

# JAPAN REVIEW

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## History and Collective Memories

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## History and Collective Memories

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\* The Japan Institute of International Affairs organized a symposium on January 17, 2018 with Foundation for Strategic Research (France) entitled “Crossed perspectives: questions of history and remembrance in Europe and Asia” in Paris. Article No. 1, 2, 3, and 5 are written in relation to the symposium.

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She has authored five books including her latest work, *China, Japan, and Senkaku Islands: Conflict in the East China Sea Amid an American Shadow* (Routledge ©2018). She has written numerous peer-reviewed research papers and articles in various edited book volumes and academic journals. She is a regular participant in Track 1.5 & 2 diplomatic dialogues and writes regular columns on foreign policy and strategic affairs in newspapers published out of India and Japan, namely, *The Sunday Guardian and The Sankei Shimbun*.

# Preface

## The Crossroad of History and International Relations: Towards Historical Reconciliation in East Asia

Yuichi Hosoya  
Professor, Keio University

### Introduction

It should be noted that the importance of historical issues in international relations is not new, nor it is indigenous to Asia. After the end of the First World War, the US and European governments began to release their diplomatic documents to show that they were keen on avoiding the outbreak of this catastrophic war. They all wanted to avoid responsibility for beginning the Great War. Thus, the great powers were competing to proclaim the justice of their own causes.

The twentieth century experienced a transformation in the nature of international relations. After the end of the religious wars in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, international relations had been occupied by power politics and the pursuit of national interests based upon rationality. However, the twentieth century saw the increasing importance of values, ideas and justice. More than ever, international order needed to be based on particular justice. After the first and second world wars, the victorious powers imposed their values and ideas on the foundations of the postwar orders.

While historical issues and memories have been closely linked to international relations both in Europe and in Asia for many decades, we have seen much more tense situations in the rivalries over historical issues in Asia since the end of the Cold War. Jan-Werner Müller, a leading political theorist of our time, wrote that “the relationship between memories and the present, or so it seems, has been stronger and more immediate than at other times.”<sup>1</sup> He explains that “one reason might be that the past returns with a vengeance during times of political crisis.”<sup>2</sup> It is particularly important to be aware that “after the collapse of communism, memories of the Second World War were ‘unfrozen’ on both sides of the former Iron Curtain.”<sup>3</sup>

### The Reemergence of Historical Issues after the End of the Cold War

Thus, it is important to link the reemergence of historical issues with the end of the Cold War, as strategic requirements had long prevented the emergence of the historical issues between and

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<sup>1</sup> Jan-Werner Müller, “Introduction: the power of memory, the memory of power and the power over memory”, in Jan-Werner Müller (ed.), *Memory & Power in Post-war Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.6.

within the opposing camps. Gilbert Rozman, a professor at Princeton University, also pointed out the importance of the link between the two: “The victimizer and the victims were artificially separated through much of the Cold War era, but now they face each other without intermediaries and with much less inclination on either side of the divide to put aside the issue of history”.<sup>4</sup>

Together with the collapse of the communist regimes, the rise of democracy and popular movements in Asian countries have further ignited the reemergence of historical issues in the last three decades. Governments in Asia, particularly in South Korea, have been facing difficulties in containing historical issues since democratization. Previous authoritarian regimes in South Korea could largely prevent the emergence of historical issues since they needed both economic assistance from Japan and also a stable strategic relationship with the US. In a sense, the emergence of historical issues in South Korea is related to the rise of democracy, feminism and nationalism at the cost of a close partnership with the Japanese government. Cheol-Hee Park, a professor of Japanese politics at Seoul National University, argues that “anti-Japanese sentiment and anticommunism has constituted a core of South Korean nationalism”.<sup>5</sup> Once communism lost its power in South Korean politics, anti-Japanese sentiment became the center of South Korean nationalism.

In China, the situation is worse than in South Korea. After having abandoned political reforms and the possibility of democratization at the Tiananmen incident of June 1989, the Chinese Communist Party began to rely more upon using an anti-Japanese historical campaign to maintain the legitimacy of its authoritarian regime. Jennifer Lind, an expert on historical issues at Dartmouth, argues that “the Chinese Communist Party, left ideologically adrift after the country’s embrace of capitalism, has been known to stoke anti-Japanese sentiment to bolster its domestic political legitimacy. Many China watchers worry that the party will increasingly appeal to nationalism and xenophobia if the remaining sources of its legitimacy – economic growth and the claim to Taiwan – are jeopardized.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus, since the end of the Cold War, both domestic and international politics in East Asia have been empowering confrontation over historical issues. At the same time, East Asian countries have begun to make more efforts to reconcile their different stances on this issue.

### **Politics and Diplomacy for Historical Reconciliation**

If historical issues have more closely linked with international relations in East Asia, it is now more necessary to settle, or at least to mitigate, historical confrontations among those countries. In the last decade, Japan, South Korea and China have devoted considerable energy to creating better relationships by facing historical issues more squarely.

There were some good reasons for these diplomatic efforts. First, intra-East Asian trade has grown rapidly in the last two decades. This required better inter-governmental and international relations among the countries of East Asia. Second, these countries have basically been rational enough to understand the damage caused by diplomatic antagonism over historical issues.

At the Sino-Japanese summit meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Xi Jinping on November 7, 2014, the two governments agreed that “Both sides shared some recognition that, following the spirit of squarely facing history and advancing toward the future,

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Rozman, “East Asian Historical Issues in a Contemporary Light”, in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo (eds.), *East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism* (London: Praeger, 2008), p.54.

<sup>5</sup> Cheol Hee Park, “Historical Memory and the Resurgence of Nationalism: A Korean Perspective”, in Hasegawa and Togo (eds.), *East Asia’s Haunted Present*, p.191.

<sup>6</sup> Jennifer Lind, “The Perils of Apology: Why Japan Shouldn’t Learn from Germany”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2009. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/japan/2009-05-01/perils-apology>.



they would overcome political difficulties that affect their bilateral relations”.<sup>7</sup> This became a positive sign of improvement in the bilateral relationship.

In this spirit, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe decided to issue a new historical statement in 2015. Abe remarked at the beginning of January 2015 that “As we come to this milestone of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the end of the war, I intend to consolidate wisdom when considering what the Abe administration can send out as a message to the world concerning Japan’s remorse over World War II, the path we have walked since the war as a peace-loving nation, and how Japan will contribute further to benefit the Asia-Pacific region and the world, and then incorporate that into a new statement”.<sup>8</sup>

Based upon a report submitted by the Advisory Panel, Prime Minister Abe issued his historical statement, the so-called “Abe Statement”, on August 14, 2015, in which the Japanese government clearly linked “20<sup>th</sup>-century history” with “Japan’s role in the world order in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”.

Japan should not be the only country endeavoring to promote historical reconciliation. Both China and South Korea should take some responsibility for creating better bilateral relationships. The governments of both countries should not utilize anti-Japanese sentiment in their countries as a “weapon” to enhance their domestic legitimacy and popularity. Orville Schell, the director of the Center on US-China Relations at the Asia Society, criticizes Chinese weaponization of historical issues and writes that “The Central Propaganda Department – which, along with myriad other state organs, is tasked with censoring the media and making sure that all educational materials tow the party’s line – has sealed off entire areas of China’s past”.<sup>9</sup> China should also “face squarely up to history” as well as its neighboring countries.

Regardless of the remaining difficulties over historical issues, Japan, China and South Korea need to continue their efforts to reconcile differences in their stances on historical issues. By doing this, East Asia can become another good model for how countries overcome difficulties over historical issues and how these countries create close regional cooperation.

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Regarding Discussions toward Improving Japan-China Relations”, November 7, 2014. [http://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/c\\_m1/cn/page4e\\_000150.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/cn/page4e_000150.html).

<sup>8</sup> The Advisory Panel on the History of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and on Japan’s Role and the World Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, *Toward the Abe Statement on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of World War II: Lessons from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and a Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for Japan* (Tokyo: JPIC, 2017), p.iii.

<sup>9</sup> Orville Schell, “China’s Cover-Up: When Communists Rewrite History”, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2018, p.23.



# Factors of Reconciliation: Is There a European Model?

Thomas Serrier

The violence that broke Europe in pieces and resulted in millions of deaths during the two world wars may have created the impression that “nothing tears us apart quite like family.”<sup>1</sup> What a contrast with today in any event!

A crowd of a million people in London’s Trafalgar Square, in the streets of Barcelona and Rome, 600,000 protesters in Madrid and Berlin, several hundred thousand in Paris, demonstrations in Warsaw, Prague and up to Minsk...: the largest trans-European gathering to this day was held on 15 February 2003 to say no to the war in Iraq. If the European states were divided between participation (United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Central Europe) and the refusal to participate (Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium...) in the coalition initiated by George W. Bush to overthrow Saddam Hussein, European opinion, for its part, seemed united. Doubts over the legitimacy of the operation coalesced with the powerful tradition of “Never again” that proliferated in Europe after 1945. Drawing on this mass demonstration, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, two of the most celebrated European intellectuals of the day, published a plea entitled “After the War. The Renaissance of Europe” in several European newspapers on 31 May 2003.

The meaning of this title did not refer to an imagined future for the period following the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, but rather interpreted the present as being the indicator of a secular shift. Guided by geopolitical urgency and European construction expectations, the analysis by Derrida and Habermas in fact took up the great irenic narrative which, with certain slight differences, makes post-war Europe the period of successful consolidation of democracy and an irreversible conversion to the culture of peace.

“Where have all the soldiers gone?” we might well wonder, with James J. Sheehan, in thinking about the peaceful way of life that prevailed at the turn of the twenty-first century, from Lisbon to Tallinn and from Belfast to Sofia. This was before the wave of terrorism that hit European countries and led to a renewed stress on security.

War and, sometimes, even the idea of military intervention, seemed to have been banned, maybe not in all European countries, but in an overwhelming majority of them. This shift had been taking place since 1945, even though it was slowed by the Cold War. It reached its peak with the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to the European Union for its contribution to “peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights.” It was supposed to have transformed Europe, a continent of incessant wars, into a permanent sanctum of peace. This great narrative became commonplace. For instance, the objectives of the “House of European History”, established in 2007, to recount “50 years of the European adventure” since 1945—Year Zero—are explicit: “In 1945, at the end of the war, Europe touched the bottom of the abyss.”<sup>2</sup> And the title of the last book by Ian Kersaw, Hitler’s biographer, picks up exactly the same thread: *Europe to hell and*

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<sup>1</sup> Elie Barnavi, “Faire prendre conscience aux Européens de ce qui leur est commun (Raise awareness among Europeans about what is common to them),” *Le Monde*, 19 October 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Exhibition catalogue, *It’s our history! Fifty years of European adventure*, Brussels, Tempora, 2007, p. 29.

*back*.<sup>3</sup>

If tensions remain within the European Union or at its margins (Cyprus, Macedonia, Ukraine, Russia), the shift that took place since 1945 demonstrates the possibility of a rapprochement between former enemies. For many historians, this metamorphosis goes far beyond the simple fact of the European construction in an exclusively political and institutional sense.

To analyze the scope and limits of European reconciliation, four main points must be taken into consideration.

