

Historical Dialogue and Reconciliation in East Asia

Keiji Iwatake: Good afternoon. My name is Keiji Iwatake, and I'm the director of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA. Today's seminar grows out of a five-year project undertaken by Japanese and overseas Chinese historians, supported by our parent foundation in Japan, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. The outcome of the project is a recently published book of essays in Japanese and Chinese whose title can be translated as *Contentious Issues in Modern Sino-Japanese Relations: Toward a History Beyond Borders*. Just last weekend, a two-day symposium on this topic was held at Harvard University. We are very pleased to have here today some of the panelists who participated in the symposium. Now I'd like to introduce Professor Daqing Yang, who has been involved with the aforementioned project from the outset. Thank you again for joining us at today's seminar.

Daqing Yang: Good afternoon. My name is Daqing Yang. I teach Modern Japanese History at George Washington University, and together with Professor Mike Mochizuki, I direct the program on Memory and Reconciliation in the Asia Pacific, which we have been working on since 2003. I welcome you to this very special occasion. In particular, I take personal pleasure in presenting to you this very special panel that will discuss, from their very personal experiences, historical dialogue and reconciliation in East Asia. I thought I would just start by raising a question: Why are we having such a panel now, and what do we mean by historical dialogue and reconciliation?

Right now seems to be a relatively quiet moment in East Asia regarding the issue of historical controversies. However, just a few years back, we may recall that heads of state

cancelled their summit meeting because of a visit to a particular shrine in Tokyo, and over history textbooks.

Accomplishments of Historical Dialogue

Let me begin by briefly discussing what we mean by historical dialogue and reconciliation. By historical dialogue, we are really referring, in the broadest sense, to any form of exchange of views over historical interpretation, but more specifically referring to academic discussion among historians from different countries. And the term "reconciliation" is a very complex one and has no easy definition. I think we largely share the belief that reconciliation is both an outcome and also a process. And to some extent, in its essence, it's a psychological process that consists of the transformation of deeply held beliefs and attitudes toward the other. And it is in that connection that the study of history, historical interpretations, are often at the core of the process of reconciliation.

Now, what has East Asia accomplished in the field of historical dialogue? I think we should keep in mind that the history of historical dialogue in East Asia is actually a relatively short one, especially compared to the more familiar example of Europe. If we look at international conferences, it is really in the mid-1980s that scholars from the Republic of Korea, Japan, and the People's Republic of China first sat down together to discuss history at international conferences. Of course, since then, international conferences have become much more regular, although the level of dialogue at these conferences varies.

In addition to international conferences, the last few years have seen publications jointly

authored by historians or educators from East Asian countries. In 2005, the first trilateral modern East Asian history textbook was published simultaneously in Korea, in Japan, and in China, and some of you may recall that we actually co-hosted a panel discussion at CSIS specifically on the evaluation of that book. And also, between Japan and Korea, there are many similar projects co-authored by either history teachers or university professors; 2006, in fact, saw the publication of several such jointly authored books.

The project I personally have been involved with led to the publication of this book, this is the Japanese edition. The Chinese edition was also published simultaneously. This is the book Mr. Iwatake just referred to. And also, I have been personally involved in overseeing the English translation of this book and we hope, in the next year or two, we will see the English edition published.

And moreover, in the last few years, we also witnessed the establishment of joint historical commissions in East Asia, established between governments. In 2002, the governments of Korea and Japan agreed to establish the first joint historical commission and at the end of 2006, the government of Japan and China established a similar joint commission, and Professor Bu Ping here in fact is the Chinese team leader in this unprecedented endeavor.

And besides these several types of historical dialogue, we should also take notice of the fact that historical dialogues in East Asia are taking place in many other areas. The unprecedented level of foreign students studying in each other's countries, even including diaspora Chinese and Korean scholars teaching in Japan or some Japanese professors resigning their positions in Japan

to take up positions in Korea. These are also venues of historical dialogue taking place.

Characteristics of Dialogues

Now, compared to Europe, as I said earlier, East Asia's experience with historical dialogue is a relatively recent development and we also tend to see that these dialogues are largely responses to crises or to diplomatic escalation in the region. Moreover, the increasing economic interdependence and inter-social bonds, along with globalization, contributed to historical dialogues by making it easier for scholars in the region to have frequent meetings and interactions. I think, as someone based in North America, I truly envy my East Asian colleagues for being able to hop on the airplane and meet their counterparts two hours later.

Another characteristic of the East Asian dialogue is the participation and support of outsiders, by which I mean institutions such as the Georg Eckert International Institute for Textbook Research based in Germany and various foundations based in Europe and in North America, as well as academic communities outside East Asia that have taken a deep interest in facilitating the dialogues within the region. By mentioning these progresses, I don't mean to underestimate the challenges and difficulties encountered in the dialogues. In fact, in the next two hours or so, several of the participants in these dialogues will relate to you the progress as well as the challenges they encounter. In doing so, they will also outline what they consider to be the future solutions to some of those difficult issues.

So finally, the timing again, in this town we are very sensitive to politics and I'd just like to remind you that in addition to our presidential election, in Japan they're going

to select the next prime minister in a matter of weeks and whether the future leaders will continue the policies undertaken by their predecessors in facilitating historical dialogue obviously will have some impact. But now, I'd like to pass the microphone to my colleague, Professor Mochizuki. Thank you.

Mike Mochizuki: Thank you very much, Daqing. I'd like to join my colleagues in welcoming all of you to this panel discussion and to thank Mr. Iwatake and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA for proposing this program with the Sigur Center for Asian Studies here. I have the distinct pleasure of being able to moderate the discussion. First, let me turn the floor to Professor Mitani who will speak on historical memories in East Asia, political settings and problems, and the history textbook issue. Professor Mitani?

Mitani Hiroshi: Thank you very much for your kind introduction. I'm very happy to be here with old friends of mine, Mike Mochizuki and Daqing Yang, and with major figures in historical dialogue in East Asia today. I will talk on the history textbook issue but I'm very critical of only looking at this issue while we are talking about the historical memory issue. It is a kind of tradition in Japan to only concentrate on the history textbook issue; it is not good, but it is convenient to explain how things have gone over the past 20 years with the historical memory issue. So, I'll talk about the history of the history textbook issue.

Historical Memory in Contemporary Politics

This year, we saw the cooling down of the controversy on historical memories in East Asia that had swept this region for several years in the early 21st century. The changes

of political leadership in Japan in September 2007 and in Korea in February 2008 enabled the governments of East Asia to shelve historical problems from the diplomatic arena and hand them to the specialists in history. In the spring of 2005, when younger people in Seoul, Beijing and other major cities in China made big demonstrations in the street against Japan, I really worried about the possibility that nations in East Asia might have fallen into a vicious cycle of antipathy that no government could control. The historical controversy seemed to invite further conflicts in international relations in general. Fortunately, this wildfire stopped and political leaders seem to have realized the danger in exploiting historical memories to gain support from domestic public opinion.

Yet the problem of historical memory is left unresolved. It has even spread from being only an issue between Japan and neighboring nations. Korea and China recently engaged in controversy over the ancient states of Koguryō [Gaogouli] and Bohai [Parhae]. National histories in East Asia are now in conflict with each other. There are deep gaps between historical memories in East Asia that will continue to evoke controversies from generation to generation.

Here, I would like to take a brief look at the history of the history issue with reference to its political context and then to analyze the problems involved in the so-called history textbook issue. There were six big issues that have evoked harsh controversies in recent years: Nanjing atrocities, comfort women, Tokyo war crimes tribunal, Yasukuni Shrine, postwar reparations, and history textbooks. But here I would like to concentrate only on the textbook issue.

Origin of the History Textbook Problem as an International Issue

It is a relatively new phenomenon that nations in East Asia have begun to pay attention to the historical memories of neighboring peoples. After WWII, China and Korea created national histories in which Japan and the West played major roles as villains in modern history. However, before 1982 they seldom paid attention to the historical memories among the Japanese, at which point both nations made protests as they perceived that the Japanese Ministry of Education had forced textbook publishers to rewrite their drafts to replace the word “invasion” with “advance.” Here, I do not analyze why they made this protest but point out the fact that it happened almost 40 years after WWII rather than during the years when many more people who had suffered from the Japanese invasion were alive.

The Japanese government responded to these claims sincerely. The spokesman Kiichi Miyazawa made a statement that the government would stand by its expressions of regret for the wrongdoing of the past, which it had made upon normalizing relations with Korea and China in the 1960s and 1970s. Also, the next cabinet, the Nakasone cabinet, revised the standard for textbook authorization to add a clause that demanded, “In dealing with events in the modern and contemporary history of relations with neighboring countries of Asia, textbooks should give appropriate consideration to viewing them from the standpoint of international understanding and international cooperation.” The prime ministers at that time decided on these moves because they had sincere regret for Imperial Japan’s invasion and evil activities as well as sharing ambitions to make Japan welcomed by international society as not merely an economic power.

Since the mid-1980s, it became a custom for neighboring nations to watch Japanese history textbooks and to offer severe criticism every time they were revised. Japanese textbook authors became more attentive to neighboring nations’ feelings and described evil activities of Imperial Japan such as the Nanjing atrocities, forced mobilization to Japanese mines, and so forth. Also, the Ministry of Education began to shed the strong ideological standpoint it had taken during the 1960s and 1970s. The change was partly because various judges criticized the ministry for maintaining an arbitrary authorization process during the famous lawsuits by the historian Ienaga Saburo, and partly because there emerged a non-LDP cabinet in 1993. Today, the ministry hides itself behind transparent standards and procedures in textbook authorization while keeping its power to control textbook policy as a whole.

Comfort Women in Textbooks

In the early 1990s, a number of former comfort women in Korea and other countries came forward in search of their dignity as human beings. Some scholars call it sexual slavery, and the Japanese Imperial Army’s comfort women system was indeed a most inhumane and shameful institution, one that the military employed to maintain its organization. Perceiving this, all the history textbooks for high schools included a brief description in 1993, and the majority of the textbooks for junior high schools followed. However, this move evoked a strong backlash in Japan. When non-LDP prime minister Morihiro Hosokawa announced his regret and apology for the bad acts of Imperial Japan, including this, many LDP members criticized him as unpatriotic. For some of these politicians, this sort of criticism might be simply a means to recover their power to organize a cabinet.

But, for others, such as the recent prime minister Shinzo Abe and other younger politicians, it marked the starting point of a broader intent to exploit historical memory. They found it very effective to appeal to this kind of nationalism to gain support from public opinion. Their criticism was fueled by the anti-Japan campaign that Chinese leader Jiang Zemin began in 1995.

On the other hand, the addition of a description of the comfort women system in middle school history textbooks evoked not a few criticisms among the wider Japanese public. A major question was raised as to whether it is proper or not to teach such sexual cruelty to junior high pupils before they receive adequate sex education. Apparently swayed by this criticism, all eight textbooks for junior high schools removed the account of the comfort women in the next version, while a majority of senior high textbooks retained it.

