

# The History of the “History Problem”: Historical Recognition between Japan and Neighboring Asian Countries

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## *Abstract*

*Today’s simultaneous trends of “globalization” and “regionalization” paradoxically intensify nationalistic conflict in Northeast Asia, especially over history issues. After the division of the region into nation-states under the Cold War system, each nation developed its own version of national history. In the context of globalization, information flows between these nations with ever-greater speed, which gives rise to the possibility of both dialogue and controversy. The issue of history is a factor of instability in Northeast Asia, especially between Japan, Korea and China. Mutual distrust is deeply rooted in memories of war and imperialism. This paper takes up the “history problem” in contemporary Northeast Asia. It does not try to set straight “what actually happened” in the past, but considers why this history problem remains unresolved, and why it appears as a clash between nationalisms.*

*The memories of the past war constitute contemporary national identities, but the treatment of these memories has a specific history. The article considers how in the immediate postwar global order, defined by the Cold War, Japan substituted war reparations with alternative forms of economic assistance that avoided a resolution of the history issue with Korea and China, and how that frozen set of relations in Asia thawed as the global order shifted again after 1989. While inter-government talks have sought to construct friendly relationships with future-oriented strategies, some conservative politicians – particularly in Japan – have tried to increase national integration by emphasizing patriotic school curricula. This tendency has resulted in history textbook controversies within Japan and between Japan and its neighbors, which also give rise to the need for transnational dialogue. The controversies, through reflecting on knowledge of the past – or pasts –, hint at the future actions that must be taken to commence historical reconciliation and community building in Northeast Asia.*

## **1. Introduction**

Since the 1990s, relations between Northeast Asian countries have been deepening rapidly, while nationalistic clashes between them have also intensified. In particular, the “history problem” related to the region’s tumultuous twentieth century has become one of the most serious obstacles to the building of intimate diplomatic ties between Japan, South Korea and China. Although some dismiss the past as meaningless or harmful for the future of an Asian community, without addressing the causes of deeply rooted mutual distrust the formation of a regional community remains difficult, if not impossible. Moreover, how and what kind of past is recognized determines what kind of future will be constructed. Northeast Asian countries have a history characterized not only by conflicts, but also by interdependence. The history of the Second World War in Asia is often projected onto the present and the problems of the present are often projected onto the past. Understanding the differences and controversies of historical recognition helps us to understand the problems of contemporary politics and to envisage a better future that would

overcome past conflicts.

The purpose of this article is not only to reveal the conflicting issues and differences in historical recognition, which might merely reproduce racial prejudice as well as mutual distrust, but also to examine the background in which clashing nationalisms originated. This background includes the rise of the modern nation-state, the history of Japanese imperialism, the postwar Cold War system and its collapse, as well as subsequent processes of regionalization under the influence of globalization. The memories of physical and mental pain must be remembered so they will not be reproduced. Postwar compensation cannot heal this pain, but it could contribute to the building of justice of rule in the public sphere, and to learning from past crimes. The answer to the question of the history problem requires a stop to the chain of hatred that stems from historical conflicts, and depends upon constructive approaches to reconciliation. In addition, this article suggests that the historical controversies can lead to a mutual understanding of differences and ultimately a more open public arena in which more people may have the freedom to participate.

Therefore, this article provides an overview of the differences in historical recognition in the region in order to more clearly consider the factors underlying the controversies and the issues to address. It will discuss the differences among nations using the opinions of intellectuals and the public found in recent survey data. First, it will put the contemporary history problem in the historical context of Northeast Asia and review the way in which the Japanese government dealt with war reparation under the Cold War system. It will then show how this relates to the general view of history in postwar Japan, and consider the influence of history education on public opinions in reference to the history textbook controversies between Japan and its neighbors. After discussing the differences and controversies in historiography which led to clashing nationalisms as well as attempts at dialogue among Northeast Asian countries, the study will explore the possibility of historical reconciliation and community building in Northeast Asia.

Modern Northeast Asia was shaped by the expansion of empire, colonization, aggressive war, and the resistance against it. "Northeast Asia" in this study includes the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Republic of Korea (South Korea), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), and Japan. Because the information on Taiwan and North Korea is limited in Japan, and because China, South Korea, and Japan are most involved in the problem arising from conflicting national histories, this analysis will focus on Japanese attitudes toward the history problem and on interactions between Japan and China, and Japan and South Korea, using joint opinion polls such as the Asia-Vision Survey on college students' attitudes conducted by the Global Institute for Asian Regional Integration (GIARI) of the Waseda University Global COE Program in 2009, the joint opinion polls involving China, South Korea and Japan conducted by Asahi Shimbun in 2005, and the Japan-China joint opinion polls conducted by the Genron NPO during the years 2005-2007.

The subject of the history problem is the nation. This study uses the definition of the nation as outlined by Ernest Renan, the famous nationalist and philosopher. In the late nineteenth century, he described the nation as a modern project based on a select memory of the past. He belonged to the first generation of the nation-state system, and explored the emergence of the early nation-state in France. He answered the question "What is a Nation?" in his lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882 as follows:

*A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life.<sup>1</sup>*

According to Renan, a nation is built of the solidarity between a group of people who con-

sent to forget past conflicts within the nation in-group and share a sense of mutual past suffering, a desire for present lives lived in common, and for a common future destiny. A nation is based on a “daily plebiscite.”

Northeast Asian people now share the past within the units of separate nations, which makes the present history problem appear as a clash between nationalisms. The past that forms their common identity is constructed and reconstructed for a future, large-scale solidarity. If the past could be shared among Northeast Asian people, on an even larger scale, it would then be possible to envision constructing a greater regional community.

## 2. The “History Problem”

As transnational relations have developed with the expansion of the global market since the collapse of the Cold War system, conflicts between nations have intensified. The influence of the processes of “globalization,” economic openness, and cultural exchange has gradually increased among Northeast Asian countries, and the history problem has also become an important issue and factor of instability in the region. Of course, history problems are universal issues, rooted in struggles for human rights against violence and discrimination, originating in state power especially during times of war. Today’s accusations of the Japanese state, attributing to it various war crimes, such as the exploitation of “[war] comfort women”<sup>2</sup> and forced labor during the Second World War, are also based on universal ideas of “crime against peace” and “crime against humanity.” This humanitarian movement is a consequence of democratization in Northeast Asian countries.

At the same time, the reason why the contemporary history problem in Northeast Asia appears as a clash of nationalisms is that this region has long been divided. First, nations in the region were separated into empires and colonies, and later into nation-states under the postwar East-West division of the world. These divisions have inhibited reconciliation up to the present day.

