

# JAPAN PERSPECTIVES

No. 6

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# JAPAN PERSPECTIVES

*Japan Perspectives* is an English-language journal published by the Tokyo Foundation containing articles from the Foundation's website. In addition to translations of the public policy research recommendations made by the Foundation, *Japan Perspectives* offers timely insights into and analyses of Japanese politics, economy, society, and culture written specifically for overseas readers.

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Production Managers: Asako Uemura (Public Communications)  
Satoko Yanoma (Public Communications)

The Nippon Foundation Bldg, 3rd Floor, 1-2-2 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052, Japan  
Tel: +81-3-6229-5504 (Public Communications) Fax: +81-3-6229-5508  
E-mail: [info@tkfd.or.jp](mailto:info@tkfd.or.jp) URL: [www.tokyofoundation.org/en](http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en)

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No. 6, August 2013

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August 21, 2013

## Japan's Endangered Opposition

### *Ruling Coalition Scores Upper House Election Landslide*

*Katsuyuki Yakushiji*

*In the wake of July's electoral blowout, the party that monopolized Japanese government from 1955 to 2009 is firmly back in the saddle. And the opposition may be too fractured and demoralized now to play any meaningful role in the legislative process. Katsuyuki Yakushiji comments on the upper house election and the opposition's self-destruction.*

Japanese voters handed an overwhelming victory to the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan's July 21 House of Councillors election. The landslide has given Prime Minister Shintaro Abe's ruling party control over both houses of the Diet (the LDP—New Komeito coalition already held a majority of seats in the House of Representatives), ending six years of legislative gridlock in the Diet. Having thus laid the foundation for a stable government, Abe can now turn his full attention to reviving Japan's economy and dealing with its 1,000 trillion yen public debt.

#### **A Lopsided Victory**

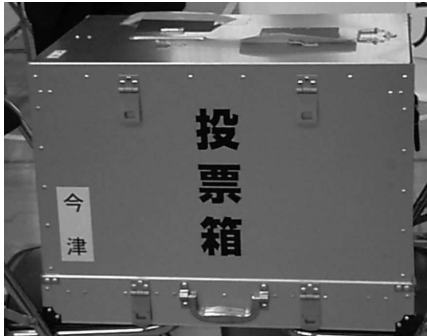
For the opposition camp, the July election was a catastrophe; the media has reveled in the sordid spectacle of finger pointing and infighting among the battered parties, and the situation hardly bodes well for the future of Japanese democracy. Without a responsible opposition rigorously checking and, where necessary, demanding changes in government policy, Japan could fall victim to the evils of one-party rule. As things stand now, however, the opposition seems too torn by internal bickering to engage the ruling party seriously.

Half of the 242 upper house seats were up for election on July 21. Of those

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*Katsuyuki Yakushiji* Senior Associate, Tokyo Foundation; Professor, Toyo University. Former editor of the Political News Department and editorial writer, Asahi Shimbun, and former chief editor, Ronza magazine.

121 seats, 65 went to the LDP and 11 to its junior coalition partner, the New Komeito, for a solid coalition total of 76. Most important, the ruling bloc now controls 135 seats in the upper house, a stable majority.



In contrast, the Democratic Party of Japan, which held the reins of government from September 2009 to December 2012, won just 17 of the 121 seats up for grabs. As a consequence, its upper house strength plummeted from 86 seats before the election—the largest bloc in the chamber—to 59, or about half the number controlled by the LDP. The Japan Restoration Party, Your Party, and the Japanese Communist Party

each won 8 seats, and the Social Democratic Party secured just 1. Neither the People's Life Party (headed by former DPJ leader Ichiro Ozawa), the Green Wind Party, nor any of the other new parties organized by sitting Diet members in the past year or so came away with a single upper house seat.

The upshot is that the balance of power in the Diet has suddenly become lopsided, with the huge LDP and its sidekick, the Komeito, on one side and a highly fragmented and fragile opposition on the other.

### The Opposition's Disarray

In the wake of their disastrous performance, the opposition parties need to demonstrate their worth to voters through constructive involvement in Diet affairs while revamping their organizations and reviewing their policies in preparation for the next national election. But instead of addressing these challenges, they have indulged in the blame game and descended into internecine warfare, alienating voters even further.

Epitomizing this implosion is the DPJ, the party in power until last December's general election. After the upper house election, DPJ President Banri Kaieda and Secretary General Goshi Hosono, who was in charge of election strategy, came under mounting pressure to resign to take responsibility for the party's crushing defeat. Kaieda remained the party leader, though, while Hosono resigned as secretary general, being replaced by Akihiro Ohata, a close ally of Kaieda. Although Kaieda's continued control of the DPJ rankles with many in the party, no one is volunteering to take his place at the helm of this foundering ship.

Nor is that the worst of it. Shortly after the election, Kaieda—apparently stunned by the magnitude of his party’s defeat—demanded drastic disciplinary action against two of the party’s patriarchs, former Prime Minister Naoto Kan and former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, complaining that their recent actions had damaged the party. Kaieda initially called for the expulsion of Kan, who had openly backed a candidate that the party decided at the last minute—not to endorse. He also sought to have the name of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama (who had already resigned) expunged from the party’s rolls over the latter’s controversial statements regarding the Senkaku Islands. In the end, the party issued a letter of protest against Hatoyama and suspended Kan for three weeks. Still, the fact that the DPJ would even consider such radical measures against two of its most prominent members—both former prime ministers and pivotal figures in the party’s formation—testifies to its internal disintegration.

Adding to the aura of doom surrounding the party was the eerie silence from such DPJ stalwarts as former Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, who presided over the DPJ’s last administration, former Deputy Prime Minister Katsuya Okada, former Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara, and former Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Yukio Edano. Their refusal to speak up or take action as the chaos deepened intensified the impression of the DPJ as an organization bereft of the energy or will to move forward.

A similar pattern of dysfunction has emerged among the newer opposition parties. The Japan Restoration Party had picked up more than 50 seats in its first general election last December thanks to the popularity of its charismatic co-leader, Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto. But support for the party plummeted after Hashimoto’s embarrassing remarks concerning the Imperial Army’s use of “comfort women” and the US military in Okinawa. Since the JRP’s dismal showing in the July election, a serious schism has emerged within the party, as Diet members loyal to Hashimoto (mainly from the Osaka area) clash with followers of the other co-leader, former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara. Hashimoto, who had expressed a willingness to resign his party post and devote himself to Osaka affairs full time, ended up staying on in an effort to hold the JRP together, but tensions remain high, and many believe the party could fracture at any time.

Your Party, a small LDP splinter group, picked up a few additional seats in the upper house, but its performance fell short of expectations after steady gains in the three previous national elections. Here, too, disappointment has led to disunity, and a serious disagreement erupted between President Yoshiomi Watanabe and Secretary General Kenji Eda.

Social Democratic Party President Mizuho Fukushima bowed out in the wake of the SDP's disastrous loss, but a change in leadership here signifies little, given the SDP's continuous downward trajectory over the past seven years.

#### Shallow Roots

The fragile unity of Japan's opposition parties should not come as a great surprise, given the shallowness of their roots. Of all the nation's political parties, the only one with a history extending back before World War II is the Japanese Communist Party. The next oldest is the LDP, formed in 1955, followed by the Komeito, founded in 1964. The DPJ was established less than 20 years ago, in 1996, the same year that the Social Democratic Party was formed by former members of the Japan Socialist Party (formed in 1955). The remaining opposition parties date from the last decade or so, and most were established by disaffected members of larger parties.

None of these newer parties really represents a coherent set of policies or a distinct political base. Almost all are the result of strategic alliances by politicians seeking to capitalize on the popularity of a party leader or a hot-button policy issue (such as taxes or nuclear power) in order to gain votes or secure a position of power. When politicians view the party as a vehicle to further their own political ambitions, rather than a means of achieving certain policy goals, we can hardly expect them to display solidarity and loyalty in the face of defeat.

Such parties have proliferated in recent years as a result of the proportional representation system. Tiny upstart parties have virtually no chance of electoral success when voters are forced to choose among candidates for electoral districts with one, two, or even three seats. But under the electoral system adopted in the mid 1990s, a portion of the seats in both houses are allocated to large multiseat constituencies (one nationwide constituency in the upper house, 11 regional blocs in the lower house), in which voters cast their ballots for the party of their choice, and the seats are divided among the parties in accordance with the ratio of the vote they receive.

Theoretically, this system affords a fighting chance for candidates from even the smallest party, providing it has a sufficiently recognizable name or popular leader. This has encouraged politicians to form or join one new party after another in a bid to change their political fortunes. The trend peaked late last year, when lower house politicians rushed to ally themselves with high-profile leaders or popular causes before the December general election in hopes of saving their own political fortunes. A dozen parties vied in that race.

Ironically, the trend has proved self-defeating. The proliferation of parties



has split the vote in the small and medium-sized electoral districts, until only a huge organization like the LDP has a decent chance of winning a seat. Of the parties formed in the past 20 years, only the DPJ managed to grow into a significant force, and it did so by securing the support of Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation), Japan's largest labor organization. But after three years of broken government, no amount of organizational support could save the DPJ from the voters' wrath.

In the recent House of Councillors election, Japanese voters passed a harsh verdict not only against the DPJ but also against the political irresponsibility embodied in "parties of the month" and politicians who change their allegiance at the drop of a hat. At the same time, they expressed their desire for stable government by casting their ballots for the LDP. In doing so, they ensured the dominance of one strong party over a host of weak ones.

Under these conditions, the opposition forces will continue to lose popular support. Indeed, in an opinion poll conducted by the Mainichi Shimbun about a week after the upper house election, support for the LDP stood at 35%, as compared with 5% for the DPJ, 7% for the JRP, 5% for Komeito, and 4% for Your Party. In the absence of any viable strategy for expanding their bases, the opposition parties have turned their attention, all too predictably, to another round of spin-offs and mergers. By the time the next national election rolls around (in about three years, barring extraordinary circumstances) the entire opposition lineup is likely to have changed—except, perhaps, for that lone bastion of constancy and organizational strength, the Japanese Communist Party.