Yet, the more important reaction to this controversy was the launching by some intellectuals in 1997 of a popular movement to publish a history textbook that would describe Japan as an impeccable nation. They succeeded in organizing grass roots support for their society, "Tsukurukai," by appealing to a Japanese populace suffering from anxiety and uneasiness caused by the long economic depression during the 1990s. They maintained that Japanese history belonged to the Japanese only and that it was shameful to allow foreign interference in the national history of Japan. They maintained they were simply behaving as Chinese and Koreans do. Although this movement at first was not connected to the hawks in the LDP, the two groups gradually began to cooperate with each other.

The Heightening of the Controversy: 2001 to 2007

The history textbook controversy of 2001 marked the start of a harsh controversy on historical memories in East Asia. When the Ministry of Education authorized the Tsukurukai textbook after demanding the revision of 137 parts that violated its standards, both Japanese leftist intellectuals and Korean and Chinese public opinion began to criticize the Tsukurukai and the Ministry of Education. Within Japan, there emerged a severe controversy between the newspaper Sankei that supported the Tsukurukai and the newspaper Asahi that had been the established media for leftist intellectuals. This controversy even involved TV shows and radio, which made it a national issue. Nationalist discourse seemed to have overwhelmed Japanese public opinion.

However, the educators and members of the public who were responsible for the selection of the textbooks in their junior high schools made unexpected decisions. It was revealed that the share of the Tsukurukai textbook was only 0.04%, practically nothing. Contrary to the impression left by its presence in the mass media, the Tsukurukai totally lacked the power to prevail in the textbook market.

This textbook controversy in 2001 revealed several important problems and changed the setting of the discourse. First, it became evident that the dichotomy of left vs. right in political discourse was no longer effective. It was revealed that a majority of the Japanese people supported the status quo after World War II, that is, peace and prosperity under capitalism including peaceful relations with neighboring people. Second, during this controversy, I found that ordinary Japanese lacked the knowledge of

what Imperial Japan did to neighboring people. This does not mean that Japanese history textbooks lack presentations of this knowledge. The problem lay in the fact that ordinary Japanese adults did not remember it even though they had read the textbooks. For example, they learned from textbooks that Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and began colonial rule. However, from the brief description in a thin textbook, it was difficult for them to realize what it meant for Koreans. I have to confess that even I, a historian of modern Japan, realized it only when I heard a Korean historian saying, "A part of our history is the history of another country." I think it most important for the Japanese to think about the meaning of historical facts from others' points of view. For this purpose, I am now editing a series of modern regional histories of East Asia entitled *Modern History for Japanese Adults* with Professor Kawashima and Liu Jie.

Third, there emerged international movements to overcome the discrepancies in historical memories in East Asia. Although cooperative research on modern East Asian history had already begun in the 1980s, the 2001 controversy accelerated these attempts. Most of them shared a clear goal: to prevent Japanese educators from adopting the Tsukurukai textbook during the next revision and to have the Japanese public know the evils of what people did in the past in the name of the Japanese empire. The most famous project of this kind was the publication of *A History for the Future* in 2005 edited by historians from Japan, South Korea and China, in which Bu Ping led the Chinese team.

International relations in East Asia actually worsened at the same time that these international efforts took place. Tensions culminated in the massive anti-Japanese demonstrations in Korea and China in the

spring of 2005. One of the direct causes was Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. I would like to point out that neighboring peoples interpreted Koizumi's repeated visits as clear evidence that the Japanese nation as a whole wanted to neglect their sins of the first half of the 20th century. This perception was understandable. Yet, a further look will offer another image of the situation. Japanese public opinion at that time split in half according to public opinion polls taken by newspapers just after Koizumi's last visit to Yasukuni Shrine. Although half of the Japanese supported it for various reasons, another half was critical of it because they thought it improper to offend neighboring peoples who continued to ask him not to do this.

Yet, the successor of prime minister Koizumi, Shinzo Abe, continued to harass neighboring peoples. Although he disguised himself as a friend of South Korea, he continued to refer to the comfort women issue as if he were going to whitewash it. It is true that he did not deny the public announcements made by former Japanese governments. But, his ideological stance on Japanese imperial history was clear enough to expand the doubts of neighboring peoples toward the Japanese nation as a whole. Even American people were embarrassed every time he referred to this issue last year. It was not until Mr. Yasuo Fukuda assumed the post of prime minister that I felt relieved from the fear that the Japanese leadership might bring about more conflicts with East Asian people in spite of the wishes of a majority of Japanese, who prefer to live in peace with neighboring peoples.

Perceptions of Japan

Here, I would like to turn my attention to the condition of historical memory among

neighboring peoples. There exists among Japan's neighbors a strong tendency to neglect Japanese efforts to face its evil past. This February at Stanford University, I heard an editor of history textbooks from Beijing say that Japanese textbooks tried not only to conceal the evil activities but also to praise the Japanese invasions. He said this based on the Tsukurukai textbook.

Is it proper to represent Japanese textbooks by referring to a practically unused textbook? He also neglected the fact that it was absolutely impossible to praise Japanese invasions according to the standards set by the Ministry of Education. It is understandable that Chinese people have strong doubts toward Japan even now. I think it proper to denounce some Japanese who try to whitewash invasions and oppression. Also, it is proper to keep watching any attempts to do so.

I was totally disappointed to learn that the efforts to improve textbooks by the Japanese were totally hidden from the Chinese public, and even from the elite. If this situation continues, Chinese people will inevitably continue to believe that all Japanese are shameless enough to continually escape from recognizing their evil past. We, the Japanese who engage in history education, are in need of recognition of our efforts by neighboring peoples, and need encouragement instead of neglect.

Tasks for the Future

Thinking about the future of the historical memory issue in East Asia, I think there are several tasks to be taken care of.

One. We should not utilize historical memory for political or diplomatic means. Doing so will only strengthen the existing

national antagonism in East Asia among future generations.

Two. We have to pay more attention to historical education for adults. It is not children but adults who passionately engage in political controversies. Our efforts to publish a series on East Asian modern history for adults will offer some clues to solve this problem.

Three. We have to compare history textbooks in East Asia. In the long run, textbooks will continue to play significant roles in forming national memories. In order to understand present national memories and to promote reconciliation among future generations, it is not adequate to analyze Japanese textbooks only. Stanford University's project for comparative studies of Chinese, South Korean, Taiwanese, Japanese and US textbooks will offer precious insights in this respect.

Four. We have to begin the efforts to overcome national histories. As mentioned earlier, there is a territorial controversy on ancient history between China and the two Koreas. National histories will continue to be a source of international disputes in East Asia. We will not reach historical reconciliation if academics in East Asia do not dare to take the responsibility to nurture transnational imagination. One of the solutions may be to write a regional history that presents historical images from other nations' viewpoints, as well as descriptions of the emergence of a shared world. Thank you.

Mochizuki: Thank you Professor Mitani. Now we will turn to Professor Bu.

Bu Ping: Thank you. In recent years, the dialogue between different countries on historical perceptions is attracting more and

more people's attention to historical issues, especially the joint effort made by Germany and France to compile a history textbook. *Europe and the World since 1945* is regarded as a great success as well as a good example for other countries to follow.

Compared with the harmonious situation in European countries, the differences in historical perceptions among some Asian countries, especially such East Asian countries as China, Japan and South Korea, are more prominent. In such a case, can these East Asian countries hold a similar dialogue to reach a consensus on some historical events? And how should we proceed with the dialogue to meet our goals? I will elaborate on these issues here.

National Identity in East Asia

In terms of regional cooperation, the countries in Europe are developing far ahead of their counterparts in Asia. Some scholars attribute it to the consciousness of "We, Europeans" popular in Europe, which means that European identity has been firmly established. On the contrary, East Asian countries haven't built such kind of identity yet.

Other scholars are of the opinion that the successful building of European identity is closely connected with the realities of European history. They believe that although there are a great number of independent nations in Europe, actually an identical civilization did exist in all these European nations, namely the "European Civilization" which was put forward by François-Pierre Guillaume Guizot, a distinguished French historian. The "European civilization" would not only facilitate the formation of a political system characterized by "supra-nationalism" and the preservation of their common cultural

heritages, but also provide an efficient way to avoid conflicts. As for the wars and conflicts in European history, they are interpreted by some European scholars as the clashes of different identities on the following three levels: region, nation and populace.

As far as East Asian countries are concerned, has there been any historical basis for the formation of identity like that in European countries? Indeed, most East Asian countries have been under the influence of Oriental civilization, which features a Chinese character and Confucian thoughts. However, numerous research projects have shown that despite the fact that these countries were affected by the same civilization, there were still great differences in values among different nationalities or nations; moreover, even some new sub-civilizations were derived from the original civilization. For this reason, it would be not very persuasive if we testify to the existence of East Asian identity merely from the above perspective. In a certain sense, judging from the historical evolution of the East Asian order, we could get a rough idea about the difficulties and complexities of building identity in East Asia.

The Traditional Order

In the history of East Asia, there existed a specific paradigm for a period of time, which was applied to maintain sound relationships among different countries, or to solve diplomatic disputes. That is the so-called "East Asian Order."

Before the nation came into being in modern times, the predominant relationship among different states in ancient East Asia was described by Professor John King Fairbank as the "imperial tributary system," which was an international order between imperial

China and its neighboring states. To be more specific, Chinese emperors established relationships with the kings in China's neighboring countries by receiving and paying tribute, even awarding titles to them, which were closely related to the diplomatic and commercial status of these countries, so this imperial tributary system was also regarded as a kind of state-to-state relationship.

Since the great unification in the Qin-Han dynasties, the emperors of the dynasties gave recognition of authority and sovereignty to neighboring countries so as to build relationships with these tributary states. In the Sui-Tang dynasties, which were considered the two greatest empires in the world at the time, the tributary relationship was further strengthened. Since the founding of the Ming dynasty, the clearly defined tributary system was officially established to symbolize outsiders' submission to Chinese overlordship. The theoretical underpinning of the imperial tributary system is the world outlook inherent in Chinese people, that is, the thoughts on the relationship between China and minority nationalities. The core of the thought is that China is the center of advanced civilization while the outsiders are regarded as barbarians. The reason why the imperial tributary system was built on a fairly solid foundation and maintained for a long period of time is that there once was a powerful and wealthy China, surrounded by some less powerful tributary states.

However, the imperial tributary system didn't necessarily mean that China would bring all these tributary states under its direct political or military control. Actually China, as the center of the system, wished to maintain a stable order indirectly through conferring kingships in tributary states by virtue of its relatively high level of

civilization and political organization while the tributary states strived to safeguard national security and have a relatively independent space to deal with domestic and foreign affairs. Obviously, there was no domination-subordination relationship among the states in the East Asian order, which was totally different from the imperialist countries' dominance over their neighbors in modern times.

