that the report was wrong. The Japanese government, however, has maintained the clause on “Respect for neighboring countries in Asia on history issues.”

¹⁴ Jungmin Seo, “Politics of Memory in Korea and China, Remembering the Comfort Women and the Nanjing Massacre,” *New Political Science*, vol. 30, No. 3, September 2008.

¹⁵ « Liberté pour l'Histoire, une pétition pour l'abrogation des articles de loi contraignant la recherche et l'enseignement de cette discipline », *Libération*, 13-12-2005, on http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2005/12/13/liberte-pour-l-histoire_541669.

¹⁶ “Comité de vigilance face aux usages publics de l'Histoire”, <http://cvuh.blogspot.jp/>.

recognize the positive role of the French presence overseas, particularly in North Africa.¹⁷ In 2008, at the annual conference *Les Rendez-vous de l'Histoire de Blois*, the historian Pierre Nora also denounced “the discourses of repentance and contrition based on 2000 years of Christian guilt and the systematic disqualification of France”.¹⁸

More recently, in a radio program devoted to historical questions and Baccalaureate preparation for high school students, a historian corrected the term “crime against humanity” to qualify the Algerian War, reclassifying it as a “war crime”.¹⁹ During the electoral campaign for the 2017 presidential election, the same use of the term “crime against humanity” applied to the Algerian War by the candidate Emmanuel Macron on the occasion of a visit to Algiers also aroused much criticism.

It is this same type of debate on the most controversial historical issues, expressed in almost the same terms, neither more nor less revisionist than in France, and confronted by the same criticisms, that also exists in today's Japan, be it the denunciation of a “masochistic view of history”, or the lobbying actions of the Nihon Kaigi (日本会議), that militates for a more “positive” presentation of Japan's role in history textbooks.

On another level, Tokyo, like Paris, faces the same criticism concerning the use of archives and the same rejection by former victims of the concept of “objectivity” applied to issues such as the slave trade, the colonial period, the exactions committed during the Second World War in Asia, and the wars of decolonization. In France, movements like “Les indigènes de la République” reject the validity of this concept of objectivity. The Taubira Act on the slave trade also encourages the use of oral sources collected in Africa to “balance” written sources in European archives. In Asia, Chinese historians denounce joint history committees focused on the analysis of archives, and the positivist concept of “Rankean”.²⁰ According to these historians, the opening of archives encouraged by the Japanese government qualifies as “archival hegemony”, and does not compensate for the alleged silence on “alternative narratives”. Positivism is thus denounced as a means of perpetuating historical injustice and avoiding the ethical and political nature of history problems.²¹

Treatment of the Colonial Past in French and Japanese High School History Curricula

With regard to Japan, the controversy over the teaching of the colonial past and the Second World War focused on the authorization, in 2005, of a new history textbook that lacked historical rigor and reduced the importance dedicated to the most controversial episodes like the Nanking Massacre.²² However, this textbook has been adopted by less than 1% of secondary schools, and

¹⁷ Gilles Manceron, op.cit.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *La Fabrique de l'Histoire*, 8-05-2017, France culture.

²⁰ “Rankean” comes from the name of the German historian Leopold von Ranke whose works on “historical objectivity” were introduced in Japan in 1869. Hai Guo, “The Use and Abuse of Rankean Positivism in the Sino-Japanese History Problem, the Japan-China Joint History Research as a Case Study”, *East-Asian Workshop Net Research Center for East Asian Studies*, Madrid, 21-04 -2017.

²¹ Ibid.

²² 新しい歴史教科書 (Atarashii rekishi kyookasho, *New History of Japan*), Jiyusha, 2015 (reprint).

it is very far from characteristic of the mainstream of history teaching in Japan.²³

In fact, the teaching of the colonial period and the Second World War in Japan, including its most dramatic dimensions, developed as early as the late 1970s, before this type of subject was introduced in French textbooks. The different organization of history teaching in Japan and in France makes comparisons difficult, particularly in terms of the volume devoted to each historical period but - within the limits of the programs - these issues, including the mention of “comfort women”, have been covered in Japan for several decades. In the 1980s, all history textbooks mentioned the massacre of civilians by the Imperial Army in Nanjing. Differences concerned the number of victims, some textbooks following the official claims of the PRC, others choosing to mention the uncertainties and divergences that persist between historians on this issue.²⁴

In France, history programs are devised at the level of the Ministry of Education and involve several external parties, such as teachers' unions, associations of historians, and advocacy groups. The school curriculum thus constitutes a very important political and symbolic issue.²⁵ Until the early 1980s, the history curriculum published in 1957, whose chronology stopped in 1945, remained in place.²⁶ The Algerian War did not become part of history programs before 1983. As a result, according to a survey conducted in 1980, middle school students had “never heard of the war in Algeria.”²⁷ However, the importance of the Algerian War in history programs increased considerably and, since the reform of 2015, the Algerian War can also be considered a subject for the Baccalaureate, which was not the case before.²⁸

This growing importance attributed to the teaching of the Algerian War in France can partly be explained by the ambition to adapt the teaching of history to the changes in middle and high school demographics since the beginning of the 1980s. The need to adjust to a new electoral sociology, and adapt the “memory issues” to classes with a very high proportion of students whose parents came from North Africa, played a role in this evolution. In a report to the Ministry of National Education published in 1983, René Girault suggests that the Ministry “tackle this delicate problem, in order to adapt to a growing number of pupils from immigrant families”.²⁹ According to the historian Pierre Nora, “the public education system found in repentance a new

²³ Tan Weilu, *The Forgotten History: The Book Controversy and Sino-Japanese Relations*, Bachelor of Arts, University of Pittsburgh, 2009. In Japan, the choice of textbooks is based on a system of authorization ex post by the Ministry of Education. The guidelines mention that “all children must be taught about Japan’s historical relationship with its Asian neighbors and the catastrophic damages caused by World War II to humanity at large”. The focus is on the pacifist orientation of Japan after the war. In France, the Ministry of Education publishes a priori very detailed outline programs that authors of history books and publishing houses must follow. The Ministry also influences the writing of history books through the choice of possible subjects of examinations for the Baccalaureate. The Algerian War became a possible subject in 2015.

²⁴ Chien-Peng Chung, op.cit.

²⁵ Patricia Legris, « Les programmes d’histoire en France : la construction progressive d’une citoyenneté plurielle (1980-2010) », *Histoire de l’éducation*, 126-2010.

²⁶ « Programme d’histoire de l’enseignement du second degré, arrêté du 19 juillet 1957 », JORF, 30 juillet 1957. Evelyne Héry, *Un siècle de leçons d’histoire 1870-1970*, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1999.

²⁷ Philippe Salson, op.cit.

²⁸ *La fabrique de l’Histoire*, op.cit. For instance, the violent repression that left 8 people dead and hundreds of wounded during a demonstration organized by the Communist Party against the Algerian War at the Charonne metro station in 1962 is now one of the main teaching points on the Algerian War in high schools.

²⁹ René Girault, *L’histoire et la géographie en question, rapport au ministère de l’éducation nationale*, Service d’information du Ministère de l’éducation nationale, Paris, 1983.

mission”.³⁰

But if the Algerian War is now taught in France, and taught in a more and more thorough way because of the ambition to meet the alleged expectations of this new population of immigrant origin, the memory issues related to controversial subjects were not easily managed. The denomination of “Algerian War” for instance is very recent. Until a decision by the National Assembly in 1999, despite the fact that the war mobilized more than 250,000 men, the official denomination remained “law enforcement operations”.³¹

Concerning the exactions committed during the Algerian War, the Act of December 3, 1979 on the opening of archives stipulates that “the national archives concerning private life, national defense and State security will not be opened for 60 years”, thus impeding for an extended period historical research based on archives on one of the most controversial periods in the colonial history of France.³²

On May 8, 1945, the day of the liberation of France, a demonstration denounced as an “insurrection” by Paris took place in Algeria, in the city of Setif. The repression of this demonstration produced several thousand, or tens of thousands, of victims, depending on the sources. According to a resolution adopted by the Paris Council in 2015, the victims were “arrested, tortured and executed summarily”.³³ Despite the importance of the event, however, it was only in 2015 that, for the first time, a French minister visited Algeria to “honor the victims of the Setif massacre, on behalf of the Franco-Algerian friendship”.³⁴

This commemoration, and the treatment of the Setif massacre, has given rise to critics very similar to those that can be found in Japan on the most controversial historical issues. Movements of veterans of the Algerian War and historians have denounced the exaggerated figures of victims endorsed by the Algerian authorities, and Laurent Wauquiez, Secretary General of the UMP, criticized a system of “one-way repentance” and deplored the loss of “national pride” in the treatment of history in France. These positions have provoked debates, but they have not been systematically condemned in the name of anti-revisionism, as some Japanese debates on the same issues and the teaching of history can be.

The Comfort Women Issue in Korea and Military Prostitution in Colonial France: a Significant Difference in Treatment

The issue of military prostitution, particularly in times of war, is another example of the difference in treatment between Japan and France. In Japan, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono's statement on comfort women, which has not been abandoned, serves as a basis for the teaching of this subject that remains controversial but is not taboo.³⁵

In France, on the other hand, the question of military prostitution (bordels militaires de campagne or BMC) is not mentioned in school textbooks, although they constituted an important

³⁰ Gilles Manceron, op.cit.

³¹ Philippe Salson, op.cit.

³² The usual period is 30 years. Loi du 3 décembre 1979, décret 79-1038 in Philippe Salson, op.cit.

³³ « Massacre de Sétif, l'autre face du 8 mai 1945 », *Le Figaro.fr*, 07-05-2015. According to official Algerian sources (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN) more than 45,000 people were killed; according to French sources, the number of victims was 3000 to 8000, and the killing of about hundred French nationals is also mentioned.

