

History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino–Japanese Conflict

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Anti-Japanese popular nationalism is rising high in China today. Little evidence to date proves that it is officially orchestrated. Nonetheless, Chinese popular nationalism still has deep roots in the state's history propaganda which has implanted pernicious myths in the national collective memory. Fueling mistrust and exacerbating a mutual threat perception, popular nationalism could be a catalyst for future Sino–Japanese conflict over the Taiwan problem, island disputes, and maritime resource competition. The increasingly liberalized but often biased Chinese media, the role of nationalist sub-elites, and the government's accommodation have all contributed to the strength of anti-Japanese nationalism, which cannot be mitigated by bilateral economic interdependence. To rid bilateral relations of the negative historical legacy, the two countries need the vision and determination to remove nationalistic myths and promote a shared history through mutual critique and self-reflection in transnational historians' dialogues.

Shadows of the past

On 21 March 2005, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan issued a report on UN reform, which called for increased involvement in decision-making by those countries that contribute most to the United Nations financially, militarily and diplomatically. The news triggered the fear among Chinese people around the world that this could be the chance for Japan to win its bid for permanent membership in the Security Council. Within one week, tens of millions of Chinese signed Internet petitions to oppose Japan's bid, citing its WWII atrocities and continuing denial of that history as the main reasons.¹ While small protests were staged in China in early April, Mombusho [Japanese Ministry of Education] then released approved textbooks for the year, including a contentious history book criticized for whitewashing Japan's wartime aggression. It was the straw that broke the camel's back. Massive anti-Japanese demonstrations quickly erupted in dozens of Chinese cities spanning over 20 provinces, and even escalated to violent attacks on Japanese nationals and diplomatic stations.

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1. 'As China grows more powerful, regional rivalries take new turn', *Chicago Tribune*, (12 April 2005).

The nearly three weeks of demonstrations in April were the largest anti-Japanese mass movement since such movements first appeared in the mid-1980s. They marked the culmination of Chinese public outrage at Japan in recent years. In summer 2003, more than one million Chinese people responded to an online petition demanding that Japan apologize and compensate for Chinese injuries due to the leaking of Japanese chemical weapons left behind after the war.² In October, nearly 1,000 Chinese students marched in the streets of Xi'an protesting an obscene skit performed by several Japanese students during a university cultural festival. Seeing the skit as a deliberate Japanese insult against China, the demonstrators shouted slogans such as 'Down with Japanese imperialism!', 'Japanese bastard out!', and 'Boycott Japanese goods!'³ These incidents remind people that Chinese memory of the traumatic war with Japan remains vivid. Collectively, they overshadowed the prospect of future Sino-Japanese cooperation, a key to regional stability and prosperity in East Asia.

Such anti-Japanese movements clearly indicate a rising tide of popular nationalism in China. Where did the popular nationalism come from? Can the Chinese government restrain the negative emotions of its people towards Japan? Can such emotions significantly damage Sino-Japanese relations and affect regional security? These are the questions that this article addresses. I argue that the visceral nationalist sentiment has deep roots in the decades of centralized school education and official propaganda in China that implanted pernicious myths in the national collective memory. Owing to the structural imperatives of the Cold War, the official history of the Sino-Japanese war in the Mao-era emphasized the communist victory and blamed only a few Japanese militarists for the war. From the 1980s, however, domestic political needs prompted the government to purvey new myths highlighting Japanese war atrocities and Chinese victimhood. But the inconsistency in the official historiography marred the images of not only Japan but also the Chinese government itself. The current Chinese popular hostility to Japan sprang from both the public's hatred of Japan stimulated by the post-Mao era history propaganda and their cynicism toward their own government, who they believed had lied about the history and acted too softly on Japan.

While most scholars of contemporary Chinese nationalism acknowledge that popular nationalism and official propaganda are different but also interconnected, not all believe that the former would be strong enough to challenge the later or fundamentally divert the course of Chinese foreign policy.⁴ Many point to the weak

2. 'Relic of war adds to strain in Beijing ties with Tokyo', *The New York Times*, (12 August 2003); 'China nets million Japan protest', *BBC News*, (18 September 2003).

3. 'Culture clash: curtain still raised on Chinese protests over obscene skit', *Asahi.com*, (3 November 2003).

4. There is an extensive literature on the rising Chinese nationalism in the recent decade, including Geremie R. Barbe, 'To screw foreigners is patriotic: China's avant-garde nationalism', *The China Journal* 34, (1995); Allen S. Whiting, 'Chinese nationalism and foreign policy after Deng', *China Quarterly* 142, (1995); Jonathan Unger, ed., *Chinese Nationalism* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996); Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Dingxin Zhao, 'An angle on nationalism in China today: attitudes among Beijing students after Belgrade 1999', *China Quarterly* 172, (2002); Peter Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-state by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); William A. Callahan, *Contingent States: Greater China and Transnational Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); and the special section 'The Limits of Chinese Nationalism' in *Journal of Contemporary China* 14(42), (2005).

influence of public opinion in an authoritarian state, and argue that overall the Chinese government has exercised restraint when handling international disputes.⁵ These skeptics, however, overlook the reality that the recent opening up of Chinese society has created more public space for bottom-up emotional venting and policy advocacy. The public tendency to absorb information selectively with regard to Japan and the increasing influence of nationalist sub-elites also strengthen the power of a radically anti-Japanese popular nationalism. The government is compelled to accommodate the popular sentiment, especially when the public raises their demands in the name of patriotism that is now the main ideological underpinning of Beijing's regime legitimacy. Although it has yet to push the two governments into direct confrontation, China's popular nationalism has fueled widespread mutual mistrust and antipathy in both countries. Given the great uncertainty in the bilateral power balance due to the rise of China and Japan's international assertiveness, popular nationalism can increase mutual threat perception and embolden hawkish government policies. All three factors, the potency of the anti-Japanese popular sentiment, the increasing difficulty for the Chinese state to harness the nationalism, and the fear among the Chinese public of lagging behind in the bilateral power rivalry, have contributed to the significant role played by nationalism at this stage of Sino–Japanese relations.

Because controversies surrounding war history interpretation have often triggered nationalist protests in China and seriously bedeviled Sino–Japanese relations, in order to improve relations they have to settle the history problem. The difficulty lies in the egoist, pernicious national myths that inculcate a sense of innate superiority, inflame mutual hatred and fear, and, as a result, worsen mutual misperception and justify bellicose policy demands. I argue that the two countries need the vision and determination to remove nationalistic myths and promote a shared, honest understanding of their history. One critical measure to stop national mythmaking is for both sides to not just emphasize the wrongdoings of others but also to conduct self-reflection and self-criticism of their own nation's history.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. I first analyze how different political incentives motivated the changing myths in the Chinese official interpretation of history of the Sino–Japanese War from the 1970s to the mid-1980s, which worsened Chinese popular feelings about Japan and ignited anti-Japanese nationalism. Using the case of anti-Japanese student demonstrations in the 1980s, I show that Chinese popular nationalism could aggravate China's political tension with Japan by preventing Beijing from taking a moderate position in its diplomacy towards Japan. I then introduce three major points of contention in current Sino–Japanese diplomatic relations, including the Taiwan controversy, sovereignty dispute over offshore islands, and competition for maritime resources, and argue that the growing Chinese nationalism could pressure Beijing to engage in serious conflict with Japan over these issues. The next section explains that the resurgence of anti-Japanese nationalism in China since the mid-1990s was greatly boosted by the rapid, but still limited, opening up of the mass media. Even thickening bilateral economic ties

5. See, for example, Caroline Rose, 'Patriotism is not taboo: nationalism in China and Japan and implication for Sino–Japanese relations', *Japan Forum* 12(2), (2000).

cannot serve as a safety valve for bilateral political relations. And the situation has been worsened by the ambiguity in the bilateral power balance over the past decade. The final section discusses the pros and cons of Beijing's current readjustment of its Japan policy and concludes that a fundamental 'new thinking' on history-writing would be more effective than tactical policy maneuvers to dampen anti-Japanese popular nationalism and foster mutual trust in the long run.

Past in the present: old and new myths

More than 30 years ago, in September 1972, China and Japan normalized diplomatic relations. When giving his toast at the state banquet to honor Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, who came to Beijing to sign the official document, Premier Zhou Enlai expressed the wish that 'the friendship between our two great nations shall pass on from generation to generation'.⁶ The friendship did arrive, but lasted much shorter than Zhou had wished.

For about a decade after the normalization, the two countries had a relatively harmonious relationship. They formed a loose strategic alignment targeted at the Soviet Union, and Beijing accepted the US–Japan alliance and Japanese defense buildup. Economically, bilateral trade boomed, with the absolute value increasing more than nine times from 1972 to 1981. Meanwhile, Japan's low-interest loans to China, starting from 1979 and reaching 3.3 trillion yen cumulatively by the end of 2004, brought China much-needed foreign capital and advanced technologies. Besides, the two countries reached a compromise on several bilateral sovereignty disputes. Japan accepted the People's Republic of China (PRC) to be the sole legitimate government of China, but never took a formal position on the legal status of Taiwan.⁷ Having secured the severance of Japan–ROC official ties, Beijing did not take issue with Tokyo's ambiguous attitude and essentially tolerated its semi-official contacts with Taipei. Nor did China care about the ownership of a few small uninhabited islands located between Taiwan and Okinawa, called Diaoyu in Chinese and Senkaku in Japanese that later sparked intense bilateral disputes. In 1972, Premier Zhou told Japanese delegates at the preparatory meetings for the normalization negotiation 'There is no need to mention the Diaoyu Islands. It does not count as a problem of any sort compared to recovering normal diplomatic relations'.⁸

Indeed, given the strategic significance of bilateral solidarity in the face of the common Soviet threat, the two governments were happy to set aside secondary

6. See Huan Tian, ed. *Zhanhou zhongri guanxi wenxianji* [Documents on Postwar Sino–Japanese Relations] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue, 1997), Vol. 2, p. 109.