Therefore, some scholars argue that the imperial tributary system with China as the core was the most predominant system in the East Asian order of the day. Although the order under this system might not be an ideal international order for East Asian countries, it still can be considered as a useful instrument to explore a new order to replace the imperialist order.

However, in the imperial tributary system, there was unavoidably military conquest over tributary states when they refused to follow the criteria of Sinocentric civilization. For this reason, some scholars are of the opinion that there was an "imperialist feature" embedded in the tributary system that should not be neglected.

In addition, it is still doubtful whether the imperial tributary system can be regarded as the sole embodiment of East Asian identity, the reason for which is that at that time some Asian countries like Japan also set up a similar tributary system on a small scale with a view to challenge the dominant role of China in the East Asian order. Especially since the end of the 16th century, the China-directed traditional order was threatened by the small-scale tributary systems formed by China's neighboring countries. With the development of these scattered small-scale tributary systems, the leading role of the imperial tributary system in East Asia was

finally broken down.

The Japanese New Order

With the advent of the modern era, Japan gradually became the center of this region and succeeded in keeping Russian troops from moving southward by making an alliance with the British. After obtaining support from the USA, Japan then annexed Taiwan, Korea and took further steps to invade Northeast China. The sudden rise of Japan was accompanied by the decline of the Qing dynasty, which used to be the dominant actor of this region for a long period of time. As a result, the traditional East Asian order ultimately collapsed.

In theory, the sovereignty-based principles in international relations, stipulated by the “law of nations,” endows equal position to every state. However, these principles have never been abided by in practice. Instead, capitalist dynamics and the use of force, i.e. the “law of the jungle,” still played a dominant role in international relations.

Japan endeavored to liberate East Asian nations by toppling the American and British colonial rule over this region. As a matter of fact, the real purpose of Japan was to attempt to replace the China-centered imperial tributary system with a new Japan-directed greater East Asian order, namely the so-called “Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere”, in which the leading role of Japan would be highlighted and a self-sufficient system of a greater Japanese Empire would be firmly established. After waging a war of aggression against China, in order to bring a fast end to this war and to start “peacefully” building a new order in East Asia, Japan put forward a fresh theory: “New East Asian Order.” This East Asian order, upholding the law of nations and civilization seemed to be an ideal system for

fully respecting sovereignty; however, the order was totally under the control of hegemonic Japan.

At that time, Miki Kiyoshi and Ozaki Hidemi also put forward a proposal of establishing an “East Asian Community,” that is, reforming Japan by uniting with the socialist revolution in China, and then carrying on socialist transformations in other East Asian nations under the leadership of Japan. This was an attempt to build the new East Asian order. However, against the backdrop of Japanese militarism, any attempt to rebuild East Asian identity was destined to failure.

Postwar Orders

During the period of the Cold War, international relations in East Asia were subordinate to the confrontation between two camps respectively led by America and the Soviet Union. For instance, America attempted to make all East Asian countries adopt its social system by means of economic, technological and military cooperation with these countries. To be more specific, in terms of economy, America partly brought vitality to the economic network of the “Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere;” in military terms, America succeeded in building an American-directed order for protecting the security of East Asia. In any case, an East Asian identity still failed to be established.

In the post-Cold War era, especially later in the era of globalization, the countries in East Asia underwent dramatic structural changes. Differing from the ancient East Asian order, there is no sole superpower dominating this region any longer. Some people hold the optimistic opinion that the extensive governmental and non-governmental communications among different countries

in East Asia will lead to the removal of the three biggest barriers for establishing a regional community, that is, the geographical barrier, the historical barrier and the identity barrier. On the other hand, some people seem to hold less optimistic opinions, that is, although the economic relations between the three economic powers in East Asia, Japan, China and South Korea are becoming much closer than ever before, a consciousness of regional community is still far from being fostered. Despite the fact that 60 years have passed since the end of World War II, there are vast political and emotional chasms between Japan and China, and between Japan and South Korea, especially on such sensitive issues as historical perception, historical textbooks and visits to the war-related Yasukuni Shrine etc., all of which pose great challenges to the emergence of a consciousness of regional community.”

However, regarding the establishment of an East Asian identity, the present regional situation is nothing less than fine.

Efforts at Historical Dialogue

Despite different opinions on whether identity once existed in East Asia like that in Europe, in recent years, great efforts have been made by East Asian nations to build borderless historical perceptions.

China has spared no effort to develop world-oriented history education. That is, to put Chinese history into the context of world history, regarding Chinese history as one integral part of world history, and trying to view the development and evolution of Chinese history from the perspective of world history. In 1985, the examination and appraisal system was adopted for selecting national textbooks for historical education so that history textbooks gradually become

more diverse.

In the latter half of the 1990s, some Japanese universities invited a number of scholars from Japan, America, mainland China, Taiwan, and South Korea to participate in a research project called, “Conceptions and Misconceptions Among East Asians,” discussing the different conceptions of some historical issues and presenting a research report.

Meanwhile, educational institutions and learned societies in Japan and South Korea established mechanisms for joint research into history. For example, “Forum on a Japan-Korea History Textbook” jointly organized by the Research Institute for History Textbooks of the University of Seoul, and the Research Institute for Historical Education of Tokyo Gakugei University, as well as the “Seminar on Collaborative Historical Research by Japanese and Korean Historical Societies” organized by ten historical institutes or societies in the two countries.

A series of discussions have been held in these seminars for the purpose of reaching a consensus on some historical issues on the basis of mutual understanding. In addition, these seminars also put forward such questions as the coexistence of East Asian countries and the compilation of historical textbooks. Great results have been achieved through the aforementioned joint research.

In the 21st century, East Asian scholars and teachers made a great number of achievements in joint historical research, examples of which are as follows: Since the year 2002, scholars, teachers and some civil organizations from Japan, China and South Korea have held a “Forum on Historical Perception and East Asian Peace” every year. On the basis of these discussions, the

compilation committee for historical textbooks was set up by the involved parties in the three countries. After three years of joint research and discussion, the *Contemporary and Modern History of China, Japan and South Korea* was published in 2005, which was accepted as a supplementary textbook in the middle schools of the three countries. In addition, students from the three countries take part in a summer camp for an exchange of history learning every year.

In 2001, Professor Mitani Hiroshi joined hands with Professor Liu Jie and some other Chinese scholars based in Japan to establish a “Conference of Young Japanese and Chinese Historians”, discussing the changes of perception in the two countries on some historical issues. After several years of work, *Contentious Issues in Modern Sino-Japanese Relations: Toward a History Beyond Borders* was published simultaneously both in China and Japan, which presents us with a thorough and profound investigation into the different perceptions of some important issues in the modern history of both countries.

On the basis of seminars jointly participated in by Japanese and South Korean scholars and teachers, Professor Kimishima Kazuhiko of Tokyo Gakugei University, in collaboration with some scholars from South Korea, published their research results: *The History of Communication between Japan and Korea: From Ancient Times to Modern Times*.

In addition, the faculty members’ unions in Hiroshima, Japan and Taegu, South Korea jointly set up a committee devoted to compiling a history textbook: *Korean Envoys: From Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s Korean Invasion to Friendship*. A similar compilation committee for a history

textbook was also organized by women’s groups in Japan and South Korea: *Modern Japanese and South Korean History from the Women’s Perspective* is one of the most distinguished publications of this committee.

Scholars and ordinary people in East Asian countries have made great efforts to conduct joint research and compile teaching materials in recent years. Although there are some differences both in terms of the final form of research results and in terms of research depth and quality, there is no difference of opinion on the ultimate goal of their joint research, that is, to establish historical perceptions beyond borders.

Methodologies

We can view individual countries’ histories and the regional history of East Asia from a variety of perspectives. A common practice is to study the history of an individual country firstly and then expand the scope to regional history, which has been called a “Concentric Circles Model.” However, whether a Concentric Circles Model would enable people to transcend the scope of national history is still an open question. Some researchers argue that those who advocate a so-called Concentric Circles Model are actually defending the nationalist conception of history with the individual country as its core. As a consequence, some scholars put forward a so-called “East Asian Perspective” or “East Asian Conception of history.” For example, some Korean researchers advocate a so-called “Korean history as a Part of World History” or “World History Embedded in Korean History”. In their view, the first step is to abandon Korean history and then integrate Korean history into world history. Then, they argue, the history of East Asia, or more specifically, the history of the relationship among China, Japan and Korea, should be

put at the top of the agenda.

To transcend national history and national historical memory, historians must integrate varied national historical memories, explore their linkages and summarize their commonalities. Only through careful and conscientious research can a shared conception of history be realized.

It's significant that some cooperative history research projects, sponsored by governments, also appeared during this period. Japan and Korea jointly initiated a cooperative history research project in 2002. The first part of this project was finished in 2005 and the second part was initiated in 2006. The Sino-Japanese cooperative history research project was initiated at the end of 2006 and so far it has been smoothly conducted for nearly two years. This project, consisting of ancient history (including the Middle Ages) and modern history, covers sixteen themes (seven on ancient history and nine on modern history). The modern history part in particular goes further: it not only fixed the research titles, but also set the keywords. As scheduled, both sides will write articles according to the same titles and keywords, which would further deepen the discussions and studies.

Sino-Japanese History Issues

It's been widely recognized that the history issue is the biggest obstacle in Sino-Japanese relations. Since the end of World War II, debates on historical perception have never stopped between China and Japan. In recent years, some efforts have been made to open dialogues between the two governments and societies, which in my view is extremely necessary. Nevertheless, when taking a close look at the Sino-Japanese history issue, people would find that the underlying reasons for different

historical perceptions between China and Japan are rooted in different fields with different forms and extents. Naturally, they shouldn't be handled in a similar manner. In my opinion, the Sino-Japanese history issue is embedded in three different but interrelated levels, i.e. the political level, the emotional level and the academic level. Only by clarifying the underlying reasons at every level can real dialogue on the history issue become possible.

Political Level: Nature of the Japanese War of Aggression

At the political level, the main issue is how to judge the nature of the Japanese war of aggression against China in the early 20th Century. In China, the war was clearly defined as a war of aggression waged by Japanese militarism. In Japan, Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro and Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi expressed their introspections on the war in 1993 and 1995 respectively, although people often doubted whether these could be regarded as "real" introspections.

However, some rightists and conservatives in Japan, especially some Dietmen within the Liberal Democratic Party, denied Japan's role in the war and fiercely opposed any introspection on the Japanese side. In 1995, 105 Dietmen from the Liberal Democratic Party established a so-called "Committee on Historical Study." They argued in a statement that the speech by Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro and his introspection on the war are advocating a kind of "Self-torturing historical conception," which shouldn't be tolerated; we must build a bright historical conception based on objective historical facts. This Committee published a book called "Conclusion of the Greater East Asia War," advocating such fallacies as the Nanjing

Massacre was fabricated or comfort women existed for personal economic reasons, completely denying the Japanese army's role in the war and the war's aggressive nature.