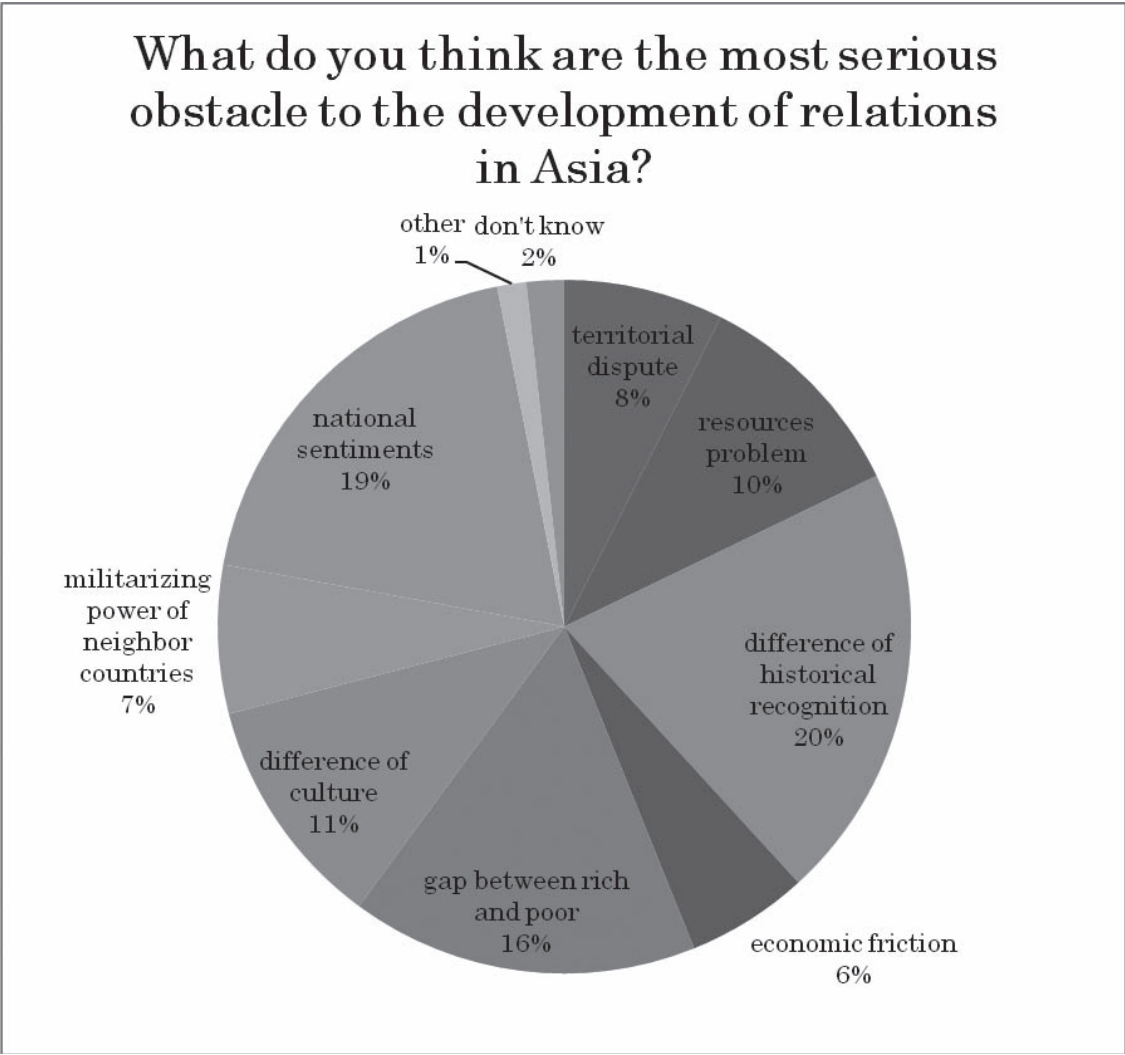
After the end of Japanese colonial rule and war of aggression, both Korea and China, as countries emerging from a colonial past, adopted an orthodox ideology of national history based on their peoples’ resistance to Japanese imperialism and the subsequent achievement of independence through these struggles. Japan had indoctrinated its imperial subjects in the period leading up to and during the war with imperial history centered on the ancient myth of the Emperor, which justified Japanese imperial rule as the extension of the Emperor system. In the postwar period, national history was reconstructed to be consistent with universal values of modernity, democracy, and pacifism. This reshaping was an attempt to reject what was seen as the premodern, underdeveloped social structure of Japan that had led to militarism.<sup>3</sup> The typical case of this national postwar pacifism is the remembrance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, in which Japanese citizens suffered as victims. The postwar goal of pacifism was achieved by stressing defeat, and was politically secured by the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan under the Cold War system. Under this treaty the American military presence both protected Japan and controlled Japanese military activity, functioning as a stabilizer in the region. Japanese people memorialized their sufferings, as well as the wartime poverty and the pervasive culture of violence perpetrated in Japan, through individual Japanese citizens who were seen as “unpatriotic” (非国民), members of the military, local communities, and schools. The postwar emphasis on their own experience inside Japan effaced any consciousness of the aggression other Asian countries had experienced at the hand of Japan.

Hence many Japanese people cannot understand why neighboring countries still actively blame Japan, even after agreements on war reparation were concluded and feelings of remorse

were expressed several times at the government level. Some people simplistically ascribe anti-Japan movements in Korea and China to excessive “national sentiments” (民族感情), which would be ingrained by dictatorships through state-imposed curricula of self-centered national history.

For example, according to the Asia-Vision Survey,<sup>4</sup> 20% of Japanese college students think “the biggest obstacles to the development of Asian countries’ relationships” is “differences of historical recognition,” and 19% think it is “national sentiments,” rather than economic, social, or cultural differences (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Views on Obstacles to the Development of Asian Countries’ Relationships**



Source: Asia-Vision Survey, 2009.

To counter this trend in popular sentiment, Japan-China and Japan-South Korea joint history research groups have been trying to find the objective “facts” in order to make up for the discrepancies in historical recognition and to promote reconciliation through “sober” intellectual dialogue.<sup>5</sup> For example, the Japan-China Joint History Research Committee was launched after anti-Japan demonstrations occurred in China in 2005, and an agreement on joint history research by both Japanese and Chinese intellectuals was reached at the subsequent Japan-China Summit Meeting in 2006.

The chairman of the Japanese side of the Committee, Shin’ichi Kitaoka, on the mission of

the research, said, “The history problem must be separated from politics. If the history problem arises, its discussion should be left to scholars while political economic partnerships shouldn’t retrograde.”<sup>6</sup> Kitaoka is also a policy member of the Japan-ROK (South Korea) Joint History Research Committee.

In spite of this goal of “mitigating conflicting sentiments over the history problem, and the attempts at increasing exchange and peaceful partnership between the two countries by revealing historical facts and interchanging opinions on the historical recognitions through researchers’ sober studies,”<sup>7</sup> the 2010 report of the Japan-China Joint History Research resulted not in a joint statement but in a disjointed report. Unable to agree on the number of victims in the Nanking Massacre, for example, the report recorded both Chinese estimates (more than 300,000) and those of the Japanese (20,000-200,000), even though the Japanese side acknowledged that Japan was responsible for this atrocity. This lingering discrepancy in the area of quantitative knowledge is a reminder that “facts” are not neutral.

Of course historical records have their limitations. At the end of the war, many official documents were burned. Oral history is also limited, since few people concerned are still alive today. In the contemporary situation, the issue is no longer that the generation with wartime experience won’t speak out, but that those with no personal experience are grappling with historical recognition. Apart from non-political, pure “objective” matters of historiography, another factor of cognitive differences relating to politics should be considered here. Immanuel Wallerstein explains politics of “pastness” as follows:

*Pastness is a mode by which persons are persuaded to act in the present in ways they might not otherwise act. Pastness is a tool persons use against each other. Pastness is a central element in the establishment of or challenge to social legitimation. Pastness therefore is pre-eminently a moral phenomenon, therefore a political phenomenon, always a contemporary phenomenon...Since the real world is constantly changing...Ergo, the content of pastness necessarily constantly changes.*<sup>8</sup>

In postwar Northeast Asia, authoritarian governments, including the Japanese government under the LDP’s dominance,<sup>9</sup> were also seen as a kind of authoritarianism—exploited memories of the dark past to legitimate their own rule. These governments, under the auspices of the Cold War policies of the United States, promised their citizens modernization, focusing on economic growth rather than on democratic participation. Real democratic participation was replaced by economic nationalism, which boasted economic growth and granted the people economic income and social welfare in exchange for a voice in policy.

### **3. The Process of War Reparation**

Japan’s approach to war reparation from immediately postwar until recently was strongly determined by the Cold War system under which the history problem was frozen. With the collapse of the bipolar system, this problem began to thaw, resulting in the current conflicts. Under the Cold War, open dialogue between Japan and its neighboring countries was not permitted, but post-1989, dialogue has been possible and has led to both conflict and the possibility of reconciliation. Understanding this postwar political situation helps us understand the persistence of the wartime history problem.

The outbreak of the Korean War just five years after the conclusion of WWII turned the Cold War in East Asia into hot war. In the context of United States strategy at the time, Japan needed to be the “bulwark against communism” in the region. Allied Forces occupying Japan

in the immediate postwar years shifted from an emphasis on democratization to a policy of rearmament and economic independence. This “reverse course” resulted in a Japanese version of McCarthyism—a “red purge” of Communist Party officials from public office—and the release of previously purged war criminals, militarists, and ultra-nationalists. To facilitate the incorporation of Japan into the Western Bloc, the priority of Western countries—led by the U.S.—was Japan’s economic recovery, at the expense of working through war reparations.<sup>10</sup>

The Japanese government led by Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida dismissed demands from those on the Left to sign an overall peace treaty with all of the countries in Asia, including Communist China, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The terms of the treaty would have given Japan sovereignty, “territorial integrity” and reduced its responsibility for making war reparations to facilitate Japan’s economic recovery. Instead Yoshida favored a treaty of mutual cooperation between the U.S. and Japan, which guaranteed a significant American military presence in Japan, and therefore in East Asia. This military presence, together with the subsequently established Japanese Self-Defense Forces, was ostensibly to safeguard Japan’s “unarmed peace,” and placed Japan firmly in the Western Bloc.

The San Francisco Peace Treaty between the Allied Powers and Japan were signed by 48 nations in 1951, and American Cold War strategy exempted Japan from most reparation responsibilities. Allied countries that had been attacked or occupied by Japan—Laos, Cambodia, Australia, the Netherlands (the metropole of Indonesia), the U.K. (Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia), and the U.S. (the mandatory of Micronesia)—renounced the right to claim war reparations. However, some Asian governments that had been colonial subjects and former colonies of Imperial Japan—North Korea, South Korea and the Republic of China (the present Taiwan)—were excluded from these discussions. The People’s Republic of China, India, Burma (the present Myanmar), Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (the present Czech Republic and Slovakia) were also absent. After this, however, India, the Republic of China, and the People’s Republic of China renounced their claim for war reparations by signing bilateral treaties with Japan in 1952. The Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People’s Republic of China was also subsequently signed in 1972, invalidating the former Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty. Instead of war reparations, Japan extended Chinese support for economic development. The Official Development Assistance (ODA) was a form of reparations from Japan to China, but Japan did not compensate for the suffering of war victims in China.

