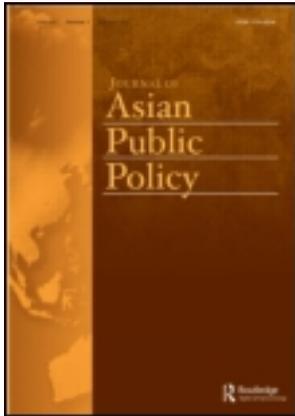


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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Through the looking glass? China's rise as seen from Japan

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Coexisting with a powerful and assertive China as a neighbour is a new experience for modern Japan that has long considered itself the only powerful state in east Asia. Interacting with China under this new condition has brought out multiple and competing conceptions of China as it means to Japan. China is an historical rival, a security concern, an indispensable trading partner, an economic competitor and a regional power with competing as well as common interests all at the same time. Japan also sees images of its past self in the pattern of China's rapid development. These ideas of China act both positively and negatively in how Japan conceives and manages its relationship with China, but they also reflect Japan's lack of confidence and shaken sense of history, identity and place in the world. In order to find a way to meaningfully engage with China, Japan needs to recognize its own identity and strength objectively.

Keywords: Japan-China relations; US-Japan alliance; China's renaissance; Yasukuni Shrine; Senkaku/Daoyu incident; 1947 constitution of Japan's Article 9

Introduction

China's meaning to Japan has become increasingly complex in the last two decades, and there is no simple way to define Japan's national interest vis-à-vis China as in the past when interaction with Communist China was chiefly diplomatic. Today, two conceptions of China compete for influence in Japanese debates and discussions about China: China as a rival (historical and ideological) and China as an economic partner. Even though China is now part of the same 'capitalist' world as Japan, that has not made engaging with China any easier. Yet, Japan's relationship with China, as with post-war Japan's relationship with the United States, is beginning to assume a comprehensive character. While China's present military expansion is a regional security concern, China is increasingly becoming an indispensable part of Japanese economic and social life and the two societies are interdependent on and indispensable to each other as never before. Moreover, while China is not a security ally like the United States is to Japan, the relationship between Japan and China is historically rooted and geographically fixed, two conditions that are bound to inform the future course and character of Japan–China relations.

Conceiving a constructive relationship with China that matches in degree the complexity and sophistication of Japan's relations with the United States is, therefore, an important part of Japan's overall effort to recover and re-emerge from prolonged political and economic stagnation, which was further exacerbated by the largest ever disasters triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake of 11 March 2011, as a self-assured, confident, purposeful power.

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This paper attempts to explain Japan's evolving approach to China as a part of its on-going challenge to navigate successfully the major power shift occurring on the international arena, informed in no small measure by China's renaissance. It is essentially an interpretative story of Japan's shifting sense of identity as reflected in the vicissitudes of Japan–China relations in the last two decades.

The emergence of multiple Chinas

In the history of modern Japan that began in the late nineteenth century, a powerful China is a new experience. The new regional paradigm places Japan in a new position, different from the one that Japan had long been used to: as the only modern and powerful state to emerge from Asia, a *sui generis* in the modern world that was created and dominated by Western powers. Geopolitically, Japan is an Asian power, and that fact is unalterable. But Japan's main partners and competitors have been in the West, a condition that remained unaltered until the end of the Cold War. Having developed a strong identification with the 'West' – meaning both the Western alliance and the Western world – (re)-building a regional identity for Japan after 1945 became a relatively neglected affair.

In addition, Japan and China were separated ideologically after the last war and the two nations did not go through the time-consuming but necessary process to reconcile with each other. Kakuei Tanaka, the Japanese prime minister who normalized diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC) back in 1972, described the post-war difficulties in re-establishing ties with China as 'a domestic problem . . . a cancer that is not good for Japan.'¹ More recently, Japanese thinker Tamamoto (2005, p. 10) noted: 'At the moment, Japan does not have a workable formula to maintain the security relationship with the United States and foster cordial relations with China.' The difficulty in managing relations with China is still a domestic problem because, as in Tanaka's days, relations with China still sharply divide opinion in Japan. One tends to be either antagonistic towards China or friendly towards it, and an objective middle ground that might clarify the purpose in forging closer ties with China has been difficult to construct.

Due to its rapid pace of military modernization and the styles it tends to follow in handling problems with neighbouring countries, which Japan's latest defence white paper has called 'rather coercive', viewing China as a 'security threat' (Kyodo News 2011) clouds Japanese discourse today. On the other hand, China is also Japan's (and perhaps, more importantly, of many other countries) number one trading partner and a major competitor in the international economy. More and more Japanese recognize that the relationship with China is important to Japan and increasingly understand that it is in Japan's national interest to build a robust relationship with China. The first step would be for the two countries to interact with each other with mutual respect. However, there are still obstacles preventing Japan and China from forging such a relationship based on mutual respect, let alone trust and mutual understanding. These obstacles are hard to remove while both sides still pit each other as historical rivals, irreconcilability of a number of issues from the interpretation of past history, territorial disputes to antagonistic popular attitudes towards each other.

In this respect, the first decade of the new century was like a roller-coaster ride for Japan in interacting with China, reinforcing the antagonistic aspect of the bilateral relationship in the minds of both nations. Except for a brief ice-melting interlude of exchanges of goodwill and efforts on both sides to redefine the relationship to a future-oriented one, the diplomatic fallout during Jun'ichiro Koizumi's tenure as Japanese prime minister between 2001 and 2006 and the maritime accident near the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in 2010 stand

out as incidents defining Japan's conception of China as an enigmatic and difficult neighbour.

While the ups and downs in diplomatic relations are nothing new and will not go away, those in the last decade stand out in one respect for Japan: they have inspired the Japanese to discuss, debate and analyse China's renaissance for what it means to Japan as never before, precisely because there is greater recognition of the facts that China is here to stay; Japan must coexist with it; and that there is no single, definitive China for Japan. There are multiple Chinas. The substance of this active 'cottage industry' in China reveals that reactions to China as a comprehensive challenge – economic, military-security and geopolitical – to Japanese security are not necessarily dominant, although they raise alarm.

China as an enigmatic concern

Expressions of China such as 'inherent enemy' (Komori 2005, p. 254),² 'an elephant too big' (Okamoto 2007) or 'threat' reflect such security-driven concerns about the manner in which China exercises its newly acquired power. Such concerns are widespread and there is demand for China to better explain its security policy as an 'über-realist power' (Kaplan 2010, p. 24) – particularly naval expansion – for the purpose of mutual assurance among neighbours, at the very least. While analysts and experts might understand that China is essentially moving to secure the economic survival of a massive nation that is also striving to achieve higher living standards, and that the possibility of war between China and Japan or even the United States is remote, public perception in Japan is not necessarily informed by in-depth understanding of the logic of Japan's China strategy. Ordinary people form their impressions from sensational news, such as clashes between Chinese fishing boats and Japanese and South Korean coast-guard vessels.

