MY NEIGHBOR, MY ENEMY:
UNDERSTANDING THE PROTRACTED CONFLICT BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in English

By

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Washington, DC
May 1, 2009
The research and writing of this thesis is dedicated to everyone who helped along the way, especially Professor Alan C. Tidwell, my thesis advisor, and Professor Fathali M. Moghaddam, my thesis committee member.

Many thanks,
Go Funai
Despite numerous attempts at political reconciliation and increasing levels of economic interdependence, tensions between China and Japan remain high. The bitter rivalry, ostensibly rooted in the Second World War, grabbed the world’s attention in 2005 when anti-Japan protests erupted in over 40 cities throughout China. This study examines why China and Japan remain sworn enemies even though they share realistic reasons to reconcile. While the existing literature acknowledges historical enmity as the primary source of conflict, it does not rigorously explain the underpinnings and dynamics of that enmity. Thus, the purpose of this study is to fill this analytic gap using ideas in conflict resolution and social psychology. I argue that China and Japan are mired in an identity-based conflict that is best understood by examining enmification, or the process of creating enemies, throughout its history of conflict dating back to the 16th century. Moreover, such a historical analysis must consider that while China and Japan share mutual animosity, their hostilities stem from disparate sources. For China, its umbrage draws upon bitter memories of Japanese troops storming their soil. Japan, on the other hand, resists its label as the shamed aggressor, especially by the postwar generations who are left with few palpable traces of its war with China. Thus, I treat history as a dynamic process to illuminate how the political rhetoric fails to reflect the complexity of the
China-Japan conflict beyond anything more than historical grievances rooted in the Second World War.
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1. Introduction

World War II, the deadliest clash in Sino-Japanese history, is also the current source of political rhetoric between the rival nations. While China accuses Japan of sidestepping responsibilities for its wartime atrocities, Japan accuses China of dwelling on the past to gain political concessions. In April 2005, Japan’s approval of “chauvinist” history textbooks and its proposal for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council ignited anti-Japan protests in over 40 cities across China.¹ The provocative protests piqued the world’s curiosity about the reasons why these neighboring nations held so firmly to their historical animosity, while other former adversaries had managed to let go of their turbulent pasts. France and Germany, who squared off in the Franco-Prussian War and two world wars, now live peacefully as neighbors. Japan and the United States, once sworn enemies, are now the closest of political allies. However, the China-Japan conflict is not puzzling for its persistence since 1945, but rather for its longevity despite numerous political attempts at reconciliation and rapidly increasing levels of economic integration.

In 1972, China and Japan normalized diplomatic relations and opened economic channels between the countries for the first time since the Second World War. The Japanese side “deeply reproach[d]” itself for the serious damage that it caused to China, and the Chinese side accepted the apology, renouncing their demand for war reparations

“in the interest of friendship between the Chinese and the Japanese peoples.”\(^2\) Since then, high-level Japanese officials have publicly expressed regret for its past militarism to China at least 10 times (see Appendix A). Furthermore, Beijing and Tokyo have signed three other major political documents, the latest in May 2008, reaffirming their commitment to peaceful cooperation in bilateral and global affairs.\(^3\)

Meanwhile, economic activity between the financial giants had boomed, with bilateral trade reaching all-time highs for every year of the past decade\(^4\) and eclipsing $200 billion\(^5\) for the past three years. In that time, China has become Japan’s biggest trade partner, while Japan has maintained its status as number three on China’s list behind only the European Union and the United States.\(^6\) The liberal economic theory, not to be confused with the better-known democratic peace theory, suggests that such

\(^4\) Trade between China and Japan is predicted to decrease for the first time in 11 years in 2009 due mostly to the ramifications of the global financial crisis. See, Xinhua News, “Japan’s Trade with China to Decrease in 2009, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-02/26/content_10903220.htm (February 26, 2009).
\(^6\) Japan is number three on China’s list of trade partners if counting the European Union. These trade figures hold even while Japan decreased the amount of food coming in from China after the food scares. See Ministry of Commerce The People’s Republic of China, Top Ten Trading Partners, http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/statistic/ie/200807/20080705642998.html (2008).
economic interdependence would result in closer political ties. Yet paradoxically, neither political nor economic cooperation epitomize Sino-Japanese relations today.

Instead, many scholars describe Sino-Japanese relations as economically hot and politically cold. While China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains a website of seven “sensitive issues” it has with Japan, top-level Japanese officials constantly find themselves enraging the Chinese. In November 2008, for example, Japanese Air Self-Defense Force General Tamogami Toshio stoked tensions with his provocative essay defending Japan’s military aggression during World War II. In public opinion polls, both countries consistently rank as “highly disliked” in each other’s polls. The 2008 Pew Global Attitudes Project confirmed this mutual animosity finding that seven-in-ten Chinese (69%) express an unfavorable view of Japan, while more than eight-in-ten Japanese (84%) dislike China. Why do China and Japan remain such bitter enemies despite their numerous attempts at political reconciliation and increasing levels of economic interdependence?

The purpose of this study is to address this question using ideas in conflict resolution. In particular, this study utilizes concepts of social psychology to show how enmification, or the process of creating enemies, has affected Sino-Japanese relations throughout the past century. This study also examines the tension between social

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8 Hsiung China and Japan at Odds, 44.
psychological and resource mobilization theories, dissecting how the apparently contradictory ideas can coexist to help explain the China-Japan conflict. Ultimately, I argue that China and Japan are mired in an identity-based conflict that is best understood by examining enmification, or the process of creating enemies, between the rival nations through a historical view that dates back to the 16th century. Moreover, such a historical analysis must consider that while China and Japan share mutual animosity, their hostilities stem from disparate sources. For China, its umbrage draws upon bitter memories of Japanese troops storming their soil. On the other hand, Japan defies its label as the shamed aggressor, especially by postwar generations who are left with few palpable traces of its war with China. Thus, this paper treats history as a dynamic process to illuminate how the political rhetoric fails to reflect the complexity of the China-Japan conflict beyond anything more than historical grievances rooted in the Second World War.

1.1 Organization

After this introduction, I provide the rationale for conducting this study. Then, I review relevant theories of conflict resolution, including ideas from social psychology. I then devote a subsection each to various phases of Sino-Japanese relations, beginning in an era of relative peace and shared respect. Next, I explain how Japan’s quest to develop a “rich nation, strong army” during the Meiji Restoration supplanted shared admiration with the seeds of enmity. Then, I explain how Japan strengthened and unified the nation by vilifying its neighbors. In the following subsection, I show how vilification led to dehumanization during the Second Sino-Japanese War, or World War II. Next, I
illustrate how domestic and international factors shaped the conflict during the Cold War, following with a look at the “textbook incident” of 1982 and the continued geopolitical influences affecting enmity between China and Japan. I then examine how enmity has become a ritual or “routinized” in Sino-Japanese relations. Next, I take a look at collusion, the final stage of enmification, as it applies to China and Japan. I then analyze the deconstruction of enemies, followed by a projection of three possible scenarios moving forward. In the final section, I recap the argument and give some concluding remarks.

1.2 Why another study of China and Japan?

There are two main reasons for this study. First, even though the ongoing conflict between China and Japan has received extensive coverage, there is not enough theoretical balance. Namely, realist and neo-liberalist perspectives have dominated the literature, which have understated the importance of emotion on state behavior and erroneously recounted history in static terms.\textsuperscript{12} For the realist school of thought, historical animosities reinforce realism’s already pessimistic outlook for reconciliation.\textsuperscript{13} Enmity supports realists’ ideas that nations are driven by self-interest and that conflict derives from incompatible group interests, such as the disputed ownership of gas and oil deposits in the East China Sea. This viewpoint presumes that social psychological aspects of intergroup behavior are not determinants of conflict but rather, that conflict arises from


the incompatibility of group interests. Neo-liberals, by contrast, believe that “Asia’s nascent institutionalism and vibrant economies will create mutually beneficial relationships that can mute historical animosities.” Yet, there is no correlation or any evidence to suggest that increasing levels of institutional or economic integration are bringing the neighboring nations any closer together. While both realist and neo-liberalist perspectives make valuable contributions to the literature, neither view is well equipped to deal with issues of emotion, such as deeply embedded historical animosities.