Actually, such an attitude is consistent in Japan's political life. After the so-called "1955 system" was established, a dark stream of revivalism surfaced in Japan, which beautified the "Greater East Asian War." Some "introspection" of Japanese politicians was not based on a correct perception of the war of aggression at all. Nobusuke Kishi, who once held an important position in Manchukuo and was detained as a top war criminal suspect after the war, after becoming the Prime Minister, he told himself that he only recognized responsibility for the failure of the war, not for aggression. Such an attitude influenced lots of Japanese politicians. It's fair to say that such an attitude has a close link with the idea of "sengo seiji no sôkessan," or "complete resolution of postwar government" in the 1980s, the modified history perception and "New History Textbook" in the 1990s, as well as frequent praying at the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese Prime Ministers. Japan's attitude towards history actually hampered its reconciliation with China and Korea and it is the underlying reason why history issue has become an imbroglio in Japan's relations with its neighbors.

Emotional Level: Imbalanced Historical Experiences

At the emotional level, the main issue is the imbalanced historical experiences between China and Japan, which has been exerting deep influences on the historical perceptions of the two countries. I shall discuss this issue from two perspectives. Firstly, imbalanced historical experiences

existed at the country level. Both China and Japan started their modern history with "country opening" under the pressure of western powers. However, the ensuing development tracks and history experiences of the two countries sharply diverged.

With the forced "country opening" to the outside world, China found it in an unprecedentedly awkward and dangerous situation. With apprehension about the destiny of the Chinese nation, China relentlessly fought against the western powers in an effort to revive the Chinese nation. With the subsequent failures and frustrations in its struggle against the western powers, China's conflicts with the west were increasingly intensified. Therefore, what dominated China's history experience was the unequal treaty system imposed by the West.

To get rid of the backwardness of Asia and embrace western civilization, Japan followed the policy of "Departure from Asia for Europe" in the middle of the 19th century, which advocated handling Japan's relationships with its Asian neighbors in a similar manner as the western powers. If China saw its traditions under the guideline of "Chinese learning for the essence, western learning for practical use," then Japan, on the contrary, fiercely criticized the hypocrisy and shamelessness of traditional culture. Instead, Japan believed that accepting the universal principles of the west would enable itself to be an equal member of the international law and treaty system. Thus, compared with China, it's fair to say that what dominated Japan's historical experience was the interests of the international law system inherited from the west.

Therefore, it's no surprise that China and Japan diverged from each other regarding

historical perception. The Meiji Restoration not only enabled Japan to become an equal member of the western-dominated world arena. More importantly, it convinced Japan that China should naturally support Japan to become the hegemon in Asia. Faced with the increasing threat of Japanese aggression, however, China had to be on high alert against possible Japanese attacks. Especially during the Sino-Japanese war from 1931 to 1945, China and Japan had completely different historical experiences since they joined two opposing armed blocs.

For example, Britain and the United States signed agreements with China, forgoing extraterritoriality in China on January 1943. In December 1943, the anti-fascist Allies discussed the military strategies against Japan in the Cairo Conference. The Cairo Declaration, issued after the conference, clearly stipulated that Taiwan would return to China after the war and also set a couple of principles for punishing Japan in future. So China naturally placed high expectations on the Cairo Declaration rather than the Japan-proposed New Policy on China, or the Greater East Asia Conference and the Greater East Asia Declaration.

However, Japan placed high expectations on the aforementioned New Policy on China and the Greater East Asia Conference. All the participants in the Greater East Asia Conference were puppet regimes under Japan's control. Even for them, the Japan-advocated Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere was nothing but the last straw of a sunset Japan. However, Japan believed that the New Policy on China and the Greater East Asia Declaration would shake the KMT's determination to keep up resistance against Japan, and even possibly entice KMT into breaking away from the anti-fascist alliance.

As Mr. Ian Naissus, a famous British expert on diplomatic history once noted, "For most Asian people, the 'Greater East Asia Declaration' was just a kind of unrealistic propaganda. So what it received was only empty acclamation because people didn't believe Japan would really treat its Asian neighbors as equal partners." Thus, China and Japan had completely different historical experiences: the Cairo Conference and its declaration and the Greater East Asia Conference and its declaration.

Secondly, ordinary people in China and Japan had imbalanced historical experiences of the war. The most striking memories of the war, both in China and Japan, were the sufferings of ordinary people. In China, the keywords of the Japanese war of aggression included "Nanjing Massacre," "Unit 731" and the policy of "Burn All, Kill All, and Loot All," while "Atomic Bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki," "Air Strikes on Tokyo" and "Okinawa Combat" dominated ordinary Japanese memories of the war.

The historical experiences of ordinary Chinese and Japanese people were imbalanced. Japanese people were both inflictors and sufferers in the war. So if Japanese people were confined to their own sufferings in the war, then it would eclipse their roles in inflicting more suffering on their neighbors, which would make ordinary Japanese people unaware of the sufferings of ordinary people in other countries. The Anti-War Movement and Anti-Nuclear Movement were the starting point for Japan's democracy and peaceful development after the war. However, Japan excessively exposed its sufferings during the atomic bombings without introspection into its war crimes committed on other Asian nations, which weren't comprehended widely in the world. For example, the exhibition on the Atomic Bombing in

Hiroshima (memorializing the 50th anniversary of World War II) was not allowed to appear in the United States.

Let's take air strikes as an example. Even before the outbreak of World War One, the principle of restricting air strikes had been put forward by the Hague Peace Conferences in 1899 and 1907, the purpose of which was to protect civilians in air strikes.

During World War II, however, the U.S. air forces bombed many civilian targets in Japan, which led to massive civilian casualties. In August 1995, a special edition of Tokyo News released the statistic that the casualties in U.S. air strikes during World War II was 950,000 (excluding Okinawa).

After the war, numerous research groups on air strikes were established across Japan. They collected the information of victims, clarified the facts of air strikes, informed the younger generation of information on air strikes, and even asked the government to recognize the civilian sufferings during the air strikes. The average age of these activists is 73 years old. They worried about wars and air strikes in other parts of the world, the Japanese government's sending troops to Iraq, and even the revision of Japanese Constitution. They appealed for a ceasefire and peace by reminding the Japanese people of their sufferings during the air strikes in World War II.

What dominated the historical memories of ordinary Chinese people were the indiscriminate bombings by Japan's air forces during World War II. To stop Nazi Germany's air strike on Guernica and Japan's air strike on China, the League of Nations passed a resolution on "Protecting Civilians from Air Strikes in Wartime" on September 30th, 1938. The main contents of

this resolution included: intentional attacks on civilians are illegal, the targets of air strikes must be for military purposes and discernible from the air, attacks on military targets mustn't inflict losses on civilians, and it's illegal to use chemical and bacterial weapons. The civilian deaths from Japanese air strikes, released by the Chinese authorities after the war, were 336,000. Another 426,000 people were injured. For ordinary Chinese people, the most painful memories were the massive air strikes on Chongqing from February 1938 to August 1943. The air strike on June 5th 1941 caused thousands of civilian casualties (determining the exact number requires further study), which was called the "June Fifth Tunnel Massacre" in China.

For ordinary Japanese people, if they ignore the historical experiences of ordinary Chinese people while underscoring their own experiences of the air strikes, then it would be regarded as insufficient introspection on Japan's war responsibilities. For ordinary people in war-inflicted countries, if they can't be open-minded enough and realize the sufferings of all human beings during war, it would lead to narrow mindedness.

Academic Level: Different Methodologies

At the academic level, the major problem is how to describe and judge the history issues. In this regard, a wide divergence exists between Chinese and Japanese researchers.

As for the comprehension of historical data, researchers naturally prefer to use data focused on their own countries and available documents of other countries due to language barriers and other restrictions. So it's fair to say that there is still a long way to go to make full use of the historical documents and primary materials in other

countries.

The influences of different methodologies can be decisive. When Chinese historians study the Japanese war of aggression, they generally not only focus on the description and analysis of concrete incidents, but also explore the linkages behind a couple of seemingly isolated incidents. For Japanese researchers, however, even if they recognize the aggressive nature of the war, they generally focus on the objective causes of incidents.

Take the causes of the anti-Japanese war as an example. Chinese researchers usually start their discussion from the aggressive nature of Japanese policies (e.g. “Line of Benefit” or “Continental Policy”), while their Japanese counterparts base their analysis on China’s Exclusion of Japanese or the contingency of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. So it’s no surprise that many Japanese researchers pay a lot of attention to the “First shot” issue in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, while their Chinese counterparts focused on the reasons why Japanese troops were stationed in Fengtai and why they conducted military maneuvers against Song Zheyuan’s troops. In the view of Chinese researchers, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident should be linked with Japanese military expansion in North China after the Mukden Incident of September 18, things such as the Shanhaiguan Incident, the battle in Rehe Province, Japan’s nibble at north China, Japan’s support to the Eastern Hebei Anti-communist Government and the Fengtai Incident as well.

Some scholars blamed such differences on the contrary academic traditions of China and Japan. In my opinion, however, such an argument is groundless.

Firstly, traditional Chinese historical study

based itself on recording and clarifying the events in the past. However, this is just the first step. Its ultimate objective is to clarify the relationship between politics and ethics, what Sima Qian stressed as “Drawing Lessons from History.” His work, *Records of History (Shiji)* was viewed as the model of traditional Chinese historical studies. So historical studies in China should also tell people what’s right and what’s wrong.

Is historical study in Japan immune from politics and ethics? *Nihon Shoki (History of Japan, A.D.720)*, the origin of traditional Japanese historical study, was written under the deep influence of Chinese culture. Although Japan didn’t inherit the tradition of state-led historical study afterwards, it doesn’t mean historical study in Japan could be separated from politics and ethics. Shiba Ryotaro’s historical novels, which are very popular in Japan, are good examples in this regard. In other words, history is more than telling stories.

Empirical study on specific issues is also one component of traditional Chinese historical studies. The micro studies on social history issues are not contradictory to macro-historical studies. In Japan, empirical study dominates many research fields of history studies, such as Marxist historiography, history from below, social history and academism. In China, empirical study has been an intrinsic part of history studies. Since the Reform and Opening-up policy, China has made great strides in the research of social history and history from below, in which empirical study has been widely employed.

The book, *Contentious Issues in Modern Sino-Japanese Relations: Toward a History Beyond Borders*, edited by professor Mitani Hiroshi and professor Liu Jie, is a good example for Chinese and Japanese

researchers to study the divergent historical perceptions at the academic level. In this book, the authors elaborate such significant issues as whether the Tanaka Memorial really existed and what is the number of victims in the Nanjing Massacre etc.

The Sino-Japanese cooperative history research project is another attempt to study the divergent history perceptions between China and Japan at the academic level.

