
Remembering and Forgetting

THE LEGACY OF WAR AND
PEACE IN EAST ASIA

573

Edited by Gerrit W. Gong

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Remembering and Forgetting



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The Legacy of War and Peace in East Asia

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Washington, D.C.

Cover design by Meadows Design Office.

Significant Issues Series, Volume XVIII, Number 2
© 1996 by The Center for Strategic and International Studies
Washington, D.C. 20006
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Printed on recycled paper in the United States of America

99 98 97 96

5 4 3 2 1

ISSN 0736-7136

ISBN 0-89206-284-3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Remembering and forgetting : the legacy of war and peace in East Asia /
edited by Gerrit W. Gong.

p. cm. — (Significant issues series, ISSN 0736-7136; v. 18, no. 2)

ISBN 0-89206-284-3

1. United States—Foreign relations—East Asia. 2. East Asia—
Foreign relations—United States. 3. United States—Foreign relations—
1945–1989. 4. United States—Foreign relations—1989– [1. East
Asia—History—1945–] I. Gong, Gerrit W. II. Series.

DS518.1.R438 1996

950.4'2—dc20

96-5060

CIP

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Ambassador Freeman was the principal American interpreter during President Richard Nixon's path-breaking visit to China in 1972 and was country director for China from 1979 to 1981. He holds a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from the Harvard Law School. His award-winning *The Diplomat's Dictionary* was published in 1994. His most recent study of statecraft and diplomacy, *The Strategy of Power*, is forthcoming. He is a member of the board of the Atlantic Council and was elected to the American Academy of Diplomacy in 1995.

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A Rhodes scholar with M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees in international relations from Oxford, Dr. Gong has been a professorial lecturer at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University and on the research faculty of Oxford University. He is the author of *The Standard of*

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Charles Hill is a career minister (ret.) of the U.S. Foreign Service and a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford, California. He is also diplomat-in-residence at Yale University. His government service included the positions of Chinese language officer in Taichung, Taiwan, political officer in Hong Kong, mission coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, and China cultural exchange negotiator. In 1983, he was appointed chief of staff of the Department of State, and from 1985 to 1989 he was executive aide to Secretary of State George Shultz.

Mr. Hill received an A.B. degree from Brown University, an M.A. degree in American Studies from the University of Pennsylvania, and a J.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He has been a fellow at the Harvard University East Asia Research Center, a Clark Fellow at Cornell University, distinguished lecturer at the United States Air Force Academy, and special consultant to the secretary general of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

William Lee Howell is a fellow in Japan Affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where he is responsible for coordinating research and development activities related to Japan. He has written on a broad range of topics, including regional security, financial reform, political trends, and technology policy. His articles appear frequently in the Japanese mass media. Mr. Howell received his L.L.M. in international legal studies from the Washington College of Law at American University and his J.D. from the Widener University School of Law. He holds B.A. degrees in East Asian languages and literature and in economics from the University of Maryland. He has also studied at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University and in Strasbourg, France. Mr. Howell spent most of his youth in Japan.

Anne Simone Kleinman is currently a graduate student in the department of political science at Yale University, specializing in comparative politics with a focus on the shifting legitimacy of governance and its relationship to the course of reunification across Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China.

Ms. Kleinman holds a B.A. in East Asian Studies from Harvard University and has also studied at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques and the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. At the time of the writing of this volume, she was a research assistant in the Asian Studies Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Dong-bok Lee was elected to the National Assembly of South Korea in April 1996. He has played a key role in the development of South Korea's policy toward North Korea for the past 25 years, holding the positions of director general of the National Unification Board's Office of North-South Dialogue, special assistant to the director of the National Security Planning Agency, and special assistant to the prime minister. He most recently was a senior research fellow at the Research Institute for National Unification in Seoul and a senior visiting fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Gaston Sigur Center for East Asian Studies of the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Lee was instrumental in negotiations on several major inter-Korean agreements, including the July 4 North-South Joint Communiqué of 1972 as well as the North-South Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, Exchange, and Cooperation and the North-South Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, both of which took effect in February 1992. He has written numerous articles on North Korea and inter-Korean relations.

Lucian W. Pye is Ford Professor of Political Science Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a leading specialist in comparative politics and in political culture and psychology, with special emphasis on Asia and especially China. He is a past president of the American Political Science Association, former chairman of the Comparative Politics Committee of the Social Science Research Council, former director of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, former governor of the East-West Center in Honolulu, and current vice chairman of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and a trustee of the Asia Foundation.

Professor Pye was born in Fenchow, Shanxi, China. He did his undergraduate work at Carleton College and his graduate work at Yale University. He has taught at MIT since 1956. He is the author of 24 books and more than 240 articles and chapters.

Preface

This small volume frames key issues and questions regarding remembering and forgetting as part of the legacy of war and peace in East Asia. The subject is both fascinating and disturbing, both timely and enduring.

In some ways these are universal human issues: perceptions and decisions, both personal and on behalf of states, often are formed for reasons different from those publicly, or even privately, articulated. In other ways, these issues in East Asia must be interpreted through the prisms of remembering and forgetting unique to the countries and people there.

I express appreciation to Chas. Freeman, Charles Hill, Lee Howell, Anne Simone Kleinman, Dong-bok Lee, and Lucian Pye for their fine chapters. In addition to those whose formal chapters appear, many others have contributed to this volume, including those who participated in a CSIS Remembering and Forgetting Conference and who have been mulling over these issues for many years in many settings.

Within CSIS, Kaoru Okuizumi, Jae Ku, and Justin Higgins have provided appreciated research support; Roberta Howard has sensitively and expertly shepherded the editorial and production process; and Anne Kleinman, in addition to her own chapter and research assistance, contributed to the organization of the conference underlying this volume.

Introduction: Remembering and Forgetting in East Asia

Gerrit W. Gong

The nineteenth century was characterized by a single center of power, Europe. The twentieth century had two, Europe and North America. The twenty-first century will see the emergence of a third center of power, East Asia.¹ Although the coming century may not be exclusively a Pacific era, East Asia's dramatically increasing salience as a center of population and natural resources, of political dynamism, and of markets, trade, technology, and capital is clear.

What is less clear is how East Asians, from Vladivostok to Bali, from Manila to Kashi in China's Xinjiang autonomous region, will define their individual and national identities in relation to themselves, their neighbors, and the world at large. As in Bosnia, the West Bank, Northern Ireland, Armenia, and elsewhere, the legacies of war and peace for individuals and countries in East Asia are being forged in the individual and collective crucibles of remembering and forgetting.

What do we remember and why? What should we forget and when?

This volume examines issues of memory and forgetting, both manifest and emerging, in East Asia. Remembering and forgetting are the great acts of human consciousness, agency, and will. It is in remembering and forgetting (or, often, reconciling and/or forgiving) that individuals and nations interpret their pasts, set their current priorities, and shape their future courses of action. In remembering and forgetting, individual and collective searches for justice and meaning in life infuse local and national policy. As do the six essays in this volume, these issues interweave the philosophical, political, and policy dimensions that can and will characterize the emergence of East Asia as a global power center.

The Philosophical Dimension

The philosophical dimension encompasses concept and theory—and thereby practical, specific implications for individuals and nations.

As the deconstructionist analyses of the 1960s and 1970s have given way to the more encompassing syntheses of the 1980s and 1990s, new disciplines have ushered in a welcome diversity of approaches to the core questions of memory—what, why, and when to remember or to forget. This diversity is illustrated by the Winter 1996 issue of *Daedalus* on the cross-disciplinary topic of social suffering, by Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember*, by Michael Kammen's *Mystic Chords of Memory*, and by Ann Thurston's *Enemies of the People*, to name a few.²

In the first chapter of this book, Charles Hill underscores the prescriptive implications of families' and nations' descriptions of historical events, tales, and myths. Remembrance, he writes, is "a conscious effort to place actions of the past into a coherent explanation of use to the present." Hill explores how what Herodotus calls "fighting stories"—"the stories that continue to win adherents despite constant assault from other versions"—define and hold together one's political community. Remembrance is also what delineates one's image of another culture.

The political culture of memory, especially in East Asia, often involves what Hill calls contests for the past over the "substance, shape, and significance of remembrances." These are battles worth fighting, he argues, "because the outcome can shift not only the course of international relations but the future of a nation-state itself."

Encompassing but extending well beyond the philosophical dimension, individuals and countries in East Asia today seek to free themselves from the anguish, bitterness, and guilt brought by the sometimes brutal legacies of war or conflict and to reconcile the past and present. These efforts involve the South Korean who remembers the humiliation of being fingerprinted and beaten for speaking Korean during the Japanese colonial period; who can never forget the North Korean secret police taking a father as the Korean War began; who lost friends when North Korean operatives exploded a bomb in Rangoon or relatives when South Korean special forces swept Kwangju; or who, during the opening ceremonies of the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, wept at the juxtaposition of childhood memories of war's devastation

and modern Korea's accomplishments.

They involve those in Taiwan who lost family members, land, or businesses during the February 28 Incident in 1947, when Nationalist agents killed thousands of local Taiwanese; the woman who, carrying a single traveling bag, left her family's four-walled Beijing courtyard house in summer 1949 to visit a boyfriend in Taiwan, only to discover that she could not return; or the soldier who followed Chiang Kai-shek's armies in 1949 and remained faithful to a wife he never saw again, a child he had never met, and a granddaughter he never knew about until their first meeting 40 years later ("I have family again").

They may involve an ordinary Chinese citizen or perhaps an intellectual whose faith was breached and whose trust was broken in the act of betraying or of being betrayed, in the process of beating or of being beaten, whether during the 1957 anti-rightist campaign, the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, or the 1989 Tiananmen tragedy.

They involve individuals in Japan, some feeling intense remorse and others perhaps none: a former military doctor attached to Unit 731, whose sharp scalpel vivisected live Chinese subjects and whose findings on the extremes of human endurance formed medical benchmarks thereafter; the footsoldier who used Chinese citizens for bayonet practice in isolated fields or who pillaged cities, as during the 1937 Rape of Nanking; or the individual who took advantage of "comfort women" who had been forced into prostitution in the name of hygiene and the protection of larger civilian populations.

Many others throughout East Asia remember the death marches, the torture, and the cruelties, as well as the general squalor and degradation of war. The Association of Bereaved Families, the Soldier's Pension Federation, and the Association of Shinto Shrines, for example, are important constituencies for Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, and their members remember the Pacific War differently than do, for example, members of U.S. veterans groups. Such groups, later joined by many members of the U.S. Congress, vigorously protested the Smithsonian Institution's planned commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the Pacific War. The furor concerned how the "story" of the bombing of Hiroshima would be told—whether including the suffering inflicted on Japanese civilians was part of the "whole story" or was a "one-sided story." The result was a drastic revamping of the exhibit, which was

symbolically centered on the fuselage of the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 bomber that on August 6, 1945, dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima.³

Lucian Pye's point of departure is that "memory, imagination, and national myths" are "fundamental to the problems of old societies that are seeking a modern sense of national identity and are therefore in need of a new basis of nationalism." Memories, enlivened by imagination, build the "myths of a nation that have greater emotional substance and a higher level of truth" than mere objective historical accounts. When national memories get blocked or distorted, however, the collective imagination becomes distorted or even paralyzed, making it difficult to create "new and appropriate senses of national identity."

The essentially secular basis of the Confucian tradition, Pye argues, has contributed to East Asia's current difficulties with national identity. Lacking a solid sacred dimension, East Asian societies paradoxically became highly vulnerable to the secular dimensions of modernization (utility, efficiency, and a market-oriented culture) while struggling to identify "what should be precious and beyond questioning in the parochial elements of their national identities."

Far too often in East Asia, as elsewhere, what I call "shallow nationalism" is manifest in the manipulation of mass politics by appeals to xenophobia and ethno-nationalism. To counter such pseudo-nationalism, Pye challenges the peoples of China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan to define the "ideals, values, and symbols they want to have central to their myths of nationalism" by becoming "more at home with their collective memories and engaged more freely and comfortably in shaping their collectively imagined national selves."

The Political Dimension

The personal and philosophical patterns of remembering and forgetting of course shape national and regional relations. And that underscores a second dimension—the political.

In East Asia, the political dimension of memory colors competitive nationalisms between Japan and, especially, its Korean and Chinese neighbors. It extends to rivalries exacerbated by the cold war (North and South Korea; China and Taiwan; and, earlier, North and South Vietnam). It also extends to relations between the United States and countries against which it fought

in East Asia during this century (China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Japan).

By definition, new ages require new or renewed identities and visions for the future. The cold war polarized East Asia. It strained relations between the socialist countries—the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam—and the friends and allies of the United States, including Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and others. These political strains paralleled a period of economic (and political) development when the governments of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and others justified tight political control for reasons of national security. These are timely issues as individuals and countries in East Asia reexamine identities and relationships through the prisms of remembering and forgetting.

The international patterns linking East Asian countries have changed more rapidly than fundamental individual and national identities have emerged. South Korea has established diplomatic relations with China and Russia; North Korea maintains dialogue with the United States and Japan. ASEAN has welcomed Vietnam and is discussing extending membership to Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. One can fly from Taipei to Beijing (and soon to other parts of China) on the same aircraft, simply by changing flight numbers in Macau.

At the same time, the growing pattern of regional interconnections in no way negates the significance of national identity. Tokyo's persistent difficulties with its neighbors over the past; Beijing's firing of M-9 missiles to within 25 miles of Taiwan's ports on the eve of Taipei's first direct presidential elections; Seoul's ongoing preoccupation with the trial of a former president and charges of bribery against another, amid ongoing Korean debate over inter-Korean relations and economic globalization—these issues must be examined in detail from the perspective of each country.

It is perhaps inevitable that individuals and groups seeking national legitimacy and power attempt to link motivating concerns from the past with current politics, thereby highlighting the nexus of the politics, policy, and philosophy of memory. Thus, three of this volume's essays consider issues of remembering and forgetting as they illuminate China-Taiwan relations, the cross-pressures inherent in Japan's efforts to reconcile itself

and its neighbors, and the dilemmas in a "doubly divided" Korea.

With respect to China and Taiwan, the title of Chas. Freeman's essay ("Same Strait, Different Dreams") evokes the Chinese adage "same bed, different dreams," a pointed reminder of how people can interpret the same situation in different ways. Freeman describes how the differing memories (perceptions as well as historical experiences) of those on Taiwan and those in mainland China concerning the island's past 100 years underlie the current political and policy dilemmas spanning the Taiwan Strait. His essay also usefully adds to this mix "memories" of the United States and Japan, which influence the China-Taiwan interaction in ways that Washington and Tokyo sometimes forget.

With respect to Korea, Dong-bok Lee probes generational attitudes and domestic shifts within South Korea as part of "the shadows of the past." These contradictory memories make Korea, in his words, "a country that even today continues to be obsessed more by memories of the past than by visions for the future in addressing its public issues."

Especially today, Seoul's memories of the past drive internal political dynamics. These encompass the current handling of Korea's May 1980 tragedy at Kwangju; the trial of former president Chun Do-hwan (and possibly former president Roh Tae-woo); the political fortunes of political contenders Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, which extend to the regional politics of Cholla province (whose capital is Kwangju) and of South Korean liberal alliances generally; the role of Korea's large business conglomerates (*chaebols*); Korea's vision of global competitiveness; and U.S.-South Korean civilian and military relations.

With respect to Japan, Lee Howell describes the dual challenge Japan faces in reconciling itself and its neighbors to its past. Howell details the domestic political pressure points related to "war guilt" that precipitated Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's apology, which was later undercut by the Diet's unwillingness to make a collective statement. He also discusses the perceived slight by Beijing caused by China's resumption of nuclear weapons testing less than a fortnight after Murayama's state visit.⁴ Overall, Howell contends, Japanese leaders "must develop a vision for Japan's future that not only reflects post-cold war ambitions, but also acknowledges pre-World War II debts to the region."

The Policy Dimension

The policy dimension is integral to each of this volume's six essays. Part of the significance of the issues of remembering and forgetting is that East Asia is a region and group of countries in search of an identity, a common purpose, and a vision for the future.

Anne-Simone Kleinman's examination of "An Unassimilable Past and the Diplomacy of the Future" assigns to remembrance an important role in the language of diplomacy. Bridging the individual and collective, Kleinman observes that "abiding anguish, anger, and resentment can, and often do, resist national forms of remembrance as embodied in memorials, museums, and official apologies."

In this view, political power and national identity require both those at the political center and those on the political margin to consider the importance of national and individual memories. One reason is that, as in Taiwan, political democratization and "a kind of democratization of memory" may parallel each other.

Diplomacy and the organization of national memory imply that conscious efforts to shape different modes of remembrance can become a diplomatic tool for resolving East Asian conflict. Kleinman asks, "What are the limitations of memory-based diplomacy? How do states speak about memory so that it will be liberating, not confining? How can they confront the depth of victims' anger and resentment, without being consumed by it? How do they move beyond these sentiments of victimization or triumphalism?"

Conclusion

As East Asia determines its identity, purposes, and future vision, issues of remembering and forgetting necessarily involve policy objectives, processes, and planning (themselves frequently complicated by intersections of philosophy and politics).

Challenges to U.S. policy objectives in East Asia connected to divergent memories include disputed territories, contested borders, and freedom of navigation on the open seas; shifting configurations of military power and diplomatic perception; and possible redefinitions of national objectives among the East Asian countries.

Similarly, issues of remembering and forgetting may be manifest in the shaping of the economic contours and contingencies affecting the competitive strategies of companies and countries in the world's largest and potentially most dynamic markets. They may be seen in the shifting flows of capital, trade, and technologies emanating from possible tariff advantages in, for example, the ASEAN Free Trade Area. They may evidence themselves in the Korean levying of high duties on personal care products manufactured in Japan or in the Beijing-Seoul political underpinnings of the nascent consortia aimed at producing a mid-sized passenger plane for the Asian market.

In terms of policy process, the United States and each country in East Asia has an interest in individuals and countries finding ways to come to peace with themselves, with their pasts, and thereby with their futures. No individual or country intent on vengeance can be at peace. Such peace comes only when a sense of justice intersects with a measure of forgiveness. One can forgive without forgetting.

Sometimes individual grief is magnified for political purpose, in both natural and calculating ways. It is natural for the grief of individual citizens to become a badge of honor or a symbol of grievance; these concerns may be used to fan nationalistic sentiments for personal, regional, or national political advantage.

For example, by choosing not to press for war reparations at the time of Sino-Japanese diplomatic recognition in 1972, Zhou Enlai recognized that no monetary value could be placed on China's wartime suffering. This also opened subsequent avenues for Beijing to establish twin approaches of "containment by guilt" and "concession by guilt" with respect to Tokyo. To say there is no genuine, popular Chinese remembrance of Japanese atrocities during the war years is very wrong; sometimes these emotions threaten to burst out of control, or to be used for other political purposes, as happened in Beijing during the late 1980s when Chinese students protested against Japanese war memories.

But some in Tokyo believe the war was a concern of the previous generation; that China is using war guilt as a means to extort political or commercial concessions from Japan; that opening the wounds and potentially the coffers of reparation, whether for Korean reconstruction, comfort women, or anyone else, would both provoke a never-ending demand for resources and prevent societal healing.

As the essays in this volume detail, similar layered issues of the policy process exist with respect to China-Taiwan-United

States relations, to Japan-Okinawa-United States relations, to United States-Vietnam or United States-North Korea relations, and so forth.

In terms of policy planning, the reality of global interconnectedness means that policymakers must consider not only their own issues of remembering and forgetting, but also those of the countries with which they are dealing, as well as those of other interested countries.

Particularly in East Asia, there is a crucial difference between shallow and healthy nationalism. The former often uses cries for vengeance as a binding glue to manipulate past grievances and maintain current political power. The latter assimilates the realities of the past to satisfy any demand for retribution. It envisions a future unshackled by hatred.

All of this occurs within the possibility that East Asians may, because of cultural differences, remember and forget differently than do many in the West. This highlights a significant issue for the international system. The rise of East Asia as a new power center may introduce into international diplomacy increasingly self-confident and assertive Asian traditions regarding values and ways of governance.

Some of this may be offset by the deepening veneer of cosmopolitan convenience and cosmopolitan culture that may nevertheless mask local cultural resurgence. More fundamentally, however, deeper memories and patterns based on different cultural filters of things remembered and forgotten may yet reveal new ways of organizing capital and labor in productive configurations. Different cultural patterns may influence the operating differences among what has been described as Asia's "keiretsu capitalism," Europe's "compassionate capitalism," and North America's "compulsive capitalism." Different cultural patterns may also shift societal balances among individual and collective law and order, which may over time change the global economic, political, and security centers of gravity.

But all of this is part of a future yet to be determined by how a common though not necessarily shared past is remembered and forgotten.

Notes

1. See, for example, Kishore Mahbubani, "The Pacific Way," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 1 (January/February 1995).

2. See "Social Suffering," *Daedalus* 125, no. 1 (Winter 1996); Paul Con-
nerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press,
1989); Michael Kammen, *Mythic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tra-
dition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); and Ann Thur-
ston, *Enemies of the People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

3. Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, "Blown Away," *Washingto-
nian*, August 1995.

4. For the full text of a statement issued on August 15 by Prime Minis-
ter Tomiichi Murayama on the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War
II, see *The Japan Times Weekly* (International Edition), August 21-27, 1995.
For a fuller discussion of "war guilt," see Gar Alperovitz, "Hiroshima: His-
torians Reassess," *Foreign Policy*, no. 99 (Summer 1995); "Memory and Apa-
thy," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 24, 1995; and Geoffrey M. White,
"Memory Wars: The Politics of Remembering the Asia-Pacific War," *Asia Pa-
cific Issues*, no. 21 (July 1995).



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Fighting Stories: The Political Culture of Memory in Northeast Asian Relations

Charles Hill

The past is not dead; it's not even past.
—William Faulkner

The importance of the political culture of memory in international relations is one of those fundamental recognitions that once were taken for granted but over the course of this century became disparaged, forgotten, or swept away by the rise of political science and the growing general confidence in quasi-scientific methodologies.

But the increasingly manifest inadequacies of political science over the past decade, particularly with the collapse of communism,¹ have without doubt stimulated a turn toward forms of explanation other than the rigorously empirical and quantitative methods that have purported to offer both objectivity in a search for truth and predictive capability with regard to major political and social shifts. That the claims for these efforts have been often overblown is obvious; that the self-verifying methodologies involved may be fundamentally flawed has only recently been systematically addressed.²

The cause of the disease has been attributed to the striving of political scientists to claim for their discipline the scale of achievement that has brought immense prestige to natural scientists. Michael Howard, in his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford in 1980, spoke of those

people, often of masterful intelligence, trained usually in law or economics or perhaps political science, who have led their governments into disastrous miscalculations because they have no awareness whatever of the historical background or the cultural universe of the foreign societies with which they have to deal. It is an awareness for which no

amount of strategic or economic analysis, no techniques of crisis management or conflict resolution . . . can provide a substitute.³

The turn to potentially more fruitful modes of understanding is already taking forms more closely associated with the traditional liberal arts. As Richard Pipes put it, "unlike molecules and cells, human beings have values and objectives that preclude their being analyzed in a value-free, unteleological manner. Thus the investigation of social and political organizations calls for a methodology closer to that employed in history and even literature."⁴

The indispensable centrality of both remembrance and the formation of stories to political understanding is being rediscovered across the disciplines. With a growing discontent over the ubiquity and "privileged" status of data, statistics, and "hard" facts has come a rising recognition of the limitations of such material in efforts to answer or explain the most significant questions and issues. In academic circles, where the "anecdotal" still remains one of the most devastating forms of disparagement, the anecdote is increasingly resorted to as a source of comprehension and meaning on a level deeper than that available from fact alone. Information is not enough: knowledge and insight are essential.

Events fade as memory fades. They endure only in the form of stories. Once again, after a long hiatus, has come the recognition that without stories it is practically impossible to contemplate the human condition, let alone the international condition, in any sustained, meaningful way. In law there is growing recognition of the essential role of "literary narrativity" in which, through every phase of the lawsuit, litigants, lawyers, and judges are engaged in a constant process of shaping and presenting a coherent story.⁵ Some economists perceive that economic theories, for all their mathematical power and elegance, cannot guarantee their own relevance to practical situations. Narrative and rhetoric, whether they represent "truth" or not, substantially affect economic activity and "economists tell stories in their science."⁶ Psychiatry is now understood to rely vitally on the composition of stories to make symptoms intelligible. All psychotherapists "eventually compose with the patient's cooperation some kind of story—a chronicle that reveals how psychological symptoms arise when such motivations as hopes, commitments, preferences, and fears collide with reality."⁷ In

history, distinguished scholars have emphasized the connections between the rhetoric of historical writing and that of imaginative literature.⁸ Once again, history is understood to be built not merely of events but of varying perceptions of them. And America's most noted philosopher, Richard Rorty, has announced the end of philosophy and proposed that the most fruitful sources for thinking through and working out the problems of the world as we find it are to be located in the stories told by novelists, among them Flaubert, Proust, and Nabokov.⁹

Events maintain a life in memory. Remembrance is more than memory; it is a conscious effort to place actions of the past into a coherent explanation of use to the present. Rivalries arise over the substance, shape, and significance of remembrances. Usually nasty at best, such contests for the past are worth waging battles for because the outcome can shift not only the course of international relations but the future of a nation-state itself.

The political culture of memory involves far more than the way a particular event is recalled. The process is almost infinitely complex, but it might be analyzed across three levels: the story that integrates one's own political community; the image of another culture; and the bilateral story, which tells how such images are integrated, or not, into one's own binding national or cultural narrative.

At the most fundamental level is the story upon which a political community rests. The most original and persuasive description of this phenomenon has been laid out in a new book by Norma Thompson.¹⁰ Her work provides the first clear explanation of the heretofore baffling mixture of fact and fancy in Herodotus's *History* by convincingly demonstrating how Herodotus defines a political community, its boundaries, and its purposes by the central story that its members—Scythian, Persian, Athenian, Spartan—have over time come to agree upon and tell about themselves—in other words, their shared “political culture of memory.” More pertinently, one can understand a great deal about the character of the political community in question by examining the extent to which a set of remembrances is shared and by which memories, whether of real or mythical events, are able to sustain themselves against rival stories.

Herodotus calls these “fighting stories,” the stories that continue to win adherents despite constant assault from other versions. These narratives serve to define and hold together the political community. Thompson cites the recent work by David

Hackett Fischer on Paul Revere. Over the course of more than two centuries the story of Paul Revere's ride has been reworked, discredited, appropriated, or expropriated. The question is whether the story can take the brunt of the onslaught and still remain on its feet to continue, in the Herodotean sense, to "fight its way through" and remain the memory of choice and the defining recollection of the political community in question.¹¹ When such stories fade away, something of the cohesion and self-definition of the political community itself has begun to break down. This could be observed in the United States in recent years with, for example, the story of George Washington as a boy cutting down the cherry tree. No longer told in grammar schools, after school hours children may see a television cartoon satirizing the "Father, I cannot tell a lie" tale. The satirization of a subject that is itself unknown means that the story has lost its ability to serve as part of a binding cultural memory.¹²

So the first category is that of the stories or narratives that serve a particular political community's need to define itself.

The second category—images of another culture—have in the case of Northeast Asia been most tellingly rendered by Harold Issacs's study of the underlying attitudes, feelings, and impressions that American leaders of opinion in the 1950s had about China. In a striking image of his own, Issacs revealed sharp "scratches" on American minds about China and its inhabitants.¹³

Issacs's study, as the anthropologist Milton Singer has pointed out, was cross-sectional. Of even more interest, Singer said, would be a "longitudinal" approach that would trace the history of these images as they appear and fade: "This longitudinal study would be an essential complement to the cross-sectional study, for—as Issacs indicates—the sources of his interviewees' images are rooted in the past, in the history of their own lives, as well as in the social and cultural history of their country."¹⁴

The age of the longitudinal story has begun.¹⁵ A reaction to the insufficiencies of objective, quantitative, scientific methodologies may be involved. Dissatisfaction with relativist, historicist, and anti-foundationalist declarations may in part account for it. And it also may be a contemporary rediscovery of an angle of vision that in earlier eras was taken for granted.

In our third category—the cross-perception of two countries—a longitudinal approach has been elegantly set forth in Richard Madsen's *China and the American Dream*.¹⁶ Madsen

reviews the cultural myths that have shaped the perceptions of people of both the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) for much of the twentieth century, and particularly over the past 25 years.

Whereas Harold Issacs categorized the course of the U.S.-China story as a fairly simple four-part sequence that he designated as "benevolence" (1905–1937), "admiration" (1937–1944), "disenchantment" (1944–1949), and "hostility" (1949–), Madsen weaves a more consistent yet more elaborate and richly textured narrative.

Madsen tells the story this way. Since the high point of the great American missionary drive in China (part of the nineteenth-century American college dream to achieve "the evangelization of the world in this generation"), Americans have seen China as a "troubled modernizer," an admirable people, struggling against many obstacles to become "just like us." However, in the past three decades, says Madsen, that mainstream, liberal story told by Americans to themselves about China has been challenged by two other versions: one from the right—China as the "red menace," and one from the left—China as socialist savior of the world. In other words, the China lobby version and the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars version. Then, Madsen says, Richard Nixon went to China, and the mainstream liberal story of China as "troubled developer" was given renewed and indeed unparalleled legitimacy. The exaggerated, benign expectations raised by Nixon's dramatic "opening" to China were what caused Americans to be so appalled by the events at Tiananmen in June 1989—a reaction, Madsen thinks, that was far more anguished and overwrought than the facts of the situation warranted.

In other words, the image of Tiananmen 1989 was a "scratch" on the American mind that ran excessively deep because of the long-term, "longitudinal" story that Americans had told themselves about their relations with China for decades. The story had nearly collapsed under communism, but when reawakened by Nixon and Henry Kissinger, it was embraced once again—and with unprecedented enthusiasm.

Before assessing the Madsen version more thoroughly, it may be best at this point to summarize the "scratches" now being incised—in American and in Asian minds.

Over the past 13 years, there have been numerous incidents in Northeast Asia relating to unresolved issues from World War II. Their frequency appears to have increased as the Japanese

government and people have become more comfortable challenging their country's previous posture of contrition and culpability. Almost all of the controversies have arisen from complaints by the PRC, South Korea, and Taiwan that Japan is either attempting to rewrite history or not take full responsibility for its actions during the war.

One perpetual source of disagreement within Northeast Asia has been over the publication of Japanese history texts. In 1982, China and South Korea objected to revisions of Japanese students' texts that characterized Japan's actions as "advances" rather than aggressions or invasions and called Korean uprisings against Japanese domination "riots." Beijing and Seoul claimed that these revisions violated the postwar peace treaties in which Japan expressed regret over its actions. Although the issue was eventually smoothed over after much consultation, it resurfaced in 1985, 1986, and 1988.

One of China's specific concerns with the Japanese texts was their treatment of the 1937 Nanking massacre, when up to 200,000 Chinese were slaughtered. Some Japanese claim either that these death tolls are greatly exaggerated, or that the incident is overemphasized and should be viewed as entirely consistent with the conduct of war. In 1984 and 1985 a series of articles and books came out in Japan advancing these perspectives; once these views began to be aired more publicly, they seemed to strike a chord with many Japanese and they resurfaced repeatedly.