August 19, 2013

## Abe Forgoes Yasukuni Visit

### *The Administration's Post-Election Policy Directions*

*Tsuneo Watanabe*

*Despite the LDP's strong showing in the July 2013 upper house election, Prime Minister Abe would be wise to focus on economic policy. Any moves to forcefully advance his conservative agenda, notes Senior Fellow Tsuneo Watanabe, would wind up wasting his political capital, which is not as solid as it appears.*

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe chose not to pay his respects at Yasukuni Shrine on August 15, the sixty-eighth anniversary of Japan's surrender to Allied forces to end World War II in 1945. The decision suggests that the prime minister understands the practical and strategic dimensions of both domestic and international politics.

In the July 2013 House of Councillors election, Abe's Liberal Democratic Party and coalition partner New Komeito won a solid majority in the upper house of the National Diet. The victory appeared to give Abe a free hand to advance his personal political agenda for at least three years—until the next upper house election in summer 2016—on the strength of a majority in both houses of the Diet.

Ending the opposition's control of the upper house with the recent election victory has given Abe far greater political capital than during his previous, troubled tenure as prime minister seven years ago. On September 26, 2006, Abe launched his first administration with strong popular support. He wound up resigning less than a year later, on September 12, though, due to ailing health shortly after his party lost a majority in the July 2007 upper house election.

The LDP lost the 2007 contest due to public criticism over lost pension records and personal scandals involving seven cabinet members. By learning from this bitter experience, Abe has cautiously focused his administration's energies

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*Tsuneo Watanabe*      *Senior Fellow and Director of Foreign and Security Policy Research, Tokyo Foundation.*

on winning a majority in the upper house. Abe has avoided visiting the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, which enshrines Class A war criminals, and he has denied any intentions of revising the 1995 war apology by then Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama. Instead, he has given top priority to pushing ahead with his “Abenomics” program of economic growth.

This choice has paid off in the form of strong public support. Some wondered whether Abe would now shift course and pursue his own conservative agenda after securing a majority in both houses. China and South Korea have been watching carefully to see whether Abe would visit Yasukuni Shrine, particularly on the symbolic date of August 15.

### Playing It Safe



*(capl@washjeff.edu)*

Abe has wisely chosen to play things safe because the results of the LDP victory in July, if we look closely at the results, were a not blank check for the prime minister’s policies. First of all, the LDP did not secure a two-thirds majority in the upper house, something the party holds in the lower house. This means that the LDP would be unable to amend the Constitution—including the war-

renouncing Article 9—on its own. Any constitutional amendment requires the endorsement of a two-thirds majority in both houses and a majority in a national referendum.

The LDP’s coalition partner, the New Komeito, is a critical player. It is cautious about amending Article 9, since it is supported by the large Buddhist organization, Soka Gakkai, which has a liberal and pacifist policy stance. Soka Gakkai founder Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was arrested and died in jail during the war in 1944, and the organization has consistently taken a pacifist position, being a staunch defender of Article 9. There is bound to be considerable resistance among Komeito members to joining Abe’s attempt to amend Article 9.

The Komeito has also enjoyed a very close relationship with China for more than four decades. It was the Komeito that helped pave the way for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the People’s Republic of China in 1972. While China’s new leader, Xi Jinping, has avoided high-level

talks with Japanese government leaders since the heightening of tensions over the Senkaku territorial issue, the one exception has been current Komeito leader Natsuo Yamaguchi. Xi welcomed Yamaguchi in Beijing for a friendly meeting in January 2013.

There are a considerable number of liberal and moderate Diet members within the LDP as well who are skeptical of Abe's desires to amend the Constitution and who wish to reconcile ties with China and South Korea. In a roundtable discussion reported in the August 2013 edition of the influential monthly journal *Chuokoron*, two senior LDP politicians—Yohei Kono, the former speaker of the House of Representatives famous for his Kono Statement expressing remorse for South Korean comfort women, and current Speaker Bunmei Ibuki—along with former Socialist Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, who apologized for Japan's war aggressions, noted that the Abe administration's conservative agenda lacks a global strategic perspective.

Prior to the upper house election, there was speculation that Abe was looking for partners besides the Komeito to achieve a constitutional amendment, notably the conservative Japan Restoration Party, led by former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara and the young and charismatic Osaka mayor, Toru Hashimoto. Due to Hashimoto's controversial remarks justifying the wartime use of comfort women, though, popular support for the JRP plummeted, and the party failed to win enough seats to allow Abe to consider the JRP as an alternative partner to the Komeito.

### **The Illusion of Strong Public Support**

Although the LDP scored solid victories in the lower house election of December 2012 and the July 2013 upper house vote, public support for the LDP is not nearly as high as that the party enjoyed during the Jun'ichiro Koizumi years. For example, the LDP received only 34.68% of the votes cast in the proportional representation constituency in the latest contest, while the three major opposition parties combined received 34.27%: the Democratic Party of Japan got 13.40%, the JRP received 11.94%, and Your Party claimed 8.93%. As the result, the Komeito, which received 14.22%, still holds the casting vote. Voter turnout was also quite low in the two recent elections, suggesting that if unaffiliated voters, many of whom stayed away from the polls, had an incentive to vote against the LDP, the party's majority could easily have been overturned.

The Komeito has a far greater influence over the LDP than the numbers suggest. Soka Gakkai serves as a formidable election machine for the Komeito.

As local LDP chapters have weakened over the past decade, the LDP has come to depend more and more on Soka Gakkai's support during election time.

Abe's political capital is quite vulnerable, resting primarily on public support. According to a poll conducted by Kyodo News in July, the approval rate for the administration was 56.2%. This is admittedly quite high, but it represents a drop from 68.0% in June and 72.0% in April. The disapproval rate, meanwhile, was 31.7%, the biggest reason cited for disapproval being that Abe's economic policy was unlikely to produce positive results.

This suggests considerable skepticism over Abenomics, despite the fact Abe's economic policy is also the source of his support. His endorsement of an aggressive monetary policy to end deflation and correct the yen's excessive appreciation has created high expectations for economic growth.

Abe and the LDP also enjoy strong support from Japan's business community. For example, the influential lobby group, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), is reportedly considering a resumption of large political donations to the LDP, which had been suspended during the years of DPJ rule. The Japanese business community hopes that Abe will concentrate on policies to promote economic growth, such as by lowering corporate taxes to offset the consumption tax hike slated for April 2014. Another Keidanren wish is for Abe to improve relations with China because of the enormous stakes involved.

Businesses also want Abe to restart nuclear plants to lower utility costs. Polls show, though, that 58.3% of the public are against the resumption of nuclear plants, while only 32.5% support it. This will be one of Abe's policy dilemmas in pushing for an economic recovery. This is all the more reason the business community is anxious that Abe not waste his limited political capital.

### **Worries in Washington**

Abe has claimed that he has restored ties with Japan's alliance partner, the United States. The fact of the matter is, however, that the drift in alliance management had been restored by the DPJ's Yoshihiko Noda administration. Although Washington welcomes Abe's respect for the alliance, it is also worried that Abe's conservative agenda could exacerbate political tensions with China over the Senkaku issue.

The United States seeks reconciliation between Japan and China in both security and economic terms. Even anti-China conservatives in the United States, for example, have begun expressing concern that Abe's conservative agenda may push another critical US ally, South Korea, to the Chinese side.

Generally speaking, US experts are wary of Japan's turn to the right. Abe's attempt to change the interpretation of the Constitution to enable Japan to exercise the right of collective defense is seen as an example of such a turn, but closer cooperation with US military operations in a contingency is actually an important agenda for US defense planners. A change in the constitutional interpretation has the potential of alienating the LDP's coalition partner, the Komeito. In order to avoid rankling the Komeito and South Korea, Abe will need to proceed with restraint. Any rash moves could also lead to losing the confidence of the Obama administration.

So despite the LDP's election victory in July, the political environment surrounding the Abe administration is not friendly to its conservative agenda. Abe will need to diligently amass additional political capital by focusing on economic growth and pursuing reconciliation with China and South Korea. Abe's decision not to visit Yasukuni Shrine on August 15 was a sign that he will continue to proceed with caution.

August 5, 2013

## Economy Was 'Key Factor' in Japan Poll

*Gabriel Dominguez*

*After six years of political deadlock, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition has won a majority in the upper house of the National Diet. In an interview with German broadcaster Deutsche Welle, Senior Fellow Sota Kato takes a look at the significance of the recent election.*

\* \* \*

**DW:** What was the decisive issue in this election?

**SOTA KATO:** The key factor was the economy. "Abenomics" is generally perceived as a success by Japanese voters. For example, according to the Asahi's exit poll taken on Sunday, July 21st, 69 percent of the voters evaluated Abenomics favorably and 47 percent of them voted for Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the proportional-representation constituencies.

**DW:** What other issues played an important role for voters?

**KATO:** The electoral system of the upper house and division among opposing parties. The landslide victory of LDP owes much to its dominance in one-seat constituencies.

While LDP won 29 out of 31 seats (93.5) of the one-seat constituencies, it only won 18 out of 48 seats (37.5 percent) of proportional-representation constituencies. The anti-LDP votes were split among the divided opposing parties and, as political science theory predicts, such a split proved to be fatal for the opposing parties in one-seat constituencies.

**DW:** Why is this election so significant for Japan?

**KATO:** First, it marks the end of *nejire kokkai* or the "twisted diet." Since the Japanese upper house holds substantial "veto power" over both legislative and budgetary processes of Japanese politics, the end of the "twisted diet" makes things much easier for the Abe administration to implement drastic policy plans. Second, Abe now doesn't have to face a national election for three years.

This also allows his administration to seek long-term policy solutions for the Japanese economy.

**DW:** Now that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's coalition has control of both chambers, what economic and structural reforms is he expected to push through?

**KATO:** On one hand, he might try to implement long-term structural plans such as social security and pension reforms. On the other hand, since Abe's term as the president of the LDP expires in two years, he might focus more on intra-party politics. If the latter prevails, vested interests filled in LDP might hinder the prime minister's attempts to pursue any meaningful structural reforms.