Japan compensated through bilateral agreements based on the San Francisco Peace Treaty in the case of the Philippines, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, Burma, and Indonesia. For countries that had renounced any claim for reparation—Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Singapore, Malaysia and Micronesia—Japan also concluded a bilateral treaty of economic cooperation. The grants and soft loans Japan provided to honor these treaties went under the name of economic assistance rather than war reparation. With regards to Thailand, Mongolia and European countries, Japan concluded agreements addressing rights to claim war reparation and provided economic assistance as postwar compensation.

All of these promises to Japan’s neighbors were made in the Cold War atmosphere that descended upon East Asia at the conclusion of WWII. In this global situation, the Allied Powers were particularly concerned with reinvigorating Japan’s economic standing to create a solid capitalist ally in East Asia. Most of the reparations, then, became conditional loans, which functioned to assist Japan’s economic advancement. The expansion of Japan’s economy into Southeast Asia evoked the spread of prewar and wartime Japanese imperialism. Furthermore, these postwar strategies were largely planned and implemented by the very same economic bureaucrats and company managers who had served Imperial Japan, and many feared it was a revival of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.”<sup>11</sup> Progressive intellectuals in Japan often criticized, and some of them continue to criticize, this character of Japan’s compensation.

In the case of South Korea, which had a particularly fraught postcolonial relationship with Japan, Japan concluded a treaty in 1965 to provide grants and soft loans as compensation for its 35-year imperial rule of the Korean Peninsula. This “compensation,” however, addressed post-war economic development in South Korea, but not the misery of those who were victims of war under Japanese colonial rule. Both Japanese and South Korean governments put economic development before the resolution of their shared history problem. Because of this neglect, historical controversies between the two nations, such as that over the legality of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1910, continue. Also, although there was an official recognition by the Japanese government of legal responsibility for war reparation based on the 1965 treaty,<sup>12</sup> the issue of compensation for individual victims such as forced laborers and “comfort women” remains unresolved. Because the victims were forced into silence by the developmental dictatorship in postwar South Korea, only more recently—since the process of democratization began in the late 1980s—have they begun to dare accusing the Japanese state of war crimes. Only in the 1990s, after the demise of the “1955 system”<sup>13</sup> and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)’s long-time rule in Japan did the Japanese government begin to respond to these concerns.

In the course of the geopolitical transformation from the Cold War division of Eastern and Western Bloc to a cross-border market system with gradual liberalization and multi-polarization, international relations in Northeast Asia have become very close. In response to this trend, attempts have appeared to move history education beyond national history and to embrace a transnational perspective. In Japan, and to some extent in China, these efforts have influenced the writing of history textbooks.

Diplomatic talks between nations in Northeast Asia tend to avoid history issues and attempt instead to strengthen partnerships with future-oriented strategies.<sup>14</sup> To this end, Northeast Asian governments try to promote economic and cultural relations. Included in these efforts is the promotion of apolitical joint history research among two or three nations. Many intellectuals respond to this trend, and strive toward sharing universal ideas in the global system.<sup>15</sup> For example, the project “Japan-China Intellectual Community” was launched to promote cross-border intellectual exchanges during 1997-2003.<sup>16</sup> Chinese historian Liu Jie points out that from the 1990s “multipolarization of history studies” has developed in China, making free research possible and contributing to diversification of the views of history, not necessarily subject to state power. According to Liu Jie the project reflected these trends and was set up as a non-official attempt to construct a common space where “public intellectuals” in East Asia could exchange their opinions freely and think beyond national borders.<sup>17</sup>

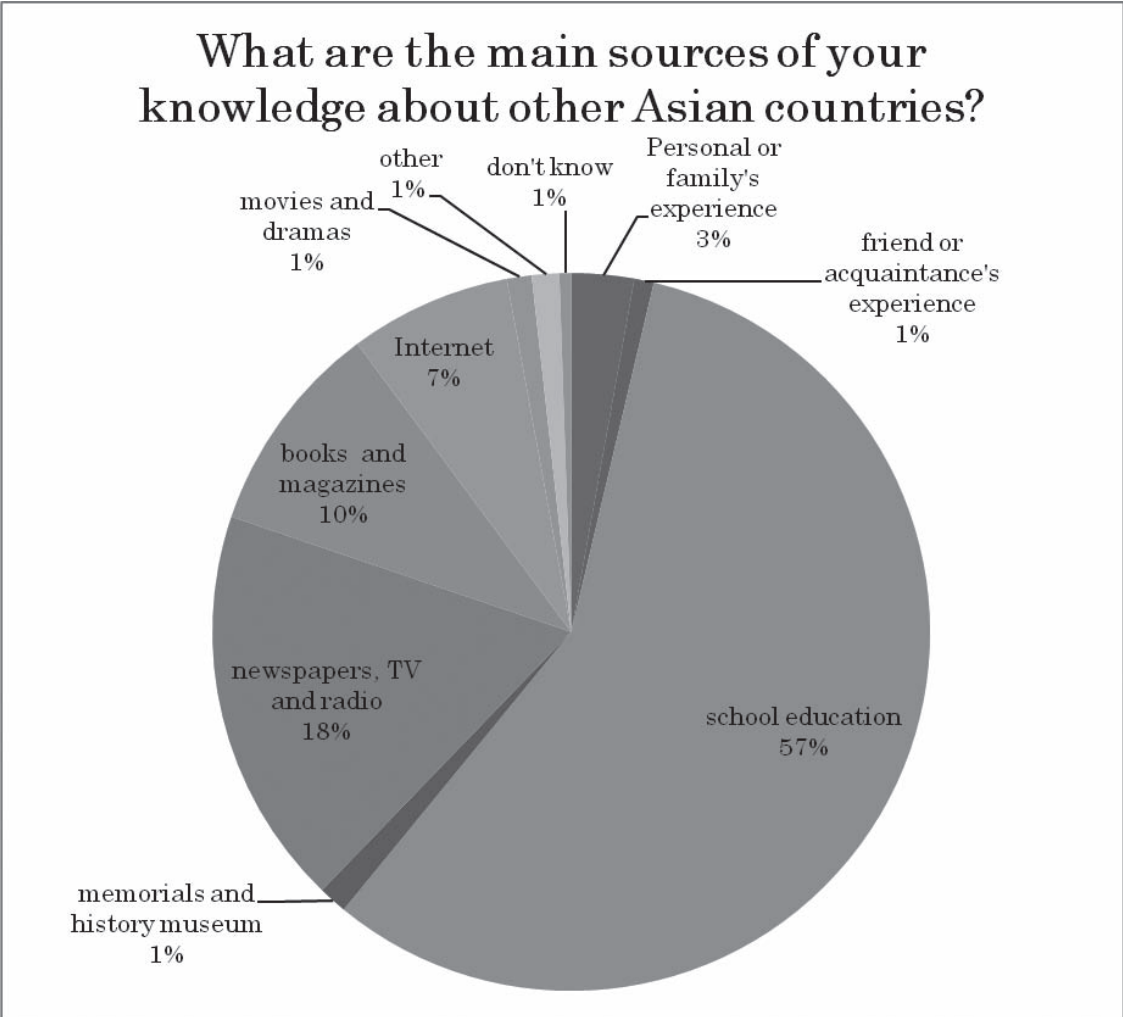
In general, however, the more globalized knowledge and power are, the wider the gaps between the intellectual elite and the common people. School education plays a central role in shaping people’s worldviews, and the history of prewar Asia also demonstrates that the budding cosmopolitanism of the elite stood in stark contrast to the nationalism of the masses. When the social tensions caused by this gap increase, it can intensify anti-foreign nationalism and chauvinism in society at large. This case shows that nationalistic resentment can be an unintended result of patriotic national education.

In recent years, Japanese educational trends exhibit this push toward patriotism. For example, the 1999 Law Regarding the National Flag and Anthem can be seen as an index of neo-conservative nationalism, since it revives the prewar practice of displaying the national flag and playing the national anthem, even though students are not forced to salute the flag or sing the anthem. Japan’s national flag and anthem were symbols of the rule of the Empire of Japan. These symbols revive the memories of Japan’s war of aggression and its colonial rule, and make neighboring Asian people nervous that Japan may return to prewar militarism, or that there may be a revival of the sense of racial superiority that was prevalent during that period. Even at sporting events, such as the 2004 AFC Asian Cup held in China, the sight of Japanese supporters singing

the national anthem and flying the national flag has the potential to evoke sensitivity and hostility in many neighboring Asians. Also, the influence of mass media on popular sentiment cannot be ignored. The deeply rooted memories of the past war are susceptible to breaking out when prompted by sensational mass media coverage.<sup>18</sup>

The recent rise of neo-nationalism as a reaction against globalization and social unrest indicates domestic society and national integration in crisis in Japan, South Korea, and China. In Japan, the Fundamental Law of Education was amended in 2006 for the first time since its establishment in 1947. It adds as the objective of education "to nurture an attitude...to love our country and our home," which is known as the "Patriotism Clause."<sup>19</sup> Seemingly anachronistic, this move is a reaction within Japan to the globalization of history studies, and a response to Korean and Chinese voices criticizing Japanese wartime policy. Education in all three nations becomes a battlefield, in which nothing less than national identity is at stake. According to the results of the Asia-Vision Survey, more than half of Japanese college students get their knowledge about other Asian countries from their school education (see Figure 2). Therefore, the next section takes into account how school education influences people's understanding of history in Japan, as well as in South Korea and China.