³⁴ « Un ministre français rend hommage aux victimes du massacre de Sétif », *Le Point.fr*, 19-04-2015.

³⁵ 慰安婦関係調査結果発表に関する河野内閣官房長官談話 (Ianfu kankei chōsa kekka happyō ni kansuru Kōno Naikaku Kanbō Chōkan danwa, Statement of the Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono about the results of the investigation into the “comfort women”), <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/taisen/kono.html>, 04-08-1993.

element of France's colonial policy.³⁶ Contrary to the claims of a group of Western historians who denounce the “specific nature” of the Japanese system because of its “large scale, systematic management under the military, and its exploitation of young, poor and vulnerable women in areas colonized or occupied by Japan”, the organization of these “comfort stations” were very similar in France, including the involvement of the army.³⁷

In the French colonies, the system subsisted into the 1960s, although officially the Marthe Richard law had banned brothels in France as early as 1946.³⁸ Local women were enrolled in the BMC in the colonies. A kind of public service delegation was granted by the military to local brothel keepers, in charge of the recruitment of prostitutes, many of them very young and vulnerable, the objective being to impose medical controls to fight the transmission of venereal diseases.³⁹ These women then followed the troops, and the colonial armies stipulated regulations and specific rates.⁴⁰

The same phenomenon also existed in the Republic of Korea after the Korean War where, despite the official prohibition of prostitution after 1945, a system of comfort stations had also been established near US bases. In January 2017, a court in Seoul acknowledged that “some women were trafficked but it is impossible to conclude that the victims did not engage in their own free will”, a decision that recalls the Japanese government's position on comfort women.⁴¹

It is true that one can observe a cross-movement that sees difficult issues such as the Algerian War taking a larger place in the secondary education curriculum in France since the late 1980s, while at the same time the analogous place of World War II in Japan has generally diminished. However, France and Japan do face similar problems in the treatment of painful and controversial historical subjects. In spite of these similarities, there is nevertheless a very important difference between the French situation, where debates are permitted, and where the independent work of historians is recognized as legitimate, and Japan, where debates on the freedom of the historian are called into question, with a hostile position of denouncing the “rise of nationalism” and “revisionism” of the Japanese authorities having been fairly systematically adopted in Western countries as well as in the PRC and in Korea.

This difference in treatment can be explained in part by the sometime clumsiness of the communication policy of the Japanese authorities. However, it can also be explained by a lack of real knowledge of the history of Asia in general, and of Japan in particular, in Western countries. Japan is therefore perceived as a distant and fantasized object, allowing the expression of judgements disconnected from reality. Nevertheless, this difference in treatment is mostly

³⁶ Mustapha El Qadéry, « Femmes de bordels militaires de campagne, les BMC de l'armée coloniale française au Maroc » in M. Peraldi, *Des femmes sur les routes*, sur http://www.gremmo.mom.fr/pdf/conf1/El_Qadery02.pdf.

³⁷ *Open Letter in Support of Historians of Japan*, on https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/contributed-files/japan-scholars-statement-2015.5.4-eng_0.pdf

³⁸ France did not sign the December 2, 1949 “Convention of the United Nations for the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Prostitution” until 1960 because of the continuation of military prostitution in its colonies. Japan signed the Convention in 1958.

³⁹ Jean-Marc Binot, *Le repos des guerriers, les BMC pendant la guerre d'Indochine*, Fayard, Paris, 2014.

⁴⁰ Mustapha El Qadery, op.cit.

⁴¹ Jeff Kingston, “Comfort Women in South Korea Who Serviced US Forces Seek Justice”, *Japan Times*, 04-03-2017; Sara Soh, *The Comfort Women, Sexual Violence in Post-Colonial Memory years in Korea and Japan*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009. In the case of Korea, the issue was complicated by the collaboration of Korean elites during the colonization period, and the participation of local brothel keepers or “private interests” in the recruitment of “comfort women”; see Jungmin Seo, “Politics of Memory in Korea and in China: Remembering the Comfort Women and the Nanjing Massacre,” *New Political Science*, vol. 30, No. 3, September 2008.

explained by the important differences in the political-strategic context between France and Japan.

The Weight of History Between France and Algeria, and among the PRC, Korea and Japan

The question of the use of history for political motives is very present in Algeria, where the Algerian War and the anti-colonial struggle are an integral part of the strategy of legitimacy of the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale). The constant reminder of a difficult past has also been integrated into Algeria's negotiating strategy with regard to France.⁴²

But if the Algerian authorities may be tempted to build their legitimacy and increase their leverage against the former colonial power by mobilizing the memory of war and past exactions, the weight of Algeria - and its influence - on the international scene remains limited.

In the case of Japan, the situation differs greatly with the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), two powers that - for different reasons - have transformed historical issues and anti-Japanese nationalism into a fundamental element of their strategies for legitimacy and influence.

The case of Korea approximates to some extent the case of Algeria in its relationship with France, and history as a motivation is basically related to internal politics. History became the central field of political struggle in Korea in the context of the transition to democracy in the late 1980s.⁴³ It is from this time that the issue of comfort women took on a growing importance. The new freedom of speech and the rise of feminism and liberal political parties were important factors in this evolution.

The issue of comfort women in Korea thus played an important role in building a new political and national identity against the military dictatorship and the elites who collaborated with the Japanese colonial authorities and remained in place after 1945. The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan, established in 1990, also played an important role in obstructing any questioning of the official position on the question of comfort women as "sexual slaves of the Imperial Army". In particular, any analysis that tried to take into account the position of women in Korean society, and the role of Korean "private actors" in recruiting prostitutes for the Japanese forces, could be condemned.⁴⁴

In the case of the PRC, there is a double dimension. The first is related to the internal legitimacy of the Communist Party after 1989, with the establishment of patriotic education campaigns in 1991, and the emergence of a new nationalism with a strong anti-Japanese component during the 1990s.

The second dimension is strategic and its objective remains to prohibit the return of Japan as a normal and legitimate power on the international scene. This second dimension has an international propaganda dimension that strongly influences perceptions of Japan, particularly in the West.⁴⁵

⁴² For instance, according to an agreement signed in 1982, France accepted to pay for Algerian gas at a price more than 25% above the world market price. Regarding visas, residency visas and work permits have been required for Algerian nationals since 1994, but no accommodation certificate of conformity is required for members of their immediate families, unlike other nationalities.

⁴³ Jungmin Seo, *op.cit.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ In Asia, including in countries that suffered from Japanese colonization (Taiwan) or occupation during the war (South-East Asia), the perception of Japan is today extremely positive. As in the case of relations between France and West Germany during the Cold War, this positive appreciation can also be explained by a common strategic preoccupation regarding the increasing assertiveness of the PRC in the region.

One of the main objectives of the propaganda apparatus of the Chinese Communist Party is therefore to prohibit any right to historical research for Japan. For example, an “Association for the Safeguarding of Historical Facts” has been established by a Chinese national in the United States that claims to “seek apologies, more compensation and to petition against Japan’s attempt to join the UNSC”.⁴⁶ It should be noted also that, in 2005, the first massive anti-Japanese demonstrations in China, officially justified by popular indignation after the authorization of a new history textbook by Tokyo, were in fact related to the proposed reform of the UN Security Council that could have opened the possibility for countries such as Japan, India or Germany to be accepted as permanent members. The PRC rejected absolutely that perspective, not on moral grounds but because it would have balanced the influence of Beijing on the international scene as a “global power”. For the Chinese regime, history is thus very directly an instrument integrated into a multidimensional strategy that does not leave room for reconciliation and forgiveness with a former enemy whose main value, for the Chinese regime, resides in that status.

This prohibition of the right to history for Japan is thus also based on the fact that, for the Chinese leadership, control of history and the rejection of any historical debates is also a tool in the context of the balance of power with Tokyo. In that specific strategic context, the Nanjing Massacre became an issue quite recently in the PRC, and it is fully related to the emergence of anti-Japanese nationalism since the 1990s. In 1937, Nanjing was the capital of the Kuomintang nationalist regime, illegitimate in the eyes of the Communist Party. Thus, the Nanjing Massacre is not mentioned in any of Mao Zedong's writings. On the contrary, Mao Zedong rejoiced at his meeting with Premier Tanaka in 1972 about the Sino-Japanese War, which had allowed the Communist Party to take power in 1949.

Since the 1990s, however, a new “commemorative” movement has emerged in the PRC, accompanied by the construction or renovation of museums devoted to the “war of resistance against Japan”. But this multiplication of memorials, specifically directed against Japan, and the constant reminder of the war on Chinese TV, also aims to compensate for the taboos that remain in place concerning the historical tragedies caused by the Chinese Communist Party since 1949.⁴⁷

In the case of the Nanjing Massacre, the claim to the exclusive control of history by the PRC is expressed through the interdiction on discussing the official figure of the number of victims, 300,000, engraved in eleven languages at the entrance of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial restored in 2007. No historical research on the nature and scope of the massacre is allowed, and the work of non-Chinese historians adopting a more scientific perspective is systematically denounced.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Memory issues are common to all colonial powers who have committed abuses in controlled territories. This is particularly the case in France and in Japan, confronted with complex issues that affect the very identity of the nation. We find in both cases the same difficulty in addressing certain issues, the same necessity to shed light on the past, the same issues concerning education but also the same debates about the legitimacy of the growing weight of historical memories and

⁴⁶ Chang Jun, “Ding Yuan: Safeguarding Historical Truth”, *China Daily* 24-10-2014.