**DW:** How likely is it that Prime Minister Abe will now succeed in his plans to revise Japan's pacifist constitution?

**KATO:** I think Abe is wise enough to wait until his popularity from the public and his support base within LDP remain firm and stable. The key for realizing this is economics. So I think Abe will first keep on pouring his energy to improve economics through post-election Abenomics.

*The interview was conducted by Gabriel Dominguez. Reprinted with permission from the Deutsche Welle website.*



August 14, 2013

## Japan in the New Era of US-China Relations

*Bonji Ohara*

*In the wake of historic efforts to place the Sino-American relationship on a new and cooperative footing, Bonji Ohara examines the repercussions of stepped-up transpacific dialogue for Tokyo.*

**T**he June 7–8 summit between US President Barack Obama and China's President Xi Jinping was extraordinary in a number of ways. It was extraordinary for a Chinese head of state to visit the United States within three months of taking office. It was also extraordinary for an American president to accommodate his Chinese counterpart by traveling all the way to California and entertaining him at the historic



*US President Obama with Chinese President Xi on the grounds of the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands, June 8, 2013. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)*

Sunnylands presidential retreat, following the Chinese leader's tour of Latin America. Another extraordinary feature of the summit was its length: According to most reports, the two leaders spent about eight hours conversing intimately over the course of two days.

Japanese media coverage generally highlighted the two leaders' commitment to cooperate on cyber-security and the denuclearization of North Korea, but to my mind the summit's larger significance lies in the apparent determination of both leaders to begin forging "a new type of major-power relationship," in the words of Xi Jinping.

The talks testified to a commitment on both sides to transcend the power-balance politics of the Cold War and forge a relationship grounded in coopera-

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*Bonji Ohara     Research Fellow and Project Manager, Tokyo Foundation.*

tion—lingering differences notwithstanding. Obama assured Xi that it was “very much in the interest of the United States for China to continue its peaceful rise,”<sup>1</sup> while Xi repeated his statement that there was enough space in the “vast Pacific Ocean . . . to accommodate the development of the two great powers in the world, namely China and the United States.”<sup>2</sup>

In their statements to the press, both leaders called for a “new model” of relations between major powers.<sup>3</sup> Obama, though, has since cautiously avoided echoing Xi’s characterization of the US-China relationship by also using such phrases as “new type” and “new level,” indicating that Washington did not wish to ascribe specific meaning to the term “new model.” Be that as it may, the length of time the two leaders spent with one another testifies not only to the magnitude of the issues dividing the two governments but also to their sincere determination to overcome the distrust that has grown up as a result of those differences. How did this historic change in attitude come about?

### China’s Initiative

The reference to a “new model” of relations originates in a concept first introduced by Xi Jinping while he was still vice-president. Visiting the United States in February 2012, Xi gave a speech advocating “a new type of major-power relationship.” His call was reiterated by then President Hu Jintao the following May, during the fourth round of the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Beijing. In June that year, President Obama himself echoed the idea after his meeting with Hu on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Mexico, commenting that the two leaders had been able to “really create a new model for practical and constructive and comprehensive relations between our two countries.”

A year later, Obama and Xi met in California with the aim of sharing their visions on how to “forge a new model of cooperation between countries,” as Obama put it. Two decades after President Jiang Zemin sought to usher in a new era of bilateral relations, circumstances had finally convinced both governments of the need for action.

During talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry in Beijing on April 13

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/07/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-jinping-peoples-republic-china>

<sup>2</sup> [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-06/08/c\\_132440622.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-06/08/c_132440622.htm)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/08/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-jinping-peoples-republic-china>

this year, President Xi referred to a recent telephone conversation in which he and President Obama had agreed to seek a path for bilateral cooperation and a new model of major-power relations. This suggests that the Chinese government had reached out to Washington around this time, and that Washington had responded favorably.

In fact, although the Western media reported that the main purpose of Secretary of State Kerry's visit was to discuss North Korea's development of nuclear weapons, the website of China's Ministry of Defense stated that the aim was "to join with China in seeking a way to forge a new type of major-power relationship, and in addition to discuss such priority issues as the situation on the Korean Peninsula, territorial issues in the Asia-Pacific region, the political situation in Syria, the Iranian crisis, bilateral trade relations, and cybersecurity."<sup>4</sup>

In other words, by the official Chinese account, the purpose of the secretary of state's visit was to rebuild US-China relations, and this was the central focus of discussions between Kerry and President Xi, Premier Li Keqiang, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. All of this supports the notion that the June summit was the outcome of a Chinese initiative.

### Changing Circumstances

Referring to the June summit on July 10, at the opening session of the fifth US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, Vice-Premier Wang Yang cited a Chinese proverb that translates, "a cornered rabbit will kick out at an eagle." According to Wang, President Xi mentioned the proverb during talks with Obama to make the point that dire circumstances may force one to discover previously hidden resources. The implication is that the Chinese initiative to rebuild the bilateral relationship was driven by a sense of alarm over changing circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

What those circumstances were can be gathered from the content of the white paper on defense that the Chinese government released on April 16 this year, shortly after Kerry's visit to Beijing. Under the heading "New Situation, New Challenges, and New Mission," the report notes that "the US is adjusting its Asia-Pacific security strategy, and the regional landscape is undergoing pro-

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<sup>4</sup> [http://news.mod.gov.cn/headlines/2013-04/13/content\\_4442311.htm](http://news.mod.gov.cn/headlines/2013-04/13/content_4442311.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/07/211773.htm>

found changes.”<sup>6</sup> In the same context, the white paper notes that “some neighboring countries are complicating or exacerbating the situation in relation to issues of territorial sovereignty and maritime rights” —presumably as a result of the US shift—and it refers explicitly to Japan and the Senkaku Islands. The core message is that the Obama administration’s strategic “rebalancing” toward the Asia-Pacific region is bringing about worrisome changes in China’s security environment. It seems reasonable to conclude from this that security concerns were behind Beijing’s initiative to rebuild US-China relations.

But what impelled the United States to respond to China’s overtures at this time?

The Chinese Defense Ministry’s list of “additional” topics covered during Kerry’s visit offers some clues. Topping the list is “the situation on the Korean Peninsula” —that is, North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, a matter on which Washington has been seeking Beijing’s cooperation for some time.

Second on the list is “territorial issues in the Asia-Pacific region,” which include disputes with the potential to trigger a clash between US and Chinese forces in the East and South China Seas —something Washington is no less anxious to avoid than Beijing. Syria, Iran, trade relations, and cyber-security are other areas in which the United States is eager to secure China’s cooperation. In short, a confluence of international circumstances made the time ripe for a rapprochement between Washington and Beijing.

### Japan’s Role

Unfortunately, this period of US-China rapprochement also marked a downturn in relations between China and Japan. In fact, President Xi Jinping’s first clear articulation of a hard-line stance toward Japan coincided closely with Kerry’s visit to Beijing. Of course, the downward spiral in Japan-China ties began last year, after the Japanese government purchased three of the Senkaku Islands, triggering anti-Japanese rioting and demonstrations in China. But by early this year, Beijing appeared to be looking for a way to defuse tensions.

Meeting with New Komeito leader Natsuo Yamaguchi on January 25 in Beijing, Xi Jinping was reported as saying that he desired friendlier ties between China and Japan. He also said that his government would consider the possibility of high-level discussions and stressed that active measures were

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<sup>6</sup> [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-04/16/c\\_132312681.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-04/16/c_132312681.htm)

needed to create an atmosphere conducive to such dialogue.<sup>7</sup> Visits by former Prime Ministers Yukio Hatoyama and Tomiichi Murayama around the same time were reported with much fanfare in China. These developments indicated that the Chinese government was working to cultivate a climate of public opinion favorable to a bilateral summit.

On March 31, Li Xiaolin, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, visited Japan as an emissary of President Xi, presumably to gauge Prime Minister Shintaro Abe's interest in improving relations with Beijing.<sup>8</sup> It was around this time that the tenor of Xi Jinping's pronouncements on Japan began to change. According to one Chinese government source, the government decided that "China can do nothing more in terms of reaching out to Japan as long as Prime Minister Abe continues to behave as if he held all the cards."

It could be that China stepped up its overtures to the United States after reaching the conclusion that circumstances were not conducive to a Japan-China summit, and that a reconciliation with Japan was not in the offing. In the absence of any clear prospects for a thaw in relations with Tokyo, Beijing may have initiated a rapprochement with Washington to reduce the risk of a military clash.

The United States is just as anxious to avoid a confrontation with China. On April 21, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey visited China at the invitation of Fang Fenghui, chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army. He was treated with lavish hospitality, just as Kerry was, and conferred with President Xi as well as General Fang. While Japanese media reported that the discussions dealt with "regional security issues," a Chinese government source indicated that they dealt more specifically with "how to avoid a war between Japan, the United States, and China." Needless to say, the Senkaku Islands dispute would have been at the center of any such discussion. It would appear that the sharp deterioration in Japan-China relations has begun to cause genuine concern in Washington.

This past July, US Vice President Joe Biden stressed the impact of US-China relations on global affairs in his remarks at the opening session of the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, stating, "The dynamic that emerges between

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.asahi.com/politics/update/0125/TKY201301250081.html?ref=reca>

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, [http://big5.ifeng.com/gate/big5/news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/diaoyudaozhengduan/content-3/detail\\_2013\\_03/28/23606849\\_0.shtml?\\_from\\_ralated](http://big5.ifeng.com/gate/big5/news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/diaoyudaozhengduan/content-3/detail_2013_03/28/23606849_0.shtml?_from_ralated) and <http://news.wenweipo.com/2013/04/01/IN1304010031.htm>.

our nations will affect not just our peoples, but . . . have a significant impact on the entire world. . . . Our relationship is and will continue to be a mix of competition and cooperation. And competition can be good for both of us, and cooperation is essential.”<sup>9</sup> Many international issues contributed to the recent rapprochement between Washington and Beijing, and one of them was doubtless the deterioration in Japan-China ties.

### **China-Korea Summit**

On June 27, President Xi Jinping and South Korean President Park Geun-hye met for talks in Beijing. Their discussion touched on the issue of historical revisionism in Japan, and their joint statement, while avoiding explicit mention of Japan, contained implicit criticism.<sup>10</sup> South Korea has made previous attempts to strengthen ties with China, primarily for economic reasons, but until now Beijing has shown no great enthusiasm. No doubt the need to build friendships in East Asia has become more pressing for the Chinese since relations with Japan took a turn for the worse.