7. The Sino–Japanese joint communiqué reaffirmed the stand of the Chinese government that 'Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China', followed by Japan's understanding and respect for this stand and its promise to comply with Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation that had stipulated that Japan should return all the territories taken from China. With such circuitous expressions, Japan avoided taking a direct position on the status of Taiwan. See Soeya, *Japan's Economic Diplomacy with China, 1945–1978* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 111.

8. Tian, *Zhanhou zhongri guanxi wenxianji*, Vol. 2, p. 92; Tadao Ishikawa, Mineo Nakajima and Masaru Ikei, eds, *Sengo Shiryō: Nichū Kankei* [Postwar Documents: Japanese–Chinese Relations] (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1970), p. 414. Since the 1970s until the early 1990s, China's official position on the islands was to jointly explore the oil resources surrounding the disputed islands with Japan without touching on the sovereignty issue.

issues, such as to shelve the island dispute, and also to subdue contentions over the war history. When visiting Beijing, Prime Minister Tanaka expressed ‘deep reflection’ (*fukai hansei*) for the ‘much trouble that Japan brought to the Chinese people during an unfortunate period’ in the bilateral history. This is an ambiguous gesture of contrition because Tanaka did not tell exactly what happened during the ‘unfortunate period’ or use the word ‘apology’ (*shazai* or *owabi*).⁹ Back in Japan, Tanaka said at a 1973 Diet session that whether the war with China was aggressive or not had to wait for future evaluation.¹⁰ In fact, from the end of the war, a series of Japanese conservative governments sponsored a war narrative that blamed a small group of militarists for hijacking the state and duping the Japanese nation into a disastrous war. This ‘myth of military clique’ whitewashed the complicity of a wider range of wartime political actors, including the emperor and court officials, zaibatsu, civilian politicians, and high-ranking bureaucrats, who regained prestige and power in Japanese politics after the war ended. It also ignored the enthusiastic support that numerous ordinary Japanese citizens gave to the war policy and the horrendous atrocities committed by the rank-and-file in the Japanese military.¹¹

But Japanese historical amnesia did not spark Chinese protests in the 1970s. Instead, Beijing quickly accepted Tokyo’s superficial apology and renounced claims for war reparation in exchange for early diplomatic recognition. Zhou also told Tanaka that the few militarists must be strictly separated from the vast majority of Japanese people, and that both the Chinese and Japanese nations were traumatized during the war.¹² By endorsing the Japanese ‘myth of military clique’, the Chinese government avoided political disputes with Japan over historical memory and made way for their immediate strategic collaboration. In addition, to distinguish the many good Japanese from only a few bad Japanese also fit the communist ideology, the primary legitimacy foundation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime in Beijing. From the founding of the PRC until the end of the 1970s, communist propagandists premised national identity on the ‘defining fundamental fissure’ between the Chinese Communists and the Capitalists, especially the Kuomintang (KMT) government in Taiwan.¹³ As for foreign perpetrators, the class-based Marxist historiography claimed that the majority of people in a country were righteous proletarians and struggled with the evil capitalists, the militarist minority in the case of Japan.¹⁴

9. See Prime Minister Tanaka’s toast speech at the banquet hosted by Premier Zhou Enlai, 25 September, 1972, in Tian, *Zhanhou zhongri guanxi wenxianji*, Vol. 2, p. 105. The Sino–Japanese Joint Communiqué of Diplomatic Normalization also used the word ‘*fukai hansei*’. ‘*Hansei*’ means ‘remorse’ or ‘reproach’ in official English translation, but is more often translated as ‘reflection’, ‘self-examination’, or ‘introspection’ in Japanese–English dictionaries. See Mike Mochizuki, ‘Memory & reconciliation in East Asia: Japanese perspectives’, unpublished manuscript, June 2005.

10. Yutaka Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensōkan [The Japanese Views of War]* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1998), pp. 138–140.

11. On the Japanese conservative mainstream historiography about the war history, see Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensōkan*; George L. Hicks, *Japan’s War Memories: Amnesia or Concealment?* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1997); John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co./New Press, 1999), chs 15–16.

12. Tian, *Zhanhou zhongri guanxi wenxianji*, Vol. 2, pp. 103–104.

13. Rana Mitter, ‘Behind the scenes at the museum: nationalism, history and memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987–1997’, *The China Quarterly* 161, (2000).

14. The discussion here is based on a number of substitute teaching materials used right after the PRC was established and four editions of official textbooks produced in the 1950s and 1960s.

Thus, propaganda of national myths prevented rigorous investigation of historical facts, and political gestures substituted sincere, concrete restitution. Beijing's attempt to create an illusion of Sino-Japanese friendship in the 1970s without first settling the historical account was largely successful. Most young Chinese at that time had minimal knowledge about Japanese war atrocities, for the state-controlled textbooks rarely mentioned them and academic research on this topic was banned. Private stories about the 'Japanese devils' nevertheless survived, but only within families and small communities. Moreover, because of the tightly controlled mass media at the time, ordinary Chinese people had no way to learn about Japan's false treatment of the war history, such as the aforementioned speech in the Diet by Tanaka, textbook cover-up of war crimes, and leaders' worship at the Yasukuni Shrine that later became the focal point of Sino-Japanese political contention.¹⁵

Just when the Chinese people seemed to have accepted Sino-Japanese friendship, the government revamped the war narrative. Domestic politics was the main cause of the change. From the early 1980s, Deng Xiaoping's economic reform and open-door policy met with strong resistance from the conservative old guard within the Communist Party.¹⁶ Outside the government, the reform policy also drew complaints from a great part of the population who suffered from the negative side effects of the reform, such as the appearance of inflation, unemployment, corruption, and crime. At this time the communist ideology emphasizing class warfare had lost currency, to a large extent due to the decline of the party's prestige after the Cultural Revolution. The government now needed a new framework of ideas to facilitate intra-party consolidation and for rallying public support. Gradually, patriotism replaced communism to become the ideological foundation of the CCP's regime legitimacy. The state propaganda of patriotism, or the official nationalism, tried to inspire the people's love for the nation by praising China's national greatness as well as accentuating the differences between China and other nations. It exhorted the people to identify with the communist state that claimed to be the guardian of patriotism and, in its name, persuaded the public to sacrifice for the ambitious, but oftentimes socially and politically controversial reform policies.¹⁷

Promoting history education regarding China's resistance of foreign aggression was a key aspect of the new nationalist propaganda. This was set in motion after the 1982 Sino-Japanese textbook controversy when China protested Mombusho's attempt to distort the history of Japanese aggression in textbooks. It was the first time since the war that China took issue with Japan's historical views. Deng seized this opportunity to boost patriotism at home and appease the conservative faction within

15. Yasukuni is a Shintoist temple that began to enshrine BC-Class war criminals of WWII in 1959 and A-Class war criminals in 1978. In 1975 Miki made the first official worship there in the capacity of a prime minister. In the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s, Prime Ministers Tanaka, Fukuda, Ohira and Suzuki each paid homage there several times as private persons, but these shrine visits received no mention in the Chinese media at the time.

16. On the intense rivalry within the party regarding economic reform strategies in the 1980s, see Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1987), pp. 77–90.

17. Suisheng Zhao, 'We are patriots first and democrats second', in Edward Friedman and Barrett L. McCormick, eds, *What If China Doesn't Democratize?* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).

the CCP.¹⁸ After the textbook controversy was settled, the Chinese politicization of history education carried on. In 1985 the Chinese Ministry of Education restored ‘Five-Love Education’ [*wu’ai jiaoyu*] (love the motherland, people, work, science, and public properties), a practice dating back to the early 1950s but which was soon interrupted by Mao’s instruction to emphasize ideological indoctrination. This campaign particularly emphasized the teaching of China’s history of resisting foreign aggression. In 1989, the State Education Commission instructed primary and secondary schools to use history learning to make students ‘remember historical lessons, and not to forget imperialist invasion and Chinese people’s heroic resistance’.¹⁹ Unlike its previous emphasis on class struggle and CCP–KMT confrontation, the new history education curriculum centered on the conflicts between the Chinese nation and those foreign nations that invaded China in the past, especially Japan, so that it could inspire the people to redeem past humiliations and restore national glory. By targeting Japan as the national enemy, the new narrative could also foster a sense of solidarity between mainland China and Taiwan, a former colony of Japan, and justify the goal of national reunification that was an integral part of the official ideology of nationalism.²⁰

So the official history acknowledged the KMT’s role of resistance in the war, and substituted the ‘vicious Japanese imperialist aggressors’ for the erstwhile KMT villains. History textbooks published on the basis of the 1986 Teaching Guideline included detailed treatment of the KMT-led military campaigns against Japan, which were largely omitted in previous textbooks. Meanwhile, they covered Japanese war crimes more comprehensively than before, providing vivid descriptions, concrete figures, gruesome pictures, and even naming individual victim villages or persons.²¹ The film industry dedicated at least three movies to the Nanjing Massacre alone, the prime icon of Japanese brutality that, according to the Chinese official estimate, claimed 300,000 Chinese lives.²² Such a phenomenon was unthinkable in the past when revolutionary heroism dominated the communist propaganda and art works dwelling on human suffering were denounced as preaching defeatism or bourgeois humanitarianism.

