

A Clash of Historical Perceptions: Japan's Post-War Disputes with China*

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Introduction

It is not uncommon for diplomatic relations to develop spontaneously in a positive direction if there is an expansion of trade and economic relations or of human exchange. However, this has not been the case in relations between Japan and China, as is encapsulated by the phrase “hot economies, cold politics.” With on-going incidents of fishing boats colliding in the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, political tensions have yet to dissipate. Both the Japanese and the Chinese admit that historical perceptions stand as the cause of these problems. According to a recent opinion poll, both Japanese and Chinese respondents identified historical perceptions as a major obstacle to the development of Japan–China relations. Chinese respondents named the Japanese perceptions of “the Nanjing Massacre” and the war of aggression as an important issue in need of resolution. Japanese respondents similarly raised China’s anti-Japanese education and textbook content as such an issue.¹

This article conducts an analysis of the historical perception issue in Japan–China relations by turning the spotlight on Japanese and Chinese nationalism. This includes the textbook issue, the Yasukuni issue, the “apology” and their backgrounds, and China’s history education.

Japan–China Relations until the 1970s: Unproblematic Historical Perceptions

To a majority of Japanese, the “Greater East Asia War” is principally remembered as a war against the US, and any awareness of violence (“aggression”) against the Chinese is viewed as much less significant, despite the fact that it predated the conflict with the Americans (Yoshida, 1995: chapter 3 and 4).

Yoshimi Takeuchi noted that the Japanese felt “pain to an unexpected degree over [Japan’s] aggression against China, when taking into account also the latent [pain]” (Takeuchi, 1993: 236). We know for a fact that a portion of leading post-war intellectuals in Japan had feelings of “culpability” vis-à-vis China. This tendency was spurred on by the admiration for socialism that was prevalent at the time, and was partly lacking in objectivity, as symbolized by the praise for the Cultural Revolution (Nakajima, 1981: 404-414; Mizoguchi, 1989: 5-12).

A majority of the Japanese general population disliked the USSR but felt “affection” toward China, and this continued beyond the normalization of Japan–China relations and the Cultural Revolution, until the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident (Tonami, 2005: 340-345). According to opinion polls, the normalization of Japan–China relations occurred when pro-Chinese sentiments

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¹ Genron NPO, 第8回日中共同世論調査結果 (Results of the 8th Japan–China Joint Opinion Poll), June 2012 (<http://www.genron-npo.net/world/genre/cat119/2012-a.html>).

surpassed anti-Chinese sentiments for the first time since the war. From that point onwards, pro-Chinese sentiment continued to grow, until this trend was once more reversed at the time of the Tiananmen Square Incident. There have been no remarkable changes to this trend since (Murotani, 2005: 5-6).

Regarding the historical perception issue that emerged post-1980, the Japanese were generally inclined to compromise with the Chinese which stemmed from the “culpability” they felt at the time. Even Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who called for the “final settlement of post-war politics,” fundamentally accepted China’s stance on the Yasukuni and textbook issues. This was a product of the aforementioned “culpability,” but while it had the positive effect of easing tensions between Japan and China, it remained problematic since “It does not fundamentally resolve our contradictions and maintain amicable relations, but it is the result of us trying to coexist even as the contradictions continue to amass” (Yokoyama, 1994, 26-59: 112-113).

Moreover, although the Japanese government has clearly dissociated the Official Development Assistance (ODA) from any repentance for the “past,” when Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira initiated the assistance in 1979, the Chinese were under the impression that the deal was an expression of the prime minister’s gratitude for the Chinese renunciation of war reparations².

Simultaneously, starting around 1970, the academic world began paying attention to Japan’s wartime atrocities, as represented by the “fifteen-year war debate.” Several books on the topic were published at this time, such as Katsuichi Honda’s *Travels in China* (Asahi Shimbun, 1972), and Seiichi Morimura’s *The Devil’s Gluttony* (Kobunsha, 1981).

Similarly, in China during the Mao Zedong era, there had been no diplomatic need to mobilize anti-Japanese popular sentiment to request a Japanese “apology.” Rather, China made efforts to create “peaceful and amicable relations” as a way to support their international political goal of restraining the US and the USSR. The result was the normalization of Japan–China relations and the accompanying renunciation of war reparations. Therefore, a history of friendship was emphasized without ever problematizing the historical perception issue.