Constructivism, the perspective employed in this thesis, views history as a central factor in analysis, but its predictions are more “case specific and often at odds with those of realists and neo-liberals.” Deeply engrained enmity and history could explain, for example, why the potential for bilateral cooperation is greater than the existing levels of integration might suggest. History could also explain why Japan has not been more aggressive despite realistic reasons for being so. In a case like China and Japan where historical enmity plays such a driving force in the conflict, theoretical perspectives that incorporate social psychology are most useful. This lack of theoretical diversity in the literature is sufficient reason for another study of this kind, but the rising geopolitical significance of East Asia also makes this paper timely.

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15 Cha, “Hypothesis on History and Hate in Asia,” 37.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid, 37-38.
The actions of these Asian giants, who account for over three-quarters of the region’s economic activity and over one-half of the region’s military spending, carry serious regional and global implications. Warnings of an armed conflict or nuclear arms race between the rivals may sound alarmist, but recent surges in ethnocentrism and xenophobia suggest that violent confrontations over the vast seabed of gas and oil deposits in the East China Sea or disputes involving the sensitive issue of Taiwan is not entirely out of the question.

Also, while China’s secrecy over its rapidly growing defense budget has Japan worried, China remains wary over Japan’s recent pushes to revise its pacifist constitution to make it easier to deploy troops. Recognized as one of five “nuclear weapons states” by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), estimates have China’s nuclear weapons stockpile around 400. Japan, while not a nuclear weapons state, could easily produce thousands of nuclear warheads from plutonium extracted from the spent fuel of its more than 50 commercial nuclear reactors, although such a move would realistically only occur after overturning Article 9 of its peace constitution that renounces war as a sovereign right.

19 Ali Chaudhry and Andrew George, “Chinese Nuclear Arsenal.” *Center for Defense Information* (July 8, 2004), 
20 Marc Erikson, “Japan Could ‘Go Nuclear’ in Months,” *Asia Times Online* (January 14, 2003),
21 Article 9, at least for the short term, seems like it will remain intact. However, Japan is showing signs of ridding itself of its “nuclear allergy.” Historically averse to the idea of nuclear weapons since the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan has recently pushed harder to become a “normal country.” Just a few years ago, even mentioning the idea of a nuclear Japan would have been unpopular
Even with the limitations of Article 9, however, Japan’s deep political alliance with the United States ensures it of American military backing in the case of an attack by China. Because of these deep political ties between Japan and the United States, China regards American attempts at containing China’s rapidly rising economic and political prominence as a joint effort between the United States and Japan. This close U.S.-Japan alliance, some analysts predict, may begin a new Cold War with China. Of course, historical animosities by themselves do not lead to military conflict, but they can easily serve as a convenient justification for violent actions. Therefore, as long as China and Japan remain stubbornly deadlocked in their political feuds, there is reason to continue studying enmity between these neighboring foes.

2. Conflict Resolution and Social Psychology

John Burton, a professor of conflict resolution, states, “Studies of conflict are, at its heart, a study of human behavior and relationships.” This is particularly relevant for China and Japan where mutual animosities hold a significant place in the collective identities of each nation. The hardened positions of these adversaries require an understanding of integroup relations if any meaningful progress is to be made. One of the most helpful social psychological theories is Henri Tajfel and John Turner’s Social...
Identity Theory, which attempts to explain relationships between groups from a group perspective.\textsuperscript{24}

Social Identity Theory assumes that “people are motivated to achieve a positive ‘social identity,’ or membership in a social group, with all of the attached values and emotional significance of it.”\textsuperscript{25} Groups therefore make social comparisons between their self-identified in-groups and unfamiliar out-groups, with the ultimate aim of achieving positive and distinct positions for the in-group.\textsuperscript{26} For the Chinese and Japanese, social identity theory is useful in understanding the respective nations’ need to achieve psychological distinctness due to their close geographical proximity, intertwined histories, cultural linkages and similar biological features.\textsuperscript{27} Once groups find ways to differentiate themselves from those outside of it, the in-groups have a tendency to commit the Ultimate Attribution Error,\textsuperscript{28} where members of one group view negative behavior of another group as being typical of them, whereas positive behavior by that out-group is classified as an exception to their usual behavior. Both Social Identity Theory and the Ultimate Attribution Error provide effective ways to understand the in- and out-group mentalities of both China and Japan.

Another useful theory to evaluate Sino-Japanese relations is fraternal relative deprivation, or when dissatisfaction arises because of a person’s group’s status vis-à-vis another group.\textsuperscript{29} Such deprivation occurs when a comparison is made with members of a

\textsuperscript{24} Taylor and Moghaddam, *Theories of Intergroup Relations*, 61.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, 80.
\textsuperscript{28} Tidwell, *Conflict Resolved*?
\textsuperscript{29} Taylor and Moghaddam, *Theories of Intergroup Relations*, 128.
comparable but “better-off” group. While China or Japan has always dominated East Asia in modern times, there has never been a time when both China and Japan have asserted dominance simultaneously. China’s economy, growing at 8-9 percent annually since the late 1970s, along with its increasing role as a world leader (i.e. hosting the 2008 Beijing Olympics, facilitating the Six-Party Talks), is catching up with a stagnant Japan, which has never fully recovered from its economic slump and political embarrassments of the 1990s, also known as their “lost decade.” Fraternal deprivation becomes increasingly relevant as these two countries near political and economic parity for the first time ever in modern history.

While the aforementioned theories are helpful in understanding intergroup relations, any review of such theories must also address contending “materialistic” theories, particularly Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT). RMT, which became increasingly popular in the 1970s, questioned whether intergroup psychology was relevant for explaining collective behavior at all. Contrary to theories in social psychology, RMT asserts that collective action only takes place when resources or elites are available to facilitate such action, rejecting the premise of emotional or psychological forces as being the basic drivers of intergroup relations. RMT assumes individuals to be rational actors that manipulate groups to secure resources and propel social mobilization. RMT has undoubtedly enriched the study of intergroup relations, but it

31 Taylor and Moghaddam, Theories of Intergroup Relations, 131.
32 Ibid, 132.
falls short of fully explaining group behavior. In fact, neither RMT nor social psychological theories are sufficient in this regard.  

Moreover, since no grand theory of intergroup relations exists as of now, a mix of theories are necessary to examine intergroup relations. In this case, RMT and social psychological theories are both useful in analyzing the China-Japan conflict. How, though, can two apparently contradictory sets of theories coexist to explain Sino-Japanese relations? Michael Kerbo aptly asserts that because no group interactions are alike, each requires a different set of conceptual tools for its analysis.

More specifically, Kerbo reconciles the concurrent use of social psychological and resource mobilization theories by categorizing social action into “movements of crisis” and “movements of affluence.” According to Kerbo, the former occurs when the parties are experiencing life threatening conditions – real or perceived. Elites can more effectively mobilize groups and resources during moments of crisis, as they require quick, decisive action, unencumbered by democratic debate and assembly. On the contrary, movements of affluence refer to collective action in which the actors are not motivated by immediate life-threatening situations of political or economic crisis. Partly because their basic human needs are not threatened, these actors have surplus resources such as time, money, and energy to devote to social movements. The major point is that because human needs are met, and the actors can engage in causes from which they

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benefit less directly and are motivated more by ideology and moral issues. In these cases, social psychological theories are more useful in their analysis.

Thus, both resource mobilization and social psychological theories are useful in illuminating Sino-Japanese relations. This holds particularly true when analyzing China and Japan, who have exceedingly distinct yet intertwined histories. Between the first and second Sino-Japanese wars, China suffered military attacks, widespread famine and extreme turmoil, making the RMT perspective more helpful in analyzing this period of its history. However, after ascending from of its political isolation and stabilizing its socio-political climate in the late 1970s, China’s standards of living have improved, generating more movements of affluence rather than of crisis. On the other hand, Japan’s experiences are generally better explained as movements of affluence, with some movements of crisis during the Second World War and the 1950-1960s.