China also responded negatively to incidents inside Japan. On August 15, 1985, Japanese prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone visited the Yasukuni Shrine, which commemorates the Japanese war dead. This was the first time a prime minister had visited as a government official instead of as a private citizen, an act that many Chinese decried as insensitive and offensive. The rancor expressed in China included a student protest in Tiananmen Square against Japanese militarism.

Tensions seemed to die down in the beginning of 1986, when Nakasone sidestepped the traditional visit to the shrine. Differences over Nanking were, however, revisited when a conservative revision of the Japanese history texts again cast doubt on whether the massacre had really occurred. Facing criticism from China and South Korea, the Japanese education minister shot back, claiming that those criticizing Japan's military actions were hypocritical and that their histories too included attempts to dominate their Asian neighbors. These assertions were viewed

as an attempt to gloss over Japan's expansionism, and the minister was fired in September 1986 after refusing to retract his statements or apologize for them.

The willingness of Japanese officials to publicly defend their country in the face of continuing pressure to take greater responsibility for the war seemed to increase in the late 1980s. One cabinet minister stated in April 1988 that Japan fought the war to secure its own safety. Although opposition parties called for his ouster (and got it shortly thereafter), the tendency to reverse previous policies of public contrition seemed to gain strength. The 1988 textbook revisions deleted a lesson describing Japanese brutality, which again brought complaints. In May 1994, the minister of justice denied that the war against China had been an aggressive one, or that the Nanking massacre had ever taken place. He retracted his statements after being rebuked by Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata, but was forced to resign three days later. And in August of 1994 yet another cabinet member resigned after asserting that Japan had not attempted to conquer its Asian neighbors, but instead had liberated them from Western colonialism.

In the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, Japan was among the first to reverse China's isolation. Japanese prime minister Toshiki Kaifu was the first leader of an industrialized nation to visit China after the suppression, calling on Premier Li Peng in August 1991. Emperor Akihito followed in October 1992, marking the twentieth anniversary of normalized relations between the two countries. The emperor's visit, however, was controversial within Japan because speculation abounded over whether there would be an explicit apology to the Chinese for their suffering during the war. In the months preceding the emperor's arrival, numerous citizens' groups in China collected a reported 300,000 signatures demanding more than \$300 billion in war reparations from Japan. The Chinese government banned demonstrations or protests during Akihito's visit and reportedly put one leader of an anti-Japan group under house arrest. The emperor ultimately said he felt "deep sorrow" for the sufferings Japan had inflicted upon China. Other, lower-level Japanese apologies have followed.

Taiwanese domestic politics also reflected some of the climate of increasing controversy about the past. In 1992 the government of Taiwan admitted that in 1947 Nationalist forces had killed between 18,000 and 28,000 Taiwanese in what became known as the 2-28 massacre. Previously, the government had claimed that the riots that precipitated the slaughter were caused

by Chinese Communists and that a small number of people had been killed as part of the ongoing civil war. That the government finally acknowledged what in fact had been years of brutal suppression was seen as a painful but positive step toward healing internal wounds in Taiwan. In June 1993 the Taiwanese cabinet approved a \$77 million compensation fund for victims of the massacre.

Similar actions were hoped for when, in 1991, documentary evidence that the Japanese government had been involved in organizing brothels of "comfort women," or women who were kidnapped or tricked into becoming prostitutes for Japanese soldiers, first surfaced. Although government officials did apologize numerous times to women from China, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Taiwan, the controversy was rekindled in May 1992 when the Japanese government claimed it had found no evidence that the women had been coerced. South Korea in particular voiced its objections, and women's organizations began to demand the release of historical documents, compensation, and a monument to commemorate the suffering of the women involved. Various lawsuits were filed against Japan, and in late 1994 a memorial library was opened in Los Angeles to continue the international campaign seeking justice and reparations.

And in a mirroring of the problem of Japanese historical revisionism, the United States was charged with the same practice by Japanese concerned about the debate that erupted in late 1994 over the Smithsonian Institution's design of an exhibition commemorating the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Differences on the American side indicate that Americans too may be increasingly at odds with themselves over the degree of responsibility and contrition owed to the victims of its wartime actions. The issue was fiercely debated by academics, veterans, and policymakers in the United States. Japan expressed its frustration that the Smithsonian decided under pressure to remove much of the material, written and visual, that personalized the devastation the bombs inflicted on Japanese civilians. On the U.S. side, unhappiness with the apparently pro-Japan character of the exhibition was scarcely reduced by repeated revisions of the content of the material on display.¹⁷

As these cases suggest, the political culture of memory involves not only international relations, but "culture wars" within a nation involved. Some of these competing remembrances of the past are now contending entirely on national

terms in the Herodotean sense as “fighting stories,” the outcome of which can affect—sometimes decisively—the course of an entire political community. This can be seen in the Japanese characterization of Hiroshima. As Ian Buruma has pointed out, Hiroshima is the supreme symbol of the Pacific war to most Japanese.¹⁸ The right and left view it differently: the right sees it as similar to Auschwitz in being a racist, genocidal event and the embodiment of evil; the left, as a form of divine punishment for Japan’s evil actions. A striking variation on this has come from Masaru Tamamoto, who describes the U.S. atomic bomb as a liberating event:

The people felt liberated from death, which had seemed certain during the final months of the war. At that time, the imperial state, declaring that the empire would never surrender, called for the martyrdom of all 100 million Japanese. It promised the people only the glory of death in a sacred war. Then suddenly came Hiroshima, Nagasaki and unconditional surrender. American victory meant the recovery of life thought to have been hopelessly lost. The occupiers became liberators, providers of a second chance at life. Liberty, in its original definition as the freedom of the state from alien rule, seemed irrelevant when the pursuit of it meant the death of all Japanese, the extinction of the race.¹⁹

Buruma finds a common theme among all Japanese commentators. All sides, he says, share the view that the American occupation deprived Japan of a collective memory.

To summarize the events that the three main parties to international relations in Northeast Asia are at present called upon to comprehend and explain—to themselves perhaps even more so than to others: Japan is called upon to deal with the Rape of Nanking, 1937, which Buruma calls “the prime symbol of Japanese savagery during the war in Asia.”²⁰ The challenge to the PRC is symbolized by Tiananmen, “the most emotionally and historically charged urban space in China.”²¹ This is the Tiananmen not only of the tanks of 1989, but also of the Red Guards of 1965 and of the political and economic contradictions of 1995. The United States’ political culture of memory, at present, is only marginally concerned with Hiroshima; the more significant narrative struggle remains focused on Vietnam, as currently demonstrated in the vituperation and praise variously expressed in reaction to the confessional book by Robert McNamara.²²

The politics of cultural memory, the "fighting" of the stories of contending remembrance, are, in the present Asian-American context, being conducted under highly unusual circumstances in that the primary cultural narrative of each of the three states is itself problematic. In this context, the politics of cultural memory are more intense, of greater import, and more volatile because they affect nothing less than the very foundations of the political communities—Japan, China, and the United States—that are involved.

The implications for international security that arise from this set of circumstances are vast because the foundations of the communities in question are unstable.

The "story" that underlies the American political community has been deteriorating for a considerable time. Whereas Japanese textbooks over the past two decades have been resisting recognition of a potentially disconcerting past, in America, as Frances Fitzgerald has pointed out, "the great unity of the texts has been broken."²³ The texts, when surveyed by Fitzgerald some 16 years ago, showed for the first time a sense of uncertainty about the central questions of American history—identity, society, values, and place in the world. Whereas nineteenth-century texts defined American identity by religion, twentieth-century versions increasingly did so by race, gender, and ethnicity. In a survey today, one imagines that the sense of uncertainty that Fitzgerald found in the late 1970s would have been replaced by an asserted certainty, but a certainty about fragmentation and the undesirability if not impossibility of a unified foundational narrative. In other words, *e pluribus plurimum*.

A contemporary disputation over these issues, amusing if it were not representative of a wider trend of considerable ultimate consequence, has come in Garry Wills's mocking of Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House, for his attempts to revive traditional stories of the American political community:

Gingrich unabashedly states that the aim of history courses is to inculcate values, the values embodied in ancient myths—in Washington praying at Valley Forge, or Patrick Henry saying "I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." Gingrich does not advert to the fact that none of those things, in all likelihood, ever occurred—but one senses that he would not care if this were pointed out to him. It is the moral that matters, not the evidence. . . .

In the same way, he does not study history but echoes of history—myths, success books with historical anecdotes—and, especially, novels. He says at least half his reading is in novels. “I believe in fiction” [Gingrich says].²⁴

Thus is the United States in a centrifugal process of far-reaching change that will do much to determine its future self-definition as a political culture or community. Vietnam is likely to remain at the heart of this. While Hiroshima is likely to fade with the passing of the fiftieth anniversaries of World War II, other issues of American morality past and present, such as the U.S. role in the cold war,²⁵ and current issues concerning human rights (e.g., international human rights reports and requests for investigation into current American practices) may be scrutinized. The more self-critical these become, the more strongly those sectors outraged by the deconstruction of the earlier national ethos will react. Charges from abroad about American actions in Asia in the past, as well as debates over America’s proper reaction to questions of human rights and adherence to international law in present-day Asia, will take on heightened importance because of the problematic character of American self-definition.

Japan and China, each in its own and different way, also face a major definitional challenge concerning the meaning of political community.

For Japan, the issue may center on whether the Japanese constitution will be equated with article 9, which declares Japan’s renunciation of international military power. If the occupation and its institutions deprived Japan of its collective memory, the nation must construct, or reconstruct, its identity anew. If the American occupation, increasingly recognized as an externally imposed break with Japan’s past and true character, is transcended or rejected, what then will be the fate of the institutions established during that period? The political system set in place by the occupation has not yet been genuinely employed. Japan now faces a historical turning point the direction of which is far from certain. As Masaru Tamamoto writes, it is likely that Japan, given an uninfluenced choice, would produce a constitution not unlike the MacArthur document, with the possible exception of article 9. But with the shifting power balance of Asia and the world today, the issue is far from clear. In addition, all things will not be equal; that is, foreign military policies are bound to have

major effects. The *Economist* predicts that Japan's period of change will run its course with Tokyo continuing to identify more strongly with the West than with Asia.²⁶ Others see an inevitable process of re-Asianization. What is clear is that a significant transformation is under way in Japanese society and that at this time of change, the events of cultural memory, always of great sensitivity, can become more volatile than ever.

As for China, Madsen's account of how America has viewed China as a "troubled modernizer" is persuasive, but I would tell it somewhat differently.

The original American-China story was that of the missionary and the gunboat. The missionary story emerges from America's nineteenth-century "muscular Christianity." It was behind the collection box at the door of every midwestern small town's Presbyterian church. This story has been vividly told by Pearl Buck and John Hersey.²⁷ The gunboat story begins with Anson Burlingame, who, although the representative of an encroaching foreign power, forged a "special relationship" between America and China:

From the day of his arrival he took the unique and bizarre attitude that the Chinese people were real people, to be treated with courtesy and consideration. In spite of the fact that he was a representative of a foreign nation with "interests" to conserve or acquire he held the idea that the country belonged absolutely and entirely to the Chinese, and that it was their business as well as their privilege to conduct it.²⁸

This attitude led the Chinese government to put the conduct of their business with the treaty powers into Burlingame's hands. Having made him an ambassador of the Celestial Empire, they returned him to Secretary of State William Seward with more powers than those with which he came to China.²⁹

The shock of the Nationalist defeat and flight to Taiwan was magnified by the character of America's long-standing China story of faith, trade, and benevolent friendship. Madame Chiang Kai-Shek's Wellesley degree and cross-country speechmaking tried to reinforce that story. But with the "loss of China" the story ended. Never again would there be anything like the earlier version of two peoples on different sides of the earth, each with a special aptitude and affinity for the other.

In the cold war, containment produced two Chinas, two Koreas, and two Vietnams. Hanoi's 1960 move on the South jeopardized this superficially stabilized situation. Throughout the last half of the 1960s American foreign policy leaders were fixated on the possibility that China would enter the Vietnam War as it had entered the Korean War. The excesses of the Cultural Revolution, heavily covered by the American media, created an image, as Theodore White put it, of "madness."³⁰

The compelling stories that remained between China and America in the last half of the 1960s were driven by the cold war. The United States was convinced that China had embarked upon an effort to create, support, and see to victory "wars of national liberation" across Southeast Asia; the PRC was convinced that the United States was bent on a policy of "encircling" China. Two events turned these stories on their heads: the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia and the Tet offensive of 1968. Both China and the United States emerged from 1968 with an altered perspective. Each had preoccupations elsewhere: the China-Soviet border and the American domestic scene, respectively. Each could see the importance of a relationship with the other. The near-inevitability of an "opening" of U.S.-China relations was recognized before Nixon and Kissinger entered the White House in January 1969.

One of the first American groups to tour China after the Nixon-Kissinger-Chou En-Lai policy had gone into effect was a group of black teenagers from Chicago. Mayor Richard Daley wrote to Chou En-lai proposing such a visit and the Chinese quickly responded. The young people from Chicago had no political memory as regards China; they were as open-minded and unburdened by stories of the past as any such group could be. In every Chinese city they visited, the Chicago teenagers would ask the Chinese for their story: Who are you? What do you want to do? What does China want? The answers were perfectly uniform, in Canton, Shanghai, or Beijing—so similar and unvarying as to be utterly unbelievable. On the other hand, the Chinese never asked a question about the Americans, their lives, their schools, their families, or their country. Not one question. On one side there seemingly was no story; on the other, a patently false story.

One evening, at a pavilion on the edge of one of the lakes outside Suzhou, the Chicago teenagers gathered after dinner to sit on the walls of the veranda and talk quietly while looking

over the dark lake. Out of the guest villa came one of the attendants, an old man, alone. He came up to the group, looked over his shoulder to see if any of his colleagues might be nearby, and made a request: "Can you sing 'Anchors Aweigh'?" All that remained to him was a vestigial memory of a song sung by sailors at a *chiu chia* in a port town on the Yangtze long ago—a scene from the movie of Richard McKenna's novel *The Sand Pebbles*, now irrelevant and out of time and place.

Communism and the Cultural Revolution killed not only the stories between the nations, but China's own story. A new story now must be built, not rebuilt, from the ground up. Post-Tiananmen China is a schizophrenic country. The old ideology is dead, but still walks. A new ideology can be glimpsed, but is evanescent. The Chinese today face, almost as if anew, the challenge of choosing between, or trying to integrate the old dichotomy of, foreign science and Chinese essence. The "Faustian character of Western civilization" described by Benjamin Schwartz is at hand in China, the Promethean conquest of external nature and the enormous growth of social-political power within human society.³¹ But China will not, obviously, simply become a giant in the sense of the "Faustian" West. Yen Fu, in the end, turned back to Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu: "Idling in my little pavilion, I watch the clouds and listen to the rain." Nor is this classic expression of the Chinese cultural essence maintainable in the future. Long before the Three Gorges Dam is completed in 2009 gibbons will cease to howl along the Yangtze to inspire Chinese poets. Of related significance has been the struggle over the story of China's even more symbolic river. In the 1988 six-part television series *River Elegy*, the Yellow River story was pitted against the "Dragon" and "Great Wall" stories in a contest over which would prevail in the politics of remembrance.

The battle for the victorious version of the Tiananmen story continues. Were valiant youth, fighting for democracy, cruelly suppressed? Or was a mass disturbance seized by radicals whose intransigence no government could have been expected to tolerate?³² One American journalist has asserted, "There will be a war over which one is the right historical interpretation, and it's starting. This is a history that is howling to be told."³³

The United States, Japan, China: the story of each has been dismantled, fragmented, or shattered. As they contemplate each other in Northeast Asia, immediate geopolitical realities intrude. A withdrawing military power—the United States. A rising military power—China. A power that must decide—Japan. The stories between each and all fail any longer to convince. How

they construct their narratives with themselves and with each other will determine prospects for international peace and security over the next quarter century.

Set in the midst of this great power triangle, of course, is the Korean peninsula. Both North and South also have come to a time when their respective "paradigms" must change. The Communist bloc foundations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been pulled away. The "Free World" partnership of the Republic of Korea has faded from international politics.³⁴ To the geostrategists of the early twentieth century, Korea was either a vital foothold on the Asian mainland or "the dagger pointed at the heart of Japan."³⁵ The political culture of memory in Northeast Asia will unavoidably have to focus on Korea.

Winston Churchill supposedly declared that "memory is the enemy of policy." Today, when the issues of memory affect the major powers' perceptions not only of each other but of their own self-definition, memory can easily become the weapon of policy. Madsen in his conclusion, speaking only of the United States and China, calls for the creation of "powerful new master narratives" that would tie peoples together in a vision of "a new way forward to a just and prosperous world community."³⁶

There is no shortage of rhetoric by responsible leaders to this effect. Reality, however, is running in the other direction—toward more contentious rival versions of past, present, and future. Rather than positive "master narratives" that serve to bind a global community together, what is taking place—as has been the case throughout the modern era—is the creation or regeneration of primordial national, cultural, or ethnic myths to serve as weapons in the struggle with modernization and globalization.³⁷ It is not worthwhile remembering that past which cannot become a present, Kierkegaard said. What we face today, however, is the reality that almost any past, worthwhile or not, can become a present if remembered and recounted with a vengeance. At this point in history, when the narratives of major powers are exhausted, contentious matters of cultural memory and the politics of remembrance are more highly inflammatory than ever and must be clearly labeled "Handle with care!"

Notes

1. See W. Robert Connor, "Why Were We Surprised?" *American Scholar* 59, no. 3 (Summer 1990).

2. David M. Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984). See also Don Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

3. Michael Howard, as in Robert Conquest, *History, Humanity and Truth, The 1993 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities*. (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1993).

4. Richard Pipes, "The Fiasco of Sovietology," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 1 (1995): 160.

5. Laura Hanft Korobkin, "The Maintenance of Mutual Confidence: Sentimental Strategies at the Adultery Trial of Henry Ward Beecher," *Yale Journal of Law and Humanities* 7, no. 17 (Winter 1995): 1-48. See also the controversy over narrative and rhetoric in the law conducted in the pages of the *New Republic* (March 13, 1995, and April 10, 1995) in which Professor Alan M. Dershowitz of Harvard University vehemently declared himself to be "a strong critic of storytelling in the courts."

6. Donald N. McCloskey, *The Rhetoric of Economics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1985), and *If You're Smart: The Narrative of Economic Experts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

7. Paul R. McHugh, "What's the Story?" *American Scholar* 64, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 191-206.

8. Anthony Grafton and Suzanne Marchand, "Proof and Persuasion in History: A Preface," *History and Theory* 33, no. 4 (1994): 3.

9. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

10. Norma Thompson, *Herodotus and the Origins of the Political Community: Arion's Leap* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

11. David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). In the case of Revere's ride, the "fighting story" that has yet to be defeated is, of course, largely the doing of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whose poem continues to hold the imagination fast. For an examination of how a painting by Benjamin West did the same for the story of the death of British General James Wolfe on the Heights of Abraham, see Simon Schaama, *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* (New York: Vintage, 1991).

12. A counter to this trend appeared in 1995 in "Rabbit-ears Radio" on National Public Radio. Prominent entertainment personalities read classic American folktales, e.g., Robin Williams as Pecos Bill, and Garrison Keillor as Johnny Appleseed.

13. Harold Issacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958).

14. Milton Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes. An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 11.

15. A convenient point of departure could be 1962, the year of Thomas S. Kuhn's effort to demonstrate that a "science" cannot be fixed independently of the story (paradigm) chosen for its description. T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

1962). See also Paul Horwich, ed., *World Changes: Thomas Kuhn and the Nature of Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 4.

16. Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream: A Moral Inquiry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

17. The director of the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum resigned, citing "controversy and divisiveness" over the matter. See "Aide Quits over Enola Gay," *New York Times*, May 3, 1995, p. A19.

18. Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994).

19. Masaru Tamamoto, "Reflections on Japan's Postwar State," *Daedalus* 124, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 1-22. See also Kenzaburo Oe, "The Day the Emperor Spoke in a Human Voice," *New York Times Magazine*, May 7, 1995.

20. Buruma, *Wages of Guilt*.

21. Jonathan Spence, *Chinese Roundabout* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 293.

22. See the letter to the *Wall Street Journal* from the author, printed on April 22, 1995. Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1995).

23. Frances Fitzgerald, *America Revised* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1979).

24. Garry Wills, "The Visionary," *New York Review of Books*, March 23, 1995, pp. 6-7.

25. On the Korean War as an "American creation," see Bruce Cumings, ed., *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983).

26. "Japan and Asia: A Question of Balance," *Economist*, April 22, 1995, pp. 21-23.

27. Pearl Buck, *Fighting Angel* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1936), and John Hersey, *The Call* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

28. Ralph W. Page, *Dramatic Moments in American Diplomacy* (n.p., 1918), 176-183.

29. The classic gunboat story, in which Americans "protect" Chinese while actually losing control to them, is told by Richard McKenna in *The Sand Pebbles* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

30. Theodore H. White, *China: The Roots of Madness—A Documentary* (New York: Norton, 1968).

31. Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power. Yen Fu and the West* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

32. A *New York Times* article in April 1995 suggested that the Tiananmen students had a hidden strategy to provoke the authorities into violence; see Patrick Tyler, "Six Years after the Tiananmen Massacre, Survivors Clash Anew on Tactics," *New York Times*, April 30, 1995, p. 12. This was denied in a letter to the *Times* from one of the students, Chai Ling, on May 11, 1995.

33. Orville Schell, as interviewed by and quoted in Tyler, "Six Years after the Tiananmen Massacre."

34. During the 1994 World Cup competition a group of Korean businessmen based in California flew to Foxboro, Massachusetts, to watch

Korea play Bolivia. The Koreans were stunned with delight when they realized that the American fans were cheering for Korea to defeat the Latin American team. Korean fans read this as a sign that the Free World allies were still on the same side. American fans, when asked, said they simply were cheering for the underdog.

35. Russell H. Fifield and Etzel G. Percy, *Geopolitics in Principle and Practice* (Boston: Ginn, 1944), 98.

36. Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, 227. Interestingly, Madsen was a contributor to a major academic project in the 1980s aimed at renewing (or creating) an American narrative of political community. See Robert Bellah and associates, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985).

37. See Frederick Buell, *National Culture and the New Global System* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), esp. chapter 2, "Nostalgic Nationalism in Japan."



TREE of LIBERTY SOCIETY

Memory, Imagination, and National Myths

Lucian W. Pye

The question of national memories truly captures the mood of our times. In this season of confusion about where the nations of the world are heading, it seems necessary to get a firmer grip on the past even as we seek to foresee the future. We are constantly looking backward as we try to discern the shape of things to come. Barely a week goes by without another anniversary, everything from the ending of World War II to key points in the Vietnam War. Without a clear sense of the future we search the past for guidance, and so we seem to be driving forward by looking in the rearview mirror. Consequently we are in danger of being overtaken by what can only be called "post-ism," that is, defining our circumstances as being post-this or post-that: "post-cold war," "post-Deng Xiaoping," "post-colonial," "post-industrial society," "post-materialistic politics," "post-atonal music," "post-Marxism," "post-structuralism," "post-new institutionalism," "post-Freud," "post-Foucault," and, of course, "post-modern." Clifford Geertz has even added "post-post-modern" and Peter Drucker has introduced the theory of "post-capitalism." I have even come across "post-sècular" to describe the rise of fundamentalism abroad and the revival of religion in America. We might also add the concept of "post-knowledge" now that Forrest Gump has become such a hero.

Significantly, we do not have any "pre's" or "ante's" because it is so hard to see ahead in these confused times. In this "post-ideological era" we no longer have any strong convictions or degree of certitude about the future, so we cannot treat the future with the same confidence with which we explain the past. Hence we can no longer peer ahead with the same 20-20 vision that hindsight provides.

What I want to do is to suggest that a useful way of getting out of our bind of "post-isms" is to use a formula that focuses on the interrelationship between memory, imagination, and

mythmaking. This is a relationship that is fundamental to the problems of old societies that are seeking a modern sense of national identity and are therefore in need of a new basis of nationalism. Let me first explain the relationship and then try to demonstrate its utility for clarifying thinking about both East Asian relations and the state of nationalism in that region.

The Formula for Nationalism: Memory, Imagination, and Mythmaking

Memory and imagination are intimately associated in a complex and not always well-appreciated relationship.¹ The two can be mutually supportive in that memory calls for the fantasy play of imagination and imagination searches memory to get its building blocks. The more vivid the memory, the livelier the imagination. The two are also, however, bound together negatively so that the blanking out of memory inhibits reverie and thus paralyzes the imagination. The relationship is further compounded and takes on an added dimension when memory and imagination come together in a society's collective act of creatively constructing its bonding myths of national identity. These are the myths that support the constructive spirit of nationalism in that they provide the basis for a sense of national community and hence give legitimacy to the state. When memories are blocked and the collective imagination is frozen, the result is likely to be outbursts of xenophobia and quick distrust about the acts of others.

In recent years the relationship of memory and imagination has been a hot topic in clinical psychology with the debate about "delayed" versus "false" memories and the charges that psychiatrists have been implanting in their patients imagined memories of incest experiences. For the layman the issue has been whether the delayed memories involved "real" or "imagined" experiences. For the analysts the problem is whether mental health is possible if imagination is paralyzed by the blocking out of memory.

For our purposes there is no need to get entangled in this debate or to adjudicate the merits of the different sides, because we are interested not in issues of individual psychology but in matters of group psychology involving national sentiments and collective experiences. More specifically, we are interested in the role that collective memories play in shaping national imaginations in the historically critical processes of building the myths of

national identity that in turn are fundamental for the sense of legitimacy of governments. It is true that the imagined myths that are the content of nationalism usually involve some distortion of history and the glossing over of negative experiences. There is, however, a difference between remembering to forget and a conspiracy of silence, between choosing to ignore and a state of paralyzed imagination stemming from blocked memories.²

Memories are of fundamental importance for political development because they constitute, in vital and living form, the historical legacies of a people, which in turn give force to the myths of legitimacy of the country. It is their collective memory that binds a people together in their knowledge of having a shared set of historically significant experiences. It is memories, enlivened by imagination, that build the myths of a nation that have greater emotional substance and a higher level of truth than just the objective accounts of historians. National myths are thus objective factors in giving meaning to public life. In calling them myths we are not in any way denying their worth or significance. The fact that they may not accurately report actual historical events does not diminish their significance.³

Memories are important not just because they give vitality to the past and inform a people about what they have in common; they are also central to the most important driving forces of politics because it is memories that are basic to a people's claim to recognition, to their sense of pride and self-respect, and to their love of fame and glory. These are the sentiments that elevate national politics above the humdrum level of mere public policy options, above just pocketbook matters. What distinguishes local politics from national political life is precisely that at the national level there is a large ingredient of this element of pride, of the demand for recognition and a search for the heroic. That is to say, nationalism goes with national politics and is lacking in local politics. When this element is missing in a political system, government becomes mere administration and the people are ruled as though they were a colony.

When collective memories are suppressed and the national imagination is constrained, self-respect and pride are replaced by shame and humiliation. Instead of pride there is anger; instead of honor there is bitter resentment; instead of healthy nationalism there is xenophobia. When nationalism lacks a sense of history, it also tends to lack ideals, articulated values, and emotionally charged symbols. The only ties that can then bind

become those of blood, family, and race. Instead of inspiring ideals of nationhood, the people are left with only the mindless instincts of biological identity and ethno-nationalism. Consequently, they can only be aware of how they differ from the "others." They have nothing to project to the world that is worthy of the world's respect.

In short, a healthy sense of nationalism must be built upon a combination of not just what is unique about a people but also what others find in them that is admirable and worthy of respect. There thus needs to be a blending of the values of both the parochial and the cosmopolitan, the particular and the universal. Blood and race do not provide the universal values necessary to arouse respect and admiration in others. Without inspiring ideals, a nation is without any substantive content for the image it seeks to project in world affairs.

There are, of course, many reasons why national memories get blocked, repressed, or distorted. A new national leadership, especially one that is strongly ideologically motivated, may want to deny that there was anything good in the previous era. With its propaganda agenda dominating public discourse, such a leadership needs to blank out parts of the past. Memories may also be just too painful to be faced by the country as a whole. Or they may be too divisive so that if dwelt upon they would split the society. The divide can be between classes, or it can be simply geographical, generational, or political divisions of inordinate intensity. A weak leadership may feel threatened if memories are revived about more glorious times. Memories can also be suppressed because a people wants to concentrate on the immediate tasks of building a new future. The trouble, of course, is that the more troublesome the memory, the stronger the instinct to suppress it. Yet these are precisely the blocked memories that will cause serious problems for the collective imagination and for mythmaking.

East Asia's Slow, Gnawing Crises

Today, a profound and vexing problem for the countries of East Asia is that they all have accumulated a mass of painful memories, blocked memories, and false memories, which in their different ways are distorting and paralyzing the collective imaginations of their peoples. This is happening at the very time when East Asians need to tax their collective memories and imaginations in order to create new national myths that can

give substance to healthy forms of modern nationalism. As long as problems with memories cast a blanket over the free play and reverie of the collective imagination, the creative search for new and appropriate senses of national identity cannot easily take place. Before it is going to be possible for the people of China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan to define the ideals, values, and symbols they want to have as central to their myths of nationalism, they are going to have to become more at home with their collective memories and engage more freely and comfortably in shaping their collectively imagined national selves.

When it comes to collective memories, the East Asian countries are in a paradoxical fix, because they are populated by people who have grand and glorious traditions, but whose recent tumultuous histories have also left them with an extraordinary number of memory blockages. When people are timid about looking backwards, the old and the young lack a sense of common roots. This is a profoundly troublesome situation because the blockages are in fact mainly associated with the very events that have created the need for new myths of legitimacy for their governments. The result is a paralysis of imagination that in differing degrees is holding up political development. In particular, the paralysis is complicating and distorting the reformulation of appropriate ideals of nationalism for each of the countries. The crisis is most acute with respect to China, but problems exist for both Korea and Japan.

Although national myths are basic for domestic concerns about legitimacy, they also have serious consequences for interstate relations. This is because they provide the content of the nationalism that gets projected into world politics, and each state must react to the nationalisms of the others. It is a troubling fact that all of the countries of East Asia have radically different memories about the histories of the other states. Consequently, what should be shared, common memories turn out to be not at all the same. The Chinese have memories of Japan's role in the region quite different from those the Japanese have of themselves. Japanese and Koreans also have sharply different memories of their shared experiences.

When other countries fail to respect what a country idealizes in its past, or trivialize what is felt to be of great historical importance, there are bound to be tensions in the relations between them. When one country totally forgets events that are the bitter memories of another, the stage is set for future troubles. The refusal, for example, of the Japanese to recognize what their

army did in China can only be seen by the Chinese as a perverse and unconscionable act of arrogance and insensitivity.

Blocked memories can cause difficulties even when they do not involve traumatic events. For example, there are people in both Korea and Taiwan who might have ambivalent and far from entirely negative memories of Japanese rule, but they cannot articulate them because the Japanese in a perverse fashion have refused to acknowledge that they ever had an imperial era of colonial responsibilities. In contrast to the British or the French, who have special feelings for their former colonial countries, the Japanese seem to have no pride in what they left behind or in the accomplishments of their former subjects. This is especially perverse because Japan is the only former colonial power to be able to boast that all of its former colonies are becoming successful industrial democracies.