That said, we must also not lose sight of the fact that there is considerable frustration in Japan with its own political and economic stagnation and that an overall sense of decline is reflected in Japanese discussions about China. The oft-emotional discussions about China reveal Japan's current inability to measure and understand its own power and purpose *objectively*. For example, the over-simplistic understanding in the West of the post-Cold War Asian international political economy as 'rising China eclipsing the sinking Japan' has played a part in further denting Japan's sense of identity as the world's second largest economy, a position it has held for over three decades. By suffering from low self-esteem, Japan is receding into a lesser position of influence with every confident stride China makes on the international scene. The Japanese reaction to the news of China's GDP surpassing Japan's in 2011 to become the world's number two was typically in this see-saw mode. A defeatist mood prevailed in Japan following the news, as if its economic power had suddenly diminished considerably.

The vicissitudes of US policy towards China also play a role in Japanese confusion and anxiety about China's rise since the 1990s. The elastic nature of the distance between the two giants in the Asia Pacific region, the United States and China, has been a source of anxiety in Japan's understanding of its place in United States' Asia policy since the so-called 'Nixon shock', when US President Richard Nixon made a surprise visit (without prior notice to Japan) to Beijing in 1972. Japan has been sensitive (and often over-reacting) to developments in the post-Cold War US policy of increasing interactions with China, partly out of the natural fear of being sandwiched between two larger powers that are still very much sovereignty-conscious states and partly out of the fear of being abandoned by the United States. However, this fear is exacerbated by Japan's habit of measuring itself in terms of how it stands vis-à-vis Western powers, particularly the United States, a habit

cultivated over time since Japan began to modernize in the late nineteenth century among competition from the Great Powers.

In the context of Japan's modern history, therefore, China's renaissance has another meaning. China is seen to be reclaiming its historical position as the region's most powerful state, a position held by Japan for the last 150 years while China was unable to mount a serious challenge. Such an interpretation of China's recent rise is not surprising considering east Asia has never experienced a situation where there is more than one domineering power; Japan's rise in the modern era came at the expense of Qing China's decline. Furthermore, the 'anti-hegemony' clause in the 1972 Joint Declaration that neither country will seek to dominate the region remains a prudent reminder that Japan–China rivalry in the past was tragic and extremely wasteful. Therefore, it is not unreasonable for the Japanese (and, for that matter, the Chinese) to think that there only needs to be one leader in the region.

Different Chinas in new realms

In these cautious or even pessimistic reactions to China's rise there might be a sense of optimism to envisage an east Asia where both Japan and China can rise together and be powerful harmoniously; however, security realists are rarely optimistic and recent Chinese behaviour in regional and international affairs gives little reason for them to be so. Yet, China is not a fully developed power, economically or politically. How the international community, particularly China's neighbours including Japan, engages with China still has a bearing on how it develops. The articulation of Japan's own vision of Japan–China relations is an important exercise in formulating such a long-term strategy that best serves Japan's national interest.

In this respect, the influence of growing interdependence between the two societies at the level of everyday life on the bilateral relationship is increasingly hard to ignore as a factor determining the nature of the future bilateral relationship. Social issues, such as health and hygiene, environmental protection, safe and clean energy production to food safety and security, constitute an expanding realm in the bilateral relationship where the scope for and significance of meaningful exchange of views and cooperation are both great. In fact, the emergence of social issues as bilateral concerns has opened up a common ground that could not be sought when the two countries followed different paths of development for much of the last century. Indeed, it was so because Japan turned to European-style imperialism and China to socialist revolution. In this realm of the bilateral relationship, Japan is looking at a China with which it must coexist as two cooperative, complementary powers in a world of globalizing capitalism.

Moreover, in the years to come, Japan is likely to be able to relate to China looking in the mirror of Japan's own history of modernization. The process of contemporary China's break-neck speed nation-state building and industrialization and its attendant challenges are not unknown to Japan: from growing nationalism, environmental degradation and pollution, tension between political authoritarianism and democratic impulses arising from social transformation, and so on. As China enters the 12th phase of its five-year plan that aims for structural reform in the economic system of export and investment-oriented growth, another China that strikes a resemblance to Japan looms in the horizon. For, structural reform has been, and still is, a difficult process for Japan because it is essentially about dismantling the ossified system of political economy of a developmental economy state under an equally ossified political process of single-party rule by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) (Satoh 2010). China's effort is likely to induce a similar,

destabilizing process for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as it tries to maintain its right to rule at the same time.

More than two decades since the Asian tigers (South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan) began to take off economically with the rest of east Asia following suit, we are now witnessing the political impact of economic development on the legitimacy of the ruling regimes, which include Japan and China, induced by social transformation. Political transitions taking place in southeast Asian states from Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia to Myanmar and Singapore demonstrate this point. Political change from variants of authoritarian rule to more democratic political regimes in these state dramatically highlighted the legitimacy crisis faced by the old ruling regimes that oversaw their countries' economic modernization since the 1970s.

Japan is no exception to this pattern, as Japanese political economy long geared towards export-led development and growth has been undergoing a similar political transition for the last 20 years, although it has been incremental and almost too slow. The Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ's) overwhelming electoral victory over the LDP on 30 August 2009³ was the most significant demonstration of popular will against the LDP thus far – in retrospect, a development comparable to 'revolutionary' movements, called 'spring' in many parts of the world, which took place certainly in a peaceful manner though – and it also demonstrated that Jun'ichiro Koizumi's dramatic domestic reforms were no substitute for a real change of power.

In essence, Japan's struggle to re-adjust its system of political economy via change of power and the CCP's effort to re-assert its authority for a single-party rule can be understood in a similar vein in that they are both political reactions to comprehensive structural adjustment of the economic system. For if the declared intentions for structural change in the next five-year plan are to be realized, such recalibration of national strategy is bound to have political repercussions, such as resistance from vested interest groups among the elites in the political structure on the one hand and a growing popular demand for a pluralistic approach to national politics on the other. These will put considerable pressures on the ruling party elites, even though they have demonstrated thus far their capacity to be 'agile, responsive, and creative' (Holbig and Gilley 2010) to ensure the party's continual right to rule.