The first regards the historical, material, and moral context in which this movement towards reconciliation took place. The second focuses on those players who had a leading role in both the rapprochement itself and the effort to put the process of reconciliation itself at the centre of European collective memory. The third will evoke the role of the political management of memory issues in these developments; and finally, the fourth will examine the existence of a specific European model of conflict resolution.

### **The Period Following the Two Wars: Exhaustion, New Order, and Reorientation**

Today it is common to hear both journalists and representatives of the EU declare that Europe was “built on the foundations of reconciliation.” Perhaps this is forgetting that the strategic choice of the “fathers of Europe,” including Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, had been to promote the interconnection of economic interests, that would prohibit any direct confrontation between European nations (particularly France and Germany). It was not based on reconciliation, and even less on friendship among the people, difficult to imagine so soon after the war’s end.

With respect to both the recent past and the centuries-old legacy of conflicts, all officials, from all sides, regardless of their political affiliation, initially chose to remain silent. In the speech he gave in Zurich in 1946, Winston Churchill summarized that position by stating that the objective should be to “turn our backs upon the horrors of the past.”

In retrospect, however, it is the in-depth transformation of relations between former adversaries that gains notice. Particularly because the “last catastrophe” (Henry Rousso), namely WWII, was not the only conflict to overcome between European nations. The wreckage of 1945 echoed the ruins of 1918. Before that, there were the traces left by the Napoleonic Wars, the Religion wars and the Hundred Years’ War... over the ages, quasi-standardized conflicts formatted the relations between “hereditary enemies”. The Franco-German and Polish-Russian examples are only two among countless others.

Even today, tensions among European countries remind us that the way of overcoming these rivalries is not self-evident: it is neither the product of any historical necessity nor the effect of a natural movement towards friendship between the countries in question. The resurgence, between Poland and Russia, or between Greece and Germany, of negative stereotypes anchored in age-old historical legacies, nurtured by a succession of institutional, social, and financial crises, reflects the importance of the challenges.

If there is a consensus on the necessity of reconciliation, it is far from being permanently secured. The context of reconciliation among European countries is well known: from the cost of human and material devastation left by the war in 1945, to the absolute urgency of reconstruction, by way of the incorporation of European countries into the two opposing Cold War blocs. The effect of which was the control of any policy that would destabilize the new order imposed and guaranteed by the American and Soviet superpowers. One could add, to the risk of being accused of cynicism, the disappearance of the most virulent sources of conflicts during the inter-war period, as a result of massive transplants of populations into areas of inter-ethnic mixing by the two totalitarian States in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

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<sup>3</sup> Ian Kersaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe 1914-1949*, Penguin, 2015.

“Europe is sick. Too sick even to hope for some cure. The therapeutic must yield to the surgical. An operation is necessary. None would be more efficient than exchanges, even imposed exchanges, of population,” wrote Nikolai Politis in 1940. “In the Europe of tomorrow, the interest of order and peace will require the coincidence of political borders with ethnic borders.” Politis was, however, not a pro-Nazi. On the contrary, he was a jurist and political leader who embodied a generation of cosmopolitan intellectuals committed to building European stability in the wake of the First World War. Winston Churchill was the first to call into question the ethnic balances of the pre-WWII period in Europe, speaking of a “clean sweep” as a necessary evil to ensure lasting peace. This sensitive and disturbing issue continues to trouble the collective conscience of Europeans. In 2003, the Polish writer Stefan Chwin, who was born in 1949 in Gdańsk, wrote in a provocative paper:

“The time has surely come to stop mentioning only the losses related to the deportation of whole ethnic groups, but also to raise soberly and coldly the “positive aspects” of these massive population displacements.”<sup>4</sup>

This argument questions the tacit agreement of the exclusively negative nature, in terms of consequences, of the displacements of populations that occurred before and immediately after the Second World War. However, would Europe that is being built today have been permitted to see the light without the “original sin” of these massive displacements of populations by the Nazi and Soviet totalitarian regimes? Might it be possible that it is precisely these huge displacement of populations during the 40s and 50s that finally saved central Europe after 1989 from a massive crisis akin to that which ripped through the Balkans between 1991 and 2001?

### **Actors of the Reconciliation Process: Emblematic Figures and Social Foundations**

In 1945, various actors pledged to (re)build Europe on the principle of confrontation of ideas rather than confrontation of weapons.

The first condition was to take a decisive step out of the spiral of revenge and violence that had been one of the characteristics of Europe until 1945. “Far from avenging us, whoever strikes or slaughters a German prisoner, insults us,”<sup>5</sup> declared Robert Antelme in 1945, shortly after being himself freed from the Dachau concentration. For this man, a member of the French resistance, it was the memory of his friends, victims of the war, that imposed a new humanism, based on the respect for the former enemy: “Revenge will come only from the victory of the ideas (···) for which they died.”<sup>6</sup>

This ethic of reconstruction is the prerequisite for a new departure. Joseph Rovin, also a former deportee to Dachau, who was born in Munich and took refuge in France after Adolf Hitler’s rise to power, declared in a famous article that France will have “the Germany it deserves” according to its attitude, unforgiving or constructive.

This new ethic arose from the substitution of national antagonisms with a new moral vision based, on the one hand, on the rejection of the principle of collective condemnations and, on the other hand, on the idea that the greatness of a nation can only be measured by its degree of advancement and capability to respect a former enemy.

In 1989, the President of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel, during a meeting with his German counterpart Richard von Weizsäcker, did mention that his people had already accepted the principle of collective guilt leading to the systematic expulsion of the German minority in Czechoslovakia: “We expelled them, not on the basis of established individual guilt, but simply

<sup>4</sup> Stefan Chwin, « Das « Glück » der Vertriebenen », (The « luck » of the displaced), *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20-10-2003.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Antelme, *Vengeance*, Paris, Farrago, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

because they belonged to a particular nation. (...) In acting thus, we have injured ourselves.”<sup>7</sup>

The Franco-German situation, without necessarily being at the heart of this transformation, became emblematic of these evolutions which emerged in the civil society well before it became an official position.

Former protagonists of the Second World War, veterans, members of the resistance, and former prisoners of war, invested with a moral authority played an essential and exemplary role in this reconciliation process. Intellectuals like Władysław Bartoszewski in Poland, Joseph Rovin or Jean du Rivau in France, Jorge Semprun between Spain, France and Germany, but also the dissidents Lev Kopelev and Alexander Solzhenitsyn also played a major role. Their friendship with the German writer Heinrich Böll during the 60s and 70s, made a process of reconciliation possible, beyond the memories of Operation Barbarossa, Stalingrad, Soviet troops in Berlin in 1945, also beyond the ideological constraints of the Cold War.

The role of the Church is also well-documented, most notably in the German-Polish case. In October 1965, an important letter was sent by the Polish ecclesiastical authorities to their German counterparts. The use of the formula: “We forgive and ask for forgiveness” allowed both the sufferings endured by the Polish people throughout the war and by the Germans expelled after the defeat of the *Wehrmacht* to be acknowledged.

This healing work, that carefully took into account each country’s suffering, had begun, in the middle of the war, with Father Franz Stock, a German prison chaplain who helped hundreds of French detainees by ensuring the exchange of messages between those sentenced to death and their loved ones and who, after the war, stayed in France to support German prisoners of war.

After the war, many former members of the resistance, who escaped German camps, exhorted their comrades to avoid any nationalist excesses and to encourage mutual knowledge and exchanges involving the youth of both countries, politicians, trade unionists, journalists or even entrepreneurs.

It is this spirit that presided over the beginnings of the Bureau International de Liaison et de Documentation (BILD) and, in August 1945, the foundation of two journals, *Dokumente* and *Document* published in France and in Germany. The initiatives by these individual figures were, followed by various cultural, political or professional initiatives. The Franco-German Institute (DFI) was established in Ludwigsburg in 1948 to foster exchanges and language learning. Partnerships grew; meetings between historians came in quick succession and for instance Georg Eckert created a program for the systematized critical re-reading of textbooks. The Elysée Treaty of 1963 thus officially sealed a reconciliation that was well under way, and essentially further strengthened it. Over fifty years, more than 8 million French and German youth participated in the exchanges organized by the French-German Youth Office (FGYO).

### **The Role of Symbolic Gestures of Reconciliation in Europe**

The echo that met the solemn gestures of reconciliation can be understood against this social and cultural backdrop. The aura of the protagonists, the symbolic nature of the chosen historical backdrop (Reims, Verdun, the location of a memorial to the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Krzyżowa...), the strength of these gestures, supported by the power of the speeches - or on the contrary, by the silence that is sometimes preferable for adding to the impact of some of these gestures, played an essential role.

But we know that the official Polish press, after Willy Brandt’s famous gesture of kneeling in 1970, held back images of the West German Chancellor repenting in Warsaw. We also know that the symbolic venue proposed for the “Reconciliation Mass” that was celebrated in the presence

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<sup>7</sup> Richard von Weizsäcker and Vaclav Havel, “Échange pragoise sur la culpabilité (Reflections on guilt from the citizens of Prague),” *Esprit*, No. 162, June 1990, pp. 5-8.



of Chancellor Kohl and the Polish Prime Minister-President Mazowiecki on 12 November 1989 in Krzyzowa was suggested at the very last moment to avoid embarrassing historical blunders. Instead of this former Prussian territory, centre of the anti-Hitler resistance, located in Poland since 1945, Kohl had first considered the Annaberg hill, the site of clashes between German forces and pro-Polish paramilitary in 1921.

Another significant transnational symbol has been, without question, the handshake between French President François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl in Verdun in 1984. A similar pattern emerged when Queen Elizabeth II, whose cousin Lord Mountbatten had been assassinated by the IRA, and former IRA leader Martin McGuinness shook hands for the first time in June 2012, remembering “all who died in the Irish conflict,” while leaders of *Sinn Féin* had refused the idea of such a meeting a year before considering that it was “too early.”

The performative character of solemn rituals is, however, not certain. On the contrary, the repetition of such formal gestures can seem artificial, performed in order to “prove” the reality of reconciliation. In a biting commentary, German journalist Klaus Bachmann criticized in 1994 the “kitsch of reconciliation”, based on the mechanical repetition of the same ritualistic and hollow gestures.

Writing on this very topic, Valérie Rosoux stated that “the joint celebrations of WWI armistice day each November 11 by Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy certainly illustrates the passage from duel to duo. Do they evoke however the same emotion as the first ones in 1984?”

When there is a lack of real support or popular consent or when the gestures of reconciliation are clearly related to political ends, they can easily become counterproductive. This was for instance the case of the “brotherly kiss” between Leonid Brezhnev and the Secretary General of the East German Communist Party Erich Honecker on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GDR.

Conversely, a situation may still be too sensitive to make such a gesture possible. This was the case of Bosnia, where, after the wars between 2000 and 2010, several ceremonies, modelled after the figure of Brandt kneeling in Warsaw, never producing unanimity, in fact quite the opposite.

When Serbian President Boris Tadic travelled to Srebrenica in July 2005, the associations of mothers of the victims initially refused to allow the head of State to participate in the commemorations. In 2013, his successor, Tomislav Nikolic, declared that he was kneeling to ask forgiveness, but refused to use the words “massacre” or “genocide”. Two years later, the Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic was forced to leave the memorial of Srebrenica.