2.1 Enemies

Various disciplines define enemies differently. Economists, for example, consider enemies to be rational competitors for scarce resources. Political scientists emphasize the relative power of enemies and the uneven distribution of resources resulting from their struggles for primacy. Sociologists view the enemy as a metaphor. While these definitions are useful to consider, enemies, for the purpose of this study, are value-laden

34 Kerbo, Movements of Crisis and Movements of Affluence.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
beings that elicit strong negative feelings, unlike opponents who are simply those making choices against each other in an effort to gain a particular desired outcome.\textsuperscript{38}

### 2.2 Enmification

From schoolyard bullying to state-driven genocide, enmification plays a central role in sustaining and escalating conflicts. According to Oppenheimer, enmification is a precondition to violent conflict, as it vilifies, dehumanizes and breeds collective hate against the “other.”\textsuperscript{39} Once formed, enemy images become deeply engrained, becoming more resistant to change even as the enemy signals intent to change.\textsuperscript{40} In both China and Japan, enemy images are passed from generation-to-generation through family folklore, chauvinist histories taught in secondary schools, and popular stereotypes perpetuated by the mass media such that animosity for the other becomes a part of one’s identity.\textsuperscript{41} Still, studies of conflict have largely understated the importance of enmity; and nowhere is this analytic gap more apparent than in postwar Asia where analysts frequently cite historical enmity to explain state behavior but fail to explain the requisite rationale for their position.\textsuperscript{42} Any meaningful attempt at resolving the China-Japan conflict requires an understanding of how enemies are constructed and deconstructed.\textsuperscript{43}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} Tidwell, \textit{Conflict Resolved?}, 126.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Cha, “Hypotheses on History and Hate,” 41.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Tidwell, \textit{Conflict Resolved?}.
\end{itemize}
There are four stages to this process of enmification: threat, distortion, rigidification and collusion.\textsuperscript{44} Central to this process is identity, which Burton and others argue to be a fundamental driver of human behavior.\textsuperscript{45} Janice Gross Stein argues that, “People have a fundamental human need for identity,” and continues, “Identity is the way in which a person is or wishes to be known to others; it is a conception of self in relation to others.”\textsuperscript{46} Identity is dynamic, complex and highly situational, as individuals freely move from one identity to the other depending on the given context. For example, a Japanese man might consider himself Asian, democrat, brother or peace activist depending on the situation. An event that is perceived to invalidate a person’s core sense of identity creates a sense of threat.

*Distortion*, the second stage of enmification, is considered a psychological response to threat. Distortion is an individual’s way of reducing the level of a threat to one’s identity by denying or altering the meaning of an event. This concept is similar to the idea of cognitive dissonance, which proposes that people have a drive to reduce contradiction in their lives by justifying their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.\textsuperscript{47} Thus, distortion allows enemies to rationalize their deep seeded hostility, even if it manifests into violence. In some extreme cases, including the Sino-Japanese Wars, distortion reaches such extreme levels that it can lead to dehumanization and unimaginable acts of human cruelty.

\textsuperscript{44} Tidwell, *Conflict Resolved?*
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
The third phase, rigidification, is when people become so hardened in their positions that they develop hostile imaginations of the “other” and treat stereotypes as truth, regardless of what objective data and common sense might reveal. At this point, the parties frequently respond with reactive devaluation, or the concept of devaluating proposals received from the enemy even if the identical offer would have been acceptable when suggested by a neutral party or ally.\(^{48}\) As a metaphor, rigidification is the process of building a wall of protection from unwanted attacks to one’s identity. Eventually, a unified and coherent ideology is formed within the in-group that becomes a part of that group’s identity.

Collusion, the final phase, is where the parties actually help each other sustain the conflict. The rigidification of one’s responses to threats becomes incorporated into the self, becoming an integral part of the history and identities of the involved parties.\(^{49}\) At this point, the conflict satisfies the identity needs of the parties, making it somewhat mutually beneficial to abhor the other. Thus, colluding in the maintenance of the conflict becomes a unifying group objective, rallying point and/or patriotic duty.

The process of threat, distortion, rigidification, and collusion provides a useful explanation of how deep-rooted protracted conflict becomes so embedded into the identities of individuals. Once an identity is threatened, it brings about defense, which becomes deeply entrenched into the core of the involved parties. The enmification framework is effective in facilitating the discussion on how China and Japan have sustained their mutual animosity.

\(^{48}\) Tidwell, *Conflict Resolved?*.  
\(^{49}\) Ibid.
2.3 History

The main problems with the treatment of history in analyzing Sino-Japanese relations are that they have generally been oversimplified and understated in importance.\(^{50}\) This has been the case even though history plays a central role in understanding protracted conflicts. As Alan Tidwell explains, “History provides third parties and researchers with direction, as it also provides explanations for actors’ motivations.”\(^{51}\) History provides crucial insight into the motivations and rationale for future actions, which holds particularly true for China and Japan where the parties remain staunchly divided over historical memories. Therefore, this section begins with a brief description of Sino-Japanese relations before the nations were at each other’s throats.

3. Admiration

Before the First Sino-Japanese War, neither considered the other a major threat to its security, even though Japanese pirates intermittently assailed the Chinese during the 16\(^{th}\) century. In fact, China was the most powerful and wealthiest nation on earth, and Japan, for the most part, venerated its neighbor for its prosperity and culture.\(^{52}\) Beginning in 593 A.D., Prince Shotoku of Japan sent students to learn about China (initially to study Buddhism, which had previously filtered into Japan through Korea).\(^{53}\) The study trips continued for centuries, helping to shape Japan into what it is today.

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50 Cha, “Hypothesis of History and Hate in Asia.”
51 Tidwell, *Conflict Resolved?*, 107.
52 In *China and Japan at Odds*, James C Hsiung (p. 2) writes about the prosperous Sui Dynasty (589 A.D.) and Tang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.).
53 Hsiung, *China and Japan at Odds.*
many other cultural aspects of China. China’s influence was so great that it inspired entire societal transformations in Japan, including the Taika Reforms in 646 A.D. and the Taiho Code in 702 A.D.\textsuperscript{54} Japan not only learned from China, its venerable neighbor was the single biggest influence in Japan’s nascent stages of development.

But if Japan looked up to China so much, what triggered the change of that relationship from admiration to animosity? Scholars primarily point to the change in regional power politics during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, when the reign of the once great Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) was nearing its end in China. From the 1840s-1860s, the British and Second French Empires delivered shocking blows to the dynasty throughout the Opium Wars. As a result, the country suffered internal strife, as warlords divided “China” into numerous territories with no obvious ruler at the helm.\textsuperscript{55} The combination of foreign imperialism and internal revolts severely weakened the Qing Dynasty, pitting Chinese provinces against each other.

Meanwhile, Japan had minimal impact on China throughout most of the Qing period other than intermittent piracy spurned by its own civil war, economic malaise and high unemployment. For the most part, Japan proved a beneficial trade partner and posed little threat to China’s security. In fact, Japan’s sakoku, or closed country policy (1633-1853), minimized interactions between the countries altogether for over 200 years. The isolationist policy, enforced by the Tokugawa shogunate (feudal regime of Edo Japan), restricted migration so that no foreigner could enter nor could any Japanese leave the archipelago. Although there was some trade with the Dutch, Chinese and Koreans, the

\textsuperscript{54} Hsiung, \textit{China and Japan at Odds}, 2.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
country was virtually closed for two centuries in its attempt to control commerce and to remove colonial and religious influences, primarily those of Spain and Portugal. Sakoku would remain intact until 1853 when Commodore Mathew Perry of the U.S. Navy and his “Black Ships” forced Japan open to the outside world. Some Japan scholars claim that the threat from Western powers drove Japan’s military expansionism beginning in the 19th century.

4. Threat: Japan and the Meiji Restoration

The modern fleets of Commodore Perry posed a serious threat to Japan. Bewildered, Japan aimed to completely remake its identity as an economic and military power on par with Western imperial countries. Japan sent students around the world during the ensuing Meiji Restoration to learn about Western cultures; not only to prevent Japan from falling under foreign imperialism but also to enable Japan to compete equally with Western powers. Disputes arose about how much Japan should emulate Western powers, as well as about opening up the country to new ideas. Eventually, the debate focused in on the degree to which Japan should replace its Asian identity with a Western one. Japan’s leadership ultimately would decide that the Western threat was insurmountable without a radical makeover.

From 1868-1912, the Meiji Restoration transformed Japan’s military, technology and culture in ways that remain unrivaled in world history. A feudal society became a modern one, adopting Western-style governance and culture (e.g., ballroom dancing, beef eating) and uprooting a society built around Shinto divinity and rule by the Shogun and his samurai. Japan’s transition from xenophobia to xenophilia marked a major change in
its identity, as the country pursued a policy of “rich country, strong military” to start anew. Japan replaced centuries of feudalism with Western-inspired institutions within a matter of decades.

However, pursuit of such rapid modernization required significant buy-in from political leaders and the general population. To this end, Japan’s leadership began conjuring up images of racial superiority, or favorable images of the in-group. Imperial powers had previously raised the idea of world domination by the world’s strongest countries, but for Japan, it had convinced itself that it was the chosen nation to lead Asia into the future. Yukichi Fukuzawa, founder of one of Japan’s most influential newspapers, commented in 1882, “We shall someday raise the national power of Japan so that not only shall we control the natives of China and India as the English do today, but we shall also possess in our hands the power to rebuke the English and to rule Asia ourselves.”56 For many Japanese, the psychological struggle of their dual identity of being part of Asia and yet yearning to emulate the advanced West has often resulted in a sense of superiority vis-à-vis fellow Asians.57 Self-concepts of racial superiority allowed the Japanese to distance themselves and ultimately justify their attacks on their neighbors.

