

# Whatever Happened to Historical Reconciliation between China and Japan?:

## Reflections over the New Millennium

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*With the return of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in December 2012 and his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine exactly a year later, history issues that have largely been on the backburner in Japan-China relations are once again making headlines and are likely to dominate bilateral relations. Whereas this seems to bring China-Japan relations back to Prime Minister Koizumi's tenure at the beginning of the new millennium, the basic contours of this relationship have experienced important shifts. The continued economic trends, the escalation of territorial disputes, and the adoption of the "Asia Pivot" policy by the U.S., are bound to shape this crucial relationship between China and Japan. What does it mean now to speak of historical reconciliation in general and between China and Japan in particular? Has reconciliation become a more remote goal now that tensions between these two giant neighbors have allegedly risen to the level seen on the eve of World War I? Are there any roles for historians and the scholarly community to play at such a critical juncture? Although much more sectors must be involved to reduce the rising tension between the two countries, I argue that historians can still play a crucial role in clarifying conflicting interpretations over various disputes as well as promote a new history that transcend national boundaries in the long run.*

## 1 Historical Reconciliation: A Ten-Year Reassessment

A little over a decade ago, I participated in a multinational research project on historical reconciliation that was organized by Dr. Funabashi Yoichi and supported by the Tokyo Foundation. Our small team included prominent scholars and policy experts from the US, Japan, and Australia and subsequently produced a publication in both Japanese and English. Simultaneously Dr. Funabashi convened another team that consisted of scholars in Japan and published a similar book in Japanese. These two conferences and publications were significant landmarks in the discussion of confronting historical trauma and historical reconciliation in

East Asia.<sup>1</sup> It is thus appropriate to use them as points of departure.

The launch of these two projects by the Tokyo Foundation marked a significant moment at the start of the new millennium. Since the first textbook incident of the early 1980s, the East Asia region has seen what can be described as a history war, largely over Japan's colonial and wartime expansion in Asia. Issues such as visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese leaders, statements by Japanese politicians denying or minimizing Japanese aggression or atrocities, among others, have regularly thrown Japan's relations with its East Asian neighbors into disarray. Beginning from the 1990s, voices of former victims of Japan's wartime atrocities, among them the so-called military comfort women, began to be heard as they demanded official apologies and compensation. In response, the Japanese government took a number of measures such as the 1995 Murayama Statement and the Asia Women's Fund. Moreover, how to deal with historical trauma and bring about historical justice has become a regional as well as global concern. In Asia Pacific, issues such as aborigines' rights in Australia (and Canada) and the 2.28 incident in Taiwan, make historical reconciliation a particularly pertinent task on the eve of the new millennium. Truth and Reconciliation commissions in South Africa and Latin America over domestic human rights abuses as well as renewed compensation lawsuits in Europe against Germany began to create a global discourse on historical justice.

Ironically, these conferences and publications nearly coincided with a new wave of history wars in East Asia. I recall vividly at the post-conference dinner in 2001, the South Korean Ambassador Cho Sangyong had an animated discussion with a Japanese guest over the Fusosha history textbook that downplayed Japan's wartime atrocities in Asia. Ambassador Cho was soon recalled by the Korean Government in protest over Japanese Government's approval of a slightly revised Fusosha textbook. After that, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine despite protest from both Korea and China escalated the history war to the highest level of diplomacy as Beijing and Seoul eventually refused to hold summit with Japan. Just as the Fusosha revisionist textbook was the result of the backlash against a series of steps taken by the Japanese government in the 1990s toward reconciling with Japan's neighbors, Koizumi's insistence on paying annual visit to the controversial war shrine reflected what some call "apology fatigue" among many Japanese.

Having briefly reviewed the background, it is fair to ask the following questions: what has changed since our first major academic endeavor to address historical reconciliation over a decade ago? What remains the same? What new insights have we gained over this period?