### **The Work of Time and Memory: A European Paradigm?**

One of the key difficulties of the process of reconciliation is to suggest that a turning point can occur in an instant, while for the populations, especially for the victims, the process can only be accepted in the long term. In the aftermath of violence, is it in generations that such an evolution is possible. The issue is to transform painful memories by giving them a constructive or re-constructive meaning. The central issue is the reason of all these European conflicts that have taken so many soldiers and civilians from us – A moral question to which politicians have often chosen not to respond and remain silent.

That attitude was the most common choice right after 1945 as it had always been. In fact, for centuries, silence and amnesty were regarded as prerequisites for any reconciliation. In 1946 in Zurich, Winston Churchill set out a clear and explicit objective that everyone could understand: “We must all turn our backs upon the horrors of the past.”

Major changes in attitude came later, during a long period that extended from the 60s to the 90s. It led to a complete reversal of the imperative to forget. Today, populations and European authorities alike insist on the importance of memory from all sides.

Despite the shortcomings, obstacles and silences that may persist today between neighbouring countries and former European enemies, it is true that this ability and willingness

to confront the memories of the wars that ravaged Europe give the European Union Member States a particular vocation in terms of conflict resolution. To cite Guy Verhofstadt, one example among many, the devastating experience of the two world wars and particularly of the Shoah is “the source of a particular European sensitivity and generosity.”<sup>8</sup> Unlike the United States, often perceived as arrogant and unilateral, Europe has learnt “humility” from past tragedies.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Limits of the European Model**

It would be easy however, to establish the list of ongoing conflicts or unresolved issues in Europe, from Ukraine to Cyprus, divided for over 40 years. The categorization between resolved and unresolved conflict is in itself highly subjective.

These limits do not prevent the EU from seeking to extend its model of reconciliation beyond its borders.<sup>10</sup> First, beyond the limits of Europe, the question concerns the normalization of relations among the EU members or between some of its member states and states outside of the Union. In this specific instance, the main challenge is posed by the colonial past of European countries. The spokesperson of the European delegation at the Conference in Durban, Louis Michel, described a horizon of “historic reconciliation between North and South” based on a narrative that implicitly integrates, at its very core, the acknowledgement of responsibilities. “Over the centuries, European history has been contrasted. The best has coexisted with the worst. European countries have been in turns both conquerors and subjects, martyrs and aggressors, fraternal and fratricidal, bearers of generous ideas but also of abject designs.”<sup>11</sup> But recognition of an injustice does not systematically lead to an apology. Many things are at stake, from the legal and financial consequences that could result from possible reparations, to the consequences on internal policies, and electoral sanction.

The fact that France and Algeria have never managed to sign their “Elysée Treaty” nor enact their own type of “Verdun handshake” is revealing in this regard. More than half a century after the independence of Algeria, the Franco-German model has been definitively abandoned by the officials and the political advisers of the two countries. Without doubt because the Franco-German model is based on the recognition of a kind of symmetry between the two former enemies. Moreover, between France and Germany, there is a reciprocal cultural fascination. It is without doubt much less the case between Germany and Poland, but the Franco-Algerian case, as with other situations opposing former colonizers and former colonies, is entirely different.

Colonization automatically cancels any idea of symmetry as it imposes a hierarchy between the parties.

Beyond the difficulties of applying the European model of reconciliations to former colonies, there are other limits to this global aspiration. The European experience is without a doubt a remarkable precedent. However, at the global level, it does not constitute a unique model for all post-conflict situations. According to Valérie Rosoux: “The grammar of reconciliation gradually set out by the European countries does not result solely from a *sui generis* experience. It is also significantly influenced by the example of the establishment of “reconciliation commissions”, whether in Latin America or for the most emblematic of all, in South Africa in the 90s.

Far from dictating the way forward, the European States seem to have become fascinated, with a model of reconciliation based on forgiveness. The charisma of Nelson Mandela had a lot to do with these developments adapted for the European theatre, as in the case of the International Crime Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

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<sup>8</sup> Guy Verhofstadt, Brussels, 18 December 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Guy Verhofstadt, Brussels, 08 December 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Thierry De Montbrial, *Le Monde*, 7 April 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Durban, 30 August 2001.

The concept of “forgiveness”, according to V. Rosoux, also appears nowhere in the project of the founding fathers of the European Union. Actually, in the founding texts of the European community, there is much more question of the pooling of each nation’s interests than of reconciliation between the people, or even of the establishing conditions for lasting peace between European nations.

The idea that taking memory issues into account, if not as the sole instrument but at least as an essential ingredient in the process of reconciliation, is a fairly recent development, as we have said. Nevertheless, it remains a strong feature and an essential factor of reconciliations in Europe. It bears witness to the weight of the past and the pedagogical value given to the past, even the most difficult one to face, on Europe. The ravages of past centuries, especially the last one, have regularly brought devastation to the “old continent.” The fear of diving back probably explains the European obsession with the urgency of reconciliation.



## The Past and Politics

### – Focusing on “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” in Post-War Germany

Takumi Itabashi

#### The Theme “Vergangenheitsbewältigung”

**A**lthough both Germany and Japan were defeated in the Second World War, they are currently thought of in contrasting ways by international society concerning war compensation and historical awareness. Needless to say, Germany is thought of positively, while Japan is thought of negatively. Why the difference? Is there anything we can learn from Germany?

The efforts of Germany to overcome the negative legacy of its history are collectively called “Vergangenheitsbewältigung (Overcoming the Past).” In this article, the term “negative legacy of its history” is used to refer only to the war of aggression or the Holocaust under Nazi Germany. In regard to such history, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” encompasses not only war compensation but also the perception of war responsibility, legal regulations on (Neo-)Nazism, history education, and various other aspects.

Although interest in Germany’s “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” is generally high in Japan, there are extremely contrasting views regarding it. On the one hand, there are so-called “idealization” type arguments: they praise Germany for having “repented for their past,” and set it as a model that Japan should imitate. In such arguments, the current state of Japan is criticized based on the model of Germany, which is excessively idealized (and not necessarily based on reality).

On the other hand, there are many “dissenting” type arguments: namely, arguments that Germany has “conducted itself slyly and cleverly,” pointing out and criticizing issues or flaws in its “Vergangenheitsbewältigung.” Such arguments raise as a problem the hypocrisy of Germany’s “Vergangenheitsbewältigung.” A typical example of such arguments is that Germany foisted the blame on Hitler and the Nazis and exempted regular German people from responsibility. There may be some truth to such arguments. However, it is obvious that such arguments cannot justify the current state of Japan.

Nonetheless, Germany has not noble-mindedly promoted “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” out of goodwill alone. Based on this point, those who are the dissenting type insist that it is nonsense to “learn” from Germany. However, what should be noted here is that even the dissenting type people are arguing on the same premise as those who make idealization type arguments. In other words, they are, in reality, on a level playing field with those who idealize Germany, in that their assertion that “we do not need to imitate Germany since they are hypocrites” focuses on moral integrity.

Contrarily, in this essay I would like to emphasize that “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” is not only a moral issue, but also a political one. It seems that there have been very few viewpoints so far that perceive “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” as a political issue, whether they praise or criticize the example of Germany.

As I will describe later, Germany’s “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” reached its present state after many twists and turns, as well as processes of trial and error, in the midst of international and domestic power politics. If Germany has a better reputation than Japan concerning its efforts

to overcome its past after such a history of power politics, we need to squarely look at that fact.

The point I would like to place special emphasis on is the relationship between “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” and international politics. Post-war Germany has advanced “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” while taking its national interests into consideration, within a scope of action prescribed by the international environment. It has determined the responsibilities that it should assume and the scope of compensation, while being subject to external pressure and remaining conscious of its reputation in international society.

Some specific examples will be introduced below.

### **Compensation Agreement with the State of Israel/Jewish Community as the Starting Point**

The starting point of “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” in post-war Germany is the Luxembourg Compensation Agreement (“Wiedergutmachungsabkommen”), which was concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), the State of Israel, and the representative of the Jewish people living outside Israel (the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany) in 1952. This agreement laid the foundations for “reconciliation” between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany after the bitterness created as the result of Nazi persecutions of Jews during the Second World War.

It was necessary for West Germany, which was a divided nation that had just been established, to settle its past in order to return to the international community as the “only nation that legitimately represents the Germans.” Under such circumstances, Konrad Adenauer, the first chancellor of West Germany, reached the conclusion of the Luxembourg Agreement with the help of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and external pressure from Western nations, while fighting against strong objections from ministers or members of the ruling party, as well as public opinion that was reluctant to provide compensation. Adenauer and his aides understood that “whether the new Germany would be able to regain the confidence, reputation, and trust in the world”<sup>1</sup> depended on the negotiations on compensation with Israel.

What was of special importance for Adenauer’s Israel policy was the existence of the United States. For example, John J. McCloy, the U.S. High Commissioner for occupied Germany, said that the new Germany would “be watched very closely and very carefully by the entire world,” and that the relationship of West Germany with the Jewish people would be “one of the real touchstones and the test of Germany’s progress toward the light.”<sup>2</sup> It can be said that Adenauer succeeded in concluding the Agreement by sensitively responding to the intentions of the U.S., and using them as a trump card for countermeasures against opponents.

Adenauer recognized that the FRG as the legal successor to the German Reich had a duty to accept responsibility for the crimes committed by the German government. Although Adenauer felt deep shame about Nazi persecutions of Jews, he was not simply concerned with German moral debt. A conclusive motive for the completion of the Compensation Agreement was the concern that without such an action Germany’s integration into the West would be endangered.

### **Development of Legal Systems and Education**

Based on the protocol agreed upon between West Germany and the Jewish organization at this time, the system for compensation of people who were persecuted under the Nazi regime for political, religious, or ideological reasons was legally established in the 1950’s (the law of

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Blankenhorn, *Verständnis und Verständigung. Blätter eines politischen Tagebuchs 1949 bis 1979* (Frankfurt a.M. / Berlin / Wien: Propyläen, 1980), p. 138. Blankenhorn was head of the Political Department of the Foreign Office at that time.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Michael Brenner, *Nach dem Holocaust. Juden in Deutschland 1945–1950* (München: Beck, 1995), p. 114.

particular importance was the Federal Indemnification Law, established in 1953/1956). Including bilateral agreements or other agreements stipulating individual hardship mitigation measures or compensation for individuals, the total amount of compensation paid by post-war Germany to the victims of Nazi injustice exceeds 7 trillion yen.

In addition, Germany’s “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” is not confined solely to compensation, as was described previously.

First of all, trials were held in West Germany to prosecute Nazi crimes based on domestic penal codes, separate from the Nuremberg trials held during the period of occupation. In order to make it possible to punish killings conducted during the Nazi period as murders, the statute of limitations for murders was abolished in 1979, after long debates about the statute of limitations, which started in 1960. In addition, activities of far right and neo-Nazi groups were monitored by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz) as being unconstitutional, and any speech and behavior that praises Hitler or Nazism, as well as Holocaust denial, is banned as the crime of “Volksverhetzung (incitement to hatred)” in Section 130 of the German Criminal Code. Moreover, after 1970, a reconsideration of history education was promoted, and strengthening of modern and contemporary history education, as well as international dialog with countries including Poland (1972 -) and Israel (1985 -) aiming at the improvement of textbook content, was started.