From this perspective, it seems fair to say that the worsening of Japan-China relations has helped drive China closer to both the United States and South Korea. But the impact does not stop there. In recent months, China has become a more potent presence than ever throughout the international community. As long as the unhealthy state of Japan-China relations persists, Japan must be prepared for the possibility of global political shifts that undermine our own long-term interests.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://editorials.voa.gov/content/biden-on-us-china-dialogue/1712598.html>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFS0504H\\_V00C13A7PP8000/](http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFS0504H_V00C13A7PP8000/)

June 20, 2013

## China's Xi Regime at Six Months

*Kazuyuki Suwa*

*China watchers have dissected President Xi Jinping's every pronouncement over the past six months, searching for an indication of the direction in which the new regime plans to take the country. Kazuyuki Suwa, an expert on Chinese politics, offers his own guarded forecast for China's domestic and foreign policy over the next few years, stressing the rigid constraints imposed by the country's political system.*

Last November, at the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the CPC Central Committee elected seven men to the Politburo Standing Committee, the nation's de facto governing organ: Xi Jinping (general secretary, chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission), Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan (first secretary of the Central Secretariat), Wang Qishan (secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection), and Zhang Gaoli.



*Xi Jinping, left, and Li Keqiang.*

A few months later, at their annual March meetings, the National People's Congress and National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) completed China's leader-

ship transition by designating Xi president of the People's Republic of China and chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission, Li Keqiang premier, Zhang Dejiang chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, Yu Zhengsheng chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, and Zhang Gaoli first-ranked vice premier.

Quite a few observers have concluded from this lineup that Jiang Zemin's Shanghai clique has triumphed over its rivals, the Youth League faction of Hu

Jintao and the taizidang, or “princelings,” grouped around Xi Jinping. This is an oversimplification that ignores long-term ramifications and the complexity of interpersonal relations in Chinese society.

### No Clear Winner

There is no denying that the disgrace of Ling Jihua, General Secretary Hu Jintao’s most trusted aide, cast a pall over Hu’s final days in office and dashed his hopes for a smooth and graceful exit.<sup>1</sup> But Hu has been able to put his successor, Xi Jinping, in debt by voluntarily and fully yielding the stage through his relinquishment of the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission and other leadership posts—and taking Jiang Zemin with him. With regard to the latter, Xinhua reported in January that Jiang Zemin had asked to be treated like other retired senior statesmen in respect to the order of precedence in the wake of the Eighteenth National Congress.<sup>2</sup> The most recent ranking (May 2, 2013) consequently places Jiang eighth, followed immediately by Hu.

If Hu truly cares to cling to power within the party, he will have a good chance ten years hence, when Xi leaves office. The CPC’s second-ranking official, Li Keqiang, is a Hu protege and, under current party age limits, will still be eligible to take the helm—albeit for one term only—when the Twentieth National Congress is convened in 2022.<sup>3</sup>

What of Xi Jinping’s own power base? Although closely associated with an informal group of elite politicians commonly known as the taizidang (or “Crown Prince Party,” referring to the sons of former major party figures), Xi is said to owe his current position to Jiang Zemin, who engineered his 2007 appointment to the Politburo Standing Committee using the process of “democratic recommendation” prior to the Seventeenth National CPC Congress. This catapulted Xi, then Shanghai party secretary, past Li Keqiang in party ranking

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<sup>1</sup> In March 2012, Ling’s 23-year-old son died in a car crash. Details of the crash were not revealed until months later, when it was reported that the young Ling had been drinking and carousing while driving his Ferrari at high speed. The incident set off a storm of public outrage over the luxurious lifestyle of the political elite, symbolized by the Ferrari, and the incident’s cover-up by government officials.

<sup>2</sup> Xinhuanet, January 23, 2013. [http://www.cq.xinhuanet.com/2013-01/23/c\\_114463725.htm](http://www.cq.xinhuanet.com/2013-01/23/c_114463725.htm)

<sup>3</sup> The maximum age for a general secretary candidate is apparently 67 years under current party rules. Li, who was born in July 1955, will be 67 in 2022.



and placed him next in line for the top spot. In this sense, Xi himself can be considered part of the Jiang faction.

Meanwhile, CPC Central Committee General Office Chief Li Zhanshu, widely regarded as Xi's closest ally, has a solid base within the Youth League. As for the other members of the Politburo Standing Committee, all except Li are too old to seek reelection at the next party congress five years hence. This means that all five are likely to fall into line with Xi over the next few years as they look forward to a peaceful retirement.

While the members of the Politburo Standing Committee may differ privately on policy and personnel issues, they can generally be expected to function as a team. In the unlikely event of a genuine schism threatening party unity, the top leadership can be expected to cope with the crisis by purging the sources of discord under the time-honored pretext of rooting out corrupt and subversive elements.

### **Emphasis on Continuity**

When Hu Jintao was appointed general secretary in 2002, a good number of Japanese observers, impressed by Hu's mild-mannered image, expressed high hopes for democratic reform and improved relations between Beijing and Tokyo. But those expectations came to naught. The political changes instituted under China's 30-year-old "reform and opening up" movement reflect a grim awareness of the dangers of concentrating too much power in a single individual. Under the current system, there will never be another Mao Zedong.

China remains a one-party dictatorship, to be sure. But we must recognize that three decades of reform and opening up have transformed the party itself. Those changes, embodied in Jiang Zemin's "three represents" doctrine, guarantee that each new regime will take on the flavor of its top leader only gradually and only within the limits of fundamental continuity. Even Deng Xiaoping himself adhered to this path. Since then, every new leader has begun by honoring the parting instructions of his predecessor—in this case, Hu Jintao's Political Report to the Eighteenth National CPC Congress. The CPC of the early twenty-first century is a predictable organ, operating in an extremely systematic manner.

The most important of the policies that Hu Jintao bequeathed to Xi Jinping are those pertaining to economic development. We can expect the new regime to focus its economic efforts on boosting domestic consumption and achieving the goals of the twelfth five-year plan and the targets revealed at the Eight-

eenth Congress (including an average annual growth rate of 7% between 2011 and 2015 and a doubling of GDP and per capita income in both the cities and the countryside between 2010 and 2020).

When it comes to political reform, the administration's task will be to bolster the existing one-party system (including the NPC and the CPPCC), not to emulate Western democracy. In today's China, so-called political reform actually focuses on administrative reforms aimed at maintaining and strengthening the party's control.

### **Xi's Unique Flavor?**

Yet while clearly cognizant of the need to adhere to established policy, Xi Jinping has already revealed some early indication of his own proclivities. The first was his coining of the "Chinese dream" concept, which—if we may judge by the enthusiasm of party organs and the state media—might ultimately take its place alongside such official doctrines as Jiang Zemin's "three represents" and Hu Jintao's "scientific development." Of course, in the absence of concrete measures to bring about equal opportunity and a more just society, the dream remains just that. Still, it suggests a determination to infuse greater mobility and vitality into China's increasingly stratified society.

Xi has also differentiated himself from his predecessors with the historical view, expressed in a speech early this year, that the period before reform and opening up should not be rejected completely but regarded as an integral part of Chinese history since the revolution, necessary to what came afterward.<sup>4</sup> This statement elicited sharp criticism from intellectuals in the progressive camp, who saw in it a reactionary attempt to legitimize the policies of Mao Zedong. Troubling as the statement may be on one level, one can appreciate the need for Xi, as the nation's leader, to acknowledge and address the sentiments of those who have begun looking back with nostalgia to the Mao era, when at least everyone was "equally poor."

The real question is which elements of reform Xi intends to preserve and which he intends to modify. Only time will tell, but for now I would be inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt and take his statement as an indication that he is struggling to appeal to as broad a political spectrum as pos-

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<sup>4</sup> Renmin Ribao, January 6, 2013, [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2013-01/06/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20130106\\_2-01.htm?div=-1](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2013-01/06/nw.D110000renmrb_20130106_2-01.htm?div=-1). See also China.org, [http://www.china.org.cn/china/2013-01/06/content\\_27596486.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/2013-01/06/content_27596486.htm)

sible in order to consolidate his power base in these early days of his administration.

### **Dim Prospects for Rapprochement**

Relations between Japan and China can only be understood properly in relation to Chinese foreign policy as a whole. The immediate source of the tension that has brought the bilateral relationship to its lowest point since the restoration of diplomatic ties in 1972 is the Japanese government's purchase of three of the disputed Senkaku Islands in September last year. But China's increasingly prickly dealings with Japan epitomize its entire approach to diplomacy of late.

Despite Beijing's lip service to "peaceful development," its foreign policy in recent years has been predicated on the pursuit of hard power and a serious persecution complex. If forced to articulate the worldview underlying this policy, the Chinese would probably say something like:

*In 2008, we successfully hosted the Beijing Olympics. We weathered the financial crisis that broke out that year thanks to a huge infusion of funds and saved the world economy. In 2010, the year we held the highly successful Shanghai Expo, we overtook Japan to become the world's second largest economy. Then everything changed. Washington began "rebalancing" toward Asia with a view to containing China. Other countries in the region took to repeatedly violating our territorial sovereignty, Japan in the East China Sea and Vietnam and the Philippines in the South China Sea. These threats leave us with no choice but to boost our defense, strengthen our partnership with other emerging economies, build our own multilateral frameworks (such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization), and expand our cooperation with developing countries in Africa and elsewhere.*

Such are the basic assumptions underlying the foreign policy that Xi Jinping inherited. Deng Xiaoping's policy of "lying low," conceived in the midst of China's international isolation following the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989, has ceased to play any meaningful role in Chinese diplomacy, now that China itself is a major power—except perhaps in relation to the United States.

We must keep in mind two major points when dealing with Beijing henceforth. The first is that China's "big stick" policy did not begin with the Xi Jinping regime. That being the case, singling out the new regime for its hard-line stance is not merely unproductive but potentially misleading.