As social and economic interaction increases, domestic public opinion will also come to matter more in managing relations with China. That said, in spite of the poor popularity of China,⁴ public opinion is often much more diverse and sophisticated than polls suggest. In fact, how the government handles relations with China can affect popular support rate for the government. Take for example the issue of Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, the controversial symbol of Japan's imperial past, between 2001 and 2006. The public, including the business community, gradually became critical of both Koizumi and China since the spill-over effect of the diplomatic impasse was damaging other aspects of growing ties between Japan and China.

Koizumi's open defiance of China's meddling in what he (and many Japanese) considered a domestic matter found support among those in Japan who resented the Chinese regime that propagated anti-Japan sentiment among its people and then puts up the historical justice argument against Japan to claim moral superiority in order to keep the economic aid from Japan flowing at the same time. Even before Koizumi came to power, Beijing's use of the 'history card' against Japan was becoming excessive. For example, President Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan in 1998 left a particularly negative impression of the Chinese leadership among the Japanese as he chose to talk about Japan's history throughout his trip, even at the banquet hosted by Emperor Akihito (Tabata 2009). Jiang's approach alienated

even the moderates in Japan who do not question the fact that Japan's battles in Asia were nothing but wars of aggression (i.e. those espousing the non-conservative interpretation of the last war). Yet, when anti-Japan riots broke out in Chinese cities in the spring of 2005 and the Yasukuni visits began to damage business relations, the Japanese public began to question the wisdom of the visits and to cast a critical eye towards Koizumi's diplomacy and Yasukuni.

In a more recent example, the popular reaction to the Senkaku/Diaoyu accident between Japan's coast-guard vessel and a Chinese fishing boat also had two dimensions and eventually undermined the government's credibility in popular opinion. One was, of course, comprised of a host of criticism directed towards China, including the Chinese government's counter-measures, such as the cancellation of high-level meetings and negotiations, suspension of the export of rare metals and the discouragement of tourist trips to Japan. They aimed where Japan would feel the pain most: the economy that has become structurally dependent on China. As additional blows, Chinese authorities arrested and detained employees of a Japanese company dealing with the removal of chemical weapons left behind in China by the Imperial Army in the last war. This was then followed by outbreaks of violent student riots in certain Chinese cities that destroyed Japanese shops and restaurants. The incident certainly sharpened Japan's perception of China as a difficult neighbour and a security threat.

The other, however, was criticism directed towards the Japanese government's handling of the whole affair. In comparison to China, the Japanese government of the new ruling DPJ seemed to be committing one diplomatic blunder after another, starting with the decision to arrest the Chinese captain in the first place. The prosecutor's office decision to withhold the disclosure of the video footage of the collision filmed by the coast guard was also a curious one.⁵ When the Japanese prosecutor office released the Chinese captain, no one in the government seemed to be accountable for this critical decision to give up, according to opposition parties and critics, an important bargaining chip. The biggest problem, however, was that no one seemed to be in charge or to have any expertise in diplomatic bargaining. The public had already begun to question the then Prime Minister Kan's capability as a leader even before witnessing his handling of the 3.11 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear triple disasters.

Yet, both the Yasukuni debacle and the Senkaku/Diaoyu incident demonstrated that while the political relationship might be hostage to the residual confrontational mind-set and extremist camps in both societies, the broadening core of society-to-society relationship in Japan had the capacity to absorb political shocks and the desire to continue in the spirit of 'business as usual'. There were no serious popular outbreaks against China or the Chinese people in Japan over either of these incidents; moreover, Chinese tourists to Japan continued to grow over the same period. How to lessen the influence of these polarized, extremist views, which are arguably the left-over by-product of the earlier days of normalized relations when the 'history problem' did not figure as prominently, and how to take of the thornier edge off from the political relationship seems to be important challenges for both countries.

History and identity

History remains the core of discord so long as the two states retain their respective views about World War II. The recent incident of arson at the Yasukuni Shrine on 26 December 2011 was initially suspected to be the act of a Korean, but the perpetrator turned out to be a Chinese living in Japan who had escaped to Seoul in January. The same Chinese was caught

in Seoul for throwing a fire-bomb at the Japanese embassy in Seoul. The Chinese claimed that he got angry at Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda's statement that the comfort women issue between Japan and South Korea was 'already settled'.⁶ The emotional dimension of the legacy of the last war is beginning to assume a more open and expressive form, attesting to the fact that there is not yet a proper closure between Japan and China as well as between Japan and South Korea over pre-war events and the war itself.

How Japan reckons with its past has become as important as it has ever been in any effort to move Japan-China relations towards a better future. Yet, what is also often missing in debates and discussions about how to respond to the 'China challenge' is the recognition that sound Japan – China relations based on reconciliation over history is a significant contribution towards regional stability, prosperity and, ultimately, peace.

Yet, national history is at the core of any nation's identity. In the process of reconciliation between former enemies, weaving a common narrative of history between them is an important exercise. The efforts since 1972 between Germany and Poland,⁷ for example, to cooperate on writing history textbook is an important demonstration that comparing notes, perceptions and interpretations of war-centred relations between them contributes to improving popular understanding and perceptions towards each other. Such an undertaking has only just begun between Japan and China.⁸ As the Yasukuni incident demonstrated, time has only begun to flow between the two nations separated by memories of war and ideology for 60 years.

The mainstream narrative of the last war for the Japanese has long been one that began with Pearl Harbour and ended with atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the history of colonization of and war in Asia has not figured largely in post-war Japan's understanding of itself and the world, as an ally of the United States. The fact that some conservative leaders, notably from the former ruling LDP, still cling on to the view of Japan's acts of aggression in Asia as a war of liberation of the Asians is illustrative of the selective amnesia of the authors of the conservative narrative of Japan's Asian past. The Chinese perceive the last war as one that began earlier in 1931 with the Manchurian Incident, and the war of resistance against Japan has played a formative role in the forging of modern Chinese national identity. This longer war is only beginning to gain recognition in Japan after the ideological meltdown, but this view of history has taken a long time to take root in Japan.

While agreeing on a common narrative of the last war appears as yet a faraway goal, the fact that Japan and China agreed to such an endeavour is a significant development in the bilateral relationship. However, in both Japan and China, history tends to be interpretative, ideologically divisive and that objective and accurate accounts are as yet fully acceptable politically. While China might wish to weave a narrative from a revolutionary perspective for political reasons, Japan, too, has preferred narratives and interpretation of events, as mentioned above, according to certain ideas about nationhood or ideology that is integral to the identity of the political regime of the day.

In Japan, there has been no single preferred or dominant narrative. Instead, there have been two main interpretations of Japan's Asian past in contestation, a situation distinct to post-war Japan. Roughly speaking, they are: the progressive version that sees Japan as the main perpetrator and the conservative one that justifies the war as the war of liberation of Asia. And, they reflect the left-right ideological axis that characterized the so-called 1955-regime (*55-nen taisei*) of LDP rule when the Socialist Party was the main opposition and have affected Japan's effort to come to terms with the war.