First of all, that round of the history war seemed to have entered at a phase of ceasefire after the departure of Koizumi from office in 2006. His successor, Abe Shinzo, made fence-mending trips to neighboring China and Korea soon after taking office before visiting any other countries. Although Abe did not stay in office for long, he refrained from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, an example followed by his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) successors as well as Prime Ministers of the Democratic Party (DPJ) that came to power in 2009. Although

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1 Funabashi *Nihon no sensô sekinin wo dô kangaeru ka* [How to consider Japan's war responsibility?], edited by Funabashi Yôichi (Tokyo: Asahi shimbunsha, 2001); English translation is *Reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific*, Yoichi Funabashi, ed., (Washington, DC: USIP, 2003),

Abe did cause some consternation when he appeared to challenge the 1992 Kono Statement admitting the Japanese government involvement in the wartime military comfort women system, he modified his position quickly. In return, leaders of neighboring China (and South Korea) reciprocated by not making history issues at the forefront of their Japan diplomacy. Political reconciliation at the top seemed to have taken a step forward.

Moreover, historical reconciliation also moved ahead at the level of society. In addition to increased exchanges between ordinary citizens, dialogues among historians in East Asia has made much progress in the last decade. Now we have several jointly authored supplementary history books among Japan, Korea, and China. The one that has garnered most attention is the *History that Opens the Future*, published in all three countries in 2005. For the first time ever, countries in East Asia have engaged in official joint historical research. Following the precedent of Japan-Korea Joint Historical Research, China and Japan embarked on a similar endeavor in late 2006 under the Abe administration, coinciding with the diplomatic “thawing” and cooling down of the history war between the two countries. In a sense, as some have pointed out, the establishment of the joint historical research helps managing the diplomatic crisis, by allowing both governments to focus on other pressing issues such as trade and environment.

However, the history war has never really ended, but simmered in other ways. A few Japanese politicians including elected officials as well as Diet members continue to unsettle Japan’s neighbors over history issues. Nationalist revision of history in Japan is no longer limited to manga artist Kobayashi Yoshinori or the Society for New History Textbooks. On the other hand, patriotic education in China continues to emphasize war of resistance against Japan as well as Japanese wartime atrocities. Anti-Japanese popular nationalism remains deeply entrenched in China, if the 2011 violent mass demonstrations are any indication. Economic problems—whether the continued stagnation in Japan or the rising inequality in China—often make an external adversary convenient. Whether out of own conviction or, as many analysts suggest, out of concern for their legitimacy, Chinese leaders are not ready to make full reconciliation with Japan over history issues.

Fast-forward to 2014. In the wake of Prime Minister Abe’s recent visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, the first by a Japanese Prime Minister in seven years, the process of historical reconciliation experienced a severe setback. Will China-Japan relations return to the Koizumi years in the shadow of the shrine visits?

To better answer this question, we must keep in mind larger trends in the region and the world. Firstly, compared to ten years ago, China’s economy has overtaken Japan in terms of overall GDP, perhaps for the first time in modern history. The economic inter-dependence has also deepened. Secondly, in the military and security arena, the steady double-digit increase of China’s military spending, coupled with what many describe as aggressive posture in China’s surrounding waters, has prompted the U.S. to adopt Pivot to Asia. Also relevant is the changing society and the rapidly rising spread of internet use in both countries, although implications still await further analysis.

Moreover, both China and Japan are under new leadership: in the case of China a once-every-10-year change of top leadership and in Japan, the rise and fall of the Democratic Party and the return of LDP dominance. Whatever his accomplishment in reviving Japan’s sagging economy, the return of Abe Shinzo as Prime Minister provides many ominous signs of

the return of history issues. His obsession about revising the postwar constitution goes hand-in-hand with his strong personal convictions that Japan (and his grandfather Kishi Nobusuke) have been wrongly vilified by the Allies as well as postwar Japanese Left. His appointment of several like-minded “true-believers” in historical revisionism to important posts in the LDP and the cabinet was an early sign. They share the same fundamental views on history with those outside LDP such as Hashimoto Toru and Ishihara Shintaro. Moreover, in contrast to Koizumi, who emphasized China was not a threat to Japan, Abe went to great lengths around the world to warn about the rise of China and to seek allies. Given these reasons, relations between Japan and China are in greater danger of a free fall and a thaw between the leaders is unlikely to happen at least in the short run.