The Chinese in general were also less resentful of the Japanese and more of the Kuomintang, landowners, and capitalists as well as the US and the USSR, in part because of their education. The Japanese were not enemies and Mao Zedong said that, “The Japanese and Chinese peoples are good friends.” With regard to the Second Sino–Japanese War, the “glory” of victory in the “Anti-Japanese War,” the “devoted sacrifices” of fallen patriots in the war, and the revolution was emphasized. For example, “the Nanjing Massacre” did not appear in Chinese junior-high-school history textbooks until 1979, which is later than Japan (1975). This means that China’s suffering, its “national disgrace,” was not emphasized until the 1980s, which then reflected a change in circumstances (Gries, 2004: 43-53; Shirk, 2008: 261-265; Callahan, 2010: 161-190; Wang, 2011: 18, 74-75, 126-127).

The Textbook Issue

The historical perception issue with China started with the textbook controversy of 1982, ten years after the normalization of diplomatic relations. Such textbook controversies with neighboring countries would come to transpire a total of four times. The first controversy occurred in June 1982 over a high-school history textbook that was to be used from 1983. It began with Japanese newspapers reporting that the screening carried out by the Ministry of Education (presently the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT)) had resulted in “the Japanese Army invaded North China” being rewritten as “the Japanese Army

² Statement by Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan (‘In Exchange for the ODA Wartime Reparations to China’, *Sankei Shimbun* [May 13, 2000]).

advanced into North China” and a change to contents pertaining to the Nanjing Incident³. After criticism from both China and South Korea, the matter was resolved as the cabinet of Zenko Suzuki announced that they would revise the screening. In the end, the Japanese government decided to add a “neighboring countries clause” to the screening criteria for history textbooks.

The second textbook controversy occurred in 1986. China, South Korea, and the Japan Teachers Union fiercely opposed the conditional acceptance of *A New History of Japan*, a high-school textbook compiled by the People's Congress to Protect Japan, arguing that the book justified the invasion. Nakasone responded quickly and the book was passed after a very rare fourth round of MEXT extra revisions.

The third and fourth textbook controversies occurred in 2001 and 2005, and revolved around textbooks put together by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, titled *The New History Textbook* and *The New Civics Textbook*, respectively. As they were both approved by MEXT, strong protests and calls for revision were voiced by China, South Korea, and some Japanese groups, arguing that the books glorified or denied the invasion. On this occasion, the Japanese government did not accede to the Chinese and Korean revision requests. In spite of this, neither case became significant international issues.

These textbook controversies “occurred as an extension of Japan's domestic textbook issue.”. The confrontations over textbook screening and contents in post-war Japan were an internal affair and an already “politicized” issue, heavily influenced by the ideological battle occurring under the 1955 system and the Cold War (Mitani, 2006: 205-206; Duan, 2007: 63-64).

Therefore, when there were reports that contents had been rewritten, there was frequently debate about whether these were in fact “incorrect reports.” Groups critical of the screening viewed MEXT's traditional position itself as problematic, while those critical of MEXT and the screening system argued that they were “all too dogmatic” or “masochistic” (Onuma, 2007a: 272). Moreover, as seen in the Ienaga Trial, there was also a debate on the issue of a “double standard” in which those who criticized the screenings as being equal to “censorship” demanded that MEXT implement stricter revisions of screenings when it came to textbooks with a divergent position, such as *A New History of Japan* (Hayashi, 1987: 182-186; Tateno, 2001: 117-118).

Since the post-Cold War era of the 1990s, efforts were made by mainly “leftist” scholars to shed light on “the aggressive nature of wartime Japan and especially the specifics of Japan's invasion of China and Asia” (Ishida, 1996: 30-34; Kurosawa, 2011: 46-47). However, because the interpretations put forward by these scholars were not free from errors and exaggerations and due to the perceived “politicization” of their arguments (Onuma, 2007a: 186, 356; Onuma 2007b: 210-216), many Japanese were uncomfortable with their scholarship, leading it to be criticized for being too “masochistic” and a target of widespread opposition. The textbooks produced by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform emerged from this kind of context, which is why their validity was debated with such fervor.