Japan's present difficulty with China over past history is a legacy of the 1955-regime's politicization of the interpretation of Japan's Asian past. This legacy cannot be explained

without reference to the character of the 1955-regime as the embodiment of both change and continuity between pre-war and post-war Japan and its complex interplay throughout the history of post-war Japanese politics. Crucially for understanding Japan's relations with China today, Beijing had little, if no, influence on the formative period of post-war Japan. The course and character of post-war Japan's path was set by the US policy towards Japan and Asia as a whole. And, first of all, the China with which Japan enjoyed its diplomatic relations was the Republic of China, not the People's Republic of China.

The most definitive and enduring post-war change came by way of the constitution of 1947 drafted by the United States, which transformed the political system from authoritarian rule to democracy, a process that also transferred sovereignty from the emperor to the people. An equally significant but arguably more contested conceptual leap from pre-war Japan occurred with the 1947 constitution's Article 9, which defined Japan's state orientation to be pacifist. This fundamentally altered the means with which Japan was to conduct international affairs, for the use of force was forbidden as a state instrument. Yet, as Glenn Hook notes, 'Japan is fundamentally different from its wartime allies, Germany and Italy, in that 1945 was an interruption rather than a rupture in the Japanese state. After defeat, and a period of two quiet decades in which the imperial institution consolidated its survival . . . a process of re-centring the imperial institution in the national life developed' (Hook and McCormack 2001). Hook detects the undying legacy of the pre-war Prussian-style Meiji state, a unified nation-state under a sovereign emperor that was erected in 1868 and dismantled in 1945, and the invisible forces within the political establishment that try to blur the contours of post-war reforms and restore the Meiji state.

For example, the Yasukuni shrine, a Shinto shrine of modern origin (established in 1869), is a relic of the three pillars of the pre-war militarist state – patriotic education, the military and Yasukuni – that survived the post-war reforms as a private religious establishment; the post-war state no longer recognizes it as a state institution.⁹ The 1947 constitution ensured that Japan would not return to a fanatically Shinto-nationalist military state loyal only to the emperor, and made strict separation between the state and religion and stripped the emperor of all political powers. Yet, with each visit to the shrine by Japan's high officials the country was seen to be sending out the message that post-war Japan had not made a clear break from the pre-war state mentality, as Tetsuya Takahashi writes: 'This [pre-war] system, based on the trinity of the military, Yasukuni shrine, and patriotic education, *appeared* to be dismantled in 1945 with Japan's defeat in the Asia-Pacific War. But I emphasize that it appeared to be, for it continued to exist in an ambiguous form throughout the post-war era and it seems now to be reconstituted' (Takahashi 2007, p. 106). The crucial part in the element of continuity is not just in the imperial institution per se but the rehabilitated conservative mind-set of Imperial Japan that came to occupy the centre of political life in post-war Japan, manifested in the consolidation of the LDP as the ruling party in 1955.

Revising the 1947 constitution was an important objective for the LDP. Central to the revisionist aim was the perceived need to regain state freedom or restore the state in Weber's familiar definition, seen as restricted by Article 9 that does not recognize the state's monopoly on force. Re-arming was, therefore, an important objective. However, restoring the Meiji state and modifying liberal reforms believed alien to Japanese tradition (such as individual rights and gender equality) were part of the so-called reverse course conservatism (*hando hoshu*) that the rise of the LDP represented. It was a matter of regaining the source of national identity believed to have been lost by the post-war reforms. Nationalism in post-war Japan is about this lost or suppressed identity.¹⁰

The problem was that the LDP refused to drop the idea of constitutional revision even though its attempt failed in 1960. As a result, defending the constitution became a prime cause of the opposition. The Socialist Party represented the anti-war sentiment of a public that identified with state pacifism, and maintained the position (until the 1990s) that both the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the United States – Japan security treaty were unconstitutional. Remaining in the state of permanent tension, the 1955-regime kept the post-war 1947 constitution and the United States – Japan security treaty in co-existence and to compete for authority as a pragmatic measure to secure Japan without disturbing domestic political stability. As the Cold War progressed and the economy took off, and Japan became increasingly dependent on the United States for security, the reality that the constitution was actually deeply contested became obscured (Satoh 2010).

The political left–right axis of the Cold War era nurtured an ideologically charged intellectual landscape. The interpretation of the last war became particularly a sensitive and divisive area in public discourse as a taboo settled around questions regarding the emperor's war guilt while Emperor Hirohito was still reigning. Apart from the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, which the right-wing nationalist resent as victor's justice, there has been no comparable effort by the Japanese themselves to account for their leaders' actions. Yet, without confronting the question of who was responsible for starting the war or failing to stop the war, which would also include a hard and necessary look at the role of Hirohito, any meaningful national exercise in coming to terms with the war was impossible. Moreover, the 1955-regime that focused excessively on economic growth chose to ignore the importance of coming to terms with its Asian past, not least because east Asian states, including China, were not as yet politically mature but also because Japan was ideologically divided.

However, for such a hard exercise of confronting and coming to terms with the war past to become politically compelling, and therefore, possible in the domestic context, Japan needed to wait until the emperor passed away and the Cold War ended. As it turned out, it was only his passing away in 1989 that coincided with the year of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the ideological conflict that the grip of ideology on interpreting history began to ease. The pace of change, however, has been slow. Even as late as 1995, the Japanese Diet was divided over the interpretation of the last war, when it tried to unanimously adopt a resolution to renew Japanese commitment never to repeat the past on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of World War II. As in the controversial high-school textbook white-washing, some revisionist politicians opposed the use of the word, 'aggression' to describe Japan's advances in Asia.¹¹

In fact, the 1990s would witness history acquiring importance of existential proportions to Japan's sense of identity, as a part of Japan's effort since the economic bubble burst to reinvent and revitalize itself in a changing regional landscape, notably the rise of other east Asian states, including China. Even though history is by no means the monopoly of politics, and that the conservative version of the 'last war' is by no means the dominant one, accusations and criticisms that Japan is unrepentant have persisted because, in the end, the official face of Japan has been the LDP as the ruling party and its conservative interpretation of the 'last war'. Relations with the rising and confident China in particular have brought parochial aspects of Japan's interpretation of history into sharp relief.

In the next section, we look at the Yasukuni controversy during Prime Minister Koizumi's era (2001–2006) to illustrate that this Japan was beholden to its preferred narrative of the last war as China is to its own, but increasing contact with China began to challenge not only the legitimacy of the conservative interpretation of history but also the LDP as a ruling party.