## 2 History Reconciliation in the Age of Territorial Dispute

More importantly, a new front has been opened that has close links to the ongoing history war: territorial disputes. Like other international disputes, disputes over territory are often supposed to be simply a matter of international law. Yet, the legitimacy of territorial claims is inevitably bound with history, or rather, the interpretations of history: who first discovered the territory in question? What was the nature and circumstances of the territorial annexation? Moreover, the history of the countries involved as well as their bilateral relations holds the key to understanding why the dispute has risen at particular moments. The linkage of these two issues, at least on the Chinese side, shows the danger of stalled reconciliation and makes further progress on both fronts more challenging.

What is the current territorial dispute about? While economic interest, identity, security, domestic politics have all played a role, perhaps even a dominant one, at its core, the dispute between China and Japan boils down to two fundamental issues: first, PRC (as well as ROC) and Japan all claim Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands as its inherent sovereign territory; second, Japan and PRC disagree whether there was a tacit agreement between their leaders in the 1970s to shelve the dispute.

It is true that in addition to basing their claims on history and law, China also emphasizes geography and geology: these Islands are situated on the continental shelf extending from China and strong currents along the Okinawa Trough to the east has served as a natural border between China and the Ryūkyū Kingdom, present-day Okinawa. It is also true that the two sides have different interpretations of several major international agreements such as the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951. As it is clear from reviewing the prehistory of the dispute, however, the differences between China and Japan are fundamentally a difference over modern history.

The prehistory of the dispute can be roughly divided into four phases. In Phase One, at least beginning from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, these Islands frequently appeared in Chinese records under Chinese names, largely serving as navigation aids for periodic official Chinese missions to the Ryūkyū Kingdom, a tributary state to China and Japan. These Chinese records served as the source of knowledge of the Islands in Ryūkyū and Japan, although seafarers from Ryūkyū likely knew the Islands independently. Phase Two begins from the 1870s, when Japan reduced Ryūkyū Kingdom to a feudal domain (*han*) and then annexed it com-

pletely, and ends with the Japanese cabinet decision to annex the Islands in January 1895. Although the Japanese government once offered the southernmost group of Ryūkyū islands to Qing China around 1880, a move that would have made the later dispute moot, the latter did not accept it. Private Japanese made the first explorations of the Islands in the 1880s but the central government in Tokyo refrained from annexing them as Japanese territory for fear of complications with China until 1895. In Phase Three, Japan administered the Islands as part of Okinawa Prefecture. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they came to be known in Japanese as Senkaku, which was a direct translation of the name Pinnacle Islands, initially given to some of the islands by the British Navy in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Japanese government leased several islands to a Japanese businessman who built a fish packing factory on one of them until 1940. In Phase Four, following Japan's surrender in World War II in August 1945, these islands were placed under the U.S. administration, along with Okinawa and other Japanese islands until they were handed over to Japan in 1972.

A comparison of the official Chinese and Japanese narratives shows some key differences: Japan's position is that first, Japan legally annexed the Islands in early 1895 based on the principle of *terra nullius* (land without owners) in modern international law; secondly, sovereignty has resided with Japan ever since, even when they were under U.S. administration before their return in 1972; moreover, China (Qing, R.O.C. or P.R.C.) did not raise any objections until 1970, a year after prospects of oil and gas deposits were announced. On the other hand, similar to Taiwan, China argues that firstly, the islands have been Chinese territory since the Ming Dynasty based on Chinese historical records; secondly, Japan illegally annexed the Islands in the midst of war with China in early 1895; lastly, the Islands should have been returned to China after World War II on the basis of the Potsdam Declaration of 1945, which reiterated the 1943 Cairo Declaration that territories stolen from China should be returned. The two sides thus differ sharply over the meaning of discovery and ownership; they also have different emphasis within the prehistory: whereas China attaches great importance to Phase One of Chinese initial discovery, Japan places emphasis on Phase Three of unchallenged Japanese administration.