4.1 The First Sino-Japanese War

In its quest to reach parity with Western powers, Japan sought natural resources from neighboring Korea, which was then under Chinese authority. Japan’s plan was to either annex Korea before it was seized by another power or to ensure its independence

57 Yoichi Funabashi 2003, 83.
from China and reform its administration to favor Japanese commerce. In particular, Japan hoped to exploit Korea’s coal and iron deposits for its growing industrial base. In addition, Japan sought Korea in order to reduce the security threat in the case that any other foreign military captured the strategic peninsula. While the Western powers were still the most imminent threat, Japan’s grab for natural resources initiated an aggressive campaign for territorial expansion into Asia.

This fight over Korea, or the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), ended in a swift victory for Japan. Meiji Japan annihilated the Qing Dynasty, gaining a large sphere of influence in China and Manchuria and joining the Western powers in their scramble to establish stakes in Asia. With its loss, China was forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895, recognizing the independence of Korea and ceding Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan.\(^{58}\) In addition, Japan gained monetarily, forcing China to pay 200 million Kuping taels as reparation for the war and allowing Japanese ships to navigate the Yangtze River and operate manufacturing factories nearby.\(^{59}\) China’s last-ditch effort to revive the dynasty, the “Hundred Days Reforms” of 1898, failed miserably, signaling a remarkable shift in regional power toward Japan for the first time in modern history.\(^{60}\)

### 5. Distortion: Japan’s “Benevolent” Imperialism

Japan’s self-proclaimed “benevolent” imperialism during the early 20\(^{th}\) century is an example of *distortion*, or altering the meaning of an event in order to reduce its

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\(^{58}\) Hsiung, *China and Japan at Odds*.

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
associated threats. Japan’s leadership justified its expansionism, or plans to create a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” as a way to defend Asia from Western imperial powers. Japan claimed that it was actually helping the greater Asian continent, despite expanding its territory and extracting natural resources from its neighbors.

This distortion also explains how Japan’s political elites manipulated the country during such a time of imminent danger. By masking its true intentions of expansionism with more altruistic reasons, political elites mobilized its groups and resources to assault its once revered neighbor. Japan’s political elites thus engaged its country into widespread militarism by fabricating the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Meanwhile in China, the tumultuous end to the Qing Dynasty by the Xinhai Revolution led to the founding of the Republic of China in 1912. Unfortunately, the nascent Republic was even weaker than its predecessor because of factionalism among various warlords. Unifying the nation and repelling imperialism was improbable, as some warlords even aligned themselves with various foreign powers in an effort to wipe each other out, including warlord Zhang Zuolin of Manchuria who openly cooperated with the Japanese for military and economic assistance.61 “China” struggled to develop a sense of national identity during this early period of the republic.

But Japan was not without challenges to its collective identity either. Near the end of the 19th century, the Japanese began questioning their rapid adoption of Western ways, renewing its appreciation for traditional Japanese culture, including divine respect

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for the Emperor. While Japan’s internal introspection united the nation more closely, its expansionism supplied its growth as a country. Japan’s competing ambitions with Russia over Manchuria and Korea led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, where Japan won a surprising and decisive victory over powerhouse Russia. Japan’s victory left no doubts about the new balance of power in East Asia. In 1915, Japan took advantage of its growing power by issuing its “Twenty-One Demands” to China, ordering it to make political and commercial concessions. The final revised version of Thirteen Demands did little in terms of real change, but reaffirmed the power structure in Asia. China, which remained fragmented, was unable to resist the newly powerful Japan.

Eventually, the rise of the Kuomintang (KMT or Chinese Nationalist Party) and their fight against factional warlords was the first step in uniting China once again. The KMT’s objective in its military campaign of 1926-1928, or Northern Expedition, was to speed up the Chinese revolution against feudalism and imperialism and unify China by ending the rule of local warlords. Subsequently, Chiang Kai-shek, Commander-in-Chief of the KMT, emerged as the leader of China in 1928.

Under Chiang’s rule, Chinese nationalism continued to rise, particularly since one of his main goals was to rid China of foreign imperialism. However, the Northern Expedition had only nominally unified China, while civil wars broke out between former warlords and rival Kuomintang factions. In addition, the Chinese Communists (CCP or Communist Party of China) revolted against the central government following a purge of its members from the KMT. Because of the internal strife, the KMT diverted much attention into fighting these civil wars, focusing on internal pacification before resisting
foreign forces. Thus, China had little national unity in its struggles with Japan, whereas Japan utilized its attacks of China to bolster its nationalism.

Exploiting China during vulnerable times, the Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931. After five months of fighting, the Japanese established the puppet state of Manchukuo in eastern Manchuria. For Japan, Manchukuo provided an abundant supply of raw materials and served as a buffer state against another threat, the Soviet Union. Unable to fend off Japanese forces, China appealed to the League of Nations for help. The League's investigation was published as the Lytton Report, which condemned Japan for its incursion of Manchuria, and led Japan to withdraw from the League of Nations. Otherwise, however, the international community was unwilling to take any meaningful action against Japan. Four years later, the Japanese occupied parts of Chahar and Hopeh and captured Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai and Nanking in 1937.62

It was around this time that Japan invented the concept of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a self-sufficient bloc of Asian nations free of Western colonialism and led by Japan. Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe led the effort to create a Great East Asia comprised of Japan, Manchukuo, China and parts of Southeast Asia. The military goals of this expansion targeted the isolation of Australia and naval operations in the Indian Ocean. Japan’s distortion to justify its military aggression was under the guise of “benevolent guidance,” claiming that no nation was to exploit other nations under the concept of Greater East Asia.

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This is a prime example of cognitive dissonance, where Japan’s imperialism was justified by its self-declared intentions of righteously fighting off Western imperial powers for the other helpless Asian countries. Japan rationalized its expansionism this way: 1) racial homogeneity and geographical proximity among Asian countries made the formation of an East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere plausible; (2) the West undying quest to colonize Asia required it; (3) Soviet Communism was a disintegrative influence, and East Asia had to form an alliance to combat it; and (4) Japan’s familiarity with the peculiarities of history, geography, and cultural conditions in East Asia best prepared it to achieve complete racial unity.63 According to Japan, dominating its neighboring Asian countries was in their “best interest” for the long term.


Before 1937, China and Japan fought in smaller battles, or “incidents”, but refrained from engaging in another all-out war until that point. The 1931 invasion of Manchuria, for example, was known as the “Mukden Incident.” The last of these incidents was the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 1937, which sparked the full-blown war between the two countries. The Second Sino-Japanese War, from 1937 to 1941, was initially between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan, but merged into the larger theater of World War II following the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor. For China, the war was a result of decades of Japanese imperialist policy aimed at securing its growing material needs. In Japan, the invasion of China became a holy war, the initial

step in a plan of having the “eight corners of the world under one roof.” 64 While propaganda pegged China as its enemy, Japanese leadership, led by Prime Minister Konoe, organized the League of Diet Members Believing the Objectives of the Holy War in 1940. 65 By 1941 Japan had captured most of the eastern coastal areas of China, and by the end of the war, Japan had committed atrocious that haunt this tortured relationship to this day.

6.1 The Rape of Nanking

In December 1937, the most toxic event in Sino-Japanese relations, the Rape of Nanking (now Nanjing), forever stained Sino-Japanese relations. Within six weeks, 300,000 Chinese were raped, tortured and murdered – a death toll exceeding those of the atomic blasts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined. 66 Journalist Iris Chang called the Japanese assault on Nanking, then the capital of Nationalist China, as “the forgotten Holocaust of World War II” and “one of the great evil deeds of history.” 67 Still, some Japanese leaders and historians continue to dispute the mayhem as exaggerated or even fabricated, despite the condemning verdict at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE) held in Tokyo. The ongoing controversy over the Rape of Nanking remains a major stumbling block in Sino-Japanese relations.