A case in point is the incident early this year in which a Chinese naval ves-

sel locked its weapon-guiding radar on a Japanese destroyer. There is no question that the behavior of the Chinese vessel in this incident deserves the strongest censure. But the assumption that it was acting on orders from China's top leadership is misguided. The problem, rather, lies in the "anything goes" atmosphere surrounding provocations against Japan, an atmosphere that has encouraged rash decisions in the field. Having duly protested the incident, the Japanese government should now turn its attention to developing mechanisms for averting a military crisis.

The second point is that China's persecution complex cannot easily be removed by an outside force. If we assume that the patriotic education campaign launched in the mid-1990s is a key factor behind the recent upsurge of xenophobic nationalism, the curriculum's emphasis on Japan as a villain in Chinese history has made our country a natural target for such sentiment. Given these deep-seated attitudes toward Japan, we are scarcely in an ideal position to persuade China that its suspicions are unwarranted.

Two recent bright spots in this otherwise gloomy picture were China's decisions to resume talks between Japanese and Chinese senior defense officials and to take part in the Japan-China-South Korea Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting in Kitakyushu this past May (with China being represented by the vice-minister). That said, any substantive move toward rapprochement by the Chinese seems unlikely for now, given Chinese suspicions that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is just waiting for a victory in the July House of Councillors election to reveal his true, rightist colors. There are even intimations that China's Foreign Ministry is considering downgrading Japan's diplomatic status; in his review of Chinese diplomacy in 2012, outgoing Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi pointedly omitted Japan from his discussion of "Major Power Diplomacy."<sup>5</sup> Such is the state of relations between our two countries.

For an increasingly confident China, the Xi Jinping decade holds the promise of overtaking the United States as the world's biggest economy. Yet the domestic situation, which ultimately sets the tone for Beijing's foreign policy, is far less stable than it was at the time of the Tiananmen Square protests.

Amidst these circumstances, the administration of Xi Jinping must steer a safe course to solidify its power base—in spite of which, it has already shown some signs of flexibility on matters of policy. With all this taken into account, Tokyo can best serve Japan's national interests by approaching this stormy pe-

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<sup>5</sup> Carried (in Chinese) in the January 2013 edition of *Qiushi*, [http://www.qstheory.cn/zxdk/2013/201301/201212/t20121227\\_202430.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/zxdk/2013/201301/201212/t20121227_202430.htm)

## VIEWS ON CHINA

riod in the history of Japan-China relations with a firm belief in the possibility of rapprochement, some solid strategies for improving relations (such as the development cooperative multilateral frameworks) and an understanding that as a still fledgling major power, China must be treated with patience, understanding, and caution.

July 29, 2013

## Xi's Economic Agenda: The Stimulus Dilemma

*Osamu Tanaka*

*Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has warned against overreliance on government stimulus measures even as the economic recovery falters. Probing beneath the official GDP figures, Osamu Tanaka argues that the summer months will sorely test the new government's resolve.*

In this series of articles, I will examine the basic factors driving China's economic policies under President Xi Jinping, taking into account the nation's recent history and long-term challenges, as well as the latest economic data released by the government. In this first article, I assess the likelihood of a new round of stimulus measures in the light of current trends and past experience.

### Recent Economic Trends

Judging from the latest economic data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (see table), industrial output, consumption (retail sales), and investment were all basically stagnant during the first five months of this year. Meanwhile, export figures for May fell sharply, as the government cracked down on the practice of inflating export reports. By contrast, the value of home sales soared, supported by the relatively rapid growth in the money supply. Steps to rein in the real estate market, adopted at February's State Council executive meeting under outgoing Premier Wen Jiabao, seem to have backfired, triggering a run on the housing market.

As a whole, the Chinese economy is rebounding less quickly than the government had anticipated. Last fall the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences predicted 8.2% growth in gross domestic product for 2013, only to revise its forecast down to 8.0% in its spring report and more recently to 7.5%–8.0%. The International Monetary Fund has scaled back its growth forecast for China as

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*Osamu Tanaka*      *Research Fellow, Japan-China Organization for Business, Academia, and Government Partnership.*

### China's Major Economic Indicators, 2013

(% change from year earlier)

	Jan.–Mar.	April	May
Consumer prices	2.4	2.4	2.1
Industrial production	9.5	9.3	9.2
Retail sales	12.4	12.8	12.9
Fixed asset investment (urban)	20.9	20.6 (Jan.–April)	20.4 (Jan.–May)
Property development	20.2	21.1 (Jan.–April)	20.6 (Jan.–May)
Private companies	24.1	23.9 (Jan.–April)	23.8 (Jan.–May)
Exports	18.4	14.7	1.0
Money supply (M2)	15.7 (end of March)	16.1	15.8
Value of home sales	69.0	65.2 (Jan.–April)	56.8 (Jan.–May)

well; speaking in Beijing on May 29, First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton said the IMF expected GDP growth in the vicinity of 7.75%.

I have become more and more convinced of late that we need to start focusing on China's quarterly growth rate in relation to the previous quarter, as we do when gauging economic growth in Japan and the West. China's quarterly growth is currently calculated by comparing each quarter's GDP with output during same period the previous year, a method that paints a very different picture.

For example, during 2012, China's official quarterly growth figures, calculated year-on-year, were 8.1% (Jan. – Mar.), 7.6% (Apr. – June), 7.4% (July – Sept.), and 7.9% (Oct. – Dec.). These figures suggest declining growth in the first three periods and a rapid recovery in the fourth. But quarter-on-quarter growth for the same period was 1.6%, 1.9%, 2.1%, and 2.0%, indicating that the recovery was actually gaining moment until the fourth quarter, when it began to sputter.

In the first quarter of 2013, meanwhile, year-on-year growth was 7.7%. But growth over the previous quarter was 1.6%, which translates into an annualized growth rate of only 6.4%. Moreover, while the year-on-year figures suggest that economic growth slowed abruptly in the first months of 2013, the quarter-on-quarter numbers yield a much more natural curve. In my view, tracking quarter-on-quarter growth would be a more reliable way to gauge economic trends.

To be sure, quarter-on-quarter growth for the most recent period must be regarded as tentative; as the NBS acknowledges, the latest quarterly GDP figures are always preliminary and are routinely revised three months later. Still, the available data strongly suggests that China's economic recovery began to stall in the fourth quarter of 2012 and that the annualized rate of growth in the first quarter of this year was actually less than 7%. Such a rate of expansion would be more consistent with the year-on-year growth in electricity consumption—once cited by Premier Li Keqiang as a more reliable indicator than government GDP data—which fell to 5.5% in the January–February period and a mere 2.0% in March.

### Standing Firm?

In November 2008, in response to the deepening global recession, the Chinese government adopted a massive economic stimulus package involving 4 trillion yuan in government spending, along with structural tax cuts and aggressive steps to loosen credit. These measures spurred a renewed burst of growth, boosted employment, and greatly enhanced China's position in the world economy. But the stimulus also had negative side-effects, including rising inflation, a surge in housing prices, growing surpluses in production capacity, and burgeoning public debt at the local level. As a result, the Chinese economy today faces significant financial risks, and any substantial expansionary measures now could fully expose those risks.

At the April 17 meeting of the State Council Standing Committee, the government's top leaders assessed the nation's economic situation and announced that they would stay the course on economic policy. Just eight days later, on April 25, the CPC's seven top officials gathered for a special meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee (the nation's *de facto* top decision-making body), apparently for no other reason than to reaffirm this rejection of any major policy shift.



*(Suvcon photo)*

The second meeting stands out for several reasons. First, the Politburo Standing Committee does not routinely publicize the time or content of its meetings. Second, the Politburo had held a plenary meeting just six days earlier, on April 19, ap-



parently without touching on economic policy. (According to reports, the subject of the meeting was populist education within the party, and the subject of the Politburo seminar held later the same day was dealing with graft and corruption.) In this context, it seems clear that the Politburo Standing Committee felt obliged by subsequent events not only to give renewed attention to economic policy on April 25 but to publicize the meeting's content.

Those subsequent events were the April 20 Lushan earthquake in Ya'an, Sichuan, and the outbreak of H7N9 avian influenza around the same time. We know that the Politburo Standing Committee met on April 23 to discuss relief and rescue operations in Lushan county. The fact that it met again two days later suggests that China's leaders felt impelled to revisit economic policy in the light of the quake and the flu outbreak.

Such action is scarcely without precedent. In the first half of 2003, as the epidemic of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) spread through southern China, experts warned that the outbreak could have a serious impact on consumption and adversely affect the service sector. In response, Premier Wen Jiabao convened a series of State Council standing-committee and plenary meetings in May and June, and the government adopted a package of emergency measures to prop up the economy, centered on public spending. This fueled an investment frenzy that overheated the economy once the SARS epidemic had subsided.

Similarly in the wake of the May 2008 Sichuan earthquake, the government kept a fairly tight rein on the economy in the first few months of 2008, after the soaring stock and real estate prices of 2007 raised the specter of an asset bubble. Then the subprime mortgage crisis hit, and the world economy began to contract, undercutting Chinese exports. In June, following the Sichuan earthquake, politicians at the central and local level met to hammer out a macroeconomic course correction, and in November the government announced its 4 trillion yuan economic stimulus plan.

Going all the way back to 1998, we see a similar pattern after Zhu Rongji took over as premier. Until then, the government had been pursuing a fairly tight macroeconomic policy in an effort to keep a lid on inflation. But during the first half of 1998, the East Asian financial crisis began taking a toll on Chinese exports. That summer, northern China suffered devastating flooding, and in August Zhu shifted to a policy of fiscal expansion and easy credit.

Since that time, each Chinese premier has faced a major disaster the first year of his term. And each time, in the face of growing pressure from local officials, he has been obliged to shift to a course of fiscal expansion and credit easing.

## Mounting Pressure

This year as well, the government stood firm at the outset, determined to push ahead with economic restructuring policies, even as growth began to sputter in the first quarter of 2013. Local officials were naturally dissatisfied with the low level of investment. With the bird flu outbreak and the earthquake in Sichuan, that dissatisfaction doubtless erupted in calls for macroeconomic measures to shore up the economy. At this point, the government probably decided it had no choice but to convene a special meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee to deliver a top-down decision against any fundamental change in policy.