**Figure 2: Main Sources of Knowledge about Other Asian Countries**



Source: Asia-Vision Survey, 2009.



#### 4. History Education and Politics

Louis Althusser, examining ideology, determined the school as one of the fundamental ideological state apparatuses to reproduce a capitalist social system.<sup>20</sup> Ernest Gellner analyzes the nation-state as a prerequisite for the establishment of the capitalist system, which demands homogeneous labor power cultivated by the state's general education.<sup>21</sup> School education, especially the knowledge of history, is the basic common knowledge meant to produce and reproduce a nation. National integration is also a precondition for the free functioning of global markets. These simultaneous trends toward national integration and international interactions raise the possibility of nationalistic clashes. The conflicts between national histories among Northeast Asian countries show this dynamic. In this region, national memories about the war linger, and are influenced by views that emphasize self-victimization.

In Northeast Asia, Japanese history textbooks have caught the public's attention. School education is often used as a political tool, wielded to construct and reconstruct national identity. As such, the Japanese history textbook controversy is suitable to serve as a case to understand these contemporary identity politics.

The Japanese constitution guarantees academic freedom. Every scholar enjoys the right to research independent of state power, and universities ostensibly remain autonomous. Schoolteachers can also teach students with their own supplemental teaching materials under the principle of the local self-government.<sup>22</sup> The primary textbook, however, must be authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. This so-called textbook authorization system is virtually state censorship.

The contents of these official history textbooks, authorized by a government ministry, are assumed to correspond to official statements made in the international context. One expects them to be created with respect paid especially to Japan's neighboring countries, and their relationship to Japanese imperial history. When the Ministry of Education demanded a rewrite of the term used for the Japanese Army's incursion in Northern China from "invaded" (侵略) to "advanced into" (進行), Japanese history textbooks became a diplomatic issue. After receiving the Chinese government's protest against this edit, the Ministry of Education adopted a new authorization criterion, the so-called "Neighboring Country Clause." It declared, "Textbooks ought to show understanding and seek international harmony in their treatment of modern and contemporary historical events involving neighboring Asian countries." By virtue of this clause and to respond to the anti-Japan demonstrations in South Korea in 1992 sparked by the testimony of former Korean "comfort women," a description of "(war) comfort women" appeared in most history textbooks.

The "comfort women" issue manifested itself as Korean nationalism, but it also raised transnational concerns voiced by the United Nations Commissions of Human Rights (UNCHR) and various civic groups. The Japanese government was forced to apologize and disclose the results of their investigations into the alleged, coercive mobilization of Asian women as "comfort women," or prostitutes for Japanese soldiers during the war years. Finally Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono acknowledged the facts about the coercion and wretched living conditions of "comfort women," and the army's involvement in this system. He issued an apology in 1993.<sup>23</sup>

On the fiftieth anniversary of the war's end, Prime Minister Tomi'ichi Murayama issued a statement in which he expressed "feelings of deep remorse" and "a heartfelt apology" for Japanese "colonial rule and aggression."<sup>24</sup> This declaration set a precedent, which has been followed by successive cabinets whenever the history problem comes up and Japan's relations with neighboring South Korea and China deteriorate.

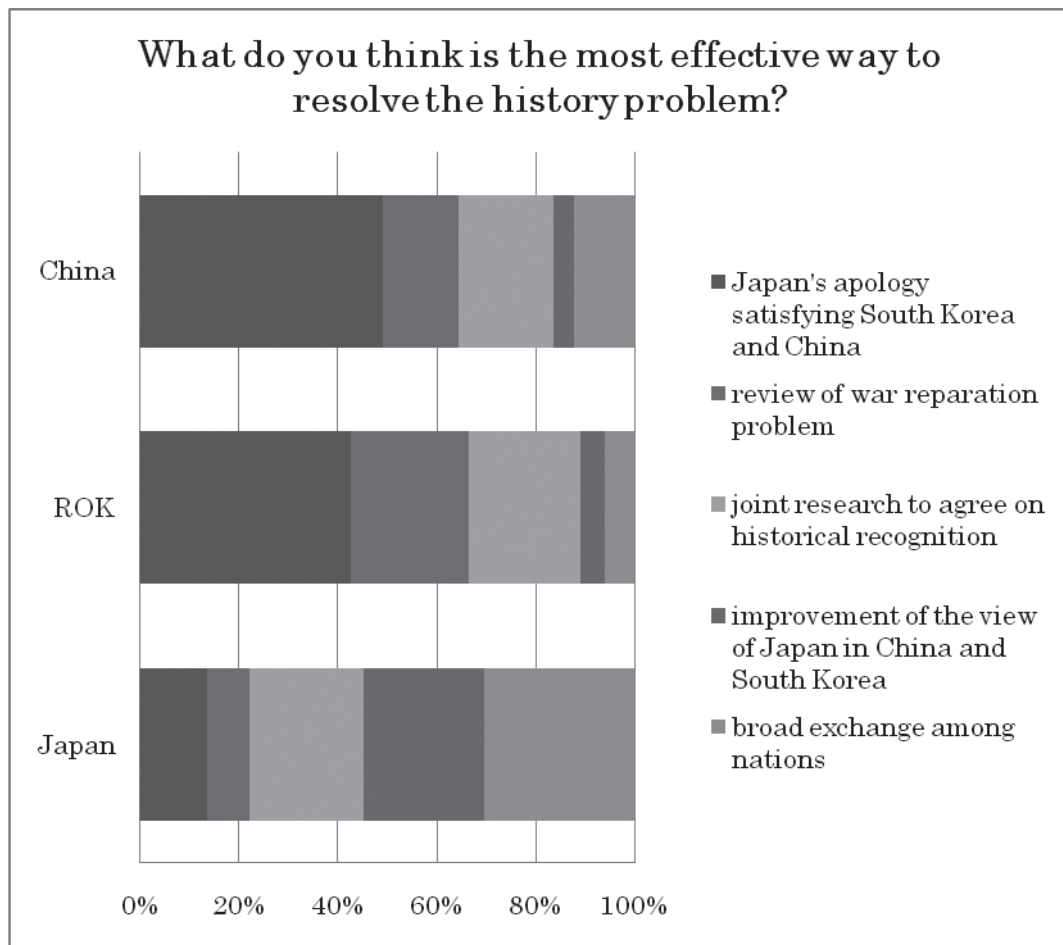
In a sense, the statement is a product of democratization. With the collapse of the longtime LDP-controlled regime, Murayama—the head of the Japan Socialist Party—formed a coalition cabinet in 1994. The Japan Socialist Party, which subsequently changed its name to the Social

Democratic Party, had adopted policies designed for the protection of the postwar constitution, pacifism, and opposition to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Therefore, the political rise of the Japan Socialist Party meant an increased diplomatic effort to enhance peaceful relations with Northeast Asian countries, especially with China. Although the Japanese political left is assumed to be “progressive,” it also retains a “conservative” element: its policy of protecting the Constitution, which remains the ideal manifestation of “emancipation” from a dark past of the oppression of individual freedom.<sup>25</sup> The postwar constitution of Japan signifies the negation of the past of militarism, imperialism, and “fascism”—even if the terms used to describe Japan’s war crimes refer to militarism rather than a political system of fascism<sup>26</sup>—and expresses the will of the Japanese people to construct a free and peaceful society in the future by overcoming the past.

History is reflexive knowledge that enables us to imagine the future as a process of “progress” or “recession.”<sup>27</sup> What kind of past we try to address decides what kind of future we can build. The approaches to issues of war responsibility among Northeast Asian countries are not only “diplomatic cards” used to extend friendship or apply pressure but also to signal the direction in which the countries may progress cooperatively. Having suffered from Japan’s imperialism, other Northeast Asian countries retain a deep mistrust of Japan. Therefore they continue to demand sincere remorse and apology, especially in light of the various reactionary movements that also continue to rise in Japan.

According to the opinion poll conducted by Asahi Shimbun in response to anti-Japanese protests in China in 2005, nearly half of Chinese (48%) and South Koreans (43%) thought that Japan’s apology was the most effective means to resolve the history problem. Japanese people, however, thought it would be exchange—cultural, economic, and political—(29%) rather than apology (13%) (see Figure 3). Japanese people might wish to forget the loathsome wartime past. This seems to be a factor of difference and an obstacle to coming to a mutual recognition of history. Postwar generations seem to have little consciousness about history, and therefore little sense of responsibility for the past and for how it might influence the future. This is quasi-realism: they see only the very transient present, but cannot actually contemplate the future and its relation to the past.