By seeking to wash their hands of the "evil times of the bad militarists," the current generation of Japanese have blocked from their memories their responsibilities in one of the most complex relationships known to human history, that of the colonial bonding of master ruler and client subject. This complicated love-hate relationship is in some respects analogous to the Oedipus complex in the individual's life history, for there is the desire to kill the "father" but also to love the "mother." By pretending that they have nothing to do with that past history, the Japanese have in a sense run away from their responsibilities as "parent." The colonial experience, with all of its negative and positive elements, has been critical in the building of new nationalisms throughout Asia and Africa. The struggle for independence and the craving to prove one's worth in the eyes of the former masters have been the essential foundations for articulating a new spirit of nationalism.

It is this constructive aspect of colonialism for the building of modern nation-states that sets colonialism off from the age-old practices of just conquering other peoples and exploiting them. Colonialism, as a part of the worldwide modernization process, involved planting the seeds of nation-building and the modernizing of subject societies. By not acknowledging their historic role, the Japanese have taken something precious from both Koreans and Taiwanese: their right to pride in their achievements, earned by gaining recognition in the eyes of their former master and mentor. By not keeping alive any memories of their role as colonial masters, the Japanese have left the Koreans with only the sense of having been "occupied," much as they might

have been occupied by Mongol conquerors in the precolonial era. Japan sent some remarkable governors to Taiwan; the record in Korea was not as good. But in both cases much was done to establish the infrastructure and to train the human talent essential for nation-building. The Japanese refusal to acknowledge its former colonial responsibilities has made it necessary for Koreans and Taiwanese to largely blank out from their public consciousness any detailed references to their colonial experiences. No wonder resentment, indeed hatred, against Japan has endured in both countries, and neither country has been able to use its colonial experiences in the building of its modern myths of nationalism.

With these general considerations about the relationship of the myths of nationalism and legitimacy to the problems of memory and imagination in mind, let us turn to a brief examination of the problems in the various East Asian countries.

China: A Great and Ancient History, Multiple Suppressed Recent Memories

Few peoples can claim as glorious a history as the Chinese. The wonders of the Sinic civilization stand out as one of the great achievements of the human race. Yet the Chinese also have more than 100 years of recent history that they have had to suppress, deny, distort, or blatantly falsify. The blockage of memories of the recent past has had the effect of dimming visions of the historic past. This is not the place to review the convoluted attempts of modern Chinese intellectuals to revive a national sense of greatness. Some have sought to reclaim the achievements of a distant past, to play up the accomplishments of the earlier dynasties, but their efforts have had little resonance for most Chinese. Rather, they seem only to provide proof of how long ago it was that Chinese civilization had vitality, and of how those achievements are now but a faint legacy. As Joseph Levenson brilliantly pointed out, the attempts to revive Confucianism only created a false, artificial tradition, something that is quite different in character from a living tradition.⁴

Other intellectuals have gone to the opposite extreme of nihilistically dismissing China's ancient past, calling it a crippling legacy, an obstacle that must be brushed aside in China's search for a modern national self. This was the spirited approach of the May Fourth generation that set out to suppress the past and to welcome the modern but entirely foreign ideas of

democracy and science. Then came the Communists, and for 40 years they have relentlessly attacked with all the powers of persuasion of the Party and state all the symbols and values of Confucianism, declaring them to be cursed "feudal legacies." Finally, there are the contemporary critics of Chinese traditions, who include the makers of the television program "The River Eulogy" and such social critics as Bo Yang and his *The Ugly Chinaman*, in which he asks how a civilization could ever have been called great when its people bound the feet of half the population, causing them to totter about, and then insisted that the result was erotically exciting.⁵

China's problems today are far worse, however, than they were when the May Fourth writers were holding forth or when Joseph Levenson wrote. Today the Chinese are faced with the unbearable pain of their recent history. The evidence is overwhelming that the Chinese simply cannot confront in a full and honest manner the details of their national experience during their own lifetimes. There is a taboo about speaking about the events in Tiananmen Square. Much more profound is the horrible problem of the Cultural Revolution, which has no parallel in all of human history. The Holocaust and Stalin's purges were the result of state policies and the disciplined use of the authority to command police power. In the Cultural Revolution it was citizen against citizen—neighbors, schoolmates, and officemates going at each other to the point of murder. It is too painful even today to ask what it was in the character of the Chinese people that allowed them to engage in such brutal practices. How was it possible to stir up such intense anger? How was it that pretended manifestations of "love of the Chairman" could have led to such beastly behavior? Some of those who were sent down to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution have written of their sufferings in the "broken literature" phase of the early reforms, but almost none have tried to explain why they caused harm to others during that period of madness. They have avoided guilt by playing up their own victimization.

In addition to the shame of the Cultural Revolution, there are all the other follies of the Mao era that the Chinese now need to suppress in their memories. Nobody quite has the courage to say outright that the 45 years of communism were a terrible mistake. Yet how can the country move ahead without first deciding what have been its mistakes? The Chinese have had to experience the shock of discovering that rather than leading the world into a future ruled by communism, they took the wrong path and are

now lagging behind not only the leading countries but nearly all the rest of Asia.

Just about every segment of Chinese society carries with it buried memories that are still too painful to confront. The intellectuals had the experience of suffering the Anti-Rightist Campaign, and to this day they are not sure whether it was all right to be a Rightist or whether it was proper to be safe as a Leftist. Nor are they sure whether it was better to have been falsely or rightly attacked as a Rightist. Either way it is something to be repressed from memory. The peasants have submerged memories of the Great Leap tragedy, during which they must all have known people among the 30 million who died in the famine that they knew had been caused by a stupid state that was at the very time bragging about its ability to feed its huge population like no other Chinese regime had ever done before.

This tremendous collective burden of suppressed memories has had profound consequences for the Chinese national psyche. It has inhibited the play of the collective imagination just at a time when the country needs to arrive at a new sense of national identity to replace the eroding role of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought as the basis for state legitimacy. Now is the time when the Chinese people should be engaged in a great national dialogue that would set out the values, ideals, and symbols they need before they can define their collective sense of national identity. But the repression of their memories means that there is no chance for the play of imagination necessary for the forming of a new myth of nationhood.

Instead of a healthy sense of collective pride and self-respect to energize their sense of nationalism, the Chinese are left with a predisposition to xenophobia. Unsure as they are about how they should honor their own self-image, the Chinese are also certain that others are not giving them the respect they deserve. It must be recognized that poisoned pride easily becomes hubris, and fear of humiliation becomes an angry backdrop in dealings with foreigners. The leadership banks on the idea that the simpleminded slogan "To Get Rich Is Glorious" can serve as an enduring basis for legitimacy for a great country. The society as a whole, however, seems to be without a moral compass. The Anti-Corruption Campaign that has become a part of the "post-Deng" succession struggle does speak to the public's awareness of the lack of any basis for public morality, but it does not provide the foundations for a new sense of legitimacy. Increasingly, the accumulation of troubles that is darkening the national mood in

China can be largely traced back to the paralysis of the Chinese collective imagination, which in turn stems from the extent of their blanked-out memories.

This is a particularly troublesome situation because China is in desperate need of building new myths of nationalism. It is assumed that nationalism will replace the Marxist ideology, but without any idealistic myths and a new set of national values Chinese nationalism will be nothing more than a form of racism—a nationalism based on blood and biology, without any inspiring visions or positive values that others can respect. Nobody should underestimate the bonding powers of racial identity for the Chinese. The record of investments by overseas Chinese in the mother country since the reforms is proof of how strongly ethnic Chinese feel their identity is linked to their “old home.” But the absence of any ideals as the basis of that identity means that there is a hollow quality in any attempt to profess a sense of Chinese nationalism.

Japan: A Bureaucracy but Not a Proud State

Japan, too, has had a loss of memory problem. For more than 50 years the Japanese people have acted as though they had no recollection of having started a major war and then of losing it. The American occupation gave them a constitution, but they remain unsure of what to do with it. Should they amend it or not? Any sense of guilt has been overcome by a combination of basking in the spotlight of victimhood because of Hiroshima and taking pride in their economic achievements. Forgetting what they have done to others, the Japanese easily slip into the role of the worthy but underappreciated country.

In the Japanese case, suppressed memories have produced an extraordinary paradox. On the one hand, bureaucrats seem to be running and regulating much of national life, but on the other hand, the Japanese have little attachment to the state as an ideal. As Masaru Tamamoto has observed, “It is difficult to elucidate the image of the state held by the Japanese themselves. Lacking solid conceptual form, it is a bewildering and tangled image. . . . For much of the postwar era, a pervasive anti-state ideology inhibited even the use of the word state, *kokka*, in mainstream political discourse.” According to Tamamoto, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone “once complained that as far as the Japanese are concerned there is no state.”⁶ Few countries can match Japan in its degree of homogeneity, its sense of common racial identity, and its level of community and group conformity. Yet there is

also a missing sense of what the Japanese state represents. The emperor is no longer the symbol of the collective identity. Japanese often find it embarrassing to suggest that the national anthem should be sung on what should be public ceremonial occasions. There is general ambivalence over what the military can and should do.

Without a vision of the nation, all politics is indeed local. The Japanese capacity for intense loyalties to a collective, which once fueled the imperial conquests, has since defeat been directed to identifying with one's company. The Japanese "salaryman" has given to his company what earlier generations gave to their nation as a state.⁷ Japanese intellectuals are not sure whether they should take pride in their country's having put aside nationalistic passions, but then they wonder whether they may not be just reintroducing a sense of Japanese exceptionalism by suggesting that this could be the case.

By blanking out the traumas of the past, the Japanese people as a whole have been able to define for themselves a world in which they are virtuous and without the sins and defects that they think they see in other countries. By seeing themselves as somehow totally unrelated to the "bad militarists" of the war years, the Japanese find it only natural that the past should be forgotten by all others, and they genuinely feel that it is really bad form to bring up Nanking and Pearl Harbor. By trying to wipe the historical slate clean, the Japanese have, as we have seen, even denied the era of their colonial responsibilities and thereby denied both the Koreans and the Taiwanese the chance to develop their respective memories of the complex relationships of the colonial experience. The Japanese have thus forced others into either silence or exaggerated fits of hatred.

For the Japanese, if there is a past it does not have to go beyond Hiroshima; moreover, being the only victims of atomic bombing should absolve them from any need for guilt for their own deeds. Forgetting the past only sets the stage for claiming the future by holding that they are ready to surpass their one-time American mentors. The impressive Japanese achievements of the postwar years rest, however, on rather unsure foundations because they are not related to a shared idealization of the Japanese state. Pride and shame seem to blend. One moment the Japanese are enthusiastic about wanting to say "no," but in the next they wonder why should they want to say "no."

This ambivalence between pride and shame ties the Japanese in knots as they debate whether they should "apologize" for former actions. By not remembering the full history, the Japanese

are left with only the stark, symbolic, and essentially black-and-white choices of either apologizing or not, and because neither captures the full truth, neither is satisfactory.

Thus, just as with the Chinese, there is a disquieting element in the Japanese national mood. They do not seem to know what to make of nationalism because they have not found a basis for building a new and modern sense of national identity. In the past, hypernationalism turned out to be a disaster and hence they want to forget it, but they also know that there should be an honorable kind of patriotism even though they have not as yet been able to determine what shape it should take. There is thus a myth waiting to be created. But it cannot be formed until the collective imagination has been freed from the shackles of blocked memories.

Korea: A Doubly Divided Society

Korea seems to be a society that does not know which way to turn in its search for a narrative upon which to base any new myths of nationalism. The traditions of old have lost their hold on the current generations. The Yi dynasty is no more a model for modern Korea than the Qing dynasty would be for China. The colonial period is, as we have seen, too blanked out from memory, and the post-independence period has been too chaotic to be of much constructive use. There are, however, two dominant themes that complicate the thinking of Koreans about their national identity. The first is the impossible problem of the division between North and South Korea, and the second is a massive generation gap that is the product of South Korea's astonishingly rapid pace of industrialization.

During the era of the cold war the division of Korea neatly matched the ideological division of the world and gave both Koreas a sense of being significant international actors. The South could picture itself as being in the forefront of the world struggle, even though its autocratic practices did not exactly make it a model of democracy. Yet, ironically, just as South Korea became more of a democracy the cold war ended, and the country has been left with no clear direction to turn to in its search for national identity and myths of nationalism. Everyone is expected to proclaim the slogan goal of reunification as the unquestioned top priority for the nation. Yet nobody can say what a reunited Korea would or should look like. The focus of the debate cannot

rise above the level of tactics for achieving reunification. Thus there is no place for higher visions or ideals. There seems to be a magical belief that the act of reunification will in itself instantly give Koreans a new and brilliant sense of self-identity. Thus the goal of reunification becomes an excuse for not moving ahead in creating a set of national myths for South Korea, much as the fear of invasion from the North during the cold war was an excuse for South Korea to hold back on becoming less autocratic and more democratic. The attempts of the military to impose a nationalistic ideology on the people have not outlasted the cold war. Now the postponement of the search for a new set of myths of national identity has made the goal of reunification into nothing more than an appeal to racial identity without any ideals.

The problem is compounded because Korea is also a dramatic case of how rapid social and economic change can produce a nearly unbridgeable gap in generational orientations. Young Koreans have grown up in a world totally different from the world their elders knew. The memories of the older generation that go back to Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War have little meaning for young Koreans who have lived their entire lives in an ever more prosperous society. Neither the traditions of the old society nor the hardships of poverty and war have any meaningful significance for young Koreans. Older Koreans have complex memories of both the humiliation of the Japanese colonial period, when they had to speak Japanese and assume Japanese names, and their feelings of pride and satisfaction over their successes in the colonial society. Older Koreans who adapted effectively to the Japanese-sponsored system know that now they would be called traitors if they confessed to having had any positive sentiments about their accomplishments during the colonial period. The younger Koreans know that they are expected to hate the Japanese, but in fact Japanese popular culture and technology have a certain fascination for many of them.

To appreciate this generational gap, just consider the much smaller gap that the electronic revolution has created in Western societies where the young are at home with the computers that intimidate the old. If there is no teenager in the neighborhood, older people are helpless with regard to programming their VCRs. Whiz kid hackers are operating in a world that their elders cannot fully comprehend, and consequently the young have a sense that the older generation has little to teach them. A 28-year-old in Singapore is able to manipulate billions of dollars

in various markets and bring down a venerable British banking house whose senior officials did not fully understand what he was doing.

The gap in comprehension between the generations in the Korean case is equivalent to a massive memory loss. This is because the wisdom of the older generation cannot be passed down to the young, who feel that they must set their own standards and adhere to their own rules of life. On the positive side this does mean that there is less trauma over how to relate the old cultural traditions to modern world standards, which is a problem that has plagued most of the other countries of Asia. In a sense the cultural slate has been wiped clean. Politically it is possible that Korea will be able to practice democratic politics in a bolder and more straightforward manner than many other Asian countries. Yet the generational gap still means that the country cannot escape the problems that stem from its lack of a coherent set of collective memories.

Without any significant models upon which to build new myths of national identity, the Koreans seem to be in a contradictory state. In one respect they seem totally open to the world, easily adjusting to the international economic system and quick to pick up new technologies—true cosmopolitans. Yet in another respect their lack of a coherent sense of modern national identity has left them turning inward with no close associations with any other country and a tendency to see themselves as victims, still in a sense a “hermit kingdom.” The signs are there that the Korean sense of bonding is based more on blood than on ideals. Indeed, the appeal of reunification is nothing more than the appeal of blood and family.

A Secular-Based Civilization's Paradoxical Problems with Modernization

As we noted at the beginning, the countries of East Asia have all had acute problems with blocked memories. This may have causes beyond the tumultuous and chaotic history of the region in the last century and a half. The problems may in fact stem from some of the deeper and more profound characteristics of their shared Confucian tradition. If we make even a brief comparison of the Confucian civilization with the two other major contending civilizations, the Islamic and the Western, it is striking that each has quite different fundamental foundations. This

in turn may in part explain why they differ in their adjustment to the modern condition.⁸

The Islamic civilization is manifestly based on a religion. Indeed, without its religious dimension there would be no Islamic civilization, in that aside from Islam the cultures of the Muslim countries are quite different from each other. This fundamental fact helps to explain both why the Islamic countries have had such a difficult time in establishing secular governments and why they are under constant threat from fundamentalist movements.

The West, on the other hand, is distinctive because it has the dual foundations of both a religion and a distinct secular culture. Broadly speaking, the Western tradition was built upon a complicated balancing act between the sacred and the secular, church and state, science and religion, and the principle of "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and unto God what is God's." The combination, which has not always been free of tensions, has given the West the possibility of being pragmatic with respect to secular concerns while retaining an appreciation for the importance of unquestioning acceptance of some higher, and essentially sacred, principles.

Confucian civilization, in contrast to the other two, was strikingly secular, making almost no claims to a sacred dimension. It is true that there was the concept of the mandate of heaven for the rulers and the practice of ancestor worship for the people, but the mandate concept hardly constituted a religion, and ancestor worship tended only to reinforce the sovereignty of family and blood ties without providing any generalizable values or ideals. It is also true that Japan had, in addition to Confucian values, a tradition of a sacred emperor and Shintoism as a state religion, but this ended with the defeat in World War II.

Without a sacred dimension and depending largely on secular values, Confucian civilization became, paradoxically, highly vulnerable once it was exposed to a dynamically changing world. This might first seem odd because the ultimate test of secular values is that of utility, efficiency, and effectiveness, all of which are basic to modern culture. But the problem was that the very secular nature of Confucianism left it totally exposed to the secular dimensions of Western civilization and without a distinctive sacred dimension. Whereas the sacred lies beyond questioning, the secular can be challenged by rationality. A true secular society is thus one that in theory should be able to adapt readily

to whatever is the most efficient. It would thus be a veritable model of a market-oriented culture. On the other hand, what is sacred is, of course, removed from the crass test of mere efficiency, utility, and the market.⁹ Yet history would seem to suggest that without a solid sacred dimension, Confucian civilization lacked an anchor that could give its people the degree of security and self-confidence essential for coping with fundamental change. Without protection from rational criticism for some key elements of their culture, everything became exposed to second-guessing and to the pragmatic test of efficiency and effectiveness. Thus we have a strange, paradoxical contradiction: the essentially secular Confucian civilization turns out to have had severe problems adapting to modernization, which is also an essentially secular culture, because it lacked adequate sacred foundations.

It is therefore quite likely that the essentially secular basis of the Confucian tradition contributed to the serious problems the East Asian countries have had in identifying what should be precious and beyond questioning in the parochial elements of their national identities. Without recourse to a higher set of sacred values, the Confucian cultures have had to make do with largely pragmatic values, which they have had to arbitrarily treat as being beyond questioning. Such values can provide the framework for a distinctive way of life, but they do not ensure the unquestioning faith that a religion provides. That is to say, it is not easy to transform what is merely secular into the sacred. This was what the early Chinese reformers sought to do when, confronted with the challenge of the West, they tried to identify some values as being of the "essence" of Chinese civilization, and not just utilitarian values, which they thought characterized Western technology. But in the end, it turned out that all of their values were in fact rational or, as we are calling them, secular. Without the shield of a religious identity, the whole structure of Confucianism was challenged on rational grounds. Caught in this dilemma, Asians have shown a tendency, which we have noted, of going to the extremes of either trying to artificially revive dead sentiments or nihilistically denouncing all of the past. In either case there are blocked memories and thus a problem for the collective imagination in creating new myths of national identity.

It may be possible for societies that have the heritage of a strong secular civilization to get along for some time with only a pragmatic, make-do basis for community and by rejoicing over

their materialistic, economic progress. But in the longer process of history people need to have a higher sense of idealism, a surer basis for pride and self-esteem, and this can only come from the process of sustaining and revitalizing their collective myths of self-identity. In time each of the East Asian countries will have to surmount these problems of memory, imagination, and myth-making. Until that happens there is going to be a tentative and vulnerable quality in both regional relations and domestic politics in East Asia. With the peoples of the countries unsure of what their nations should represent in the world, there is an element of fragility in the politics of the region.

In the meantime, it is going to be interesting to observe how the different processes of mythmaking are taking shape, what tendencies are surfacing, and what hints of ultimate directions can be spotted. Eventually the Chinese will certainly find a new basis for their collective pride that goes beyond just material progress. The same will be true for the Japanese and the Koreans. Political repression in China has inhibited the process of dialogue that will be necessary before the society as a whole can define what it wants as its new ideals of nationalism and legitimacy so as to replace the now nearly meaningless vision of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought.

In both Japan and Korea the door stands open for such a popular dialogue, but as yet the people are too sensitive to the danger of reviving painful memories and too afraid of exposing how divided they are for a people who are supposed to be conformists. So the process of finding a new sense of national identity is stalled. There is, however, progress in Japan, as leaders seek ways of confronting the past while preserving present values as they deal with the neighbors they once mistreated and as they confront awkward anniversaries relating to World War II. Certainly there is a powerful popular urge in Japan to become just another "normal country." The redefining of national myths for Korea is, as we have noted, complicated by the fact that people are unsure whether without reunification it is possible to articulate a new basis for nationalism. It does not seem right for South Korea to try to articulate a new spirit of Korean nationalism without the involvement of the North. At the same time, however, the practical problems of reunification seem more horrendous with the passing of every year because the two parts seem to be growing only further and further apart.

In the long run there are, however, grounds for optimism because all of the East Asian societies have rich folk traditions

that could provide the content of healthy, new national myths of identity. As the process of popular politics takes stronger hold in the region, the result should be an ever-increasing tendency to appeal to elements in the various folk cultures. Perhaps out of these folk cultures the East Asian countries will find the essential elements of their respective parochial identities that they can then combine with modern, universal standards to create new national identities. The region should then become a more stable place as the countries use the formula of memories, imagination, and mythmaking to fashion for themselves constructive, healthy national identities.

Notes

1. The following analysis of the relationship between memory and imagination is based on Evelyn K. Pye, "Memory and Imagination: Placing Imagination in the Therapy of Individuals with Incest Memories," in Judith L. Alpert, ed., *Delayed Memories of Childhood Abuse* (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1995). For how memory operates to create "myths" in individual lives, see John Kotre, *White Gloves: How We Create Ourselves through Memory* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

2. On the relationship of imagination and nationalism, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2d ed. (London: Verso, 1991). On the role of history in nationalism, see Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

3. A myth can be understood as being somewhat analogous to a theory, in that a theory involves the generalizing of particulars to the furthermost extent possible, while a national myth involves the generalizing of individual memories and histories to the limit that people find acceptable. The sport of some revisionist historians is to expose any inaccuracies in national myths, but such undertakings rarely have any significant consequences because myths rest upon foundations quite different from those of the revisionists.

4. Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958, 1964, 1965). See also Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

5. Bo Yang, *The Ugly Chinaman and the Crisis of Chinese Culture*, translated and edited by Don J. Cohen and Jing Qing (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992). In the contorted history of the modern Chinese intellectuals' attempts to come to terms with China's awesome history, what at one time is seen as a positive development can at the next be denounced. For example, I was recently informed that today some Chinese intellectuals are attacking the entire vernacular (*bai-hua*) movement because they claim that it

severed the connection with the grand tradition of Chinese poetry that goes back to the great Tang poets. These current conservative intellectuals seem to forget that not much great poetry was produced during the Qing dynasty.

6. Masaru Tamamoto, "Reflections on Japan's Postwar State," *Daedalus* 124, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 1-2.

7. Change is, however, coming to Japan but at an uncertain rate, and redefining nationalism may be coming later rather than sooner. See, for example, Frank McNeil, *Democracy in Japan: The Emerging Global Concern* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1994), and Clayton Naff, *About Face: How I Stumbled onto Japan's Social Revolution* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994).

8. Samuel P. Huntington in his "clash of civilizations" argument identifies the three main civilizations as the Western, Islamic, and Confucian, and then notes that Japan is in a sense a civilization unto itself and not just a part of the Confucian. See Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

9. The concept of sacred and secular that I am employing here follows the analysis of Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils in *Toward a General Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951) and Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).



TREE of LIBERTY SOCIETY

Same Strait, Different Memories

Chas. W. Freeman, Jr.

On February 28, 1947, a minor, nonpolitical incident in Taipei led to a bloodbath in Taiwan in which thousands of the island's inhabitants perished at the hands of Kuomintang (KMT) forces. The KMT had occupied Taiwan and proclaimed the island's reannexation to China less than two years before. The KMT's brutality was born of fear that the rolling victory of its Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rivals on the mainland might have extended to the island.

For decades thereafter, public mention of the 2-28 incident was taboo in Taiwan. The millions of officials, military personnel, and others who had fled the fall of the Republic of China (ROC) on the mainland to seek refuge in Taiwan recalled it as a Communist-inspired internal security problem, justifying rule by martial law. Propagandists in the People's Republic of China (PRC) inaccurately echoed this view by attempting, although without success, to portray 2-28 as a Communist-led popular uprising. Politically active natives of the island remembered it as a symbol of martyrdom and repression by an undemocratic regime imposed on them by transient outsiders from the China mainland. For "mainlanders" and "Taiwanese" alike, 2-28 long stood as a symbol of alienation, division, and competing nationalisms.

On February 28, 1995, however, mainlanders and Taiwanese joined in commemorating 2-28 at Taipei's Suchow University. They were addressed by Chang Hsiao-yen, a highly regarded mainlander. Chang is minister of overseas Chinese affairs, but everyone in Taiwan knows him also as the grandson of Chiang Kai-shek and the son of Chiang Ching-kuo, whose presidency of the ROC on Taiwan laid the basis for democratic rule by the Taiwanese majority. Chang spoke with poetic eloquence in Mandarin, the official language, although, like many of his generation, he is at home in the Taiwanese dialect.

Minister Chang began:

We have come here today from different places. We may have been born in different provinces, regions, and cities; we may speak different dialects. We have each grown up in different circumstances. We may have different religious faiths. We may also have different political philosophies, belong to different age groups, and be of different sexes. We may have different appreciations of the value of human life and of fate or the explanations for these. But, we would not have gathered here today if we did not have a common concern and love for this piece of earth we now stand upon—this piece of earth we depend upon for our survival and our growth.

Chang closed his remarks with an appeal to his audience to transcend their disparate memories of 2-28 and to replace them with a common realization that

we all belong to this piece of earth. We all belong to this nation. Among us, there are no longer any "transients"; there can no longer be any "outsiders." . . . We must enable our children and our children's children to recall with pride this time in which their parents and their parents' parents committed ourselves to forgive, to atone, and to love so that they might . . . [live] free of alienation, in mutual respect, and in the warmth of companionship.

Minister Chang did not describe Taiwan as his homeland, as a subsequent generation may do. Nevertheless, his appeal to substitute a sense of common identity and destiny for the malice of the past dealt movingly, and skillfully, with the reality that differing memories of the same events can divide a people. Memories inspire the myths by which nations coalesce or break apart. They are the hidden root of political discourse. They shape a people's vision of the future even as they define its view of the past and present. Incompatible memories lead to incompatible perspectives. The story of Taiwan is woven from the different memories of Chinese on Taiwan and on the mainland. It is told differently in Tokyo and in yet another way in Washington. This story is understood one way in Beijing and in quite another in Taipei and Kaohsiung. It seems certain to enter a new chapter, and perhaps an ending, over the coming year. It is uncertain whether the story of Taiwan will have a happy ending and, if so, for whom.

The Taiwanese Experience of China

The Chinese ancestors of the pre-ROC Taiwanese came to Taiwan in trickles and waves over centuries. China was then under foreign (Manchu) rule. Han Chinese had yet to conceive of the idea of the nation-state, still less be animated by nationalism. The Chinese who came to Taiwan were loyal to family and to clan; larger polities were for them an irksome reality to be avoided as much as possible. They sought land and a life free of famine and political turbulence as well as the taxes and exactions of Chinese officialdom. In Taiwan they found a frontier area nominally governed from Fuzhou but, in practice, beyond the de facto jurisdiction of the emperor's officials.

Beijing's casual attitude toward the island was exemplified in its response to the 1871 murder (and subsequent eating) by aborigines of Japanese sailors shipwrecked on Taiwan's eastern coast. In July 1873, after two years of Japanese protests and demands that the Chinese government punish the perpetrators, Beijing informed the Japanese foreign minister that China had no jurisdiction over Taiwan's tribal areas and no intention of asserting it. Only after a Japanese expeditionary force had occupied these areas did China claim sovereignty over all of Taiwan and send its own forces to deal with the situation in Taiwan's eastern marches. Beijing's belated interest led it to discover that Taiwan's Chinese-inhabited areas, which were experiencing a surge of immigration from the mainland, were also in a state of lawlessness. In 1885, Beijing elevated Taiwan to the status of a separate province. Taiwan Province soon led China in economic modernization. Taipei was the first Chinese city to have electricity; Taiwan was the first Chinese province to have a railroad. The island's experience of effective Chinese government was, however, brief. Nine years later, following China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Taiwan and its people were ceded to Japan. This transfer of territory and people aroused less indignation among China's ruling elite than did the simultaneous recognition of Japanese suzerainty in Korea.

For 50 years, until Japan's surrender in August 1945, Taiwan's people were subjects of the Japanese emperor, under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The Japanese efficiently suppressed sporadic resistance on Taiwan from both Chinese and—with special brutality—aborigines. Japanese policies favoring assimilation of Taiwan's largely illiterate peasant and tribal population rapidly succeeded. By the 1930s, many

Taiwanese were living in Japanese-style houses, eating Japanese food, and reading Japanese newspapers. Some were winning distinction in Japanese universities. Taiwan's economy developed along with that of Japan, giving Taiwanese an economic infrastructure, level of literacy, sophistication in modern ways, and standard of living superior to that of all but a privileged few on the China mainland. Tens of thousands of Taiwanese demonstrated loyalty to the emperor by serving as support troops and camp followers during the Japanese armed forces' invasion of the Chinese mainland. Many young Taiwanese gave their lives as kamikaze pilots in the last stages of Japan's defense against advancing U.S. forces.

Given the extent to which Taiwan had been "Japanized," the KMT forces sent to regain Chinese sovereignty over the island treated Taiwanese with both hostility and envy. Taiwanese therefore experienced the initial period of their "recovery" by China as a harsh occupation by a brutal and unsophisticated alien military, accompanied by widespread confiscations of property. This atmosphere set the stage for the 2-28 incident and a decade of severe repression of Taiwanese by the KMT authorities, following their own ejection from the China mainland. Taiwanese were treated like a conquered population and regarded with suspicion. Land reform succeeded in KMT-ruled Taiwan in the 1950s, as it had not earlier on the KMT-ruled mainland, in no small measure because the lands of a disempowered Taiwanese elite were at issue, rather than those of a landlord class with significant ties to KMT officials.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the KMT sought energetically to reasimilate the Taiwanese to Chinese ways. It taught them Mandarin, while banning discourse in Japanese. It tutored them in Chinese culture and inculcated them with Chinese nationalism. The KMT indoctrinated Taiwanese in its vaguely socialist ideology of *san min zhuyi* (Three Principles of the People). It instructed them in its version of twentieth-century Chinese history, introducing them to events they had previously seen through Japanese rather than Chinese eyes. The KMT filled them with fear of the CCP and wariness of Beijing's perfidy. It conscripted Taiwanese to fight in a renewal of the civil war it had lost to the CCP. It sought to inspire them to be willing to lay down their lives to reunite Taiwan with the China mainland. The KMT tolerated no dissent from its dogma. Despite the ROC on Taiwan's economic and military dependence on the United States, it brushed aside American expressions of concern over its harsh treatment of

Taiwanese and dissidents of both Taiwan and China mainland origin.