For analysis, we discussed the underlying reasons of different history perceptions between China and Japan from the aforementioned three perspectives. However, there are no clear boundaries among them. As a matter of fact, they are interlinked and mutually affecting.

Mixture Effects of the Three Levels

It seemed that the differences at the political level only involved the judgment on the nature of the war, and those who beautified the war in Japan are in the minority. According to the latest opinion survey, 68.1% of Japanese people recognized that the 1937-1945 Sino-Japanese war was a war of aggression. Nevertheless, the divergent history perceptions, which originated from different historical experiences, are usually utilized easily by some conservatives and become politicized.

The incomplete trials of war criminals also exacerbated the absence of an “inflictor sense” in many Japanese people. Many Japanese people felt that they were cheated by the propaganda of the Japanese Army Headquarters, and they knew little about such war crimes as the Comfort Women, the Nanjing Massacre, bacteriological and poison gas warfare, etc. Then, narrow nationalism found space to prevail in Japanese society, which denied the war

responsibilities of Japan, stirred up nationalist emotions and politicized the history issues. Moreover, some empirical studies should have been confined to academic research. However, if researchers over-exaggerated some results of their textual research, then it would offer some chances for a few conservatives to politicize these findings. Against the background of different history perceptions among the people in the two countries, ordinary people in other countries wouldn't accept such empirical research findings; on the contrary, they would fuel the confrontation between the two countries and societies.

As some Japanese historians pointed out, some history revisionists based their discussion on so-called different perceptions on historical facts (e.g. the number of war victims). They evaded the issue of political responsibilities by highlighting so-called different perceptions of historical facts. On the one hand, they advocated the study of historical facts in order to mask their political aims. On the other hand, they focused on historical conceptions or historical perceptions in order to evade judgment on key political values. For example, they even put forward such arguments as, “Civilian casualties are unavoidable in any war in human history” and “Why should only Japan be responsible for the war?”

Let's take the Pacific War as an example. Some Japanese researchers evaded Japan's responsibility in attacking Pearl Harbor. Instead, they concentrated on historical facts in an effort to look for the objective reasons for the Pearl Harbor incident (that is, America's iron embargo and economic isolation of Japan). They even resorted to the “ABCD Encirclement Theory”, a completely groundless rationale employed by the Japanese military government before

the war, to exculpate Japan from war responsibilities. Furthermore, they overstated the diplomatic efforts the Japanese government had made to avoid war with the U.S.A. In their view, the Hull Note was the real reason for the outbreak of the war. They concluded that Japan initiated the Pacific War only because it had no other options. Such a conclusion would hurt the feelings of people in other countries as well as the relations among these countries, although it was based on so-called “academic research.”

In recent years, Japanese society experienced a shift in the historical perception of the war. Some Japanese politicians recognized Japan’s aggression against China and Japan’s colonization of Korea, but they didn’t recognize that Japan’s wars with America, Britain and the Netherlands were wars of aggression. Such an argument is nothing but the reappearance of the so-called “war of self-defense” or “Greater East Asia War” which took place during the Pacific War. Someone went even further: they even blamed the former Soviet Union for breaking its neutrality treaty with Japan and “illegally” occupying Manchuria.

In the mid 1990s, Japan’s political system experienced a noticeable shift and Japan’s media and political circumstances were also greatly changed. The new generation of Japanese politicians has less sense of guilt about the war compared to their predecessors—the war was over even before they were born. On the contrary, historical revisionism, which claims to revisit the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War, has prevailed in Japanese society. As a result, a new nationalism emerged in Japanese society. The new nationalists attacked the peaceful Japanese Constitution and democratic education, even vowed to revise Article 9 in the Constitution. Under such

circumstances, emotional issues and academic debates would certainly become politicized.

Borderless History Perception

Historical perceptions originating from different levels should be handled through different approaches.

History perceptions stemming from the political level are closely connected with the structural changes in Sino-Japanese relations. As Professor Kazuko Mori once stated, “Sino-Japanese relations entered a stage of structural changes after 1995 or 1996. China’s economy was taking off at the same time as Japan was experiencing an economic recession. Thus, circumstances convinced some Japanese people that China was a rival to Japan and the ‘China Threat’ emerged in Japan as a consequence.”

Such changes also took place in Japanese perceptions of history issues. Historical revisionism became prevalent in Japanese society. The revisionists advocated regarding the post-war period as gone forever, revisiting the Pacific War, etc. However, with the coherent structural changes of Sino-Japanese relations, especially the establishment of a reciprocal relationship between China and Japan, the issues at the political level would find a way out.

As researchers, we should attach more importance to the divergences and debates existing at the emotional and academic levels. The first step is to hold history dialogues among Chinese and Japanese historians, based on which the mutual understanding of the two societies could be deepened. Here, I shall put forward the following suggestions:

First, identifying the issues at different

levels. As we discussed above, the issue of historical perceptions is embedded in three different but interlinked levels, i.e. political, emotional and academic levels. It's not easy to identify the issues at different levels because the boundaries between them are not clearly defined. If we analyzed the issues at the political level with academic methodologies, then we would fall into endless and meaningless debates. It's also unrealistic to pacify the emotions of ordinary people through orthodox academic discussions. The academic studies of historians should neither hurt the feelings of ordinary people nor get politicized. For those issues that have exerted influences on the feelings of ordinary people or found prominence in the political interactions between countries, historians should conduct thorough academic analysis and explore the possibilities to handle them in a realistic manner.

Second, keeping the fact in mind that the vast majority of ordinary people did not experience the war. Sixty years have passed since the war ended and those who experienced the war have become exceptional in society. According to statistics, those who were born after the war account for 70% of the world's population. Those at the age of 40-60 years might get some perceptual knowledge about the war from their parents, but the younger generation could hardly do so nowadays. Therefore, it's really imperative for us to avoid perceiving the history of the war hollowly and abstractly. For most people, the war belongs to the age old past. For the younger generation, the war only exists in virtual computer games. Those young people who perceive the war history hollowly and abstractly are inclined to reach wrong or nationalistic conclusions about history. So, researchers must help the younger generation to gain full and deep

understandings of the history of the war, especially to broaden their horizons through history education. Only by so doing could they think about the history and future of East Asia from a more broad perspective.

Third, reaching consensus on historical facts and creating amicable circumstances for mutual understanding. Mutual understanding is the key to resolve the history perception issues, although it needs time and specific conditions. The first step is to reach consensus on historical facts, only based on which some kind of borderless history perception could become possible. It's true that reaching consensus on historical facts is considerably difficult even among people from the same country; it needs amicable circumstances and calm thinking.

Although people have different opinions on the active academic exchanges among different governments and societies in East Asia, one indisputable fact is that the isolation of different country-based historical conceptions has been broken down. To reach a consensus on historical facts will still be the priority of academic exchanges in the near future, but academic research on history will become more and more borderless with the deepening of exchanges among researchers in East Asia.

Last but not least, noticing the time lags in history perceptions between researchers and ordinary people. The researchers carry out their studies in an academic manner, which calls for rational thinking, while ordinary people mainly perceive historical issues based on their personal experiences, which were easily affected by the media. Therefore, it would take a relatively long time for ordinary people to recognize the research results of joint projects conducted by researchers from different countries. Moreover, it also calls for cooperation on a

society-wide scale, in particular the support from and cooperation with the media. In recent years, the mutual openness in tourism among East Asian countries has intensified the interactions among different peoples, which has paved the way for further exchanges on historical conceptions among East Asian countries. “Understood by others and to understand others” has been not only a principle at the political or emotional level; it is also the necessity for peace and development of human beings.

In sum, a borderless historical perception is not only conducive to the stabilization of relations and reciprocity among East Asian countries; more importantly, it will pave the way to realize mutual understanding among different societies not only in East Asia but also in the whole world. Let’s make it happen.

Mochizuki: Thank you very much Professor Bu. We will now turn to Professor Lim who will speak on the theme of victimhood nationalism and historical reconciliation.

Lim Jie-hyun: Thank you. My topic is not about political policies, historical commissions, history textbooks, education systems, etc. Rather, it’s about historical culture in a very broad sense, upon which these historical textbooks and education systems and policies and even political power have been invented.

I mean that if the former group of “the facts” belongs to the domain of hard power, perhaps historical culture may belong to soft power, especially with its hegemony backed by the civil society level. It is very often heard that the change of political regime is very important for historical reconciliation in East Asia. Yes, partly this is true, but any political regime in East Asia should take into consideration the strong existence of

nationalism on the civil society level. So even though these political regimes want to escape the nationalistic, antagonistic stalemates between regimes, they have to pay attention to the very strong, hegemonic existence of nationalism on the civil society level. So even very strong political power cannot be free from this sort of nationalism as soft power.

Prevalence of Victimhood Nationalism

Today, I’d like to say something about nationalism as soft power, especially regarding the term “victimhood.” Actually, victimhood is not confined to some small and weak countries, countries colonized and victimized during the war. I mean, fortunately or unfortunately, in 2003 I was staying here and witnessed how American society responded to Bush’s call for the second Iraq war. I could see that visibly, quite predictably, and sometimes quite emotionally and energetically, the American audience responded to the call from the political power towards the second Iraq war. I think that behind the response of the American audience toward the second Iraq War lies a sort of victim. The American nation—we are the victims of a terrorist attack; perhaps the worst victims of a terrorist attack. So in the wake of September 11, I think that American society could respond to Bush’s call for a second Iraq War quite positively, and almost unanimously in the Congress.

So I think victimhood is quite a prevalent phenomenon, confined not only to weak, colonized, or victimized nations, but also some victimizing nations and also colonizing nations. So that is why victimhood is quite widely found not only in Korea and China in the East Asian case, but also in Japan. And in the European case,

victimhood also can be found now in Germany, especially the post-1999 regimes.

Jedwabne Massacre

I will turn back to this phenomenon in a more specific way. But first of all, I would like to talk about where my interest in victimhood came from. Actually, it came from my encounters with Polish history and especially the hot debate on the massacre in Jedwabne. The Jedwabne massacre is a tragedy or genocide done by Poles in July 1941 under the German occupation. But until 1999, many Poles believed that that tragedy, the massacre of Jews in the small town of Jedwabne, was perpetrated by Germans. But a Jewish historian who came from Poland, Jan Gross, excavated the truth about the massacre in Jedwabne, and he revealed that it was done not by Germans but by Poles.

It brought the whole of Polish society into a state of shock—we were taught that the Poles never harmed their neighbors. We are a very peaceful nation. We have always been invaded by Germans, Russians, and even Habsburg Austrians. As historical victims who are hereditary victims, Poles could enjoy a privileged position and a morally very comfortable position since they always regarded themselves as victims. But suddenly, they found out their compatriots were perpetrators, especially in this terrible massacre of Jews in Jedwabne. Polish neighbors killed or massacred their Jewish neighbors on a certain day. So it was really quite a shock in regard to historical culture among the Polish masses. It is very interesting.