**Figure 3: Views on the Most Effective Way to Resolve the History Problem**

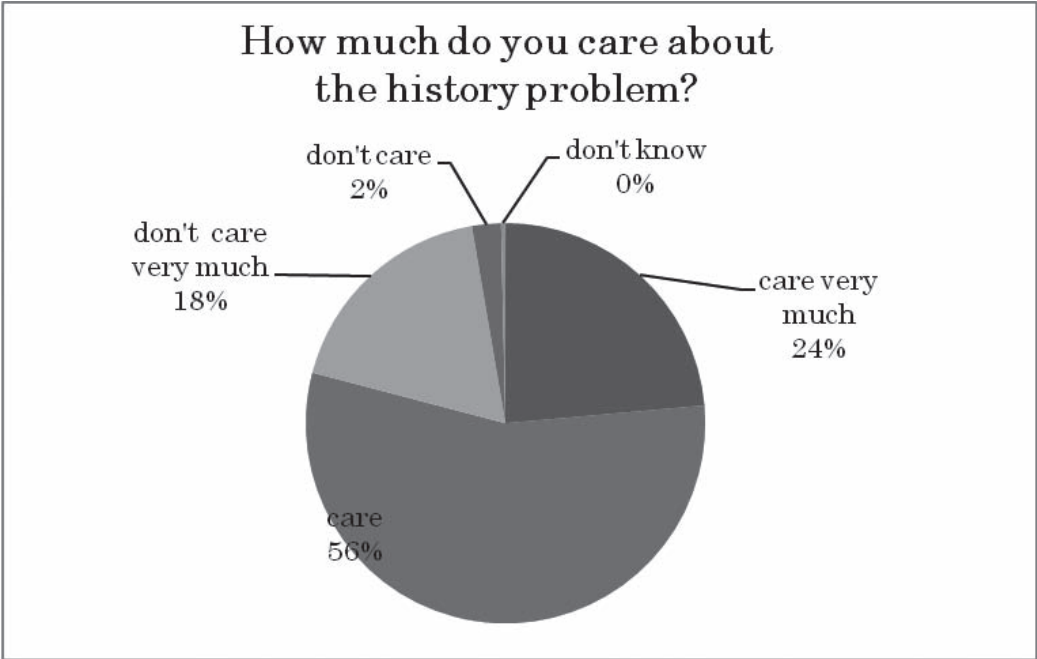


Source: Asahi Shimbun, April 27, 2005.

Contrary to the general image this constructs, however, Japanese youth are not necessarily indifferent when it comes to the history problem. According to the results of the Asia-Vision Survey in 2009, about 80% of Japanese college students do care about this issue (see Figure 4).

According to the results of a three-year survey (2005-2007) conducted by the Genron NPO in China and Japan on the question of whether the history problem could be resolved by deepening relations between the two nations, we see that Japanese were more pessimistic than Chinese (only about 26% of Japanese respondents in 2005, 27% in 2006 and 30% in 2007 thought that resolution was possible). In contrast, Chinese people seemed significantly more optimistic for the future (about 51%, 50% and 52% respectively). In Japan, a significant group of respondents indicated that even if relations deepened, the history problem would not be resolved (about 30%, 36% and 33% of Japanese, compared with about 11%, 14% and 23% of Chinese in the three years respectively), but that at least, the bilateral relations could not deepen without the resolution of the history problem (about 23%, 22%, 22% of Japanese, compared with about 26%, 32%, 20% of Chinese) (see Figure 5). Even after the anti-Japanese protests intensified in China in 2005, these tendencies changed very little.

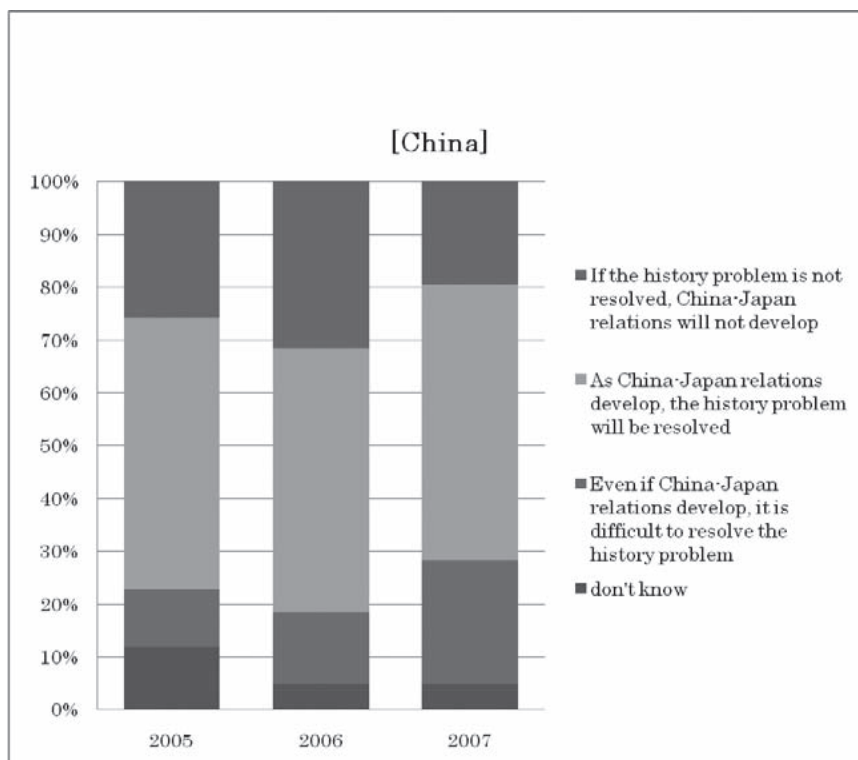
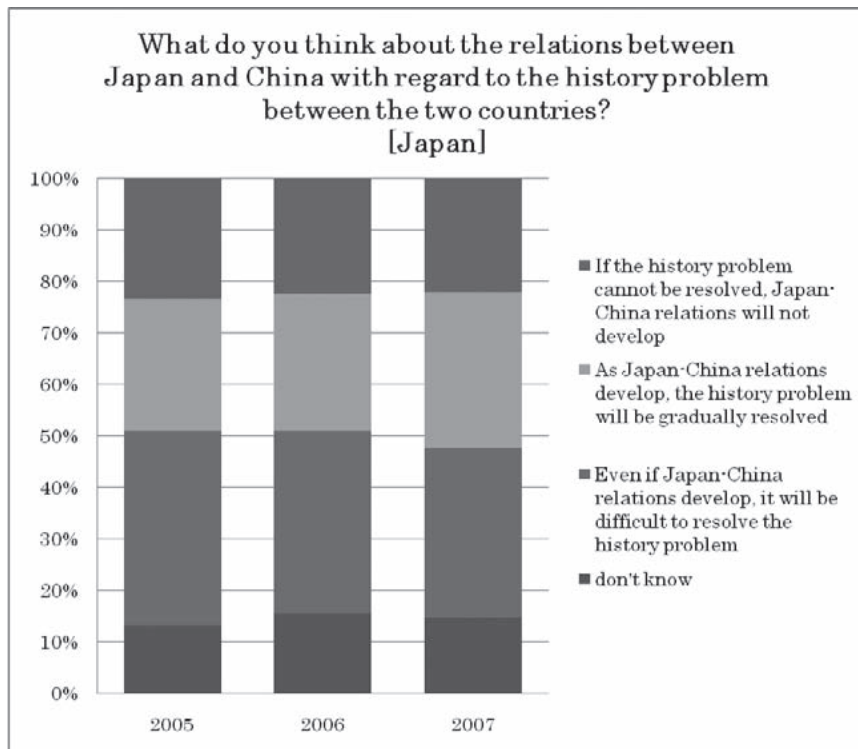
Figure 4: The Importance of the History Problem



Source: Asia-Vision Survey, 2009.

These opinions influence the Japanese government's attempts at resolving the history problem and develop friendly relations with the neighboring countries. Several differences remain, however, between the various levels of government and public opinion. Intellectuals both within and without Japan also have their own assessments.

Figure 5. Views on Japan-China Relations and the History Problem



Source: Created by author from data in Genron NPO, The 3rd Japan-China Joint Opinion Poll in 2007.

## 5. Historiography and Controversies over the Recognition of History

The Murayama government, in addition to a general apology, specifically addressed the issue of “comfort women” and supported the foundation of the Asian Women’s Fund. This fund collected private funds from Japanese people and donated it as “money of compensation” (償い金) to former “comfort women” in Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, etc. from 1995-2007.