By the late 1960s, Taiwanese had been at least superficially re-Sinicized. Literacy in Chinese and fluency in Taiwan's peculiarly accented version of Mandarin were virtually universal among those under the age of 50. A modernized Chinese culture in which Taiwanese were full participants was emerging. Taiwan's dispossessed landlords became a newly prosperous entrepreneurial class, as the American advisers who helped craft land reform on the island had hoped they would. Living standards rose rapidly as Taiwan liberalized and opened its economy and became one of the world's great manufacturing centers. Politics began to relax. The KMT's leadership remained with its mainlander old guard but its membership began to be heavily Taiwanese. Younger mainlanders increasingly identified their future with Taiwan rather than with the restoration of KMT rule over the mainland. Many left for a more secure future in the United States or Canada. Taiwanese, too, migrated to the United States in increasing numbers. Agitation for rule of Taiwan by Taiwanese rather than mainlanders ("Taiwan independence") thus added a secure American rear area to its original base in Japan.

On Taiwan itself, however, a process of mutual assimilation was manifestly under way between Taiwanese and mainlanders. Taiwanese were slowly advancing into positions of authority. When Chiang Ching-kuo succeeded his father, Chiang Kai-shek, as president of the ROC in 1975, he clearly recognized that the island's future depended on the participation of its Taiwanese majority in government. He steadily increased the political role of Taiwanese, suspended martial law, and laid the basis for a transition to a locally elected democracy. At his death in 1988, the presidency passed to a Taiwanese, Lee Teng-hui. Taiwan had become a boisterous democracy.

By the 1980s, Taiwan's living standards exceeded those of many European countries. A relaxation of tensions in the Taiwan Strait, brokered by U.S. policy, made it possible for Taiwanese to travel to the China mainland to see for themselves what they had only read about and seen in old films. They marveled at the mainland's size and its ubiquitous evidence of past Chinese greatness. They were dismayed by its squalor and backwardness. They saw the mainland's CCP-directed political system as an extreme version of the KMT rule they had endured in the 1950s. The experience reinforced both their pride in their Chinese heritage and their sense that that heritage had been

renovated and improved in Taiwan. It added to their pride in their own achievements and to their determination to see these achievements acknowledged. It also aggravated an identity crisis born of a century in which Taiwanese have been successively nationals of Japan, of a mythical China ruled from Taipei, and now of an internationally unrecognized, democratic polity in which the transition from Chinese mainland dominance of politics to Taiwanese control is soon to be completed.

The growing familiarity of Taiwanese with the mainland reminded them that for 96 of the past 100 years Taiwanese have had no political connection with Chinese across the strait. This century has culminated in Taiwan's development of a distinctive, but still undefined, identity as a modernized, democratic polity in which Taiwanese, as well as mainlanders on Taiwan, take pride and satisfaction. As Taiwanese prepared for the parliamentary elections of 1995 and presidential elections in 1996, they were sure, whatever the outcome, that they would assume full control of their island's government for the first time. The idea of surrendering some of this hard-won political power to yet another group of mainlanders through reunification with a larger Chinese polity had little appeal to them. Increasingly, Taiwanese politicians from the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) openly advocated a declaration of Taiwan's independence from China. They argued, without effective refutation either from the ruling KMT or from Washington, that Beijing could not act militarily to prevent Taiwan's independence, despite its pledge to do so, because the United States was committed to defend Taiwan against attack from the China mainland. If the PRC did attempt military action, they asserted, American forces were bound to defend Taiwan's right of self-determination.

Mainlanders on Taiwan View China and Taiwan

As KMT rule collapsed in 1949, most mainlanders arrived in Taiwan in a state of shock. The KMT had just been defeated in savage fighting with its CCP rivals. The arriving mainlanders had lost their homes and been separated from their wives, children, and extended families. The bulk of them were soldiers, many of them peasants with no real commitment to Chiang Kai-shek or his KMT. Not a few had been forced to Taiwan at gunpoint by their officers. They knew little, if anything, about Taiwan or the Taiwanese. Most were unaware of 2-28. Few of those who were

aware of the incident and its aftermath had any reason for questioning the KMT's version of events or its actions to deal with Taiwanese unrest.

These mainlanders arrived to live amongst a Taiwanese populace that was sullen, if not actively hostile, after four years of harsh repression. The new arrivals were lodged with Taiwanese, willy-nilly, throughout the island. They saw themselves as transients. Taiwanese hopefully regarded them as such. Everyone expected the CCP soon to extend its victory in the Chinese civil war to Taiwan. The newspapers were full of horror stories about the CCP's advances on Taiwan as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) rolled up KMT resistance across the strait. Arriving mainlanders found Taiwanese more rural than urban and more Japanese than Chinese in their habits. Mainlanders met Taiwanese resentment of their presence with contempt for their crude and uncultured (un-Chinese) Taiwanese hosts.

Kim Il Sung's surprise attack on South Korea on July 25, 1950, brought the KMT and Taiwan an unexpected reprieve. The warships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet took up station in the Taiwan Strait for the alleged purpose of preventing either party to the Chinese civil war from attacking the other. No mainlander on Taiwan, any more than the Communist rulers in Beijing, was fooled by this pretense of U.S. neutrality. They knew that the KMT's armies were barely capable of mounting a defense of the island, let alone taking the offensive against the China mainland. The KMT, which had blamed the absence of U.S. support for the CCP's victory in the Chinese civil war on the mainland, found itself even more dependent on U.S. military and economic backing for its survival on Taiwan. This support was not clearly offered until the PRC's intervention to prevent a United Nations (UN) victory over Kim Il Sung in Korea. That decision in Beijing led to a decision in Washington to provide generous American economic and military aid to the ROC on Taiwan.

The KMT's weak position on Taiwan forced Chiang Kai-shek to heed advice from Americans and economic technocrats he had excluded from decision-making when he ruled the mainland. Sound KMT policies built on earlier Japanese investment in infrastructure and human resources to lay the basis for steadily escalating economic growth in Taiwan. Throughout the 1950s, however, mainlanders on Taiwan lived in fear of conquest by the PLA, in apprehension of the Taiwanese, and in resentment of American tutelage. These fears were reflected in Taiwan's brutal internal security controls.

By the mid-1960s, Taiwan's economic success had ended the need for U.S. aid. Fading fears of attack from the mainland or insurrection by Taiwanese allowed the KMT regime to relax the enforcement of martial law. The passage of time had helped mainlanders and Taiwanese to learn to live with each other. Taiwanese had learned Mandarin and increasing numbers of mainlanders born on the island could speak the Taiwanese dialect of Chinese. Intermarriage was increasingly common. In the economy, mainlanders increasingly found themselves working for Taiwanese. Even in the armed forces, Taiwanese officers began to be promoted to positions of command over mainlanders.

Some mainlanders had come to accept Taiwan as their home and to identify their fortunes with it. For many in the older generation, however, Taiwan remained a place of sojourn in which the dream of return to the China mainland provided the principal source of hope. For KMT soldiers separated from their wives and children on the mainland and unable to find brides on Taiwan, this dream had particular force. For these mainlanders, the international community's switch over the course of the 1970s to recognition of Beijing, rather than Taipei, as the government of China was especially traumatic. This trauma culminated in the American announcement, on December 15, 1978, of normalization with the PRC (which meant the corresponding abnormalization of relations with the ROC on Taiwan).

Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, mainlanders were forced to accept the increasing economic and political ascendancy of the ROC's Taiwanese majority and to adjust to minority status in the island's evolving polity. The opening of the PRC to travel that followed Washington's normalization of relations with Beijing allowed Taiwan's mainlanders to rediscover their homeland. Many of them were startled by their encounter with its primitive realities. These realities had the effect of awakening them to the extent to which they had become accustomed to living in Taiwan's modernized Chinese society. Many had pined for the wives and children they had abandoned during the KMT's panicked flight to Taiwan and had dreamed of returning to their homes. But after viewing the PRC at first hand, few chose to return permanently to their mainland points of origin.

Mainlanders on Taiwan had prided themselves on the idea that the PRC had repudiated Chinese tradition while the ROC on Taiwan had preserved it. Their visits to the mainland showed them that Taiwan's adjustments of Chinese tradition to fit the requirements of a universally educated, industrial society had,

surprisingly, been much more successful and, to some extent, gone farther than the mainland's. The appeal of reunification, however loosely contrived, with the China mainland was tempered by the desire of Taiwan's mainlanders to preserve the advantages hard work and great achievement had gained for them in Taiwan. Many returned from visits to the mainland recommitted to the continued development of Taiwan as a separate Chinese society from which modern ideas and practices might be disseminated to modernize the rest of China. Reunification should be realized, they believed, only when China's transformation into a society more closely resembling that of Taiwan was well advanced. As the 1995 legislative and 1996 presidential elections loomed in Taiwan, most mainlanders continued to support the principle of reunification on such vague and indefinite terms, while rejecting any declaration of independence from China by Taiwan as both inappropriate and unnecessarily risky.

Chinese on the Mainland Remember the KMT

The CCP's victory in the Chinese civil war, and its proclamation of the founding of the PRC on October 1, 1949, ended the KMT's presence on the China mainland. Many suffered as the CCP consolidated its rule over the mainland, but for most Chinese the establishment of the PRC marked a welcome end to a century of disorder, foreign domination, civil strife, and foreign invasion that had taken the lives of perhaps 90 million Chinese. If favorable images of the KMT had survived its defeat and flight to Taiwan, these were rapidly erased. The CCP's relentless propaganda against Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT apparatus successfully identified the KMT with the enormous suffering of the past. For the new Chinese elite, the KMT was the relic of a nasty bygone era, propped up on Taiwan by a hostile United States and incapable of surviving without American support. If American backing for the KMT's sanctuary on Taiwan could be removed, they believed, the Chinese civil war would be brought to its logical conclusion, as KMT rule on Taiwan succumbed to stratagem or was pushed aside by insurrection or military conquest.

The CCP's memories of the KMT during the civil war on the mainland blinded it to the changes the KMT was undergoing in Taiwan. Chinese in Beijing neither perceived nor understood the implications of the KMT's rapid "Taiwanization" in the 1960s. (Taiwanese constituted a majority of KMT members by the early

1970s.) As Taiwan progressed toward democracy, the KMT was forced to transform itself from the conspiratorial Leninist organization it had been on the mainland into something much more closely resembling a Western political party. The KMT became more concerned about representing its constituency and retaining power on Taiwan than about regaining its lost position on the mainland. By the 1990s, as full democracy came to Taiwan, the KMT was engaged in a difficult balancing act between the "one China" principle dictated by its heritage of Chinese nationalism and the "Taiwan first" imperative imposed by its competition for the loyalty and support of Taiwan's electorate.

The old men who occupied senior leadership positions in the CCP and PLA, however, remembered the KMT as the arrogant and oppressive foe it had been in its last days on the mainland. They burned with righteous nationalist resentment against the KMT's achievement of sanctuary behind the U.S. Seventh Fleet in Taiwan. They saw the KMT as leading a tiny fragment of China's more than 1 billion people in defiance of the Chinese nationalist ideal of a unified China, able to stand up to challenges from foreign powers like the United States. Chinese nationalists in Beijing saw the KMT as traitors who were collaborating with American efforts to weaken and divide China.

The CCP's appeals to the KMT to join it in reunifying China therefore long continued to be couched in terms calculated to divide Taipei from Washington and to appeal to the KMT's own sense of Chinese nationalism. Nationalist ideals were, however, steadily eroding on Taiwan. The PRC's appeals resonated, if at all, only with older mainlander members of the KMT. Beijing's policy seemed stuck on the premise of reunification through some sort of deal with the KMT, based on what the KMT had come to see as the disastrous model of CCP-KMT collaboration in the 1940s. It was not until January 30, 1995, that the CCP put forward a proposal (PRC president Jiang Zemin's eight points) directed more to Taiwan's electorate than to the KMT and its leaders.

Chinese on the Mainland Remember Taiwan

The pain of Beijing's cession of Taiwan to Japan in 1895 quickly faded from the memory of Chinese on the mainland. Taiwan had, after all, been a frontier region only recently incorporated politically and economically into China. Chinese had plenty of other things on their minds as Manchu rule collapsed,

revolution was succeeded by warlordism, Japan invaded, and the Chinese civil war unfolded. In the 1930s, Mao Zedong offhandedly suggested to Edgar Snow that Taiwan could be independent once Japan was defeated. It was, however, Chiang Kai-shek's KMT, not Mao's CCP, that then ruled China. Chiang insisted to his wartime American allies that Taiwan should be returned to China at the end of the war. As the KMT recovered Taiwan for China, events on the island were overshadowed for mainland Chinese by the drama of the KMT's mainland collapse under CCP military assault.

Taiwan became of interest to the PRC only when Chiang and his army took refuge there in 1949–1950. The PLA then began the difficult task of marshaling an invasion fleet to subdue Chiang's remnant KMT forces in Taiwan. This invasion was frustrated by the American reaction to the sudden North Korean attempt to reunify Korea by force.

Beijing's subsequent decision to intervene to prevent the defeat and disappearance of the North Korean Communist regime led to an American reaffirmation of ties with the ROC on Taiwan. American actions to deny Taiwan to the PRC and to bolster the capabilities of the ROC on Taiwan were seen by most Chinese as a continuation of the pattern of foreign intervention and division of China into spheres of influence that had characterized the "century of humiliation" from which China had just emerged. What had been envisaged as a relatively minor operation on Taiwan to mop up KMT forces defeated in the civil war on the mainland came to be seen as a major challenge to Chinese sovereignty.

This feeling became all the stronger as the ROC in Taipei, with resolute American backing, continued successfully to present itself in the UN and internationally as the sole legitimate government of all of China, including Taiwan. Annual battles over Chinese representation in the UN transformed the Taiwan issue from a territorial issue into a major test of international legitimacy for the PRC. The CCP had won its civil war with the KMT. But the PRC was denied the international political fruits of its victory by the ROC on Taiwan and its American sponsors. Battles over the right to represent China in international councils spanned a quarter century. Not until 22 years after its founding, in 1971, was the PRC at last able to take a seat in the UN as the legitimate government of China, an acknowledged great power and permanent member of the UN Security Council. Not until the late 1980s, nearly a decade after the 1979 U.S. switch of

recognition from Taipei to Beijing as the government of China, was the PRC able to dislodge the ROC on Taiwan's diplomats from the capitals of all internationally significant states. (Among major states, only South Africa now maintains formal diplomatic relations with Taipei.)

The death of Chiang Kai-shek, in 1975, and of Mao Zedong, in 1976, ended their personal duel for China's destiny. Other leaders, with less experience of each other and, presumably, less personal animus, succeeded Chiang and Mao. By the time Deng Xiaoping had come to power in Beijing and the United States had transferred recognition from Taipei to Beijing, the ROC had ceased to pose a serious diplomatic challenge to the PRC's international standing. Under Chiang Ching-kuo, however, the ROC on Taiwan was rapidly emerging both as a more Taiwan-centered polity and as a major manufacturing economy whose financial prowess could be ignored neither by the international community nor by the PRC itself.

With the U.S.-PRC normalization agreement of December 15, 1978, Deng Xiaoping's diplomacy succeeded in removing the American military and formal diplomatic presence from the ROC on Taiwan. This reduced the most visible and obnoxious element of foreign intervention in Taiwan but did not entirely eliminate such "interference in China's internal affairs." Deng's government acquiesced in President Jimmy Carter's declared intention to "continue to sell carefully selected defensive weapons, on a restrained basis," to the ROC on Taiwan. The PRC protested, but did not retaliate, when Washington renewed the American security guarantee for Taiwan through the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) in the spring of 1979. Beijing had begun to turn its attention from crafting a solution of the Taiwan problem in Washington to crafting one with Taipei through a series of public and private approaches to the KMT regime there.

This focus was upset by the 1980 American presidential campaign, in which Ronald Reagan noisily insisted on the reestablishment of some form of official American relationship with and unrestrained arms sales to the ROC on Taiwan. The newly elected Reagan administration then made a point of proclaiming its intention to sell new fighter aircraft to Taiwan. Beijing responded by demanding that Washington reach an explicit understanding with it on arms sales to Taiwan. The negotiations that followed made the Taiwan issue once again the center of U.S.-PRC relations and completely overshadowed Beijing's approaches to Taipei. Their result was a return to arrangements

broadly similar to the 1978 normalization *modus vivendi* on arms sales, but at a price to both sides. Beijing had to acknowledge the right of the United States to sell arms to Taiwan; Washington had to agree to restrict and gradually reduce the level of such sales.

This agreement, expressed in the August 17, 1982, communiqué, was controversial in both Beijing and Washington. Chinese objected that it acquiesced in continued American intervention in the Chinese civil war. The open debate that accompanies congressional approval of U.S. military transfers was a constant reminder of the continuing American role in defending Taiwan against possible attack from the China mainland and a constant irritant in U.S.-PRC relations. Many Americans found the August 17 communiqué demeaning, and American interpretations of the communiqué gradually eroded it. In 1992, President George Bush authorized a huge sale of advanced aircraft to Taiwan. The PRC responded by suspending implementation of understandings with Washington restricting its missile exports and reportedly sold missiles it had previously agreed not to transfer to Pakistan. But it took no action against Taiwan. Meanwhile, the combination of Beijing's continued military modernization, including purchases of major new weapon systems and technology from cash-desperate Russia, and Washington's massive arms transfers to Taiwan intensified the arms race in the Taiwan Strait.

Notwithstanding this arms race, however, dialogue between Beijing and Taipei continued to expand to cover an increasing number of topics. Agreements on technical matters began to be reached between the two sides, facilitating steady growth in the scale and scope of contact between people and institutions on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. In the late 1980s, Taiwan had emerged as an increasingly crucial source of trade, technology, and investment for the modernizing economy of the China mainland. In some areas, such as those on the mainland just across the Taiwan Strait, Taiwanese investors became a dominant force in the local economy. The influence of Taiwan was, however, not restricted to these areas. By the mid-1990s, there were virtually no areas of mainland China where Taiwanese entrepreneurs were not engaged in applying the lessons (and the labor-management model) of Taiwan's industrial modernization.

As Chinese became familiar with the magnitude of Taiwan's social and economic achievements, they sought to emulate them. With the 1997 recovery of Hong Kong before them, few Chinese

had any sense of urgency about Taiwan's reunification with the rest of China. None wished to tackle the politically unsettling process of working out concrete political and military arrangements for relations across the strait after Taiwan's reunification with the rest of China. (Beijing's reunification proposals forswore the sending of mainland officials or soldiers to Taiwan, but allowed Taiwan to retain its armed forces and invited officials from Taiwan to participate in government on the Chinese mainland.) Most Chinese seemed content with Taiwan's continued *de facto* separation from them, as long as interaction across the strait continued to advance and Taipei continued to deal pragmatically with Beijing in ways that held open the possibility of loose reunification at some later, perhaps much later, date.

Most Chinese remained ignorant of the historical and policy factors that had produced Taiwanese success and of the changes in the KMT that had facilitated it. Some, however, began to look to the political as well as the economic precedent of modernization of the Chinese society on Taiwan as a model for future evolution toward free market-based democratic rule on the mainland. A few saw the KMT's transformation from a Leninist to a democratic political party as a model for the future evolution of the CCP.

Almost no one on the mainland, however, understood, still less sympathized, with the identity crisis history had imposed on the Taiwanese. The nationalism and worldview of Chinese on the mainland had been formed in the tumultuous events of twentieth-century Chinese history—the fall of the Manchu (Qing) dynasty; the establishment of the Republic of China; the May Fourth movement; the rise and fall of warlords; the Northern Expedition; the struggle between the CCP and KMT; the Japanese occupation of northeast China (Manchuria); the Long March; the Japanese invasion of north and central China; the anti-Japanese war; the Chinese civil war; the founding of the PRC; the Korean War; Soviet tutelage; the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Great Leap Forward; the Sino-Soviet split; the Cultural Revolution; the rise and fall of the "Gang of Four"; and the rolling process of Deng Xiaoping's subsequent reforms. The inability of Taiwanese to identify with a China formed by these events, and inspired by memories of them, was incomprehensible to Chinese on the mainland. Few stopped to ponder the implications of the fact that Taiwanese had not participated in these formative events (except, to some extent, as members of the Japanese armed forces in World War II).

The increasing insistence of Taiwanese that Taiwan's unique character and its economic and political achievements merited international acknowledgment in the form of recognition of Taiwan's independence was therefore greeted with angry disbelief in Beijing. Most Chinese saw a foreign hand—a clumsy American hand or perhaps a more subtle Japanese one—behind the Taiwanese drive for recognition of a separate political identity for their island. As Taiwan's 1995–1996 election season approached, however, growing appreciation of the fundamental political forces at work on the island led to apprehension in Beijing that the PRC might be forced to intervene militarily to halt moves by Taiwan toward independence. This was a course of action that virtually all Chinese understood would be disastrous for themselves as well as for their relations with the Americans and Japanese. It was also one that they saw no way of avoiding if they were to remain true to the spirit of Chinese nationalism.

Japanese Memories Repressed

When Japan came out from its self-imposed isolation in the Meiji period, it did not take it long to recognize the strategic importance of Taiwan both to the defense of the home islands and to the southward advance of the Japanese empire. The Japanese seizure of Taiwan during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895 reflected both considerations. Unlike Korea, which was administered by the Imperial Army, Taiwan was under the jurisdiction of Japan's navy, which pursued considerably more enlightened policies of assimilation once initial resistance by Taiwanese had been suppressed. Japanese attributed the ease with which Taiwanese assumed Japanese ways to the largely peasant character of society in Taiwan and to the shallowness with which higher Chinese culture had taken root there before 1895. Japanese were flattered by Taiwanese acceptance of their culture. Assimilated Taiwanese were second-class subjects of the Japanese emperor, rather like Okinawans, to be sure, but much more accepted than Koreans. Taiwan was indeed, in a memorable Japanese phrase later adopted by Americans, an “unsinkable aircraft carrier,” but it was also a southern island extension of the Japanese homeland. The loss of Taiwan in 1945 was seen by most Japanese not only in symbolic terms as the end of empire but also as the poignant loss of a quasi-Japanese population.

Fond Japanese feelings for Taiwanese persisted, even as they were repressed by the policy exigencies of post-World War II

and cold war politics. The ability of Taiwanese to speak Japanese and the resumption of Japanese contact with Taiwan through tourism and trade in the 1950s reinforced these feelings. Japanese had no affection for their wartime KMT enemies (although conservative Japanese appreciated Chiang Kai-shek's anticommunism), but sympathy for Taiwanese aspirations continued to be an unspoken factor in Japanese policy toward Taiwan.

Japan's China policy was for long subordinated to the policies of Japan's American defenders. After the shock of President Richard Nixon's sudden announcement, in July 1971, of the U.S. shift toward a strategic opening to Beijing, Japanese policy gradually took a more independent course. That course was dictated by strategic realities, which required Japan to court and conciliate Beijing. Chinese attitudes toward Japan were pragmatic but tinged with bitter memories of the tens of millions of deaths the Japanese invasion of the China mainland had caused from 1931 to 1945. The Japanese government's policies toward Taiwan were crafted with a view toward appeasement of Chinese on the mainland but were carried out in such a way as to preserve Japanese economic and other human ties to Taiwan. Japan was free to carry out such policies because management of its strategic interests with regard to Taiwan was the responsibility of its American protectors.

As Taiwanese assumed control of Taiwan's politics, latent sympathy for them found increasingly open expression in Japan. Many Japanese found the ROC on Taiwan's current president, Lee Teng-hui, a culturally appealing figure. Lee, a former Japanese national, was said to speak Japanese (as some mainlanders on Taiwan sarcastically pointed out) better than Chinese Mandarin. Japanese policy with regard to Taiwan, however, continued prudently to defer to the strategic imperative of avoiding the hostility of the PRC. Japan sought to avoid the open renewal of competition with China for political or military influence in Asia. The history of Japanese involvement in Taiwan made it a point of particular neuralgia in interaction between Tokyo and Beijing. To the extent possible, therefore, Japanese policy continued to strive to hide behind American policy toward Taiwan.

American Memory and Forgetfulness

American attitudes and policies toward Taiwan had, as noted above, been the main determinant in Taiwan's post-World War II relationships both with the China mainland and internationally. Before World War II, the U.S. military, correctly as it turned

out, had perceived the Japanese presence in Taiwan as a threat to the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia. For other Americans, Taiwan was *terra incognita*. The United States bombed Taiwan during the war and briefly contemplated invading it. A few Americans assigned to plan a U.S. occupation of Taiwan studied the island's history. (Some of these Americans, like Senator Claiborne Pell, later emerged as prominent sympathizers with Taiwanese aspirations for self-determination and independence.) In the end, however, U.S. forces massing to invade the Japanese home islands bypassed Taiwan. The United States assisted KMT forces from the China mainland to occupy the island and raised no objection to Taiwan's reincorporation into KMT China. When the KMT was forced to flee to Taiwan, Washington made it clear that it would not act to prevent a PRC conquest of Taiwan.

These policies of indifference toward Taiwan's fate had been unsuccessfully resisted by General Douglas MacArthur's Tokyo headquarters. Having assumed responsibility for the defense of Japan, MacArthur had come to share traditional Japanese views about the strategic importance of Taiwan. The North Korean invasion of South Korea catalyzed Washington's acceptance of policies toward Taiwan favored by the Tokyo-based U.S. military.

Most Americans, however, saw Taiwan purely in terms of anticommunism and the strategic and emotional imperatives of the Korean War. The nasty U.S. debate about who had "lost China" and the rising influence of Senator Joseph McCarthy soon made it politically incorrect to withhold "positive loyalty" to the cause of Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT. Escalating American involvement in Taiwan throughout the 1950s and early 1960s ensured that many Americans became aware of the tensions between Taiwan's mainlander and native Chinese populations. The American focus on support for the ROC's position in the "free world" beyond the realm of communism, however, led all but a few Americans involved with the island to identify themselves strongly with its KMT rulers.

The absurd KMT insistence that it represented all of China, despite its exile to Taiwan and irrelevance to developments on the China mainland, made the Chinese representation issue and the related question of Chinese recognition a zero-sum game. (In 1957, Chiang Kai-shek brushed aside an effort by U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to persuade him to renounce the use

of force against the mainland. His reasoning, which paralleled that of the PRC then and in later decades, was that no government of China could ever give an undertaking to a foreign government not to use force against other Chinese challenging its sovereignty over Chinese territory.) The Vietnam War led to much questioning by Americans of the basic assumptions of long-standing U.S. policy in the East Asian and Pacific region. Increasing numbers of Americans came to favor a switch in recognition and diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing. In their debate over China policy, some Americans expressed concern about the plight of mainlanders on Taiwan, but few considered the impact of the decisions they advocated on Taiwanese. By the 1968 American presidential elections, all candidates had pledged themselves, in the words of Richard Nixon, "to come urgently to grips with the reality of China."¹

The American officials who negotiated the February 28, 1972 Shanghai communiqué with Premier Zhou Enlai were aware that a small group of Taiwanese dissidents in Japan and the United States advocated "Taiwan independence." This awareness came, however, from vociferous CCP and KMT objections to the notion of a status for Taiwan distinct from "China," rather than from sympathy with the Taiwan independence movement. No American official accepted the assertion of these dissidents (which in fact may have reflected substantial opinion among Taiwanese) that "Taiwanese" were something other than "Chinese."

The issue for U.S. policy was not how to deal with self-determination by the island's inhabitants, but how to reconcile a continuing American relationship with the ROC on Taiwan with an opening to the PRC dictated by cold war strategic considerations. American policy dealt with this problem by endorsing the legal fiction, asserted by both Taipei and Beijing, that there was only "one China" and that Taiwan was "part of China." The phrasing of the American statement in the Shanghai communiqué—that the United States acknowledged that "all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait" stood for a single China of which Taiwan was part—was intended to mollify the PRC without destroying the ROC on Taiwan's bargaining position in future negotiations between the CCP and KMT. It may, as subsequent legal hairsplitting by Taiwan independence advocates sought to suggest, have theoretically left open the possibility of a distinction between "Taiwanese" and "Chinese," but that was clearly not its intention. On the contrary, if anything, it was intended to

clarify that the United States saw no basis for questioning the common position of Taipei and Beijing that no such distinction was admissible.

In the English version of the normalization communiqué of December 15, 1978, the same language, "acknowledging" the Chinese position that Taiwan was part of China, was repeated in abbreviated form. The Chinese-language version of the communiqué changed "acknowledge" (*renshidao*) to "recognize" (*chen-gren*). No public notice of this change, which was seen in Beijing as an important shift in the U.S. position, was taken in Washington, which learned of it only slightly before the communiqué was released. The normalization communiqué's formula was repeated in the August 17, 1982, communiqué that recorded the revived U.S.-PRC *modus vivendi* on Taiwan arms sales.

The Tiananmen incident of June 4, 1989, dramatically changed American views on China and placed human rights concerns at the center of U.S. China policy. Later in 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet empire in Eastern and Central Europe collapsed. The subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union itself removed the strategic rationale for U.S.-PRC relations. Americans welcomed Taiwan's transformation into a democratic polity in the early 1990s, seeing this as part of a worldwide trend toward democracy and respect for human rights that had, tragically, bypassed the PRC. The issue of Taiwan's relationship to the China mainland came to be seen primarily as a human rights issue, pitting Taiwan's prosperous democracy against a repressive regime in Beijing determined to deny Taiwan the place in international affairs to which its economic and political achievements entitled it. Support for Taiwanese aspirations for self-determination received a further boost from significant campaign contributions from the increasingly numerous, well-organized, and well-heeled Taiwanese-American community in the United States.

The ROC on Taiwan's policies were, meanwhile, shifting under the pressure of electoral politics in Taiwan. Taipei no longer claimed to be the capital of anything other than Taiwan. The KMT had replaced its long-standing dedication to the principle of one China with lip service to the notion of Chinese reunification sometime, somehow or other, in the future. The KMT had joined with its DPP opponents in seeking to establish an international personality for Taiwan as a democratic polity separate from the China mainland. For Taiwanese, the issue was the achievement of dignity commensurate with the economic

strength and political virtue of the new democracy on Taiwan, including membership in the UN. This position attracted overwhelming sympathy and support in the U.S. Congress.

Members of Congress from both parties found an easy political target in the blatant contrast between the Clinton administration's diplomatically correct relations with the undemocratic regime in Beijing and its unwillingness to accord the democratic regime in Taipei comparable honors. Most Americans had forgotten that the basis of the PRC's tolerance of the flourishing U.S.-Taiwan relationship was a U.S.-PRC understanding that the United States would endorse the legal fiction that China was undivided (when manifestly it was divided into two competing polities) and would trade changes in the form of U.S.-Taiwan relations for the continuation, without disruption, of their substance. Many Americans who remembered this U.S.-PRC understanding asserted that the emergence of democracy on Taiwan and the nearly simultaneous unmasking of the repressive nature of the PRC had made Beijing's views no longer worthy of consideration. Others, who had strongly endorsed the legal fiction of "one China" when this worked to the advantage of anti-Communists in Taipei, had always rejected it when it appeared to serve the interests of Communists in Beijing. Liberal members of Congress concerned with human rights or Taiwanese self-determination therefore joined traditional, conservative supporters of the KMT in pressing for an end to the ambiguity and contortions of Washington's relationship with Taipei.