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65 Ibid.
67 Chang, The Rape of Nanking, 4.
6.2 Unit 731

Unit 731, a covert Japanese biological and chemical warfare research and development unit, conducted lethal human experimentation throughout the war. According to the 2002 International Symposium on the Crimes of Bacteriological Warfare, the number of people killed by Unit 731 is around 580,000. Members of Unit 731 initially dehumanized human subjects by calling them *maruta*, or logs. Unit 731 used chemical and biological weapons during the war despite being banned by The Hague Conventions (1899 and 1907), Versailles Peace Treaty and the League of Nations.\(^{68}\) Japan, for example, used toxic gases on nearly 400 separate occasions and airdropped fleas carrying the bubonic plague in 1941.\(^{69}\) Fearing retaliation, however, such weapons were never used against Westerners and only against other Asian judged inferior by Japanese propaganda. Today, chemical weapons left behind by Japanese soldiers have been found in more than 30 places in 10 cities throughout China.\(^{70}\)

6.3 Comfort Women

From 1932 – 1945, the Japanese Imperial Army enslaved approximately 200,000 “comfort women,” a euphemism to describe women and girls who were enslaved sexually from places including China, Korea and others. Mass rapes in China attracted international outrage as women and girls were abducted and repeatedly tortured and raped. Thereafter, the Japanese established “comfort stations,” justifying the system as a

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\(^{68}\) See Article 23 of the Hague Conventions (1899 and 1907), Article 171 of the Versailles Peace Treaty and a resolution of the League of Nations on May 14, 1938.


means to reduce the numbers of rape, prevent sexually transmitted diseases, counter the threat of espionage and reduce the soldiers’ “combat stress.” Today, only a couple hundred survivors remain waiting for justice and reparations. Yet, some Japanese question whether comfort women were coerced into slavery at all. In March 2007, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe denied the state’s involvement in enslaving comfort women, “There is no evidence of coercion in the narrow sense.”

6.4 Little Boy, Fat Man and Japanese Surrender

In August 1945, the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on Japan to end their military expansionism. On August 6th, the U.S. dropped its first nuclear weapon, “Little Boy,” on the city of Hiroshima, followed three days later by the detonation of “Fat Man” over Nagasaki. The bombs killed approximately 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 80,000 in Nagasaki. On August 15th, Japan announced its surrender to the Allied Powers, signing the Instrument of Surrender on September 2nd, officially ending World War II. At that time, China emerged from the war nominally as a global military power.

However, China was fragile after decades of fighting and on the verge of civil war. Sapped by the demands of war, the economy spiraled, and millions went hungry and homeless. Costs for reconstructing the country after the protracted war were staggering. The war left the Nationalists severely weakened and unpopular, while the Communists gained in popularity. Mao Zedong, leader of the Communist Party of China

72 Germany had already signed the Instrument of Surrender on May 7th, ending the war in Europe.
(CPC), increased party membership from 100,000 in 1937 to over one million by 1945.\textsuperscript{73}

Soon after World War II, civil war continued in earnest between the KMT and CCP.

Finally in 1950, the Chinese Civil War came to an end with the CPC banishing Chiang Kai-shek and 2 million Nationalists to the island of Taiwan.\textsuperscript{74} Mao officially proclaimed the birth of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949 with its capital in Beiping, later renamed Beijing.\textsuperscript{75} In December 1949, Chiang proclaimed Taipei, Taiwan, the temporary capital of the Republic of China (ROC) and continued his claim of sole legitimacy over the governance of China. On the mainland, and to most of the world, however, Mao now ruled China.

As the leader of the PRC from 1949 until 1976, Mao would become arguably the single most influential figure in modern Chinese history. Revered by many as a revolutionary, Chairman Mao is credited with turning China into a major world power. Still, he remains controversial as his social programs, such as the Great Leap Forward in 1957 and Cultural Revolution in 1966, caused severe damage to the culture, economy and foreign relations of China, including the deaths of approximately 30 million people. Mao’s attempt to “smash the old world” and establish a new one somewhat paralleled Japan’s earlier Meiji Restoration. Mao’s reign would focus on the makeover of China, not reprimanding Japan for its historical wrongdoings.

\textsuperscript{73} Hsiung, *China and Japan at Odds*. 
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, 12.
7. Postwar China and Japan

The Cold War had different meanings for China and Japan. For China, it meant diplomatic isolation, social turmoil and economic volatility. Mao envisioned China making a similarly swift transformation into a modern Communist state through the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Instead, his “revolutions” backfired, triggering social chaos, widespread famine and economic malaise. Mao’s political rivals, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, would subsequently lead power struggles between rival factions throughout the country.

On the other hand, Japan had also gone through a remarkable re-identification process, albeit propelled by external forces. The Tokyo Trials quickly sentenced former prime minister and general Hideki Tojo to death and six other Class A war criminals were sentenced to life in prison. The American occupation of Japan under General Douglas MacArthur’s command brought about both demilitarization and democratization to Japan. In 1947, MacArthur and his staff drafted Japan’s “Peace Constitution,” with Article 9 of the new document renouncing war as a sovereign right, as well as using force as a means of settling international disputes. Moreover, the U.S. pumped money and resources into establishing a new democracy in Japan to counter the wave of communism sweeping Asia. Supported by the United States, Japan changed from an imperialist state to a democratic one in a matter of years.

Japan no longer posed any threat of aggressive military expansionism, but it clearly had not considered reconciliation with its former victims as a top priority either. In 1950, when the Korean War broke out, the Japanese government set its six Class A
war criminals free. After Japan regained independence from the United States in 1952, several Class A war criminals returned to government service, and five years later, one of them, Nobuske Kishi, became prime minister. Kishi’s ascension to Japan’s highest post, together with the Nagasaki flag incident in 1958, brought the limited contact between the countries to a grinding halt.\(^77\)

Throughout the next decade, Japan maintained its tight alliance with the U.S., while China aligned with the Soviet Union. Despite the standoff, Tokyo believed that relations with Beijing would greatly improve with time. In particular, Japan’s first postwar Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru predicted that China and Japan would eventually mend relations based on its shared economic interests. The “Yoshida Doctrine,” a national policy framework laid out in 1955, foresaw that Tokyo and Washington would provide a better alternative to Beijing than Moscow.\(^78\) For the most part, the doctrine proved accurate: Beijing’s ties with Moscow dwindled in the 1960’s, and with time, economic ties between China and Japan deepened.

With Moscow’s support waning and domestic support sagging, Mao looked abroad for an economic and political boost. In the absence of diplomatic relations, Beijing tried extra hard to be congenial to both the government and people of Japan, ever intent on keeping them over from being too close to Taiwan or Washington. Moreover, China did not push for war compensation so that it could maintain healthy trade

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76 In May 1958, a Japanese person pulled down a Chinese flag at a Chinese cultural exhibition, leading to the Chinese government stopping trade with Japan.
78 Michael Green, Japan’s Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power (New York: Palgrave, 2001)
relationships with Japan. China, banished to political isolation until President Richard Nixon’s historic visit to Beijing in 1972, suffered a turbulent road to modernization, unlike that of its increasingly rich island neighbor.

For Japan, the Cold War was mostly a blessing in disguise. Japan had few military concerns as it was protected under the American security blanket. In addition, Japan’s economic and political development was propped by what had until recently been a secret fund (the M Fund) set up by the CIA – which grew to a staggering $500 billion at its peak – to keep the pro-West Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in power.79 U.S. political and economic support, not only helped Japan back up to its feet, it sheltered Japan from shouldering the responsibilities commonly born by countries emerging from protracted war, and Cold War politics made it possible to leave many war-related issues unresolved.80 If China was frustrated with its neighbors’ miraculous economic growth and its own internal struggles, it hid it well.

7.1 Normalization

In 1972, the same year “Nixon met Mao,” China and Japan called off their stalemate, normalizing diplomatic relations for the first time since the Second World War. Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka of Japan through the joint communiqué issued an apology to China stating, “The Japanese side is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself.” The Chinese side recognized that, “The Government of the

79 Hsiung, China and Japan at Odds, 13.
People's Republic of China declares that in the interest of the friendship between the Chinese and the Japanese peoples, it renounces its demand for war reparation from Japan.\(^\text{81}\) Moreover, ever intent on gaining Japanese economic cooperation, Mao reportedly told a visiting team from Tokyo that the Japanese war effort in China had helped the Communists come to power. Mao also remained relatively silent about Nanking and other events, as evident in the joint communiqué, in order to establish healthy trade relations with Japan. Through a perspective of resource mobilization, Mao attempted to push China past its troubled history with Japan, without attending to the deep wounds inflicted by the Japanese military.