And then there followed lots of hot debates about the massacre in Jedwabne: in Polish historiography, Jewish historiography, controversies between Poles and Jews,

controversies between some leftist Polish historians, rightist Polish historians, ultra-rightist historians, the Kaczyński brothers, and so on.

So this whole fuss, these messy controversies followed this—the revelation of this massacre in Poland. But what is most interesting to me regarding these controversies was that the Laudański brothers were perpetrators in Jedwabne in 1941, and they survived the war. Immediately after the war, they were convicted for the murder of Jews in Jedwabne, but they were released from prison.

So after the revelation of the massacre in Jedwabne, a Polish journalist and a German journalist tried to have an interview with these living, convicted Laudański brothers. And in this interview, the most interesting thing is that the Laudański brothers regarded themselves as victims. “Like the whole Polish nation, we suffered...we suffered under the Germans, we suffered under the Soviet occupation, we suffered under the People’s Republic of Poland...”

So in this interview, we can find a very magical metamorphosis of individual victimizers into the collective victim. So they could hide behind the memory wall of collective victimhood in terms of the nation. So that is why I found that collective victimhood or some hereditary victimhood, victim nationalism, is quite dangerous. And actually, it hinders historical reconciliation, for example, in this case, between Jews and Poles and between Israel and the Polish state now.

Collective Guilt and Innocence

Based on this assumption, let me point out several points that are quite crucial to

understanding victimhood nationalism and historical reconciliation. First, the dichotomy of collective guilt and collective innocence. Hannah Arendt in the early 1960s made a brilliant analysis of collective victimhood in her book, the very controversial *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. I think that book has already survived the test of time. I think it is still one of the most crucial books in understanding collective guilt and collective innocence and how this feeling of collective guilt contributes to the making of a certain sort of historical consciousness, sentiments, and so on.

In speaking of the Japanese to my students—usually, we tend to believe that you should be sorry since you belong to the Japanese nation that victimized, who colonized, who perpetrated atrocities against your Asian neighbors during the Second World War. But usually, their friends are Japanese who were born even after the 1980s. So I used to ask my students, “Do you think that you are responsible for the atrocities that the Korean army perpetrated in the Vietnam War in the late 1960s before you were born?” And they used to say, “It is impossible that we can be responsible for acts that were done even before we were born.” But why do you say to your Japanese friends, “You should take responsibility for what the Japanese nation did during the Second World War and during colonial rule”? So it is a bit strange. But on the other hand, every young Korean could not escape from a sort of feeling that we feel sorry to the Vietnamese. Those atrocities and brutalities were not done by myself, but they were done by the generation of my fathers, my uncles, so we feel sorry anyway.

We should divide historical responsibility into two levels. One level is that people can be responsible only for what they have done. We cannot be responsible for what we did

not do. But on the other hand, today’s young people, for example, the young generation who were born after the 1980s, are responsible for the memory of the past, how the society remembers the past and what our ancestors did to our neighbors. So they are not responsible for what has been done, but all of us are responsible for the contemporary memory of the past, and we are responsible for how our contemporary societies are remembering the past, both negative and positive and so on. So we should approach the younger generation in this way by stressing that their responsibility, our common responsibility, is for society’s memories of the past, which is quite unpleasant. But, anyway, we should remember that.

That is one point. We should avoid the politics of, “you should be sorry.” You should be responsible just because you belong to this nation, or we are innocent just because we belong to the Korean nation regardless of what I have actually done. That actually reinforces the feeling of national belonging. And so in that way collective guilt and collective innocence are very crucial emotional tools or conceptual tools to lead people into a very strong feeling of national belonging and thus intensifies and reinforces nationalism.

Sacralization of Memories

And the second point is the sacralization of memories. For example, very often we hear this common response from ordinary people, “You foreigners can never ever understand our own tragic history. Only we who suffered from this tragic history can understand it, so we have the exclusive right to understand and to explain this. You foreigners, you will never experience such a tragic history. You can never ever understand our own history, so you have no

right to tackle our understanding of history.” Perhaps between individuals, it might be partly true. Everyone has his own secrets, and they cannot be shared even by—we have some experiences that cannot be shared even by wives or husbands. So every individual has some secrecy, but if this sacralization of memory develops into a group level or a national level, it has a different connotation. It actually precludes any possibility to share understandings of the past with the others.

Sacralization of politics also sometimes exists, and usually it works out as a bulwark against others’ understanding of our past and as such, eventually blocks a mutual understanding of the past.

So I’m quite afraid that the discourse of uniqueness is dominant, especially in the discourse on the Holocaust. Of course we should recognize that every historical event is a singularity. Every historical event or every historical accident or every history has its own singular characteristics that cannot be denominated into general history or common history with neighbors. But even though we recognize this singularity, it should not be made equal to uniqueness. It is a different story.

Transnationality

The third point I would like to emphasize is transnationality. Victims cannot be imaginable without imagining victimizers. So if one would like to approach victimhood in Korea, he or she should also approach Japan as the victimizers. For example, if one approaches victimhood consciousness in Poland, he should know the Polish-Jewish relationships before the Second World War and the Polish-German relationships under the German occupation and even Polish-Russian relationships. Only with an

understanding of the transnational circumstances evolving around victimhood, can one really understand what this victimhood nationalism is. So in a sense, a transnational historical approach is inevitable and indispensable, and the national historic paradigm would not work out. So it is quite an irony that victimhood nationalism can be understood not in the national historic paradigm but only in the paradigm of transnational history.

Victimizers as Victims

The fourth point is that victimhood nationalism also can be found among victimizers in Japan and Germany. Japan, as Professor Bu Ping already pointed out, was the first nation bombed by an atomic bomb, and that contributed much to the making of Japanese victimhood. Also, the trauma of the Pacific War led to an emphasis on the confrontation between America and Japan instead of emphasizing the confrontations between Chinese and Japanese and between Japanese and Koreans. It worked out to a belief that we Japanese are the victimized nation and were victims.

There was also the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers’ perception of the Japanese people. They defined nearly all of the Japanese people as simply victims of their military leaders. But this perception of ordinary people as just passive victims actually deprives the Japanese people of agency. Where has their historical agency gone? Certainly, this sort of perception of ordinary people as passive victims is an obstacle to understanding how deeply ordinary people appropriated certain circumstances on their own and how they actively responded to the political power and the given circumstances and so on.

Contextualization

And finally, I would like address the question of overcontextualization and decontextualization. Usually, victims tend to overcontextualize historical circumstances. For example, there was a controversy about *So Far From the Bamboo Grove*, a novella written by a Japanese expellee who had to flee from North Korea to Japan after Japan's defeat in the Second World War. Many Koreans were upset by the novella's depiction of the ordeal of Japanese civilians who had to flee from the occupied land. It depicts how the Koreans threatened them on their way back to Japan, and Koreans were shocked, saying, "Oh, we are the victims. We never ever victimized the Japanese—we were victims of Japanese colonialism," and so forth. So in that case, the Koreans tended to overcontextualize their historical situation.

On the other hand, the author, Yoko Kawashima Watkins, tends to decontextualize. She just emphasized how she and her mom and her sister suffered from the Koreans' hostile attitudes towards Japanese on their way back to Japan. She is totally ignorant of the historical circumstances, why her family came to leave North Korea and why Koreans had such hostile attitudes towards Japanese, those sort of facts are totally forgotten. So we can find a stark contrast of overcontextualization and decontextualization between the Korean audience's perception of the novella and Yoko Kawashima Watkins' own description of her past.

It is a very stark contrast with Günter Grass' *Im Krebsgang*, which depicts very vividly how 8,000 Germans were killed by a Soviet submarine torpedo attack, but he never forgot to describe the fact that the *Wilhelm*

Gustloff was a ship that was used by the Nazis' propaganda project of Strength Through Joy, and *Gustloff* himself was a Nazi collaborator in Switzerland, and Grass also alluded to the fact that there were not only civilians onboard but also Germans in uniform. So Günter Grass, on the one hand, emphasized the innocent deaths of more than 8,000 Germans, but on the other hand, never forgot to allude to several historical circumstances in which these German civilians actually were located. So overcontextualization and decontextualization can also be found in the various discourses regarding victimhood nationalism.

Mochizuki: Thank you very much, Professor Lim. Our final presenter is Professor Kawashima, and he will speak on extending cooperative studies of modern history in East Asia.

Kawashima Shin: Thank you, Professors Mike Mochizuki and Yang Daqing. It is my pleasure to be here to discuss the history problem in East Asia with U.S. scholars and U.S. students, many of whom are my old friends. Actually, I feel great pressure doing my presentation after Professor Lim's excellent presentation.

Government-Level Joint Study

I have joined several joint research projects between China and Japan, as well as between Japan and Taiwan. And I am a member of the government-level joint study between China and Japan. So I have had so many chances to meet with Professor Bu this year. The government-level joint study has about 20 members on each side, and the members are divided into two groups, premodern and modern, and the modern group is also divided into two parts, modern and contemporary history. So there are

three parts of this joint study: premodern, modern, and contemporary.

Which group discussion is most sensitive? Most of us would think modern history. The modern history group has to discuss war and the Japanese invasion of China. But actually, our group, the modern group, discussed matters in a more academic and cool way than other groups. Why? This is very interesting, because in the past 10 years or more, historians who do research on modern history in East Asia have had so many chances, so many opportunities to talk about these problems. So we know where the minefield is, how to avoid it, and whether to touch the minefield or not. And we know the adequate terminology to prevent the coalition from burning out. I do not know if this is a good result of the joint study or not, but I think it is a very good result to prevent the program from burning out.

Anyway, I'll start my presentation about the history problems in East Asia. As other presenters pointed out, there are so many history problems in East Asia, primarily involving Japan, but aside from Japan, there are history problems between China and South Korea (or the two Koreas), and China and Taiwan. These history problems have affected the development of normal exchanges on political, economic, and social issues.

We also have to pay attention to the other problem, the history problem in the domestic field. The history problem is easily related to nationalistic discourses and emotional social movements in domestic politics. So such trends easily affected domestic politics and economic activities. So we have to face dual problems on history, international and domestic.

Different National Memories

I would like to explain briefly how different the recognition of history among East Asian countries is. I'll introduce two simple examples. The first case is about the public memory toward World War II. Most Japanese people know the facts of the invasion of other Asian countries and China by Japanese troops and Japanese civilians. But as Professor Lim mentioned, most Japanese recognize themselves as victims of the war, partly because Japan is the only atomic bombed country in the world, and also because the Japanese recognize that Japan was defeated by the U.S., not by China. For Japanese people, 1945 is the watershed point in their memory.

On the other hand, most Chinese people also recognize themselves as victims of the war. And Chinese people are proud of the great victory over Japan and also recognized that the victims, the Chinese, were supported by the USSR. They emphasize the USSR's support more than U.S. support. And also, in their memory, 1945 is not the watershed point. It is different.