18. On the 1982 textbook controversy, see Caroline Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino–Japanese Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); Hidenori Ijiri, ‘Sino–Japanese controversy since the 1972 diplomatic normalization’, in Christopher Howe, ed., *China and Japan: History, Trends, and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Arif Dirlik, ‘Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future; or, what is in the text? The politics of history in Chinese–Japanese relations’, in Masao Miyoshi and Harry D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

19. Ministry of Education, *China Education Yearbook* (1990), p. 103.

20. For an overview of the government policy on patriotism education in Chinese schools since 1949, see Weizhong Pu *et al.*, eds, *Aiguo zhuyi yu minzu jingshen* [*Patriotism and National Spirit*] (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2000), pp. 63–84. For more on the downplaying of ‘struggle philosophy’ of the communist ideology and highlighting of patriotism in Chinese school history education since the mid-1980s, see Alisa Jones, ‘Politics and history curriculum reform in post-Mao China’, *International Journal of Education Research* 37(6–7), (2002), pp. 554–556.

21. *9 Nian yiwu jiaoyu 4 nianzhi chujizhongxue giaokeshu zhongguo lishi* (Beijing: The People’s Education Press, 1992), Vol. 4; *Gaoji zhongxue keben zhongguo jindai xiandai Shi* (Beijing: The People’s Education Press, 1992), Vol. 2.

22. They include the documentary film *Nanjing Datusha* [*Nanjing Massacre*] released in August 1982, and feature films *Tucheng Xuezheng* [*Bloody Testimony of Massacre in A Captured City*] and *Nanjing Datusha* [*Nanjing Massacre*] produced in 1987 and 1995, respectively.

War commemoration also brought Japanese brutality into the center of national memory. From the mid-1980s the government built war museums at numerous sites of Japanese atrocities and designated them as patriotic education bases, such as the memorials for the victims of the Nanjing Massacre and the Japanese Unit 731 bacteria troops (Haerbing). In the meantime, academia was allowed to conduct deeper investigations into Japanese atrocities, using newly released government documents and systematic surveys and interviews with survivors and witnesses, and academics were encouraged to publish the research widely and discuss it at international conferences.²³

Such a change of tone in official war history to highlight Japanese war atrocities and Chinese victimhood was soon echoed throughout society. Numerous popular books on this topic were published, many of which were products of the initiatives of local governments and individual publishers and writers rather than the central government. For example, a best-selling book published in 1987, *The Great Nanjing Massacre*, sold 150,000 volumes in the first month. Later it was reprinted time and again, and even topped the reading list for patriotic education in factories, schools, and military units.²⁴

When the Chinese people embraced the new victim narrative, their emotions of self-pity and grievances towards Japan outpoured. Despite years of state propaganda about the simultaneous victimization of Chinese and Japanese people, the general public was now preoccupied with China's own suffering and felt little sympathy for Japan. So at a symposium on WWII films held in Nanjing in 1995, a movie reviewer asked scathingly why the Chinese film industry was more interested in telling stories about Japanese orphans left in China after the war than those about Chinese orphans whose parents were killed by the Japanese army.²⁵ Recently, a self-proclaimed diplomatic analyst wrote on the Internet that 'no one under the atomic bombing was innocent' and 'Japanese comfort women deserved their suffering because their families thought it was glorious that their daughters could support the war in this way'.²⁶

The prevalence of the sense of victimhood in Chinese society calls into question the long-standing national myth about the good Japanese majority versus a handful of bad Japanese. China's official position since the 1980s has retained this distinction to avoid antagonizing Japan, whose economic and political cooperation was still important to Chinese national interests, but more and more ordinary Chinese people now turn their back on this view; they tend to believe that the entire Japanese nation was evil. Discussions on Japan in best-selling books, Internet chat rooms, and non-propaganda mass media commonly attribute the aggressive war to the barbarian, bellicose, and brutal Japanese national character.²⁷ The dissemination of the new

23. For a comprehensive survey of recent Chinese historiography on the Nanjing Massacre, see Yang, 'Convergence or divergence? Recent historical writings on the rapes of Nanjing', *American Historical Review* 104, (June 1999).

24. Zhigeng Xu, *Nanjin Datusha [The Great Nanjing Massacre]* (Beijing, Jiefangjun Wenyi, 1987).

25. The State Administration of Radio Film and Television, *China Film Yearbook* (1996), pp. 267–269.

26. Available at: <http://www.creaders.org/articleReader.php?idx=56821> (accessed 19 August 2003).

27. For some examples of best-selling books with a sweeping anti-Japanese view, see Qiang Song *et al.*, *Zhongguo haishi nengshuo bu [China That Still Can Say No]* (Beijing: Chinese Wenlian Press, October 1996); Keqin Sun, *Ezhi zhongguo [Containing China]* (Beijing: China Yanshi Press, 1996); Jiwen Xiao, *Riben: yige bukeng fuzui de guojia [Japan: A Country that Refuses to Admit its Crimes]* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe, 1998).

victim narratives about war history has stimulated not just popular grievances against Japan but also frustration with the earlier government ‘lies’ about benign Japanese and widespread disillusionment about the Sino–Japanese friendship. So the government effort to promote official nationalism through patriotic history education has unexpectedly opened the gate to a flood of anti-Japanese popular nationalist sentiment.

Beijing’s tied hands

Once Chinese popular nationalism was unleashed, troubles quickly arose in political relations with Japan. While the state-sponsored patriotic education was mainly intended to serve domestic political purposes rather than to target an external audience, the government was unable to stop the public from venting their anger at Japan, especially when the economic reform turned the Chinese society increasingly open and pluralistic. The first outburst of popular repugnance to Japan occurred in the mid-1980s when Chinese university students staged demonstrations in several big cities protesting Prime Minister Nakasone’s official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, Japanese textbook distortion of war history, and the dumping of Japanese goods in the Chinese market.²⁸ Since then anti-Japanese mass demonstrations have routinely become a political concern on anniversary days of the war or in times of bilateral diplomatic disputes. During the two Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes in the 1990s, Beijing had to go out of its way to stop students and social activists from staging open protests against Japan.²⁹ And on the eve of Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto’s visit to China in September 1997, the government again mobilized party cadres to dissuade students from demonstrating against his worship at the Yasukuni Shrine.³⁰

The Chinese people were resentful about Japan for not only its whitewashing of the aggression history, but also its lack of sincere efforts at restitution. In 1987, an overseas Chinese journal first published an article by an influential political dissident, Fang Lizhi, which sounded out disapproval of the Chinese policy to renounce war reparations. ‘After the war, Japan ought to pay China war reparation in hundreds of billions of dollars’, he said, ‘but with the consent of Premier Zhou (the debt) was canceled by one single stroke of writing’.³¹ Since the beginning of the 1990s and especially after the ‘comfort women’ problem stirred up in South Korea, Chinese activists such as Tong Zeng launched a grassroots campaign demanding Japanese compensation for individual Chinese war victims, and representatives of the war redress movement began to appeal to the National People’s Congress. A survey conducted among university students in Beijing in September 1992 shows that some

28. Allen Whiting, *China Eyes Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Akihiko Tanaka, *Nitchū Kankei 1945–1990 [Sino–Japanese Relations: 1945–1990]* (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo Press, 1991), pp. 137–139, 150–152.

29. Erica Strecker Downs and Philip C. Saunders, ‘Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands’, *International Security* 23(3), (1998/1999); Gries, *China’s New Nationalism*, 121–125.

30. ‘China: students urge PRC’s declaring stand on Japan issues’, *Hong Kong Ping Kuo Jih Pao*, (3 September 1997), FBIS-CHI-97-246.

31. The article was actually written back in November 1981 but was not published until 1987. For a Japanese translation of the article, see Lizhi Fang, ‘Nihonjin no Seizai no Sensōkan ni Tsuite’ [‘Regarding the latent war view of the Japanese people’], *Chūō Kōron* 8, (1987), pp. 172–178.

58.6% of respondents said the 1972 decision to drop war compensation claims damaged Chinese interests, and 89.1% supported raising compensation claims with Japan.³²

The redress movement resonated so much among not only the general public but also government officials that it prompted Beijing to circulate a red-letterheaded document among cadres at the departmental and army level on the eve of the National Day in 1992, warning them ‘not to raise, encourage others to raise, and support any attempt to claim indemnity against Japan as the Japanese emperor is about to visit China’.³³ However, even periodicals sponsored by government think tanks began to publish articles sympathetic to individual demands for Japanese reparation.³⁴ As the domestic and international atmospheres turned increasingly favorable to the war redress movement, it was difficult for the government to suppress these claims from its own people. In March 1995, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen stated that individual claims of war compensation to Japan were the rights of Chinese people and the government would neither obstruct nor intervene.³⁵ At the same time, more and more Chinese historians and intellectuals supported the grassroots redress movement by providing research evidence of Japanese war crimes and facilitating the network between Chinese war victims and international non-governmental organizations pressuring Japan to address its wartime legacy.³⁶ With the government’s acquiescence and encouragement from these Chinese ‘history activists’, Chinese war victims filed a series of lawsuits in Japanese courts in the second half of the 1990s.³⁷ It was against this backdrop that the aforementioned chemical weapon incident sparked a nationwide campaign demanding Japan pay its old debt.