Some women’s human rights groups, the Korean government and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights criticized the fund for its “private nature.” They alleged that the “comfort women” system was a war crime and a “crime against humanity” and the Japanese government should accept its legal responsibility and apologize for it by providing state compensation for the victims and also by promoting education about the issue in Japan.<sup>28</sup> This criticism was reflected in the refusal by some former “comfort women” to accept the “money of compensation.” On the side of Japan, there were some reasons why the Japanese government avoided taking legal responsibility for the issue. If the Japanese government had accepted legal responsibility, the government would have had to extend the same treatment to other individuals who might have claims against the government, such as Japanese orphans who were left behind in China when Japan withdrew from China in the waning days of the war, and Japanese prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, who were forced to do hard labor in Siberia, many of them even long after Japan’s surrender and many also dying while in incarceration. Therefore, before examining whether the Japanese army and government had coerced women to work in “comfort stations,” and before acknowledging this activity as a crime, the Japanese government tried to resolve the issue through private “money of compensation.” Paradoxically, this action prompted attacks by both rightwing nationalists in Japan who denied Japan’s war responsibility and by leftwing liberals who criticized the “private” nature of the fund.<sup>29</sup>

With the rise of reactionary movements led by nationalist politicians of the right-wing LDP after Murayama’s statement in 1995, policy on this issue began to shift. In connection with a group dedicated to reforming Japanese textbooks, they attacked the “masochistic view of history” that saw Japan as an evil aggressive state, and criticized what they saw as “servile” apology diplomacy in the postwar era. According to their argument, the historical records were seen as inadequate to prove that the Japanese army forced women in colonies to work as sex slaves.<sup>30</sup> As a result, the description of this issue disappeared from Japanese history textbooks in 2000.

This dramatic elimination of the “comfort women” issue from textbooks due to a lack of written historical records exemplifies how positivist claims about the lack of “evidence” have been used by revisionist historians to assert that the admission of Japanese responsibility in the comfort women issue is not based on “historical facts.” Reactionary politicians who wish to deny or reject any claims of Japanese responsibility have fully exploited the positivism among these historians.

The group responsible for this move, The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, was formed in 1996 by scholars gathering around the title “The Association for Advancement of an Unbiased View of History.” Its textbook, the *New History Textbook*, was approved by the Ministry of Education in 2001, and was used by only 0.039% of schools in 2001, but the adoption rate rose to 1.7% in 2009. While these percentages remain small, the textbook authors’ view of history has been authorized and officially approved. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this textbook caused controversies in Japan, China and South Korea. The *New History Textbook* introduces many myths that were used to instill patriotism into the subjects of the Japanese Empire and it makes the history of the war short and ambiguous to diminish Japan’s war responsibility and emphasize the nation’s prewar history. Hence, the textbook authors’ view of history is criticized as “historical revisionism,”<sup>31</sup> and also as representing the revival of the prewar view of the Emperor’s state history or “neo-nationalism.”

However, the authors of this textbook are not necessarily anti-Asia, as they do raise the emancipatory aspects of Japan's role in the "Greater East Asia War"<sup>32</sup> in which Japan assisted Asian colonies in achieving independence from the West. However, their affirmation of the war has caused protest in China and Korea, since it ignores the suffering these nations endured as colonies to the Japanese Empire. Straying further from an explicitly anti-Asia stance, the history textbook continues to express anti-U.S. sentiments. The proponents argue today's Japan faces a crisis of the loss of an "independent mind." This sentiment adopts the tone of Yukichi Fukuzawa, an influential exponent of Japan's modernization in the earlier Meiji period. Arguing that the Japanese lost their self-confidence as a result of the U.S. postwar occupation policies and Japan's meek submission to them, they are anxious about Japan's future in the competitive globalized world where protection by the U.S. is not as pronounced as during the Cold War. Their view of history is not simply a restoration to the prewar mythical past. They attempt to address the problems of the present world with solutions that differ from postwar democracy and pacifism. Indeed, according to them, under the Cold War structure, postwar democracy and pacifism—ostensibly universal ideals—took the form of isolated particularisms. For example, the ideal of "peace" often took the form of demanding Japan's disengagement from global conflicts, rather than insisting on global peace.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the modernization theory that undergirded American policy in the immediate postwar years supposed that any particular "backward" country could progress to a universal modernity, which was posited as an abstract Western model; further, it assumed that particularities of national character could serve or hinder modernization.<sup>34</sup>

This development model of nation-states has undergone a thorough critique in recent years on the basis of growing cross-border movements and transnational relations. On the one hand, when the nation-state system began to be shaken by the liberalization trends around the world in the 1990s, history studies began to take on the task of deconstructing nationalism by illuminating its imaginary nature and the oppressiveness of the nation-state. On the other hand, globalization began to threaten people's sense of stability, shake their pride in their nation's economic growth and prosperity, and unsettle their identity based on economic development. This instability has given rise to xenophobia and exclusivist nationalist movements. One consequence of these trends has been the emergence of so-called "neo-nationalism" that contains both the "cosmopolitan" tendencies of globalization and strong attitudes toward the anti-Japanese nationalism in the neighboring countries, which ironically has been the result of the growing cross-border exchanges of opinions. As an exponent of "neo-nationalism," the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform takes on the recent critique of the nation-state and reaffirms the nation-state while attempting to reconstruct Japanese nationalism. The attempt to intensify national integration is a reaction to the negative aspects of globalization. Moreover, the authors of the *New History Textbook* and other nationalists profess that their aim is to reverse the "postwar historiography" and the "postwar regime."

Indeed, in this author's view, postwar historiography in Japan was too inclined to positivism, and a fixation on the "object" of study. As a result, the contents of history education became a dry, meaningless enumeration of the facts and rote learning to prepare students for grueling examinations. Students of this system cannot understand the real meaning of history and how it relates to them. To cope with this shortcoming in education, conservatives in particular invoke ethics and patriotism. Moreover, positivism cannot avoid the process by which neutral, objective studies are used to certify dominant power and thought. Postwar historiography has reconstructed national history on the basis of democracy and pacifism authorized by the Constitution and the presupposed nation-state system. Today, as constructivism attempts to replace positivism, the emphasis is on narrating memories from various points of view. It is inevitable that all historians have their own sets of values, which inform their perspectives and approaches to historical facts. History is a kind of personal story. This does not mean that everyone is free to discriminate or

harbor prejudices. Despite their ideas of “unbiased view of history” and “freedom,” the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform cannot open up new horizons, as long as it remains fixated on what it sees as a lack of Japanese self-esteem and self-awareness. Their own failure or refusal to recognize and come to terms with Japan’s imperial past marks them as particularly lacking in historical self-awareness.

In the contemporary milieu in Japan, historical positivism plays a reactionary role, and constructivist versions of history can exploit this. For example, the *New History Textbook* reduced the Nanking Massacre to a quantitative issue, arguing that historical records were limited. Yuzo Mizoguchi points out accurately that this emphasis on the uncertainty of numbers transforms the existence of the fact itself into an uncertainty; it tries to make the historical fact appear as an “illusion.”<sup>35</sup> This quasi-positivism based on selective “facts” has many biases in affirming prewar Japan.<sup>36</sup>

Some people have the idea that revealing the historical “truth” will lead to the resolution of the history problem, and this is often the hope of joint history research. However, revealing the “truth” also opens old wounds and intensifies conflicts over what constitutes “truth,” as demonstrated by the history textbook controversies. In other words, dialogue about history has the potential to lead into a vicious cycle, or, the opposite, to reconciliation. For example, common educational materials on history for Japan, South Korea, and China, named *History to Open the Future*, published in 2005, attempted a transnational response to the history textbook controversies and tried to create a shared historical recognition among the three nations. It is said that this dialogue was not necessarily attempting to compose a complete shared history at this point, but rather, it aspired to the more modest and attainable goal of discussing the differences of recognition among the three countries.<sup>37</sup> Following this strategy, Hiroshi Mitani suggests that historians should begin by sharing issues, rather than sharing conclusions. A step in the right direction is simply noticing where memories diverge, and the origins of this divergence.<sup>38</sup> If joint studies go well, reconciliation could—little by little—become a possibility. Whether we can share a vision of the history and reconcile depends on the people’s will to pursue a common future.

## 6. Instead of a Conclusion

In this article, I have shown that the history problem is a present political issue. The issue is essentially about nationalistic clashes based on national histories, and it certainly requires a transnational resolution.

Prewar imperialism had divided Northeast Asia into empires and colonies, which intensified the clash of nationalisms within the region, and, after Japan’s defeat and decolonization of the other countries, the Cold War divided Northeast Asian countries into separate ideological camps and consolidated the nation-states of Japan and Korea (although Korea then was divided through a civil war). The lasting divisions of this region cast a shadow on today’s situation in the form of a chasm of historical recognitions. Therefore, the resolution of the history problem, including the postwar compensation of victims and reconciliation, remains incomplete.