At least two underlying themes lie behind what is obviously a complicated situation: First, there are diametrically opposite views of history underlying these official narratives. In the Chinese view, the history since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was unrelenting Japanese expansion at its own expense. It began with Japan's annexation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom: after Japan severed the centuries-old tributary ties between China and Ryūkyū in 1875, those islands in between that had long served as navigation signposts rarely appeared in Chinese records. China considers the Islands to be "stolen" by Japan during the 1894-1895 war and should be returned to China after World War II, since the Cairo Declaration of 1943, later reaffirmed by the Potsdam Declaration of 1945, stipulated that Japan would be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed.

On the other hand, Japan views developments in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century such as its annexation of Ryūkyū (called Ryūkyū Settlement *Ryūkyū shobun*), Bonin Islands as well as the islands later named Senkaku to be lawful territorial consolidation unrelated to its overseas military ventures or colonial expansion. In fact, no mention was made of the ongoing war with China which had gone in Japan's favor at the time of the cabinet decision to annex the Islands in early 1895, similar to Japan's de-linking the Russo-Japanese War with its annexation

of Dokdo/Takeshima. Needless to say, Japan differs over the applicability of the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations. Instead, Japan considers the San Francisco Peace Treaty, signed between Japan and major Allied Countries in 1951, to have reaffirmed Japan's sovereignty over the Islands.

The dispute is also exacerbated by the different and evolving views of sovereignty and territorial boundary. Studies have shown that the traditional East Asian international regime that existed until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had very different perceptions of sovereignty and territorial boundaries from the modern Westphalian system. The Ryūkyū Kingdom had been paying tribute to China since the Ming Dynasty and continued to do so after the Satsuma han of Japan established control through force in 1609. Similarly, the need to demarcate maritime boundaries and to establish internationally recognized markers was not universally recognized in the region until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, the evolving international maritime regime, including the 1982 United Nations Conventions on Law of the Sea, also has raised the stakes of the disputes among neighboring countries with overlapping claims. China considers its far longer, documented knowledge of the Islands dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century to be a key component of its claim. In contrast, Japanese government justifies its annexation of the Islands in terms of the modern international legal principle of *terra nullis*. Japanese leaders in the Meiji era insisted that those islands were without traces of Chinese administration even as they acknowledged their presence in earlier Chinese records. In any case, these leaders certainly believed legal territorial claims worked the best from a position of undisputed strength, which Japan clearly established vis-à-vis China at the beginning of 1895 when its troops were poised to advance toward China's capital and to occupy Taiwan.

Even though the territorial dispute is not *all* about history, vastly diverging views of history as well as overall mutual popular negativity makes the solution difficult. That is to say, lack of deep historical reconciliation makes disputes difficult to resolve.

### 3 Prospect for Reconciliation in East Asia

With territorial disputes added to the fray and the recent setback in historical reconciliation, some may find it no longer practical to even speak of reconciliation as a practical policy goal.

This needs not be the case, however. Instead, we should be aware of the depth of the problem and pursue both short-term goals to prevent further deterioration without abandoning the goal of long-term reconciliation. One important development in the past decade is a new crop of scholarship in English focusing on historical trauma, memory and reconciliation, offering new ways to look at the issue.

In particular, recent years have seen a great outpouring of works on the subject of historical reconciliation.<sup>2</sup> In a study on conflict resolution and reconciliation, Israeli scholar Yaacov

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2 See, for example, Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (New York: Norton, 2000); John Torpey ed., *Politics and the Past: On repairing Historical Injustice* (New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2003).

Bar-Siman-Tov confirms what many others have also concluded: reconciliation is both an outcome and process. As he points out, it consists of mutual recognition and acceptance, invested interests and goals in developing peaceful relations, mutual trust, positive attitudes, as well as sensitivity and consideration for the other party's needs and interests. The essence of reconciliation, in his view, is a psychological process, which consists of changes of the motivation, goals, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions of the majority of society members. The goal of such reconciliation may seem unnecessarily high, but he makes the convincing argument that "reconciliation is required when the societies involved in a conflict involve widely shared beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and emotions that support adherence to the conflictive goals, maintain the conflict, de-legitimize the opponent, and thus negate the possibility of peaceful resolution and prevent the development of peaceful relations."<sup>3</sup> Such a reminder is all the more timely when we consider rising tensions between Japan and China.