### **Symbolic Words and Actions of Political Leaders**

What should be particularly noted in Germany’s “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” are the initiatives of the political leaders of each era, and their symbolic words and actions that remain in people’s memory.

The most famous among such symbolic words and actions is probably those of Willy Brandt, the first Chancellor after the Second World War who came from the Social Democratic Party (SPD). On December 7, 1970, when he visited Warsaw to sign a treaty on the normalization of mutual relations between West Germany and Poland, he visited the Warsaw Ghetto site, knelt down at the monument of Jewish victims, bowing his head down. Whatever Brandt’s motive was, the image of the Chancellor of West Germany kneeling down in Warsaw spread around the globe, creating an impression of a “Germany that regrets its past.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition, let me mention the speech by President Richard von Weizsäcker during the Ceremony Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the End of War on May 8, 1985. It is one of the finest speeches given, and the part of his speech: “anyone who closes his eyes to the past is blind to the present” is still often quoted to this day. Here, however, I would like draw your attention to the context of this speech, which tends to be forgotten today. On May 5, three days before this speech was given, U.S. President Ronald Reagan visited West Germany, and offered flowers at the military cemetery in Bitburg with Chancellor Helmut Kohl. This became the cause of great controversy, even before his visit. This was because the soldiers of the Waffen-SS were buried in this cemetery in addition to the soldiers of the German Army. Under such circumstances, the Weizsäcker speech was delivered while the critical eye of the international society was cast upon the conservative government of West Germany. As a result, this commotion in May of 1985 has come to be remembered rather as a symbolic example of “Vergangenheitsbewältigung.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For details cf. Christoph Schneider, *Der Warschauer Kniefall. Ritual, Ereignis und Erzählung* (Konstanz: UVK Verlag, 2006); Michael Wolffsohn, Thomas Brechenmacher, *Denkmalsturz? Brandts Kniefall* (München: Olzog, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jacob S. Eder, *Holocaust Angst: The Federal Republic of Germany and American Holocaust Memory since the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 62–75.

## **The International Cold War Environment**

The above-described “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” of West Germany was largely backed by the international environment of the Cold War with regard to the following three points. First, for West Germany, it was necessary to reconcile with Western nations in the Western Bloc, including France, which it invaded in the past. Secondly, half of the countries that had suffered much damage by the Nazis, including Poland, were behind the Iron Curtain. Lastly, there was a rival that could not be ignored, East Germany. West Germany was fighting with East Germany concerning which country legitimately represented the German people; they both emphasized a break from the Nazis and competed with each other in terms of moral superiority.

## **End of the Cold War and a Globalizing World**

Lastly, I would like to mention the situation after the Cold War. Before that, however, I am going to briefly explain the difference between “reparation” and “compensation (Wiedergutmachung),” as a premise for my argument. As is often pointed out, the compensation paid by post-war (West) Germany was not reparation between countries for war damages, but was based on a concept of compensation peculiar to post-war Germany, which is “compensation for injustice under the Nazis.” War compensation by West Germany, a divided nation that had not concluded peace treaties with its former enemies, started to enter into a framework of being obligated to provide compensation for Nazi injustice under the Adenauer regime, while postponing war reparation until the future conclusion of peace treaties (in this respect, it has a different starting point from that of the case of Japan, which accepted its obligation for reparation in the San Francisco Peace Treaty).

According to this framework, the victims of persecution on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain could not receive compensation during the Cold War. During that period, the recipients of compensation by West Germany were mainly only the victims in 12 countries on the western side and Israel.

This situation had dramatically changed by the end of the Cold War and the unification of East and West Germany. Due to these changes, it became necessary to incorporate the victims of Nazi injustice residing in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, particularly forced laborers, into the subject of compensation.

To address this situation, a foundation called “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” was established. It was jointly established in 2000 by the German Government and businesses (approximately 6,500 German companies), in order to help the victims of forced labor during war, which had not been considered as a Nazi injustice, and compensation payments were made. The number of recipients was approximately 1,660,000, mainly in the former Soviet bloc countries, and the total amount of compensation payments was approximately 4.5 billion euros (the payment of monetary compensation was completed in 2007).

External pressure and the response to it were also important here. From the mid 1990’s, the victims who moved to the U.S. after the war filed a succession of class action lawsuits against German companies in U.S. courts. Major German companies that were conducting global business had to face the reality that they were involved in criminal acts under the Nazi regime through the lawsuits, and had no choice but to respond to them due to the pressure of international public opinion, including boycotts.

## **Lessons Learned from Germany**

In present Germany, prosecution of Nazis and monetary compensation have been completed, while the generation that directly experienced Nazism and war is dwindling. Under such circumstances, emphasis is shifting from “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” to “Erinnerungskultur (Culture of Remembrance).” For example, in recent years, memorials or monuments, such as

the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe located at the south end of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin or the Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism in Munich that just opened in May 2015 (the construction cost of approximately 4.0 billion yen was shared among the federation, states, and cities), have been built successively in Germany. The characteristic of memorials based on Erinnerungskultur is that they are places for presenting the past they wish to pass on to the next generation by means of explanatory panels or images, rather than displaying the items from the era, like traditional museums. In other words, Germany has entered into an era in which they strive to make the generation that has not experience war “remember” the past.

So far, I have discussed Germany. However, Germany’s “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” cannot serve as a model for Japan as it is. For example, the international environments in which Germany and Japan exist are different, and the difference in the natures of the crimes committed by the two countries cannot be ignored. Simply arguing that “Japan should become like Germany” is unreasonable in many ways, and can be even harmful at times.

In addition, there used to be intense confrontation within Germany concerning their past, and what impacted their “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” the most was pressure from international society. I would also like to emphasize that Germany has not necessarily been successful either. Rather, the image of a Germany that is always facing its past has become established through repeated trial and error.

What we can learn from Germany now after acknowledging such aspects is, I believe, how politics or the public sphere should function, and how they are composed.

Governments and politicians are required to have the ability to discern the underlying logic of international politics and determine the position that they or their country should take, as well as the ability to communicate such information inside and outside of their country. Needless to say, it is out of question for them to engage in falsehoods. Even if their words or actions are based on their beliefs, such words or actions are not politics if they are not conscious of the political functions or consequences of such words or actions.

If “public” means to be open to everyone, then “international publicness” exists already in that sense. Discourses that cater only to one’s own people (or a part of one’s own people) would only worsen the situation in such a world. In the modern international society, strict monitoring and checks are in place regarding the “forgetting of the past.” For statespersons, the ability to make their behavior conform to such values in the modern world is required. Figuratively speaking, politicians are required to have “acting skills.” It can be said that the German statesmen mentioned in this paper are those who had perfectly acted out their roles to the end.

In addition, the media should also function as an active leader of publicness, and above all, the citizens (or the “Japanese people”) should realize that they have kept choosing politicians who so far have engaged in falsehoods and that they have consumed sensationalistic media.



# 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.<sup>1</sup>

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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<sup>1</sup> 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 reparations<sup>2</sup>.

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

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<sup>2</sup> 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 Incident<sup>3</sup>. 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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 Ikuhosha. 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)<sup>4</sup>.

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 war<sup>5</sup>. 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

<sup>4</sup> 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).

<sup>5</sup> 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."<sup>6</sup> 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

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<sup>6</sup> 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).<sup>7</sup>

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

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<sup>7</sup> 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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# History and Memory Issues in Europe and Asia: Acknowledging Similarities for a Better Understanding of Contemporary Tensions

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**I**n 1989, Francis Fukuyama wrote his famous essay “The End of History?” Since then however, history and memory issues have become more important and have acquired a greater sense of urgency. These issues have become major matters of debate when examining the critical question of the use of history and the role of memory in post-colonial identity constructions and contemporary power games, with a strong linkage between internal politics and external strategies.

## Similar Debates, Different Factors

### *In France: Between the Necessary Acceptance of Past Deeds and the Rejection of Non-Debatable Narratives*

In Europe, two perspectives must be distinguished concerning the debates on history. The first one is that of intra-European relations, defined by centuries of conflicts and massacres. The two world wars of the twentieth century, with their aberrant ideologies and the mass targeting of civilian populations culminating in racial extermination marked—until today—the pinnacle of such a violent history. This traumatic experience also led to a determination to avoid future wars and to erase all sources of tensions, including history. The second dimension is that of the colonial past of European powers, and the relatively recent recognition of the need to take this past into account, in relation to migration and identity issues.

This debate is particularly significant in France, where more than 80% of the immigrant population comes from former colonies in the Maghreb, with the highest number from Algeria where the decolonization was the most traumatic on both sides. This situation raises the question of reconciliation in much more complex terms than with Germany, the usual model invoked. In the French case, the debate is focused not just on difficult issues related to a controversial colonial past and decolonization process, but also on integration and identity-building among second or third-generation immigrants.

The growing attention given to former victims’ narratives and claims emerged from both the reality of the colonial past and from contemporary social tensions, while at the same time becoming an important element of these tensions.

The use of history by some groups to assert their identity and increase their influence also poses a challenge for the historian, who may be asked to “clarify” his position on the basis of moral grounds rather than historical research. The adoption of “memorial laws” by the French Parliament was a direct consequence of these debates and was intended to impose an official version of history, in order to acknowledge past wrongs in the name of very contemporary political and social issues.

Perfect objectivity in history is illusory, but historical research is based on facts and archival work. Historical research can be used to support memory claims, but it also exists to avoid the possibility of completely distorting history. However, in many countries, history, more than science, has been for years the source of national narratives. It remains, in undemocratic or fragile countries with a poor sense of legitimacy, an instrument at the service of internal politics



and external strategies.

### ***In Asia: A Focus on Japan Based on Strategic Rivalries***

In Asia, similar issues related to history do exist, but the debate is more focused on the role of Japan as a colonial power and an aggressor during the Second World War, and far less on the legacies of this colonial past in contemporary Japanese society. The internal political dimension of the debate in Japan, despite the strong presence of a Korean and Chinese minority, is far less significant than in Europe, where factors such as demography and economic difficulties are omnipresent.<sup>1</sup>

In the Asia-Pacific, the strategic dimension remains the dominant factor. The reactivation of tensions linked to history is a sign of more profound rivalries in an unstable strategic framework. Questions of history are directly related to contemporary international relations. For the People's Republic of China (PRC), one of the major powers in the region, historical issues constitute an essential instrument for asserting its ambitions based on "historical claims," nourishing strategic competition, and increasing ideological legitimacy.

At the military strategy level, historical issues for the PRC are also a significant element of its offensive "information war" that can be particularly effective to degrade the image of Japan among other democracies.

Controversial historical issues in former colonial powers in Europe are not that different from the situation in Asia, where Japan followed the colonial and imperial models of Western powers after the Meiji Restoration.<sup>2</sup> However, a lack of knowledge of the Asian context among historians, politicians and media in Europe, and the lack of awareness of the strong similarities among the behaviors of former colonial powers—be it Imperial Japan, the British Empire or the French Republic—make it more difficult to understand the logic behind the official narratives used by some countries to achieve purposes not related to history.