The second case is about the symbols of the end of the war—victory in World War II. Japan surrendered diplomatically on 14 August 1945, and Hirohito announced the surrender to the Allies by radio on 15 August 1945. Japan surrendered formally on 2 September 1945. How about the anniversaries or symbolic days in each country? In Japan, most Japanese people recognize the end of the war as 15 August, right? It was recognized as a turning point in the early postwar days, and still is today. Chinese VJ day is September 3rd, Most Chinese forget about it, actually. The U.S. VJ day is September 2nd, right? And the Taiwanese liberation day is 25 October. There are various images, various anniversaries, various symbols in East Asia.

Then, is it necessary to unify such varied histories in East Asia? Is it possible to share so-called “objective facts” among East Asian countries? The answer is “no” or “it’s difficult,” at the very least. We have to imagine history not as only one history, but as a history or histories that are interpreted in various and diverse ways. So it is required for us to adopt the attitude or concept of “agree to disagree” with each other at first, I think.

History of History Problems

We are in the second part of my presentation. When we consider the history problems in East Asia, we have to pay attention to the precondition and background of history problems in East Asia, especially about the history of the history problems.

Actually, the first history problem in East Asia happened in the 1910s. At that time, the Japanese government complained to the Chinese government that the textbook in China was anti-Japanese, so the Japanese government forced the Chinese government to revise the contents of its textbook. Afterwards, a series of textbook problems and the historical problem of the war itself happened until 1945. Most of us imagine that textbook problems really started in the 1980s, but actually we have a long, long history of history problems. So, I think it is difficult and very challenging for us, for East Asian peoples, to solve, to cope with these history problems.

And second, when we analyze the contents of the textbooks 100 years ago, we find that each countries’ so-called “modernity” connoted a negative image of the other. Japan imagined a negative image of the Chinese and Chinese textbooks also had a negative image of Japan, but both countries admired Western society. So the historical

problem itself is a problem of modernity in East Asia.

Third, on a Chinese textbook published in 1909 under the Qing Dynasty. When we see its chapters on historical problems, it is easy for us to see that the contents of the chapters are similar to the textbooks edited by the KMT and CCP later on. The content starts from the Opium War, Taiping Rebellion, Second Opium War and so on, it’s very interesting. The so-called framework of invasion and resistance emerged in 1909, and this is used in the histories written by the KMT and CCP. So I think this history problem has a very profound and long history.

The history problem is an old and new problem in East Asia. So we have to pay attention to the formation of this problem and also learn from our predecessors’ wisdom in coping with these history problems.

Chiang Kai-shek advocated the concept of “answering an injury with a favor” to strengthen generosity toward Japan and to prevent history problems from burning out good relations. Zhou Enlai, he strengthened the so-called friendship with Japan, also in order to control the history problems or prevent history problems from burning out the relationship. But the efficacy of such a slogan was decreasing in the 1980s and 1990s.

Contexts of History Problems

What is the history problem in East Asia in the world’s eyes, or, how can we compare it with other cases in the Middle East, Europe, and so on? Actually, the East Asian history problem has so many contexts, I think. For example, for Japanese, the so-called history problem has a dual meaning. The first is a

kind of problem of peacemaking after the war. After the end of World War II, how did Japan deal with the so-called history problem to build a new trust with other Asian countries? Actually, Japan also shared the slogan of Chiang Kai-shek and Zhou Enlai in order to control or avoid the history problem from burning out good relations. But Japan began to fail to control this problem from the 1980s onward, I think.

The other aspect is a kind of problem of deimperialization and decolonization. In 1945, Japan suddenly abandoned its colonies, and Japan did not experience the process of decolonization. So Japan did not pay attention to history problems or reconciliation or other endeavors to build a new trust with Korea and Taiwan. And also, we can find that for Japan, the history problem has a dual aspect, that is, memory of the war and memory of colonization. So East Asian history problems have many contexts, I think.

Varieties of Historical Dialogue

In the past 10 years or more, many kinds of studies in East Asia have been advanced. On the government level, as another presenter mentioned, talks are held in order to prevent history problems from burning out interstate relations. The Japanese government organizes joint research committees with Korea and China and Taiwan at the half-governmental level. And on the non-governmental level, historians and teachers also have organized an uncountable number of joint studies between Japan and China and Korea and other countries. At the civil society level, NPOs, lawyers, journalists, and former soldiers have advanced so many exchanges or joint studies.

When we look at the massive number and variety of joint studies, we find various

purposes. Some groups have high expectations. They proceed with the goal of unifying the textbooks. And they also advocate for and try to create the basis of a community of East Asia, a so-called EAC. So that's the high expectation level.

I think the average approach to joint research intends to reduce the tension of history problems in order to prevent it from affecting other exchanges. These groups are eager to reduce or narrow the gaps between national histories, sometimes through shared materials.

The most minimal level is just conversation, just dialogue: have lunch, dinner, drink *sake*, finish. Through such joint studies, we had so many opportunities for dialogue.

Did we come to any fruitful results? Yes, we had positive results, actually. We understand how different the perspectives are, and that can reduce the gaps a little bit. And we also experienced the process: conversation, understanding, and respect. We also came to understand the merits and demerits of different methodologies, and also came to understand the importance of an "agree to disagree" attitude. We also tried many ways of historical writing: unification, parallel writing, making comments to each other, and so on.

Also, we discovered the importance of materials. Needless to say, in history, materials can be interpreted in various ways, but shared materials can reduce the gap to some extent. And materials can be a kind of trigger for discussion. In the 1930s, Wang Yunsheng was a very famous journalist of the newspaper *Da Gong Bao* in China. His book was also respected in Japan because it was based on very interesting and good materials. But we have to pay attention to the sensitivity of materials in Taiwan and

Korea's modern history—the governmental archives, official archives for Taiwan and Korea in modern history, most of the documents were written in ruler's language, Japanese. So if the Japanese side in a dialogue emphasizes the importance of materials, this attitude can cause problems.

Aside from the positive results, there are many negative results. Actually, we are now facing these. There are so many difficulties in advancing joint research between China and Japan. We do not have enough time to introduce all of the problems here, so I'll introduce two examples.

The first is about historiography itself. When did the Japanese invasion start? It is too difficult for us to solve—1937, 1931, with the 21 Demands, with the Sino-Japanese War in 1895? With the building of the Meiji government, did Japan have a continuous policy toward China? The Chinese side emphasizes the continuity of Japanese invasion policy, a solid policy. Did Japan and China have an alternative way in the 1930s to avoid collision and war?

There are so many problems. The other problem is, I think, a bigger problem for us: How to transmit the results to society? Is the result just the self-satisfaction of historians without an ability to change public opinion on history matters? We have only two or three ways to influence the public: to publish books, through talks, and through education. Actually, we have several ways, but we have no idea how to transmit the results to society. It is a big problem, especially in the governmental level joint study, because government has to explain the results to the public.

Extending Joint Studies

Finally, I'll talk about the task of extending joint studies in East Asia. There are things we must continue to do, dialogue, domestic and international, and increasing the kinds of materials for common use in East Asia, doing dialogues on methodology and so on, and making more chances for exchanges among the younger generation. And I think one more challenge for us is to get some specialists on human security and especially peace building to enter this field. There are some specialists on human security problems who deal with history in other countries, but we do not have many scholars in Japan, specialists on human rights or human security problems, who are interested in this history problem.

And we also face challenges in historiography. I think the construction of a common history is difficult for us to realize at the moment, so for now we need to reconsider the process of formation and the backgrounds of national histories, make a list of differences, and so on. And we should keep working on joint studies to prevent history problems from affecting other exchange areas.

We have to narrow the gap between national histories, but, on the other hand, it is better for us to find other ways to describe history that goes beyond so-called national history. Trying to find and arrange the diversities within national histories—local history or gender history and so on, perhaps something we can discuss is the history of the East China Sea. If possible, we also can challenge the descriptions of common history in East Asia, because each East Asian country strengthens the diversity within national histories.

Actually, there are so many common histories among East Asian countries. For example, in the 19th century, the Western

trade system expanded to East Asia and public health systems were also introduced in East Asia, media histories about radio or radio stars, sewing machines peddled in the cities and rural areas, and so on. So we can write common histories, and afterwards, we can write different histories. It is a challenge, but I think we can succeed.

And it is so important for us to cooperate with third parties, with the U.S. or EU and other areas, perhaps the Middle East. If we have good opportunities to cooperate with other regions, we can find new historiographies, for example, East Asian history in global history. And we can compare our projects with dialogue and reconciliation in other areas—the Middle East or the Balkan peninsula and so on. And we also have supporters, cool-headed and good advisers such as Mike Mochizuki and Yang Daqing. Thank you so much.

Mochizuki: We have about 20 or 25 minutes for questions and answers. So anyone want to start? Yes.

Questioner: Thank you very much. This has been an enormously rich and complex presentation raising a whole range of issues not only about the relationship between the three countries but what we mean by history, what we mean by identities, and so on. I would like to make one comment and then raise a question.

The question—it is very difficult, almost impossible really to separate history from the issues of national identity because the way in which a society thinks about itself and identifies itself is inevitably bound up by the way it interprets history. And I think this comes out with one of the issues that was raised about why was 1980 such a watershed in terms of China and Korea? I do not know so much about Korea, but

about China I think one can explain it in the transition from the Maoist period to the post-Maoist period. And the Maoist period is the emphasis on class struggle and the struggle for the liberation of Taiwan against the Kuomintang, but after Mao there is the emphasis on national unity, on a United Front once again with the Kuomintang, with Taiwan.

So in the Maoist period, although there is a lot of emphasis on the war with Japan, the main target was the traitor and the traitor was always described as some kind of Kuomintang person, a landlord or something in the cities. And this was the person that was highlighted in all the films and stories and so on.

So the question is, is not part of the key issue to be addressed how to persuade governments to try and define national identities and look at history questions not so much as against the other, which seems to be the course up until now? I think in China already, because of the change in approach to Japan, the attitudes toward Japan have changed. I think in the last opinion poll, something like 70 percent of Chinese polled had a positive view of Japan, which is a very big change.

Mochizuki: To whom is the question directed?

Questioner: Well, the question is addressed, I think, primarily to Professor Bu Ping.

Mochizuki: Why don't we take maybe two more questions, and Professor Bu can be thinking about his answer.

Questioner: Thank you. Several people mentioned the interpretation of history on the political and governmental level as opposed to the society and people's level.

I'm wondering how important you think political leadership is in interpreting history, sort of by setting a tone. Some of the things that have come to my mind in recent history—one is the statement by former President Kim Dae-Jung to the Japanese government and people that South Korea will not use the history issue to antagonize Japan if the Japanese do not—well, I forgot the exact wording but it was, in my mind, one of the most courageous shows of leadership in terms of historical reconciliation in Asia.