Influenced by both overall scholarly trends but certainly by recurrent problems in East Asia, many dissertations and books have been devoted to the question how past and present are intertwined. If some works have a more academic orientation that focus on the shapes of historical memories, others take on the issues of conflict over history right on. As can be expected, these scholars often have different emphasis and even different conclusions. For instance, Yanan He places the blame of memory wars on what she calls "elite myth-making," while James Reilly sees citizens' movement symbolized by what he calls "history activists" playing a greater role in China. Adopting a comparative approach, the research team at Stanford University Asia Pacific Research Center analyzed history textbooks from Japan and its Asian neighbors and found varying degree of nationalism and distortion in all. Indeed, Thomas Berger's comparison of Japan with Austria as well as Germany reveals that the common contrast of Japan as the model "unrepentant" versus Germany as the model "penitent" to be grossly oversimplified.<sup>4</sup>

Several scholars have focused on the question of reconciliation itself. Jennifer Lind sees the single-minded quest for a perfect apology as a path to reconciliation to be misplaced as it tends to produce backlashes at home and hence undermine the work of reconciliation. Author of a major study of reconciliation in postwar German foreign policy, Lily Gardner Feldman ventures to offer useful lessons for East Asia.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the European experience has often been evoked in discussing reconciliation in East Asia by some politicians in Japan and elsewhere in East Asia. Recent works have cautioned us applying the European model in a simplistic manner. For one thing, Europe continues to have its own history problems, suggesting there is really no END to reconciliation but it is an ongoing process. But the European experience is far from being irrelevant, as Thomas Berger argues. The much praised Franco-German reconciliation demonstrates, for instance, that reconciliation preceded multi-dimen-

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3 Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov ed. *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 13-17.

4 Yanan He, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); James Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy* (Columbia University Press, 2011); Thomas Berger, *War, Guilt and World Politics After World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

5 Jennifer Lind, *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics* (Cornell University, 2010); Lily Gardner Feldman, *Germany's Foreign Policy of Reconciliation* (Rowman Littlefield, 2012).

sional setting: the two counties were bound by a US-dominated security community and importantly economic bonds. Grass-root, local government and civil society played indispensable roles by creating and deepening numerous cross-border ties, be it sister-cities or study-abroad. Finally, more than just endeavoring to make political, economic and security relations closer, national leaders undertook symbolic actions that facilitated the cause of reconciliation.

What is the role of external actors, especially the U.S., in East Asian reconciliation? This question must be answered at different levels. The unprecedented open expression of “disappointment” by the U.S. immediately following Abe’s Yasukuni visit is an indication of the widely shared recognition of how sensitive the history issues are. The U.S. government does not wish to see an escalation of the history war in East Asia, especially if it is between two U.S. allies—Japan and Korea. In the arena of security, the U.S. intends to strengthen the defense alliance with Japan and encourage cooperation between Japan and Korea, thus countering a rising China. Moreover, the U.S. has its own un-reconciled past with Japan in World War II when it comes to fire-bombing and the nuclear destruction of Japanese cities. As a result, the U.S. government has not and will not apply same kind of pressure on Japan as it did with Germany over war-related compensation lawsuits.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, academics and civil society in the U.S. and other Western countries should have a different agenda. In fact, those interested in historical justice and dialogue as major academic and policy concerns are reaching out to East Asia.<sup>7</sup> They can remind East Asia of the danger of rampant nationalism in every country and how history education can affect reconciliation and conflict. They can serve as bridge between global discourse and regional action. In short, they can play a useful role in facilitating reconciliation in East Asia.

#### 4 Historians and Historical Reconciliation

If we agree with Bar-Siman-Tov that reconciliation in essence is a psychological process consisting of changes of the motivation, goals, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions of the majority of society members, then history dialogue is an essential part of the reconciliation process. While history dialogue alone is not sufficient to bring about reconciliation, no genuine reconciliation can be achieved without addressing disputed history between so-called “historical enemies” since historical perception is at the core of those “widely shared beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and emotions.”