⁴⁷ According to conservative figures, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in China caused more than 35 million deaths. See, Frank Dikötter’s trilogy: *The Tragedy of Liberation*, 2013, *Mao’s Great Famine*, 2010, and *The Cultural Revolution*, 2016.

⁴⁸ Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism, Pride, Politics and Diplomacy*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004.

repentance.

However, if in the case of France these debates are considered legitimate, in the case of Japan, questioning of the official Chinese or Korean postures is immediately condemned as a manifestation of historical revisionism. While in France, the manipulation of history by undemocratic regimes such as that in Algeria is an object of criticism, in Japan's case, the position of the Chinese authorities on historical issues, and the systematic denunciation of "Japanese nationalism", are often accepted without hesitation, in spite of the fact that the motivations of the Chinese regime are in reality related to issues of legitimacy and the contemporary strategic balance of power much more than to history.

The German example, and that of Franco-German reconciliation, is often mentioned. However, if reconciliation has been possible between France and Germany, it has been both because of the strategic context of the Cold War, and because of the desire of Paris to achieve this reconciliation. Actually, the Franco-German reconciliation and the famous de Gaulle-Adenauer meeting in 1958 happened long before any process of repentance in West Germany.⁴⁹

In Asia, only a fundamental change in what constitutes the foundations of the political system in China - and probably in Korea - could allow the emergence of a more consensual and balanced dialogue on history. If this development does not occur, if Japan's position is systematically criticized and misunderstood by its Western allies, one can only fear that, in response to constant Chinese pressure, a hostile and more radical reaction could also develop in the Japanese public and some political constituencies.

⁴⁹ Discussion of the Nazi past in West Germany, and of the role of former Nazi officials, including those involved in the "Final Solution", did not begin before the end of the 1970s.

History and Diplomacy: Perspective From Japan

Nobukatsu Kanehara *

Abstract

In the post-Cold War 1990s, the outlines of a new international community characterized by a liberal international order based on rules began to appear. Many of Asia's emerging economies have been gradually drawn into participating in this liberal international order led by the United States. Whether we can join forces with these countries in sustaining this international order is a critical question for the future of international politics.

Japan's historical experience suggests that giving preference to military affairs over diplomacy will inevitably doom a nation. What is needed is diplomatic and strategic thinking capable of anticipating the major tides of world history.

1. Where Do We Stand?

History cannot be written merely by collecting pottery shards from dead ruins or gathering ancient writings; nor can history be conceived if we as the living generation abandon the vantage point of examining what we are able to read from the remnants of the past.

From the diplomatic archives of Japan as well as from the archives of many countries throughout the world, large volumes of new historical materials are coming to light today. Additionally, it is likely that large volumes of personal journals and private letters written by people who lived in those years will also come to light with the passage of time. The careful perusal and examination of new materials requires a high degree of scholarly precision. The world awaits the valuable contributions that will certainly be made by motivated historians of the future.

However, the lessons that will be gleaned from these materials belong to this age, for what is learned from the past is a reflection of the thoughts, interests and values of all the people who are living today. But that is not all. Our perspective is very significantly affected by the course of international politics as well. History is not written by historians alone; all members of the present generations have a part in the writing of history.

Humanity has its sights fixed on the future. In order to see the future, we look back to see the past. If there is a common future, certainly there is a common past that can be shared by all. The reverse is equally true. The past changes when the future changes, for the simple reason that history is always alive.

Where do we stand as Japanese living in the 21st century? In the realm of scholarship, the Marxian view of history that swept over postwar Japan has become obsolete. Thus, many young scholars today are approaching the vast volumes of newly uncovered material with no ideological

* Nobukatsu Kanehara is Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary/Deputy Secretary-General of National Security Secretariat.

constraint and beginning to engage in free and highly detailed discussions of what is unfolding before us. A new view of history is emerging that transcends the old postwar ideological and political framework that pitted the conservative and progressive camps against each other.

The question then is: What vantage point do we assume in looking at history?

The 20th century was a period of extreme confusion and turmoil in terms of ideology, economics, politics and military. The 20th century passed us by like a raging turbid river, so that even its protagonists were probably unable to capture a full picture of what was happening. Much like a child on a speeding rollercoaster, they saw little more than fragmentary images flying in and out of their line of sight. Fortunately for us, we now know the full story of how the century unfolded. And those living in the 21st century stand on the lessons learned from that period.

(1) The Prehistory of Western Hegemony

The point of origin of the upheaval in the international order can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution that started in Britain at the end of the 18th century. The industrialized nations that gather today in G7 Summit Meetings have been the primary protagonists of international politics since the 19th century. However, the industrialized nations did not appear suddenly on the world stage. Their emergence was heralded by a certain prehistory, which is encapsulated in the history of international trade and mercantilism. From the perspective of Japan with its nearly 300 years of isolation, this is a history that cannot be readily and fully appreciated.

By the 16th century, Britain had already claimed its victory over the invincible Spanish Armada that previously monopolized the trade with the New World. Following this victory, Britain came to control the Atlantic and Asian trade from which it reaped enormous profits. Britain would soon establish itself as the hegemon of the seas once it had routed its rival nation, the Netherlands. Spain, the Netherlands and Britain (to be later joined by France), who previously were no more than nameless minor countries of Europe, very rapidly garnered immense power through trade. It is not the case that as would happen after the Industrial Revolution, these nations were able to realize revolutionary gains in productive capacity and overwhelming national power through the use of advanced technologies.

These European nations robbed and plundered their way through the treasuries of the New World and used the precious metals that they had seized to finance their trade ventures. They converted the New World and the islands of the Caribbean into massive plantations of sugar and cotton and bolstered their wealth and power by trading in these international commodities. Behind these successes stood the horrendous life of slavery to which the First Nations people of the American continent and African captives were relegated. The emergence of Europe on the global theater prior to the Industrial Revolution was made possible by the exploitation of slaves as a commodity and by trade in the commodities produced by these slaves. Thus, the seeds of Western hegemony germinated in the fertile soil of trade and slavery. The age of mercantilism from which Japan was far removed unfolded in this manner.

At the time, the Europeans had very little to sell aside from guns and woolen cloth and were captivated by the abundant wares of Asia that included tea, spices, cotton textiles and ceramic products. Although their entry into the Asian trade was often cemented through violence and the use of force, the territories that they initially were able to capture were limited in scope. All that they controlled were a number of trading towns on the coasts of the Indian subcontinent and Indochinese peninsula, several entrepôts in Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaya and Indonesia, and a few islands where spices were grown. The British and the Dutch found it particularly easy to penetrate the land and islands that are now Indonesia. Although Indonesia today ranks as the most populous member of ASEAN, it was sparsely populated and easily penetrated during the period of Western expansion.

The various kingdoms that were firmly ensconced on continental Asia were another story.

Many of these kingdoms were ruled by powerful monarchs who drew their strength from controlling the large river basins of the Eurasian landmass, which allowed them to reap the benefits of advances in agricultural development going back over several millennia. The immense volumes of water that flowed out from the snow-capped Himalayan Mountains and the Tibetan highlands fed the Indus, Ganges, Yellow and Yangtze Rivers that irrigated the Indian subcontinent and China. The spread of rice cultivation made it possible for these lands to support large populations. Over thousands of years, India and China fostered large populations and opulent dynasties. In Indochina, the Mekong River played a similar role in irrigating the rich soil of the entire peninsula. Though an island nation, Japan was blessed with abundant rain that facilitated the spread of rice cultivation. By the start of the 19th century, Japan could support a population of 30 million, placing it behind China and India as World's third most populous country. These Asian lands were ruled by powerful sovereigns who drew their strength from agriculture. Although Europe had gained immense wealth through trade, for the European sailors who arrived in Asia on sailships after making the arduous voyage around the Cape of Good Hope, the kingdoms of Asia were too substantial to swallow whole. This can be ascertained from the Japanese experience. The Dutch who had gone on a wild rampage in their quest of spices in Indonesia acted the part of obsequious merchants once they arrived in Nagasaki.

(2) From Industrial Revolution and Imperialism to a Liberal International Order

In the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution that started in Britain completely overturned the previous international order. In the context of human history, this was a quantum leap that equaled the quantum leap generated by the agricultural revolution that preceded it by several thousands of years. Suddenly, Britain by itself was producing more than half of the combined output and wealth of the entire world. Others soon began to pursue the path of Britain. They included France, Germany and other European countries, as well as Russia, the United States and Japan. The industrial state had been born. The glory of China and India, the agricultural giants of the past, wilted before the supremacy that these industrial states now wielded. The power rooted in agricultural production had been completely overshadowed by the power born of industrial machinery. The emerging industrial states virtually divided the globe amongst themselves as they sought to expand their territories, and engaged in heated disputes and battles as each tried to extend the reach of its own influence and territorial control. The age of imperialism had arrived. The European countries divided the continent of Africa and then Asia amongst themselves. India formally became a part of British territories and took Queen Victoria as its sovereign. China, in the words of Sun Yat-sen, became a quasi-colony. Its territories north of the Amur River were annexed by Tsarist Russia and its prosperous coastal regions were eaten away by Britain, France and Germany. Following the Sino-Japanese War, China ceded Taiwan to Japan. The Indochinese peninsula and Indonesian archipelago were partitioned by Britain, the Netherlands and France. The United States occupied the Philippines as a result of the Spanish-American War. About the only countries in Asia that retained their independence were Japan, Thailand and Turkey.