Premier Li Keqiang drove the point home in a State Council teleconference on May 13, explicitly rejecting the idea of a major stimulus of the type implemented in 2009–10. “Even if we were willing to rely on pump-priming measures and government investment to reach this year’s economic targets,” he said, “we are already running out of room to maneuver.” At the same time, he stressed that government-powered growth “is not only difficult to sustain but raises new problems and risks.”

But the pressure is likely to mount in the coming months. In June and July top government leaders frequently visit the countryside on inspection tours. And once the GDP figures for the third quarter are released, the premier will be chairing cabinet and Politburo meetings as well as consultations with non-party representatives to review economic conditions and discuss government policy for the remainder of 2013. If growth continues to lag, the provinces will step up demands for fiscal intervention, and the nation’s new leadership will surely find them difficult to resist.

July 1, 2013

## Overseas Chinese: Lessons in Identity and Flexibility

*Chen Tien-shi*

*Enrollment has soared at Japan's Chinese schools as a result of bold new policies designed to accommodate diversity. Anthropologist Chen Tien-shi—a naturalized Japanese citizen born in Japan to Chinese parents—suggests that China and Japan have much to learn from this and other successes of the overseas Chinese, who have mastered the art of coexisting without relinquishing their identity.*

In discussing issues in international affairs—whether they pertain to territorial disputes, historical perceptions, or Olympic competition—we tend to take the primacy of the nation for granted, peppering our discourse with observations along the lines of, “Japan sees things this way, while China sees things that way.” Perhaps we should begin asking ourselves whether this is a constructive approach.

Needless to say, I am not suggesting that we abandon the practice of analyzing the policies and actions of national governments in disciplines like international affairs. To the contrary, there is a real need for objective analysis of individual countries' regimes and leaders. The problem is that, when speaking of the policies and attitudes of the Chinese government, analysts are in the habit of referring to “China” or “the Chinese,” and their listeners or readers tend to take that substitution at face value, equating the actions of political leaders with the will of the entire nation.

The reality, of course, is much more complicated. In addition, we must ask whether the mindset that sees the world as a collection of nation-states has yielded positive outcomes overall. A relatively benign manifestation of this mindset is the modern Olympic Games.<sup>1</sup>

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*Chen Tien-shi*     *Associate Professor, School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University.*

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, there has recently been a growing number of athletes who have changed their citizenship in order to compete in the Games.

A much more destructive expression is warfare, with nationalism also leading to countless instances of brutality on a smaller scale. We need only recall the events triggered by the nationalization of the Senkaku Islands by the Yoshihiko Noda administration last year: In China, demonstrators vandalized Japanese department stores, Japanese cars, and just about anything with the word “Japan” in its name; in retaliation, there were threats against the ethnic Chinese community in Japan, including a fire at a Chinese school in Kobe. These incidents are but a tiny sampling of the appalling behavior that blind and bigoted patriotism has fueled over the course of history.

Meanwhile, the focus on nations and national governments diverts attention from other potentially important players. One example is the Chinese community in the United States, which is rumored to be deeply involved in the Senkaku Islands issue.

Instead of accepting the primacy of the nation-state, should we not be embracing (and nurturing) a new and flexible outlook appropriate to the globalized society in which we live? At the very least, those who do approach issues from a nation-centric perspective should have the wisdom to seek win-win solutions, instead of proceeding on the assumption that global affairs are by nature a zero-sum game.

The value of a flexible, adaptable approach is attested by the enduring vitality of the overseas Chinese community, to which I have devoted years of research. Close to 40 million ethnic Chinese are now estimated to be living in countries around the world. Referred to in recent years as the “Jews of the East” and the “hidden power” behind the Asian economy, they have flourished in their adopted countries despite their outsider status. The source of their vitality is a willingness to adapt and a flexible, can-do approach to life and business. These are the qualities that have allowed them to leave home penniless, adjust to a completely new environment, and turn adversity into opportunity time and again.

In the following, I examine these qualities in action, focusing on the recent evolution of the overseas Chinese schools in Japan, in hopes of gleaning a lesson relevant to the conduct of international relations in our global society – and particularly



*Yokohama Overseas Chinese School*

to the management of Japan-China relations. In so doing, I am eschewing the government-centered, top-down vantage point favored by political scientists and economists for a bottom-up examination of the culture and worldview of the people in the community.

### **Adapting to Change**

The two Chinese schools in Yokohama have a long and distinguished history, extending back more than 110 years. They both trace their origins to the Datong School, established in 1898 at the instigation of Sun Yat-sen, who expounded the importance of ethnic education among speakers of varying dialects while he was in Japan drumming up support for his revolutionary movement.<sup>2</sup> All classes at the schools today are taught in Chinese, and at the elementary school level, all teaching materials are also in Chinese, except for those used in Japanese- and English-language instruction.

The Chinese schools are classified as “other” schools, that is, institutions outside the accredited school system as defined in Article 1 of the School Education Law. This has raised obstacles to students seeking to continue their education at Japanese high schools or universities, and applications to the schools had been dwindling as a result, with enrollment dropping to less than 10 students per grade.

However, recent years have witnessed a major turnabout. About a decade ago, the number of applicants began to climb, and the schools began screening students with an entrance examination. Unable to accommodate all qualified entrants in a single class of 36 students, they began dividing grade levels into two classes—and still they have been obliged to place applicants on waiting lists.<sup>3</sup> Along with enrollment, the cultural diversity of the student body—including Japanese nationals—has increased.

Every education system is shaped by the needs and expectations of the nation and society in which it operates. The Chinese schools in Yokohama have

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<sup>2</sup> When Sun Yat-sen came to Japan in 1897, he called for the creation of a “Chinese-Western” school for expatriates. The following year saw the establishment of Yokohama’s Datong School, which in 1952 split into the Yokohama Overseas Chinese School and Yokohama Yamate Chinese School owing to growing political tensions between Taiwan and mainland China. The Datong School is considered the first overseas Chinese school in the world.

<sup>3</sup> Some Chinese schools in Japan have erected new school buildings to accommodate the influx of students.

adapted flexibly to society's changing demands while staying true to their own educational mission. This can be seen in the way they have grasped and responded to the evolving educational needs of prospective students, even while opening their doors to students of other ethnicities.<sup>4</sup>

For many years the Chinese schools focused on educating children of the so-called *ro-kakyo*, or "old overseas Chinese," members of a community going back some 150 years. But a new wave of migration from China has made the *shin-kakyo* ("new overseas Chinese") an increasingly influential presence over the past two or three decades. Though sharing the same ethnic identity, the "new overseas Chinese" are in many ways culturally distinct from the ethnic Chinese who have been in Japan for generations. Their presence alone introduced a new level of diversity into the student body of Japan's Chinese schools. Then, when Japanese and other non-Chinese students began enrolling in the schools, the campuses became truly multicultural, and the schools' educational goals began to change accordingly.

Back when the Chinese schools catered exclusively to the children of Chinese immigrants, their mission was simple and straightforward: to preserve and strengthen ethnic identity through the teaching of Chinese language and culture. Now that they are admitting students from other backgrounds, they have broadened their goals without abandoning their core mission.

Beginning in the first grade, all students receive instruction in Chinese, Japanese, and English, ensuring that students of all nationalities and ethnicities mingle and learn side by side. The goal is to nurture people with a multicultural viewpoint and the resources to pursue a wide variety of professions and lifestyles, so as to fulfill their maximum potential in whatever society they choose to live.<sup>5</sup>

The schools' history curriculum epitomizes this approach. Rather than inculcating students with rote knowledge and preconceived interpretations, the schools introduce historical events from both the Japanese and Chinese perspective and allow the students to develop their own opinions. In doing so,

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<sup>4</sup> Sugimura, Miki. 2011. "Hen'yo suru Chuka gakko to kokusaika jidai no jinzai ikusei" (The Changing Chinese School and Human Resources Development in the Age of Internationalization). In *Kajin to wa dare ka: Kyoiku to aidentiti* (Who Are the Overseas Chinese: Education and Identity), ed. Chen Tien-shi, *Kakyo Kajin Kenkyu*, no. 8 (Special Issue), 75–77.

<sup>5</sup> Chen, Tien-shi. 2007. "Taminzokuka suru Nihon no Chuka gakkou" (The Multiculturalization of Chinese Schools in Japan). In *Gendai Nihon o meguru kokusai ido* (Japan and International Migration), *Ajia Yugaku*, no. 104 (Special Issue), 142–50.

they are nurturing the capacity to think critically and make independent judgments and decisions, an increasingly essential skill in today's global society.

### **Flexible, Long-Range Thinking**

The new educational policies adopted by Japan's overseas Chinese schools offer a valuable lesson for the rest of us. They raise the possibility of a way of life in which people strive to accept and live with others even while remaining true to their own core identity.

In today's world, the ability to deal with each challenge constructively is far more valuable than any rigid nation-centric approach. What we need today are people with the independent judgment to distinguish between the two and choose the most productive path in any given situation. Only by fostering such an outlook and nurturing such people will we reach a level of dialogue oriented to win-win solutions and the peaceful resolution of international disputes.

As immigration and intermarriage blur the boundaries between "us" and "them," the world is entering an era of shared risks and benefits. Instead of squabbling over national boundaries and national resources, should we not be working calmly and diligently to secure peace and mutual prosperity for our children and grandchildren? From this standpoint, I believe that both Japan and China have much to learn from a people who have mastered the art of life on the periphery – the overseas Chinese.

August 16, 2013

## Senkaku and Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific

*The Tokyo Foundation*

*The second Trilateral Forum Tokyo, co-organized by the Tokyo Foundation and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, was held over the weekend of June 8–9 in Minato-ku, Tokyo, and attracted some 70 leading scholars, think tankers, journalists, government officials, and business representatives from Japan, the United States, and Europe for a Track 1.5 dialogue to explore avenues for further trilateral cooperation and to discuss issues in the Asia-Pacific regional architecture.*

*A breakfast meeting focusing on “Senkaku and Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific” featured three speakers: Tokyo Foundation President Masahiro Akiyama, Cabinet Secretariat Councillor Tomohiko Taniguchi, and Rommel Banlaoi, chairman of the board and executive director of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence, and Terrorism Research. The following is a summary of the personal views the three speakers presented at the meeting:*

### **“Sudden Chinese Assertions”**

*Masahiro Akiyama*

China (and Taiwan) began making assertions regarding territorial sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands quite suddenly in 1971, soon after the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East [now the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific] conducted a survey indicating the possibility of petroleum deposits under the East China Sea in 1968. China never claimed territorial sovereignty of the islands prior to this time.