By the fall of 1994, the Clinton administration had been forced by congressional pressure to announce a modest upgrading of American relationships with Taipei, including a restoration of open ministerial-level contact. In May 1995 the Congress sought virtually unanimously to overrule the administration's previous refusal to allow President Lee Teng-hui to visit the United States on the pretext of accepting an award from Cornell University, where he had earned his doctorate. By the end of May, the Clinton administration had capitulated to congressional pressure and agreed to allow Lee's visit to go forward.

Most Americans saw the issue of Lee's visit as a simple case of according due courtesy to the respected leader of a friendly democratic society and felt that no third party, such as Beijing, had the right to speak against this. There was virtually no public discussion among Americans of the cost of such moves in terms of their potential to buttress the growing view among Chinese on the mainland, including China's highly nationalist younger

generation, that the United States was a hostile, rather than friendly, power. Nor was there any discussion at all of the implications of American policy changes for perceptions on both Taiwan and the China mainland. Those perceptions increasingly were that the United States was moving toward a Taiwan policy disconnected from its China policy, a Taiwan policy that would ignore or defy both Beijing and the legacy of Chinese nationalism.

In this atmosphere, PRC president Jiang Zemin's conciliatory gesture to the ROC on Taiwan of January 30, 1995, went virtually unnoticed in the United States. Jiang's initiative was, however, taken very seriously in Taipei, which responded with its own conciliatory statement on April 8. Even as Beijing's relations with Washington deteriorated over the Taiwan issue, its dialogue with Taipei proceeded.

1996—A Year of Living Dangerously?

As 1995 unfolded, Chinese leaders in Beijing, while once again extending an olive branch to Taipei, took a series of actions, such as expanded exercises in the Taiwan Strait and military redeployments opposite Taiwan, to signal their resolve to prevent overt secession by Taiwan from the legal fiction of one China. The U.S. Congress continued to press to deepen U.S. relations with and, implicitly, the U.S. commitment to Taipei. Some DPP politicians on Taiwan continued to assert on the campaign stump that the TRA in effect provided Taiwan with a blank check that it could cash to protect Taiwan against the consequences of a declaration of independence. These politicians claimed that Americans could be invoked to defend Taiwan against the PRC, regardless of the source of the conflict. As of mid-May 1995, these assertions that the bill for a change of Taiwan's name and flag could be paid in American blood had met no rebuttal from either the KMT on Taiwan or the administration in Washington.

Japanese, true to their traditional low profile on the Taiwan issue, studiously avoided discussing it. Neither Americans nor Japanese appeared to be concerned that decisions by Taiwan's electorate, and Beijing's reaction to them, might provoke renewed military confrontation or even an armed conflict in the Taiwan Strait sought by no one. The dedication of the United States to the ideal of self-determination would be tested by such conflict, as would the credibility of the American defense com-

mitment embodied in the TRA. The strategic interests of Japan, as well as its affection for the Taiwanese, would be challenged.

An American decision to come to Taiwan's aid would require Japanese acquiescence in the use of U.S. bases and facilities in Japan. A war in the Taiwan Strait would thus force Japan to choose between its alliance with the United States and its strategic interest in a non-hostile relationship with China. So unpalatable a choice would inevitably stimulate many Japanese to seek to regain the right to pursue an independent defense of Japanese strategic interests. Japan would distance itself from the United States, while strengthening its own military capabilities. On the other hand, a U.S. failure to respond to a PRC attack on Taiwan would so devalue the U.S.-Japan security relationship that Japanese would feel even more impelled to develop a military capable of independent action to defend their strategic interests. Either way, conflict in the Taiwan Strait clearly has the potential to produce major strategic realignments in Asia, including attenuation of U.S. ties with Japan and the reemergence of Sino-Japanese military rivalry.

As of today, both Washington and Tokyo seem more alert to the extent to which their relations with China and with each other, like the prospects for peace in the Taiwan Strait, may be taken hostage by the Taiwan electorate. Decisions by the Taiwanese electorate from November 1995 through March 1996 will determine the extent to which Taiwan defies or continues to tolerate the ambiguities of life within the legal fiction of one China. These decisions about Taiwan's identity, and reactions to them by Beijing, Washington, and Tokyo, have the potential to determine much more than whether there is peace or war in the Taiwan Strait. The Taiwan electorate may also determine whether China enjoys peaceful and cooperative relations with the United States and Japan, and whether the Japanese security partnership with the United States will survive as a substitute for an independent Japanese military role in Asia.

As all sides approach decisions on matters of great moment to them, they do so as prisoners of their disparate and incompatible memories of each other and of Taiwan and its history.

Notes

1. Richard M. Nixon, "Asia After Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 1 (1967).

Remembering and Forgetting: The Political Culture of Memory in Divided Korea

Dong-bok Lee

Divided Korea: An Introductory Overview

On August 15, 1945, Korea was liberated from 35 years of Japanese colonial occupation when Japan unconditionally surrendered to the Allied forces. However, Korea did not have time to rejoice because the day of its liberation was also the day of its territorial division. As the victorious United States and Soviet Russian armies moved respectively into two zones, one to the south, and the other to the north, they divided Korea at the 38th parallel. At first, the partition was meant to be a temporary one, primarily meeting the military objectives of accepting the Japanese surrender and disarming the Japanese troops on the peninsula.¹ By then, however, the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union had already begun, turning the 38th parallel, which cut across the peninsula at its waistline, into part of the iron curtain that bisected the globe. Soon, the partition turned into a systemic division between free democracy and Communist dictatorship.

In 1948, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) were established respectively in the South and the North of the peninsula as two separate but fully sovereign states.² The three-year Korean War started by North Korea in 1950 ended with an armistice in 1953 at the cost of huge losses in human lives as well as property. The war replaced the 38th parallel with a 155-mile-long demilitarized zone (DMZ) as the new borderline and sowed the seeds of mutual distrust, enmity, and hostility between the two sides to such effect that what began as a territorial partition turned into a national division. In the years that ensued, total isolation has characterized the relationship between the two Koreas, leading to an extreme degree of sociocultural heterogeneity between the two Korean communities.

Korea is marking a half century of territorial division against the backdrop of sweeping changes in both its internal and external environment. Obviously, it is its international environment that is by far the hardest hit by those changes. To begin with, Korea's division was a by-product of the cold war that dominated the era following World War II. But a half century later, the bipolar world order that featured the East-West cold war confrontation is itself now history because communism has collapsed as a governing ideology in the global context. Only four countries remain Communist states, at least in name. Of these, experiments are under way in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Vietnam for conversion from socialism to capitalism, at least in socioeconomic practices if not yet in political systems. Fidel Castro's hard-pressed Cuba is reported as desperately looking for an opportunity to become a defector. By and large, North Korea is now the only country in the world that remains committed to being an orthodox Communist state of a brand uniquely its own, a *Juche* socialism.

In the years following Korea's division into two states in 1948, the two Koreas have engaged in a protracted and costly all-out campaign to claim legitimacy to an ultimate unification, each on its own terms. The ROK in the South scored a decisive win in 1948 when the United Nations (UN) recognized it as the "only such lawful government" on the Korean peninsula.³ In its infamous attempt to reverse the situation, North Korea began, unprovoked, a full-scale war against the South in June 1950, only to further deepen its diplomatic isolation by being branded an aggressor by the UN Security Council when it continued hostilities against the Allied forces fighting under the UN flag.⁴

Since the 1960s, the two Koreas have fought diplomatic battles across the world, posing as "outposts" of the East and the West in the larger context of cold war confrontation, trying to outdo each other in winning recognition from world nations. The inter-Korean diplomatic competition came to a virtual end, however, when the balance tilted decisively in favor of the South in 1991. In that year, the two Koreas simultaneously entered the UN, which resulted in South Korea's diplomatic normalization with all but one, Cuba, of those former Communist countries that had previously had diplomatic ties only with the North. This process culminated in the South's normalization with the Soviet Union in 1991 and the PRC in 1992. By 1993, the number of nations with which South Korea had entered into diplomatic relations was 174 against North Korea's 131.⁵ In recent years

North Korea has been eager to offset some of these diplomatic setbacks with attempts to normalize its ties with the United States and Japan. But North Korea's diplomatic efforts to that effect remain bogged down, largely over the international suspicion about its clandestine nuclear ambitions.

During the past half century, the relative national strengths of the two Koreas have also undergone tremendous changes. At the time of division in 1945, South Korea trailed in economic strength far behind North Korea. Accounting for two-thirds of Korea's total population, South Korea was a typical underdeveloped agrarian economy in the immediate wake of division, whereas the North was left with most of the available industrial base and natural resources at its disposal. According to statistics, North Korea accounted for 98 percent of iron ore, 87 percent of anthracite, and 98 percent of soft coal as well as 92 percent of the power that Korea as a whole produced in 1945.⁶ In 1964, the per capita income of South Korea was \$107, scarcely more than half that of North Korea, which stood at \$194.⁷

But economic statistics a half century later show a spectacular reversal. In the early 1960s the two Koreas made momentous choices for economic development and turned in opposite directions. When the South launched its first five-year economic plan in 1962, it chose an open-door policy that featured internationalization as a means to overcome its chronic shortages in resources, capital goods, and industrial technology.⁸ In contrast, the North, in launching its first seven-year plan in 1961, chose a closed-door policy featuring an economic autarky that placed emphasis on self-reliance for mobilization of its indigenous resources.⁹ In 1962, North Korea's leader Kim Il Sung promised that, by the time his first seven-year plan came to completion in 1969, the people of his country would be assured of "steamed rice, meat soup, silk garments, and tiled-roof houses." In fact, North Korea's first seven-year plan was never completed.¹⁰ Nor were any of North Korea's subsequent multiyear economic plans.¹¹ In his New Year Address on January 1, 1992, Kim Il Sung revisited the four staples he had promised his people, assuring them that supplying these goods still remained his "unfulfilled aspiration."

As of the end of 1993, South Korea's gross national product (GNP) was 16 times as large as that of North Korea, while its per capita income was 8 times that of the North. In trade volume, South Korea was 63 times larger than North Korea; in power generation, 6.5 times; in crude oil imports, 56 times; in car

ownership, 205 times; in the number of ships owned, 66 times; in steel production, 18 times; in production of cement, 12 times; in production of fertilizer, 3 times; in textile production, 32 times; and in fiber manufacture, 30 times.¹² In contrast, North Korea had recorded negative growth for the previous four years, causing its economy to contract by 20 percent,¹³ and as of the end of 1993 had amassed an outstanding foreign debt of \$10.3 billion in the aggregate.¹⁴ In the strictest sense of the word, North Korea's national economy, called a "people's economy," has been nearly bankrupt for a long time.

Military muscle is probably the one area where North Korea retains an edge, at least in quantitative terms if not in quality. According to the *Defense White Paper 1993–1994* published by South Korea's Ministry of National Defense, North Korea clearly leads the South in military strength. The North, for example, has 1.03 million men under arms against the South's 0.65 million.

In hardware, North Korea outnumbers the South in most categories:

- In ground equipment, North Korea possesses 3,800 tanks, 2,500 armored vehicles, and 10,300 artillery pieces against the South's 1,800 tanks, 1,900 armored vehicles, and 4,500 artillery pieces.
- North Korea's navy includes 434 assault ships, 310 auxiliaries, and 26 submarines against the South's 190 assault ships, 60 auxiliaries, and 1 submarine.
- In air power, North Korea has 850 tactical aircraft, 480 support aircraft, and 290 helicopters against the South's 520 tactical aircraft, 190 support aircraft, and 600 helicopters.

To help offset the North, the United States maintains 36,000 soldiers in South Korea equipped with 163 tanks, 311 armored vehicles, and 250 tactical aircraft.¹⁵

North Korea has 60 percent of its military muscle forward-deployed close enough to the DMZ to seriously reduce warning time should it actually decide to wage a renewed war. The AN-2 light transport aircraft, high-speed hovercraft, and SCUD missiles in North Korea's arsenal are worrisome additions to its capability to mount a blitzkrieg against the South. What is more, North Korea reportedly has amassed biological and chemical weapons in addition to its suspected nuclear weapons development program.¹⁶

Shadows of the Past—Contradictory Memories

Having remained divided since the end of World War II, Korea is a country that even today continues to be obsessed more by memories of the past than visions for the future in addressing its public issues. It is a country that remains shackled, to a great extent, by many legacies of its bygone cultures—monarchy, isolationism, failed attempts at opening and modernization, colonial occupation, struggle for independence, national liberation (given but not earned, ending up in a long-lasting national division), bloody ideological conflicts followed by a tragic fratricidal war, a military coup d'état that spawned political authoritarianism amid phenomenal economic growth, and ever-intensifying mutual isolation between the two Korean societies, characterized by the ever-present threat of war and ever-deepening enmity. To cap it all, the two sides have waged an all-out competition in the context of survival of the fittest system—the South's pluralistic democracy based on a capitalist market economy versus the North's class dictatorship based on a Communist planned economy.

As a divided country, Korea is unique as it relates to memories of the past in that, in a world where a half century of the cold war confrontation has by and large receded into history in a global context, it remains an island of the cold war. In the case of North Korea, ideology still plays a dominant role as a determinant not only in the shaping of memories but also in their application to current issues. This dominance of memory by ideology makes it inevitable that, more often than not, the two Koreas wind up with contradictory memories of the same events of the past.

Given its total isolation from the rest of the world and its Orwellian control of its population within, North Korea's public memories are extremely difficult to identify. In North Korea, most public memories are distorted to the point of sheer fabrication to serve the political aim of glorifying the late Kim Il Sung and his family while bolstering the North's claim to greater legitimacy than the South in presiding over the process of unification. It is therefore futile to attempt to assess these memories based on the same paradigm as used in the South. Being in North Korea is like traveling into a history filled with grossly forged memories, where the clock obviously stopped ticking sometime in the 1940s and where the people are still forced to emulate "anti-Japanese

partisans" in all their doings day in and day out, be it "work," "study," or "living." It is a country under the spell of *Juche*, which, as a pseudo-ideology, is a concoction of many odd bedfellows—communism of a Marxist-Leninist brand, Confucianism, Christianity, and monarchy.

Juche was originally introduced as a derivative of Stalinist communism, allegedly developed through a "creative application" of Marxist-Leninist communism to North Korea,¹⁷ to serve primarily as an ideological foundation for a monarchy in the making characterized by a dynastic political succession for the transfer of power. *Juche* today, however, is more a quasi-religious dogma than a political ideology, bordering on a pseudo-Christianity complete with a "trinity" of a kind in which Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and the Korean Workers' Party loom as "Holy Father," "Holy Son," and "Holy Spirit." In the wake of Kim Il Sung's demise in July 1994, North Korea was notably busy promoting his image from that of a godly figure into a god. In addition, after Kim Il Sung's death North Korea tried to make use of "filial piety," a central theme of the Confucian heritage, in rationalizing the indefinite delay in filling the two top posts in the North Korean power structure—the office of the president of the state and that of the general secretary of the Party.

In South Korea, in contrast with the North, memories thrive, with the memory of the country's division topping the rest to the point of obsession. According to a public opinion survey conducted in January 1995 by the *Joong-Ang Ilbo*, a leading daily newspaper published in Seoul, 24.8 percent of the respondents cited the Korean War of 1950–1953 as the single event that had most affected Korea's modern history. Other events in order of importance were the siege of Kwangju of May 1980 (22.2 percent); 35 years of Japanese colonial occupation (14.5 percent); the student uprising of April 1960 (11.3 percent); the March 1 independence movement of 1919 (10.8 percent); the military coup d'état of May 1961 (10.6 percent); and the democracy movement of 1987 that led to the restoration of a direct vote for presidential elections (3.8 percent). The survey also cited unifying the country (31.8 percent) as the issue topping the rest of Korea's public issues, followed by rich-poor disparity (23 percent); political democratization (16.1 percent); regional sentiments (13.1 percent); ideological conflicts (7.5 percent); legacies of the Japanese colonial occupation (5.1 percent); and residues of the "military" culture (3.3 percent).¹⁸

Unification—Two Bedfellows with Different Dreams

South Koreans have regarded unification largely as an issue with two faces, one emotional and the other rational. To many South Koreans, unification has usually appealed more as an emotional issue, addressed in the context of a "return to the status quo ante that preceded division" and based on the simplistic argument that "since Korea was one before division," it would take "being one again to be reunified." This was particularly the case with the families of those who fled Communist North Korea either before or during the Korean War and who make up about one-fifth of South Korea's total population today.

Reunification pursued within the context of a status quo ante required a prototype of a reunified Korea to which the two Koreas could return to be "one again." However, no such prototype existed in Korea at the time of division: Korea was divided in 1945 when it was being liberated from Japanese colonial rule, and the "last unified independent" Korea to exist before Korea became a Japanese colony in 1910 was under the Yi dynasty. It is beyond doubt that neither a colonial Korea nor a monarchical Korea could qualify as a prototype of a reunified Korea. Without such a prototype, reunification pursued as an emotional issue in the context of a status quo ante was bound to come to a dead end, giving way to unification pursued as a rational issue that required a "new unification."

When it came to unifying a divided country, the bitter memory of the Korean War barred the use of force under practically all circumstances for South Korea. Barring the use of force, the only other contemporary models for unification were a negotiated marriage of expediency, as happened in Yemen, or the collapse of one side for absorption by the other, as in the case of Germany. Neither, however, qualified as an ideal model for successful Korean unification. On the one hand, Yemeni unification had backtracked to a renewed military showdown in a matter of years, ending in a reversed Vietnam-style unification by force. On the other hand, German unification, often incorrectly referred to as "unification by absorption," lacked applicability to Korea because neither of the two Koreas gave any sign either of collapsing or of electing to be "absorbed" by the other any time soon.

Realizing the need for an altogether different route to unification, South Korea ultimately came up with a strategy that pursued unification more as a process than as a finished product: The two Koreas would now accommodate an interim stage of

accepting each other as sovereign states, institutionalizing a peaceful coexistence between them through "government-to-government" negotiations within the framework of a "special inter-Korean relationship" of a dualistic nature—that is, *intranational* between them, while being *international* in their mutual relations with other countries, complete with international cross-recognition of the two Koreas.

Short of political integration, the two Koreas could take gradual steps to reduce tensions between them, minimize the inconveniences and suffering of the people on both sides caused by the prolonged state of national division, and narrow the gap between the two Korean communities. The "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, Exchange, and Cooperation" (hereafter referred to as the Basic Agreement) that the two Koreas signed and put into effect in 1992 provided them, in fact, with a framework for such a "special relationship."¹⁹

In the meantime, North Korea has an entirely different approach to unification characterized by the concept of "One Korea." This approach pursued unification as a "revolutionary" issue, regarding the division of Korea as a case of "half-complete" liberation. North Korea argued that it was "fully liberated" in 1945 but that South Korea's liberation was a "failed" one, limited to replacing one "colonial master," Japan, with a new one, the U.S. "imperialists." North Korea's "revolutionary" approach to unification now had two stages—first, "liberation" of the South from American "colonial occupation" and, then, unification achieved in a merger between the "already liberated" North and the "newly liberated" South.²⁰

For North Korea, "liberation" of South Korea required two things. One was the overthrow of the South's anti-Communist system, which it branded a "military fascist dictatorship," together with the South's "colonial government of the U.S. imperialists," replacing them with a Communist, or pro-Communist, regime—a "people's democratic regime." The other was a diplomatic campaign to drive a wedge through the security ties that had existed between the United States and South Korea since the cessation of the Korean War in 1953. The goal was to replace the 1953 Armistice Agreement with a "peace treaty" concluded bilaterally by North Korea with the United States to the exclusion of South Korea, withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, and an end to all types of joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises, including, but not limited to, the much publicized Team Spirit Exercise.²¹

Nor did liberation of the South as pursued by North Korea rule out the use of force as its means. Describing "revolutionary violence" as the "sole means" to bring about a "South Korean revolution" (North Korean jargon for a Communist takeover of the South that North Korea regarded as an indispensable interim goal en route to unification), North Korea ruled out as "fantasy" both a "parliamentary route" and a "peaceful transition" as means to the interim goal.²² To North Korea, "peaceful unification" could be attained only after a Communist takeover of the South by means of "revolutionary violence." Alternatively, unification would have to be realized through "non-peaceful" means, a veiled but unmistakable reference to war.²³

According to the Northern unification scheme, the government of South Korea, as a "puppet" of a foreign force, had no role to play in the larger picture of peace and security on the Korean peninsula. Negotiations could only take place bilaterally between the United States—the "master" of South Korea—and North Korea. Nor was the government of South Korea qualified as North Korea's counterpart in any inter-Korean negotiation. At best, North Korea would regard the Southern government as one of the "political parties and social organizations" of the South merely qualified to be invited to nongovernmental gatherings of "political and social figures" to discuss unification only on terms laid down by North Korea. It was no wonder that North Korea insisted on referring to a projected meeting between Presidents Kim Young Sam and Kim Il Sung in July 1994 as a "meeting at the highest level of authorities," obstinately refusing to allow it to be referred to as a "summit meeting."

It is worth remembering that, in an earlier stage of national division, South Korea, too, advanced a version of the "One Korea" concept, which was characterized by "unification by recovery." The concept was based on the UN's recognition in 1948 of the ROK as the "only lawful government" on the Korean peninsula following North Korea's secession from a unified Korea by boycotting a UN-mandated all-Korea election; North Korea, therefore, was lawfully required to be "restored" into the ROK by means of a UN-supervised election in the North. It was in line with this concept that, in 1948, South Korea's Constituent Assembly was organized with 100 seats left vacant pending "recovery" of North Korea.²⁴

By the 1970s, however, prompted partly by the worldwide trend leading to an East-West détente and partly by the surging sense of confidence that resulted from its success in outrunning

the North in economic development, South Korea began abandoning its version of "One Korea." The South's approach to unification was now replaced by a "Northern policy," which was fashioned to a great extent on West Germany's Ostpolitik, seeking an acceptance by both Koreas of the reality of "Two Koreas" pending unification. The current South Korean unification policy is a manifestation of its new thinking on unification in that it offers three phased stages: first, reconciliation; second, confederation; and third, unification.²⁵

Political Democratization—An Unending Ordeal

The findings of the *Joong-Ang Ilbo* poll in January 1995 were a grim reminder of the agony to which many South Koreans thought they had been subjected as the country fought its turbulent way toward democracy. The turbulence had been particularly acute during the months that preceded the advent of the Fifth Republic in 1980 led by a general-turned-president, Chun Doo Hwan, as he filled the vacuum created by President Park Chung Hee's assassination in the preceding year. Next only to the Korean War, 22.2 percent of the poll's respondents cited the Kwangju incident of May 1980, together with the military show-down in December 1979 in which Chun was able to make himself the winner, opening the road toward the Kwangju incident, as one of the top events that had most affected Korea's modern history. Altogether, almost half of the respondents, 47.9 percent, cited events associated with past struggles by citizens against "military dictatorships" as having most influenced the course of South Korea's modern history.

It was notably this negative memory of past "military regimes" held by many South Koreans that, in fact, lent credence to the claim of the government of President Kim Young Sam, coming to power in 1993 without any military background, that it was the "first fully civilian government" in South Korea since the military coup d'état of 1961.²⁶ Basing its actions on this position, during the first two years of a five-year presidency the government confined itself largely to measures to correct misdeeds of the past regimes rather than addressing future-oriented issues.

There was no question that regimes preceding President Kim Young Sam's undoubtedly had achievements of their own to claim. With President Park Chung Hee leading the pack with his 18 years in power (1961-1979), joined by Chun Doo Hwan

(1980-1988) and Roh Tae Woo (1988-1993), the three generals-turned-president were responsible for South Korea's remarkable economic progress as well as diplomatic expansion. After years of an annual average economic growth of 9 percent,²⁷ South Korea's economy suffered a serious setback in one year, 1980, as the country weathered the political crisis that followed President Park's assassination. In that year, South Korea recorded a negative growth of -3.7 percent.²⁸ But the country showed a strong economic comeback during the Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo presidencies, with annual average growth rates of 9.7 percent²⁹ and 7.7 percent,³⁰ respectively, not to mention the successful hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul.

But the failure of these presidents to allow political democracy and economic justice to play a larger role in national development, in addition to the lingering memory of Kwangju in connection with the process of their almost "coup-styled" rise to power in 1980, was deeply regretted by the citizens. The fact that he was himself elected in a direct vote in 1987 notwithstanding, President Roh obviously concluded in 1990 that, with the specter of his military associations continuing to haunt him, he did not have a good chance to be succeeded by someone from his own party, the Democratic Justice Party (DJP). Consequently, he put together a three-way merger of political parties: the DJP, the Reunification and Democratic Party (RDP), and the New Democratic Republican Party (NDRP). In the subsequent political drama Roh chose Kim Young Sam, with a record of many years of antigovernment struggle, as the candidate of the new ruling party, the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP), to succeed him.³¹

The memory of Kwangju, however, refuses to go away even with Kim Young Sam's election as president. The door is therefore left open for his political arch-rival, Kim Dae Joong, to make one more attempt to gain power in 1997, despite his publicly declared retirement from active political life in 1991 following his third unsuccessful bid for the presidency. As a native of Cholla Province, the hotbed of undying regional sentiments, of which Kwangju is the provincial capital, Kim Dae Joong remains a symbol of the political culture of "*han*," a Korean euphemism for an unfulfilled desire. And it is this that continues to obsess him with temptations to return to the political ring.

Demographic Changes and Secondhand Memories

In assessing memories in South Korea, it is extremely important to take into account the sweeping demographic changes that

have taken place over the last five decades in the makeup of the population by age. According to *Korea's Statistical Yearbook 1994*, of South Korea's total population of 44 million as of the end of 1993, 33.4 million, or 76.1 percent, were born after 1950, the year when the Korean War broke out. And 36 million, or 81.6 percent, were born after 1945, the year of national liberation. To put this the other way around, only 23.9 percent of the total population were born before the Korean War and 18.4 percent before national liberation. These statistics say something quite revealing. They show that the time has come when most South Koreans have no firsthand memories of many of the major events that they believe have affected Korea's modern history most. To take one example, only 11 percent of the *Joong-Ang Ilbo* poll respondents said they had firsthand memories of the Korean War. As a result, the perceptions of most South Koreans today on many important issues have been formulated based on their secondhand memories of historical events. For example, 50.1 percent of the *Joong-Ang Ilbo* poll respondents said that they had learned of the Korean War in school classes while 15.5 percent cited their parents or other people of advanced age as sources of their knowledge about the war.

The sweeping scope of demographic changes notwithstanding, some of these past events, regardless of being remembered mostly at second hand, simply refuse to recede into history, retaining a sufficient sense of real-time urgency to influence the shaping of many current issues and public responses to them. The events that took place during Japanese colonial rule remain one such example. To go back to the *Joong-Ang Ilbo* poll, a staggering 79.3 percent of the respondents said that, in their view, "liquidation of the legacies of Japanese colonial rule" remained "incomplete." As a symbolic gesture to "purge the national psyche of memories of Japanese occupation," President Kim Young Sam, always sensitive to his popularity, reacted to this public mood with his decision to tear down a building in Seoul put up by the Japanese in 1926 to house their colonial government.³²

It is doubtful, however, if the purge will become complete with the removal of the old colonial government house, particularly at a time when there is a mounting need for improved regional cooperation between Korea and Japan. Post-liberation Koreans refuse to "forget" their secondhand memories of many past Japanese cruelties, which included, among other things, attempts to eradicate Korea's own culture and language, compulsory assumption of "Japanized" names, forced mobilization

of millions of Korean youths into battlefields as well as dangerous work sites, and violent suppression of the Korean people's strenuous struggle for independence, sometimes with extreme brutality. The cases of the "comfort women" and distorted textbooks are other reminders of these undying memories.

In 1965, South Korea and Japan normalized their diplomatic ties, with Japan offering South Korea a financial package of \$300 million in grants and \$300 million in commercial loans in "compensation" for the 35 years of colonial rule. And, in recent years, two Japanese emperors, in addition to several Japanese prime ministers, have taken advantage of visits to Japan by three successive South Korean presidents—Chun Doo Hwan, Roh Tae Woo, and Kim Young Sam—to express "regret" (Hirohito, 1984), "remorse" (Hirohito, 1990), and "repentance" (Akihito, 1994), respectively, for past Japanese misdeeds.³³ According, however, to a public opinion survey conducted in 1994 by a publishing house in Seoul of young people between the ages of 15 and 19, although 61.3 percent of the respondents said that they now had "things to learn" from Japan, 13.3 percent replied that Japan still "owed Korea a deeper apology."³⁴ In the normalization talks between North Korea and Japan, North Korea is reported as asking that Japan compensate it not only for the colonial days but also for the "losses" that Japan allegedly inflicted on North Korea by remaining "unfriendly" during the five decades following the end of World War II in 1945.

A Century of U.S.-Korea Ties—A Matter of Trust

The relationship between the United States and Korea is no exception in being haunted by its own past. Many South, if not North, Koreans old enough to remember the troubled years that immediately followed national liberation in 1945 still have a fond recollection of a four-line rhyme that circulated extensively by word of mouth as the country was being divided. When translated literally into English, the rhyme reads as follows:³⁵

Do not trust Americans,
Do not let Russians deceive you,
Japanese will rise again,
Koreans, watch your steps.

Interestingly, the rhyme did not mention China. But when viewed against the far-reaching changes that have taken place in

Korea's relations with the United States, Russia, and Japan in the decades since then, the rhyme could not possibly have been more prophetic.

Korea's relationship with the United States is a case in point. Few Americans realize that Korea's security ties with their country began, in a way, in the late nineteenth century, when Korea was engulfed in saber rattling by powers, led by Imperial Japan, that were vying for supremacy over it. In 1883, King Kojong, the Yi dynasty's penultimate king, personally asked the United States to provide his country with "American military advisers" as a means to ensure its security. Thanks, to a large extent, to the way early American missionaries had explained America as a nation to him, King Kojong believed that the United States was the only country in the world that did not harbor any colonial ambitions.³⁶

It took six years for a reluctant United States to respond to King Kojong's request. In 1889, four civilian "military instructors" were sent to Korea, headed by Maj. William McEntyre Dye (Ret.), a brevet brigadier general during the Civil War as Gen. Philip Sheridan's West Point classmate, to train King Kojong's palace guards. Upon arrival in Korea, Dye was appointed by King Kojong as one of his "vice defense ministers." In 1895, Dye was an eyewitness to Queen Min's murder in her palace quarters by armed Japanese bandits supported by the Japanese army mobilized by Goro Miura, chief Japanese legate to Korea at the time. Dye was instrumental in foiling the Japanese plot to disguise the killing of King Kojong's queen as an act perpetrated by disgruntled Korean soldiers.³⁷

From the beginning, however, it was not the official U.S. position to ensure Korea's security against Japan. The U.S. position was rather one of taking sides with Japan in most cases. In 1905, the United States and Japan produced a secret "Taft-Katsura Memo" that endorsed Japan's exclusive interests in Korea,³⁸ an advance blessing for Japan's annexation of Korea five years thereafter. In March 1919, the Korean people staged a nationwide peaceful demonstration declaring Korea independent, now remembered by Koreans as the "Samil (March 1) Independence Movement." The main impetus behind the demonstration was the principle of "self-determination" proclaimed by U.S. president Woodrow Wilson in his Fourteen Points,³⁹ and the demonstrators were not without hope that, as the author of the principle, the United States would support them. The United States, however, turned its back on the Korean independence

struggle, continuing to turn a deaf ear to Korea's provisional government operating in China and its diplomatic campaign to win U.S. recognition and support as Korea's "government-in-exile."⁴⁰

Toward the end of World War II, a series of Allied summit talks were held in Cairo,⁴¹ Tehran,⁴² Yalta,⁴³ and Potsdam⁴⁴ to discuss the war's aftermath, including the fate of Korea as it was being liberated from the Japanese colonial occupation. Surprisingly, it was Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union who, in the course of these summits, championed the idea that Korea would be granted immediate independence upon liberation. In contrast, U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt, citing U.S. experience in the Philippines, argued that Korea needed "at least forty years of international trusteeship" before becoming independent. It was an irony that, in Korea's early years as a divided nation, public perception in Korea reversed these positions, holding the Soviet Union responsible for the idea of trusteeship, while the United States was mistakenly painted as the advocate of outright independence.