Nowadays, the Chinese people indeed believe that Japan is indebted to China. Having been exposed to the history of Japanese atrocities presented in minute detail, stark acerbity and frequent exaggeration, the general public has developed enormous grievances as well as a strong sense of entitlement with regards to Japan. Whenever there is a conflict of interest with Japan, the Chinese people always expect Japan to make concessions because it owed China so much throughout history. If the Japanese side does not yield, this will feed into the Chinese perception of hostile Japanese intentions: in instances of economic friction, the Chinese people suspect that the reason that Japan refuses to make concessions is because it is trying to make a profit at the expense of Chinese economic interests; in a sovereignty dispute, they suspect that Japan has

32. ‘Students demand Japanese war reparation’, *Tokyo Kyodo*, (23 September 1992), FBIS-CHI-92-186.

33. ‘Indemnity claims during Emperor’s visit discouraged’, *Hong Kong Ming Pao*, (2 October 1992), FBIS-CHI-92-192.

34. See Biqing Zhang, ‘Ribei jie jue dui wo minjian peichang wenti ciqu shi ye’ [‘The time is right for Japan to settle the problem of non-governmental compensation with China’], *Riben Wenti Ziliao* [*Materials of Japanese Affairs*] (internal circulation) 5, (1994); Weijiu Jiang, ‘Yanzhou geguo erzhan shouhaizhe peichang susong fenqi de fenxi’ [‘An analysis of the mushrooming of compensation lawsuits filed by World War II victims of various Asian countries’], *Dangdai Yatai* [*Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies*] 4, (1995).

35. Ping An, ‘Ribei qiye de zhanzheng zeren ji minjian peichang wenti’ [‘The war responsibility of Japanese firms and the problem of individual claims of war compensation’], *Kangri Zhanzhen Yanjiu* [*The Journal of Studies of China’s Resistance War against Japan*] 3, (1998), p. 194.

36. On the emerging ‘history activism’ in China in the recent decade, see James Reilly, ‘China’s history activists and the war of resistance against Japan’, *Asian Survey* 44(2), (2004).

37. ‘Experts advise Chinese WWII laborers to file class action’, *People’s Daily Online*, (15 January 2002); ‘The Hanaoka Incident: corporate compensation for forced labor’, *Sekai* 684, (February 2001); Joseph Kahn, ‘Shouting the pain from Japan’s germ attacks’, *The New York Times*, (23 November 2002).

territorial or other strategic ambitions against China. If the Chinese government wants to compromise, then public rage will quickly turn against the ‘traitorous’ government. In order to placate public anger and deflect anti-establishment challenges, the government has to maintain a hard-line policy towards Japan. This is why Chinese popular nationalism can significantly increase bilateral tension at the official level.

Bilateral economic friction in the 1980s demonstrated the aggravating effect of popular nationalism on Sino–Japanese political conflict. Economic problems between the two countries were usually caused by factors on both sides. For instance, China’s trade deficit with Japan in the 1980s was rooted in the structural difference between the two economies, Japan’s general trade barriers, China’s overheated demands for foreign products, and its lack of quality control and orderly distribution and service systems. Similarly, the causes of stagnating Japanese technology transfer and capital investment to China before the 1990s were manifold. However, the Chinese tended to blame the Japanese side for all these problems, with the exception of only a few economic experts who would admit some degree of Chinese responsibility as well. Such an obvious bias could not be understood as simply a negotiation tactic because not just high-ranking Chinese officials directly involved in economic negotiations with Japan but also ordinary Chinese shared this view. Behind the bias was the Chinese sense of historical entitlement with regards to Japan. It was taken for granted that Japan should generously assist China’s modernization and attend to all its economic needs, for Japan’s past aggression had inflicted devastating pain on China. When the Chinese expectation was not met, people reacted with suspicion and outrage. Therefore, when China’s trade deficit with Japan peaked in the mid-1980s, Chinese students instantly linked the economic issue with history. They saw the flooding of Japanese goods into the Chinese market as Japan’s renewed attempt at ‘economic invasion’, and accused it of holding back China’s technological development. One of their demands was to boycott imported Japanese goods (*rihuo*), an act to emulate the anti-Japanese mass movement of the 1930s.³⁸

Student nationalism had a direct impact on Beijing’s position in negotiating the trade friction with Japan. During their demonstrations students showed a tendency to shift the target of their condemnation between ‘Japanese economic aggression’ and ‘those Chinese in power’ who tried to augment private interests at the expense of the populace.³⁹ Fearful that anti-Japanese nationalism would transform into an anti-authority movement, the Chinese government took actions to co-opt the student movement with newspaper editorials, meetings with students, and officially organized patriotic rallies. At the same time, to show its determination to defend China’s interest, Beijing adopted an uncompromising position in its diplomatic negotiations with Japan. Chinese officials even threatened to cut imports from Japan if Tokyo failed to open its market to Chinese goods. Deng Xiaoping

38. Even in the 1990s when the trade imbalance turned favorable to China and Japanese investment and technology transfer also increased, Chinese mistrust of Japan in the economic realm persisted. In the *China Youth Daily* poll of 1996, 96.3% of respondents believed that Japanese investment in China was to occupy the market and seek profit, 50.7% thought it was to control China economically, and 45.3% thought it was to dump outmoded facilities, with only 9.5% believing it was to help Chinese economic development. See *China Youth Daily*, (15 February 1997).

39. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, p. 73.

made the harshest Chinese comments on the economic friction with Japan in June 1987. It was the first time that a Chinese leader had brought up the war reparation issue in connection with the demand for Japanese concessions in bilateral economic relations.

If viewed in light of the history, Japan ought to do much more in order to help China's development. Frankly speaking, among all the countries in the world I think Japan is the one that is most indebted to China. At the time of Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization we did not raise the demand for war reparation, which was a policy decision made with the consideration that both China and Japan were great nations close to each other and the decision would be good to our long-term interest. From the Japanese perspective that values reason, I think Japan should contribute even more to assist China's development. To be honest I have resentment in this respect.⁴⁰

Still some people may have doubts that Chinese popular sentiment should not count as independent, valid public opinion because it was either premeditated or simply played into the hands of the government who needed such leverage to bargain with Japan. But serious observers of Chinese student movements in the post-Mao era mostly agree on the spontaneity of student demonstrations and the genuineness of their emotions. That is not to deny that Chinese popular nationalism indeed stemmed from government mythmaking of national history, even though the anti-foreign aspect of the nationalism was an unintended outcome of the history propaganda.

To argue that Beijing used public sentiment as a diplomatic tactic, one needs to prove that the Chinese government was a unitary actor and impervious to public opinion. In fact it was not. In light of the Chinese enthusiasm in the first half of the 1980s recruiting Japan as a major player in Chinese modernization, the abrupt shift to a harsh policy towards Japan in the mid-1980s would not have been possible if public pressure had not significantly reshaped the balance of power between the liberal faction represented by the CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang and its conservative opponents. Having staked his political career heavily on harmonious Sino-Japanese ties and even developed a personal friendship with Nakasone, Hu's leadership in the party suffered a severe setback when the public reacted furiously to Nakasone's Shrine visit in 1985. Nakasone later told the Japanese press that he had cancelled the plan to visit Yasukuni in 1986 because of the clear risk that it would further worsen Hu's political predicament.⁴¹ By that time, party conservatives had attacked Hu's liberal propensity regarding his political reform programs. The public challenge to

40. For the major points of Deng's remarks on 4 June 1987, see Tian, *Zhanhou zhongri guanxi wenxianji*, Vol. 2, pp. 643–644, and *Nitchū kankei kihon shiryōshu*, p. 707.

41. When Tokyo announced the decision of no more shrine visit by Nakasone in 1986, Hu immediately welcomed it as 'a wise decision'. In a press interview in 1991, Nakasone said he asked Yoshihiro Inayama, then president of the Federation of Economic Organizations, to consult with Hu in Beijing whether he could continue to visit the shrine. Someone close to Hu told Inayama that 'resuming the visits will have an undesirable effect, so make sure that Nakasone does not go'. Nakasone says, 'From about that time, reports began to reach us that Hu was in a precarious situation ... That person came to see Inayama out of concern that my continuing to worship at Yasukuni Shrine regardless of these warnings would be risky for Hu and people close to him because of relations with conservatives ... Under the circumstances, it was better to give up, so I decided to stop worshipping at Yasukuni'. Cited in Yoshibumi Wakamiya, *The Postwar Conservative View of Asia: How the Political Right Delayed Japan's Coming to Terms with Its History of Aggression in Asia* (Tokyo: LTCB International Library Foundation, 1998), p. 176.

the pro-Japan policy that Hu had spearheaded rendered him even more politically vulnerable.⁴² Although the deep cause of his downfall in 1987 may lie more in ideological struggles within the party, the anti-Japanese student demonstrations between 1985 and 1987 did undermine the pro-Japan faction in Beijing and prevented a more conciliatory Chinese policy towards Japan.