Despite the European experience of the Cold War and the propaganda war with the Soviet Union and its allies, the similarities are not understood, and it is still often the Chinese - or Korean - narratives that prevail, failing to maintain a critical distance, that should not be confused with a denial of historical crimes.

Japan's ties with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy during the war, a lack of knowledge of post-war developments in Japan (apart from its close alliance with the United States, which was also used during the Cold War to build images of resurgent militarism) and the sometimes awkwardness of Japanese public diplomacy on sensitive issues explain this state of affairs.

### ***Complexity versus Oversimplification***

However, ignorance is mutual. In Asia, the idealized model of Franco-German reconciliation remains the primary reference, when in fact it is probably the least relevant and ill-adapted to the current tensions that have emerged around the role of China in East Asia.

The common point of history and memory issues in Europe and Asia is their complexity. The main challenge for Europe looking at Asia, as well as Asia observing the "European model," is to be aware of this complexity.

At first sight, historical issues related to colonialism and imperialism only concern the European powers and Japan. However, the first layer of complexity lies in the fact that colonization and issues related to it could be perceived differently according to the situation of the countries

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of foreigners in Japan, including second or third-generation Koreans, is less than 2%; whereas in some European countries, including France, the percentage is above 10%. The figure does not include French nationals whose parents are of immigrant origin.

<sup>2</sup> The Meiji Restoration began in 1868.

concerned. Thus, in Southeast Asia, the Japanese colonizer sometimes initially appeared as an “emancipator” with respect to Western colonial powers, helping to build or revive national identities. At a more uncomfortable level, the case of elite collaboration with colonial powers is another factor that still resonates today, particularly in countries such as South Korea.

However, complexity also results from the fact that other actors come into play, who are less mentioned despite the significant influence they still play in contemporary international relations. In Asia, this is the case of China, whose slogan of “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (中国民族大复兴) evolved in direct reference to the “century of humiliatio” (百年国耻) that China suffered from the first Opium war to the communist victory in 1949. However, this slogan also relates to the ambition of today’s Chinese regime to re-establish China as the leading power in East Asia, using ancient concepts such as 天下 (all under Heaven), 大國小國 (big and small powers) or 和諧 (harmony) as ways to achieve that ambition. Meanwhile, China denies any expansionism on its part, despite the fact that its contemporary territorial claims and definition of “core interests” (核心的利益) are an expansion of what was considered to constitute “China proper”, based on the last Qing Manchu dynasty’s claims to control Tibet, Xinjiang and Mongolia.

Outside of China, Vietnam suffered French colonization, but the memory of Chinese domination over North Vietnam, which extended from 111 to 938 and then briefly again under the Ming Dynasty, remains present today. Similarly, in Korea, the Manchu protectorate, under the so-called “tributary” system, remained in place from the seventeenth century until the Chinese defeat during the first Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, which ended with the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki that liberated Korea from the Qing control.<sup>3</sup>

### ***The Role of Witnesses in Asia and Europe: A Question of Legitimacy-Building***

Another level of complexity comes from the role played by witnesses in contemporary historical tensions. The legitimacy of witnesses in history comes from the European model, in which testimony of Holocaust survivors that was initially not fully recognized, particularly in France, became essential in fighting the influence of anti-Semitic Holocaust deniers who became more vocal during the 1980s and 1990s.

However, in the Asian context, and this is a complex issue, some witnesses’ initiatives, while seeking legitimacy in the European model and references to the Shoah, were less related to the need to testify about the past than to the role played by organizations initiated or influenced by states or political movements. As shown in some famous cases, these witnesses became—consciously or not—the players in a game that, in Asia, encompasses much more than historical issues.

This was the case in Japan with soldiers of the former Imperial army whose testimonies, sometimes reconstructed, were taken up by the liberal press and the pacifist movements in the context of the Cold War.<sup>4</sup> The same is true of the “comfort women,” who, for some of them, taking into account their undeniable sufferings as sexually exploited women, have also become militant actors in a cause directly related to contemporary political issues, particularly in South Korea.

In these cases, the complexity of the issues at stake is magnified by the strategy of states that control historical narratives so that they contribute to the legitimacy of the political regime and prevent any questioning of the official line.

At another level, and regardless of the country, the decision to open archives and make them available is never totally neutral, and is also part of political or geopolitical objectives that can

<sup>3</sup> Korea then became prey of Russian and then Japanese ambitions and influence, leading to the 1905 Russo-Japanese war.

<sup>4</sup> This is for instance the case of Seiji Yoshida, a former soldier of the Imperial army, who testified how he abducted dozens of women in Jeju, Korea. The information was published by the Asahi Shimbun in 1982, and then retracted in 2014 after Yoshida admitted that he had fabricated it.

evolve in time. After the First World War, the opening of diplomatic archives by the Allied Powers was intended to demonstrate their lack of responsibility in starting the war. Territorial issues in Asia are also the subject of archival confrontations involving contemporary state entities as well as former colonial powers.

### **Political Regime and Political Will: The Conditions for Reconciliation**

Despite the complexity of the issues at stake, a few factors do play a major role in the reconciliation process. The first factor, whatever the historical facts, is the democratic nature of the political system in place and its degree of openness. A high degree of freedom of access to sources for both domestic and foreign historians, free debate, and limited political interference in historical debates are conditions that facilitate reconciliation and the sincere and long term recognition of a former adversary's "repentance". In democracies, the desire for reconciliation as a basis for positive international relations, an awareness of the risks of manipulating history, as well as the existence of check and balances, create conditions for a dialogue that can lead to the elaboration of a shared history.

In non-democratic states, renouncing the instrumentalization of history can also be a tactical choice, serving broader issues. This is the case of China where, in the 1970s, Mao Zedong and then Deng Xiaoping chose not to raise the issue of past historical tensions to reach a rapid agreement with Japan. The political context in the PRC at that time, as well as the Sino-Soviet conflict, played a role in that decision. For the communist regime, issues such as the "Nanking Massacre," which took place in the capital of the nationalist government during the war, were not relevant and did not fit into a narrative where the communist party was presented as the sole active combatant against Japan.

In other situations, as in the case of Eastern European countries eager to join the European Union after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the evolution of historical research in the direction of greater transparency and objectivity—on very sensitive issues such as antisemitism—was also intended to demonstrate the democratic evolution of these states and justify their candidacies.

The geopolitical situation is therefore another essential factor, including in Europe, which makes it possible to manage past conflicts, sometimes at the cost of dealing in depth with memory issues and taking the risk of reopening old wounds at the civil society level. Reconciliation for political and geopolitical reasons, such as the Franco-German rapprochement, is a good example of that will to "forgive" at the cost of neglecting the clarification of tensions inside both societies. Thus, in the treatment of the First World War in history textbooks, the conflict is presented as a shared tragedy, with less attention to responsibilities, and the stress is increasingly on the common fate of soldiers on both sides. The "imperative of oblivion" between France and Germany, "hereditary enemies" since 1870, was the dominant factor until the 1970s. This was at the cost of overlooking more troublesome issues such as collaboration, antisemitism and the role of France in the implementation of Nazi racial policy, as well as the fact that reconciliation was initiated at a time when civil society and political elites in Germany had not yet come to grips with the past. An American historian, Robert Paxton, with his book *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944* published in 1972, was the person who opened the debate on the factors that were left out of the process of Franco-German reconciliation.

### **The Strategic Factor**

The strategic factor has been the second element at the heart of the choice between a willingness to forget and a desire to reactivate conflicts and memory issues. During the Cold War, incorporation into the Eastern or Western bloc based on geographical location was crucial in the way history and memory issues were managed.

West Germany benefited rapidly from the Cold War, which made it a vital ally in the heart

of Europe against the Soviet bloc. It was also the case of Japan, which went from the status of enemy to being the closest ally of the United States. These global strategic incentives have played an essential part in the success of the reconciliation process between Germany and France, as well as between Japan and the United States. However, in the case of Germany, the process of European reconstruction also played a significant role in favor of reintegrating Germany as a legitimate state and ally.

In Asia, the fact that Japan was closely integrated into the US-led system of bilateral alliances to counter the expansion and influence of communism in the region also made it possible to sign a peace treaty in 1952 with the Republic of China in Taiwan that did not mandate the payment of reparations. For President Chiang Kai-shek, the main issue was also strategic, and this issue is still present today.

On questions related to how Taiwan perceives Japan and how Japan perceives Taiwan, historical issues, such as for instance the question of “comfort women,” can resurface in a low-key way, but such issues are essentially, on the Taiwanese side, a marker of the will to belong and relate to “China.” In Taiwan, a Japanese colony from 1895 to 1945, the question of identity and conflicting memories is at the heart of contemporary political issues between the KMT (Kuomintang) and the pro-independence DPP (Democratic Progressive Party). Taiwanese identity has also been built with a positive attitude to Japan and a strongly negative stance toward mainland China. This is because political leadership coming from the continent imposed, from 1945 to the democratization process of the 1980s, a strict political control over the island and any autonomy aspirations or cultural differentiation.

Moreover, in Taiwan, the memory of the February 28 “incident” in 1947, which is estimated to have claimed the lives of between 10,000 and 30,000 people after the mainland republican army took control of the island, remains much more vivid than Japan’s war crimes. Today, it is also the sharing of common democratic values that is at the heart of relations between Taiwan and Japan, often described as a model of “positive reconciliation” in Asia.

In this context, the end of the Cold War did not play the same role in Europe and Asia. In Western and Eastern Europe, it opened the way to reconciliation, as was the case between Poland and Germany, while at the same time reopening questions of history inside the former Eastern bloc that were long left unanswered by the strategic and ideological constraints of the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> The consequences have not been the same in Asia. In that region, two elements were at play. The Sino-Soviet conflict that erupted in 1960 and Beijing’s perception of the Soviet Union as the main threat were the decisive factors that led to China’s rapprochement in the early 1970s with the United States and Japan.

The end of the Cold War, followed by the end of the Soviet Union, have, on the contrary, led to a resumption of tensions with Japan. Since the mid-1990s, the “China factor” plays a major role. The Chinese regime increasingly used Japan as a “target” in its nationalist education campaigns, in the context of a growing ideological insecurities and the consecutive desire to assert itself as the leading power in Asia. This change of posture on the part of China has led to the re-instrumentalization of historical issues and the recent increase in memorial commemorations and “Japanese war crime” museums.

The case of South Korea is, however, atypical. Japan and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) were allies of the United States during the Cold War and still remain US allies. The two countries share strong common strategic interests. However, political evolution in South Korea after the democratization of 1987 has played a significant role in elevating tensions concerning historical issues with Japan. The incentive to cultivate anti-Japanese sentiments is present on both sides of

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<sup>5</sup> The case of the Katyn massacre of Poland Military and civilian elites by Soviet troops is a major example of these tensions long denied by the regimes in place.



the political spectrum in South Korea.

Conservative parties, marred by the collaboration of elites with Imperial Japan during colonization, must demonstrate their nationalist credentials.<sup>6</sup> For the opposition, anti-Japanese nationalism also serves to strengthen its legitimacy against conservative. In both cases, the denunciation of Japan also helps to build a sense of national unity and belonging in a divided peninsula.