The Industrial Revolution brought rapid changes to the global society and created distortions and reactions that had never before been seen. World history between the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century may well be depicted as a history of constant turmoil and bloodshed. There is little doubt that this period in time will be remembered as the most barbaric in human history—an age typified and punctuated by social disparity, communist revolutions, racial discrimination, colonial rule, the Great Depression, block economy, world wars, wars of independence and developmental dictatorships. On the other hand, a powerful force for a return to justice and human dignity took shape in the 20th century. Even as the 19th century order was crumbling, a new international order gradually began to emerge over a period of an entire century. The new international order became clear and robust in the latter half of the 20th century

so that it replaced the 19th order based upon the rule of jungle.

(a) Prohibition of War, Peaceful Conflict Resolution and Collective Security

The first step was the acceptance of the obligation to pursue the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the prohibition of warfare. No century in human history can match the 20th century in the scale of carnage and death, for the technologies of the Industrial Revolution and beyond had been brought to bear on the battlefield. Many of the dead have since disappeared into the dark corners of history where none remembers them. The first and second world wars, which resulted in the deaths of tens of millions, exacted a particularly heavy toll. The most devastating of natural disasters include floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and contagious diseases. But there is no form of natural disaster that can claim tens of millions of victims. Short of an asteroid collision, no natural event can cause death on such a massive scale. The most fearsome calamity is the man-made calamity of war.

After the First World War, the war-torn and exhausted countries of Europe began to move toward building a fresh order that could deliver on the promise of the avoidance of war. Earlier steps for building a new international order had already been taken at The Hague Peace Conference of 1899. The embryonic form that emerged from the conference led by Russia contained such elements as international justice, humanitarian law and disarmament. The League of Nations, in whose formation President Woodrow Wilson of the United States played a leadership role, was enfeebled by the ironic rejection of the United States itself to join. Nevertheless, it did succeed in laying the future groundwork for a system of collective security. The Non-belligerency Pact, enshrined through the League's charter, worked to prevent war. In a period of shifting hegemony marked by rising American power and declining British influence, the tides of international cooperation could not be stopped.

Japan, Germany and Italy had a very different view of the quest for peace. For them, pacifism appeared to be no more than a cease-fire agreement reached among the imperial powers. From the perspective of these three countries that had achieved national unity at some time around 1870 and which were late-comers to the stage of industrial states, these efforts toward building a new international order smacked of a ploy designed to thwart the newly emerging industrial nations. The other European countries continued to hold on to the parts of Africa that had been allotted to them at the end of the 19th century. Moreover, the Ottoman Turkish Empire had been dismembered by Britain and France after the First World War, and the Middle East had been partitioned under the pretext of trusteeship. The three later-coming countries of Japan, Germany and Italy believed that the "law of the jungle" should remain firmly in place at least until they could properly prepare for the next total war and claim their own spoils.

Japan set its sight on China. Germany was focused on Central and Eastern Europe, and Italy was looking toward the Mediterranean. The Soviet Union would soon join this cold-blooded game of power politics and vie with Germany in dividing Central and Eastern Europe as well as Northern Europe. It is for this reason that all of these four countries either left or were removed from the League of Nations. The Soviet Union would join the Allied Powers following its invasion by Nazi Germany, while the other three continued to challenge the status quo and would eventually stand as the vanquished at the end of the Second World War. On the other hand, the five victor nations of the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China would come together to lead the process of erecting the potent United Nations.

It should be noted that prewar international pacifism looked very much like an agreement among imperial powers for maintaining the status quo. Colonies could not be protagonists on the stage of international politics and were objects that quite naturally remained dependent upon their colonial masters. Although the slave trade had come to an end, racial discrimination appeared to be a part of a natural order as described by the popularized false science of social Darwinism.

Colonized peoples were not guaranteed equal human rights and any claim to sovereignty remained trampled upon. While many of the industrial states had transformed themselves into democratic states during the first half of the 20th century, human rights and conceptions of human dignity were not yet understood to be universal values. That is, during this period, these were strictly regional values whose scope of application was circumscribed and limited to the countries of Europe and America.

(b) Self-Determination, Abolition of Racial Discrimination and Universalization of Human Rights

The second step in the building of a new international order was self-determination by the peoples and nations of Asia and Africa. This process moved forward hand-in-hand with the abolition of racial discrimination and shared a common path with the universalization of Western values.

Colonial populations had been conscripted into the battles fought by their colonial masters during the First and Second World Wars. Although these people were beginning to demand their own rights, their voices were not yet powerful enough to shake the foundations of the international order. Both Gandhi and Mandela became lawyers and chose the courtroom as their stage for challenging the inequities of discrimination. Yet at this time, they too were unable to light the flame of nationalism in Asia and Africa. On the other hand, in prewar Central Europe, Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, was on a path to radical racism and eventually committed to the enslavement of the Slavic people and the extermination of the Jewish people, an exercise that would culminate in the genocide of six million Jews. The slave trade may have ended in the 19th century, but racial discrimination was certainly a real and tangible problem that continued to exist through the middle of the 20th century and to trigger great calamities for humanity.

After the Second World War, brightly burning torches of colonial independence began to appear in various parts of the world, and most of Asia and Africa had achieved independence by the end of the 1960s. Of particular note is the movement for India's independence led by Mahatma Gandhi. Based on a spirit of altruism deeply rooted in Hinduism, Gandhi's love for humanity once again affirmed that the human mind couldn't be ruled by power alone. The philosophers of Europe's Enlightenment were by no means alone in advocating that all men are inherently free and equal. Similarly, the philosophy that power does not exist for the sake of power alone but rather exists to be exercised for realizing the happiness of the people is not a Western monopoly. The ideas of liberty, human rights and democracy are supported by a deep sense of love for humanity that lies at their foundation. Gandhi argued that because Western values were essentially universal values, colonial rule was therefore evil. Gandhi believed in the power of his own words and committed himself to an unwavering code of non-violence that in the end achieved the independence of India in 1947.

In this context, America's civil rights movement should not be forgotten. Rosa Parks, an African-American woman riding on a segregated bus of Alabama, ignited the ire of a white man for "not sitting at the seats assigned to Negroes." But she firmly refused to give up her seat. It was the moment that marked the beginning of the end for racial discrimination in America. The death knell was sounded for a form of racial discrimination that was rooted in the system of slavery transplanted to the American continent by the British who were then the sovereigns of the Caribbean.

The civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King touched a chord in many American hearts. On the day that King delivered his "I have a dream" speech in 1963, the expanses of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. that stretches from the Lincoln Memorial on the west to the Capitol Building on the east were filled with people, and the crowds that could not be accommodated spilled over into Constitution Avenue and Independence Avenue that abut the Mall. The influences of Gandhi can be readily seen in reading the writings of King.

The ideals voiced at the achievement of America's independence had now become universal values. They transcended national borders, continents, races, cultures and religions and were ready to serve as guiding principles for the whole world. Western values were reborn as universal values. This was the juncture at which the Japan-U.S. alliance began to transition from an alliance joined merely to resist the forces of communism to an alliance characterized by universal values.

It is also worth reviewing Nelson Mandela's fight against apartheid. The expansion of British influence in South Africa followed the Boer Wars where earlier Dutch colonists (the Afrikaners) were subdued. When British influence in South Africa eventually began to wane, the Afrikaners re-asserted their rule, at which time the South African people came to suffer even more severe forms of racial discrimination than in the past. Mandela took a different path than Gandhi's non-violence and took up arms in the fight for independence, a choice that would earn him a life sentence in prison. By this time, however, apartheid was being severely criticized by the international community as contradicting the principles of international justice. Thus, South Africa already stood isolated in the world. Mandela's unbending will drew concessions from the South African government that eventually culminated in the abolition of racial discrimination. Being released after many years of incarceration, Mandela was elected president of South Africa in 1994. When his rights were restored, Mandela eschewed the path of vengeance and instead opted for the same road taken by Gandhi. He called for love and advocated the creation of an integrated multi-racial society.

(c) The Emergence and Collapse of Communism and Dictatorship

The third step can be described as the rectification of social disparity. Industrial societies gave rise to stunning maldistributions of wealth. In free market economies, leaders of technological innovation are rewarded with immense wealth. This marked the dawn of the age of the newly wealthy. A similar process was found in Japan during the Taisho Era(1912-1926). In Europe, in contrast to the decadent and effete nobility, the emerging bourgeois class was frequently held in high regard for its austerity and fortitude. But below the bourgeois, the urban working class was relegated to a terrible existence. Human society requires a certain degree of cohesion. When extreme disparities become locked into place, those who have been pushed into the lower strata of society will either assert their rights or rebel against the social system. In many countries, labor unions were formed and governments accepted the challenge of establishing the welfare state. These are forces that remain very much alive to this day.

In other countries, violent rebellion became a reality. Communist revolutions took place seeking to push the reset button on social and international systems. Born of the turmoil of the First World War, the Soviet Union was the first country in the world to establish a one-party dictatorship of the communist party. While Marx had asserted that the revolution would occur in industrial states as they approached the end of their line, the Russian revolution in fact took place in a pre-industrial society and was driven by the ideal of creating an industrial state under the leadership of workers. Excessive idealism is prone to calamitous disaster as can be observed in such events as Stalin's purges, the famine in Ukraine, Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward and subsequent famine, the Cultural Revolution and the Cambodian genocide perpetrated by Pol Pot. In each of these instances, millions or tens of millions of lives were lost.

Looking back from the contemporary vantage point, communism was perhaps the demonic offspring of socialism and a mutant form of developmental despotism. However, when it first appeared on the world stage, communism exuded a powerful ideological attraction. Consequently, the communist ideology made deep inroads into many Western countries. The Soviet Union had joined the Allied Powers during the Second World War. But once the war was over, it forcibly transformed the nations of Eastern Europe into communist states and faced off against the United States in the Cold War.