Triple sources of trouble: Taiwan, offshore islands and maritime resources

At present, the surging popular nationalism in China can seriously destabilize Sino–Japanese relations. As the chaos at the Xi’an student festival shows, unconstrained public emotions can politicize and escalate trivial friction into major diplomatic disturbances. On other issues where the bigger interests of the two countries seem to conflict, public pressure tends to hamper smooth, expeditious settlement of bilateral disputes. Even when the two governments manage to reach a diplomatic ceasefire temporarily, the public’s emotional dedication to these disputed issues will keep them alive on the national agenda and invite even more acrimonious disputes later. At present, Chinese popular nationalism can ignite and exacerbate Sino–Japanese conflict over three controversial issues: the Taiwan problem, island disputes, and maritime resource competition.

At stake in Taiwan’s sovereignty is China’s national identity and pride because the state propaganda of nationalism has made the recovery of such ‘lost territories’ as Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan a symbol of national rejuvenation. ‘The return of Taiwan to the motherland’ was included as one of the three major tasks for the nation in the 1980s, and remains a national priority to the present day.⁴³ The government would face a legitimacy crisis if it showed any signs of compromise in sovereignty disputes over Taiwan. Policy flexibility is particularly limited when problems regarding Taiwan arise between China and Japan because China holds Japan responsible for Taiwan’s original severance from the motherland. Chinese belief of Japan’s responsibility in the Taiwan problem is crystallized by President Jiang Zemin’s remarks in 1998:

the idea of using Taiwan as an unsinkable aircraft carrier was first contrived by Japan (through its 50 years of occupation) and taken over by the United States. It can be said that it was initially Japan who put Taiwan in its current position, and it was the United States which has maintained it.⁴⁴

So Chinese people feel it is Japan’s duty to assist their cause of national reunification in order to remedy its past sins. Japan’s actions contradicting this expectation would be viewed with great suspicion. For instance, the annual talks of the US–Japan Security Alliance in February 2005 issued a joint statement that included Taiwan as a ‘common strategic objective’ and urged peaceful resolution

42. Tanaka, *Nitchū Kankei 1945–1990*, p. 152.

43. Deng Xiaoping laid out the three major tasks in a speech at a meeting of cadres called by the Central Committee of the CCP on 16 January 1980. The other two major tasks were opposition to hegemonism and economic modernization. See ‘The present situation and the tasks before us’, in Xiaoping Deng, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975–1982* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), pp. 224–225.

44. ‘Daily reports Jiang Zemin has anti-Japanese sentiment’, *Sankei Shimbun*, (9 December 1998), FBIS-FTS19981211001641.

of cross-Strait tension. The statement was the first direct expression of Japan's standpoint regarding Taiwan after Sino-Japanese normalization. It immediately drew harsh criticism from Beijing.⁴⁵ While street protests against Taiwan's independence orientation are rare, the public has no hesitation in venting its anger if Japan seems to be meddling with cross-Strait relations.⁴⁶ Given the depth of Chinese grievances towards Japan over its historical role in Taiwan, few Chinese believe that Japan has any right to comment on the matter, let alone take actions, which would be regarded as a renewed Japanese invasion. Such public sentiment may harden Beijing's policy towards Japan over Taiwan and even cause future cross-Strait conflict to spill over into Sino-Japanese relations.

Territorial controversy over offshore islands is another major issue of bilateral contention. The phrase often used to describe the East China Sea separating China and Japan, 'a narrow strip of water', conveys the geographic proximity and thick cultural connections between the two countries. But recent years have seen an intensification of political disputes in this sea area, especially regarding the sovereignty of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. In the island disputes in 1990 and 1996, mass movement against Japan broke out in Hong Kong and Taiwan, but not on the mainland. Since the end of the 1990s, however, a popular *baodiao* [defending Diaoyu] campaign has emerged in mainland China. Mainland *baodiao* activists first boarded Hong Kong protest boats bound for the islands in 1998 and, after repeated attempts at expeditions from mainland ports, finally succeeded in landing on the islands by themselves in March 2004. They also collected donations on the Web, and even registered a formal organization named China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands (CFDD) in Hong Kong and established its headquarters in Beijing. All of these actions used to be officially banned, suggesting that the fear of stimulating public resentment against the government may have prompted Beijing to acquiesce more to the movement. But as the grassroots movement gains momentum, the government can no longer shelve the island disputes but has to assert Chinese sovereignty and exclude any compromises.⁴⁷

Besides, unconstrained *baodiao* activities can trigger unintended violence, such as the skirmishes between a *baodiao* boat and Japanese coastal guards in January 2004.⁴⁸ Such incidents are likely to happen again, since Chinese *baodiao* activists have vowed to take actions, including organizing new expeditions to the islands, after Tokyo announced a state takeover of the Japanese right-wingers' lighthouse on the island in February 2005.⁴⁹ If causing any Chinese civilian casualties, popular uproars at home may force the Chinese government to take extreme measures to confront Japan.

45. 'Japan to join US policy on Taiwan', *Washington Post*, (18 February 2005); 'China strongly criticizes US-Japan statement on Taiwan issue', *People's Daily Online*, (21 February 2005). For the Japanese text of the joint statement, see http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/usa/hosho/2+2_05_02.html.

46. For example, in December 2004 more than 100 activists protested outside the Japanese Embassy in Beijing against Tokyo issuing a tourist visa to former Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui. See *Xinjingbao*, (31 December 2004), available at: <http://news.qq.com/a/20041231/000133.htm> (accessed 1 March 2005).

47. Meanwhile, the Chinese position on joint exploration of resources near the islands remains unchanged today.

48. 'Japan, China clash over Senkaku', *BBC News*, (16 January 2004).

49. 'Senkaku beacon set up by rightists now state property', *The Japan Times*, (10 February 2005); 'Private group plans to lease, develop Diaoyu Islands', *China.org.cn*, (21 February 2005).

Such Chinese public pressure can not only harden Beijing's position on the sovereignty of the islands but also alert Tokyo to the Chinese threat to its territorial integrity and provoke hostile policies from the Japanese side. The island landing by *baodiao* activists in March 2004 and the subsequent Chinese protests against Japan arresting these activists directly prompted the Japanese House of Representatives Security Committee to adopt unanimously a resolution on national territorial sovereignty, which was the first Diet resolution concerning the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Three days later, Japanese Land Minister Nobuteru Ishihara openly called upon the government to build a heliport or lighthouse on the islands to demonstrate that they are Japanese territory.⁵⁰

Closely intertwined with the island disputes is the conflict over maritime resources in the East China Sea. China and Japan disagree on the delimitation of their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), with China adhering to the principle of continental shelf and Japan regarding the midpoint as the boundary. Since Chinese oceanographic research ships entered Japan's EEZ without prior notification from the late 1990s, Japan's Defense White Paper has continuously pointed to these activities of Chinese ships as a potential security threat to Japan. The Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) also beefed up its air patrol in this sea area, and its anti-submarine airplanes sometimes flew very close to China's territorial waters. Controversy flared up in May 2004 when it was reported that China was about to build a natural gas field called Chunxiao on the Chinese side of the median line. Believing that the gas field may extend into Japan's EEZ and tap Japanese natural resources, Japan decided to launch its own geological survey in a disputed sea area on 7 July. The Chinese Foreign Ministry immediately condemned the survey as 'a dangerous and provocative act'.⁵¹

Defying Tokyo's opposition, the China National Offshore Oil Company announced in March 2005 that it would begin Chunxiao production in the fall. Again in May, at a bilateral meeting on the East China Sea issues, Beijing rejected the Japanese request for data from its explorations and proposal for joint development of natural resources on both sides of the median line. In response, in July Tokyo awarded a Japanese oil company, Teikoku Oil Co., test drilling rights in the disputed sea area. Beijing quickly claimed that the area, in which Teikoku was permitted to conduct the drilling, was within China's EEZ.⁵² Tension in this area further heightened in September when five Chinese naval ships, including a guided-missile destroyer, were spotted near the Chunxiao gas field. It was reported that one of the Chinese ships even pointed its gun toward the Japanese patrol plane that found the ships.⁵³

As the dispute intensified, memories of past Japanese aggression again set in and aroused Chinese popular animosity against Japan. This time many Chinese were convinced that Japan chose the anniversary day of the onset of the Sino–Japanese

50. 'Japan: editorial calls for Diet resolution to ensure sovereignty over Senkaku', *Sankei Shimbun*, (1 April 2004), FBIS-EAS-2004-0401; 'Kawaguchi, Wen clash over Senkakus, Yasukuni', *The Japan Times*, (1 April 2004).

51. 'China, Japan at odds over offshore gas project', *Asahi.com*, (23 June 2004); 'China condemns Japanese survey', *BBC News*, (8 July 2004).

52. 'Japan stokes China sea dispute', *BBC News*, (14 July 2005).

53. 'Chinese warships make show of force at protested gas rig', *The Japan Times*, (10 September 2005); 'Chinese warship pointed gun at MSDF plane', *The Japan Times*, (2 October 2005).