As such, it cannot be denied that the debate came to revolve around a small number of textbooks that tended to not be adopted by teachers with the majority of other textbooks being ignored (Mitani, 2006, 222). Indeed, the controversies were partially induced by events within Japan, which to some extent serves to explain the Japanese opposition. Regarding the textbook controversies and the Yasukuni issue, former Ambassador Yosuke Nakae suggests that there had existed a group that “colluded” with China for their own benefit, thus triggering anti-Japanese movements. He recalls that, “They probably wanted to put a stop to those things by borrowing the authority of the Chinese tiger. And then the mass media joined in to use that as ammunition for attacking the government” (Nakae, 1991: 162; Nakae, 2010: 236, 243, 253-254).

³ There were actually no revisions made to the parts concerning China. Asahi Shimbun apologized for the ‘mistaken report’, writing that, ‘We must apologize to our readers for having made a mistake, even if only in part’ (読者と朝日新聞 [Asahi Shimbun and the Reader], *Asahi Shimbun* [September 19, 1982]).

Due partly to the Ienaga Textbook Trial and the textbook controversies as well as the increased transparency of the screening process, history textbooks were improved so that they included more contents on Japan's violence and "aggression" toward Asia as well as a better consideration for international relations. Through this, the Japanese people's awareness of Japan as "the perpetrator of a war of aggression" is said to have increased (Hatano, 2004a: 341; Mitani, 2006: 215). Simultaneously, some took a nationalist stance, criticizing the "external pressure" and "internal-affairs interference" from neighboring countries, and were also critical of the government for having acquiesced to such demands. This helped give rise to new textbook projects, such as those of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, and eventually to more textbook controversies.

The Chinese response to the textbook controversies also seems to have been motivated by domestic factors. In particular, it had to do with history education for youths following the adoption of the Reform and Opening-up Policy. It has been pointed out that, "The focused and organized campaign was for Chinese domestic consumption, its aim being to educate youths about history and to raise support for the Communist Party [author's note: the Anti-Japanese War was used to legitimize the government]" (Tanaka, 1983; Tanaka, 1991: 120-125).

After this, the importance of the textbook issue dissipated. As an example, we can look at *New Japanese History* (approved since 2012), a junior-high-school history textbook published by Ikuhoshia. This company was criticized for glorifying the war and a movement developed to keep their books from being used in the classroom. Yet, despite the fact that this book had an adoption rate higher than previous controversial books, China did not raise significant concerns about it.

The Yasukuni Issue

Emperor Showa made seven visits to the Yasukuni Shrine between 1952 and 1972, and a total of fifty-eight visits were made by post-war prime ministers, starting with the visit by Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida on October 18, 1951; yet none of these visits were criticized by foreign states. Their appropriateness was instead debated domestically in the context of the constitutional separation of religion and state, focusing on whether the visits were "public" or "private."

Nakasone arranged "The Colloquium to Discuss the Issue of Cabinet Ministers Worshipping at Yasukuni Shrine" to resolve this issue, and it was concluded that the visits did not amount to violations of the constitution as long as care is taken regarding the style of worship. Based on this, on August 15, 1985, Nakasone became the first post-war prime minister to make an "official visit" to the shrine. This was severely opposed by China, signaling that the Yasukuni issue had gone from being a domestic constitutional debate to becoming a diplomatic issue. On 14 August, the day before the visit, Chief Cabinet Secretary Takao Fujinami expressed that, "It is our regret that we inflicted such great suffering and injury on so many people in Asia and beyond."

The basis for China's criticism was the enshrinement of Class A war criminals on October 17, 1978, and the deep significance ascribed to war-end anniversaries in Chinese culture. In other words, "In Chinese thinking, a visit to Yasukuni Shrine by the Japanese prime minister on the day marking Japan's defeat in the war, Japan's 'anniversary of national disgrace' [carries the meaning of] wanting to wash away the shame of defeat and, thus, to retaliate" (Okabe, 2006: 13).

In response, Nakasone decided not to visit the shrine in the following year, 1986. On 14 August, Chief Cabinet Secretary Masaharu Gotoda announced that they would not make an official visit since the enshrinement of Class A war criminals had led to misunderstandings and distrust from neighboring countries, especially China.