Still, in 1978, China and Japan further bolstered relations by the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, making friendship the mantra for leaders on both sides.\(^\text{82}\) In October of the same year, Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping visited Japan upon an invitation from Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda, telling him, “The conclusion of the Treaty is a political reaffirmation of the friendly relations between the two countries. In the present turbulent situation, China needs friendship with Japan and vice versa.”\(^\text{83}\) Though it took nearly three decades, the rival neighbors finally seemed poised to move beyond their lingering hostility.

8. Rigidification: Domestic and International Factors

Although the period from 1972-1982 seemed peaceful, it belied the latent conflict buried deep within the collective psyches of each nation. China’s political elites were

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\(^\text{82}\) Self 2004.

busy shoring up its domestic legitimacy and dealing with immense internal troubles, such as the Cultural Revolution, the death of Mao, and the earthquake of Tangshan that killed over 270,000 people. Meanwhile, America’s security guarantees and economic support allowed Japan to evade responsibility for its wartime atrocities. Shrewd trade policies gave Japan many shares in Western markets, leading to remarkable economic growth through the 1970s and 1980s and eventually making Japan the world’s second largest economy. After a decade of relatively little confrontation, the latent animosities between China and Japan emerged.

The 1982 textbook controversy in Japan first raised the issue of history as a serious obstacle in Sino-Japanese relations. Media outlets erroneously reported that the Japanese Ministry of Education (MOE) ordered history textbooks to make various revisions, notably changing the term “aggression/invasion” into “advancement” to describe Japanese military action in northeast China in the 1930s. However, it was later revealed that no such request was made at all during that round of state textbook approvals. Still, China, Korea and other neighboring countries fiercely voiced their opposition. For some victim countries, they finally began voicing their anger because Japan began acting like a victim – principally of American bombings – as opposed to an aggressor toward Asian countries. Moreover, the issue became a source and a potential challenge to government legitimacy in both China and Japan.

In Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the MOE expressed their displeasure and contributed indirectly to Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko’s resignation. For

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84 Schneider, “The Japanese History Textbook Controversy in East Asian Perspective.”
China, the textbook issue became part of the “history card,” or leverage to shame and pressure the Japanese government. Over the years, Beijing’s reactions to the textbook issue would become accusatory rhetoric and some cancelled visits between government officials, but no measures were taken with potentially long-term negative effects. In addition, civil society-based efforts gained momentum, where history-related issues had long been managed in a top-down way by governments. Activities against Japan’s perceived whitewashing of its history became justified as a patriotic duty for many Chinese. All these sentiments arose despite Beijing and Tokyo’s agreement to put the history problem behind them when they issued their joint communique in 1972. In fact, the textbook issue was the first of numerous controversies and debates.

In particular, the Yasukuni Shrine, a Shinto memorial dedicated to the war dead, became a major source of debate, with over 1,000 Japanese convicted of war crimes receiving enshrinement there. Of those, 14 Class-A war criminals were enshrined as early as 1978. Surprisingly, however, from 1978 to 1984, three Japanese prime ministers had honored the war dead at this shrine, yet the Chinese government did not object until 1985. Some analysts comment that China finally protested in 1985 after being provoked by the sensational coverage given by the Japanese media to the official visit made that year by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. Since then, visits to Yasukuni by high-ranking Japanese officials have ignited uproar in China, Korea and other parts of the world.

85 Two of the 14 Class-A war criminals, Yosuke Matsuoka and Osami Nagano – died in prison before verdicts were delivered.
Scholar James Hsiung adds, however, that first Chinese protest belied concerns over Nakasone’s close rapport with President Ronald Reagan due to their staunch anti-Communist bond.\(^\text{86}\) In a meeting two years earlier, Nakasone told Reagan that Japan was ready to replace its previous policy of individual defense to embrace collective security, a pledge sought by Reagan.\(^\text{87}\) This policy shift anticipated the rise in 1986 of Japan’s annual defense budge above the one-percent-of-GDP ceiling set in 1976; the 1992 Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) legislation that paved the way for the dispatch of Self Defense Forces (SDF) abroad; and the strengthening of the Japan-U.S. alliance via the 1997 reactivation of the Sub-Committee for Defense Cooperation of the United States-Japan Security Consultative Committee.\(^\text{88}\) These developments during Nakasone’s tenure signaled to the Chinese what they came to perceive as a resurgence of Japanese militarism.

Pointing to increases in Japan’s defense spending, Chinese leaders used the idea of Japanese re-militarization as a springboard for other issues as well. Throughout the 1980s, any allegations of Japan’s whitewashing of history prompted fierce condemnation from China, leading to the resignation of some Japanese officials. Chinese officials repeatedly demanded Japan to repent for historical wrongdoings, only reinforcing senses of indignation in Japan over what was perceived as Chinese interference in Japan’s domestic affairs. In 1987, Sino-Japanese relations took a particularly nasty turn.

\(^{86}\) Hsiung, *China and Japan at Odds*, 16.
\(^{87}\) Ibid.
The Kokaryo/ Guanghualio Dormitory, once a dormitory to Chinese students studying Japan, was long contested by China and Taiwan over its ownership. As a result, the Osaka High Courts’ ruling in favor of Taiwan caused uproar in China. Deng Xiaoping, a Chinese political leader, linked the dormitory and other current bilateral issues with historical grievances, igniting an equally fierce upheaval in Japan. Although China did not ask for reparations during its normalization talks in 1972, China expressed dissatisfaction with its previous compromise.

In addition to such government-level clashes, the conflict over history took a more populist turn. Beginning in the mid-1980s, Chinese students staged demonstrations over such sensitive issues as visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by high-level government officials. Chinese victims of Japanese wartime atrocities, including the Nanjing Massacre, bacteriological warfare, and sexual slavery of comfort women, filed lawsuits against the Japanese government and corporations, demanding apologies and compensation. Boycotts of Japanese goods have become commonplace, while hanjian, or Chinese collaborators, were increasingly chastised in China for working for a Japanese company or simply buying a Japanese product. While the Japanese fired back about human rights abuses after the Tiananmen Square incident, the conflict had rigidified between the nemeses, creating a structure with China on the higher moral ground and Japan on the lower. In China, where state restrictions limited civic protests, such public demonstrations indicated a transition to movements based more of affluence rather than of crisis.
On the other side, Japan, concerned about deteriorating efforts further, took solace in the Yoshida Doctrine, which predicted reconciliation because of the countries’ economic interdependence. Japan’s miraculous postwar economy, becoming the world’s second largest by the 1970s, sheltered them from Chinese intimidation. In fact, trade between China and Japan grew from $18.2 billion in 1990 to $62.4 billion in 1996; and Japan’s foreign direct investment into China expanded from $438 million in 1989 to $4.5 billion in 1995.\(^{89}\) Japan’s unofficial foreign policy was to rely on its economic might.

Unfortunately for Japan, its “checkbook diplomacy” eventually failed them miserably. China refused to provide military transparency upon Japan’s request, and in 1995, Beijing tested nuclear weapons in spite of Tokyo’s strong objections. Japan’s sensitivities of nuclear weapons and the emotional debate the same year about commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II compounded the issue. Tokyo responded by suspending $75 million in grant assistance, but the economic reprimands were simply overlooked.\(^{90}\) In fact, China responded with its “missile diplomacy” by firing ballistic missiles near Taiwan to intimidate island voters to the first-ever popular election of the president of Taiwan, again disregarding Japanese objections.\(^{91}\) In the following months, Sino-Japanese relations would reach a postwar low following Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, and disputes over the Senkaku/ Diaoyu Islands.\(^{92}\) Economic interdependence, long expected to improve Sino-Japanese relations, had fallen short of its promise. Instead, both China

\(^{89}\) Green *Japan’s Reluctant Realism*, 77.

\(^{90}\) Ibid.

\(^{91}\) Ibid.

and Japan had become rigidified in their positions, clearly differentiating between them and us.

**9. Collusion**

When collusion, or the final phase of enmification, occurs, systematic biases among the government elite and general public become commonplace, reaching the point where the merits of negotiation or discussion cease to matter. Enemies view virtually all of their interactions as zero-sum games, where gains achieved by the other side are perceived to be a loss to their own side, and the very idea of a mutually advantageous negotiation becomes a psychological impossibility. Reactive devaluation becomes routine, and the relationship reaches a point where emotions trump logic and rationality. China and Japan reached this phase in the late 1990s.