However, in other parts of Asia such as South-East Asia, the emergence of a perceived growing threat from China is a major factor that explains the easing of tensions stemming from the Second World War. A desire to counterbalance an increasingly assertive China is contributing to greater expectations vis-à-vis Japan, including on security questions. This is notably the case of Vietnam, which, despite the proximity of its political regime with the PRC, has moved closer to Tokyo and Washington.

### **The Cause of Failure: What Makes Reconciliation Impossible**

Paradoxically, the more the Second World War and the Cold War fade into the past, the more historical issues seem to regain importance. On one side, the democratic characteristics of a state argue in favor of reconciliation, but they can also open the doors to the reemergence of tensions that may be rooted in some segments of civil societies.

In the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe, after an initial quiet period related to the desire to join the European Union, greater freedom of speech has set off disturbing debates around the notion of equal victimhood, which equates the suffering of local populations in the Second World War with the misery unleashed in the eradication of long-established Jewish communities.

As demonstrated by the case of South Korea, despite common strategic interests, the combination of political liberalization and nationalism in a recently democratized political system can become a negative factor for reconciliation. In democratic countries, the rapid expansion of social media and the internet also plays a role.

Processes of reconciliation implemented from the top, such as the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1965 between Japan and South Korea, as well as the 2015 final agreement on the “comfort women” issue signed between President Park Geun-hye and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, can be challenged for domestic political reasons, despite their positive strategic motives.

In France, positions on anti-colonialism and the Algerian war have long been strong markers of division between left and right. Any intermediate position, such as that of the writer Albert Camus, that takes into account the fate of people whose families had been living in French colonies for generations, or that of the harkis who fought along French troops and who were abandoned to violent reprisals after independence, has long been rejected. The concepts of “mutual contribution” and diversity, which are constantly referred to in an increasingly diverse France, have little legitimacy in post-colonial societies, particularly in Algeria, where resentment against the former colonial “ruler” still constitutes an essential element of the regime’s legitimacy.

Furthermore, in France, history and memory issues related to the country’s colonial past have become important factors in domestic politics. How to teach history, with the controversial adoption of “memorial laws,” is an object of political debate related to the integration of people of immigrant origin into society and questioning of the French model of assimilation.

In European societies, the collapse of political ideologies has also made the search for identity based on the denunciations of past crimes such as slavery and colonization a critical element of

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, General Park Chung-hee, father of former president Park Geun-hye (who was impeached in 2016), was an officer in the Japanese Imperial army during the war.



new “memory wars” that fuel resentments within some segments of the immigrant population.<sup>7</sup>

### **Asymmetry and “Resentment-Nationalism”**

Another factor impeding reconciliation, often related to ideological divisions and the lack of democracy, is power asymmetry between formerly “dominant” and “dominated” states.

This is particularly the case between Algeria and France, Poland and Germany, Poland and Russia, Korea and Japan, and China and Japan. “Resentment-Nationalism,” whose focus is to “wash out” past and present “humiliations,” and is at the heart of some regimes’ survival strategies, as in the People’s Republic of China since the mid-1990s, is a factor that hinders long-term reconciliation. This type of discourse discourages debate on controversial issues that could challenge, or diverge from, the official line.

At the bilateral level between Beijing and Tokyo, the return of Japan as a “normal” power in Asia, which could upset a strategic balance favorable to Beijing’s interests, is denied in the name of past abuses and the negation of Japan’s political choices and evolution since 1945.

The challenge for the targeted states is to maintain a balance while not appearing to be indifferent or revisionist, as both attitudes can have negative consequences for the global image and strategic interests of the that state.

Thus, in reaction to the erection of “comfort women” statues in the United States, Japan—whose main strength and influence reside in the democratic and open characteristics of its political system and society—has sometimes be tempted to over-react in ways that may have led to negative consequences. The lack of knowledge of the real issues at stake, and of the similarities between what all former colonial powers (in Europe and Asia) did, can only exacerbate these negative consequences, which underscores the need for finely-tuned communication.

### **Conclusion**

In many cases, history itself is not the real issue or factor that prevents a long-term process of stable reconciliation. Rather, it is the utilization, according to the strategic priorities of the moment, of issues of history by some states or interest groups that undermines reconciliation. The decision to commemorate specific past events, such as the Vel d’Hiv roundup of the Jewish population in France in 1942, the violent repression of demonstrations in Sétif, Algeria in 1945, or, in the case of China, the Nanjing Massacre, is made by the powers in place to give strong signals not just to their own public, but to specifically targeted countries and to the international community as a whole.

The very idea of stable reconciliation is almost impossible without a political transformation that modifies paradigms of legitimacy. But paradoxically, in the most controlled societies, it is at the level of civil society that forgiveness can exist, in spite of and in opposition to an official narrative that puts the stress on past grievances. The growing number of Chinese tourists and students in Japan, the importance of Algerian emigration in France, and strong cultural interactions between South Korea and Japan are positive examples.

Reconciliation is thus possible, in spite of lingering historical issues. However, for a long-term and non-controversial reconciliation among nations, a series of conditions must be met. Foremost of them are the establishment of democratic characteristics and the sharing of strong common strategic interests. It is therefore problematic to speak of an ideal universal model of reconciliation when these conditions are not met, as is the case today in Asia. Even in Europe, where this model is based on robust democracies and a strong ambition to achieve peace and reconciliation on the continent, it remains fragile, as the rise of populism has demonstrated.

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<sup>7</sup> However, the low level of activism of the Korean community living in Japan on contentious issues like “comfort women” must be noted.

# Post-War U.S.-Japan Reconciliation: Healing as a National Security Strategy

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*On November 30, 2017, the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), co-hosted a day-long symposium with the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace (CEIP), entitled “Post-War U.S.-Japan Reconciliation: Healing as a National Security Strategy”. The following is a brief synopsis of the event.*

The relatively swift transformation of the U.S.-Japan relationship after World War II—from brutal enemies with racial animus to close allies is a remarkable product of history, yet mutual efforts by many players in support of this historical reconciliation process are rarely considered in the foreign policy arena. Moreover, the valuable contribution that these efforts make to each country’s long-term national security is generally unappreciated, even as the lack of such progress among many countries in East Asia is bemoaned and seen to be a serious geopolitical risk factor. Last year marked the 70th year since Japan enacted its post-War constitution and it is important to reflect upon bilateral reconciliation efforts, what they have accomplished, what helped or hindered these efforts, and what work remains. During discussions in Washington, D.C. a group of experts and scholars focused on the US-Japan relationship gathered at the offices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. with an aim to consider these issues from a contemporary foreign policy and national security perspective as well as from a historical one, in order to examine them in a global context to think through what—if any—lessons might apply to broader geopolitical relations in Asia today.

The conference began with senior representatives from JIIA and CEIP stressing the importance of looking at US-Japan reconciliation from the perspective of how it serves as the foundation for national strategy and modern diplomacy for both countries. Historical tension is often so pervasive in the region that it becomes an organizing principle, of sorts, for nations politics and foreign policy. This has been evident time and again in Northeast with tensions between Japan and its neighbors, China and South Korea. As participants noted, the U.S.-Japan situation is unique, as U.S. and Japan shared an incredibly intense, but relatively brief period of conflict around World War II, and yet managed steadily to overcome the animosities related to that legacy and creating a strong security alliance and economic relationship. History is something that one cannot undo but is something that is one of the crucial determinants of where Japan is today.

## **Morning Address: Congresswoman Niki Tsongas (D) – MA**

Congresswoman Tsongas made a morning address to start the conference and noted that Japan is one of the United States’ greatest friends and most critical allies. She then recanted some of her own personal experience with Japan when she lived there with her family in the 1960s, when her

father was an air force pilot. Tsongas spent her time emphasizing the close economic and security ties of the alliance and noted that from a state-level, Japan is Massachusetts's fifth largest trading partner, with companies operating in a diverse array of fields, such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, manufacturing and electronics, that are Japanese-owned, supporting jobs and innovative new products in a wide range of areas. Tsongas also highlighted the key security challenges in the region, a fact which has been underscored by the provocative actions of North Korea as of late, and of China's destabilizing activities in the maritime domain (East and South China Seas). According to the Congresswoman, it is important for Tokyo and Washington to have dialogue and communication at every level to further the long-term relationship.

### **Panel 1 Discussion: US-Japan Historical Reconciliation:**

#### **Dr. Jennifer Lind, Dartmouth College**

Dr. Lind opened up the panel with a thoughtful discussion of the key milestones in US-Japan reconciliation, such as President Obama's recent visit to Hiroshima and Shinzo Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor. Lind stressed that those visits, and the remarks made by both leaders, showed empathy for the suffering on the other side and a strong commitment to friendship. But, while important, Lind also emphasized that such visits don't cause reconciliation – rather they are the result of it. According to Lind, reconciliation – which was true in the case between Washington and Tokyo – comes first from a strategic need that pushes countries together. It is only in this case - and under those conditions - that leaders have incentives to accept what are often massive domestic political costs of pursuing reconciliation toward a formerly hated adversary.

Lind went on to discuss the vast gulf in remembrance on both sides, which is common after conflict where each side sees the other as the aggressor who is at fault, toward whom no sympathy, no concessions are owed. Each side sees itself as acting in self-defense. This gives rise to opposing narratives in which each side frames itself as a victim. As Lind noted, often “entrepreneurial politicians” use such fears in order to seize or consolidate power. With regard to the US-Japan alliance, Lind stressed that the relationship grew out of shared strategic need during the Cold War, aimed at Soviet containment but continues today amidst shared interests in a geopolitically volatile East Asian environment. Lind pointed to a number of key examples over the years that were the result of this reconciliation such as Obama's visit to Hiroshima and Abe's visit to the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor.

Lind concluded with discussion on Japan's relations with South Korea, noting “cautious pessimism” while stressing that South Korea continues to hedge between China and the US – preventing real space for reconciliation at the state level. Lind noted that the 2015 comfort women agreement, despite the current uncertainty of the deal, was a good start and showed tremendous compromise on both sides.

#### **Dr. Toshihiro Nakayama, Keio University**

Dr. Nakayama began his talk by noting that the basic conditions of the U.S.-Japan relationship and then went on to discuss the historical background to this relationship before World War II, such as the links during the Meiji restoration period. Nakayama noted that this part of history should not be forgotten when looking at US-Japan reconciliation. At the same time, Nakayama noted the strains within Japan in the post-war period where some groups attached themselves to pacifism after the war and were cautious on the alliance with Washington; others say the US-Japan alliance as a hurdle to Japan's sovereignty and ability to be a “normal” nation. Of course, this is a point that is less contentious nowadays and Nakayama noted all the historical markers and relationships that have lifted and sustained the alliance, such as the growth during the Reagan-Nakasone years or the George W. Bush and Junichiro Koizumi years. Nakayama stressed that these efforts made

space for the later reconciliation efforts such as Obama's visit to Hiroshima and Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor.

Nakayama concluded with discussion on the US-Japan relationship in its current state. He noted that, while many in Japan were concerned when President Donald Trump was elected in the US last year, Tokyo was able to move forward because the US remains the best choice for Japan as an ally and friend. This alliance will lead both sides to address a constantly evolving security environment in East Asia.