War, 7 July, to start the survey program in order to insult and provoke China.⁵⁴ To express their anger, Chinese protesters gathered outside the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, shouting anti-Japanese slogans and destroying Japanese national flags.⁵⁵ The organization CFDD even launched in September 2004 an Internet signature campaign calling on the Chinese government to build aircraft carriers to counter the ‘frenzied resource-grabbing offensives by neighboring countries like Japan and Vietnam’.⁵⁶ After the Teikoku Oil Co. obtained the exploratory drilling rights, Chinese Internet sites were filled with condemnations of Japan’s ‘infringement on China’s foremost interest’. Some even accused this of being an act of ‘the new manifestation of Japan’s expansionist and aggressive consciousness in the Second World War’.⁵⁷

Such public attention and emotional dedication to the Taiwan issue and island and resource disputes will tie the hands of the government and preclude a smooth diplomatic settlement. Given the two countries’ recent military reinforcement in their surrounding waters, inadvertent militarized conflict cannot be ruled out if the tension is allowed to escalate. Actually, in a highly classified security plan recently brought to light, the Japanese military envisioned two possible scenarios of Chinese attack: China may send troops to the Senkaku Islands if bilateral relations deteriorate or tensions escalate over natural resources, or China may attack Japanese SDF facilities or US military bases in Japan in the event of US–Japan intervention in the Taiwan dispute. The plan requires the SDF to respond to both scenarios by sending troops from Kyushu or other places to the islands near Okinawa and to crush Chinese forces. Although the plan notes that the chance of a military attack from China is small, it is a clear sign that armed conflict between China and Japan has become not only thinkable but also incorporated into their concrete national defense policies.⁵⁸

No safety valve

Despite the existence of multiple disputes, one may still doubt that serious Sino–Japanese political or even military conflicts would ever erupt in the near future. Some point out that Beijing has never let hostile popular sentiment disrupt the general theme of peace and cooperation in its policy towards Japan. Others are optimistic that bilateral economic interdependence is so deep that it would serve as a safety valve preventing drastic deterioration of the political ties. But in the past decade Chinese popular nationalism has grown ever more powerful than at any time in the history of the People’s Republic, if measured by the scale and frequency of spontaneous anti-Japanese protests. Such protests not only attack the Yasukuni Shrine and Japanese textbooks that have been the targets since the 1980s, but also cover a wide range

54. A partial compilation of Internet postings by Chinese citizens that commented on the historical significance of the date 7 July chosen by Japan to conduct its geological survey can be found at <http://news.sohu.com/2004/07/09/03/news220920324.shtml> (accessed 1 August 2004).

55. *Xinming Daily*, (10 July 2004), available at: <http://www.zaobao.com/special/newspapers/2004/07/xmrb100704b.html> (accessed 1 August 2004).

56. Reported by *Zaobao.com*, (5 September 2004), and reprinted at <http://www.cfdd.org.cn/view.asp?id=407>.

57. *Xinhua Daily Telegraph*, (16 July 2005), available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/mrdx/2005-07/17/content_3229525.htm (accessed 29 September 2005).

58. ‘GSDF defense plan prepares for attacks from China’, *Asahi.com*, (26 September 2005).

of issues in bilateral relations, including war compensation, territorial and resource disputes, the Taiwan issue, tourist and immigration complaints, and even misdemeanors of Japanese students.

The second factor determining the importance of popular nationalism in bilateral relations lies in the difficulty for the Chinese state to control public opinion, partly because society is becoming more vibrant, but also due to the lack of political will by the state to suppress nationalism. Even thick bilateral commercial ties cannot persuade the Chinese public to stay calm in dealing with Japan. Nor can they guarantee smooth bilateral political relations.

To begin with, media commercialization and diversification have ended the state monopoly on the information supply and enabled freer expression of divergent opinions, including those on foreign affairs.⁵⁹ So Guoguang Wu describes the situation in China ‘as a breakup of the state-monopolized media structure and replacement by a new structure in which various non-state actors play an increasingly significant role’.⁶⁰ As China’s mass media becomes more open to spreading information about societal resentment and unrest, the government cannot afford to ignore public opinion in its policymaking. For instance, confronting mounting complaints and violent demonstrations by urban residents evicted from their homes due to new constructions, in June 2004 the State Council promised to slow down demolition of old buildings to prevent social instability.⁶¹ Moreover, after the media reported the vehement protests of environmentalists against a controversial dam project on the Nu River, Chinese top leaders have recently stepped in to suspend the project and have called for a public hearing on it.⁶²

With regards to Japan, news that may provoke anti-Japanese feelings, such as a Japanese prime minister’s visit to Yasukuni Shrine, or right-wingers’ activities in Diaoyu islands, can be obtained through plenty of alternative information sources, if not from the official mouthpieces. The public is also better informed about diplomatic negotiations than before, making it more difficult for governments to strike under-the-table compromises. To make things worse, the widening public space of discourse in China has not generated a healthy, inspiring discussion of national identity and purposes, but only caused polarization of public opinion to a narrow-minded and even radically nationalist mood. This is partly due to the commercial incentives that drive the sensationalist trend in Chinese non-propaganda mass media. Meanwhile, having been heavily exposed to the details of Japanese war atrocities in the patriotic education campaign, the Chinese public is highly receptive to negative news or even rumors about Japan and Japanese people but tends to reject disconfirming information. For instance, in the student unrest in Xi’an in October 2003, the Internet media was responsible for misrepresenting an ill-designed, low-taste skit that was nevertheless meant to praise Sino–Japanese friendship as a malicious insult to China. Even though the university authority later issued

59. Geremie Barmè, ‘Soft porn, packaged dissent, and nationalism: notes on Chinese culture in the 1990s’, *Current History* 93(584), (1994); Barrett L. McCormick, ‘Recent trends in mainland China’s media: political implications of commercialization’, *Issues & Studies* 38(4)–39(4), (2002/03).

60. Quoted in McCormick, ‘Recent trends in mainland China’s media’, p. 190.

61. ‘China to defuse property unrest’, *BBC News*, (15 June 2004).

62. ‘Chinese project pits environmentalists against development plans’, *BBC News*, (3 January 2005).

statements clarifying that the behaviors of the Japanese students were vulgar but not deliberately anti-Chinese, the Chinese public chose to believe otherwise.⁶³

It is true that despite the liberalization trend, Chinese mass media is still heavily censored. At least in the near term, the government has effectively stifled liberal and anti-establishment discourse in the Internet and other means of mass media,⁶⁴ but because the state control delimits a narrow space of free speech in China, in which advocating patriotism is the safest language for Chinese societal elites to openly critique domestic and diplomatic policies and advance their own political agenda, it has only exacerbated the negative public opinion about Japan. In this half-open but still closely monitored media system, extreme nationalist opinions, expressed by self-styled nationalist freelancers, tabloid writers and even some influential academics, have flourished. These people are the spearhead of the popular nationalist torrent in contemporary China. The authors of the two anti-Western bestsellers published in the mid-1990s, *China Can Say No* and *China Still Can Say No*, are examples of these populist sub-elites. Their high popularity has gained them the upper hand in the debate with moderate views regarding Japan in non-official forums.

If the state is capable of suppressing liberal opinions in the public sphere of discourse, the fact that it does not censor nationalist opinions makes people wonder if the state is intentionally manipulating anti-Japanese sentiment as it can always clamp down the extreme 'patriots' if it wants to. Studies show that negative reporting of Japan has exceeded favorable coverage in the Chinese media since the late 1990s, but such official mouthpieces as the *People's Daily* have a much lower rate of negative reporting than non-propaganda newspapers.⁶⁵ Neither is there evidence suggesting that Beijing gives out propaganda guidance for the commercial mass media to carry negative reports about Japan. This indicates that society has gone far beyond the official line in demonizing Japan. Regardless of its origins in official mythmaking, the extreme anti-Japanese nationalism in China today represents a public opinion that is distinct from state propaganda. Because it speaks the officially sanctioned rhetoric of patriotism, such a public opinion has emerged as a form of legitimate political authority and challenged the government's 'soft' policy towards Japan.⁶⁶ Beijing certainly has the coercive power to silence dissenting voices, as recently demonstrated in its crackdown of the Falun Gong and many scattered labor and rural riots. But to use that power against popular nationalism can be politically risky because it would contradict the government's own claims to be the foremost defender of national interest and pride. No Chinese government in modern history, the late Qing, Republican, or Nationalist, succeeded in putting down 'patriotism'; each time

63. For an analysis of various anti-Japanese rumors circulated widely in Chinese society, see 'Blossoms and fruits of false information: an analysis of Xi'an anti-Japanese unrest', available at: <http://www.mlcool.com/html/ns001962.htm> (accessed 23 November 2003).

64. Author's interview on 10 November 2004 with the founder of a dissident website operating in China for three years before it was forced to shut down in August 2004. Also see Adam Segal, 'Globalization is a double-edged sword: globalization and Chinese national security', unpublished manuscript, April 2004.

65. James Reilly and Daqing Yang, 'Memory and reconciliation in East Asia: Chinese perspectives', unpublished manuscript, June 2005, pp. 20–23.

66. Vincent Price argues that the growth of a politically active public sphere can give rise to a public opinion functioning as a new form of political authority. Cited in William A. Callahan, *Imagining Democracy: Reading 'The Events of May' in Thailand* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), p. 38.

they tried, it incurred massive anti-government revolts. Today's Communist government also fears the force of public opinion being used by anti-authority elites to defy its rule, and chooses to co-opt rather than suppress the popular sentiment.