In November 1998 state visit to Japan by Chinese President Jiang Zemin was historically significant in that it was the first visit to Japan by a Chinese head of state. However, many people, including policymakers in Japan, had the impression that the visit not only failed to promote Japan-China relations, but also actually strengthened anti-Chinese sentiments among the Japanese public. Nevertheless, both governments treated the Japan-China Joint Declaration on Building a Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation for Peace and Development, issued by the two governments during Jiang's visit, as a third important bilateral document, following the 1972 Joint Communiqué and

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the 1978 Treaty of Peace and Friendship. The two sides repeatedly have stressed that all problems should be handled in line with these three documents.

However, Jiang’s visit belied the underlying tensions between Beijing and Tokyo. Although the two sides signed the Joint-Declaration, Jiang had, in fact, come to Tokyo demanding a written apology for Japan’s wartime past. By this time, the majority of political leaders and general public had come to feel that their country had apologized enough for its historical wrongdoings. By some accounts, there had been 10 public apologies by high-level Japanese officials regarding its wartime past in China. Japanese political analysts began expressing resentment about the way a rising China played on war-guilt to extract concessions from its rich neighbor. Three years later, Japan would elect one of its most controversial – and popular – prime ministers, who would regularly infuriate the Chinese.

9.1 Koizumi and the Shrine

During Juichiro Koizumi’s tenure from 2001 to 2006, top-level government visits between the two countries were suspended after Koizumi stubbornly insisted on making annual visits to Yasukuni shrine. Koizumi’s shrine visits held little vocal opposition in Japan, as postwar generations lacked the historical memories, particularly since Chinese troops never set foot on Japanese soil to give them any reason to hate the Chinese other than for their constant criticism. Moreover, Koizumi provided more leadership and charisma than any previous prime minister, boosting Japan’s overall confidence in facing China. Nowadays, more Japanese leaders are openly opposing China by supporting Taiwan, paying tribute at the Yasukuni Shrine, and calling for sterner approaches toward
China, including further cuts in official development assistance (ODA). Whereas Japan had obligingly absorbed criticisms from China in the past, Koizumi’s leadership galvanized confidence in Japan to retort back or even express outright anti-Chinese sentiments.

Koizumui’s era ignited a wave of provocative outbursts between the rivals. In 2001, angry mobs of Chinese attacked the Japanese consulate in Shenyang over Koizumi’s visits, vandalizing and destroying property. In early 2000, a widely publicized assembly by Japanese right-wingers convened to refute the occurrence of the Nanjing Massacre not only provoked official protests from China but also led to attacks on Japanese government websites, allegedly by Chinese computer hackers. In Japan, comic books with extreme caricatures of the Chinese became widely circulated. *Introduction to China*, for example, portrayed underlying Japanese sentiments of the Chinese. The comic book, which has sold more than 180,000 copies in Japan, portrays the Chinese as depraved people obsessed with cannibalism and prostitution.94 Another author, Bunyu Ko, a fiercely pro-Japanese man originally from Taiwan, has written more than 50 derogatory books on China, with sales of his books surging over one million copies in recent years.95 In 2005, anti-Japan protests erupted in over 40 Chinese cities over Japan’s approval of “chauvinistic” history textbooks, as well as their bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council. It was the first such protest against any foreign country in China since 1999, when people demonstrated against the United States.96

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95 Ibid.
96 Zhu 14.
group of around 100 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers again denounced the Nanjing Massacre as a fabrication, arguing that there was no evidence to prove the allegations of mass killings by Japanese soldiers. They accused Beijing of using the alleged incident as a “political advertisement.”

Every positive step between the countries seemed quickly undermined by negative ones, sometimes almost deliberately. When Koizumi expressed deep remorse to China’s President Hu Jintao for Japan’s historical war aggression, Hu accepted. But all goodwill dissipated once Koizumi declared that he would continue visiting the Yasukuni Shrine that year. In another case, Chinese defense minister Cao Gangchuan’s visit to Japan in August 2007 marked the first such military exchange between the countries in nearly a decade, nearly leading to a “red phone” hotline. Subsequently, China’s foreign ministry informed the United Nations that it would resume reporting of arms exports and imports after a decade-long break, even giving a breakdown of its military budget. This progress, however, was undermined when Japan’s navy joined the United States, India and Australia in war games, part of a major security initiative under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

9.2 Opinion Polls

In 2007, the BBC World Service Poll surveyed 28,000 people across 27 countries to rate the European Union and 12 countries – Britain, Canada, China, France, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, North Korea, Russia, U.S.A., Venezuela – on whether each has a mainly

98 Gurtov, “Reconciling Japan and China.”
positive or mainly negative influence in the world. In sharing the top position with Canada, Japan has now topped the poll for the second consecutive year. Of the countries polled, China and South Korea were the only countries that had negative overall perceptions of Japan. Overall, China overwhelmingly had the worst perception of Japan out of any country: 18% mainly positive and 63% mainly negative. Other Asian countries that suffered from Japan’s wartime atrocities all had noticeably more positive perceptions of Japan. In the same survey China was surveyed as “mildly positive” with 16 polled countries having mainly positive views of its influence, 9 having mainly negative views and one divided. On average China received a positive rating of 42% and a negative rating of 32%. Positive views of China were highest in Africa and the Middle East with the most negative views in Europe and the U.S. A useful way to understand these poll numbers is through the lens of fraternal relative deprivation.

Many Chinese people take pride in the fact that their country has been growing increasingly stronger, and closing the economic gap with Japan has changed the underlying psychological current of Sino-Japanese relations. This is, of course, a broad generalization, especially since the socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor is tremendous in China. However, fraternal relative deprivation becomes particularly useful in light of China’s nearing economic parity with Japan for the first time in decades. A

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99 The Japanese were not asked about their perceptions of the Chinese.
Goldman Sachs projects that China’s GDP, which has grown by more than 8 percent a year since the late 1970s, will overtake Japan in 2016 and the United States by 2041.\textsuperscript{101} With this improvement in its economic performance and standards of living, China now has Japan within its range of social comparison, making the identity-based conflicts between the Chinese and Japanese more intense, particularly since this marks the first time in East Asian history that both have neared parity, where historically one or the other has dominated.

Subsequently, there have been some signs of Japan trying to distance itself from China. Perhaps most notably, Japan is deliberately emphasizing its democratic values through forging partnerships with other democratic countries to distinguish itself from communist China. For example, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met in 2006 with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India to establish a strategic and global partnership between their two countries, stressing their shared values of democracy.\textsuperscript{102} Since people tend to make social comparisons with those perceived to be similar, also known as the “perceived similarity” factor, Japan will likely continue to stress the differences between the countries as China continues to grow economically and politically.\textsuperscript{103}

10. Some Scenarios Moving Forward

The three most likely scenarios regarding the future of Sino-Japanese relations include: maintain the status quo, engage in armed conflict, and take affirmative steps toward healing and reconciliation. The first scenario seems most likely, as it requires no

\textsuperscript{102} MOFA 2007.
\textsuperscript{103} Taylor and Moghaddam, \textit{Theories of Intergroup Relations}. 
additional effort or risk than presently assumed by either side. This way, political leaders on both sides can maintain chauvinistic political rhetoric to satisfy their deeply nationalistic voter bases. Within this scenario exist sub-scenarios where China and Japan can test the healing powers of time or assume that they can coexist without ever reconciling. However, this paper has shown that centuries of animosities do not simply fade away with time and require proper redress and reconciliation. The provocative outbursts of the mid-2000s may be symptoms of greater conflicts to come.

A second scenario assumes the worst: an armed conflict between the military giants. As fraternal relative deprivation informs, China’s rising pace to reach economic parity with Japan has the potential to instigate a violent conflict ignited by claims to oil and gas reserves in the East China Sea by the energy hungry nations. Both sides are equipped with massive military firepower, as well as with political alliances, to cause concern. This is possibly an alarmist view, but it remains a possibility nonetheless.

Finally, the third scenario is that of apology, healing and reconciliation. This scenario may be the most difficult in terms of persuading those who have “colluded” to hate the other nation. Furthermore, deeply engrained identity conflicts, Burton suggests, are some of the most difficult conflicts to resolve. Such intractable conflict requires multi-track diplomacy for the short- and long-term, as well as formally institutionalized bilateral and regional schemes. Japan would need to issue a formal written and spoken apology – one approved by the majority of Chinese – and China would need to be willing to accept such an apology. Japan would also need to understand China’s right to remember the past, just as China would need to acknowledge Japan’s right to shape its
ever-evolving national identity without being forever hounded about one phase in their long history.