Yasukuni and identity politics

Every argument and controversy over historical memories, whether over textbooks, the Yasukuni shrine, compensation for wartime slave labour and forced prostitutions, or atrocities such as Unit 731 and the Nanking massacre, enables China and South Korea to seize the moral high ground and push Japan on the defensive. Even more damaging for Japan is the fact that those historical issues lose support even among its closest allies in America, Europe and southeast Asia. The diplomatic cost is high, and it is paid every year. Unless the issue is genuinely put into the past, Japan is unlikely to gain the full status as a 'normal', sovereign country that so many senior politicians, of both the main parties, say they crave. (Emmott 2009)

Bill Emmott, former editor of *The Economist*, recommended recently that governments of Asia's big three, Japan, China and India, should work on eliminating their country's 'greatest weaknesses in international affairs' rather than building and boasting about respective strengths in their power struggle. He identifies that, 'Japan's greatest weakness is history, and its inability to put that history behind it.' Indeed, the Yasukuni controversy demonstrated that so long as Japan does not confront its own past and bring about a closure on the legacy of Imperial Japan across the region that it victimized, the 'history problem' remains a fundamental problem for the region to accept Japan's leadership role in good faith. Joseph Nye similarly recognized at the time of the controversy that Japan's poor handling of the past has undermined Japan's 'soft power' potential: 'Unlike Germany, which repudiated its past aggression and reconciled with its neighbours in the framework of the European Union, Japan has never come to terms with its record in the 1930s and 1940s. The residual suspicion that lingers in countries like China and Korea sets limits on Japan's appeal that are reinforced ever time the Japanese prime minister visits the Yasukuni Shrine' (Nye 2005).

Between the years 2001 and 2006, when Jun'ichiro Koizumi was the prime minister, Japan's relations with China plummeted to possibly the lowest level since the two countries normalized ties in 1972. The deterioration of the bilateral relationship was triggered by Koizumi's annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, the controversial symbol of Japan's militarist past, especially to the peoples and countries that were victim of Japanese aggression in World War II. At Yasukuni, the souls of some 2.5 million Japanese soldiers fallen in Japan's modern wars – from the *Boshin* civil war (1868–1869) of the Meiji Restoration to overthrow the feudal Tokugawa *bakufu* [shogunate] to World War II that were all fought on behalf of the Emperor – are enshrined as *eirei* (heroic spirits).¹² The spirits include those of the 14 Class A war criminals convicted at the Tokyo war crimes tribunal and executed in 1948, and this is a major reason for Chinese (and Koreans) protest against the Japanese leaders' pilgrimage to Yasukuni.

China first lodged a complaint against the Yasukuni visits in 1985, when Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone made a high-profile visit to the shrine along with all his cabinet ministers on 15 August. On 15 August 1945 the Japanese Emperor (*tenno*) Hirohito formally declared to his subjects Japan's surrender. After receiving criticism not only from China but also from other Asian neighbours, notably South Korea, Nakasone stopped visiting the shrine until he stepped down in 1988. Since then, Ryutaro Hashimoto has been the only prime minister to make the visit in 1996 before Koizumi. Between Nakasone and Koizumi, Japan had a succession of 10 short-lived prime ministers (including Hashimoto). Three of them – Morihiro Hosokawa, Tsutomu Hata and Tomi'ichi Murayama – were non-LDP prime ministers, the other LDP leaders were either not in power long enough or chose not to make a statement one way or the other about Yasukuni (Yuzo 1999, Takahashi 2005, Watanabe and Wakamiya 2006). However, Koizumi was the first Japanese leader to repeat

the visits and ignore their protests as meddling in Japan's own affairs of how to honour the war dead according to its religious customs.

Chinese scholar Wang Zhixin, long resident in Japan, noted how incensed the Chinese leadership had become with Koizumi's insensitivity: 'It is unprecedented that China's Premier, President, and other senior leaders have made repeated reference to Yasukuni in recent years, denouncing the outrage committed by Koizumi. Such criticisms were quite without parallel in the relations between the two countries in peace time' (Zhixin 2007). The outbreak of hooliganism at the 2004 Asian Cup football championship final in Beijing (where Japan won) and anti-Japan riots in Chinese cities in the spring of 2005 demonstrated that anger was widespread among the Chinese people, and by 2004 Chinese leaders refused to meet Koizumi even on the side-lines of multilateral meetings unless he stopped visiting Yasukuni. That the manner of honouring the war dead who died 60 years ago should become a condition for the leaders of two major powers to meet only demonstrated the deep gulf of history that still separates the two nations in spite of 30 years of supposed goodwill.

Deterioration of the bilateral relationship also caught international attention as it occurred while the world was also taking serious note of China's rapid economic and military rise, a globally significant development since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The United States also watched the chilling developments caused by Koizumi with unease and disapproval. Even US President George W. Bush was said to have cautioned Koizumi to stop visiting Yasukuni. During the Bush–Koizumi years, United States–Japan relations were said to be at an all-time high, with Koizumi taking decisive actions to live up for the first time in the alliance history to America's expectations as a security partner in areas where Japan had hitherto been hesitant to act. Koizumi sent SDF to Iraq and the Indian Ocean as a part of the 'coalition of the willing' in the war on terror, and passed laws to prepare for attacks on Japanese territory. Under Koizumi, the United States–Japan security alliance became operable as much as never before. Yet, the Bush administration was also working on guiding China into becoming a 'responsible stakeholder' in global affairs and recognizing American interest to be involved in the various processes of regional economic integration to this end. Japan's role, as America's principal ally, had to be one that facilitates rather than hinders America's Asia policy.

Two decades ago, Nakasone stopped visiting the shrine after 1984 precisely because Japan faced a similar risk of regional isolation. Nakasone had cultivated good relations with Ronald Reagan, likened Japan as America's 'unsinkable aircraft carrier', and orchestrated a Japan that appeared more confident among the Western powers. Nakasone was also exploring ways to restore Yasukuni as the national war memorial as a part of his comprehensive agenda to revive state consciousness in post-war Japan. His revisionist slogan was *senjo no sokessan* (final accounting of the post-war), which would bring about a more 'balanced' view of the pre-war history that was not excessively self-flagellating, a new constitution written by the Japanese in place of the post-war constitution written by the Americans during their occupation of Japan, and the construction of an autonomous foreign policy thinking as an 'independent' state. Nakasone at the time explained to the Japanese Diet: 'One needs to take into account the feelings of other Asian nations . . . If Japan is isolated from Asia, would the spirits of those soldiers who believed they were dying for Asia be happy?' (Watanabe and Wakamiya 2006). Not surprisingly, Nakasone was among the first to criticize Koizumi for lacking strategic vision in his diplomacy.