However, the controversies over history have shown the need for dialogue across borders. While it is true that dialogue can degenerate into a vicious circle of conflicting nationalisms, without it no reconciliation is possible. Even with government compensation of war victims, there is no certainty that compensation alone would heal the pain, or allow victims to find a way to forgive. Overcoming the past might be, as Hannah Arendt said, impossible.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, we must consider how to work through the past to forge a path to the future. It might take a long time. We cannot categorically say that forgetting and oblivion is a sin by arguing that reflecting upon history makes for a better future. As Nietzsche argues, forgetting is a virtue, since forgive-



ness is not easy, and resentment is difficult to bear.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, it was the one-sided forgetting on the part of Japan that deteriorated Northeast Asian relations. Rather than the freedom to forget, perhaps it is the freedom to remember and take responsibility for the past that will liberate the future of Northeast Asia.

Reflections on, and apologies for, past transgressions are a requisite for mutual trust and co-existence in any region, and this is especially so for Northeast Asia, in which the movement of people and ideas is increasing. In this context, a resolution would not in itself be an end, but a way to begin a community built on the past.

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## Notes

- 1 Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" Lecture at Sorbonne, March 11, 1882 (Japanese translation: Tetsu Ukai, trans., *Kokumin towa Nani ka*, Tokyo: Kawaideshoboshinsha, 1997, p. 62). This article is available at [http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/core/hss3/e\\_renan.html](http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/core/hss3/e_renan.html) (accessed June 10, 2010).
- 2 "Comfort women" (慰安婦 or 従軍慰安婦) is the euphemism for women working in military brothels, especially those who were forced into prostitution by the Japanese military during the Second World War.
- 3 The prominent opinion leader of postwar democracy in Japan, Masao Maruyama, formulated this predominant view. See Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, London: Oxford University Press, 1963. For the expanded edition of the book in Japanese, see *Gendai Seiji no Shiso to Kodo* (Thought and behavior in modern politics), Tokyo: Miraisha, 1964.
- 4 The Asia-Vision Survey is an opinion survey of students at Asian universities and graduate schools, conducted by the Global Institute for Asian Regional Integration (GIARI) in the Waseda University Global COE Program. The survey took place at 31 Japanese universities in 2009 and collected responses from 1,725 students. For results and the report, see: [http://www.waseda-giari.jp/sysimg/imgs/20100330\\_asia\\_vision\\_report.pdf](http://www.waseda-giari.jp/sysimg/imgs/20100330_asia_vision_report.pdf) (accessed March 30, 2010).
- 5 For example, after the agreement on joint history research by Japanese and Chinese intellectuals at the Japan-China Summit Meeting in 2006, the Japan-China Joint History Research Committee was created.
- 6 Kitaoka's statement is published in *The Japan Forum on International Relations Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Fall 2002), <http://www.jfir.or.jp/jbulletin/j-bulletin36/bulletin.htm> (accessed June 10, 2010).
- 7 The Japan-China Joint History Research Committee, *The First "Japan-China Joint History Research" Report*, January 31, 2010, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/china/rekishi\\_kk.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/china/rekishi_kk.html) (accessed January 31, 2010).
- 8 Immanuel Wallerstein, "Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism and Ethnicity," in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class*, London: Verso, 1991, p. 78.
- 9 On this determination of party system, see Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976 (Japanese translation: Norio Okazawa and Hideyuki Kawano, trans., *Gendai Seitogaku: Seito Shisutemu Ron no Bunseki Wakugumi*, Tokyo: Wasedaigaku Shuppanbu, 2000).
- 10 One of the reasons given for the decision to alleviate Japan's postwar war reparation burden was the lesson drawn from the economic situation in the post-WWI German Weimar Republic, in which economic recovery was never achieved, and further, it led to the rise of fascism within Germany.
- 11 When Japanese companies began to transfer their production bases to Southeast Asia and China, and Asian economic networks developed dramatically, English-language studies on Japan tended to transform their concerns from Japan's history of modernization, which served as a rationalization of the Western policy of liberalism, to "Japan's wartime Empire." Some historians of Asian Studies might see today's phenomenon of regionalization in Asia as a revival of imperialism. See Peter Duus, "Japan's Wartime Empire: Problems and Issues," in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. xi-xxvii; Peter Duus, "Imperialism Without Colonies: The Vision of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Zone," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 1996), pp. 54-72 (Japanese translation: Fujiwara Ki'ichi, trans., "Shokuminchi Naki Teikokushugi," *Shiso*, No. 814 (April 1992), pp. 105-121); Sven Saaler, "Pan-

- Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Overcoming the Nation, Creating a Region, Forging an Empire,” in Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, eds., *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 1-18; and Prasenjit Duara, “The New Imperialism and the Post-Colonial Developmental State: Manchukuo in Comparative Perspective,” *Japan Focus* (February 2010), [http://www.japanfocus.org/articles/print\\_article/1715](http://www.japanfocus.org/articles/print_article/1715) (accessed March 10, 2010).
- 12 For the official understanding about the history problem including war reparations, see the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/q\\_a/faq16.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/q_a/faq16.html) (accessed June 10, 2010). About the official release of the amount of the war reparation, see [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/taisen/qa/shiryo/pdfs/shiryo\\_07.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/taisen/qa/shiryo/pdfs/shiryo_07.pdf) (accessed June 10, 2010).
  - 13 The term “1955 system” was first used by political theorist Jun’nosuke Masumi. See Jun’nosuke Masumi, “Senkyuhyaku-gojugonen no Seiji Taisei” (The 1955 political system), *Shiso*, No. 480 (June 1964). Generally, the “1955 system” refers to the two-party system established in 1955, which was constituted by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the leftist Japanese Socialist Party (JSP). Although various factions and smaller parties coalesced into the conservative right or the progressive left, the proportion of LDP to JSP members elected to the Diet was two to one and the dominance of the LDP lasted for about forty years. However, the conservative party could not hold more than two-thirds of the seats in the parliament that were needed to approve constitutional amendments. In this sense, the “1955 system” meant a quasi-democracy and a liberal political system based on the balance of power between the conservatives and progressives.
  - 14 For example, the “Japan-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration: A New Japan-Republic of Korea Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century” of 1998 pledged a “common determination to raise to a higher dimension the close, friendly, and cooperative relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea which have been built since the normalization of their relations in 1965 so as to build a new Japan-Republic of Korea partnership towards the twenty-first century.” See also: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/joint9810.html> (accessed March 30, 2010). Although this declaration was realized after democratization in South Korea, it inherited the interpretation of the agreement on war reparations and the suspension of the history problem from the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea.
  - 15 On this social structure and thought in pre-war Japan, see Osamu Kuno and Shunsuke Tsurumi, *Gendai Nihon no Shiso: Sono Itsutsu no Uzu* (Modern Japanese thought: Its five swirls), Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1956.
  - 16 Sun Ge, one of the coordinators of this project, argued that intellectuals seek only the objective facts of history, and they cannot allow for “sentimental memory.” He attempted to distinguish “sentimental memory” from narrow-minded nationalism, but the difference remains difficult to discern. On Sun Ge’s argument, see Sun Ge, *Ajia wo Kataru Koto no Jirenma: Chi no Kyodo Kukan wo Motomete* (Dilemma in discussing Asia: In search of a common intellectual space), Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2002. Concerning this project, see Teru Shimamura, “Igokochi no Warusa’ ni Chokumensuru to Iukoto” (On being thrust into an uncomfortable position), Yoichi Komori et al., eds., *Higashiajia Rekishi Ninshiki Ronsho no Metahisutori: Kan’ichi Rentai Nijuichi no Kokoromi* (The meta-history of the history recognition controversies in East Asia: Twenty-first attempts at Korea-Japan solidarity), Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2008, pp. 28-43.
  - 17 Liu Jie, “Higashi Ajia Rekishi Ninshiki eno Chosen” (A challenge toward East Asia history recognition), Jun Nishikawa and Ken’ichiro Hirano, eds., *Kokusai Ido to Shakai Henyo* (International mobility and social transformation), Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2007.
  - 18 In light of the Chinese anti-Japanese protests in 2005, opinion polls about historical recognition between China and Japan were conducted. Examining one of these surveys, some people attributed the anti-Japanese “sentiments” or “self-conscious” nationalism to the influence of the mass media. See Narumi Yoshimoto and Shigeto Sonoda, “Chugokujin Daigakusei ni Mirareru Nashonarizumu Ishiki to Rekishininshikimondai ni Taisuru Taido: 2007 nen Hukutan Daigaku Chosa no Bunseki Kekka kara (Consciousness of nationalism and attitudes toward the history recognition issue among Chinese university students: From the analysis of a 2007 Fudan University survey),” *GIARI Working Paper*, March 2008. Needless to say, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century sociology devoted itself to the elucidation of a mass society where individuals were no longer independent but were moved by new socio-economic powers such as the mass media. For example, see Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, New York: Avon Books, 1941 (Japanese translation: Rokuro Hidaka, trans., *Jiyu kara no Toso*, Tokyo: Sogensha, 1951), and David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961 (Japa-