The Yasukuni Shrine was again politicized when Junichiro Koizumi's cabinet came to power after having made a "campaign pledge" to "definitely visit Yasukuni Shrine on the war-end anniversary" during the presidential election of the Liberal Democratic Party. His first visit to the shrine as prime minister was moved to August 13 out of consideration for China. On the day of the

visit the prime minister stated that, "Following a mistaken national policy during a certain period in the past, Japan imposed, through its colonial rule and aggression, immeasurable ravages and suffering particularly to the people of neighboring countries in Asia. This has left a still incurable scar to many people in the region. Sincerely facing these deeply regrettable historical facts as they are, here I offer my feelings of profound remorse and sincere mourning to all the victims of the war." The contents of this statement were deemed to have surpassed those of the Murayama Statement (Iechika, 2003: 22).

China demanded that the visits be discontinued since they "hurt the feelings of the peoples of victim countries," stating that Japan "should demonstrate their remorse through action." However, Prime Minister Koizumi continued to visit the shrine every year to "remember the war dead and pray for peace." Japan–China relations worsened after this.

The first point I would like to make regarding the Yasukuni issue is about the difference in perception between Japan and China. The Chinese side argued that a prime minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine negates what has been a leading principle since the normalization of Japan–China relations. That is, the idea that responsibility for the war lay with a minority of militarists and that the majority of Japanese were victims. They understood the visits as "an issue relating to the very starting point of Japan's post-war responsibility, its rehabilitation to the international community, and the normalization of Japan–China relations, thus making impossible to settle simply with reference to Japanese culture" (Press conference with China's Ambassador to Japan, Wang Yi [*Asahi Shimbun*, November 16, 2005]).

On the Japanese side, the general purpose of the visits is to remember the war dead and pray for peace. It is true that among those who want to see official visits, there are those who affirm the Second Sino–Japanese War and the Pacific War, but the prime minister's visits are not conducted on the basis of such an historical perception. For example, on October 8, 2001, two months after his first visit to the shrine, Koizumi made a visit to the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance against Japanese Aggression (Marco Polo Bridge), the first since Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's visit in 1995. There, he said that, "I examined the displays with a heart of apology and condolence toward all the Chinese who fell victim to Japanese aggression. We have to study the past well, so that our remorse can bear better fruit in the future." Compared with the Murayama Statement, Koizumi's words expressed regret more clearly. General Secretary Jiang Zemin expressed his surprise, saying, "I have never met a Japanese prime minister this reasonable." The Chinese government came to expect that Koizumi would make no more visits to the Yasukuni Shrine ("特集 繰り返されてきた『反省』『おわび』" [Feature: The Repeated Expressions of "Remorse" and "Apology"], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 28, 2005). Thus, the emphasis of China's criticism of Koizumi's Yasukuni visit shifted from historical perception to the feelings of the peoples of victim countries (Takahara, 2010: 76). Another problem with the visit was raised as well; it was the "pro-Greater East Asia War" historical perception that motivated the "honoring of war heroes," symbolized by the exhibition in the Yushukan Museum attached to the shrine, and upheld by the Yasukuni Shrine, as well as the supporting organizations of the Japan War-Bereaved Families Association and the "Society for Honoring the Glorious War Dead." Immediately after the war, the Japan War-Bereaved Families Association was dedicated to the "building of a peaceful Japan" and the Yushukan Museum was originally a museum for weapons and items left by the deceased, not explicitly showcasing any particular historical perception. Yet, the ideological struggles in post-war Japan led to the "politicization" and radicalization of historical perceptions, and the rise of the "war-of-aggression argument" in particular made room for the view that the Japanese soldiers had "died in vain." The war-bereaved families strongly opposed such a view and came to emphasize the "honoring of war heroes." Since this necessitated a historical perception that gave meaning to the soldiers' deaths and that evaluated the war positively, their efforts seem to have gravitated toward the "pro-Greater East Asia War" stance (Hatano, 2004b: 256-272). As

seen from this, the cause lay in a post-1960s domestic debate over how to conceive of the war dead.