About half a century later, in a blink of an eye the Soviet system collapsed from within in an environment where social vitality had long been lost due to the suppression of freedom. Freed from the yoke of Soviet rule, the countries of Eastern Europe for the most part chose the path to democratic society. As for the countries of Central Asia that had been colonized by Tsarist Russia, these too achieved independence after the end of the Cold War. These transitions were not without cost or sacrifice. Azerbaijan is a case in point. Students and citizens who gathered to form a “human chain” demanding freedom and independence were shot and killed by soldiers in an incident that took many lives. In the national cemetery overlooking the Caspian Sea where all of the victims are today buried and memorialized, each tombstone made of black marble is etched with a picture of the fallen and crowned with a scarlet rose.

In Asia and Africa also, many of the developing countries that had attained independence in the postwar years chose the path of communism. Considering, however, that the priority objective for these developing countries was the achievement of self-determination and speedy industrialization, it seems that many opted for communism as a convenient vehicle for resistance against their colonial masters. On their part, the Soviet Union, China and other communist nations were more than willing to supply weapons and other forms of assistance to forces that were joined in battle with Britain, France and other champions of capitalism. Examples include Vietnam and Cuba. Reading the autobiography of Fidel Castro, one cannot help but take note of his gushing and passionate nationalism that stands in stark contrast to the total absence of theoretical pretense. In the end, neither President Mandela of South Africa did opt for communism, nor did communism take root in Sukarno’s Indonesia.

One is left with the impression that perhaps no one in the Third World actually read Marx with any degree of earnestness, with the possible exception of China as it clashed for leadership with the Soviet Union in the revisionist debate. However, I should quote the words of my Chinese friend who shared these thoughts with a laugh. “In postwar Japan, it seems you consider those who have read Marx to be intellectuals. But in China, as a result of reading Marx, we were left with no true intellectuals. After Mao’s Hundred Flowers Campaign, the bloodline of true Chinese intellectuals became extinct.” It appears that members of China’s intellectual elite are surprisingly awake and aware.

(d) The Global Propagation of Democracy and the Emergence of the Liberal International Order

Toward the end of the 20th century, the many political tides that had come together to form a turbid current finally began to take on the semblance of order following experimentation that had continued over an entire century. The outlines of a new international community characterized by a liberal international order based on rules began to emerge in the post-Cold War 1990s. What lied at the foundation of this structure were such universal values as liberty, equality and democracy. Much like a subterranean aquifer that reaches all the corners of the globe, these universal values are beginning to flow quietly in all directions.

Members of the former communist bloc were not alone in achieving democracy during the 1990s. Many Asian and African countries also joined the trend. With the exception of India, most of these countries had become dictatorships shortly after gaining their independence. Some had chosen communism, while others were ruled by military dictatorships. In the case of some others, a powerful national leader had evolved into a despot. Many of these nations were intent on advancing on the path to wealth and military might at double speed. All were engaged in a desperate effort to industrialize as quickly as possible and to translate this into national might. It is hardly necessary to cite the Soviet Union as an example, but in certain respects, the early stages of industrialization can often be traversed with greater efficiency and success under a dictatorial system. The fact is that in terms of forming a modern identity, achieving linguistic

integration, propagating education, building up the social infrastructure including railways, roads, communication systems, waterworks, dams, and gas and electrical utilities, fostering a modern military and promoting industries, autocratic regimes may make more speedy progress than their democratic counterparts.

However, the industrial state is subject to rapid change, unequal distribution of wealth, and complex interactions of conflicting interests. After reaching a certain level of development, government intervention in the economy has a negative impact on efficiency by undermining the vitality of the private sector. Most importantly, in a vibrant industrial society, both the middle and working classes are keenly aware of their own interests and are politically awake and alert. A civil society seeking the rectification of economic disparities, the elimination of corruption and the establishment of fair rules is born and gradually matures. In the industrial state, democracy is inevitable. Asian growth of today is remarkable when contrasted to the stagnation that mires Europe and Japan. Their growth started in 1980s. And since the latter half of the 1980s, many nations chose proudly the path towards democracy.

The starting point in the democratization of Asian goes back to the Philippines in 1986. South Korea followed in 1987, and many countries have since walked in their footsteps. Taiwan also achieved democratization in the mid-1990s. During the 1996 presidential election, the first to be conducted under the democratic system, the prospect of an emergent Taiwanese identity was so worrisome to China that it conducted military exercises and fired missiles into the Taiwan Strait.

The firm establishment of democracy goes forward parallel to heightened awareness among the people and the maturation of civil society. The advanced democracies have a tendency to mechanically apply their own current standards to the efforts of immature democracies. Certainly they are free to voice their criticism of what they see to be shortcomings. However, there is no mistaking that the emerging democracies are firm believers in democracy. And as seen in the cases of former President Yudhoyono of Indonesia and former President Aquino of the Philippines, these nations are strongly attached to and take strong pride in their democratic histories.

The currents of democratization reached China at the end of the 1980s. Banned in China, the film *Summer Palace* eloquently portrays the atmosphere of freedom that Chinese students enjoyed those days. For some reason, the film is oddly reminiscent of Japanese students in the 1960s. But the door to democracy was slammed shut in 1989 when the students, calling for democracy, were slaughtered by the People's Liberation Army in Tiananmen Square. Having blocked the path to democracy, China is now burdened with the difficult problems of social and economic disparity, corruption, the human rights of ethnic minorities and the formulation of a national identity. The day of destiny when inevitably and at long last democracy does arrive is anticipated with fear and loathing.

(3) What the “American Century” Means

The 20th century will be remembered as the century when warfare using industrial machinery that made slaughter on a massive scale possible was banned, and the century when the nations of Asia and Africa achieved independence. It will be noted as the age when Europe's colonial empires were dismantled and the age when racial discrimination was abolished. Finally, it will be remembered as the century in which communist dictatorships appeared and then disappeared. What lies at the base of these developments is the global proliferation of the belief and certitude in the principles that all are created free, all are created equal and all are endowed with inviolable human dignity. This is indeed the source of an extremely powerful political energy. What finally emerged at the beginning of the 21st century was a liberal international order and a rule-based international society established on the bedrock of universal values.

It was the United States that spread this philosophy to all parts of the globe in a manner that

was at times direct and even tactless. The principles of liberty, equality and democracy were rooted in the political thought of the European Enlightenment, nurtured in Britain, rendered into a sharply defined theoretical framework in France, and in turn provided the theoretical bulwark for America's War of Independence. The United States was founded on these principles as a nation of principles. Postwar America discarded the isolationism that it had espoused during the first half of the 20th century and accepted to carry a heavy burden while pushing forward on transforming the international order and spreading its values.

After the First World War and particularly during the 1930s, imperialism led by the European countries began to falter and the ideals of international pacifism put forth buds. This direction was challenged by the newly emerging nations of Japan, Germany and Italy. It was overwhelming might of the United States that ultimately vanquished the challengers.

Asia and Africa were engulfed in the flames of nationalism during the 1960s, a decade when many gained their independence. As a result, the member nations of the international community would quadruple, increasing from about 50 to nearly 200 by the end of the century. During this same period, the United States abolished racial discrimination by the state that had remained institutionalized within it and rendered universal the principles of liberty, equality and democracy. By the second half of the 1940s, the United States had already assumed the mantle of leadership in the West's faceoff against the Soviet Union. But it was only after the civil rights movement of the 1960s that the United States had evidence to prove that the principles that it advocated were truly universal principles that transcended all differences of race, culture and religion. In doing so, the United States graduated from being the leader of the West to being the leader of human society.

It was during the 1990s that the communist bloc long propped up by the Soviet Union collapsed. During the 50 years of the Cold War, it was the United States that had sustained the free world.

The United States did not fight merely for the purpose of expanding its sphere of influence. Nor did it fight merely in pursuit of its own economic interests. The battles it fought were joined with the righteous conviction that spreading its values to the world constituted a just cause. And it is for this reason that the 20th century has been called the "American century."

(4) The Position Where We Stand

Looking back over these developments, we begin to see the vantage point from which we the Japanese people can observe the course of history. What has emerged after the Cold War is a liberal international order lead by the United States. Many of Asia's emerging economies have been gradually drawn into participating in this order. Whether we can join forces with these countries in sustaining this international order is a critical question for the future of international politics.

We who live in this age must, while remaining true to the values that we believe in, learn the lessons of history. Those cherished principles are the universal values of liberty, equality and democracy. At the foundation of these principles lies an unwavering belief in the sanctity of human dignity and a deep love for humanity. If there exists a moral and ethical sentiment common to all humanity that stands above all differences in skin color, eye color, race, culture, political creed and religion, that is unencumbered by national borders and even transcends any temporal divide, it is the certitude that all human beings are free, equal and endowed with inviolable human dignity that none can transgress; it is the certitude that we cannot live alone and have to connect with many other people. This is what is meant by love for humanity. It is a reality that has been expressed in various forms in the history books and religious scriptures of the East and West throughout all ages. It is a reality that is inherent to the human spirit, a reality that exists before ever being expressed in words. We may call it our conscience.

We who live in this age can reject war, genocide, colonialism, racial discrimination, dictatorship of the communist party and other forms of developmental dictatorship. Our rejection is based on the lessons that humanity learned from the 20th century. The knowledge that our generation has of war, racial discrimination and colonialism is purely intellectual without any direct experience. At the same time, we have knowledge and experience of the universal principles and their practices upon which the 21st century must be built. Those are the principles of liberty, equality and democracy. And finally, we know that these principles are founded on unwavering certitude in the sanctity of human dignity and a love for humanity. This defines the position where we stand today, and this constitutes the vantage point from which we can look back on the history of the 20th century.