- nese translation: Hidetoshi Kato, trans., *Kodokuna Gunshu*, Tokyo: Misuzushobo, 1965).
- 19 On the articles of the revision of the Fundamental Education Law, see: [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houan/kakutei/06121913/06121913/001.pdf](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houan/kakutei/06121913/06121913/001.pdf) (accessed June 10, 2006).
  - 20 Louis Althusser, *Sur la Reproduction* (On reproduction), Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995 (Japanese translation: Nagao Nishikawa, trans., *Saiseisan ni Tsuite*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005).
  - 21 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983 (Japanese translation: Takashi Kato, trans., *Minzoku to Nashonarizumu*, Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2000).
  - 22 Public elementary schools and public junior high schools must use the textbook that their school district adopts, based on the decision of the local education board. On the other hand, high schools, national schools, and private schools can choose the textbooks they will use at the school, based on the preference of the teacher using the textbook. Under the textbook authorization system, a movement to advocate the use of the *New History Textbook* appeared, and indicates political intervention in education. Concerning this issue, see Yoichi Komori, Yoshikazu Sakamoto and Yoshio Yasumaru, eds., *Rekishi Kyokasho Nani ga Mondai ka: Tettei Kensho Q&A* (What is at stake with the history textbook? A thorough examination Q&A), Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2001, pp. 126-131.
  - 23 On “the Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the results of the study on the issue of ‘comfort women’,” see: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html> (accessed March 30, 2010). As for the relationship of the history recognition controversies to the “comfort women” issue, see Shin’ichi Arai, “‘Ushinawareta Junen’ to Rekishininshiki Mondai” (The lost decade and the issue of history recognition) in Yoichi Funabashi, ed., *Ima Rekishi Mondai ni Do Torikumuka* (How to deal with the history issue now), Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2001, pp. 42-54.
  - 24 “Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama ‘On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war’s end’ (15 August 1995),” <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/pm/murayama/9508.html> (accessed March 30, 2010).
  - 25 In recent years, arguments over constitutional reform intensified, especially among politicians in the LDP who adopt the viewpoint that the postwar constitution is an “imposed constitution.” However, this argument ignores the fact that the contents of the Constitution contain universal ideas generally recognized in the international community. Also, it effaces the history in which it was constructed through the collaboration of SCAP members and Japanese politicians who adopted it in exchange for preservation of the Emperor system. The general population also received the new Constitution as the promise of emancipation. See John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co. / New Press, 1999 (Japanese translation: Yoichi Miura and Tada’aki Takasugi, trans., *Haiboku wo Dakishimete: Dai Niji Taisengo no Nihonjin*, Vol. 1 and 2, Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2004), and Shoichi Koseki, *Nihonkoku Kenpo no Tanjo* (The birth of the Japanese constitution), Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2009. The direction of postwar pacifism and democracy was determined by a prewar communist idea that Japanese society harbored a semi-feudal structure and militarism that had to be overcome by a modern democratic revolution. This is the so-called 1932 Thesis.
  - 26 Takeo Sato points out that in Japan, “war” was problematized as the loser’s responsibility. This differs from the situation in postwar Germany, in which the past “system” of Nazi Germany became the problematized object that was addressed. According to Sato, the reason why Japan was inclined to “reparation” (unlike Germany, which addressed mostly “compensation”) is that Japan treated reparation in terms of the pre-World War I recognition concerning the responsibility of the loser for the outbreak of war. See Takeo Sato, “Nihon no Sengohosho Mondai Kaiketsu eno Teigen” (A proposal for the resolution of the postwar reparation issue) in Yoichi Funabashi, ed., pp. 57, 65. Indeed, the consciousness of “losing” is strong in Japan, which has resulted in reactionary attitudes, such as the negation of war crimes and the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal as a winner’s judgment, an affirmation of prewar Japan, and urges to keep an independent self-defense force. However, it has also been noted that Japan’s war crimes can be understood in terms of interwar ideas, the illegality of war and of moral obligations to injustice and illegal actions.
  - 27 Concerning reflexive knowledge, see Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Cambridge: Polity Press, in association with Blackwell Publishers, 1994 (Japanese translation: Kiyobumi Matsuo et al., trans., *Saikiteki Kindaika: Kindai ni okeru Seiji Dento Biteki Genri*, Tokyo: Jiritsushobo, 1997).
  - 28 For example, in 1998 Gay J. McDougall reported to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights that Japan’s “comfort women” program during World War II was sexual slavery and systematic rape in violation of human rights. The report advised that the Japanese government was liable for the “comfort

- women” system as a “crime against humanity.” In 2008, the United Nations Human Rights Council also demanded that the Japanese government accept legal responsibility and apologize unreservedly for the “comfort women” system by compensation for victims and also by conducting education about the issue. The violence against “comfort women” could be regarded as sexual violence from the viewpoint of gender, which is a modern concept. Indeed, “humanity” has often been used as a “diplomatic card” to pressure countries and justify the hegemonic rule of an empire. However, it should be noted that “humanity” is the ultimate platform for appeal to reason against international or supra-national violence.
- 29 For the “Asian Women’s Fund” and the opposition to it, see Haruki Wada, “Ajia Josei Kikin Mondai to Chishikijin no Sekinin” (The Asian Women’s Fund and intellectuals’ responsibility), in Yoichi Komori et al., eds., pp. 133-153.
  - 30 On this rightwing argument from the viewpoint of interaction between the Japanese nationalist discourse and the Chinese and Korean criticisms of Japan, see Tsuneo Akaha, “The Nationalist Discourse in Contemporary Japan: The Role of China and Korea in the Last Decade,” *Pacific Focus*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (August 2008), pp. 156-188.
  - 31 Tetsuya Takahashi, *Rekishi Shusei Shugi* (Revisionist history), Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2001.
  - 32 The term “Greater East Asia War” was officially defined by Japanese wartime government after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. This term implied that Japan did not intend to invade Asia but to liberate Asia from Western colonization and to construct the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere”; using the term “Greater East Asia War” entails the affirmation and glorification of war on the side of Japan from wartime to the present. Because of these connotations, under the Press Code issued by the SCAP to censor the Japanese news media, the use of the term “Greater East Asia War” was banned during the occupation. After the occupation ended, some former Asianists like Husao Hayashi used the term and affirmed the goal of the “Greater East Asia War.” However, the more generally used term for the war in Japan has been the “Pacific War” or the “Second World War.” The term “Greater East Asia War” is used with an affirmative nuance in the contemporary nationalist discourse, e.g., in the New History Textbook, by disregarding the negative aspects of the war.
  - 33 Concerning the interdependence of particularism and universalism in the nation-state system, see Naoki Sakai, foreword by Meaghan Morris, *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997 (Japanese translation: *Nihon Shiso to iu Mondai: Hon’yaku to Shutai*, Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1997), and Naoki Sakai, Brett de Bary and Toshio Iyotani, eds., *Nashonariti no Datsukochiku* (Deconstructing nationalism), Tokyo: Kashiwashobo, 1996.
  - 34 For an inclusive review of postwar Japan studies, including modernization theory, see John Dower, Umemori Naoyuki, trans., “Nihon o Hakaru: Eigoken ni okeru Nihon Kenkyū no Rekishi Jojutsu” (Weighing Japan: Historical narratives in English-language studies of Japan), *Shisō*, No. 855-856 (September and October 1995); and Sheldon Garon, “Rethinking Modernization and Modernity in Japanese History: A Focus on State-Society Relations,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (May 1994), pp. 346-350.
  - 35 Yuzo Mizoguchi, “Chugokuan no Mondaiten wa Nanika” (What is the problem with the views on China?), in Komori et al., pp. 35-36.
  - 36 The same observation is applicable to the work of the popular novelist Ryotaro Shiba. As an example, one of his novels, *Saka no Ue no Kumo*, affirms the Russo-Japanese War, which enabled Japan to annex the Korean peninsula. See Ryotaro Shiba, *Saka no Ue no Kumo* (Clouds above the slope), Vols. 1-8, Tokyo: Bungeishunju, 1999. In Japanese textbooks, this war was, implicitly or explicitly, treated as an imperialist war, resulting in the gain of a new territory as war reparations and enabling the colonization of Korea. The reading of novels has declined in recent years, but Shiba’s novels are eagerly read by some powerful people such as politicians, company managers, researchers and students. Moreover, these novels are dramatized for TV broadcasting and made into movies.
  - 37 Liu, pp. 52-54.
  - 38 Hiroshi Mitani, “Mirai no Tame no Rekishi Taiwa” (Dialogue on history for the future), in Hiroshi Mitani and Kim Tae-Chang, eds., *Higashiajia Rekishi Taiwa: Kokkyo to Sedai o Koete* (Dialogue on East Asian history: Transcending national boundaries and generations), Tokyo: Tokyodaigaku Shuppankai, 2007, pp.13-14.
  - 39 Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968 (Japanese translation: Hitoshi Abe, trans., *Kurai Jidai no Hitobito*, Tokyo: Chikumashobo, 2005).
  - 40 Friedrich Nietzsche and Jinjo Kiba, trans., *Dotoku no Keihu*, Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2006, pp. 37-40, 62-64. The English version, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Iran Johnston is available at <http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/Nietzsche/genealogytofc.htm> (accessed June 10, 2010).