China says that the islands have been an inherent part of its territory since ancient times. From the standpoint of international law, this amounts to a



*Masahiro Akiyama*



claim of “historic title” to the islands. Historical documents, such as voyage reports and patrol maps that China has presented as evidence, though, refer to the islands not as Chinese territory but simply as navigation beacons or patrol marks.

The Japanese government began conducting a survey of the Senkaku Islands in 1885, and as a result of a 10-year study, it was confirmed that the islands were not only uninhabited but showed no trace of having been under Chinese control. On January 14, 1895, the Japanese government adopted a cabinet decision formally incorporating the islands into the territory of Japan through an internationally established method for acquiring territorial sovereignty: occupation of *terra nullius*.

A Japanese resident applied for the lease of the islands—which was approved by the Meiji Government in 1896—and dispatched workers to operate several businesses: collecting bird feathers, manufacturing dried bonito, raising cattle, and manufacturing canned goods. More than 200 people lived and worked on the islands before World War II.

There are many indications that China recognized the islands as being Japanese territory, including a 1920 letter of appreciation from the consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki; a 1953 article in the *People’s Daily*; and a 1958 atlas published by a Chinese map-publishing company.

The Senkaku Islands were not included in the territory that Japan renounced in the San Francisco Peace Treaty. They were placed under US administration as part of the Nansei Shoto Islands and were included in the area whose administrative rights reverted to Japan in accordance with the Okinawa Reversion Agreement of June 17, 1971.

China claims that Japan “stole” the Senkakus during the Sino-Japanese War. The ten-year study the Japanese government conducted was launched before the start of the war. Neither were the islands a part of Taiwan or the Pescadores that were ceded to Japan from China in accordance with the Treaty of Shimonoseki of May 1895 that ended the war.

### **Good Fences Make Good Neighbors**

*Tomohiko Taniguchi*

Chinese claims that the Senkaku Islands have historically been an inherent part of its territory are belied by absolute silence on this issue for seventy-five-plus years until the early 1970s.

China says they have historical claims to the islands, but history doesn't really matter. What does matter is that China and Taiwan maintained absolute silence on this issue following Japan's incorporation of the islands in the late nineteenth century. This was despite China's invasion of India during the height of the Cuban missile crisis and its ventures into the South China Sea while the United States was struggling with the Vietnam War.



*Tomohiko Taniguchi*

China was also on the brink of war with the Soviet Union and Taiwan. Beijing attempted to expand in all directions between 1949 and 1971, and still it didn't make any claims on the Senkakus.

The situation around the Senkaku Islands is like having a neighbor who keeps encroaching on your property. Imagine you have a backyard, and one corner of it is a garden called Senkaku. One day, you notice a hole in the fence separating your yard from that of your immediate neighbor. The next day the hole gets a little bigger, allowing your neighbor to come in and out at will. Then suddenly, your neighbor begins claiming and shouting, "The corner garden called Senkaku is mine!"

The Senkaku issue is quite different from the Takeshima dispute, since South Korea doesn't have expansionist ambitions. Takeshima is an issue between two democracies. Japan has long sought to refer the case to the International Court of Justice. Although South Korea hasn't responded, Japan is making moves to address the dispute through international rules and international law, even though it knows there's a chance that it could lose.

China blames Japan for the recent escalation in bilateral tensions, criticizing the central government for its decision to purchase the Senkaku Islands from a private owner and also the attempted purchase by Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara. But the truth of the matter is that this was prompted by increasing threats from Chinese vessels around the islands. The owner approached Ishihara—who was a personal friend—and the central government for help because he wasn't capable of dealing with the rise in Chinese naval activity around his private property on his own.

The East China Sea dispute can't be separated from issues in the South China Sea because there are no walls between the maritime areas.

## Avoiding Unintentional Conflict

*Rommel Banlaoi*

The Philippines is embroiled in a similar dispute with China in the South China Sea, so there should be closer coordination among all concerned maritime nations to adopt and adhere to a code of conduct.

The Scarborough Shoal, which we in the Philippines call Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc Shoal, is 123 nautical miles west of Subic Bay. Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the shoal is within the Philippines' 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone.

China has argued, though, that the shoal, which it calls Huangyan Island, is Chinese territory by virtue of historic rights and effective jurisdiction. It lies within the "nine-dotted line" demarcating China's claims in the South China Sea, but it's 472 nautical miles away from Hainan Province. China sent Marine Surveillance vessels Number 84 and 75 in April 2012 with a fleet of at least 12 fishing boats to establish operational control of the area. China declared it's ready to use force if provoked, since China like all other sovereign states has a right to self-defense.



*Rommel Banlaoi*

To avoid unintentional conflict with China, the Philippines no longer deploys its Coast Guard ships in the area. Fishermen are also discouraged from fishing there as a preventive measure. With limited military and law enforcement capabilities to protect its claims, the Philippine government submitted in January 2013 its maritime claim to the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea. But China vehemently rejected the submission and ig-

nored the case, blaming the Philippines for suing a "close and good neighbor" and claiming that China has been hurt.

While China seeks to convince international society that it wants a peaceful external security environment, the increased deployment of paramilitary forces has raised concern among the region's littoral states and countries relying on the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, which is one of the world's busiest sea lanes. The countries are worried that China's "reactive assertiveness" in pursuing its maritime territorial claims will increase the potential of a military conflict in this highly contested maritime domain.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



Asia's rising maritime nationalism can further complicate the situation. Avoiding violent accidents in contested areas, which can severely threaten maritime security, peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, should loom large in the strategic thinking, policymaking, and tactical operations of countries in the region.

August 27, 2013

## **Citizen Diplomacy in the Age of Globalization**

*Japan-US-Europe Symposium on Kyoto's Heritage in a Globalizing World*

*The Tokyo Foundation*

"Citizen diplomats" in the nongovernmental sector can augment the job of professional civil servants—especially when government relations grow tense—and become effective spokespersons for efforts to bring about positive change in society.

These views were expressed during a public Japan-US-Europe symposium co-hosted by the Tokyo Foundation and Doshisha University in Kyoto. The symposium, held on the Doshisha campus on June 10, 2013, brought together participants of Trilateral Forum Tokyo—a closed-door meeting among Japanese, US, and European policy experts—and some of Kyoto's leading innovators who are drawing on the ancient imperial capital's heritage and modern technology to pioneer new industries and markets.

The second Trilateral Forum Tokyo—co-organized by the Tokyo Foundation and the German Marshall Fund of the United States—attracted some 70 leading scholars, think tankers, journalists, government officials, and business representatives from Japan, the United States, and Europe for a Track 1.5 conference over the weekend of June 8–9 in Minato-ku, Tokyo, to explore avenues for further trilateral cooperation and to discuss issues in the Asia-Pacific regional architecture.

### **Communication with a Purpose**

"Diplomacy is communication with a purpose," commented Bill Longhurst, deputy head of the ASEAN Department in the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, during the Kyoto's symposium's first session focusing on "Citizen Diplomacy in the Age of Globalization."

"We conduct diplomacy to influence or persuade people, to negotiate with them, and equally important, to learn from them," said Longhurst, who was recently named the next UK ambassador to Cambodia. "A diplomat who



*From left, Bill Longhurst, Koji Murata, and Tokyo Foundation President Masahiro Akiyama (moderator).*

spends his time just pushing out their own government's messages is not doing his job. A key factor is to receive as much as one transmits."

He identified three types of diplomacy: traditional diplomacy conducted by foreign service personnel; digital diplomacy, which reaches out directly to citizens; and citizen-to-citizen diplomacy, where professional

"middle men" are left out. Noting that the last of the three is least developed, Longhurst commented that it can also be "potentially problematic" when it is conducted for "pernicious purposes or less than wholesome objectives."

In traditional diplomacy, he said, "We send diplomats to embassies to talk to host government officials and a range of other organizations." This is needed just as much today, as in the past, he noted, "with all the global challenges we face."

A more recent trend is digital diplomacy, which takes advantage of new technologies. "It means more than just having a website," he said. "It's about being interactive. The UK embassy in Cambodia started a Facebook page last year, and within a few months, we had 40,000 followers. Interestingly, when we posted what we thought was exciting news about the UK acceding to a treaty of friendship with the ASEAN region, barely anyone noticed. But when we put articles about the Olympic Games or the queen's Diamond Jubilee, we had a huge reaction: over 6,000 likes, 1,500 comments, and 324 shares, compared with just 16 likes for the story about the treaty."

"The sheer speed and reach with which communication can take place through online diplomacy," he added, "means that this is the form for the future."

A less developed form of diplomacy is that conducted among private citizens. There is great potential for such initiatives, Longhurst said, as when a movement called Make Poverty History came together at the G8 summit in 2005 to put pressure on governments to do more to help the people of Africa to relieve debt.

There can be problems, though, he said. "Radicalization is a pernicious form of citizen diplomacy that can impact on the professional diplomacy as

well. An unknown American pastor named Terry Jones announced he was going to burn the Koran live on the Internet, and this developed into a huge diplomatic incident involving the US secretary of state. The furor caused by the Muhammad cartoons in a Danish newspaper in 2005 is another example,” he noted.

Longhurst expressed the hope that better forms of citizen diplomacy would be promoted, perhaps with online translation tools helping to fill the communication gap—such as between Japanese and Korean citizens—so ordinary people can do more to take matters forward and encourage friendlier relations where official dialogue is at an impasse.

### **“If Mayors Ruled the World”**

Kyoto is an ideal place to think about issues like citizen diplomacy, noted Doshisha University President Koji Murata, being outside the greater Tokyo area and yet part of a sizable metropolis in the Kansai district—centered on three cities with contrasting features: Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe. Viewing global issues from outside the national capital in a city with its own identity like Kyoto, he noted, can provide new insights from the perspective of common citizens.