### **Dr. Michael Auslin, Stanford University**

Dr. Auslin closed the session by posing the question on whether US-Japan efforts since 1945 is more a sign of cooperation, due to shared interests, rather than true reconciliation. When exploring this further, he looked at the question of "what is reconciliation?" and put forth three types of reconciliation: temporal, geographical and societal. Auslin noted that the first one suggests that time has "healed wounds" over the seven decades following World War II. The second category, focused on geography, premises that reconciliation has been helped due to the geographic distance between Japan and the US providing a geopolitical buffer of sorts. The final category, looking at societal reconciliation, is the most important and difficult for Auslin.

Auslin noted that societal reconciliation can be sub-categorized in three realms: state, groups and individuals. In this vein, he noted while states can reconcile without incredible difficulty – this question is much more challenging for groups and individuals. Auslin used examples of some US prisoners of war and their lingering bitterness and inability to reconcile. He concluded that reconciliation is a far more fraught process, beyond the state level, and is probably much more fragile than what we might think.

### **Luncheon Keynote Discussion:**

#### **Keynote: Ambassador Michael Armacost, Stanford University**

Ambassador Armacost opened the lunch keynote speech by noting that US-Japan reconciliation is an issue that is personal for him, as he was alive before World War II. He noted that reconciliation is a challenging and constant process but was necessary to heal the ghosts of the War. Washington and Tokyo needed to acknowledge the past and yet seek to overcome it, transform their status from arch-enemies into strategic partners. Armacost then discussed the immediate post-war history and the relatively benign occupation and how that contributed to reconciliation. Afterwards, Armacost noted that the emergence of the Cold War prompted the transformation of the US occupation of Japan into an alliance. This alliance proved not only durable but it always provided incentive on the American side to cultivate a cooperative relationship with the Japanese.

Armacost stressed that, in light of Cold War realities, it was hardly surprising that political reconciliation moved forward. It was probably easier for Americans and was taken on with greater comfort level and more readily than it was for the Japanese. For Japan, reconciliation offered practical benefits and an evident geopolitical logic. Armacost concluded with discussion of current day situation and noted that he thought Prime Minister Abe's statement history, made on the 70th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II, came "pretty close" to coming to terms with Japan's actions during the conflict. Armacost also mentioned that there should be less a focus on apologies – for which Japan has made on several occasions – and more on education related to the war in Japan. Armacost finished up by noting the strong links for the US and Japan and called it a "global alliance".

During the Q&A session, Armacost noted that the Japan-South Korea agreement in 2015 seemed to be a reasonable one but it is unfortunate that it has not been implemented as expected.

**Discussant: Dr. Gerald Curtis, Columbia University**

Dr. Curtis, as a discussant for Ambassador Armacost, noted the uniqueness of the US-Japan relationship and its strength through reconciliation. For Curtis, reconciliation is not about forgetting or forgiving, but about overcoming hatred and enmity and nurturing feelings of trust and friendship. Curtis stressed that this is what happened in the U.S.-Japan relationship after the war. How did this happen? To answer this, Curtis noted a number of factors including: a relatively benign occupation, the US government decision to retain the institution of the Emperor, and the combination of US magnanimity in victory and Japanese humility in defeat.

Curtis also noted that the American military presence in Japan over decades resulted in many soldiers and their families living in Japan and then coming back to the States with positive stories to tell. Their experiences there was another important element in growing the US-Japan relationship and alliance. He then went on to discuss other powerful elements such as intellectual exchange programs like the Fulbright Commission and International House of Japan and the role the army and navy Japanese language programs played in producing a postwar coterie of Japan specialists who were committed to a strong US-Japan relationship. This helped foster reconciliation and, according to Curtis, showed that reconciliation was not simply about joint strategic interests facing common threats, but also deep personal and social connections. He noted that the JET program today is playing an important role in producing Japan specialists that is comparable to the role played by the wartime military language program, and that it is doing so in the context of peace rather than war.

During the Q&A session, Curtis noted, although he believes it was inappropriate for Korean President Moon to invite a former comfort woman and serve “Dokdo shrimp” at the dinner he hosted for President Trump, the Japanese government had nothing to gain from protesting his action. President Moon was playing to a domestic Korean audience which would not be influenced by the Japanese protest. All it accomplished was to draw more international attention to the comfort women issue. Continuing to protest the erection of comfort women statues in cities and towns in the United States will only damage Japan’s reputation. It would be far better for Japanese to continue to express sympathy for these women and not do things that only publicize the issue and inflame public opinion.

**Panel 2 Discussion: US-Japan Historical Reconciliation in a Global Context:**

**Dr. Thomas Berger, Boston University**

Dr. Berger opened the second panel by asking the question: when does history become a problem? According to Berger, it tends to become a problem when you have a combination of two factors: a collective set of memories and calculations of interest. With this background, Berger spoke at length on the Japan-Korea relationship and noted it is unnatural in strategic terms for Tokyo and Seoul to be at loggerheads. Part of the reason for the tension, according to Berger, is the way in which the memory of relations with Japan has been politicized by South Korea over the course of the last 70 years since the end of the colonial occupation. To illustrate this, Berger pointed to the Rhee years and his powerful movement to try to define a Korean identity and create a sense of there being one Korea based on two principles: anti-communism and anti-Japanese. Sometimes interests have trumped this political entrepreneurship in the Japan-Korea relationship, but the struggle and emotions are social facts on the peninsula.

Berger noted that, when you have a combination of interests and of calculations, you can wind up with history becoming periodically a problem – as in the Japan-Korea case. Berger then shifted to the US-Japan relationship as the anomaly case where there was great pain during the war, but strong reconciliation efforts in the seven decades following. Much of this was due to shared interests and the Cold War, as previous panelists noted. As Berger stressed, history was



not able to interfere in their strategic relationship in the way that history has interfered with the Japanese-Korean relationship. Closing on the ties between the US and Japan, Berger noted that the relationship is stabilized by the perception that there are common interests and network of human ties that never give up on this process.

During the Q&A sessions, on the questions about the implications of political system to the reconciliation process, Berger noted, in a democratic country, while it may be more difficult for leaders to create a consensus, it is more meaningful because it has greater legitimacy and it can lead to greater societal change. He also pointed out that, in the reconciliation process, education is one of the important tools. According to him, it can either promote or hinder reconciliation, depending upon the type of narratives that you are perpetuating through the educational system.

### **Dr. Rohan Mukherjee, Yale NUS**

Dr. Mukherjee focused his remarks on to issues in the context of historical reconciliation. First, he compared U.S.-Japan reconciliation with the reconciliation that took place between the United Kingdom and India since the end of the Second World War. And second, Mukherjee assessed the implications of U.S.-Japan reconciliation for Asian security more broadly. On the issue of the UK-India comparison, Mukherjee stressed the differences in the two cases but also noted important similarities. As Mukherjee noted, there is similarity in the manner in which each of these relationships periodically becomes contentious in the domestic politics of the countries involved. So, according to Mukherjee, in Japan, there is of course resistance in certain quarters against the U.S. alliance, particularly against the status of forces agreements and the impact of the U.S. military presence.

The second theme of Mukherjee's remarks focused on the implications of the U.S.-Japan reconciliation on Asian security, and the most important question being: does reconciliation between the U.S. and Japan come at the cost of reconciliation perhaps for Japan with other countries. In this light, Mukherjee talked about historical ties between Japan and India both during and after the war. He also noted that the U.S.-Japan reconciliation has been beneficial for regional security but also noted that some argue that U.S. alliances in East Asia, including that with Japan, were structured as a hub and spoke system and so there was no complex multilateral form of cooperation that could effectively tie the U.S. down and create a community of interests that might eventually have evolved in a group identity in the way that the E.U. did.

### **Keiko Iizuka, Yomiuri Shimbun**

Ms. Iizuka opened her talk by noting the series of key events that have hallmarked US-Japan reconciliation, such as the Okinawa Reversion Agreement, and more recently President Obama's visit to Hiroshima and Prime Minister Abe's visit to the U.S.S Arizona Memorial, Pearl Harbor. She insisted that these reciprocal visits clearly affected the public sentiment on both sides of the U.S. and Japan. But, Iizuka then noted that the situation on reconciliation however is far different with regard to Japan and its neighbors in East Asia. Iizuka spoke for some time on the difficulty of historical reconciliation efforts with Okinawa and noted that the tensions over US bases, and also that between Tokyo and Naha, remains a big concern.

Iizuka noted that the citizen's personal sentiments could both contribute and damage countries' diplomatic relations including reconciliation on history. On the East Asian security relationship and specifically ties between Japan and South Korea, she talked on how historical issues have inhibited the two sides to move forward on practical security cooperation amidst tensions on the Korean peninsula.

# Influence of Asia's Colonization: Debating the Past, Present, and Future of Territorial Issues

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*On February 23, 2018, JIIA, in collaboration with the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), organized a symposium "Influence of Asia's Colonization: Debating the Past, Present, and Future of Territorial Issues" in New Delhi, India. The following is a brief synopsis of the event.*

Re-visiting the historical and geopolitical narratives of 20<sup>th</sup> century Asia and the enduring legacies of its colonization, have often generated a debate on how nation-states and their people view the impact and fallout of colonialism in varying ways. The 20<sup>th</sup> century remained enmeshed in terms of disputes, wars, economics, and politics. Colonialism and the period thereafter did, after all, make an indelible mark on demographics, borders, political systems, laws and customs, economies, cultural influx, and, identities.

The defining trends of Asia's colonial past during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for that matter, seems to be continuing to cast a shadow on the ensuing century and Asia's future that remains weaved with it. The larger conceptual debate surrounding colonialism and the Asian experience does not get limited to historical connotations only. There is a vital contemporary geopolitical and geostrategic relevance to it. Historical narratives, re-interpretations, and/or distortions of history have been critically linked to colonial legacies and experiences, with the objective to redraw frontiers and expand spheres of influence by some states in the name of history.

Every phase of colonization, whether within Asia, or outside it, brought migration, introduced new political and social systems, boundaries (claim lines), intrastate relationships and legacies that got created out of that. This determined the direction in which Asian states moved economically, politically, and socially. More importantly, it defined the manner in which Asian nations developed their sense of nationhood. A major ramification of the colonial past and history has been the failure of some states to come to terms with the past, which has been instrumental in spurring competing/mutually reinforcing/overlapping themes of nationalisms, especially pertaining to certain territories in the maritime domain, and on land, in East, Southeast, and South Asia.

To discuss this vital subject and its related themes, a symposium entitled *Influence of Asia's Colonization: Debating the Past, Present, and Future of Territorial Issues* was organized by The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) in New Delhi, India, on February 23, 2018, in collaboration with the Centre for Land Warfare Studies. The symposium sought to discuss and debate the journey and prominent milestones of Asian states' colonial experiences, both individually, and as a region. It also strived to study and debate the impact of the evolving geopolitical and strategic narratives emanating out of this colonial past of the Asian continent.

The symposium deliberated upon whether mutual economic development and warming up will ever become an absolute substitute for political fissures that seem to be only getting deeper

among major Asian powers today. While Asian nation-states cannot amend/rewrite their [colonial] past, the endeavor of the discourse will be to evaluate the fixed vs. variable determinants that will influence Asia's geopolitical and geostrategic future amid the backdrop of this colonial past. Can Asia ever come to terms with its past and strive to make a collective effort to reduce the economic and political fault lines and build a cooperative future regionally? A brief overview of the proceedings is presented as follows.