In the years that preceded the outbreak of the Korean War, the United States withdrew its troops from South Korea not only prematurely but also without making any provision to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal.⁴⁵ With North Korea gearing up at full steam for invasion, South Korea's repeated requests to the United States for modest military assistance continued to fall on deaf ears and were roundly derided as a case of "crying wolf."⁴⁶ In January 1950, Dean Acheson, the U.S. secretary of state, literally gave North Korea carte blanche for invasion by excluding South Korea from the U.S. line of defense in Northeast Asia.⁴⁷

North Korea invaded the South, unprovoked, five months later. President Harry Truman promptly took military as well as diplomatic steps to repel the aggression,⁴⁸ which led to the establishment of a United Nations Command (UNC) to coordinate overall operational control over the troops of the 16 Korean War allies plus South Korea.⁴⁹ But in July 1953, under pressure from the United States, the UNC concluded, in the face of South Korea's opposition, an armistice agreement with the North Korean and Chinese armies.⁵⁰ Two years thereafter, Adm. C. Turner Joy (Ret.), the UNC's principal negotiator on the armistice agreement as its chief delegate to the truce talks in Panmunjom, gave a post mortem of his own in a memoir when he wrote that there "should not have been a Korean armistice such as was accepted."⁵¹

Outlook on the Future—A New Question of “Identification Friend or Foe”?

Now that the negotiation between the United States and North Korea has entered yet another critical phase in the implementation of the Agreed Framework—the deal that the United States cut with North Korea in Geneva in October 1994 on ways to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue—the relationship between the United States and South Korea is again being projected against memories of the past. It is the memory of past U.S. involvement that continues to haunt many South Koreans as they watch to see how the United States will remain involved in Korea. They are mindful that there were moments in the past when they saw the United States either playing into the hands of their adversaries by accepting “half-baked” settlements of outstanding issues for the sake of consummating a negotiation or blatantly taking sides with their adversaries in the name of larger issues with perceived global or regional implications.

It is questionable whether the current rounds of bilateral negotiation between the United States and North Korea over the North Korean nuclear issue will develop into a major turning point in relations not only between the two Koreas but also among other regional powers in the area. Assuming that the Agreed Framework is honored, it is the stated U.S. goal to “bring North Korea into a relationship with the rest of the world where we can feel safe, secure, and not constantly threatened,” with the hope that “North and South Korea can finally work out a peaceful relationship with each other so they do not remain a threat any longer.”⁵²

It is indeed a hope shared by its proponents that the Agreed Framework will serve as a “structure for a productive U.S.-North Korea relationship” leading to a “lessening of tension on the peninsula” and “better relations between the North and the South,”⁵³ while bringing North Korea out of its “permanent isolation” into a “relationship with the rest of the world.”⁵⁴ There are even hopes that, given time, the Agreed Framework might lead North Korea on a path toward “opening,” hopefully in the Chinese style, followed by “mellowing.” These hopes are allegedly based on the assessment that North Korea’s “opening” was a decision made personally by Kim Il Sung shortly prior to his own demise and willed to his dynastic successor, Kim Jong Il.

It remains dubious, however, whether such an assessment is supported by facts. Kim Jong Il was heard on numerous occasions in recent years speaking to the contrary as he emerged as

heir to his father. Both prior to, and after, his father's death, Kim Jong Il was on record as emphasizing his inflexible defense of his father's legacies and attributing the collapse of communism in the former Communist countries of the world to the fatal mistakes that communists of those countries had made in "making concessions on, and retreating from, socialist principles, yielding to pressures from imperialists."⁵⁵

It is still open to question whether the aim of North Korean negotiators, when they cut the deal with the United States in Geneva in October 1994, was really to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue or even to use the deal as a tool to open North Korea's door and improve its ties with its brethren in the South. Although normalizing ties with the United States was clearly at the top of the Northern agenda as it used its nuclear card for leverage in the negotiation, North Korea could have been pursuing normalization with the United States more as a smoke screen for the opportunity to drive a wedge through the traditional U.S.-South Korea security ties.

Ultimately, North Korea is clearly committed to a campaign to take advantage of the current round of negotiation with the United States to twist the trilateral relationship among Washington, Seoul, and Pyongyang. Traditionally, this relationship has been characterized by a security alliance between Washington and Seoul against Pyongyang. Now North Korea hopes to force Washington to perform a balancing act between Seoul and Pyongyang. Once again, it may end as a question of identifying friend or foe.

Notes

1. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945: The British Commonwealth and the Far East*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1969), 1037-1040.

2. *Nambook Daehwa Baikshuh* (A White Paper on North-South dialogue) (Seoul: Office of North-South Dialogue, National Unification Board, 1978), 18-21.

3. On December 12, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution No. 195-III on the occasion of the establishment of the Republic of Korea, in which the world organization declared that "there has been established a lawful government having effective control and jurisdiction over the part of Korea where the Temporary Commission was able to observe and consult and in which the great majority of the people of all Korea reside," that "this government was based on an election which was a

valid expression of the free will of the electorate of that part of Korea," and that "this is the only such government in Korea."

4. Se-jin Kim, ed., *Korean Unification: Source Materials with an Introduction* (Seoul: Research Institute on Peace and Unification, 1976), 127–128.

5. *Bukhan Jogam* (A bird's-eye view of North Korea) (Seoul: Research Institute on North Korea, Naewoe Press, 1994), 24.

6. *Nambook Daehwa Baiksuh*, 40–41.

7. *Seoul Kyungje Shinmoon*, January 1, 1995, 37.

8. *Nambook Daehwa Baiksuh*, 41.

9. *Ibid.*, 43.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Seoul Kyungje Shinmoon*, January 1, 1995, 37.

13. *Dong-A Ilbo*, June 11, 1994, 11.

14. *Seoul Kyungje Shinmoon*, January 1, 1995, 37.

15. *Defense White Paper 1993–1994* (Seoul: Korean Institute for Defense Analyses, 1994), 78.

16. *Ibid.*, 53–78.

17. North Korea's 1972 "Socialist Constitution" provided in its article 4 that the DPRK "accept, as a guideline of its operation, the ideology of 'Juche' of the Korean Workers' Party which is the product of a creative application of the Marxism-Leninism to our country."

18. *Joong-Ang Ilbo* (Seoul), January 9, 1995, 1, 9.

19. In its preamble, the Basic Agreement stipulates that the two sides agree to recognize the relationship between them as a "special relationship temporarily formed en route to unification."

20. *Juche Sasangeh Kichohan Namchosun Hyukmyungkwa Chokook Tongil Ihron* (A theory on South Korean revolution and fatherland unification based on the ideology of Juche) (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing House, 1975), 13–33.

21. *Ibid.*, 34–126, 219–228.

22. *Ibid.*, 125.

23. *Ibid.*, 264–271.

24. The Republic of Korea's first parliamentary election was held on May 10, 1948, to form its Constituent Assembly. Held in accordance with a UN General Assembly resolution adopted on November 14, 1947, the election was originally intended to be held on a nationwide scale under the supervision of a UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to form an all-Korea parliament for a unified Korea. However, when the UNTCOK was denied entry into North Korea by the Soviet military occupation authorities, the General Assembly adopted another resolution, on January 26, 1948, authorizing an election to be held in areas of Korea where the UNTCOK was allowed to supervise it, leaving one-third (100) of the total number of seats in an all-Korea parliament to be filled later pending a UN-supervised election in the North. See *Kukhwoesa* (History of the National Assembly) (Seoul: Secretariat of the National Assembly), 8.

25. See President Kim Young Sam's opening address at the full meeting of the Presidential Advisory Council on Democratic and Peaceful Unification on July 6, 1993. *Tongil Baiksuh* (A White Paper on unification) (Seoul: National Unification Board, 1993), 240–245.

26. In his inaugural address on February 25, 1993, President Kim Young Sam declared that he was "opening a new era of civilian democracy" that the entire nation had "awaited for 30 years." See the text of his inaugural address, entitled "All Together Toward A New Korea," in *Tongil Baiksuh*, 235–240.

27. *Hankook Kyungje Juyo Jipyo* (Major indices of the Korean economy) (Seoul: Korean Trade Association, 1991), 292.

28. *Ibid.*, 292.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Kyungje Tonghyang* (Economic trends) (Seoul: Economic Planning Board, 1995), 121.

31. In the election for the National Assembly held in April 1988, President Roh's Democratic Justice Party (DJP) failed to secure a majority in the legislature in a four-party field that comprised, in addition to the DJP, Kim Dae Joong's Party for Peace and Democracy (PPD), Kim Young Sam's Reunification and Democratic Party (RDP), and Kim Jong Pil's New Democratic Republican Party (NDRP). Of 299 parliamentary seats altogether, the DJP held 125, the PPD, 71, the RDP, 60, and the NDRP, 35, in addition to 8 independents. On January 22, 1990, three of the four parties, the DJP, the RDP, and the NDRP, merged into a commanding parliamentary majority of 195 seats under the name of the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP), in which the former leaders of the three dissolved parties shared positions of leadership—Roh Tae Woo as president, Kim Young Sam as senior supreme committee member, and Kim Jong Pil as supreme committee member. See *Handbook on Korea* (Seoul: Overseas Information Bureau, Ministry of Information, 1993), 291.

32. In his address on August 15, 1993, commemorating the 48th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, President Kim Young Sam said his decision to "tear down the old [Japanese] colonial government house and governor's mansion" was aimed at "completing an incomplete liberation" and "restoring the sense of national self-esteem." See the text in *Tongil Baiksuh*, 245–249.

33. *Kyunghyang Shinmoon* (Seoul), January 1, 1995, 27.

34. *Dong-A Ilbo* (Seoul), August 14, 1994.

35. There is no public record of this anonymous rhyme circulating in print. But, many, if not most, of those Koreans who remember the turbulent years of the latter half of the 1940s profess to having heard it going the rounds extensively then.

36. Ryoo Young Ik, *A Study of King Kojong's Program to Invite American Military Advisors* (A Special Edition Marking the 100th Anniversary of U.S.-ROK Military Ties), *Koonsa* (Military history), vol. 4 (Seoul: War History Compilation Committee, Ministry of National Defense, 1982), 111–121; Lee Kwang Rin, *Hankook Kangjwa* (Lecture on Korean history) (Seoul: Ilchokak

Press), 230–231. *Hankooksa* (Korean history), vol. 26 (Seoul: Hankilsa Press, 1991), 329–330.

37. Ibid.

38. In July 1905, in the wake of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904, the U.S. secretary of war, William Howard Taft, under instruction from President Theodore Roosevelt, met in Tokyo with Taro Katsura, the Japanese prime minister, to produce a secret U.S.-Japan executive agreement, later known as the "Taft-Katsura Memo," in which the United States recognized the suzerainty of Japan over Korea in exchange for Japanese acknowledgment of American sovereignty in the Philippines. See Han Woo-keun, *The History of Korea* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, University of Hawaii, 1971), 446–448.

39. Ibid., 474.

40. Ibid., 482–484.

41. The question of Korea after liberation came up as an issue among Allied leaders for the first time when U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt, British prime minister Winston Churchill, and Chinese generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek met in Cairo in November 1943. The three leaders agreed to "accord the people of Korea freedom and independence in due course of time" after liberation. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, Conference at Cairo and Teheran, 1943* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1961), 399–404.

42. Even prior to the three-power summit meeting in Cairo in 1943, President Roosevelt was leaning strongly toward the idea of a "trusteeship" for Korea after its liberation. He had discussed the idea with British foreign minister Anthony Eden in April 1943 and, when he met with Soviet premier Joseph Stalin in Tehran in November 1943 following his meeting in Cairo with Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek, Roosevelt insisted that there be "at least forty years of trusteeship" in Korea before its independence. Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), 777.

43. At the Allied summit meeting at Yalta in February 1945, attended by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, Roosevelt still insisted that Korea after liberation be subjected to "at least twenty to thirty years of trusteeship managed by three countries, the United States, China, and the Soviet Union," to which Stalin remained reluctant, arguing that Korean independence must be immediate and total. At Yalta, the United States and the United Kingdom practically laid the groundwork for the division of Korea by agreeing, in exchange for a Soviet commitment to enter the war in the Far East against Japan, to honor the "interests that Imperial Russia enjoyed in Manchuria before 1905." U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Malta and Yalta* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1955), 984. See also Leland M. Goodrich, *Korea, A Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956), 11–12.

44. At the Allied summit meeting at Potsdam in July 1945 attended by Harry Truman (Franklin Roosevelt's successor as U.S. president), Churchill, and Stalin, Korea was discussed in the context of reaffirming the agreement

arrived at in Cairo in 1943 to grant Korea independence in due course. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents 1941-1949* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1950), 50.

45. *Minjogeh Jeunguhin: Hankook Jonjaing Shillok* (Testimony of a nation: A documentary of the Korean war), vol. 1 (Seoul: Joong-Ang Ilbo Press, 1973), 232-250.

46. *Nambook Daihwa Baiksuh*, 21-25.

47. In a speech entitled "Crisis in Asia" that he delivered at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on January 12, 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson publicly outlined a U.S. Pacific defense perimeter that included neither Korea nor Taiwan. If these areas were attacked, he declared, the people invaded "must rely on themselves to resist" and then "on the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the UN." Dean Acheson, U.S. Department of State, Bulletin, "Crisis in Asia, Examination of the U.S. Policy" (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1950), 116.

48. U.S. Department of State, Bulletin, July 17, 1950, 93. Also Se-jin Kim, *Korean Unification*, 127-128.

49. Se-jin Kim, *Korean Unification*, 128.

50. The Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953, between Gen. Mark Clark (U.S. Army) on the one side, in his capacity as commander-in-chief, UNC, and Kim Il Sung and Peng Du-huai on the other, in their respective capacities as supreme commander of North Korea's People's Army and commander of China's "Volunteers." With President Syngman Rhee of South Korea opposed to the armistice in the context of the agreement negotiated between the two sides, the signing ceremony was boycotted by Maj. Gen. Choi Duk Shin, a Korean general who was a member of the UNC delegation to the truce talks, in protest against the signing. President Syngman Rhee withdrew his opposition to the Armistice Agreement only after he had secured a bilateral mutual defense treaty with the United States in 1954. For further details regarding how South Korea came to terms on the armistice, see John Kotch, "The Origins of the American Security Commitment to Korea," in *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953*, ed. Bruce Cumings (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983).

51. C. Turner Joy, *How Communists Negotiate* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1955), 175.

52. Testimony of Warren Christopher, U.S. Secretary of State, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on North Korea on January 24, 1995, in a verbatim version as transcribed by Federal News Service, p. 62.

53. *Success or Sellout? The U.S.-North Korea Nuclear Accord*, Report of an Independent Task Force Co-sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Seoul Forum for International Affairs (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1995), 13.

54. Testimony of Warren Christopher, U.S. Secretary of State, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on North Korea, January 24, 1995, p. 62.

55. Kim Jong Il, *Sahwoejui Kunsuleui Yuksajuk Kyohoonkwa Wuri Dangeui Chong Rosuhn* (Historical lessons of socialist construction and our party's general lines) (Pyongyang: Radios Joong-ang and Pyongyang, January 3, 1992).



TREE *of* LIBERTY SOCIETY

The Inheritance of War: Japan's Domestic Politics and International Ambitions

William Lee Howell

*The struggle of man against power is the
struggle of memory against forgetting.*

—Milan Kundera,
The Book of Laughter and Forgetting

In June 1995, close to 60 students were arrested in Seoul, South Korea, for attacking a Japanese cultural center with Molotov cocktails, and hundreds more took to the streets in protest. The incident was triggered by a statement by Michio Watanabe, a former Japanese foreign minister and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) faction head. Before constituents in Utsunomiya, Watanabe not only characterized Japan's 36-year occupation of Korea as valid under international law, but also argued that it should not have been labeled as colonialism. Watanabe went on to say that the 1910 treaty that permitted the Japanese annexation of Korea was signed "amicably," which, based on his interpretation, implied that Japanese rule was by invitation and not through aggression.¹ Amid the uproar in South Korea, Prime Minister Lee Hong-koo reacted by calling the statements "beyond common sense and [causing] considerable problems in building up future-oriented ties between Korea and Japan."² International fallout from a seemingly innocuous small-town political speech would, in the West, be dismissed as an unanticipated side effect of the modern media age. In the case of Japan, however, this recent incident is indicative of a continued, and profound, political debate over that country's history. The year 1995, the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific, became the Janus of Japanese politics and foreign policy.³

The Apology Issue

Japan's past military activities in Asia continue to shape the national, regional, and global perception of the country's role in

maintaining peace and security.⁴ Yet the recent debate over Japanese history has been confined within narrow domestic political parameters while the debate over Japan's future international role has been shaped by broader assumptions about the post-cold war environment in Asia.⁵ Although in June 1995 a final draft of a resolution condemning World War II-related aggression and pledging to "never again" repeat such acts eventually reached the Diet and was approved,⁶ the prolonged debate within the ruling coalition served only to increase the political marginalization of a Socialist prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama.⁷ Days before adopting the proposed resolution, Murayama was reported to have threatened—to deaf ears—to break up the coalition government if LDP conservatives persisted in holding up the resolution.⁸ Protests from the right continued unabated. Speculation was high that the coalition's self-imposed legislative deadline, initially set for June 18, when the Diet adjourned, would be moved closer to August 15, a date that marked the anniversary of the end of the Pacific War and also happened to fall after the July 23 elections of half the members of the Upper House of the Diet. In the end, the approved resolution was viewed as "more a triumph of carefully crafted ambiguity than a sincere apology, and unlikely to reassure Japan's Asian neighbors."⁹

The 1995 debate over Japan's war guilt did not resemble the "Schlussstrich" debate that is still taking place in Germany.¹⁰ Instead, it was depicted as a clever political ploy—a tool by which some in the LDP sought the removal of the Socialists from government leadership. How the process of collective self-examination was dragged into a domestic political controversy is best explained by the analysis of both a post-World War II Japanese political environment devoid of ideology and a national sentiment marked by victimization through and after the war.

In early January 1996, however, the instinct for political self-preservation prevailed. Faced with a worsening financial crisis involving *jusen* lenders and increasing criticism from the public and opposition parties, Murayama stepped down and the president of the LDP, Ryutaro Hashimoto, became the new head of government. Yet no new elections preceded this transfer of leadership—the Socialists remain in the current coalition. Asia would once again have to contemplate the ephemeral nature of Japan's apology.

Political Change

In 1993, the formation of a non-Liberal Democratic Party government in the wake of the collapse of the Kiichi Miyazawa government was seen by most observers of Japanese politics as an epochal event. Although the LDP took heavy losses in the general elections following the breakup of the Miyazawa government, the net effect was that conservatives gained seats at the expense of the Socialists. With two conservative parties now forming the largest political blocs, Japan's politics, already crowded at its center, saw the fabric of its ideology begin to fade. The decline in political ideology accelerated with the formation of the Murayama government in July 1994. The current coalition government, formed by traditional Socialists and conservative Liberal Democrats, was viewed as both incredible and untenable. Yet despite persistent rumors of its imminent demise, the Murayama government remained for more than a year, in large part because historically divisive issues—such as defense and international affairs—were resolved by the Socialist leadership's willingness to divorce themselves ideologically from important policy positions of the past (for example, by accepting the constitutionality of the Self-Defense Forces and by abandoning their opposition to the dispatch of unarmed Self-Defense Forces personnel to United Nations [UN] peacekeeping missions).

Despite both the resolution over an interpretation of a long-standing political-military issue and the perception that self-interest would gloss over most political differences, the settlement of a key Socialist demand for entering into a coalition—the passage of a Diet resolution formally apologizing for Japanese actions during World War II—remained a source of bitter dispute among coalition members. However ironic, it was Japan's past, and not a vision of its future, that severely strained intragovernment relations. The willingness of Japanese politicians to forsake ideological differences and instead harangue one another over historical interpretation reflects the importance of understanding the political culture of memory in modern Japan.

On May 4, 1995, prior to this much-contested Diet resolution, Tomiichi Murayama, then the Japanese prime minister, traveled to the Marco Polo Bridge on the outskirts of Beijing. After visiting the site, which precipitated the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, Murayama stated, "I recognize anew that Japan's actions at one time in our past history, including aggression and colonial

rule, caused unbearable suffering and sorrow for many people in your country and other Asian neighbors."¹¹ This near-apology did not satisfy the Chinese or lessen regional sensitivity toward Japan's past behavior. From both the regional and Western perspectives, the continued sputtering progression toward an "official" apology did not pay any real dividends in terms of Japan's intraregional and international relations. In fact, it has merely heightened cynicism about Japan's sincerity. Moreover, from a domestic political perspective, the motives behind the "apology" posturing have been attributed to both the constituent politics that influences the right, that is, pressure from veteran and family groups affected by the war, and the continued renunciation, by the left and pacifists, of Japanese militarism.¹² For many in both quarters, Murayama's apology proved an embarrassment when China resumed its nuclear weapons testing less than a fortnight after his state visit. From an Asian perspective, the timing of the nuclear tests was a severe "loss of face" for Japan.

Indeed, the irony became richer as Japan's conservatives, while advocating both the removal of the "enemies" language in the UN Charter and the pursuit of a permanent seat for Japan on the UN Security Council (UNSC), strongly resisted any Socialist initiative that might have contributed to improving the likelihood of success for either initiative. Clearly, more complex strategic and legal issues remain as larger obstacles to these goals. Nevertheless, such an obvious disconnect in policy approaches forces observers from outside the region to ask whether Japan's political leadership "has indeed seen the trees but not the forest." Or, more to the point, does Japan understand the intrinsic value of showing remorse as opposed to allowing the perception that it is simply ashamed of past acts? Or are current frustrations, both inside and outside Japan, simply reflecting the difficulty in advocating greater individual moral responsibility in a part of the world that is still attached to notions of collective accountability?

Japan and Its Past Role in Asia

Understanding the Japanese aversion toward an outright apology requires examining the Japanese "standard for civilization" during the war years.¹³ The Japanese perception of what constitutes civilized and uncivilized behavior in international relations has evolved significantly in this century. Today, Japan's acute sense of national inferiority has resulted in awkward attempts at introspection that in turn have been perceived in the

region as simply a form of narcissism.¹⁴ In fact, the Japanese public's perception of how the rest of Asia feels about Japan does not reflect the reality in the region. A July 1994 *Asahi Shimbun* poll revealed that

- one-third of Japanese felt Japan had earned the trust of their Asian neighbors, while 53 percent said it had not; and
- 72 percent felt that Japan had done too little to compensate Asia for wartime suffering.¹⁵

Yet a May 1995 *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll of six Asian countries (Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, and South Korea) reflected favorable feelings in the region toward Japanese investment, and many Asians thought relations with Japan would improve over time; with the exceptions of China and South Korea, the rest of the countries saw Japan as the single most important country in the world.¹⁶ Such results may seem encouraging to those who are opposed to any apology and who continue to rationalize Japanese actions in Asia up until the U.S. decision to drop two atomic bombs. For some Japanese, and a vocal minority in the West, the use of atomic weapons by the United States redefined the notion of war-related guilt. Japan's memory of the war vis-à-vis the atomic bomb, however, does not carry any real credibility with its Northeast Asian neighbors. But it is clear to most Japanese that a different standard for analysis should be applied to different periods in Japanese history. In a country where calendars are based on the emperor's reign, it is important to make the fundamental distinction that "the Chinese live in the realm of space, the Japanese in time."¹⁷

The Meiji Experience and Japanese Sentiment

When a prominent political leader such as the current prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, has expressed "doubts" about whether World War II was a Japanese war of aggression, as he did before the Diet in October 1994 when he was the head of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, and yet concedes, in the same speech, not only that there were clear cases of aggression but that the occupation of Korea was, in fact, colonialism, the true meaning in his statement becomes lost in its absurd context; Japan was indeed both aggressive and imperial but should not be made a scapegoat for following the interna-

tional norms of that period. This line of reasoning explains, in part, Japan's current policy in its current bilateral row with South Korea over the Liancourt Rocks (Tok-Do islands in Korean and Takeshima in Japanese). Japan seized the islands during the 1904–1905 Russo-Japan War; it bases sovereignty on a related 1905 treaty. South Korea, which reclaimed the rocks immediately following the country's liberation from Japan in 1945, has maintained a small coast guard contingent on the islands since the 1950s. The issue emerged during a sensitive period in South Korean domestic politics, which, predictably, led to populist and bellicose rhetoric from the leadership in Seoul. The roots of Hashimoto's interpretation not only lie in his domestic political base, but reach back to the Meiji era of Japanese history.¹⁸

Despite Japan's initial success in pursuing diplomatic means to put an end to its "unequal treaties," the continued reliance on the threat, and use, of force by the tripartite powers in the late nineteenth century convinced the Japanese that diplomacy served only to veil militaristic intentions. The tripartite intervention of France, Russia, and Germany in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 (a war that resulted in the Japanese conquest of Korea, Taiwan, and the city of Port Arthur in China) demonstrated that military force was the true equalizer in international relations; "might makes right" had once again been demonstrated to be a truism.¹⁹ This realization served to justify Japan's vigor in pursuing colonial expansion and its later attempts to generate empathy among Western colonial powers for its new cause. But it was this type of moral relativism (although Japan would argue this point in geostrategic terms) that failed to redress the grievances of Japan's oppressed Asian neighbors and that continued to offend modern notions of international civility held by the global community. In his chapter entitled, "No Sense of an Absolute Good," the Japanese writer Taichi Sakaiya explains:

Because of their habit of believing in multiple religions at once, Japanese do not have one absolute set of divine teachings or an unchanging set of commandments. They must rely on "everyone's opinion." In other words, the majority view of the people gathered at the particular time and place is the correct opinion."²⁰

If "everyone's opinion" is extended externally so as to apply to Japan's actions at the dawn of twentieth-century imperial-

ism—and if “everyone” is taken to mean those nations actively maintaining the global balance of power during that period—then Japan’s belated attempt at Asian colonialism is closer to approaching a kind of historical justification. As applied to current circumstances, however, Sakaiya’s observation would imply that “internal” opinion (that held by the Japanese community) and not “external” opinion (that held by the international community) is the correct opinion for determining Japan’s moral culpability over its World War II actions. Indeed, as reported in the *Economist*, more than 5 million people and a quarter of the members of the Diet signed a petition blocking the apology resolution in August 1995.²¹ The result, therefore, is that Japan continues to ask the world to accept the unacceptable—that there are separate ethical standards that apply to the origin and to the end of the Pacific War. Yet if Sakaiya’s sister premise with regard to Japan’s morality—“since Japanese feel only a relativistic sense of values, they can rapidly change their ethical views in a short period of time”—is also correct,²² then how can it be that a prime minister can apologize but the nation as a whole will not follow his lead? Moreover, how does one explain the fact that, as early as May 1995, 61 percent of Japanese felt that “Japan hasn’t done enough to take responsibility for its role in World War II”?²³ Is it that the body politic is somehow not in tune with the national psyche of Japan?

Second, beyond their newfound awareness of the hypocritical nature of international relations, the Japanese openly resented Western prejudice based on ethnicity.²⁴ The perception that Japan was treated differently because of its ethnicity further fueled an inclination toward “heroic anarchy” that had as its basis a complex notion of national honor. Although Japan would later come to share a similar ethnicity-based bias about other Asian cultures, a sense of honor came to symbolize Japan’s distinctiveness from the countries of both Asia and the West. It would also serve to justify many of the cruelties the Japanese inflicted upon the citizens, particularly prisoners of war, of various countries.²⁵

The perception that it was being held to a different “standard of civilization” from Western colonial powers, and the suspicion that much of this was based on race, intensified Japan’s “victim mentality,” or *higaisha ishiki* (sense of being a victim), which has been described to this day as “an extremely important underlying component of the Japanese mentality . . . which does not refer

to a temporary sense of grievance but to the sense that one's own social position is itself that of a victim."²⁶ It will be interesting to see whether the issue of "comfort women" (discussed below) will eventually challenge Japanese notions about honor and victimization. This sense of being a victim may account for Japan's heightened sensitivity toward its own recent history. It fails, however, to account for Japan's own insensitivity toward its Asian neighbors. Although homogeneity and familism instilled a sense of national pride in many Japanese, these same qualities also made them less empathetic with the outside world. This also explains in part why Japan remained oblivious to, or willfully disregarded, foreign reaction to the domestic political debate over its history. As a European scholar succinctly put it,

a more negative derivative of the all-embracing national Japanese particularism that is constantly nurtured by a great deal of internal sensitivity—that is, sensitivity vis-à-vis fellow Japanese—is a corresponding lack of sensitivity toward outsiders. . . . Japan's national particularism has resulted in a greater degree of self-centeredness than one would find elsewhere.²⁷

An example of this particularism was the November 1994 apology made by the Foreign Ministry to the Japanese people for the Japanese embassy's bungled delivery of a diplomatic warning to the United States during the Pearl Harbor attack. The failure to give clear warning of Japan's intention to declare war permitted, from the viewpoint of the Foreign Ministry, the United States to announce that Pearl Harbor was a "sneak attack." Such an apology seems to turn the Western notion of guilt on its head, but as one of Japan's leading psychiatrists has noted, "what is characteristic about the Japanese sense of guilt, though, is that it shows itself most sharply when the individual suspects that his action will result in betraying the group to which he belongs."²⁸

Yet for Japan, questions of guilt and notions of *higaisha ishiki* apply only tangentially with regard to the history of the Pacific War. Instead, guilt and victimization have become the themes that most Japanese feel comfortable with when examined in the context of two momentous events—the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Atomic Bomb as a Political Symbol

From Hiroshima and Nagasaki onward, Japan's collective memory begins to show some confusion over the moral dimensions of World War II. The difficult issues surrounding the end to the Pacific War were further complicated by the start of the cold war.²⁹

It is unfair, however, to interpret Japanese efforts in 1995 to commemorate the two nuclear bombings as an attempt to whitewash Japan's wartime past. It would be just as unfair to condemn those Japanese who visit the Yasukuni shrine to pray for the souls of Japan's war dead. Pilgrimages to the three sites permit the Japanese to reflect on the sorrow and human loss associated with modern warfare. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, are the most poignant of such undertakings, because they force the onlooker to recall the suffering of innocent civilians and to recognize the actual horrors of the atomic age. In the case of the Yasukuni shrine, it is understandable for families to continue to mourn the loss of fallen Japanese soldiers and pray for their souls, but the collective memory of Asia still burns with images of Japan's military actions. Mourning, much like memory, has an unavoidable political dimension—the Association of Bereaved Families understands this all too well. In an age when Asian nations still expect political acts of contrition—going beyond reparations—from its past aggressor, Japan will continue to find it difficult to mourn in peace.