As a plausible storyline of the time, Koizumi's open defiance of China was a combined expression of revived nationalism and a push towards a more assertive foreign policy stance in Japan encouraged by 'neo-con' America without much reflection upon how Japan's

regional standing might be affected. Feeling enfeebled by the prolonged post-bubble economic stagnation and mired in social and political troubles since, Japan was reacting with trepidation to China's rapidly growing power and was driven towards strengthening its alliance relationship with the United States.

In particular, Koizumi's hard-line foreign policy responses in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks gave cause for his critics to suspect that the Yasukuni visits were a part of advancing Japan's right-wing conservative agenda to rewrite the post-war constitution and normalize the Japanese military, the SDF. For example, Koizumi showed unprecedented resolve to demonstrate that the passive pacifist Japan was a thing of the past when he decided to send troops to Iraq and the Indian Ocean as a part of the 'coalition of the willing' in America's war on terror, and de facto normalized the SDF.¹³ Moreover, his government also passed the three basic laws necessary for the mobilization of the SDF at home in case of foreign invasion, a body of emergency laws hitherto lacking to make the security alliance operational at home. He also spoke of the need to change the constitution's Article 9 in the future. These steps suited America's military-heavy, neo-conservative agenda and also enabled him to forge close ties with President George W. Bush, the first Japanese leader to enjoy relations on a personal level with an American president since Nakasone, who was on a first name basis with Ronald Reagan – the 'Ron-Yasu' relationship – in the 1980s.

In view of such developments, Masaru Tamamoto raised anxiety about the combined cost of Koizumi's dubious rendezvous with 'neo-con' America and the Yasukuni visits that were alienating Japan from the region on Japanese security: 'Koizumi brushed off protests from China and South Korea as something concerning the long-ago past. But the Chinese and Koreans are talking about Japan's present and future. It is hard to imagine how angering our neighbours contributes to national security, while Koizumi preaches to the Japanese people that the Iraq expedition is vital for Japanese national security. The symbolism of the Yasukuni visit and the bravado associated with the Iraq expedition are not unrelated' (Tamamoto 2004).

It should be noted, however, that while Koizumi might be remembered by generations of Chinese as the most unrepentant nationalist leader in the post-war era, for Japan his visits to Yasukuni transformed the nature of the history problem from one about diplomacy to one of domestic politics. The impact of his Yasukuni visits on the LDP in particular was significantly different from past prime-ministerial visits that encountered Chinese protests.¹⁴ His persistence in visiting the shrine was essentially counter-intuitive to the pragmatism that characterized the LDP's style of rule and diplomacy. The party had hitherto avoided open confrontation with China over issues of the last war, including Yasukuni. However, the diplomatic crisis that Koizumi provoked was, however, so grave that the party became unstuck over the handling of history. Quite significantly it also aroused the usually docile Japanese public to question the wisdom of the Yasukuni visits. After the outbreak of anti-Japan protests in Chinese cities in the spring of 2005, the diplomatic risk seemed too high even for the public, and the private sector found the damage to economic and business relations with China costly. In a rising emotional chorus to criticize or defend it, Yasukuni – and the parochial, nationalist interpretation of history it has come to symbolize – became the subject of domestic public scrutiny, which was something quite new. In short, Koizumi took the history card out of China's hand while making Yasukuni a domestic controversy.¹⁵

From identity to interest

Conceptualizing the bilateral relationship after Koizumi stepped down in 2006 is still a challenge for Japan. The situation, however, is gradually and surely changing. The change

of power in 2009 from the long-ruling LDP to the DPJ was significant in creating a much needed space in Japan's mainstream public discourse to discuss relations with China more openly and in a balanced and inspired manner.

But the Japanese thinking about relations with China has yet to evolve into something comparable to Beijing's 'new thinking' about Japan, advocated by some Chinese scholars a decade ago. Initially denounced in China as unpatriotic for recommending the toning down of the history issue in diplomatic relations with Japan, China under Hu Jintao nevertheless followed the tenet of this 'new thinking' that argued for China's need to establish a more pragmatic and cooperative relationship with Japan. Yet, in Japanese politics there has been no noticeable effort to reappraise its long-held China policy principle, *seikei bunri* (separating politics and economics), which might be comparable to Beijing's embrace of the 'new thinking.' Although one might argue that *seikei bunri* reflected Japan's pragmatic approach towards China since normalization of ties in 1972, the context in which such pragmatism was both practical and permissible has changed.

Seikei bunri reflected a policy stance of a Japan that was still weak. It guided Japanese policy towards the PRC, as post-occupation Japan first normalized relations with Taiwan in 1952. The idea was to keep a window of opportunity to restore pre-war economic ties with mainland China open. Politically, it proved to be a prudent choice to avoid getting trapped in the Cold War ideological cross-fire. Japanese decision-makers then had no inclination 'to be part of transforming relations between states or the balance-of-power politics' (Ogata 1988, p. 178). Moreover, they were particularly wary of the possible entanglement in the Sino-Soviet rivalry (Ogata 1988, pp. 173–188). After normalization, *seikei bunri* became able to circumscribe the impact of the occasional political tension – and consequently fluctuating Japanese domestic opinion towards China – from other aspects of the relationship, particularly development assistance that began in 1979.

Today, *seikei bunri* is a mere rhetoric, obscuring the reality that even in Japan–China relations foreign policy is becoming increasingly an expression of domestic opinion and politics. Trade between Japan and the PRC increased thousand-fold since official trade resumed in the 1960s, to over 100 billion dollars annually. The volume of trade with China exceeded that with the United States for the first time in 2004, reaching 189.4 billion dollars, making China Japan's largest source of import, and the second largest export market. Today, the figure is over 200 billion dollars annually and remains above trade with the United States.¹⁶ There are over 460,000 Chinese students and workers in Japan, and they form an important interface between Japanese and Chinese societies. The Japanese business community's presence in and dealings with China make them most vulnerable to swings in the political relationship, and its impact on public mood. After the anti-Japan riots in Chinese cities in the spring of 2005, deeply alarmed by the situation, Keidanren, the association of Japanese businesses, took an unusual step to ask Koizumi to refrain from visiting the shrine.

The current absence of a new principle and coherent strategy to guide Japan's relations with China has partly to do with the long domestic political impasse that was only broken in 2009, when the long-ruling LDP lost power to the DPJ. Crucially affecting Japan's foreign relations is the Japanese conservative establishment's narrow understanding of world politics, diversifying notions of power, where military power has become one among various expressions of power.