### **The Era of Meiji Restoration**

The keynote address of the symposium discussed and elaborated upon the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Meiji Restoration. There was a big change of politics from 1867-68 to 1890, termed as the 'Meiji Restoration' when Japan established its parliament and went in for parliamentary politics.

The period before the Meiji Restoration – 265 years long Edo period (1603-1868) came after the warring state period of the 16<sup>th</sup> century during which many feudal lords fought each other making Japan the strongest military power in the world at that time in terms of the number of arms. Following the beginning of the Edo period, there was almost no war in Japan, for more than two centuries.

The succeeding establishment of the Meiji government in 1868 under the central leadership of the Emperor, saw astonishing results beginning with the abolishment of feudal domains, leading to Japan's transformation to a real centralized nation in which social stratification became much less rigid. Another major milestone of this period was the abolishment of *bushi* or the warrior class – *samurai*. Within around 15 years, in 1889, the Japanese constitution was written and parliament was started in 1890. Before that, a modern type of cabinet system was introduced in 1885 with Japan's first Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi who belonged to the lowest class of the samurai. This was unimaginable during the Edo period, and therefore, the Meiji Restoration was in a sense, a great class revolution as well, and became a revelation of the Japanese people's power that had gotten accumulated earlier during the Edo period.

The Meiji period saw transformational changes and should ideally be described as the Meiji Revolution, and not just 'Restoration'. From a global perspective was a rare example of successful change achieved without the shedding of much blood. Scholars have termed the Meiji Restoration and the American experience of revolution, and independence as the least costly and most fruitful accumulative change in contemporary history. The Meiji Restoration did not occur suddenly just with the enthronement of the Emperor Meiji, but, was made possible because of gradual changes that occurred during the Edo period that preceded it, such as an increase in population, improvements in agriculture and industrialization, a high literacy rate, the rise of popular culture, and the development of a national consciousness throughout Japan.

The ensuing period when Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese war, had a big impact on the rise of nationalism throughout Asia and Africa. Japan, unfortunately, was unable to exercise leadership with respect to those under colonialism, and instead acquired overseas territories and repressed those who were under colonial rule. Japan later headed down the mistaken road toward the Pacific War. The concept of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere ended up being a failure because it expected no equality among its members. Moreover, members shared no basic universal principles such as non-intervention in domestic politics or peaceful resolution of conflicts. Nonetheless, the Pacific War did promote Asian nationalism. Japan's post-war approach to the world was roughly successful, although few changes could have been done after the end of the Cold War. In the context of contemporary times, it is high time for Japan to reconsider its foreign policy and security policy, still very much based on the basic lines from 1945 onwards.

### **History of Asia's Colonization: The Territorial and Boundary Issues**

The first session of the symposium addressed the origins of territorial and border issues across

Asia and the history of its colonization. The panelists spelled out the following points broadly. It is widely believed that modern international law is nothing more than the development of international law as was seen in Europe at a time when there were many different versions of international laws around the world. When discussing current territorial conflicts, it is important to approach such conflicts from their respective historical perspectives, including those of pre-modern international law, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

There were distinctive territorial concepts of “hanto” ( 版図 ; territory) and “kegai no chi” ( 化外の地 ; lands outside imperial influence) in Japan before acceptance of the modern international law. After the opening up to the West and onset of the Meiji Restoration period, Japan actively took in Western “imperialist” international law and expanded its territories overseas. It is interesting that there were intense discussions between China and Japan about the interpretation of the concept “hodo” ( 封土 ; domain) in Article 1 of the Sino-Japanese Friendship and Trade Treaty on whether it referred to a territory as defined by modern international law, or did it include the tributary states.

Under the French colonization, Indochina experienced rapid economic development in the fields of mining, industry, agriculture, development of public works. Besides, infrastructure was very impressive in Indochina at that time – with one of the largest networks of roads and bridges in Asia that served the colonial economy and transport of goods to the sea. But beyond these material goods, one of the most important legacies was in the fields of law and usage of concepts considered to be better related to the principles of objective law in the management of international disputes adapted to a globalized rule-of-law-based world. While it cannot be denied that various types of inequalities and discrimination were associated with the French colonial rule over Indochina, it needs to be noted that French rule exerted a certain degree of positive influence on the territories in question.

For example, colonialism brought about changes in material spheres such as progress in agriculture, mining, and infrastructure, and also brought along with it: 1) Acceptance of a modern legal system 2) Demarcation of borders based on topographic maps 3) The creation of national consciousness in Indochinese countries through movements aimed at denying the suzerainties of China and Thailand.

When it comes to the issue of the Paracel and Spratly Islands, Vietnam holds its arguments based on international law concepts, which it inherited from the modern legal system of France. Against the backdrop of the exercise of force and balance-of-power concepts, China has been limited to invoking vague concepts of “historical rights” over the islands and is attempting to justify territorial rights over the islands by invoking its past suzerainty over Annam. On the Paracel and Spratly Islands’ issue, France has limited itself to making general expressions about legal principles and has avoided taking concrete positions. As a former suzerain of Vietnam that was historically involved to some degree in that country, France should reconsider the positions that it should take.

In South Asia, India has had land disputes with almost all of the six countries with which it shares land borders. The roots of these territorial disputes can be found in the decisions taken by the British government based on its 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial strategy. Behind the British decision to partition India and Pakistan were: 1) its obligations to the Muslim League 2) The old British policy of divide and rule 3) Desire for an access to Central Asia 4) Desire to contain the Soviet Union. A British writer accurately predicted in 1944 that the separation of Muslims would result in their impoverishment and radicalization. The end of the Cold War diminished the strategic value of Pakistan and gave rise to a desire for peace between India and Pakistan. While this continued for a time after 9/11, Pakistan’s strategic value (for the US) increased again amid the Global War

on Terror because of the country's proximity and access to Afghanistan. This put a dampener on attempts to bring about peace between India and Pakistan. The land and maritime boundary problems between India and Bangladesh were just as complicated as those with Pakistan, but have been resolved with the establishment of democratic governments in Bangladesh.

### **Asia's Geopolitical and Geostrategic Future in the Backdrop of its Colonial Past**

The second session of the symposium analyzed and discussed the geopolitical implications of the legacies left behind by history in Asia, the strategic importance of which is increasing. The panelists put forth the following points broadly. While experiencing significant economic growth, Asia today is a major hotspot on the global landscape where numerous conflicts and tensions are clustered, with China being involved in many of them. China attempts to justify its "creeping expansionism" in its border with India, in the South China and East China Seas by invoking various and vague historical narratives.

The baggage of history often weighs down Asia's strategic environment. In contrast to Europe, more and more attention has been paid to the past problems of Asia. Countries that have gained confidence because of their economic successes have been playing the history card. Asia's history problem is not limited to China as that history hinders relations even between democracies as can be seen from the strained ties between America's closest allies in East Asia – South Korea and Japan. Still, no country uses history to change the status quo territorially like China. In fact, to advance the strategic interests, China is employing the very practices that were imposed on China by the European imperial past. For instance, when Hong Kong was returned to China, Beijing portrayed it as a correction of a historical injustice. Today, as the takeover of Sri Lanka's Hambantota port illustrates, China is establishing Hong-Kong-style new colonial arrangements in areas far from its shores. While the concept of a 99-year port lease was developed by the British and imposed on China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, today, Beijing has embraced that 99-year port lease concept and is applying it in distant lands, from Hambantota to Darwin (Australia), and now pressuring even Myanmar to sign a 99-year lease on Myanmar's Kyaukpyu Port.

Efforts to change the territorial and maritime status quo will remain the biggest threat to security in Asia. History is being invoked in attempts to justify the geostrategic imperative of using force to change the status quo in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and on the Indian-Chinese border. This is the most destabilizing factor in Asia. Several Asian countries including China selectively interpret history and blend these interpretations with fiction to reconstruct their own version of history. They do this to glorify their past, to whitewash their transgressions, and to reinforce the victimhood narratives that they might have created. A good example is Xi Jinping's attempt to legitimize Sino-centrism by pursuing what he calls the 'China Dream'.

The two biggest attempts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to change the status quo by force were the annexation of Crimea by Russia and China's construction and militarization of artificial islands in the South China Sea. Russia is facing sanctions from the international community for its actions in Crimea, while China got off without any sanctions at all. This sent a wrong message to China and encouraged China to escalate its moves along its border with India and in the East China Sea. There are two ways to conquer a country – one by the sword, and the other, by debt. China has adopted the second path, of getting nations to borrow heavily, to exert control over small and medium-sized countries.

China re-interprets history based on its national interest. When discussing the pros and cons of colonialism, the cons obviously outweighs the pros. China, where revisionism is gaining strength, is the only country that has a victimization mentality with respect to territorial issues.



With the exception of the South China Sea, territorial disputes among Southeast Asian states have been manageable and have not led to major confrontations. The reasons for this include 1) Lack of involvement of major powers 2) The existence of ASEAN as a confidence-building mechanism 3) The moderate nature of nationalism in these countries 4) The respect for international law held by these countries.

Playing the history card to expand its sphere of influence, China is known to have invoked history in its attempts to tarnish Japan's image in countries such as South Korea and the Philippines. In the context of shrinking disparities in the military capabilities of the US and China, Japan has several security options available: 1) Forge a multilateral security framework led by the US 2) A multilateral security framework without a strong US commitment 3) An independent and isolationist policy of homeland security 4) Pursuit of a Sino-Japanese entente.

### **Broad Conclusions**

The closing address of the symposium outlined the settlement of disputes, and the role of Asia in the international world. Speaking of the settlement of disputes from a purely legalistic viewpoint, the first question that arises is what is a dispute in international law? The judgment of the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1924 clearly identifies what constitutes a dispute. The issue then arises, who decides the existence of a dispute? As for Japan, its position is that there is no dispute between China and Japan concerning the Senkaku Islands. And, as for Takeshima, although Japan says there is a dispute, however, South Korea says there is no dispute at all over the island.

The International Court of Justice stated in 1950 that whether there exists an international dispute or not, is a matter for objective determination. As for the International Court of Justice, it had a system of compulsory jurisdiction, but among more than 190 countries as members of the International Court of Justice, only 66 countries accepted compulsory jurisdiction. Out of the 66 countries, only six Asian countries, accepted the compulsory jurisdiction, namely Cambodia, India, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste. The importance of the rule of law is vital in the international community. Two very good and recent examples of nations displaying respect for the rule of law are, India, in how it accepted the decision handed down by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) about its maritime boundary with Bangladesh; and Japan, in how it responded to the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling about whaling off the Antarctic.

To quote James L Brierly, a former Oxford University professor of international law, and author of the book *The Law of Nations: An Introduction to the International Law of Peace*, published in 1928 – almost 90 years ago in what perhaps is among the best textbooks on international law published in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Brierly wrote that arbitration is useful as a means of settlement only when and as far as society has accepted the rule of law as its normal way of life. As present Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has stated, “Peace and prosperity in Asia forever, Japan for the rule of law, Asia for the rule of law, and the rule of law for all of us.”



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