With regard to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, annual observances in both cities have become political symbols. Yet in Asia in general, there is very little debate over the appropriateness of harnessing the global nonproliferation agenda to the tragedy associated with the two cities. Is this, therefore, a tacit acceptance of these symbols by the rest of Asia? Despite recent developments in North Korea, the successful conclusion of the conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the announcement of a Southeast Asia nuclear-free-zone agreement have reduced somewhat the likelihood that an Asian nuclear arms race will begin soon. Yet attributing these developments directly to lessons learned from the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would be, at a minimum, naive. For the rest of Asia, the atomic bomb was the *deus ex machina* that changed the course of history for the entire region, and it did so for the better. Japan, moreover, by refusing to express contrition for its past behavior, elicits very little sympathy for its own suffering. Japan's failure at

contrition has unfortunately diminished its moral standing vis-à-vis the nuclear issue in the rest of Asia. Ironically, given the level of suspicion in Asia about Japan's military intentions, Japan could in fact find itself acting as the catalyst for a regional arms race. A greatly expanded regional security role for Japan's Self-Defense Forces or the repeal of article 9 of the Japanese constitution may increase tensions throughout Asia. Therefore, when considering Japan's security objectives—regional peace and security for the coming century—its current reluctance to apologize for its wartime aggression can only be described as either counterintuitive or shortsighted.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki will always maintain their allegorical value, but it is the domestic political dynamic that has appropriated the memory of the atomic bomb. As Geoffrey White has accurately observed, "whereas the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are critical international events, particularly in regard to U.S.-Japan relations, debates about how to remember them have been almost entirely a national affair."³⁰ As evidenced by the controversy surrounding the *Enola Gay* exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the United States too, was not immune to a domestic political maelstrom.³¹ The Smithsonian controversy is best summed up by a question posed by White: "How could an intensely international story—the sacrifices of America's veterans and the suffering of Japan's atomic bomb victims—be represented in an intensely *national* site?"³² The heated Smithsonian debate and subsequent articles in American journals questioning the use of the atomic bomb have served to confirm the Japanese public's steadfast belief that the moral aspects of the Pacific War were not as black and white as the West has led the world to believe.

In Japan, the manipulation of the memory of the bomb by domestic political actors has been much more oblique. On July 23, 1995, Japan's much-anticipated elections for the Upper House of the Diet were finally held. As expected, the Socialists suffered the greatest decline, and despite repeated calls for a general election, the Murayama coalition government was able to stay in power. Although voter turnout was an anemic 44 percent, the results of the July election were seen as critical to forecasting the possible outcome in the more significant Lower House elections. The next Lower House elections, mandated to occur no later than 1997, would be the first general election held under Japan's new electoral reform laws—the single-seat electoral district being their key feature.

The days leading up to the Upper House elections were understandably tense for the political world. The election of two ex-comedians as governors of Tokyo and Osaka on April 9, 1995, was acknowledged as proof of an ever-increasing public frustration with the political status quo. Both candidates were independents, and neither mounted a traditional campaign. At the time, the governorships appeared to be a lock for opposition party candidates. When the main opposition party, the Shinshin-to, or New Frontier Party, could not clearly separate its policy platform from the current left-right coalition government, voter interest shifted toward personality (i.e., individual candidates) and away from party lines. Governors Yukio Aoshima and Isamu Yamada became the first wave of Japan's new "politics of personality."

Having missed a golden opportunity, the New Frontier Party understood the necessity of creating a greater cleavage between itself and the coalition government before the July Upper House elections. In reality, the party, composed mostly of former LDP members, would be pressed to find itself differing from its LDP counterparts on that many issues. In the 50th anniversary year of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, Japan's politicians would receive a much-needed boost from the most unexpected of sources—France.

On June 16, 1995, the newly elected French president, Jacques Chirac, announced France's intention to resume nuclear testing at the Mururoa atoll in the South Pacific. Protests erupted worldwide, particularly in Australia and New Zealand. Japan, on the other hand, was reserved in its response. In the weeks leading up to the July elections, however, the Japanese press began to run articles critical of Japan's weak response to French nuclear testing.³³ On July 14, Toshifu Kaifu, the former LDP prime minister and current New Frontier Party leader, called for a Japanese boycott of French goods. By July 18, five days before the election, the LDP-Socialist coalition leadership had agreed to seek a Diet resolution protesting France's decision.³⁴ On July 20, Prime Minister Murayama announced that Japan would ask the UN to adopt a resolution condemning all nuclear testing and had his chief cabinet secretary deliver a stronger protest to the French ambassador.³⁵ Not to be outdone, Masayoshi Takemura, then finance minister and leader of the Sakigake (Harbinger) Party, became the most vocal member of the cabinet in support of a boycott of French goods. Surprisingly, the boycott was picked up by some retailers and consumer groups, and the effect on overall trade was greater than expected.

To imply that Japan's recent exhortations about French nuclear testing was pure politics might appear excessively cynical, but the timing of the protest, or rather the convergence of various historical events, proves otherwise. Within a three-week span, between late July and early August, Japan experienced a major election campaign and observed the anniversaries of the more significant events in its modern history. France, as a non-Asian nation, definitely invited Asia's enmity by announcing, in the same year as the 50th anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, its intention to conduct nuclear tests outside its own borders. Compared to Japan's lower-profile response to a May 1995 decision by the People's Republic of China to resume nuclear testing, the Japanese reaction to French testing appears, from an outside perspective, overdone and marked by politics. France stopped its testing at the end of 1995 and has declared its intention to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. The official Chinese response to Japan's decision to freeze a portion of its foreign aid was nothing short of indignant. China, on the other hand, appears likely to continue its nuclear tests in 1996 and has been cryptic about its intention to sign on to the CTBT. In all likelihood, Japan's political leaders will face popular pressure to confront China on this issue further. Once again, Japan's political leadership has demonstrated a remarkable inability to utilize the symbols of its past constructively for the legitimate goals of the present.

The Political Necessity for Reconciling Japan's Past Behavior

The 1995 Diet resolution expressing remorse over Japan's Pacific War activities may partially assuage Asian resentment toward Japan's interpretation of its history, but the public and intense nature of the political debate has diluted any perception that Japan was sincere. Moreover, the history book is not yet closed for Japan—there are still other sensitive war-related issues that require attention.

In November 1994, the International Commission of Jurists insisted in a report that Japan had a legal, and moral, duty to compensate the "comfort women" of Asia.³⁶ An announcement by the Murayama government that it would fund \$1 billion in exchange programs and "vocational training" was labeled insufficient. Japan's own special commission was criticized for governmental inaction on the issue. This case is significant because it involves the testimony of survivors who suffered from Japanese

acts that are beyond any political or moral justification. Just prior to the July Upper House elections, then-Prime Minister Murayama issued a public and formal apology to all those who suffered as comfort women at the hands of the Imperial Army. He also announced the formation of a private foundation that would collect funds to compensate the roughly 1,000 survivors. Although Murayama was often criticized as lacking vision and as only the nominal head of state, it is all the more disappointing that the very politicians who offered themselves as a better alternative could never have made such an announcement.

In February 1996, a UN human rights lawyer urged in a report that Japan should accept full legal responsibility and make financial restitution for the abuse of Asian women by the Imperial Army during the World War II. The report was the first major condemnation by the UN in half a century. Prime Minister Hashimoto and other officials reacted quickly to the report by stating their intent to refute the charges and to refuse further compensation.

August 15—The End of Memory

On August 15, 1995, Kim Young Sam, the president of South Korea, presided over a crowd of roughly 50,000 cheering people in Seoul as a wrecking crew began to tear down the immense South Korean National Museum, built originally to headquarter the Japanese Imperial Army and colonial government. The popular decision to tear down the building had been made two years earlier by the newly elected president. Despite the fact that there is no replacement site ready to house the National Museum's wares, the decision to destroy the building had strong public support. On the 50th anniversary of the end of the Pacific War, South Korea chose to erase its past. The destruction of the building has become yet another intersection between politics and memory in Northeast Asia.

In Japan, on the same day, Prime Minister Murayama went beyond the language of the earlier Diet resolution and gave a direct apology to those countries that suffered Japanese wartime aggression:

So that we do not go wrong in the future, I humbly acknowledge this undeniable fact of history. Once again, I express my deep remorse and heartfelt apologies.³⁷

Given that Murayama has had strong pacifist beliefs for some time and that the majority of the public advocated a more forceful apology, his statement was nothing less than sincere and certainly most appropriate for this particular occasion. His statement is, however, associated with an unfortunate contradiction. Many Asians, having previously witnessed the incredible rancor in the Diet over the apology resolution, believe Murayama's apology reflects only the emotions of a private individual and does not represent the national sentiment. There comes a point, however, when one wonders if certain nations would simply prefer conversion over contrition.³⁸ In October 1995, South Korean politicians voiced strong protest against Prime Minister Murayama's remark before the Japanese Diet that the 1910 Annexation Treaty was, under international law and the practices of that period, a legally valid treaty. This uproar in Korea came despite the fact that Murayama had offered the first clear apology for Japan's colonization of Korea in his official statement of August 15, 1995, during the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Pacific War.

Memory and Its Political Future

Japanese politicians, in setting the course for the country's future, can no longer act as if they were beyond the reach of the region's history. Yet it would be just as unwise for the rest of Asia to raise the political stakes even higher whenever Japan attempts to assume greater regional, and international, responsibility. Forgetting is an essential, but difficult, part of the political culture of memory. Some things, however, can never be forgotten, but only recognized and excused. As Japan increasingly tugs at its domestic leash to free itself to explore greater global responsibility, it will continue to face political hurdles that are anchored in its past.

The debate continues, for example, in Japan and abroad, over Japan's proper role, earned or deserved, on the UN Security Council. Careful analysis of Japan's future role in the UN involves examining several important aspects of the issue that are unrelated to the political culture of memory. Indeed, there would first have to be a change in the geopolitical attitudes of current UNSC members, as well as the members of the UN General Assembly. And, of course, Japan would need to conduct the necessary revision of the Japanese constitution, make modifications to Japanese laws, and change government procedures to

allow itself the full range of actions expected of a permanent member of the Security Council. Yet an organization set up by the victors of World War II, whose charter until 1995 had embedded in it negative references to both Germany and Japan, cannot ignore the forces of past memory scripted into the formal language that mandates its current roles.

Under article 108 of the UN Charter, a charter revision would take place in the General Assembly. The key issue—whether Japan can lobby enough General Assembly support to grant it permanent Security Council membership—is as yet unclear. But in failing to address issues from the past with its regional neighbors, Japan has been forced to depend on its foreign economic policy to generate support for its political objectives. Although Japan is the largest provider of overseas development assistance in the region,³⁹ its ambassador to the UN, Hisashi Owada, expressed concern in October 1994 that not one minister of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had brought up Japan's bid for a permanent Security Council seat during speeches before the General Assembly.⁴⁰ In that same week, Hang Sung-joo, then South Korea's foreign minister, in a speech to the General Assembly, proposed a third category of council membership that would not have veto power. Although Japan was not mentioned explicitly, it was clear that South Korea did not want Japan to have this power. The public outcry over the apology issue in South Korea made it virtually impossible that Korea would support Japan's bid for the council anytime in the near future.⁴¹

Unfortunately, those studying the geopolitical ramifications of an expanded Japanese role in the UN often assume that Asia is predisposed toward fully integrating itself into international regimes. The same historical bias and suspicion that has prevented any revamping of the UN Security Council in Japan's favor may eventually return to erode regional confidence in international law. The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of Sea, expected to be ratified by the Japanese Diet in 1996, has added to regional tensions. Beyond the Tok-Do/Takeshima islands issue, Japan will have to deal with Chinese claims over the Senkaku Islands. China also intends to ratify the convention in 1996, but bilateral relations could spiral downward much as they have with South Korea. Although the Convention on the Law of the Sea permits a country to establish an exclusive 200-nautical-mile economic zone off its coast and incorporates various measures to resolve disputes, it does not compensate for weak political

leadership bent on exploiting territorial issues for domestic political gain or national enrichment. Any resolution of international law issues remains difficult so long as Asia is reluctant to abandon completely its pre-1945 notion of sovereignty and its nineteenth-century method of regional diplomacy.

Conclusion

The hoped-for UN reorganization for its 50th anniversary failed to materialize, and so Japan has resigned itself to seeking a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the 1997–1998 term. Suffice it to say that it would be in Japan's interest, both domestically and internationally, to revamp its public diplomacy efforts toward its regional neighbors. A key first step for such an effort, in the wake of the June 1995 Diet resolution, would be for the government to proceed to develop a coherent and consistent policy position for some of the more emotional, and still outstanding, issues from the war such as resolutions for comfort women.

Second, Japan must be proactive in approaching its war-related history. It has failed utterly in all its previous attempts at "spin control" with regard to these issues. The process of official denial, slow acknowledgment, and forced apology (which was the case for the comfort women issue) comes at too high a diplomatic cost. Japan should come forward with a clear and more objective educational agenda with respect to its past that anticipates its neighbors' anxieties and expectations, but also reflects their contending forms of memory.

And third, Japanese leaders must develop a vision for Japan's future that not only reflects post-cold war ambitions, but also acknowledges pre-World War II debts to the region; any new confidence-building initiative will be predicated on addressing issues from the past. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, although strongly opposed to any Japanese apology in 1995, may prove more successful than his predecessor at the difficult task of improving regional relations. Many in Japan characterized Murayama as an ardent Socialist and therefore read any apology as reflecting his personal ideological and political leanings; for Asia, Murayama was not a true reflection of either Japanese society or its leadership. The region may respond more positively to a conciliatory message delivered by a conservative and popular leader such as Hashimoto (although Asia would have to acknowledge that it, too, has a responsibility for

eventually moving beyond the past). A well-conceived and sincere diplomatic initiative led by the Japanese prime minister would be one of the more significant Asia-related confidence-building measures in recent history. Failure to manage the remaining historical issues will only deepen enduring regional suspicion with regard to the prospects for peace and security in East Asia.

Notes

1. Ironically, this incident was not the first time that Michio Watanabe had aggravated South Korea-Japan relations. In late March 1995, Watanabe was criticized in Japan for leading a much-publicized three-party mission to North Korea during a delicate period in negotiations between the United States and the North over the delivery of South Korean nuclear reactors. Watanabe's goal was to reopen diplomatic talks over normalization of relations between Pyongyang and Tokyo, in abeyance since November 1992. Watanabe unfortunately passed away in fall 1995, and relations between Pyongyang and Tokyo remain relatively unchanged.

2. See "Watanabe Forced to Retract Claim that Japan Annexed Korea 'Amicably,'" *Daily Japan Digest*, June 6, 1995, 1. Even in Asia, "politics is politics." It was only a month after the Watanabe incident that the South Korean prime minister endorsed a proposal that South Korea and Japan should co-host the 2002 World Cup for soccer. See "South Korean Premier Suggests Co-Hosting World Cup Soccer with Japan," *Daily Japan Digest*, July 13, 1995, 5.

3. For a concise analysis of Japan's current dilemma, see "The Symbols of Japan Past," *Economist*, June 3, 1995, 31.

4. "But controversy about Japan's military activities—past, present, and future—is set to be an enduring theme of 1995. . . . As Asian neighbors also move to celebrate their liberation from Japan, the Japanese government may well find that its planned \$1bn fund for cultural and youth exchanges with its Asian neighbors will not be enough to assuage the past." International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey 1994/95* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), 174.

5. In May 1995, Japan's largest-circulating, and centrist, newspaper published a post-cold war policy recommendation that envisioned Japan as both capable of better crisis management and more active in its global role. See "Outline of a Comprehensive Security Policy," *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Tokyo) (English supplement) May 3, 1995. Japan's major liberal newspaper also published its recommendations for a more peace-oriented vision of Japan in a new world order. See "A Path Toward Nonmilitary Contribution to the World," *Asahi Evening News* (Tokyo), May 3, 1995, 7.

6. Much of the document tones down Japanese ties to colonialism and aggression, but the key expression of contrition reads as follows: "We recog-

nize the acts of this kind carried out by our country in the past and the suffering we caused the people of other countries, especially those in Asia, and we express our feelings of deep remorse." See "LDP Gives In on 'Remorse for War' Resolution, to Keep Coalition in Power," *Daily Japan Digest*, June 7, 1995, 1. It was also reported that Watanabe's controversial remarks hastened the passage of the resolution.

7. In a *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll taken in the middle of May 1995, Murayama's approval rating was a mere 34 percent and his negative rating was 49.7 percent. When asked what good things he had done, 63.2 percent responded with "nothing." More ominous for Japanese politics in general was the response by 57.1 percent of the voters that they no longer support any particular political party. A January 1996 opinion poll by the *Asahi Shimbun*, however, showed that Prime Minister Hashimoto's cabinet had an approval rating of 61 percent. *Daily Japan Digest*, January 16, 1996, 2.

8. "Murayama Threatens to Quit Coalition over War Apology, with Little Effect," *Daily Japan Digest*, June 1, 1995, 1.

9. See Nicholas D. Kristof, "Japan Expresses Regret of a Sort for the War," *New York Times*, June 7, 1995, p. A1.

10. *Schlussstrich* refers to a "debate to end all debates" about Germany's wartime past. See Debra Jo Immergut, "Germany Faces War Memories Anew," *Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 1995, p. A10.

11. Steven Mufson, "Japanese Leader Makes Near Apology for World War II Aggression in China," *Washington Post*, May 5, 1995, p. A30.

12. "A trio of political lobbies with power akin to that of the National Rifle Association in the United States is withholding any frank assessment of history. The lobbies—little known outside of Japan—are the Association of Bereaved Families, the Soldier's Pension Federation, and the Association of Shinto Shrines. Their message: In World War II, Japan fought a just war to liberate Asia from Western Imperialism." Norihiko Shirouzu, "Lobbies Keep Japan from Facing Its Past," *Wall Street Journal*, June 6, 1995, p. A14.

13. "In general, the standard of 'civilization' demanded that foreigners receive treatment consistent 'with the rule of law as understood in Western countries.' In specific terms, this meant 'a modicum of respect for the life, liberty, dignity, and property of foreign nationals, such as may be expected in a civilized community, freedom of the judiciary from the direction of the executive, unhindered access to the courts and reasonable means of redress in the case of manifest denial, delay, or abuse of justice.'" Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 14. (Citing Georg Schwartzberger, *A Manual of International Law*, 6th ed. [Abingdon, Oxon.: Professional Books, 1976], 84).

14. Postwar Japanese literature, in examining the war, tends to focus on human suffering, often presented from the perspective of the average Japanese civilian. There is little examination of the morality in the politics of the war. "To tell of war is to tell of the people oppressed by its tyranny. Japanese literature of the last 50 years might be best characterized as preserving the memory of human tragedy that the war inflicted." Susumu Nakanishi,

"Literary Reflections of Postwar Japan," *Japan Review of International Affairs* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 334.

15. United States Information Agency, "Shadows of the Past: Japanese Public Attitudes Toward World War II," *USIA Briefing Paper*, March 17, 1995.

16. "Yomiuri Poll Finds Most Asians Have Friendly Feelings Toward Japan," *Daily Japan Digest*, May 23, 1995, 2.

17. See Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: From the Twenties to the Nineties*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 180.

18. As well as being a prime candidate to head a future LDP-led government, Hashimoto is also the current president of the Association of Bereaved Families, a major political lobby in Japan opposed to a formal apology for the Pacific War.

19. "Japan became sufficiently modern and powerful to challenge the interests of the European members of the international society, and to question whether or not the 'civilized' society was in fact only a European one with honorary non-European members on good behavior. . . . Japan justified [its] military confrontation which hastened the decline of the West in Asia with moral and ideological arguments which portended the Asian and African revolt against Western dominance. . . . Japan turned against the 'civilized' Powers in part because it perceived itself to have struggled hard to join them, only to be denied a fair place after fulfilling the requirements set forth in their standard of 'civilization.'" Gong, *Standard of "Civilization,"* 164-165.

20. Taichi Sakaiya, *What Is Japan? Contradictions and Transformations* (New York: Kodansha America, Inc., 1993), 118.

21. "The Japan That Cannot Say Sorry," *Economist*, August 12, 1995, 31.

22. See Sakaiya, *What Is Japan?* 124.

23. Geoffrey M. White, "Memory Wars: The Politics of Remembering the Asia-Pacific War," *Asia Pacific Issues*, no. 21 (July 1995): 2, n. 4.

24. "[The Japanese] resented bitterly the imputation of racial inferiority which they thought to lie behind the insistence of the occidental powers upon concessions from Japan which they neither claimed nor submitted to in their relations with one another." Gong, *Standard of "Civilization,"* 172, n. 22 (citing F. C. Jones, *Extraterritoriality in Japan* [New Haven, 1931; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1970], 47).

25. "Captain Francis P. Scott, the chaplain at Sugamo prison, questioned Japanese camp commandants about their reasons for mistreating POWs. This is how he summed up their answers: 'They had a belief that any enemy of the emperor could not be right, so the more brutally they treated their prisoners, the more loyal to their emperor they were being.'" Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994), 173.

26. See Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence*, trans. John Bester (Tokyo: Kobundo Ltd., 1971; Tokyo: Kodansha International/USA Ltd., 1990), 130. Doi goes on to separate *higaisha ishiki* from the delusion of persecution: "The difference from the sense of victimization of the normal person [Japanese] is that with the latter the sense is never held by him alone but is shared with

the group to which he belongs, whereas the man suffering from a persecution complex believes that he alone is the victim of some scheme" (p. 130).

27. Jean-Pierre Lehmann, "The Clash of Communities: Japan and the International Political Disorder," *NIRA Review*, Spring 1995, 7.

28. See Doi, *Anatomy of Dependence*, 49.

29. "In one respect, at least, left-wing pacifism in Japan has something in common with the romantic nationalism usually associated with the right: it shares the right's resentment about being robbed by the *Americans* of what might be called a collective memory. The romantic nationalists think that the U.S. occupation after the war deliberately destroyed sacred traditions, such as the imperial cult, without which the Japanese could have no identity. The romantic pacifists believe that the *United States*, to hide its own guilt and to rekindle Japanese militarism in aid of the Cold War, tried to wipe out the memory of Hiroshima." Buruma, *Wages of Guilt*, 99.

30. See White, "Memory Wars," 2.

31. The recent controversy in the United States surrounding the Smithsonian Institution's *Enola Gay* exhibit is the perfect illustration of the domestic battle over memory. The controversy highlighted the differences between the revisionist and traditionalist camps over the "unanswerable" question of whether the atomic bomb was necessary to end the war with Japan. The exhibit was scaled down in January 1995 to avoid further controversy, and in May Senate hearings were held to review the Smithsonian's management. In July, the revamped exhibit opened to renewed protests.

32. See White, "Memory Wars," 1.

33. See "Politicos Suddenly Make France Nervous by Calling for N-Test Boycott," *Daily Japan Digest*, July 19, 1995: "The N-tests became an issue after *Asahi* and others wrote critical stories last week calling attention to the fact that a month after the announcement, all Japan had done was file a stock protest."

34. Ibid.

35. See "Tokyo to Propose UN Resolution on French Nuclear Test, Renew Protest," *Daily Japan Digest*, July 20, 1995, 1. The July 21 *Daily Japan Digest* reported that the French Foreign Ministry responded by calling in the Japanese ambassador and warning him that Tokyo risked damaging friendly relations.

36. See "International Commission Says Japan Has Moral Duty to Pay Off Comfort Girls," *Daily Japan Digest*, November 23, 1994, 1. Comfort women were young Asian girls who were drafted into work in Imperial Army brothels during the war.

37. See T. R. Reid, "Asia Underwhelmed by Japan's Apology," *Washington Post*, August 15, 1995, p. A21.

38. The official Chinese government response said in part that "there are still some people who are not able to take a correct attitude." Ibid.

39. With the appreciation of the yen (*endaka*), one aspect of Japan's regional diplomacy has weakened. Most of Japan's aid has been in low-interest yen-denominated loans. This latest bout of *endaka* has increased loan payments by roughly 20 percent and makes future borrowing too great a

currency risk. Indonesia has refused any further aid loans in yen, and China and Malaysia are pushing to restructure their current debt.

40. "Owada Asks Tokyo to Rally ASEAN to Support Japan's Bid for UN Seat," *Daily Japan Digest*, October 25, 1994, 1.

41. For a historical understanding of the influence of anti-Japanese sentiment in post-World War II South Korean politics, see Sung-Hwa Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea: Japanese-South Korean Relations under American Occupation, 1945-52* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1991).



TREE *of* LIBERTY SOCIETY

An Unassimilable Past and the Diplomacy of the Future: International Relations in East Asia Fifty Years On

Anne Simone Kleinman

As East Asia becomes a zone of prosperity—its parts increasingly webbed by business ties—enduring historical conflicts threaten to obstruct continued economic integration. Resolution of these conflicts is imperative for improving the regional picture and the chances for charting a common regional direction. Economic and military measures alone will not suffice.

The conflicts that have divided parts of East Asia for the past 50 years remain in force: the competing claims of sovereignty between mainland China and Taiwan; past Japanese militarism and colonialism in the region; the division of Korea into two ideologically opposed states; the question of war guilt; territorial disputes; and the legacy of colonial rule.

Memories of the events that gave rise to these conflicts are contested. Key to working through these memories, both within nations and between nations, is the dialectical process of remembering and forgetting. This process will deeply influence international relations in the region into the next century.

Paradoxically, burgeoning regional economic integration has enhanced awareness of the abiding national differences that are thwarting the process of convergence. The unfinished business of the past is alive in East Asia, limiting the prospects of regionalism.¹

In this period of remembrance, marked by commemorative anniversaries as well as expanding economic ties and regional cooperation, important momentum has been generated for addressing these enduring national differences. Will generational change and openness be enough to overcome them, or are they too cemented by time? Can we change national memories? Do we want to? What role should remembrance serve in working through national differences? What knowledge does it offer, and what questions does it resolve? What are the advantages and hazards of historical memory? To what extent do the dialectical processes of remembering and forgetting become obstacles

to relations between states? To what extent do they become tools for improving these relations?

Remembrance is part of the language of diplomacy. As such, it can be strategically deployed—at certain points to diplomatically remember, at others to tactically forget. Memory in turn enables certain remembrances to gain currency. Power—political and economic—is shifting the nature of national memory in East Asia. East Asian power and the new strategic arrangements there authorize debates that would not have been possible 20 years ago. New claims are now being made. They include those of “comfort women” forced to serve as sexual slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II, as well as those of Taiwanese who endured the island’s occupation and reannexation by Nationalist forces retreating from defeat by the Communists in mainland China.²

Remembrance as a form of diplomacy can be a transformative force that reanimates interregional relations. It has the restorative quality to reconcile and redeem (through apology or compensation), to offer the promise that repeated histories will cease repeating themselves. Admittedly, there is also a certain comfort in divesting a country of its past; to confront it can instill doubt and uncertainty, threatening political unity.

How nations remember is bound up in the question of governance and political power. The organization of national memory—which goes to the heart of questions of regime legitimacy, national identity, and nationalism—is a matter of political survival. This is equally the case between nations as within them. Contesting memories at this second, subnational level include remembrance in mainland China of the 1989 democracy movement at Tiananmen and in Taiwan of the February 28, 1947, Taiwanese uprising against the brutality of Nationalist rule.³ A national memory of these formative events legitimizes the political elite that issued from them. As a result, these elites are deeply invested in the preservation of national memory. To question this memory is to challenge the political system itself and their stake in it.

There is an important personal dimension to memory; the past is ultimately worked through at the level of the individual, among survivors and succeeding generations. This inquiry centers, however, on *national* memories, which are collective though by definition unevenly distributed.⁴ Memory at the subnational level is not distributed or “forgotten” across the society in the same fashion. Abiding anguish, anger, and resentment can resist,

and often do, national forms of remembrance as embodied in memorials, museums, and official apologies.

National remembrance, as explored here, is organized on three levels: as it relates to political power and national identity (in both Taiwan and mainland China); as it influences the conduct of diplomacy (between Japan and its neighbors); and as it changes the way policy, both in and toward East Asia, is thought about in strategic terms (ultimately shaping the way the United States relates to the region and its parts). Each of these modes of remembrance is discussed in the context of a single case study. However, each may apply alike to other cases in the region, and this inquiry is meant to provide a general framework within which such other examples might also be considered.

Remembrance, Political Power, and National Identity: Memory at the Margin versus at the Center

Competing claims for sovereignty are the centerpoint of official memory in the mainland and Taiwan, with their source in polarized accounts of the Chinese civil war. Forty years have passed since the formation of the distinct political systems on mainland China and in Taiwan, but the two have yet to negotiate a formal truce or (for the mainland) to renounce the possibility of a use of force to assure reunification.

Mainland China has been the counterweight against which Taiwan has defined itself since the Nationalists assumed power in 1949. Paradoxically, for many in Taiwan increased economic integration has reinforced a sense of legitimacy for the island distinct from the mainland and centered on interdependence with the global forces of a market economy and democratization. Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui's speech at Cornell University in June 1995 affirmed the singularity of the "Taiwanese experience" as a model of political reform and economic development. "I only hope that the leaders in the mainland are able one day to be similarly guided," Lee remarked, "since these achievements in Taiwan can most certainly help the process of economic liberalization and the conditions of democracy in mainland China."⁵

Antithetical memories have fixed the civil war in the political life and identities of both Taiwan and the mainland. They form a kind of double reflection integral to how the two political entities relate to each other. For many in Taiwan, the symbolism of the civil war affirms the island's separateness from mainland China. For those on the mainland who lived through that period of deep

cleavage, it evokes a time of internal weakness and national division. Reconstructing itself as a great power has only intensified the mainland's ambition for political unity and the reintegration of its parts. In January 1995, Chinese president Jiang Zemin articulated an eight-point plan for reunification. Appealing for political unity across the strait, Jiang invoked the 40-year Japanese occupation of Taiwan. "The Chinese people," he claimed, "will never forget this humiliating chapter of their history."⁶ By harking back to the period of Japanese colonial rule, President Jiang evoked a memory shared by Chinese on both sides of the strait instead of the contested memory that emerged out of the civil war between Nationalists and Communists.⁷

How does Taiwan, in its uncertain interaction with the mainland, maintain its commitment to past images as current ones are transformed? Will recent economic convergence mean that Taiwan will have less leverage in defining the terms of its interaction with the mainland, and eventually of reunification? Will this interaction accentuate the commonalities of the two sides or their differences?⁸ Are their disputed memories of the past so polarized that they cannot accommodate one another?

In Taiwan, official remembrance is divided at two visible levels: first, at the international level concerning mainland China, and second, at the subnational level concerning the mainlander ruling elite and the Taiwanese, who make up the vast majority of the population (up to 85 percent). The mainlanders' suppression of opposition by the island's inhabitants enforced the division between newly arrived mainlanders and long-time residents. Driven by the fear that without political unity Taiwan would be "washed with blood,"⁹ invaded, and lost to the Chinese Communist Party, the Nationalists imposed rigid controls on the population while they consolidated their political power. Nor did they tolerate dissent. The mainlander/Taiwanese division deepened in the subsequent decades; many natives of Taiwan were forced to speak Mandarin and punished for using the local language, and their own culture was suppressed.