My second point relates to the widespread popular support for Koizumi's Yasukuni visits, expressed each year despite China's criticism. For example, a 2006 opinion poll on the occasion of what became the last Yasukuni visit on a war-end anniversary, 52.6% were in favor of these visits, stating that the primary purpose of Koizumi's visits was to comfort and remember the dead soldiers as well as praying for peace and the renunciation of war. In addition, some respondents (25.3%) supported the visits because they did not think it appropriate to discontinue them due to objections from other countries. 56.6% responded that they were unconvinced by China's opposition (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 17, 2006). To the Japanese public, the Yasukuni issue changed from being about the appropriateness of the visits themselves to centering on China's unyielding objections. As people came to understand China's actions as "internal-affairs interference," their opposition grew stronger than it had been at the time of the textbook controversies. The Chinese government, however, feared that to abandon the guiding principles of the post-war period was tantamount to fanning emotional nationalism among the people and damaging its own political legitimacy. Today, Yasukuni Shrine is intimately intertwined with nationalism on both sides and has undergone "symbolization" in the context of Japan–China relations (Mori, 2006: 183).

The "Apology"

It is often said that Japan has not "apologized" enough to China for the Second Sino–Japanese War, but Japan is in fact said to have made more than twenty official "apologies" to that effect (Sugimoto, 2006: 328-328)⁴.

In October 1985, Nakasone became the first Japanese prime minister to acknowledge that the Second Sino–Japanese War was a "war of aggression." All subsequent prime ministers have reaffirmed this view and it was most clearly expressed by Morihiro Hosokawa. In August 1993, he stated that, "I myself perceive the war as having been one of aggression and injustice."

Although words like "remorse" and "apology" are used frequently in documents such as the Japan–China Joint Communiqué (September 1972) and the Japan–China Joint Declaration on Building a Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation for Peace and Development (November 1998), the strongest expression of "heartfelt apology" was not used until the Murayama Statement in August 1995, on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war⁵. When Premier Wen Jiabao visited Japan in April 2007, he also stated that, "The Japanese government and Japanese leaders have expressed their stance on the history problem many times, publicly admitting the aggression, expressing their remorse, and deeply apologizing to the victim countries. I positively appreciate this" (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, evening edition, April 12, 2007). Yet, the intention expressed in the Murayama Statement was not widely accepted within Japan. For example, one week before the statement, Minister of Education Yoshinobu Shimamura said that, "Whether or not it was a war of aggression is a matter of perception," a statement he later apologized for and retracted. Moreover, in June on that same 50th-anniversary occasion, the House of Representatives debated the Resolution to Renew the Determination for Peace on the Basis of Lessons Learned from History (Fusen Ketsugi). Disagreement arose on whether to insert the term "apology" in the definition of "aggression," as a result demonstrating that there existed a split along the lines of historical

⁴ An exceptional case in China, the "New Thoughts" thinker Ma Licheng points out that Japan has apologized 21 times and that the historical problem has been settled (Ma, 2004).

⁵ The Murayama Statement was said to be initiated by the prime minister's office, but was actually part of a long-term post-war settlement policy promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With China, South Korea, the US, and Britain in mind, Murayama's correspondence was published at the same time as the statement (Hattori, 2007).

perception.

Referring to the Murayama Statement, a spokesperson of China's Foreign Ministry Information Department stated that, "The Japanese government has expressed deep remorse over its past colonial rule and history of aggression, and they are committed to actively apologizing to the peoples of Asia [...] There still remain those in Japanese society, including the political sphere, who do not show the proper attitude with regard to this historical issue." As such, it cannot be denied that some ministers and other politicians made "verbal slips," with the result of offsetting the effects of the "apologies." In short, "In Japan, the voices of those who deny the war of aggression and oppose any apology have grown stronger than those that express apology" (Shang, 2005: 96-101).

Moreover, since the schema of Japanese "aggression" and Chinese "resistance" was self-evident in China, the "apology" issue could never come to the point of discussing historical perceptions. At its core, it was a fundamentally political issue, but it also concerned historical perceptions since there was no popular consensus about the Second Sino-Japanese War in Japan and a deep rift existed between the two sides, as demonstrated by the adoption of the Fusen Ketsugi. As a result, the gap between Japan and China when it came to the "apology" only continued to widen (Mizoguchi, 2004: 63-83).