Another thing that comes to my mind is Koizumi's insistence on going to Yasukuni Shrine, which I think was responsible for arousing nationalistic feelings that either did not exist or were dormant in Japan. So how important is leadership for setting the tone on the popular perception of history?

Mochizuki: We will take one last question and then we will have another round later. Yes?

Questioner: My question is directed to every presenter today, or to Professor Yang, because you talk a lot about reconciliation models, and the essential elements of reconciliation are a shared memory, historical justice and diplomatic normalization. Only if we can achieve all elements can we start to talk about reconciliation. Some people will advise looking at psychological analyses of this reconciliation model. Personally, I just finished my thesis on a very similar topic.

So I just wonder, it is more like a counter argument, if we have so many historical dialogues ongoing, but every time we talk about all these events like the Nanjing Massacre, like the comfort women issue, do you not think it is more like a reminder of historical injustice to the people? So the more dialogues we have, the more difficult it

becomes to solve the historical problems between China and Japan. So I think it is more like two different schools, two different ways to think of the problem. How would you comment on such a different opinion about the reconciliation between China and Japan? Thanks.

Mochizuki: Okay. So we have three very good questions on the table; one on national identity, one on leadership, and then the final one on more dialogues make it more difficult to have reconciliation. So who would like to start and respond to any of these questions? Professor Mitani, would you like to answer maybe the second question on leadership?

Political Leadership

Mitani: Yes, I would like to respond to the second question, the impact of leadership of the government and politicians and its impact on reconciliation. There is a big difference between the leadership expressed in the relationships between Germany and France, Germany and Poland, and in East Asia, between Japan and China.

In the case of Japan and its neighbors, often the government or politicians are a hindrance to emerging reconciliation. Between the 1980s and 1990s, the Japanese government did not act like that. But prior to 1980 and after the 1990s, during the 21st century, politicians often acted as a hindrance to reconciliation.

And the questioner mentioned President Kim Dae-Jung, that means a lot. Between the Japanese government and the Korean government at that time, they started up a large-scale joint study team aimed at future reconciliation between Japan and Korea. And there were seven to eleven joint study teams regarding politics, economics, history,

and so forth. I was involved for six months on the history team, even though my major expertise area is on 19th century Japanese history, I was really in total agreement regarding 20th century history. So this is the background of the dialogue on historical issues between Japan and China and between Japan and Korea during the 21st century.

It was President Kim Dae-Jung, with his leadership, who brought these people together to study the relationship between Japan and Japan's neighbors. And I was not the only person who was brought to this dialogue arena.

The impact that political leadership can have on the people of the countries is very strong, and it is very significant that we have not seen that from Japan in the 21st century. Therefore, we just kind of forget about the government, and as members of civil society, we ourselves have to work on this.

Finally, for the Japan-Korean relationship, I have been working with Professor Lim, and for the Japan-Chinese relationship, I have been working with Professor Kawashima and Professor Bu. But the arenas that I'm involved in are all non-governmental joint study teams. In this non-governmental environment, it is possible to really reach deep discussions and deep understanding.

On the other hand, the governmental level joint study teams, I think there is a big possibility that they just end up failing. Actually, the first attempt at the Japan-Korean joint study team ended in total failure. And for the Japan-China governmental level joint study, because of the lessons learned from the failure of the Japanese-Korean studies, we have not ended up going separate ways after fighting.

The background for the failure of this Japan-Korean joint study was that from the Japanese side, we had very top-level Japanese historians. They are experts in Korean history or the history of the Japan-Korea relationship. Many of them were my friends. However, after two or three months in this experience, they all wanted to get out.

And those leaders, those scholars were willing to get involved in this study of the Japan-Korean relationship or Korean studies, even when the Japan-Korean relationship was at its worst. Because of this experience, getting involved in a joint study, one friend of mine all of a sudden said, "Now I do not like Koreans anymore." And that was a serious problem.

In my case, I got involved with the Japan-Korea, Japan-China joint study teams, but they were non-governmental and I never had that kind of experience. I made a lot of friends and I never disliked my counterparts, and so whether it is governmental or non-governmental, this is very important.

Lim: It is a bit complicated, but I firmly believe that political leadership is influential in popular perceptions of history. If leadership is lacking, it can bring a catastrophe to the whole society. It is true that, for example, Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* opened the way for historical reconciliation between Poles and Germans. But even though *Ostpolitik* opened the way, actually the dialogues between Polish and German historians didn't work for quite a long time. It is only after the formation of the European Union and then, the formation of the European Science Foundation that these guys actually got a real conversation started. I mean, if we need some government support, we should push these three governments to organize a common East Asian foundation which actually funds

transnational history projects or some dialogues among historians. If governments support and organize their own national team of historians, these guys feel that, “Oh, we represent our own nation.”

So suddenly you could find a sort of tension between the national team of Korean historians and the national team of Japanese historians. So from this sort of formation it is really difficult to expect a reconcilable atmosphere and so on. So competition among national histories has been strengthened in that sort of formation. So that is why Mitani Hiroshi and I and some other colleagues rather prefer non-governmental organizations and non-governmental formations to government formations.

Sino-Japanese Relations in the 1980s

Bu: The question about the 1980s, that was the time when the Japan-China relationship was at its best, and China became a part of the world community. And at that time Japan sent a lot of ODA, economic aid, during the Chinese economic reforms. And at that time from a class struggle focus in the past, they were promoting more modernization in China.

Up to that point, the China-Japan relationship was still the under the legacy of the wartime experiences; however, during the 1980s the relationship was more focused on exchange between the two countries including Chinese students coming to Japan to study. And the mid 80s was the height of the Japanese economic bubble as well.

In the mid ‘80s, Japanese politicians, during the Prime Minister Nakasone era, they wanted to revisit the 40 years of post-war Japanese history. And during that time, the

Japanese history recognition and Yasukuni homage issues emerged the same time.

So this is a kind of a contradiction, two good things and two bad things emerging at the same time during the ‘80s.

Recent Improvements

On the other question about Chinese sentiments toward Japanese getting more positive recently, this has something to do with the leadership of politicians. For example, Abe, he visited China when the China-Japan relationship was at its worst.

And a very positive move on the Japanese part was this year’s Sichuan earthquake disaster—the Japanese government dispatched a rescue team to help the victims and also made a lot of donations to help them.

Also academicians and scholars, they have been contributing to the improvement of the relationship as well.

Even though at the present moment Chinese sentiment towards Japanese has improved and is getting more positive, it is very fragile. I think the expression of sentiment by politicians has a vital impact in this regard, because the people to people understanding has not reached a depth that you can be comfortable with, as yet.

Mochizuki: Thank you. I understand that Professor Kawashima has some comments to make on the last question about historical dialogues being an obstacle to reconciliation.

The History Problem in the 1980s

Kawashima: I’ll answer the first question briefly, okay? In my presentation, I

mentioned that Japan fought to control the so-called history problem in the 1980s because Nakasone changed the security policy under the influence of Reagan in the U.S. After the war, Japan experienced the so-called bubble economy and it was pleasant for Japanese to accept the concept of Japan as number one. Japanese nationalism was rising in 1980s, actually. This nationalism bothered China so much, but at the time, Chinese leaders, for example, Hu Yaobang, he went to the provinces to persuade people to be patient with Japan at that time. So I think the primary reason why the historical problem arose in the 1980s is based on the Japanese side, I think. That is on the first question.

More Studies Lead to More Problems

On the third question, yes, I agree. I agree with your point. Joint studies actually create two problems—although joint studies cannot solve one problem, right? So the problem is increasing rapidly now, but I think this is a first step towards reconciliation between societies. Because both societies share a problem, this is a first step toward reconciliation. We cannot conceal the problem now.

Mochizuki: Okay, maybe two very quick questions.

Questioner: I just had a question about the prevalence of *minjokchuii* or *minzokushugi* or nationalism in East Asian history writing. I'm kind of basing my question on the assumption that *minjok* is a modern concept and that a nation could be considered an imagined boundary or invented tradition. And this has actually been written and discussed a lot by American scholars. And I am wondering how this issue is—whether it is taken into consideration in joint

scholarship and how do you incorporate this issue amongst the history of three nations?

Questioner: I have just a quick question and I guess you talked about that just now. My question was comparing this to, for example, German-French relations and their efforts, and you mentioned that. I sense that it is a matter of time, since the effort in East Asia has only more recently occurred. I mean, to me, there are many different levels, at the governmental level, society level. How would you evaluate the impact that it has had right now? I heard some positive sentiments on the Chinese side and on the Japanese side, but I do not really know exactly what the situation is now compared to before, since the beginning of the effort. And I also wondered, thinking about public opinion, and thinking about the media, if the media has a role to play?

Mochizuki: Okay, so two questions. One is on the role of nationalism or *minzokushugi* in these histories and how it affects the development of a regional history. And second, what really has been the impact of these dialogues and what role does the media play? Anyone?

Impact of the Dialogues

Mitani: I would like to respond to the second question. Compared with the 1990s, it has been a dozen years, and I can see a remarkable improvement. During the early '90s when Japanese scholars met with Chinese or Korean scholars, we ended up fighting with each other. But now that we understand more of their situation through the dialogues, we do not get emotional and we do not end up in emotional arguments or fights. And the Japanese, because we knew so well that we were the perpetrator against the Chinese and the Korean people, we had some fear. We were so afraid of what kind

of attack or aggressive dialogue we will have to deal with. But today, I do not have any fear. I am totally relaxed and I know I can carry on a dialogue with them. So these dozen years of experience is very important and has been very helpful.

Conceptions of the Nation

Lim: I think I might answer the first question. My experience tells me that if I had to choose between the primordialist concept of the nation and the modernist concept of the nation, I would have to say that the modernist concept of the nation prevails, especially in the meetings of the History Forum for Criticism and Solidarity in East Asia. Of course, there are some variations. For example, some are more inclined to examine the interactions between traditional entities and the modernist way of thinking. So there might be something there, whether I am more inclined to the more radical modernist concept of the nation or not. But the difference does not matter. So actually, if we have to choose between these two ways of thinking about the nation, without any hesitation we can say that the modernist concept of the nation prevails among us.

Also, historical interpretation is always plural. There can be no monohistorical interpretation. It has existed only in dictatorial regimes. So the problem is not difference and similarity. Even if you have some historians who share a common ideological ground, a common historical stance, and a common political view, they may have different interpretations of the same historical phenomena. So it does not matter. But the supposition or presumption that this difference does not matter among us who take part in this historical dialogue is based upon the fact that we are beyond the national historical paradigm. So if we do not

share the national history paradigm and we try to go beyond the nationalist historical paradigm, and we try to have a sort of transnational historical image of East Asia, I think the difference does not matter.

Mochizuki: I think I we could go on for another two hours in this discussion, but I'm afraid that our time is up. I want to thank all of our panelists for such a stimulating discussion. I also wanted to thank the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA again for making this program possible. Thank you very much for coming.