Once considered the custodians of the past, historians, especially those affiliated with education and research institutions, clearly have a role in this. This is not because historians alone always determine a country’s public stance on specific history issues. The fiasco over Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibition in 1995 demonstrates that populism and special interest groups can gain upper hand in such public debates over history.<sup>8</sup> There is need to articulate

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6 It came closest in the late 1990s when the Congress mandated the establishment of Nazi German and Imperial Japanese Government Disclosure Act.

7 For example, see the <http://www.historicaljusticeandmemorynetwork.net/> based at Columbia University.

8 Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt eds., *History wars: the Enola Gay and other battles for the American past* (New York : Metropolitan Books, 1996).

how views of the past are formed in important groups: political elites, opinion leaders, as well as public at large. Efforts must be made at various levels, and its success also depends much on economic as well as international environment. Still, when significant portions of historians in both countries can claim to share much understanding about a common past, or even agree to disagree over interpretation on some issues, then they would have done much to insulate the potentially disruptive problems of history. These historians at least have the potential to shape public policy related to history issues, and perhaps more importantly as a community they can also influence the public discourse at large.

In the short run, there are still things historians can do to diffuse tensions over the territorial dispute. While other contributing factors need to be taken into consideration, the different views of history have long exacerbated the current territorial disputes and can be used to justify unilateral actions. Left unattended, the consequence is stark. Fortunately, there are now a number of mechanisms of addressing disputes over history through dialogue even though none promises perfect solutions. In fact, in governments sponsored a Joint Historical Study from 2006 to 2010, teams of leading historians from each country surveyed the entire history of China-Japan relations under a common framework agreed upon in advance. Although this joint historical study did not meet all its goals, it at least temporarily de-linked the contentious history issues from overall bilateral relations, affirmed areas of substantial agreement, narrowed the difference over some issues while clarifying many remaining ones.

Leading scholars from China and Japan should initiate a new phase of the Joint Historical Study. Participating as independent scholars instead of national spokespersons, the members will engage in collaborative work to study the conflicting historical claims related to the disputed islands and produce a common set of relevant historical documents, similar to the one made between Japan and Russia in 1992. Equally important, the joint study should clarify the changing perceptions of sovereignty and territorial boundary as well as introduce new perspectives for understanding the past other than diplomatic and political history centered on the nation-state. It will sponsor academic conferences that are open to respected scholars from other countries. The findings of these joint studies should be made public. The Chinese and Japanese governments should endeavor to make available all relevant official records. While direct mediation by a third party may be unrealistic for resolving the dispute, academic institutions and civil society in the United States and Europe can play a positive role by encouraging and supporting constructive dialogues between Japan and China. They can host academic and policy discussions, and participate in joint history projects between Japan and China as observers.

In the long run, dialogue between historians, and between all professions at all possible levels must be expanded and institutionalized. Here, looking at the example from Europe may be helpful. In 1958, the West German government established a German Historical Institute (Institut Historique Allemand) in France, the first such institution set up since the end of World War II. Located in Paris, its primary objective was to promote the study of modern history and to ensure closer ties between the historians of both countries. Its activities include supporting young graduate students, holding regular weekly presentations as well as annual conferences, and publishing joint works as well as Documents on Western Europe. The GHI in Paris also serves as a hub that connects with a variety of research centers in West Germany, France, and Belgium, playing a unique role in the European scholarly community.<sup>9</sup> The

success of GHI in Paris was followed by the establishment of GHI in London in 1976, and the US in 1987. The trend continued after the reunification of Germany. In 1993 and 2003, two GHIs were opened in two former Eastern Bloc countries, Poland and Russia, respectively. It is not difficult to see a pattern here: all the five countries with GHI have been involved in major conflicts with Germany in modern times. GHI has served as a vehicle for postwar Germany to build a solid foundation of historians' community with each of its major adversaries that also have had long historical ties. Such an approach seems consistent with the overall German policy toward its history problem. It has largely succeeded in doing so.