The repeated "apologies" were criticized by "sensible people with experience of engaging in Japan-China relations, who thought that a relationship that requires apologies is far from a true friendship" (Okabe, 2006: 65-68). It has also been pointed out that the apologies might have a bad effect on the nationalisms of victim countries, saying that, "Despite the good intentions of those in Japan who admit the damages inflicted and want to make apologies, an undeniable side-effect is that it has fostered nationalism in neighboring countries" (Mitani, 2007: 99-100). As a result, we see the phenomenon of "history problem fatigue" or "apology fatigue" among the Japanese general population (Kokubun, 2000: 72-74). There has been a build-up of negative emotions asking "How many times do we have to apologize?" and a sense of victimhood stemming from being blamed arbitrarily for a history that one had no part in, which can be seen especially among young people born in the post-war period (Buruma, 1997: 33).

In recent years, international observers have noted that attempts at "apologizing" leads to more divided domestic opinion, so that every apology issued by the government in reality is followed by opposition at home and more distrust from the country receiving the apology, thus sometimes yielding a negative outcome. Similarly, if the other country lacks the will or foundation to accept the apology, the apology become ineffectual (Yamazaki, 2006; Lind, 2008).

There is a great discrepancy between the Chinese and Japanese stances on the "apology" issue, with one asking "Why does Japan not apologize?" and the other "How long will China keep asking for an apology?," but this is not simply a matter of dealing with the "past." It can be said to be intimately connected with popular sentiments and nationalism on both sides.

History Textbooks in China: Patriotic Education

With the rise of the anti-Japanese movement in China after 2004, a popular theory among the Japanese mass media and politicians was that its cause lay in the "anti-Japanese education" that formed part of China's patriotic education. Specifically, issue was taken with the contents of history textbooks and museum displays in China.

Motivated by such concerns, the Japanese government has in recent years used the stage of diplomacy to request a revision of such "anti-Japanese education," but the response from China has simply been that the patriotic education is not aimed to be "anti-Japanese" and no "anti-Japanese education" is being carried out.

In China, patriotic education was first promoted by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s, as a way to control the domestic unrest following the shift from cultural revolution to reform and opening

up, as well as to magnify the unifying force of the Communist party and the state. The patriotic education was further intensified during the Jiang Zemin period in the 1990s, in the context of a growing sense of crisis following the democratization movement and the Tiananmen Square Incident, coming to emphasize not only a glorious history but also China's humiliation and victimhood (Kinoshita, 2007: 114-119).

This is best symbolized by the Outline on Implementing Patriotic Education, enacted by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party in August 1994. The "guidelines" define patriotism as "a banner for mobilizing and encouraging the organized struggle of the Chinese people" (above text), and emphasize the importance of education for the youth and clearly specifies the Patriotic Education Bases as educational institutions for that purpose. Moreover, important literature conforming to these "guidelines" identifies patriotic education as dependent on teaching China's modern and contemporary history. The literature states that, "it promotes understanding of the Chinese people's grave hardships and valiant struggles in the modern era as well as establishes the people's self-esteem, self-confidence, and pride from an early age" (Okamura, 2004).

Firstly, with regard to Chinese textbooks (in this article, I refer to middle-school history textbooks), it is true that the Second Sino-Japanese War is treated as the most important topic in the history of Japan-China relations, but it still takes up only a small part of the entire textbook, and it is not necessarily the case that it has been expanded in recent years (Wang, 2006).

Rather, it is the contents that have changed under the influence of patriotic education. The history textbooks of the 1980s already contained mentions of Japanese military activities, but the emphasis was on the heroic fighting of the Chinese Army and the leadership of the Communist Party. Since the 1990s, the entries about Japanese acts of cruelty have been expanded, with added mentions about "the pits of ten-thousand corpses" and "the contest to kill 100 people with a sword" as well as renewed emphasis on the cruelty and huge body counts of incidents by using photographs and illustrations. There has been a particular increase in detailed accounts of "the Nanjing Massacre" in recent years. The 2001 edition of the "Teachers' Text for Teaching and Learning (Teacher's Version)" states that, "We have to expose the cruelty and barbarity of the war of aggression against China that was caused by Japanese imperialism [...] We have to engrave in our minds a deep resentment of and great hatred for Japanese imperialism."⁶ There is concern that these textbooks may impart a negative image of Japan to students (see also Shinbo, 2006; Ibaraki, 2006; Yuge, 2006 and 2007).