In terms of common economic interests, although they are each other's top trade partners, China and Japan's economic interdependence hardly extends to the strategic dimension, meaning that trade disruption would not inflict intolerable damage on their national security interests. Even in the best years of bilateral relations in the 1970s, no Japanese weapons or sensitive military technology were transferred to China.⁶⁷ Neither are the two countries dependent on each other for energy or natural resource needs. China still counts as an important source of Japan's imported coal and food stuffs, but coal only constitutes less than 20% of Japan's total energy supply,⁶⁸ and if the relationship drastically worsened, Japan could easily find alternative sources of supply. Certainly both countries would suffer significant economic setback if the flourishing trade and capital flow between them were cut off, but the cost would not be so great as to reverse critical national security decisions. The weak linkage between trade interdependence and stable political relations was demonstrated in the eruption of WWI between countries that had heavily traded with one other before the war.⁶⁹

Particularly, the benefit of economic cooperation cannot neutralize Chinese emotions of historical grievances or ensure smooth political relations. Afraid of being accused of selling out national pride and face for money, the Chinese government cannot afford to make concessions on bilateral controversies on the grounds of economic interests. During the 1996 island dispute, for instance, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman explicitly stated that: 'Japanese loans to China will benefit bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Nonetheless, the Chinese government offers no room for compromise and will take whatever action necessary to safeguard China's territorial integrity and sovereignty'.⁷⁰ This does not mean that the government would not take ad hoc measures to limit the economic damages of political disputes, but concerns about public opposition still preclude any bold diplomatic moves that would generate a *long-term* solution.

Even the thriving economic cooperation between the two countries will be jeopardized if Chinese popular nationalism continues to simmer. The case of the Beijing–Shanghai high-speed railroad project illustrates that Chinese public emotions about the war history can interfere with the government's economic diplomacy with regards to Japan. Since 1994, policymakers in Beijing have long debated which country's technology fits its needs best: the Japanese shinkansen (bullet train), the German maglev, or the French TGV. It was only in 2003 that the shinkansen appeared to be the leading contender in the bid for this \$15 billion project. However, within ten days of the Hong Kong media reporting in July that Japan might win the project, more than 80,000 Chinese netizens had signed an online petition

67. When Prime Minister Ōhira Masayoshi unveiled the first Yen Loan Package for China in 1979, he spelt out the principle of not to provide any form of military assistance to China. See Tanaka, *Nitchū Kankei 1945–1990*, pp. 109–110.

68. See Japanese Statistic Bureau, *Japan Statistical Yearbook* (2005).

69. Peter Liberman, 'Trading with the enemy: security and relative economic gains', *International Security* 21(1), (1996).

70. 'Chinese Foreign Ministry news briefings', *Beijing Review*, (23–29 September 1996).

opposing the choice of shinkansen because of Japan's failure to come to terms with its past. Public pressure compelled the Chinese government to reconsider the political consequences of its decision. So when Japan's Transport Minister Ogi traveled to China to make a pitch for the shinkansen in August, she received the cold shoulder, unable to secure meetings with Prime Minister Wen Jiabao or senior officials from the Railways Ministry.⁷¹ Beijing made it clear that, besides the technical and financial aspects, the political factor was also important in decision-making. 'Politics is not an absolute factor, but it definitely cannot be excluded', said a high-ranking Chinese official participating in the project.⁷² Recently, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei suggested to a visiting Japanese Diet delegation that Beijing might have to exclude Japan from the railway project due to the pressure of public opinion: 'we are facing high anti-Japan sentiment in China. If our government adopts the shinkansen technique in the railway project, the people would have (negative) opinions'.⁷³

The third reason that nationalism plays a significant role at this stage of Sino-Japanese relations is that the historically derived mutual antipathy and mistrust can worsen the security concerns generated by the high ambiguity in their current power balance and cause serious mutual threat perception.

In recent years, apprehensions about the mutual security threat have been on the rise in both countries. Japan's new Defense Guideline released in December 2004 singled out China and North Korea as potential security threats. Meanwhile, China issued its new Defense White Paper stressing Japan's missile defense and overseas military activities as the complicated security factors in the region.⁷⁴ Their security concerns are built on realist ground. Japan's economy has stagnated for more than a decade while China has maintained phenomenal economic growth. Militarily, China has increased its annual defense spending at a double-digit pace in the past decade, and is set for an ambitious drive to modernize both its conventional and strategic forces. While Japan is nervous about the rise of China, China is also wary of Japan's increasing assertiveness in international military affairs, from its missile defense program, dispatch of Self Defense Force troops to the conflict-ridden Iraq, to its military emergency bills recently passed in the Diet. After Tokyo announced its decision to deploy troops to Iraq, the Chinese media immediately sounded out the concern that Japan was abandoning the self-defense principle.⁷⁵

However, it is still too early to conclude that the Sino-Japanese power balance has had any significant shift. China's military remains weaker and far less sophisticated

71. 'Bullet train gets a cool reception in China Beijing-Shanghai rail link', *Financial Times*, (7 August 2003). For a chronological review of Chinese policy deliberation concerning the railroad project, see 'Jinghu gaotie shinian yijiao' ['Beijing-Shanghai high speed railroad: a 10-year sound sleep'], *Shangwu Zhoukan* [*Business Watch Magazine*], (5 September 2004).

72. *Jinghua Shibao*, (15 January 2004), available at: <http://bj.people.com.cn/GB/14545/2297992.html>

73. *Taipei Times*, (31 December 2004).

74. See Japan's 'National Defense Program Guideline for FY2005 and after', available at: <http://www.jda.go.jp/>. The text of 'China's National Defense in 2004' can be found at <http://english.people.com.cn/whitepaper/defense2004/defense2004.html>.

75. For examples of Chinese newspaper editorials warning of Japan's defense policy shift, see 'China: Japan continuing to change defense policy, upgrade SDF's weaponry', *Jiefangjun Bao*, (15 December 2003), FBIS-CHI-2003-1215; 'China: deployment of SDF units to Iraq a "major shift" in Japan's defense policy', *People's Daily*, (4 February 2004), FBIS-CHI-2004-0204.

than that of Japan, especially in regard to naval and air force capabilities.⁷⁶ Their economies continue to be mutually complementary, with Japan enjoying great comparative advantage in component manufacture and China being strong in the assembly of products.⁷⁷ To apply the realist theory of balance of power, structural factors alone do not preordain the two countries to be adversaries. But the shadow of war history has intensified the Chinese perception of Japan's negative intention to such an extent that the Chinese public is concerned more about its relative than absolute gains in bilateral relations, lest China fall behind in the power competition with Japan. Regarding the Beijing–Shanghai railroad project, for instance, another reason that opponents to shinkansen cited besides their disgust of Japan's historical amnesia was that, if the project were granted to such large industrial conglomerates as Mitsubishi that were also big players in the Japanese defense industry, it would greatly boost Japanese military power and eventually threaten Chinese national security.⁷⁸

Moreover, in the eyes of the Chinese public, bilateral island and resource conflicts are not simply about the small, uninhabited territories or the unknown amount of resource reserves in that area, but have been magnified to involve a zero-sum game with Japan. So far Beijing has rejected Tokyo's proposal for a joint zone of energy development in the East China Sea that straddles the median line, claiming that only the east side is open for joint development while the west side of the line is 'indisputably Chinese zone', where China has every right to proceed with its gas and oil exploration projects. While China's growing energy demand requires the search for new supplies, domestic public pressure should be an important motivation for Beijing to shun substantive collaboration with Japan. Especially after the mainland *baodiao* movement gained momentum, the public sensitivity to sovereignty issues has heightened. It is now unimaginable that the people would approve Japan to take a share in the resources that they believe should belong to China only. A professor of international relations at Beijing University argues that the Sino–Japanese resource dispute is difficult to settle precisely because the negotiation is conducted in a highly transparent environment. With the constraints of domestic public opinion, 'it is simply impossible' for the two governments to strike a consensus easily.⁷⁹

Towards a real new thinking

Currently, Beijing's typical approach to anti-Japanese popular nationalism is twofold: maintaining an unyielding position to Japan while restraining popular actions at home when they appear to damage the larger national interest. For instance, during the anti-Japanese demonstrations in April 2005, Premier Wen presented a tough line of the government in an interview in India, when he urged Japan to 'face

76. Eric Heginbotham and Richard J. Samuels, 'Japan', in *Strategic Asia 2002–03* (The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2002), pp. 96 and 111.

77. Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, *White Paper on International Economy and Trade 2004*, pp. 219–220.

78. See Yuan Geng, 'My only reason to oppose a Japanese brand of Beijing–Shanghai high-speed railroad', available at: <http://www.hjclub.com/Showtopic.asp?ID=217974> (accessed 20 August 2004).