Needless to say, there are major differences between Germany and East Asia, both in terms of their modern history and academic traditions. Almost all German universities are public and thus subject to closer state control (and in a sense GHIs function as an overseas extension of the German higher education and research system); Moreover, between Japan and US (and other countries) there are already a number of well-established channels of academic exchange (though none of them specifically devoted to the study of history). Still, a modified version of GHI would be highly useful as a long-term strategy, for creating a widened community of discourse on history among countries in the Asia Pacific region that are most closely involved historically with Japan. U.S. and China obviously fall under this category, so does Korea.

Institutionalized historical dialogue in East Asia should seek to establish a genuine basis for a transnational community of historians in the long run, which is crucial to resolving the history problem as a recurrent and disruptive irritant in Japan's diplomacy with these countries. Thus, shared value in scientific inquiry should be the foremost ultimate rationale instead of short-term gains in public diplomacy. Moreover, to gain international credibility and to maintain intellectual vitality, there must be the right balance between government and private partnership. In fact, the Moscow GHI is funded by two private German foundations: Krupp Foundation and Zeit Foundation. In Japan, Toyota, Sasakawa and other foundations can conceivably play such a role. In addition, there should be Japanese and foreign partnership. Though director of each GHI is a German professor seconded from a German university, the advisory committee of each GHI consists of both German and nationals of the countries involved. Lastly, it can (and probably should) make use of existing institutions such as Japan's Center for Asia Historical Materials or the bilateral history commissions between Japan and Korea and between Japan and China.

## 5 Conclusion

Reviving stalled historical reconciliation between China and Japan in time of growing tensions calls for concerted efforts at different levels and across a broad range of disciplines. It also requires us to pay attention to internal dynamic in each society and explore possible linkage between internal reconciliation and external reconciliation. I raised this question in a

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9 John T. O'Connor, "The Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris," *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1. (Spring, 1977), pp. 173-177.

book I co-edited with two Korean-American scholars.<sup>10</sup> On the one hand, the progress in addressing internal past wrongs in Korea gives its leaders moral authority to reach out to former perpetrator countries, as then President Kim Daejung of South Korea has done during his historic visit to Japan in 1998. Yet, the fruits of Korea's internal reconciliation is far from being guaranteed. Japan's relationship with Okinawa perhaps is another case where international reconciliation can contribute to regional reconciliation.<sup>11</sup>

The historical reconciliation must also be a regional endeavor that goes beyond China and Japan. It is time for a regional East Asian Reconciliation Fund whose mandate is to facilitate historical reconciliation. Locales like Okinawa that has a special history in pre-modern East Asian peaceful exchange but embroiled in modern history of trauma can become a special facilitator of regional reconciliation. The Seoul-based Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, established in 2011 as the first inter-governmental organization in Northeast Asia, should also undertake historical reconciliation as one of its key missions.

The road to true and lasting reconciliation in East Asia is a long and tortuous one. This should not be the cause of giving up and doing nothing, nor leaving it to time to heal old wounds because time can also deepen them. My own prediction for the next five years---under LDP-Abe and Xi leaderships is that the best we can hope for at top-level is another truce, though it is now much more difficult than Abe's first term in office after Koizumi years. That leaves the challenge to civil society in Japan and, to a lesser extent China (and the U.S.), to take the lead in continuing and expanding groundwork for reconciliation. Deepening understanding and combating nationalist prejudice must be a top priority. As part of a multi-front endeavor aimed at achieving this goal, China and Japan should further expand scholarly exchanges including the studies of history. Just as important, the two countries should publicize their collaborative work among museum curators, history educators as well as journalists and opinion leaders so as to narrow gaps in historical understanding among the general public.

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<sup>10</sup> *Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia: The Korean Experience*, edited by Gi-wook Shin, Soonwon Park and Daqing Yang (Routledge, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> This is the argument of "Japanese Historical Reconciliation Should Begin at Home with Okinawa" by Somei Kobayashi, *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, No. 218 (May 2013).