10.1 Apologies

Studies of official state apologies and their role in deconstructing enemy images warrant continued attention. In particular, the contrast of such public apologies with varying levels of success would be beneficial. For example, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s apology to the Australian Aborigines and the “Stolen Generations”\textsuperscript{104} in February 2008 provides an example of an effective public apology, even though its long-term effects have yet to be seen. Rudd apologized to the Australian Aborigines, who were forcibly removed from their homes and families by the government between 1869 and 1969. The apology, broadcasted live around the country, was met with cheers and jubilation among all parts and people of Australia\textsuperscript{105} – a stark contrast from the Japanese apologies that have been met with suspicion and even hostility in China.

Of course, not all segments of Australian society were pleased. Some Members of Parliament and some aborigines, primarily because it was not accompanied with compensation, expressed dissatisfaction too. Still, the apology was largely described as a courageous and seminal moment in the nation’s history after a decade of denial by the

\textsuperscript{104} The Stolen Generations is a term used to describe children of Australian Aboriginal descent who were separated from their families by the government between 1869 and 1969, or even into the 1970s in some places.

government of John Howard. Public apologies clearly possess the power to illicit strong emotions and alter the course of history if it is planned well and is inclusive of the key parties. Official public apologies, like any other major political statements, however, are carefully orchestrated events that require buy-in from key political elites and members of civil society.

For China and Japan, there are lessons to be learned from examples like the Australian case, even though it was a domestic issue rather than a bilateral one. Japan, unlike postwar Germany, continues to be reprimanded by the international community, led by China and the Koreas, as well as Australia, the United States, and other countries in Asia and Europe, for its failure to properly own up to its past wrongdoings. Even though high-level Japanese officials have repeatedly expressed remorse for its past militarism, China sees these apologies as empty statements followed up by contradictory behavior. Hence, a highly publicized, organized and heartfelt apology from Japan – and China’s acceptance of such a gesture – is necessary, albeit not sufficient, in turning around this conflict.

10.2 Deconstructing Enemy Images

Scholars have proposed several ways to deconstruct enemy images in addition to offering public apologies. One way to change the propensity of enemy images is to introduce a large amount of contradictory information that cannot be accounted for in a

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short amount of time.\textsuperscript{107} For example, President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988-1989 made a series of unilateral gestures to the United States, seeking to break their long-held standoff. In particular, Gorbachev engaged in a unilateral disarmament and arms control strategy called GRIT, or graduated reciprocation in tension reduction, stating that his intention was to stop the nuclear arms race and inviting the United States to reciprocate.\textsuperscript{108} These unilateral moves, along with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, finally convinced President George Bush to change his image of Gorbachev and the Soviet Union after years of political gridlock.\textsuperscript{109}

Enemy images can also change incrementally over time, albeit a more complicated process. As people consider information that runs counter to their previous notions of the enemy, they begin to accept conditions under which the images do not apply. When closed countries become more open or as leaders receive new information about their rival, their image of the enemy can change incrementally. For political leaders to accept ideas that are inconsistent with embedded images, however, requires meaningful social interactions where cognitive constructs can be relearned.\textsuperscript{110}

However, attempting to change enemy images incrementally over time becomes more complex and difficult because of what Gordon Allport called the “functional autonomy of motives,” the idea that motives are distinct from drive.\textsuperscript{111} In short, Allport’s

\textsuperscript{107} Stein, “Image, Identity and Conflict Resolution.”
\textsuperscript{108} Oliver Thranert, “Gorbachev and Arms Control: Was it really GRIT?” \textit{Contemporary Security Policy} 15(3) (1994), 251-254.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
theory suggests that a person may engage in steady behavior on the surface but the motives underneath those actions may evolve over time. In the case of China and Japan, the Chinese initially created enemy images of the Japanese in response to their brutality, but sustaining those images of the Japanese may have had differing motives, such as shoring up domestic legitimacy. Hence, as was the case with China and Japan, time allows for domestic and international factors to further rigidify deep animosities over longer stretches of time.

Another way of assuaging enemy images is through collaboration on a superordinate goal, or something that can only be achieved with the cooperation of the other involved party.¹¹² In 1954, Muzafer Sherif conducted a famous study involving two rival groups of boys at a camp to illustrate this idea. Sherif successfully brought these two groups together by using superordinate goals, such as solving the problems of a breakdown of the water supply and food delivery truck. The cumulative effect of this process was diminished hostile feelings and friendship, with both groups electing to ride home together on the same bus on the last day of camp.¹¹³ For China and Japan, a superordinate goal might include issues related to the environment, particularly since they depend on each other to maintain clean air and waterways. Moreover, such superordinate goals must be pursued through official diplomacy, as well as by civil society.

As Celia McKeon attests, “Civil society actors can make significant contributions to peace processes. Their capacities may help to create the conditions for talks, build

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¹¹² Taylor and Moghaddam, *Theories of Intergroup Relations*.
¹¹³ Ibid.
confidence between the parties, [and] shape the conduct and content of negotiations...”

A prime example is the collaborative history textbook written by a committee of 54 scholars from China, Japan and South Korea. In 2002, the committee held 11 meetings in Nanjing to agree upon a joint history of modern East Asia. The common history textbook, *History to Open the Future*, which is available in Chinese, Japanese and Korean, devotes more than 60 of 249 pages to discuss Japan’s wartime aggression, including the controversial topics of Nanking, Korean fight for independence, comfort women and Unit 731. The committee now promotes the book, which has been endorsed by scholars of all three countries, to be used throughout middle schools in East Asia.

The collaborative history textbook project is a prime example of how civil society efforts to build peace complement the efforts of official diplomacy. Civil society activities bring people together by sharing common activities, ranging from sports, board games and cultural hobbies. Civil societies in China and Japan are more important than ever as the conflict moves in the direction of affluence rather than of crisis, which requires a greater buy-in from members of the population at large.

11. Conclusion

China and Japan remain sworn enemies despite numerous attempts at political reconciliation and increasing levels of economic interdependence. While the political rhetoric ties the feud almost exclusively to the Second World War, a longer historical

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view of Sino-Japanese relations reveals that enmification actually began during Japan’s Meiji Restoration and continues to evolve the relationship today.

In sum, I used the four stages of enmification – threat, distortion, rigidification and collusion – as a framework to explain how social psychological forces have disrupted reconciliation efforts between China and Japan. Using that framework, I described the evolution of China and Japan’s identity-based conflict, where abhorring the other side has become integral to the collective identities of both nations. I also explained the difference between social movements of crisis and of affluence to show how domestic and international politics have shaped this historical grudge differently for China and Japan. Furthermore, I explored the sources of China and Japan’s animosity separately to understand why their outlooks of a shared animosity have differed so greatly.

From this framework, I conclude that the governments of China and Japan must play a vital facilitative role in reconciliation efforts, but healing between the neighboring nations must go deeper and take place at the civil society level. In fact, I extrapolate that reconciliation efforts would be more durable if they targeted the civil society level more so than the governments. Especially during movements of affluence, I argue that time and resources are better spent on healing the wounds between civil societies since they are the source of domestic legitimacy that is so vital to the process of political reconciliation. For this to occur, the domestic environment in Japan must overcome support its political leaders who advocate atonement; and likewise in China, the domestic climate must advocate for reconciliation.
As an analytic tool, enmification provides a useful framework to examine deep
and emotional protracted conflicts. This case study provides an early step toward a more
general model, which would then have to be tested against other cases of former war
adversaries. Historical enemies such as Japan and South Korea could be compared with
countries that have experienced de-enmification like France and Germany or Japan and
the United States to narrow in on the issue of why certain enemy images change – or
resist change – over time. The study of enemies warrants further attention as it adds an
invaluable socio-psychological dimension to the practice and scholarship of conflict
resolution.
## Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 29, 1972</td>
<td>Japan’s high-level government apology or expression of regret to China</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 24, 1982</td>
<td>Joint Communique of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>August 26, 1982</td>
<td>Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko, press conference during the textbook incident of 1982</td>
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<td>October 27, 1992</td>
<td>Chief Cabinet Secretary Kiichi Miyazawa following the textbook incident of 1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 11, 1993</td>
<td>Heisei Emperor (Akihito)</td>
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<td>June 9, 1995</td>
<td>Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa</td>
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<td>August 15, 1995</td>
<td>Diet of Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 15, 1995</td>
<td>Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, 50th anniversary of the end of World War II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26, 1998</td>
<td>Japan-China Joint Declaration on Building a Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation for Peace and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 3, 2001</td>
<td>Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 8, 2001</td>
<td>Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 15, 2003</td>
<td>Prime Minister Juichiro Koizumi</td>
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