At the same time, Chinese education as whole is also changing. The establishment of the Nationwide Middle and Elementary School Screening Board began a shift from the earlier system of textbooks "certified by the state" to that of textbook "screening," which involves the "screening" of textbooks compiled on the local level. The Shanghai history textbook created under this new system stands out in its positive appraisal of Japan, as it has less mention of the Nanjing Incident and other Japanese military activities, makes much more space for post-war Japan, and refers to the ODA for the first time (*Yomiuri Weekly*, 21 January, 2007: 21-24; *Asahi Shimbun*, March 8, 2007). It was used as a "trial book" in 2006, but the Shanghai City Board of Education suddenly decided to cancel it in September 2007 (*Asahi Shimbun*, September 15, 2007. For details, see Sato, 2008).

At the same time, a priority designation of Patriotic Education Bases has taken place in accordance with the Outline on Implementing Patriotic Education. At present, 266 bases have been designated. Target areas mostly include history since ancient times, the Communist Party, and political leaders. Although only a small number deals with the Second Sino-Japanese War, these include large-scale and well-known places such as the Museum of the War of Chinese

⁶ This policy is also followed in the Compulsory Education Standard Trial Textbook for Chinese History: First Book for the Eighth Grade: Teachers' Text for Teaching and Learning (2006).

People's Resistance against Japanese Aggression (Marco Polo Bridge), the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, and the 9.18 Historical Museum (Shenyang).

Facilities connected to the Second Sino–Japanese war emphasize the violence of the Japanese Army; honor the Chinese resistance against the Japanese, especially stressing Mao Zedong and the Communist Party's struggle and historical victory in the Anti-Fascist War; and advocate the people's unity and the building of a strong nation. It is especially problematic how photographs, dioramas, and wax figures are used to appeal to the visitors' visual perception and emotions. Furthermore, doubts have been raised about the authenticity of some displayed photographs. These exhibitions have been criticized for not contributing to the Japan–China friendship, since they foment hate for and resentment of Japan and may cause misanthropy and the glorification of war (Anzai, 2008: 17-19; Hiranuma, 2009).

Discerning people in China suggest that they should not incite vengeance. An example is the author Ge Hongbing who wrote on his blog that the bloody and gory photographs on display at the various anti-Japanese museums “fill the minds of young people with resentment and give rise to a mind-set of wanting to ‘take revenge’ on Japan” (*Tokyo Shimbun*, June 24, 2007; *Sankei Shimbun*, June 15, 2007).⁷

Words like “anti-Japanese” or “resistance against the Japanese” are seldom used in Chinese official documents relating to patriotic education and it cannot be said that Japan is the target of these documents. As such, most experts on Japan–China relations do not regard the patriotic education as primarily “anti-Japanese” (Okamura, 2004: 69). Yet, the Second Sino–Japanese War is more than a basis for the legitimacy of the Communist Party's government, and Japan has remained an important target of resistance throughout the modern and contemporary history, which is emphasized by patriotic education. Additionally, it cannot be denied that the historical perception issue has led to a greater focus on Japan in recent years. Since China has a “nationalism accompanied by trauma” in the form of its history of humiliating invasion, the “people's restoration” has come to carry the meaning of liquidating China's humiliation. Since Japan is the principal target of this process, this means that “There is no place more acutely sensitive to China's nationalism than Japan” (Liu, 2001: 116-117).

Chinese scholars agree that the aim of patriotic education lay in praising the Communist Party's struggle during the Second Sino–Japanese War, thereby cultivating a spirit of patriotism and gaining popular support, but that, “It cannot be denied that it had a dimension of inciting anti-Japanese sentiments amongst the people” (Liu, 1998: 113). Although originally meant for domestic consumption, the patriotic education eventually became a partially “anti-Japanese” education and came to have an effect outside of China as it became entangled with the historical perception issue between Japan and China.

In recent years, however, there has been a growing chorus of voices within China who identify “Chinese nationalism and anti-Japanese activities” as obstacles to Japan–China relations. Signs of change can be seen as they surpass “Japanese nationalism and anti-Chinese activities” (Kudo, 2008: 70-71).

Simultaneously, the democratization movement in recent years is accompanied by more open expressions of the Chinese general population's memories of victimhood, which had been suppressed as part of the national policy that was diplomatic normalization (Yang, 2006:341; Nie, 2006: 33-36).