Nearly 40 years since normalization, China and Japan have developed into powerful states in their own ways. They are globally significant powers, capable of influencing the destiny of other smaller states in the region. Even though US presence and the United States–Japan security treaty continue to be important to east Asian security, the United

States does not have decisive influence on how China and Japan conceive their relationship nor can it shape the region alone. As a region, east Asia has entered the era of tripartite cooperation, competition and conflict between China, Japan and the United States.

It is important to recognize, however, that China and Japan are very different powers that think and behave differently. China is a more conventional power in that military might counts for it as much as other sources of power, such as economic or 'soft' power. It is also a nuclear power and holds one of the five permanent seats on the UN Security Council. Japanese power, on the other, has qualities that cannot be measured by the number of gunboats and missiles alone. Japan is, above all, an economic power that can influence international politics without itself using force. As such they are states of mismatched status that express power in different ways. China and Japan are capable of being complementary powers for regional stability and prosperity, as Tamamoto suggested during the tsunami relief in 2005: 'States possess comparative advantages that can be used toward the general good. Cash-rich Japan can play a meaningful role in the tsunami relief effort. But Japan is relatively powerless when it comes to solving the North Korean nuclear question, which is where China holds leverage and plays a critical role' (Tamamoto 2005). One might recall the Asian financial crisis of 1997 to realize that the success of region-wide initiatives can be difficult to achieve when China and Japan are at odds with each other.¹⁷

With China and the United States

Former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said on his visit to Beijing in December 2007 that, 'China and Japan are facing a big chance and opportunity.' But because China and Japan have never been friends in their modern history, one should take into account that the two have become pre-disposed to be confrontational and suspicious of each other, a mind-set that still affects the bilateral relationship even after the ideological divide has dissipated. Coming to terms with the past and reconciling with each other is obviously the most desirable course for the two major powers in the region. However, it takes more than just coming to terms with the recent history, that is, the 15-year war after the Manchurian Incident of 1931.

China and Japan need to weave a common narrative of modern history of Asia in order to find out what made them enemies and what might make them friends, but such an exercise can only take place when the two countries come to share a sense of purpose in transforming the bilateral relationship from one defined by mutual suspicion – and therefore weak and detrimental to the region as a whole – to one that is based on mutual trust.

China and Japan are capable of taking prudent decisions, pragmatic accommodation of each other and even cooperation on practical issues, such as economic development, energy efficiency and environmental protection. What is so far missing – especially in the Japanese perspective – is a bird's eye view of the bilateral relationship's regional role, which is arguably a more important issue because it is about two powerful states that are capable, each in its own way, to influence the future of the region. Yet, as even recent history of the Asian financial crisis of 1997 demonstrates, it is not in the interest of the region to see China and Japan act separately, or even antagonistically towards each other. The idea of the Asian Monetary Fund, floated by Japan at the time but sank by China and the United States, has resurfaced as the Chiang Mai Initiative, backed by both China and Japan.

As neighbours, as trading partners and as regional powers with (differing) strategic, political and economic significance for the United States, the matrix of the relationship

has become complex. For Japan it is a change of scenery from the days when it was the only modern power in Asia. Both countries have been under prolonged single-party rule; there is an inevitable inertia in the way the bilateral relations are conceptualized. The tendency to view each other in confrontational and competitive mode, where Japan's allied relationship with the United States factors greatly, is a reflection of such old habits cultivated during the Cold War. What must be averted is a situation where the United States chooses to contain the growth of Chinese power. It is in the region's interest for the United States to continue following a balanced course that encourages China to become a responsible stakeholder in world politics, and Japan will be a key player in influencing US decisions.

In the long run, however, Japan is bound to face the question of the future character of the security alliance with the United States. A stable and cooperative tripartite relationship between China, Japan and the United States is not an end but the means to ensuring east Asia's gradual economic integration. The wonders of economic integration is that it makes state sovereignty less an issue as borders come down with increased interaction between societies and economies. In such a scenario, it would make little sense for the United States to maintain bases in Japan at the present high level because spots of potential armed conflict – such as Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula – would (hopefully) cease to be so potentially dangerous. It would make little sense for China to spend so much on preparing for an enemy that does not exist or a conflict that may not happen. It is in Japan's interest to promote such a development, and in order to pursue this course Japan needs to share this vision with China and the United States. This might be the ultimate existential challenge for post-war Japan as it grapples for a future with China.

Conclusion

The structure of east Asia's political economy is still in a period of major reconfiguration, primarily in response to China's renaissance but also to a host of other factors, including Japan's prolonged economic and political slump. There is no denying that the multiple disasters of earthquake, tsunami and the nuclear power plant accidents on 11 March further complicated the challenge. The recent displays of Chinese hubris and flaunting of power and Japan's unilateral tumbling, stumbling and slumping are arguably twin causes of regional anxiety towards an order that might be dominated by China. Yet, the flipside of such Japanese uneasiness with China is Japan's own lack of confidence since the economy turned sour in the 1990s and the prolonged muddling through in the process of political and economic revitalization.

A joint survey conducted by Japan's *Yomiuri Shinbun* and China's *Xinhua News Agency* just before the Beijing Olympic games in 2008 revealed an extraordinary degree of Japan's low self-esteem that appears to be affecting public perception of China's rise. Asked to choose what describes Japan, only 40% of Japanese respondents said the country was economically rich, whereas over 70% of the Chinese respondents saw Japan as a rich country. Moreover, over 55% of Chinese saw China's economic development as having positive effects on Japan. Polls are momentary snapshots of the public psyche about any given issue, and at survey time nearing the Beijing Olympic Games, the Chinese were clearly more optimistic compared to the Japanese.¹⁸ The 3.11 triple earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters have exacerbated Japan's sense of decline. However, the recovery process appears to be providing new sources for energy and a sense of purpose to change Japan for the better.

One key for Japan to engage meaningfully with a rising China is to firmly recognize its strengths objectively and feel confident about them. Japan's primary strength is in the economic arena, in the capability to improve the quality of life through technological innovation, such as controlling pollution, using energy efficiently and improving the qualities of existing manufactured goods, from cars to home electrical supplies. As such China's and Japan's strengths and weaknesses cannot be placed in a comparative context where the rising status of one diminishes that of the other. Moreover, Japan must be mindful that (a) it is not in Japan's power nor interest to influence power politics between China and the United States, (b) the Japanese economy needs both the United States and China, and (c) America is not going to support a Japan that cannot sort out the history problem's negative impact on Japan's regional standing. Japan has no choice but to balance relations with both countries.