This position is not unique to the Japanese. As the nations of Asia and Africa continue to gain greater strength and review with pride their own long histories, many of them will look to the past from the vantage point of these universal values. The historians of these countries will no doubt write their histories from a global perspective in light of the histories of their own people in an attempt to rediscover identities lost during the colonial past, in light of the histories of entire regions that were partitioned and lost when the colonial powers re-drew national boundaries, and in light of universal values. This is the history that will be written in the 21st century. Simply put, history as it is written will continue to change.

2. Assessing the Road Taken by Japan

(1) The “Two Japans” and the Fissured View of History

As students, our Post-war generation in Japan did not have an opportunity to learn about the history of modern Japan or the history of the modern world. Simply because, it was not included in the education programs. So I was made to suffer many difficulties as a diplomat. Is that really history education if it doesn't teach our children any modern history? It is inexcusable to send our children out into society without preparing them with knowledge, as it is they who will bear the weight of society in the future. University years are particularly important because this is when we spend the most time reading books. The youth are bubbling with social curiosity, and it is for this reason that university education provides an excellent opportunity for exposing our youth to the views and thoughts of a wide range of outstanding scholars. Scholars are certainly free to subscribe to political positions whatever they may be, but pushing their own partisan views on students is not a good idea. That contradicts the tenet of academic freedom and is tantamount to curtailing the future of students endowed with many abilities and possibilities. It is the prerogative of the students with their unconstrained intellects to choose the professors from whom they seek instruction. After entering the University of Tokyo, I chose to join the seminar of Professor Susumu Takahashi of the Faculty of Law and was assigned to read a thick book written by A.J.P. Taylor in its original language. In an age when the Marxian view of history still held strong sway, I discovered that there were other approaches to history that were no less profound and humane.

Why doesn't Japan provide education on modern history to their youth? The reason is that the Japanese have lived the postwar years in a constant state of tension between “two Japans.” History is directly linked to identity. Once an identity takes form, it takes three generations or roughly a century to change it. That is about the same time span required for completing a transition in our view of history. Throughout the postwar period, the Japanese archipelago was home to “two Japans” with two distinct identities.

The fissure in the Japanese identity can be traced back to the abrupt policy transition that occurred during the American occupation. This is a fissure that is closely tied to generational differences. During the early period of the occupation, the formulation of American policies on Japan was led by the New Dealers that populated the Government Section of the General

Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ). Their sights were set on preventing the resurrection of Japanese militarism and dismantling the military and economic components of the ability to wage war. Within Japan, these policies were placed under the slogan of “democracy and peace” and penetrated deeply the hearts of the young Japanese people of that age.

Those in their youth at the end of the war comprise the generation of Japanese who experienced firsthand the horrible misery of the Second World War in their most impressionable years. With no idea of what was happening, they were thrown into the maelstrom of total war, at the end of which two million soldiers and one million civilians had lost their lives. This was the generation that was suddenly forced to accept, with no understanding of the reasons why, the fate of a doomed nation and to pledge in their hearts that they would die for the country. And this was the generation that desperately struggled to convince itself that the death of loved ones was not without meaning. For them, Japan’s defeat in the war was the moment when the great and righteous cause that they had endeavored so hard to believe in came crashing down. Why had their family members and friends lost their lives, and why had they themselves been forced to ruin their own lives? This generation could not find any convincing answers. What followed was a sense of extreme rage against the State. They totally rejected all that was prewar Japan, and embraced with all their heart the birth of a nation committed to absolute pacifism and democracy. For the members of this generation, 1945 became “year zero” and the year in which everything in Japan was reset. This creed was effectively passed on to the baby boomers born in the latter years of the 1940s, a generation that would grow up to lead the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Almost immediately after the end of the Second World War, the world began to move gradually toward the Cold War. Following the visit of George Kennan, the U.S. State Department’s Director of Policy Planning, basic policies on the occupation of Japan shifted toward a more realistic approach. This is because, faced with the Soviet threat, there was an urgent need to re-arm Japan and to re-build its economy. In particular, the rearmament of Japan became a reality with the start of the Korean War in 1950.

To restore the Japanese economy to strength, GHQ called back the former bureaucrats and military men of Imperial Japan and the *zaibatsu* captains of industry. Many of them had experienced the war as mature adults. In this context, it would be wrong to imagine that the radical young army officers of the Imperial Way Faction (Koudou-ha) who came close to instigating a revolution with their belief in the divinity and absolute authority of the emperor represented the mainstream in prewar Japanese society. To the contrary, there were many senior statesmen, intellectuals and business leaders who had breathed the air of freedom and liberty during the era of Taisho Democracy and viewed the perverse and unreasonable behavior of the military in the Showa Era with disgust. It may be that for these members of Japan’s “old liberals,” the misery of defeat brought with it dawning lights that seemed to illuminate the darkness of despair. From their perspective, the rearmament of Japan and its economic restoration were no more than a means to restore Japan’s strength. Moreover, from their vantage point, there was nothing normal about the era of rampant militarism when military men ran amok. Hence, it would have seemed to them that they were simply re-asserting their prewar identity that they had always maintained.

These two generations would bitterly and repeatedly clash on policies related to defense and foreign affairs. The generation that welcomed the dismantling of Japan’s military machinery as an expression of the ideal of demilitarization was represented by the Socialist Party of the day, which was labeled progressive. On the other hand, those who supported rearmament and the Japan-U. S. alliance were represented by the Liberal Democratic Party of the day, which was labeled conservative. This clash was both generational and ideological, and was brought directly into the

debate on history. The former group had as part of its identity the total rejection of prewar Japan while the latter group represented a generation that had maintained an uninterrupted prewar identity, an identity that had been only temporarily disrupted when the nation was derailed by the forces of militarism.

The two Japans represented by these two generations were pushed into a framework of intense conflict between the conservative and progressive camps by the forces of the Cold War. With no logical room for compromise, the two camps co-existed while repeating their bitter clashes. As a result, Japan has been left with no modern and contemporary history to serve as a common framework for understanding the present.

The Japanese people did not get their sense of modern history from the postwar historians with their deeply colored ideologies. Instead, they turned to a popular writer for guidance. The view of modern and contemporary history as presented by Ryotaro Shiba, the noted author of historical novels, can be said to have formed what the Japanese people today have adopted as their view of history. It is a view that focuses on Japan's post-Meiji drive to modernization as a means to survive in an eat-or-be-eaten world, a drive that was pushed far off course by the tyranny of the military in the early years of the Showa Era. According to friends who are a few years my senior, as widely as his works are read today, Shiba and his books were not always accepted by literate or leftist society. That is, when he first began writing his novels, intellectuals scoffed that his writing was not worth reading, and for many years even the University of Tokyo Library chose not to add his books to its collection.

Those in their late fifties and early sixties who are now in positions of responsibility in Japanese society belong to the generation that came after the two generations discussed above. This is the generation to which I myself belong. By the time my generation was old enough to understand what was happening around us, war, racial discrimination and colonialism were more or less a thing of the past. Japan was already a member of the West, integrated into the Cold War structure and enjoying its accelerated economic growth. We are looking for a new view of history. My generation and the generation that follows are not ideologically bound by the Marxian view of history, nor do we suffer any identity crisis. It is purely for reasons of intellectual curiosity that we want to know the truths that the previous generations have not shared with us.

We have our own values, and we have a firm vantage point on history that is founded on liberty, equality and democracy—values that emerged victorious from the ideological battles of the 20th century. We share a strong awareness of the sanctity of human dignity. We are driven by a strong desire to protect our loved ones. We affirm Japan as it stands today, and we affirm the liberal international order of the postwar era. While we eschew taking positions based on ideology, we are in possession of intellectual honesty. It is now up to my generation and the generation of young Japanese that follows us to create Japan's view of history.

(2) Japan's Strategic Mistake

The 20th century was a period of very rapid and radical changes in thinking. Changes in the mode of thought result in changes in how we assess actions and behavior. Thus, there is no one left today who would say that "enhancing national prestige" and "rich country, strong army" describe the values by which the Japanese people live. Japan today stands by the liberal international order that hoists the banner of liberty, equality and democracy. We are free to examine our past from our own vantage point of the generation.

The Meiji Restoration may be lauded for various great achievements. But rapid industrialization and the victories in the wars with China and Russia certainly would not be numbered among them, for they were no more than the result of a greater achievement. What was so distinctive about the Meiji Restoration was the establishment of the equality of all people and the elimination of social classes. This had such an amazing and electrifying impact on

Japan's population of 30 million.. Japan's rapid modernization was driven by the pent-up energy of the people that was released by the promise of equality. The institutionalization of democracy followed in rapid succession, including the establishment of the Imperial Diet, the creation of a judicial system and the realization of universal male suffrage. It was indeed the release of the people's energy made possible through accelerated democratization that supported the advances of Meiji Japan.

This brings us to the question: Where and why did Japan make its strategic mistakes?

The Meiji government was ruled by a cadre of elder statesmen in a system that may well be compared to a small business managed by its founder. However, as Japan grew and expanded as a modern nation, the elder statesmen gradually left the scene and the role of political leadership came to be played by modern groups and forces. When the strength of the "transcendental government" dominated by elder statesmen ebbed, three modern organizations began to vie for leadership. These consisted of the Imperial Diet, the military and the bureaucracy. Standing near the center of power, the three would engage in extended battle. The first to claim an advantage was the Imperial Diet and its political parties. Memories of this period have faded, but it should be remembered that during the era of Taisho Democracy (period of Taisho Era (1912-1926) under Emperor Taisho when political party system with universal suffrage took roots and started to flower in Japan), Japanese diplomacy led by Foreign Minister Shidehara was committed to international cooperation and arms reduction. It was a time when the party government was able to reduce the forces of the Imperial Army by several divisions and compel the Imperial Navy to accept the terms of an international agreement on naval reduction. However, the public eventually grew weary of the constant fighting between the political parties of the Seiyukai and Kenseikai. Taisho Democracy finally collapsed, abandoned by a disgusted public that had run out of patience.