79. Cited in Zhongxu Yang, 'Donghai youqi zhizheng ruhe qiujie' ['How to find a solution to the East China Sea oil and gas disputes'], *China Newsweek*, (26 July 2004).

up to history squarely', or it could not 'take greater responsibility in the international community', thus hinting at Japan's bid for a permanent UN council seat.⁸⁰ Although the official media refrained from reporting the demonstrations, it diligently covered the issues of Japanese textbooks and the Yasukuni Shrine. Beijing also tolerated the demonstrations until late April when the protesters turned more violent and the danger of an even bigger demonstration on the May Day holiday loomed large. Fearing severe social instability, negative reactions in the Japanese business circle, and damages to the upcoming historical visit by the Nationalist Party chair Lien Chan in Taiwan, Beijing took a series of firm actions, including solemn denouncement from the Public Security Bureau against illegal protests and arrests, to control the situation. This time the government managed to end the mass demonstrations, but it by no means eliminated the widespread anti-Japanese sentiment in society. In the future, similar public protests will almost certainly recur and become more difficult for the government to end at will. In order to accommodate the domestic nationalist sentiment, Beijing has to bash Japan on the history issue to show that it is just as angry as the public is, but to do so would only galvanize and embolden rather than sooth the protesters.

Thus, popular nationalism has become a double-edged sword for Beijing: while the rising nationalist sentiment may to some extent facilitate social mobilization and solidify popular allegiance to the state, anti-foreign nationalism can undermine Beijing's diplomacy to Western countries aimed at securing a stable inflow of foreign investment and technology as well as cultivating China's image as a peaceful and responsible player in the international community. The difficult dilemma that Beijing is facing between domestic political concerns and foreign policy goals prompted some Chinese policy elites to explore a constructive solution. This was the background of the recent 'New Thinking' debate on Japan policy in China. Liberal journalist Ma Licheng first spoke out in 2002 against the growing anti-Japanese xenophobia in China and advocated an end to the 'history issue' if China wanted to be a truly great, respectful nation. Ma's argument was soon echoed by Shi Yinhong, an expert in international affairs, who proposed a 'diplomatic revolution' to Japan. Both Ma and Shi advocated that China's Japan policy should focus on the strategic and economic benefit of their cooperation and avoid being bogged down by the history quarrels that only involve secondary interest.⁸¹

While pointing out that containing anti-Japanese popular nationalism is in the overall interests of the Chinese nation, the 'new thinking' has not provided a truly innovative policy prescription but only returned to Beijing's old strategy in the 1970s that brushed the history problem aside for the sake of more practical goals. This strategy, however, would be far less effective now than before because the Chinese society is no longer closed to the outside world and public opinion resists official control. Hence it is not surprising that Ma and Shi were quickly showered by bitter attacks from not only the intellectual circle but also from cyber space, where Chinese netizens called them 'traitors'. Even if Chinese people can be persuaded by immediate interests to be conciliatory and restrained, they would neither forget nor

80. 'Japan: China is scary country', *CNN.com*, (12 April 2005).

81. Peter Gries, 'China's "new thinking" on Japan', *The China Quarterly* no. 184, (December 2005).

forgive Japanese aggression; in the long run their grievances against Japan would only explode with greater scale and intensity, just like what has happened since the 1980s.

In recent years, Beijing indeed tried to readjust its Japan policy in the direction of such ‘new thinking’. After President Jiang Zemin’s visit to Japan in 1998 where his harsh criticisms of Japan’s historical attitude were widely criticized as counter-productive, Beijing set out to soften its rhetoric on the history problem.⁸² In Premier Zhu Rongji’s visit to Japan in 2000 and the high-ranking party leader Zeng Qinghong’s meetings with Japanese politicians during 2000–2002, they avoided making sharp comments on the history issue but put noticeable emphasis on bilateral friendship and cooperation. But Sino–Japanese tension over the history issue only relaxed for a short period before Beijing decided to suspend the exchange of top leaders’ visits due to Prime Minister Koizumi’s annual shrine visits. With the rising tide of anti-Japanese nationalism at home, Beijing is unable to put aside the history issue even if it wants to. The anti-Japanese demonstrations in April 2005 testify to the powerful societal resistance to the ‘new thinking’.

The lesson that the two countries should learn from the postwar history is that they can only settle the history issue by facing it, not skirting it. National mythmaking is the main obstacle to solving the history issue because it tends to emphasize a country’s own virtues and victimhood while whitewashing its wrongdoings done to others and also ignoring others’ suffering. Such inward-looking, nationalized history naturally provokes ‘history quarrels’ with other countries and fuels mutual distrust. It is not a problem unique to Sino–Japanese relations but has been identified as a serious cause of international conflict elsewhere,⁸³ but in some cases, such as postwar Franco–German and German–Polish relations, countries that had a history of traumatic conflict managed to restrain national mythmaking through joint history research and textbook cooperation.⁸⁴ Joint history projects were most useful if they did not just serve as a venue for a country’s historians to scrutinize the history writing of another country but also helped them to reveal and reflect on the historical injustices done by their own country.⁸⁵ Not only helpful to set straight the historical facts, such transnational historians’ dialogues can

82. See Gilbert Rozman, ‘China’s changing images of Japan, 1989–2001: the struggle to balance partnership and rivalry’, *International Relations of the Asia–Pacific* no. 2, (2002), pp. 113–123.

83. Stephen Van Evera, ‘Primed for peace: Europe after the Cold War’, *International Security* 15(3), (Winter 1990/91), pp. 23–24. Also see Stephen Van Evera, ‘Hypotheses on nationalism and war’. Other recent studies on nationalism suggesting a causal relationship between elite mythmaking and war and conflict include Ben Kiernan, ‘Myth, nationalism and genocide’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 3(2), (2001); Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: Norton, 2000); David Mendeloff, *Truth-Telling and Mythmaking in Post-Soviet Russia: Pernicious Historical Ideas, Mass Education, and Interests Conflict*, Ph.D. dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001).

84. For an overview of transnational historians’ dialogues in Europe since the end of World War I up to the present, see Takahiro Kondo, *Kokusai Rekishi Kyōkasho Taiwa: Yoroppa ni Okeru ‘Kako’ no Saihen* [*International History Textbook Dialogue: Reorganizing the Past of Europe*] (Tokyo: Chūō Shinsho, 1998).

85. A good example is the liberalization of Polish historiography following Solidarity in the early 1980s, which was no longer fixated on the German evils but began to reflect on the problems of the Polish nation and its Soviet ally, including the centuries of anti-Semitism culture in Poland, Poles’ complicity in the Holocaust, postwar deportation of German nationals, cruelty of the communist rule, and the Russian/Soviet atrocities against the Poles. By the time the Cold War ended, a much more balanced and objective view of history had emerged in Poland. See Yinan He, *Overcoming Shadows of the Past: Post-conflict Interstate Reconciliation in East Asia and Europe*, Ph.D. dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004), pp. 375–378.

also narrow, even if they are never able to completely close, the gap between nationally bounded interpretations of such critical issues as victimization and responsibility. As H. Richard Niebuhr says in *The Meaning of Revelation*:

where common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community, and where community is to be formed common memory must be created ... the measure of our unity is the extent of our common memory.⁸⁶

In China and Japan, however, so far war historiography remains chiefly in the custody of politicians and ideologues, and their historians have been hardly able to carry out dialogues in a spirit of professionalism and genuine mutual critique. Limited cooperation on school education has taken place, such as the exchange program between China Education Union and the JIU since the mid-1980s, which were mostly confined to class visits and teachers' meetings, and their focus was usually to criticize Japanese textbooks.⁸⁷ When the Murayama government of 1994–1995 expressed its support to research cooperation with Asian historians regarding the history of Japanese aggression, Beijing claimed that time had not ripened for joint history research and China would offer assistance only if the topic was about Japanese self-reflection.⁸⁸

In recent years, as part of the above-mentioned 'history activism' in Chinese society demanding historical truth-telling about Japanese war atrocities, Chinese historians have begun to participate as private individuals in joint history projects with their Japanese and South Korean colleagues. Yet in these projects Chinese historians still concentrate on criticizing the distortions and biases in Japanese textbooks but rarely touch on the nationalist myths in China's history writing.⁸⁹ This is an area where more creative efforts are needed. If both countries are willing to abandon national mythmaking and leave history writing to the rigorous, joint examination by conscientious historians, it should effectively curb Chinese popular nationalism and lead Sino–Japanese relations in a constructive direction.

86. Quoted in Donald W. Jr Shriver, 'The long road to reconciliation: some moral stepping stones', in Robert L. Rothstein, ed., *After the Peace: Resistance and Reconciliation* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), p. 210.

87. Rokurō Hitaka, *Nihon to Chūgoku: wakamono-tachi no rekishi ninshiki* [*Japan and China: The Historical Views of the Youth*] (Tokyo: Nasunokisha, 1995); and Hongzi Wang, 'Zhongri lishi jiaokeshu de jiaoliu' ['Sino–Japanese history textbook exchange'], *Lishi Jiaoxue* 1, (1999).

88. Satoshi Amako and Shigeto Sonoda, eds, *Nitchū kōryū no shihanseki* [*A Quarter Century of Sino–Japanese Exchanges*] (Tokyo: Toyo Keizei Shinposha, 1998), pp. 122–126.

89. Chinese historians have been unable to conduct serious self-criticism partly due to their own anti-Japanese biases but also often because of the official restrictions imposed on their international exchange activities. In some cases Chinese historians were told not to exceed an official line of historiography in their dialogue with foreign historians, or even advised not to attend certain international textbook conferences. Author's interviews with Japanese historian Kimijima Kazuhiko on 25 October 2000 and South Korean scholar Han Do Hyun on 9 June 2005.