In this context, even though the DPJ's first prime minister Hatoyama's call for the creation of an east Asian community essentially failed to take off as he might have wished, it is important to note that the initiative nevertheless inspired some in Japanese policy and intellectual circles to delve into studying the possibility. Former secretary general and shadow kingmaker in both the LDP and the DPJ, Ozawa Ichiro, made a bolder demonstration of the new ruling party's intention to shift away from the LDP's United States-centric foreign relations when he took over 100 young DPJ Diet member to visit leaders in Beijing in December 2009, less than four months after the change of power. Combined with Hatoyama's disastrous handling of the relocation issue of the Futenma airbase in Okinawa with the United States, the DPJ arguably overdid the anti-LDP, reactionary approach to foreign relations in its first year as the new ruling party. However, the DPJ's attempt – however muddled, misdirected and consequently messy – to distance Japan's foreign relations from the 'domineering' United States and to strike a better balance between Japan's relations with the United States and with the rest of east Asia is perhaps the closest match to the emergence of China's 'new thinking' on Japan earlier in the decade.

Needless to say, conceiving a meaningful relationship with China is a two-way exercise. Former Japanese ambassador to Beijing, Miyamoto Yuji, argues that there is no bright future in the bilateral relationship if the two countries fail to make constant efforts to understand each other, to respect the other while also working towards earning the other's respect (Miyamoto 2011). He also points out that the most difficult aspect of the interaction between Japan and China is to calibrate a "mutual phase" in each other's minds and hearts' (Miyamoto 2011).

The world that Alice visited through the looking glass was full of adventure, but it was not a true reflection of the real world. This is, of course, not the place to judge whether what Alice experienced in the looking-glass world was good or bad. But it would certainly help us to reflect that we all have looking glasses to look at ourselves, to see if we look OK or even to attempt to see our own true self. Certainly not many people would imagine going through the glass and visiting the other side of it, but it is common to all of us to tend to mirror others with their own image. But what we see in the mirror goes the other way even if everything is just the same. The only way to avoid this complication is to realize that there is a looking glass, or glasses, that we use and others are using as well, and try not to be misguided, if not fooled, by them. It is therefore very difficult to develop a common understanding even among our close family members or friends, and certainly in our neighbours in east Asia. But we need to make efforts. And the efforts to establish common understanding in various areas considered obstacles, especially the disagreement over history, are extremely valuable steps in this direction.

Notes

1. Tanaka (1991). 'Of course, Nixon did not change everyone's views or behaviour as rapidly as he "changed the world" (with his surprise visit to Beijing). For Japan, 1972 was the year of power change. And, Sino-Japanese normalization was the first problem of domestic politics that the new cabinet had to tackle.'
2. Yoshihisa Komori of *Sankei Shinbun* criticized Eisuke Sakakibara, the former finance ministry official and 'Mr. Yen', when Sakakibara advocated, 'strategic pragmatism of simultaneously pursuing pro-U.S., pro-China track, using the China card against the U.S., and the America card against China,' in a piece for *Sankei Shinbun* (2 May 2004). Komori wrote: '[Sakakibara] is basically saying, "cosy up with China and don't be so close to America" . . . by this he is putting the U.S., which is Japan's ally, and China, which is an *inherently enemy* [italics by author], on the same boat . . . Moreover, he treats the free and democratic America and the single-party rule China as equals, which means that he has no conception of political values' (Komori and Takubo 2005).
3. The DPJ won 306 out of 480 seats in parliament's lower house, the House of Representatives.
4. In the most recent Cabinet Office survey, 45.3% did not feel that Japan-China relations is on good terms and over 70% did not feel affinity towards China (<http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h23/h23-gaiko/zh/z09.html> and <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h23/h23-gaiko/zh/z11.html>).
5. The curious decision to initially withhold the video footage of the incident did nothing to bolster Japan's bargaining position with China, and the decision became all the more perplexing after the footage was leaked by a coast-guard officer on YouTube.
6. Noda made his statement in talks with the Korean president, Lee Myung-bak, over the issue of the erection of a statue of a comfort woman in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul on 14 December in a symbolic protest against Japan's stated position that the issue was resolved in 1965. 'Lee calls on Noda to take positive steps to resolve "comfort women" issue', *The Asahi Shimbun*, 18 December 2011; http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201112180020.
7. See the works of the German-Polish Textbook Commission at: <http://www.gei.de/en/research/the-european-schoolhouse/europe-and-the-national-factor/german-polish-textbook-commission.html>.
8. The first phase of Japan-China joint research on history took place between 2006 and 2009. Each country's findings were published as separate reports in 2010. It appears that the effort was basically at the level of 'comparing notes' rather than arriving at a common interpretation of events, especially in the area of modern history. See http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/china/rekishi_kk.html.
9. Japanese philosopher Tetsuya Takahashi, who has written extensively on the Yasukuni controversy, makes it quite clear: 'The nineteenth-century Meiji State created three essential institutions: the military, the Yasukuni shrine, and patriotic education' (Takahashi 2007, pp. 105-124).
10. Although today's nationalists often argue that the constitution was forced upon the Japanese at the time, they tend to overlook the fact that Japanese Diet members debated and made amendments to the draft. Furthermore, the Diet debated the constitution again in 1956-1961. Article 9, in particular, was the subject of a heated debate, in which the Communist Party members also took issue. See Dore (1997).
11. See Wakamiya (1998). Wakamiya writes: 'In its making, from conception to adoption, the resolution had allowed one politician after another to make public statements (without the speaker's ever realizing it) the conundrum: "When will the Japanese ever learn?" . . . I for one found the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war to be a shaky and ambiguous milestone.'
12. The official Yasukuni Shrine website explains: '[For] the worship of the divine spirits of those who sacrificed themselves for the country' (<http://www.yasukuni.or.jp>).
13. Although the SDF had been participating in UN peace-keeping operations since the government passed peace-keeping law in 1992, it still cannot take part in collective military action overseas because the constitution's Article 9 forbids it. UN peace-keeping was deemed an exception, as not all operations required the SDF to be combat-ready. Both missions in the war against terror fell outside the realm of missions and situations permitted by the peace-keeping law; crucially, they did not have UN mandates.
14. Two Japanese prime ministers before Koizumi had met Chinese protest for visiting the Yasukuni shrine: Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone in 1986 and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in 1997.

15. Haruko Satoh.
16. For the latest trade figures, see the JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) website: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/news/releases/20080229066-news>.
17. Take, for example, the case of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, when Japan floated the idea of an 'Asian Monetary Fund.' The idea did not take off at the time because Japan could not win support from the United States and China.
18. The Japanese survey was conducted on 12–13 July; the Chinese survey on 11–16 July. 4 August 2008, *The Yomiuri Shimbun*.

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