By the early years of the Showa Era (1926-1989) under Emperor Showa, the Imperial Diet had been weakened and political parties had lost their previous power. It was at this juncture that the military stepped in to increase its influence in Japanese politics. It should be noted that the military was not acting on any right or authority grounded in the constitution, but was simply overstepping its bounds to brazenly force its way in. Early Showa Japan was dragged along by the military and ultimately pushed into the Second World War where it chose the United States as its enemy. The curtains were lowered on the Empire of Japan with defeat in the disastrous war.

It is meaningful to examine the reasons why Japan allowed itself to be overtaken by the military, an issue that is of significance in considering the principle of civilian control in contemporary Japan.

The first reason pertains to systemic and institutional problems. To facilitate the modernization of the military, some principles had been installed in the system of government. For instance, the military had been guaranteed the independence of its command authority, and the posts of Army Minister and Navy Minister were reserved for officers in active duty. These seemingly innocuous measures would later be abused by the military in its quest for power. The independence of command authority was instituted to put an end to meddling by political activists or military people that was rife during the *bakumatsu* period immediately preceding the Meiji Restoration, and to foster a professional attitude in the military. Thus, in its original form, the independence of command authority implied the non-interference of the professional military in political and diplomatic affairs. As for the appointment of officers in active duty to the posts of Army Minister and Navy Minister, the original purpose here was to spur the modernization of the military by eliminating the influence of Aritomo Yamagata and other members of the Choshu clan. With this intent, a system was created to shut out the retired generals coming from the Choshu clan from the cabinet posts of Army Minister.

The original intent of these measures was subverted as the military became increasingly

politicized. Here was an organization that even at the end of the Second World War had ten million men under its command. This massive military machine held diplomacy in utter contempt, was overconfident of its power and appropriated the instruments of national policy for its own purposes. The independence of command authority became a shield to stave off the political control of the military. Thus, by yielding the exact opposite result as was originally intended, this principle in effect accelerated the politicization of the military. The system of appointment of active service officers was abused by the military as a tool to withdraw ministers from the cabinet that did not comply with its wishes and undercut and destroy such a cabinet.

The second reason can be found in the weak and limited powers assigned to the prime minister under the Meiji Constitution. During this period, cabinet ministers, including military ministers, were drawn from the bureaucracy. In many instances, ministerial posts were filled by individuals who would be serving as vice-ministers under the present system of Japanese government. Overall the bureaucracy wielded overwhelming power, which meant the government was hobbled by rampant sectionalism. Okinori Kaya, who served as Finance Minister in the Tojo Cabinet, cynically reminisces that meetings of the senior ministers were no more than a gathering of amateurs engaged in small talk.

The prime minister did not have the authority to instruct the Army and Navy to cooperate or coordinate between themselves. He was not in the command line. It is reported that even Prime Minister Tojo, himself a general of the Imperial Army, was unable to issue a single instruction to the Navy. The Kwantung Army stationed in Manchuria acted as it willed without any regard to the wishes of the central government or the emperor. In many instances, Tokyo was left with no other option but to endorse *as fait accompli* the progression of the state of affairs in China. The sloppiness of military planning and coordination by Japan's Imperial Army and Navy in the period between the war with China and the Pacific War will certainly be long remembered in the military annals of the world. Dazzled and deluded by the early victories of Nazi Germany, the Imperial Army ran around in confusion trying to decide whether to move north to fight the Soviet Union or to drive south to capture the resources of the British and Dutch colonies. The Imperial Navy on its part made the fateful decision to engage the United States in a war that it had no prospect of winning. If asked whether the two forces were acting under any common or integrated strategy, the answer would have to be a resounding no.

The most serious problem was that the Meiji Constitution did not invest the prime minister with sufficient power and authority to unify the will of the nation. Hitler concentrated all the powers of government in his own hands through his political genius. As a result, Germany underwent a "nuclear explosion" with an evil genius at its core. On the other hand, placed in the midst of a dynamically changing international environment and headed by a weak prime minister, the Japanese government failed to control the military, to unify the will of the people and stood idly by as the nation awkwardly underwent a "meltdown."

The third reason relates to the collapse of command authority within the military. The supreme command authority supposedly belonged to the emperor, but the Imperial Army's continental policies were based on arbitrary decisions made by subordinate officers. The assassination of Zhang Zuolin, and the Manchurian Incident were both unauthorized intrigues planned and carried out by the Kwantung Army. Zhang Zuolin was a local warlord in Manchuria, opposing increase of Japanese influence and he was frustrating the ambitious Kuang tong Army. His assassination was a plot by Colonel Daisaku Komoto. After the Manchurian Incident, the Imperial Army controlled the whole Manchuria, and even the forces stationed in Korea ignored the instructions of Tokyo to march across the border. Manchuguo was established later as an "independent" nation from China. General Kanji Ishiwara have much to answer for their acts. After a few years of stability following the Tanggu Truce, the military took the initiative again. Starting with the conquest of North China, it moved on to the Shanghai Incident that would

transform the war with China into full-scale war. It was a foolish strategy indeed. On the one hand, Japan had entered into the quagmire of war with China in the south while remaining exposed to the massive threat of the Soviet military on the north. On the other hand, the invasion of China would assuredly earn the enmity of all the Western countries that had substantial interests in China. Ishiwara opposed expanding southward on the grounds that Japan needed to brace itself for the Soviet threat on the north. General Akira Muto (then director of the third division of Imperial Army Staff), who argued in support of the North China offensive, is reported to have told to General Kanji Ishihara (then director-general of the first division of Imperial Army Staff), "I am simply copying what you did in Manchuria." Ishihara was chased off Imperial Army Staff. And after the war, Muto would be hanged as an A-class war criminal.

One would expect a very different procedure in decision-making than what actually occurred. In preparation for reporting to the emperor, one would expect meetings of related cabinet ministers, including the foreign minister, to have been convened for the purpose of carefully reviewing the grand strategy, related diplomatic policies, fiscal conditions and the anticipated impact on the economy. Only after completing all of these procedures would concrete operational objectives be established and handed over to a professional military for execution. In present-day Japan, the prime minister would gather all related cabinet ministers to a National Security Council meeting before reaching a decision on foreign policy. Having reached a decision, the prime minister would then issue a general order and the Self-Defense Forces would act to realize the concrete operational objectives that have been identified. In Japan of the early Showa Era, diplomatic strategies were distorted to fit the operational objectives that had already been established by the professional military. When decision-making on national strategies is monopolized by the military, as it was in prewar Japan, fissures appear in the will of the nation, diplomacy retreats into the background and the economy fails. An existential crisis is all but unavoidable.

The fourth reason traces its origins to the politicization of the lower echelon of army officers. The Japanese public was exhausted by the series of major events and developments including the lifting of the gold embargo, the Great Depression, the division of the world economy into blocs and the Tohoku Region's agricultural crisis that almost lead to starvation. The public had lost patience with the political parties and their incessant partisan fighting and was ready to pin its hopes on the military that exuded an aura of integrity, modernity and rectitude. During this period, the middle to lower echelons of army officers included many who hailed from impoverished villages. There was a growing sense among these young officers that Japan needed to undergo fundamental social reform, a fact that made them particularly susceptible to politicization. The Taisho Era was the era of the parvenu or overnight millionaires. Worsening social disparity had set the stage for an explosion of popular anger in the event of any major economic downturn. The ideology of the Russian revolution also had an impact on society. And the military itself had become rife with an undercurrent of insubordination that found expression in a willingness of junior officers to challenge and supplant their seniors. A case in point is the assassination of General Tetsuzan Nagata, renown cool-headed strategist by a fanatic lieutenant colonel, Aizawa, in his own office in 1935. Acts of terror, rebellion and failed coup d'etat were repeated. The May 15 Incident (1932) plotted by the young navy officer that took the life of Prime Minister Inukai ended in failure, and the February 26 Incident (1936) engineered by young army officers of the Imperial Way Faction was suppressed brutally. Notwithstanding these outcomes, the acts of terror and uneasy atmosphere caused by the failed coups perpetrated by the military effectively augmented the voice of the military within the government.

Attention to diplomacy, fiscal policy and economy was pushed into a neglected corner as the military gained greater political power. On the global stage, however, the eat-or-be-eaten environment of the 19th century was gradually beginning to give way to the liberal international

order that would emerge in the second half of the 20th century. Within the Japanese government where the military was becoming increasingly powerful, the path of international cooperation advocated by Foreign Minister Shidehara was laughed at and the energies of the government were concentrated on the question of how to fight and survive in the eat-or-be-eaten age of total war. Thus, the narrowly defined military objective of acquiring resources to ensure the nation's ability to engage in long-term fighting usurped the position of Japan's overall strategic goal.

It can be surmised that the Japanese military at this time was unaware of two key developments. First, it did not comprehend the expansion of American influence with its strong ideological component. The Meiji government had established modern Japan with the use of force as exhibited in the Battle of Toba-Fushimi and elsewhere. Given this background, modern Japan probably had little difficulty understanding the eat-or-be-eaten imperialistic order as practiced by Britain and France, or European power politics rooted in the Westphalian system. On the other hand, President Wilson's advocacy of international peace and the idealism of the Open Door Policy in China were probably very confounding for the Japanese.