Conclusion

The historical perception issue did not become a problem in the relations between Japan and

⁷ Yet Ge later deleted and withdrew the blog text after a storm of online criticism.

China until the 1970s. Until that point, it had rather been a Japanese domestic problem, but it became an international problem with the 1982 textbook controversy. The Japanese and Chinese governments reached a level of political “compromise” in the process, but this stimulated radical arguments at home, setting up a structurally vicious circle where the nationalisms on either side kept reinforcing each other.

Each side had its own version of the “politicization” of historical perceptions, each progressing in a different direction. Japan was heavily affected by the ideological battle of the “domestic cold war,” which caused a split of historical perceptions. China labeled those with a “correct view of history,” as seen from the Chinese perspective, as “forces of justice” and those without as “right-wing,” and since they attached importance to the former the Japanese domestic battle became an issue of Japan–China relations (Yabuki, 2004:104-108).

Since the first textbook controversy, it could often be observed how the domestic antagonism, after having spread abroad, would return to have domestic repercussions. As this provoked criticism of “external pressure,” the result was an arousal of nationalism within Japan. It has been pointed out that, “With both the textbook issue and the Yasukuni issue, the present diplomatic solutions are ones that created various forms of dissatisfaction inside Japan. [...] The conservative nationalists have been expanding their movement by criticizing” (Tanaka, 2007: 164-165).

From the Japanese perspective, it is always the Japanese historical perception that is seen as problematic and China's objections are heeded, so that “The essence of the historical perception issue between Japan and China is to what extent Japan can accommodate China's one-sided assertions” (Iechika, 2007: 64-65), which has given rise to a structure of asymmetry (Ijiri, 1990:114). Against this background of “politicization” and “asymmetry” of historical perceptions, not only the “left” but also “liberals and moderate conservatives” have abstained from objecting to the Chinese out of “a feeling of atonement” and “an excessive ethicism.” Thus, “the result has in fact been dissatisfaction and distrust of ‘left-wing’ and ‘liberal’ debaters amongst ordinary Japanese citizens, a growth of sympathy and support for ‘anti-Korean and anti-Chinese groups,’ and more obstacles to reconciliation in Japan–China and Japan–Korea relations” as well as “a recurring vicious circle of emotional attacks by nationalistic elements on both sides that lead to further mutual opposition” (Onuma, 2007b: 212-216).

Simultaneously, China “has posited the remembrance of the anti-Japanese resistance as an important political and social activity throughout the post-war period” (Bu, 2007: 207), so that historical perception became an issue of the state and party's legitimacy. To young recipients of the post-1980s patriotic education who never experienced war, the words and deeds recently shown by some people in Japan have had a greater impact than the “facts” of history, fomenting a new antipathetic image of an “unremorseful Japan” (Lu, 2002: 225). It has been said that, “It is definitely not so that an indirect experience lessens the sense of victimhood. Rather the opposite, there is the possibility that only the imagery is amplified without obstruction,” and “This situation becomes more dire as time goes by” (Ueda, 2005: 166-167). The patriotic education directed at youths was not the direct cause of the textbook and Yasukuni issues, but it built the foundation for their amplification.

Furthermore, Japan's recession and China's prominence in recent years have further complicated the historical perception issue. The discord over historical perceptions between Japan and China combined with the lack of historical experience of Japan and China simultaneously existing as superpowers has encouraged a sense of rivalry between the two. International observers note that the antagonism over historical perceptions “is really only a surface phenomenon, hiding the real conflict that is over leadership in Asia” (Meyer, 2010: 212-215).

The scope of the historical perception issue has expanded in both countries ever since the textbook controversies, becoming a complicated phenomenon that encompasses the different

dimensions of political diplomacy, academic research, and popular sentiment, making it difficult to discuss it only within the framework of state diplomacy as was done in the past. The “official” Japan–China Joint History Research (see also Hatano, 2009; Kitaoka, 2010; Shoji, 2010), which is funded by both governments, is emblematic of this. It argues that neither side should stimulate nationalism by “politicizing” the historical perception issue in politics, diplomacy, and the media, but we should first calmly verify the “facts” that make up the premise of our mutual historical perceptions in order to reduce the gap and prejudice between the two countries.

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