The February 28, 1995, unveiling of a plaque in Taipei New Park (now renamed 2-28 Peace Park) to memorialize the February 28 Incident 48 years earlier aimed to reconcile these internal divisions within Taiwan. At the unveiling, an apology was delivered by Taiwan's first president born on Taiwan, Lee Teng-hui. "From now on," President Lee stressed, "the incident is no longer a distressing memory or a lingering shadow, but a

reminder for all people living on this land to work hand in hand to create a brighter future for the nation."¹⁰

Accommodation of the population's memory of protest against earlier Nationalist rule began not at the political center but at the margin, as local governments run by the opposition party began erecting monuments and museums to memorialize the event.¹¹ This peripheral vantage point permitted issues to be raised that could not be addressed by the center until the political conditions permitted. Indeed, until the lifting of martial law in 1987, any mention of the February 28 Incident was taboo in Taiwan. Some in the leadership still oppose recognition of the event for fear that invoking its memory will only intensify the internal divisions in Taiwan. Lin Tsung-yi, a distinguished psychiatrist and the son of an academic killed during the Incident as well as the representative who accepted the president's apology on behalf of the victims, has said, "There are people in the military and in the KMT [Kuomintang] who are afraid of losing their grip on Taiwan, but they know the wind is blowing against them and their sun is setting."¹²

Overt recognition of Taiwanese resistance to mainlander rule would not have been possible a decade ago. Mainlanders held a monopoly of political power (even if the Taiwanese held economic power) and controlled the political self-definition of Taiwan. No alternative discourses were permitted. Only recently—since 1987—has a competitive party system been introduced in Taiwan, with the opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), able to attain positions of power. Political democratization in Taiwan has in this way brought about a kind of democratization of memory as well.

Meanwhile, the way that memory has been resolved internally between mainlanders and Taiwanese may have created greater tension in the island's relations with mainland China. Taiwan's unresolved past was never a problem for the mainland; it did not imply independence. A politically more unified Taiwan, however, is now a challenge and a threat to Chinese sovereignty as the island works out competing ambitions for independence or eventual reunification with the mainland.

Cross-strait tensions are further heightened because of the shift in perspective on its past and on its prospects for reunification with the mainland that has paralleled Taiwan's shift in political structure. As soon as Taiwan's power base changed, so too could the national memories and outlook. Once the political

system became more open and pluralistic, it was able to accommodate alternative histories that had earlier been regarded as a critique of Nationalist power.

On the mainland, will the Communist Party ever be able to do likewise, reconciling its own internal struggle with how the 1989 democracy movement at Tiananmen is remembered? At present, China's leadership is immobilized by remembrance of Tiananmen. The regime is as fragile as it was in 1989—divided over how to address the crippling forces of corruption, inflation, and a "delegitimation crisis" and profoundly uncertain about who will assure China's political unity.¹³ The uncertainty is perhaps even more pronounced because of instability as political authority passes from Deng Xiaoping and his revolutionary comrades to a new generation of leaders.

In the years following the Tiananmen incident, ideological emptiness has become a central political question in mainland China. The Chinese Communist Party appears to be covering up questions about its legitimacy by giving increased attention to economic solutions. Yet remembrance of Tiananmen cannot be resolved economically.¹⁴ There is, consequently, a real paranoia within the Party surrounding Tiananmen. No public commemoration of the anniversary of the event is permitted. Official remembrance, which casts the democracy protesters as counter-revolutionaries and the Party as the sole institution standing between China and turmoil, has enforced a silence among critics of the state.

Employed in such a way, official memory of Tiananmen becomes a fiction appropriated to serve the political and ideological purposes of the Communist Party. The Party's treatment of Tiananmen is also immobilizing: the leadership cannot break ranks with their account of events, yet they shut themselves off by not accommodating demands to redress the past. Consequently, unofficial memories of Tiananmen have become "secret histories" that cannot be shared.¹⁵ Fear foremost keeps Chinese from sharing them. These secret memories at the margin (like those of many survivors of the February 28, 1947, uprising in Taiwan) keep resistance to the political center alive.¹⁶ By challenging faith in the political course, they can ultimately undermine regimes. With no outlet, no means of being externalized or resolved, they operate just beneath the surface.

In such unofficial forms of remembrance, Tiananmen—as a site of memory—becomes powerfully charged and potentially politically dangerous.¹⁷ For the state, it is the locus of triumph

over internal forces of division that raised the specter of chaos; for the millions who participated in the movement, and for the hundreds of millions who were silent witnesses to the tragedy, it is the locus of hope deferred.¹⁸ For the events of 1989 exist in another stratum of memory that is neither official nor secret. Tiananmen unfolded before a world audience. With no oppressive political controls inhibiting their speech, international voices became carriers of their own memories of Tiananmen. Hence, any memory of the 1989 event made to conform to an official account can meet with resistance at not one, but two levels: from both inside and outside China.

With no legitimate critic outside the government in China, political unity becomes based on the absence of public protest. In the case of Taiwan, it has become a point of policy to accommodate subnational memories to break the cycle of internal division and alienation. By appealing through memory to Taiwan's earlier experience of Nationalist rule, the Nationalist Party has allowed for the possibility of incorporating different forms of remembrance, ultimately transforming official memory itself.

The resolution of subnational divisions in both Taiwan and mainland China will set the conditions for national reunification. A more politically unified Taiwan may resist integration, adopting a more assertive policy even without declaring independence. A politically unstable China, meanwhile, may be more assertive in its approach to reunification, throwing itself into an external adventure in order to affirm an uncertain internal political unity.

Diplomacy and the Organization of National Memory

The formation of a national consensus on competing perceptions of the past has an impact beyond national borders on how nations interact with one another. Remembrance can be a form of diplomacy, a strategy. At certain points different modes of remembrance can become a diplomatic tool for resolving central conflicts in East Asia. What are the limitations of memory-based diplomacy? How do states speak about memory so that it will be liberating, not confining? How can they confront the depth of victims' anger and resentment without being consumed by it? How do they move beyond the sentiments of victimization or triumphalism?

The role of memory in diplomacy is powerfully illustrated by the inheritance of the past in Japan's current foreign relations,

especially with its Asian neighbors. Japan uses remembrance of World War II to stimulate a powerful sense of its own victimization because of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Yet Japan's neighbors feel that they—not the Japanese—were the victims in the war. Indeed, these neighbors are still wary of Japan's intentions. This wariness is fueled by Japan's reluctance to apologize for the brutality of its wartime behavior, including such atrocities as medical experiments on prisoners of war, the enslavement of comfort women to serve the Japanese army, and the massacre of hundreds of thousands of civilians in mainland China and elsewhere in the region.¹⁹

Whether Japan chooses to address the colonial era or defiantly avoid it, the country's past and future are indivisible.²⁰ Although Japan is deeply invested economically in Asia, if it is to forge stronger ties with its neighbors (commercially as well as diplomatically) and gain greater international stature, it must reexamine the past. This reexamination has become the measure of the country's acceptability as a partner in the region and a power in the world.

Why has admission of the past been so difficult for Japan? What will move the country from denial to acceptance of its wartime responsibilities? Are there ways of compelling redress (e.g., political pressures or pressures on the part of victims themselves)? Is atonement required for Japan to take on international political and military leadership that will match its economic power? Will the international community accept Japan as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council or adopt a strategy of keeping it out? Fifty years on, these questions continue to shape Japan's national identity and its prospects for a greater regional and global role.

The depth of remorse that Japan conveys to its neighbors is widely felt to be inadequate, even insincere, and driven primarily by domestic political motivations. Even Japanese prime minister Tomiichi Murayama's unmistakable "heartfelt apology" for Japanese wartime aggression, pronounced on the 50th anniversary of Japan's surrender, sounded hollow to foreign observers given that it was immediately followed by visits by members of parliament to honor Japanese war dead exalted at the Yasukuni Shrine.

Thus entangled in internal political interests and agendas, the debate about Japan's past has become locked into the same logic of remembrance that dictates that those who died in the war on behalf of the Japanese nation must not—at all costs—be

dishonored. This national interest is promoted by families of the war dead, who represent an interest group with considerable political influence in Japan.²¹ It is also a perspective advanced by mainstream politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as well as neo-rightists and other ultranationalist groups for whom the defeat in the Pacific is still, 50 years later, an open wound.

The imagery of the atomic bomb, and in particular the site of Hiroshima, is the centerpoint of Japanese official remembrance of World War II. Powerfully ingrained in Japanese national memory of the war, Hiroshima is used to enforce political identity in Japan, in particular the sense that the country has been unfairly judged. This memory casts Japan, and the Japanese, as innocents, "more sinned against than sinning."²² It also challenges the logic of Japan's neighbors and the Allied forces who fought in the Pacific theater. Japanese war apologists still ask why Japan alone should be made to apologize for its war crimes. If Japan's own claims are not being accepted (namely, that the United States apologize for dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki), why should those of its neighbors?²³ After all, they reason, was not Japan's advance into East Asia liberating, fought on behalf of those Asian countries that it freed from European colonial rule? So long as such internal voices in Japan persist—however disputed—its neighbors in the region as well as the outside world will continue to question how genuine Japanese apologies for past colonialism and militarism are and how prepared Japan is to reengage the region politically and militarily.

National memory is manipulated by those political interests in Japan seeking to avoid apologizing for the past. It is also appealed to by neighbors to force concessions from a once-defeated Japan or to forward their own domestic political agendas.²⁴ Unsettled scores of the past can become a form of diplomatic leverage used to make continuous demands on the Japanese. The Chinese government, for example, uses China's wartime suffering to argue for more favorable terms on debt rescheduling, trade and investment issues, and ties with Taiwan. Although the Chinese government surrendered any further claims to reparations in its 1972 treaty with Japan, it has permitted citizens to advance individual claims that are not covered by the accord, among them comfort women, wounded civilians, and other victims of the war.²⁵

The Japanese government seems unable to relinquish its inflexible posture that it has apologized sufficiently for the past. Official remembrance of the war in Japan begins with its end: the

dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Details surrounding the event, meanwhile, are scarcely explored.²⁶ This kind of half-memory limits Japan's role and acceptability as a regional and international power. The constraints of 50 years ago still block Japan's ability to play a flexible global role and its emergence as an international power (with political and military dimensions).

Japan finds itself in a paralyzing dilemma: to transform its international image, it needs the consent and trust of its neighbors, yet its actions are taken with only its own population in mind as audience and, even then, only with reluctance. Will Japan apologize by concession, without a challenge from outside? Or is admission of moral responsibility for its war crimes impermissible—politically impossible and culturally alien?²⁷

There is a bitter irony to a Diet debate locked in battle over the use of a term and the degree of remorse that it conveys, not its historical implications, and that irony extends to apologies meant for a domestic audience and not for the victims to whom they should be directed.²⁸ In mid-1995, Prime Minister Murayama expressed "humble apologies" to comfort women (800 to 1,000 of whom are alive today and will receive a written apology as well as cash and medical care). Timed to coincide with the national election for the Diet's Upper House, the decision appeared motivated by political convenience—by a desire to extend the political life of the ruling coalition, rather than by any real concern to accept moral obligation for atrocities of the past. Used in such a way, the unexamined past can provide reassurance to those in power. "For the less you confront it [the past]," the political analyst Timothy Gatten Ash argues of the post-Communist countries of Central Europe, "the more you live in conscious or unconscious continuity with it."²⁹

In leaving the colonial era unexamined, the Japanese government may have assured continuity with the past, but it has consequently put diplomatic relations with its neighbors on ice at their prewar stage. This also freezes the Japanese in feelings of national shame, rather than providing them with an opening for justifiable pride in their country's subsequent accomplishments in the region. The image that Japan wants to promote of itself and its achievements is constrained by the unrelenting memories and bitterness of its neighbors. The unmasterable shame associated with Japanese wartime brutality forces Japan to abdicate authority on many important issues, including responsibility for regional initiatives.³⁰

Its actions thus circumscribed, Japan must rely almost exclusively on its economic power to advance its objectives, enforcing a loss of confidence in its role and uncertainty about its achievements. "Without that rehabilitation [in Asia]," the Japanese author Kenzaburo Oe writes, "we shall never be able to eradicate the ambivalence in our attitude toward our neighbors, the feeling that our relationships aren't real."³¹ In such a climate of lack of national assurance, an apology would be an important advance for Japan, enabling it to adopt a tone of affirmation and hope, not one of continued escapism.

Memories (and forgettings) of World War II have profoundly shaped Japan's sense of national identity, an identity seemingly centered around economic success. But Japan's failure to come to terms with its national memory leaves it no alternative but to fixate on the period prior to 1945, diminishing its international stature. Why, therefore, is Japanese political leadership silently resigned to suppressing the past, or at least the version it is not comfortable with?

Perhaps Japan appears so unrepentant in large part because so much of Japanese society turns on social responsibility—the individual's underlying commitment to the group that extends directly to the nation (what Masaru Tamamoto refers to as the "familial national polity"³²). To admit to the crimes of war would be to undermine the very notion of duty in Japan. It is as if continuity with the past (assured by keeping the emperor and national bureaucracy in place following the war) somehow absolved the Japanese of the responsibility and self-examination associated with defeat.

National Remembrance and U.S. Diplomacy in East Asia

How mainland China and Taiwan, Japan and its neighbors, and North and South Korea work through their enduring differences to negotiate a common future is of immense strategic concern to the United States. It will reshape how East Asia's parts relate to one another and, as a result, how the United States relates to the region. Whether the United States faces an East Asia fragmented into competing national components, or an East Asia with regional or subregional solidarity, will be influenced by how these differences are resolved. Deepened divisions in East Asia might require the United States to redraw its

commitments there; a rapprochement between its parts, meanwhile, might pressure the United States on issues ranging from trade policy to human rights. How issues of remembering and forgetting are resolved politically also holds dangerous security implications. Those issues risk being played out as military solutions in a region still in search of a security structure to manage such conflicts, as for example in overlapping security claims in the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea.

One need only consider the Beijing-Washington-Taipei triangle to see how issues of remembrance in East Asia have a bearing on U.S. policy and security ties in the region. The United States does not have formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Recently, however, there has been a drive in the U.S. Congress to expand relations with Taiwan, as evidenced by congressional pressure that forced the Clinton administration to extend a visa to Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui to allow him to travel to the United States for an alumni ceremony at his alma mater, Cornell University. Similar pressure could be brought to bear on the administration in the future to address Taiwan's bid to rejoin the United Nations (where it lost its seat to mainland China in 1971), possible future visits by Taiwanese officials to the United States, or mandatory legislation concerning Taiwan in Congress. Decisions on these issues would draw the United States further into the diplomatic and military entanglements implied by one-China, one-China/one-Taiwan, or two-China cross-strait scenarios. The perception that the United States is promoting relations with Taiwan as a way of weakening or encircling mainland China—rebalancing its diplomatic commitments to the Three Communiqués and Taiwan Relations Act—has increasing currency among the Chinese leadership.³³ This has fueled stronger rhetoric on their part about the use of force to assure reunification and provided justification for renewed Chinese military maneuvers.

Even though it is not the intention of U.S. policy to resolve the conflicting claims of Taiwan and mainland China, it appears that the United States has been drawn into doing so. The United States, therefore, needs to define what its real interests are in order not to play into the colliding strategies of the two and, similarly, those between Japan and its neighbors and North and South Korea.

U.S. appreciation of such enduring histories—differently understood by their partisans—and of how they shape current political debates illuminates fundamental questions. These

questions challenge the United States to understand in what ways East Asia is transforming today, who the actors are who are prompting this change, what it is that fuels memory (making it more important or less intense over time), what the possible future conflicts in the region might be, and whether these changes are stressing commonalities or differences. Ignorance of, or inattention to, these regional issues could be costly.

How does memory as a form of diplomacy change the way the United States thinks about policy?

- As a matter of policy, the United States should be sensitized to the realities on the ground in East Asia and careful about locating the bottom line in calculating the response of East Asian nations.
- Redefining policy with respect to national identity would let the United States consider what is most highly valued by those states it is interacting with. From the perspective of Tokyo, Taipei, Beijing, Pyongyang, or Seoul, what are the important questions? Such understanding, grounded in indigenous realities and motivations, would sensitize the United States to what is at stake for its interlocutors in the region.
- If it was mindful of disputed national memories, the United States could look at regional conflicts differently, taking a dilemma view of conflict: it could allow two different positions, perhaps unresolvable—neither right nor wrong—to coexist.
- An appeal through memory to some other dimension of diplomacy would allow the United States to talk about things important to East Asia, namely, continuities and transformations. National memory, after all, is about both.
- The United States should be aware that discussion of national remembrance brings people into the debate and demonstrates how individuals are taken up into the collective and appealed to.
- If the United States pays attention to these conflicts it will see how power is shifting in East Asia today. This inevitably leads to the subject of the sources of nationalism, national identity, and cultural uniqueness. The United States fought three wars in Asia not adequately aware of the forces of nationalism and what was at stake for the countries against which it fought.

Examination of the role of memory in diplomacy is also important to the United States' own enduring conflicts that have their origins in East Asia. The controversy surrounding the *Enola Gay* exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum illuminates the power of national remembrance in shaping the United States' own current debates. The controversy centered around veterans' groups deeply bitter about the proposed account of the U.S. role in World War II, which they found inaccurate and too forgiving of the Japanese. This dispute led to the scrapping of initial plans to explore any political motivations that might have been behind the dropping of the bomb and the devastation it produced. By reducing the exhibit to just the forward fuselage of the *Enola Gay* (the B-29 bomber that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima) and a firsthand account by its American pilots, national memory is presented as a physical artifact, embodied in a mechanical "gadget."³⁴ The U.S. decision to drop the bomb is thereby presented unambiguously as a fact, a physical reality unstirred by divisive debates about the number of Japanese who would die on the ground, the number of American lives spared by not launching a ground invasion, and the political, economic, and strategic motivations for authorizing the bomb.

The deliberately bland simplicity of the final exhibit resulted from the collision offstage of two forms of memory: the official memory that defends the act of dropping the bomb as well as the honor of the American veterans who died during the war, and those countermemories that question the bomb's use, presenting the uncertainties surrounding the decision and the remorse and regret over the human loss it entailed. In the case of the *Enola Gay* exhibit, these two forms of remembrance neutralized one another, preventing the exhibit's statement from either being substantive or carrying a human dimension.

Yet, just as East Asian national memories affect those nations' external policies, national memories built by the United States affect its policies toward East Asia.

Are the dark and unassimilable parts of the past—both Japanese and American—to be buried, or elevated as a warning, or should they reinvent themselves in new forms?³⁵ The hazard of official memory is that it privileges only one version of history, that which serves the nation. So constructed, remembrance becomes a matter of upholding national honor. Historical revision and simplification of events remove the uncertainties that are part of decision-making. They efface sensibility to the tragic

human loss that total victory (of the sort the United States enjoyed in the Pacific) implies.

After all, in remembering the atomic bomb, the commemoration of U.S. victory is also that of Japanese suffering. That the moral connection between victory and suffering was not communicated in the *Enola Gay* exhibit conveys the tendentious nature of national memory, even (perhaps especially) 50 years later. If Hiroshima is about how the Japanese want to project an image of themselves in the world, the *Enola Gay* is about the way the United States wants to project its image, an image in which the power of technology conveys the power of the nation. Ironically, because each view denies the other, these strikingly different national memories share a similar burden. The failure of each to acknowledge the other's claims assures that the policies of the two countries will continue to be influenced, albeit partially, by an unnegotiable past.

Exhibits like the *Enola Gay* are a particularly important gauge of how the past is made present in current debates and is used to privilege certain perspectives over others—perspectives that go on to structure relations and actions. The transmission of national memory in museums, memorials, and textbooks takes on increasing importance at this time, as the events of 50 years ago recede in time and the last generation of survivors to directly experience them passes on. What will become of these memories without survivors and witnesses to produce them? Soon, commemoration and the writing of history will be the principal means of making that past real for those who cannot access it by experience.

Conclusion

Official remembrance allows a powerful set of national interests that are too often buried or denied to be brought into diplomatic play. It engages fundamental policy questions, giving access to a different angle on diplomacy. Official remembrance can also become part of a strategy for improving international relations.

How is diplomatic strategy or potential advanced by bringing memory into the policy equation? How do we put in place processes that encourage memory to be worked through in a restorative way? Preoccupation with one's own memories, forgetting the memories of the other side, can close off the possibility for reconciliation. A diplomatic strategy to affirm the

memories of both sides, accommodating the memory of the other (not necessarily agreeing with it, but acknowledging it), frees countries from the sentiments of victimization or triumphalism.

Certain modes of remembering and forgetting constrain the process of working through national differences. National memory, for example, can be worked through too easily: As soon as the power base changes, so, too, do the memories. It can, likewise, be paralyzing. As in the case of Japanese remembrance of the war, remembrance can be a kind of enduring constraint that cannot be broken out of, that coerces all other aspects of how a country relates to its fellows. This kind of unappeasable memory is so absolute in its requirements that nothing can satisfy it. It contributes to the intensification of hate and revenge. "To privilege memory excessively," writes the French historian Jacques Le Goff, "is to sink into the unconquerable flow of time."³⁶

Some kinds of forgetting make it possible to work out conflicts over time. Other kinds of forgetting, as in the case of Tiananmen, are dangerous because they discard fundamental aspects of society without which there can be no national purpose. Relations between and within nations cannot be founded on papering over profound differences. Nor can policy be organized to avoid these differences if it is to be successful.

It is a political myth to think that a nation is wholly unified behind a single, unchanging memory. Memory is plural, and it is elastic.³⁷ Subnational memories challenge the uniformity of official remembrance, a uniformity more possible when mobilized against a threat to the idea of the nation.

The organization of national memory is a mobilizing technique. As a way of making sense of the past, of making it bearable, official remembrance makes national unity of purpose more compelling. As long as these memories persist, they provide a rationale for those in power. This explains in part why, to reaffirm the common purpose of a nation, national differences are sometimes magnified and subnational ones buried. This also suggests that for official memories to change, for reconciliation to really hold, requires a willingness to seek national unity in ways other than through opposition to a rival. What will happen if these conflicts dim? Are rivalries necessary for cementing national purpose and identity? Without them, in what ways will former adversaries relate to each other? to themselves? Is the state free to challenge the past in such a way? Or is the state by its very character and mandate required to validate the past (or

the version it is comfortable with), manipulating the articulation of memory always in its own defense? Perhaps, therefore, it is the non-state actors who occupy a space at the margins—unconstrained by official policy—who are most able to confront and work through the past and thereby to craft a different future.

This is not to say that reconciliation of national differences is always certain. Not everything can be explained or forgotten. Some things are unsolvable, unforgivable; they are part of the condition of living. In the case of Japan and the United States, neither nation can allow itself to be affected by the opposing memory. If after 50 years such memories are still unassimilable, think how powerful they must be and will continue to be if left unresolved into the next century.

Nor is the effect of national remembrance always deliberate. Much about its shape and shaping influence—whether it atrophies or intensifies, is embellished or suppressed, remains fixed or is made malleable by the passage of time—is accidental. The production of national memory is a blending of imponderables, among them domestic political arrangements, shifts in diplomacy, and the always uncertain interplay of the memories of survivors and succeeding generations.

The ongoing cultural processes of remembering and forgetting run particularly deep in East Asia, where the past is an inheritance, not something to be broken with. Why, therefore, should anyone expect mainland China and Taiwan, Japan and its neighbors, and North and South Korea to relate to each other differently in the future? Or are the economic stakes and the logic of economic self-interest now so great in East Asia as to be beyond threat from other diplomatic considerations? Put differently, will the desire for political stability and continued economic growth provide the impetus for regional integration? Are the old forms of remembrance—as political fictions fixed in time—at last to be overshadowed by the illusion of a future emptied of a past? Under the threat of globalized forces that intensify old antagonisms and nationalistic memories, is there a means by which old memories can be made to engage each other so that new memories of an internationalized future can be forged?

Notes

1. Regionalism is understood here in economic as well as political and security terms.

2. "Taiwanese" as a category refers to that portion of Taiwan's population who were residing on Taiwan before the Nationalist takeover in 1949 and to their descendants.

3. On February 28, 1947, in what is known in Taiwan as the February 28 Incident, the Nationalist forces killed by official estimates 18,000 to 28,000 Taiwanese who were protesting Nationalist rule. But more important than the numbers was the attempt to liquidate the educated class and the imposition of an oppressive rule that was to last for decades.

4. National memories are not uniformly distributed for many reasons; among others, gender, class, ethnicity, and political faction.

5. "Always in My Heart," speech by President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., June 1995, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States (TECRO), photocopy, p. 7.

6. Under President Jiang's eight-point plan for the reunification of Taiwan and mainland China, Taiwan would maintain a high degree of autonomy, retaining its armed forces and administering its own party, government, and military systems. Although calling for peaceful reunification, the plan also reasserts the mainland's refusal to forswear the use of force against Taiwan should it declare independence or jeopardize the reunification process. See "President Jiang Zemin's Speech on Reunification of the Motherland," Embassy of the People's Republic of China Press Release, January 30, 1995, p. 1.

7. Similarly, the recent Chinese film *The July 7 Incident* appeals to a period in which Nationalists and Communists were united in opposition to invading Japanese. Released in mainland China and financed by the Beijing city government, the film features Nationalist forces fighting the Japanese on Marco Polo Bridge. See Benjamin Kang Lim, "China Warns of Catastrophe of Taiwan Independence," *Reuters Ltd*, August 4, 1995.

8. One resident of Taiwan interviewed for a *New York Times* article on Taiwan's emerging identity said of the mainland, "I'm a foreigner in that country. It is not my country." Edward Gargan, "In an Assertive and Democratic Taiwan, a Basic Issue Arises: Who are We?" *New York Times*, July 20, 1995, p. A4.

9. "Strait Talking," *Economist*, July 22, 1995, 34.

10. *Free China Journal*, March 3, 1995, 1.

11. Some 1,300 memorials and plaques to victims of the February 28 Incident have been erected in Taiwan, mostly by local governments under opposition control. Julian Baum, "Past Time," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 23, 1995, 22.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Tu Wei-ming, "Introduction: Cultural Perspectives," in "China in Transition," *Daedalus* 122, no. 22 (Spring 1993): xx.

14. This is not to say that remembrance of Tiananmen is the sole challenge to revitalizing the Chinese Communist Party today. Other challenges include soaring rates of corruption and inflation.

15. The term "secret histories" is employed by Rubie Watson in *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism* (Santa Fe, N. Mex.: School of American Research Press, 1994), 4.

16. I am indebted here to the work of James C. Scott on "hidden" and "public" transcripts. See his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

17. The French historian Pierre Nora refers to such sites of memory as "lieux," or loci, of memory. Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

18. See also Jonathan D. Spence for a review of Tiananmen's earlier symbolic significance in Chinese history and collective memory. Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1981).

19. Six veterans of the Japanese Imperial Army's germ warfare unit made public information about these biological experiments on prisoners of war in "The Truth About Unit 731," published in 1995. As for comfort women's claims, the Japanese government in response set up a "Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative," which was to provide U.S. \$1 billion over the next 10 years for student and cultural exchanges and for training programs; the outcome is currently uncertain.

20. Using the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima to recognize Japan's wartime past as both victim and aggressor, Mayor Takashi Hiraoka of Hiroshima stated: "For the people of Hiroshima, 50 years was a period they needed just to regain their dignity as human beings. With 50 years gone by, we are now ready to put the bombing in broader historical context." "Mayor: Japan Must Face Past," *Washington Post*, August 1, 1995, p. A15.

21. The Association of Bereaved Families, the Soldiers' Pension Federation, and the Association of Shinto Shrines are among the most powerful lobbying groups representing the families of the war dead. Together, they claim a membership of some 1 million Japanese. For discussion of the deeply divided political landscape in Japan over the war, see Norihiko Shirōzu, "Lobbies Keep Japan from Facing Its Past," *Wall Street Journal*, June 6, 1995, p. A14.

22. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.2.

23. On the 50th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, President Bill Clinton reiterated that the United States owes no apology to Japan for its wartime acts.

24. Indeed, the opposition party in Taiwan, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), has used the 100th anniversary of the start of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan to call for Taiwan's independence.

25. In fact, the first Chinese victims (1,000 survivors and relatives of Chinese forced by the Japanese Imperial Army to work in copper mines run by the Kajima Corporation, still one of the largest construction companies in Japan) have come forward, seeking an apology and wartime compensation. Sheryl WuDunn, "Slowly, Survivors Sue Japan for War," *New York Times*, August 13, 1995, 10.

26. The textbook controversy in Japan has become a measure of the country's reexamination of the past. It was not until the early 1980s, under pressure from China and South Korea, that Japan began to reformulate its textbook censorship policies. Controversy still continues over textbook revisions, especially regarding the language used to describe Japan's wartime behavior. Such controversy exposes the political divide in Japan between conservative figures who criticize what they deem excessive accounts of Japan's wartime behavior and others like the author Saburo Ienaga, who has been fighting the Japanese Ministry of Education to prevent censorship of wartime events in school textbooks.

27. For further discussion of the question of Japanese war guilt and its relationship to the conception of national identity in Japan, see Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (New York: Jonathan Cape, 1994).

28. Nicolas D. Kristof, "Japan Expresses Regret of a Sort for the War," *New York Times*, June 7, 1995, 1.

29. Timothy Garten Ash, "Central Europe: The Present Past," *New York Review of Books*, July 13, 1995, 22.

30. It has also forced Japan to pass over human rights considerations in extending developmental assistance to its neighbors and to refrain from publicly censuring their human rights records. Japan's announcement that it would cut grant aid to China to protest its May 15, 1995, nuclear test (only days after the extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) is the first time that the country has used economic aid to protest Chinese policy.

31. Kenzaburo Oe, "Denying History Disables Japan," *New York Times Magazine*, July 2, 1995, 29.

32. Masaru Tamamoto, "Reflections on Japan's Postwar State," *Daedalus* 124, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 13.

33. While leaving the Taiwan Relations Act unchanged, the Taiwan Policy Review issued in September 1994 strengthened unofficial relations between the United States and Taiwan, permitting high-level official exchanges of economic and technical agencies and changing, among other things, the name of Taiwan's representative office in the United States. For recent initiatives pertaining to the Taiwan Relations Act, see sec. 260 of H.R. 1561, which seeks to amend sec. 3 of the act (22 USC 3302) by "adding provisions that supersede any provision of the joint communiqué of the United States and China of August 17, 1982."

34. "Gadget" is the term used by Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, director of the Manhattan Project, to refer to the atomic bomb. Evan Thomas, "Hiroshima: Why We Did It," *Newsweek*, July 24, 1995, 23.

35. The intent here is not to equate the moral worth and historical responsibility of the two national memories—Japanese and American—but, rather, to draw attention to a similarity in the mode of remembrance and its effects.

36. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendali and Elizabeth Clamen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), xii.

37. In his seminal book *Penser la Révolution Française*, the French historian François Furet terms the fluid nature of memory transmitted from one generation to the next "commemorative elasticity." Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 25.



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Remembering and Forgetting

THE LEGACY OF WAR AND PEACE IN EAST ASIA

Many of the conflicts that have divided parts of East Asia for the past 50 years remain unresolved: competing claims between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, past Japanese militarism and colonialism in the region, and the division of Korea into two ideologically opposed states. At the same time, the memories of the events that gave rise to these conflicts are contested. Key to working through these memories is the process of remembering and forgetting: What do we remember and why? What do we forget and when? For it is through this process that nations, as well as individuals, interpret their pasts, determine their identities, and set their priorities for the present and the future.

The authors of these essays offer unique perspectives on the importance of memories in East Asia today and how the process of remembering and forgetting will influence public opinion, political decision-making, national policy, and international relations in the region into the next century.

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5/96