Today, we know how the League of Nations developed into the United Nations, and we know that free trade buttressed by the freedom of the seas is the foundation of Japan's prosperity. But the prevailing sentiment in Japan at the time was to dismiss American idealism with all its talk about peace and distaste for channeling its immense resources into military might. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Japan simply did not understand what America was talking about. What the United States was endeavoring to preserve in Asia under the Washington system was not the balance of major powers' interests that had been hammered out after the end of the First World War nor the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Its true interest lied in putting into practice the new international order that it had hoisted as an alternative to the shenanigans of the Old World. Prewar America in its dealings with Europe presented itself as isolationist, but not so in Asia where it frequently adopted the face of active interventionism with new ideology grounded in its constitution and its declaration of independence.

The United States is given to diplomacy marked with strong elements of ideology, but its approach has none of the dogmatism of the Soviet Union. Instead, the policies it advocates are directly linked to its own identity that is based on its founding principles. As the United States gained power, its founding principles gradually became the reality in international politics. This process continued without interruption throughout the 20th century and did not stop with such accomplishments as the United Nations and free trade. Eventually, the United States would overcome its own internal racial discrimination, an achievement that would push it to the forefront of global leadership in the true sense.

Ever since the Meiji Restoration, the soul of those committed to eliminating class differences and transforming Japan into a nation state had been deeply affected and instructed by the ideals of the French revolution and the principles enunciated in the American War of Independence. Particularly revealing is a poem written by Munemitsu Mutsu, renown foreign minister at the time of Sino-Japanese war in the 19th century, during his young years of incarceration. Entitled "Reading the Universal History," the poem contains these lines. "Strife and turmoil upon six continents and three thousand years of rise and fall, No holy wars ever found on the globe, You only see the slaughterhouse world of eat or be eaten. Reading through these dark chapters, one finally arrives at a beacon light that brings shimmering hope to the eye, This is none other than the chapter of American independence." The Meiji thinker Chomin Nakae was impressed by the similarities between the philosophies of Rousseau and Mencius.

However, what really moved Japan were the words of Otto von Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor of Germany, spoken to the Iwakura Mission during its 1873 visit to Berlin. Addressing the mission members who were studiously examining international law as if it were the golden rule imbued with absolute authority, Bismarck said that what international politics required was not

law but power. Spoken shortly after the Prussian unification of Germany that followed the defeat of France, the nemesis that had repeatedly humiliated the Germans since the Thirty Years' War of the early 17th century, Bismarck's statement captured the minds of many Japanese for many years to come and effectively anchored their thinking in the 19th century.

The Japanese military of the early Showa Era was oblivious to a second significant development, which was the rising tide of self-determination that was beginning to sweep across the colonized peoples of Asia and Africa. Prewar Japan had a group of thinkers and ideologues that were popularly referred to as pan-Asianists. In hindsight, these thinkers were in their own way groping to find what in later years would take concrete form in Asian and African movements for national self-determination.

Before Japan began acting like a member of the imperialist countries, many among the Japanese expressed anger toward racial discrimination and believed that Japan should stand in solidarity with the peoples of Asia. Also, many Asian revolutionaries were drawn to study Japan as the Asian success story in modernization. Those who travelled to Japan include Jose Rizal, the poet hero of the short-lived independent Philippines that followed the Spanish-American War; Phan Boi Chau who came to Japan with hopes of resurrecting the Nguyen Dynasty that had been destroyed by France; Rash Behari Bose who sought asylum in Japan and married the daughter of the famed Nakamura Restaurant following the attempt on the life of the British Viceroy of India; Sun Yat-sen, Liang Qichao and others from China; and Kim Ok-gyun and others from Korea intending to learn from the Meiji Restoration to modernize the Joseon Dynasty. Many Japanese people supported these visitors and their activities. Furthermore, Shumei Okawa was criticizing European and American aggression into Asia, and Kametaro Mitsukawa had already published in 1925 his scathing criticism of racial discrimination in America in his book, *The Negro Problem*.

At the time, however, there was an overwhelming difference in national power between the Asian countries and the Western countries that had already undergone the industrial revolution. Thus, the slogans for an Asian restoration through solidarity with the Asian people were not realistic and had very little chance for success. Ultimately, the Japanese government would opt for an opposite course of action. Joining the club of Western imperialist powers, Japan would thereafter continue to expand through the exercise of force. However, in their origins, Japan's Asian policies differed fundamentally from the mercantilist and colonial models of Europe that were designed to realize the immense potential of gains through trade. In search of profit, the Dutch and British had established expansive monoculture plantations in their colonies and used slave labor to produce and trade international commodities such as sugar and cotton. But this mindset did not exist in Japan. Instead, Japan's first forays into Asia were driven by the quest for national security. The immediate objective was to ensure a strategic depth against the southward incursions of Tsarist Russia. The thinking was that Japan could effectively defend itself against most of Europe and America through naval power. For Russia alone, a land battle conducted on the continent was a real possibility. It is for this reason that Japan's continental management began on the Korean Peninsula.

Taking advantage of weakened European influence in Asia after the First World War, Japan presented China with its 21 Demands, which served to ignite Chinese nationalism. The Wilsonian principle of national self-determination triggered the March 1st Movement in Korea. However, Japan did not realize that this movement would one day spread to the whole of Asia and Africa and develop into a tidal wave of self-determination that would change the course of history.

As international relations became increasingly tense in the 1930s, Japan became obsessed with the nightmare of total war on a global scale. Under these circumstances, the whole nation was dragged along by the military that insisted on the necessity of acquiring resources in preparation for war. The Manchurian Incident was an early manifestation of this process. The quest for resources would become even more clearly expressed in the southward advance into

the mainland of China and the southern campaign that engulfed French Indochina.

Pan-Asianism would never become the Japanese government's guiding principle in the conduct of the war. While it may be true that some Japanese believed in the "liberation of Asia," this was never a part of government policy. As for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, if it had been announced in peacetime, it may have included a message that would resonate with Asian peoples placed under colonial rule. But as it were, its announcement during war was far from timely and was denounced as wartime propaganda by the Allied Powers with whom Japan was already at war. And for the Asian people caught in the crossfire of the Japanese military and the Allied Powers, Japan did not look like a liberator and had the appearance of a new ruler aspiring to replace the Europeans.

Having been defeated in war, Japan immediately lost all the adjacent territories that it had ruled and was thus spared the difficult experience of liquidating its colonies. In a certain respect, this lack of experience lowered Japanese sensitivity to Asian and African nationalism even in the postwar period. After the war, the United States moved quickly to grant independence to the Philippines. Of the five major victorious powers comprising the United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union and China, the two countries of Britain and France embarked on the postwar period with their immense colonial empires intact. But that would soon change. The dispatch of Britain and French troops to counter the nationalization of the Suez Canal ended in failure. France would suffer the disasters of the Algerian War of Independence and the Vietnamese War of Independence. Britain would relinquish India, and in Africa it would continue to be burdened by the Rhodesian problem until the very end. Russia continued to wield influence over the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia that it had colonized under Tsarist Russia, but this came to a close with the end of the Cold War. There is little doubt that if Japan had not fought the Pacific War, it would have maintained its status as a timeworn imperial power and had to expend a great amount of energy on coping with fiery independence movements.

3. Conclusion

What patterns do we see when looking back to Japan in the 20th century from our contemporary vantage point? The newly born nation of Meiji Japan was intently focused on surviving the eat-or-be-eaten age of imperialism. In particular, it had a palpable fear of the southward advance of Tsarist Russia. With this in mind, Japan chose to join the club of European imperial powers, including entering into an alliance with Britain, and claimed victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Thereupon, it endeavored to extend its sphere of influence on the Korean Peninsula. Observing the exhaustion of the European powers in the First World War and the Russian Revolution, Japan began to increase its influence in continental China.

After the First World War, Japan stood in opposition to the tide of international cooperation that had gained significant momentum. Instead, it joined hands with emerging powers that were advocating against the status quo and opted for the path of fighting against the European colonial powers on the Asian battlefield. During this period, Japan was unable to foresee the future emergence of a liberal international order based on universal values that the United States was already beginning to advocate, and made the fateful decision to enter into direct war with the United States, a war that it had no possibility of winning. For the Japanese people of this age, it was beyond imagination that the United States subscribed to a political creed at odds with that of the European colonial empires, that it had an aversion to colonial rule, and that it would eventually abolish racial discrimination in line with its own stated creed and philosophy.

However, Japan's greatest oversight by far was its failure to foresee the tidal wave of Asian and African nationalism. A mere decade or so after Japan's defeat, the entire international order would be recast with the Asian and African rush toward independence and the collapse of the European colonial empires. The racial discrimination that the Japanese were once made to suffer was also

laid to rest.

Predicting and anticipating global trends and tides primarily through the eyes of diplomacy is the first step in strategic thinking. Giving preference to military affairs over diplomacy may win battles but will lead to defeat in war. Power and might are necessary elements in diplomacy. However, no matter how powerful in military terms, prioritizing power over diplomacy will inevitably doom a nation.

It cannot be denied that one of the causes of Japan's mistake was the fragile relation between the government and the military under the Meiji Constitution. Military interests are narrow and confined. What is needed is diplomatic and strategic thinking capable of anticipating the major tides of world history. Defeat unavoidably awaits those who pursue only the narrow concerns of the battlefield. Postwar Japan must endeavor to establish a good relationship between the government and the military in the true sense. Seventy years after the end of the war, Japan has now finally acted to formulate a national security strategy and create a National Security Council headed by the prime minister. We should bear in mind that this progress was made possible by the lessons learned from history.

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Tokyo Japan 100-0013

Tel: +81-3-3503-7261 (from outside Japan)

Fax: +81-3-3503-7292 (from outside Japan)

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