Having been the imperial capital for over a millennium, Kyoto today is also home to many innovative startup companies. It has 36 universities, despite its population of just 1.45 million, “So it’s a city of universities,” Murata said. “In fact, students make up a tenth of the city’s total population. It’s a place where citizen diplomats of tomorrow are being nurtured.”

One of the first universities to be built in the city was Doshisha, he noted. The city’s role as a center of education was one factor that saved it from decline when the emperor moved to Tokyo—taking the nation’s capital with him—following the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

A hallmark of a good citizen diplomat is pragmatism, Murata explained, noting that it is also a key attribute of mayors. Referring to a book by Benjamin Barber of the City University of New York called *If Mayors Ruled the World*, Murata posited that a less acrimonious and politicized world might result if municipal leaders became the chief actors in global governance, making decisions through a world parliament of mayors.

“Barber notes that mayors are natural spokespersons for the people, since 70 percent of the world population lives in cities,” he said. “Most global-scale issues, including climate change, also emanate from urban areas. At the same time, mayors would be less preoccupied with advancing national or political

agendas and would focus on the practical needs of individual citizens, potentially bringing big changes to global governance. As former New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia once quipped, “There is no Democratic or Republican way to fix a sewer.”

At the same time, Murata noted, local governments would need to establish a more flexible organization and broaden their horizons, training municipal workers to adopt global perspectives. “Government officials shouldn’t be the only ones spearheading a shift to a more locally focused and pragmatic global governance, and this is where civil society, academia, and private citizen diplomats should play an increasingly bigger role.”

### The Evolving International Order

Trilateral Forum Tokyo in itself is an important initiative in citizen diplomacy, noted Tokyo Foundation Senior Fellow and Director of Policy Research Tsuneo Watanabe. In addition to encouraging dialogue on pressing global issues among experts in Japan, the United States, the Forum, in 2012, helped link the civil societies of the three regions by taking Forum participants to Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima—the three prefectures hit hardest by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

“We covered a broad range of themes over the past two days,” Watanabe said of this year’s sessions in Tokyo. “We addressed China’s rise and the future of the international order; TPP and the global trading order; the future of innovation in industrial development; the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran; future directions in foreign aid; energy and resources, a hot topic with most of Japan’s nuclear reactors off line; and the future of Myanmar, which has had close ties with Japan and is also very important for the US and Europe.”

Despite the diversity of the topics covered, “China, interestingly, came in all the sessions,” Watanabe said. “This shows how big China’s presence has become and how concerned the global community is about whether China is going to adhere to the existing rules of the international order. Nobody wants to turn China into an adversary, and we all want to encourage China to become a responsible stakeholder.”



*From left, Dan Kliman, Tsuneo Watanabe, and Bill Longhurst.*



The sessions took place just as Presidents Barack Obama and Xi Jinping were holding their summit in California. "One of the topics we discussed was cyber security, which was also discussed at the summit," Watanabe explained. "A cyber attack on essential infrastructure could seriously disrupt the life of a nation, but there are as yet no international rules for dealing with such an eventuality."

Watanabe also reported that a number of private businesses have had their digitized intellectual properties stolen. "To prevent such cyber thefts, some companies are keeping their most important innovations in analog form."

Referring to Murata's remarks about municipal leaders playing a bigger role, "We're already seeing that statements by mayors can have global repercussions," Watanabe said, taking note of Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto's controversial comments about the military's use of prostitution, which caused a backlash not only locally but also affected Japan's relations with the United States, South Korea, and China. "This," he said "has made international relations very complicated, but it also highlights the growing importance of citizen diplomacy."

### **Enduring Networks among Future Leaders**

Recalling his days spent at Doshisha in 2004–05 on a Fullbright fellowship, GMF Transatlantic Fellow Daniel Kliman pointed out that students, too, can play an important role as citizen diplomats. "I was a student of Murata sensei at a seminar," he noted, jokingly adding that the *nomikai* (drinking parties) among the seminar participants were a very good introduction to citizen diplomacy and very productive for US-Japan relations."

He identified four types of citizen diplomats, the first being scholars and think tankers. "In today's world, governments are very much stretched for time and resource, and they often lack long-term horizons, thinking only weeks or days ahead," Kliman said. "Scholars and think tankers can get around politics and government hierarchies, cross-cutting the lines of bureaucratic responsibility to go straight to key decision makers, as well as generating ideas and frameworks that governments can then take up."

They are also better positioned to discuss politically sensitive topics. "At the Forum we talked about US-Japan-South Korean relations, which is a critical trilateral relationship to build up but can be difficult for historical reasons."

Another type of citizen diplomat, Kliman said, is private-sector leaders. "Large trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership in the Asia-

Pacific and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the US and Europe, will be the key defining issues in the coming years. There are many domestic interests, though, that don't want to see these agreements move through, so it's incumbent on business leaders in the US, Japan, and Europe to make the case to their publics that the agreements are in their own interests. If the negotiations are to truly succeed, business leaders will have to step up as citizen diplomats."

Kliman agreed with Murata about the role of urban leaders—the third type of citizen diplomat. "Some mayors are arguably better than others, but Murata sensei is absolutely right in saying that cities need to play a more global role. They are the locus of economic activity, and cities across the world also face common challenges, such coming up with new engines of economic growth, aging and diversifying populations, building resiliency in the face of climate change and large-scale natural disasters, and achieving energy efficiency."

The fourth and perhaps the most important type of citizen diplomat is students, Kliman said. "Going abroad and participating in Fullbright and other programs is so critical—even with the rise of social media—because there's no substitute to face-to-face relationship building. These scholarships have created enduring networks among future leaders that can help shape diplomatic and other government policy. The knock-on effect" of nurturing future citizen diplomats "is critical to developing the next generation of urban leaders, private-sector leaders, and scholars."



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The Kyoto program's second session on "Cultural Heritage as a Modern Innovation" focused on the resurgence of several traditional industries. Moderated by Professor Yuzo Murayama of the Doshisha University Graduate School of Business, the session featured presentations by Masao Hosoo, president of a

textile company founded over three centuries ago that has successfully struck a chord among modern consumers worldwide with the distinctive quality of its fabrics; yuzen dye artist Yunosuke Kawabe, and renowned composer and percussionist Stomu Yamash'ta.

**Session 1: Citizen Diplomacy in the Age of Globalization**

*Speakers:*

- Koji Murata (President, Doshisha University)
- Bill Longhurst (Deputy Head, ASEAN Department, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office)
- Tsuneo Watanabe (Director of Foreign and Security Policy Research and Senior Fellow, Tokyo Foundation)
- Daniel Kliman (GMF Transatlantic Fellow)

*Moderator:*

- Masahiro Akiyama (President, Tokyo Foundation)

**Session 2: "Cultural Heritage" as a Modern Innovation**

*Speakers:*

- Masao Hosoo (President, HOSOO)
- Stomu Yamash'ta (Composer and Percussionist)
- Yunosuke Kawabe (Yuzen Artist)

*Commentators:*

- Tom Wyler (Senior Advisor for International Trade and Investment, US Department of Commerce)
- Roel van der Veen (Chief Academic Advisor of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Professor of International Relations of the University of Amsterdam)

*Moderator:*

- Yuzo Murayama (Professor, Doshisha University Graduate School of Business; Director, Innovative Globalization of Kyoto's Heritage Industries Project)

July 16, 2013

## The “China Factor” in Japan-Russia Relations

*Taisuke Abiru*

*The main achievement of the summit talks between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin in April 2013 was an agreement to launch a “two plus two” security dialogue involving both countries’ foreign affairs and defense ministers. Research Fellow Taisuke Abiru analyzes this important development in the context of Moscow’s strategic policy toward China.*

On April 29 this year, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived in Moscow for the first state visit to Russia by a Japanese prime minister in 10 years. The basic goals of the Kremlin’s new diplomatic offensive are three-fold: (1) to negotiate a peace treaty, which means first resolving the territorial dispute over the islands off the coast of Hokkaido known as the Northern Territories; (2) to step up diplomatic and security cooperation in response to China’s growing clout; and (3) to boost energy cooperation with a view to meeting Japan’s increased demand for natural gas and other resources in the wake of the March 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident.

In respect to the Northern Territories, the summit yielded little beyond an agreement to kick-start the stalled negotiating process. Of course, prospects for a resolution of the dispute could improve significantly if Putin is truly open to the idea of ceding half of the disputed territory by area, an option he is reported to have broached during the talks.<sup>1</sup> But this is a subject for a separate article.

Nor did the talks produce any significant breakthrough in the field of energy cooperation. With Japan’s Resource and Energy Agency placing top priority on lowering the cost of gas imports, executives from Russian energy giants like Rosneft, Novatek, and Gazprom had been visiting Japan since early this year to drum up interest in a number of new projects for joint construction of liquefied natural gas plants in Russia. But as none of these potential deals had pro-

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*Taisuke Abiru*    *Research Fellow and Project Manager, Tokyo Foundation.*

<sup>1</sup> *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, May 1, 2013.

gressed to the stage of price negotiation, Abe and Putin were unable to announce any major new developments.

The one substantive outcome of the summit was an agreement to bring both countries' foreign and defense ministers together for a "two plus two" security dialogue. Japan is currently engaged in such dialogue with just two countries, the United States and Australia. Russia's debut as Japan's third two-plus-two partner is a surprising development. It testifies to a major push toward bilateral security cooperation since Russian Security Council Chief Nikolai Patrushev's visit to Japan last October, reflecting both governments' concerns over China's growing power.

### **Acknowledgement of the "Chinese Threat"**

On April 15, just two weeks before Abe's visit to Moscow, a fascinating piece titled "The Sum Total of All Fears: The Chinese Threat Factor in Russian Politics" appeared in *Russia in Global Affairs*, Russia's leading journal of foreign affairs and international relations.<sup>2</sup> The author of the article is Vassily Kashin, an expert on China and military affairs with whom I have been in communication for the past 10 years. Kashin, a senior research fellow at the Moscow-based Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, offers insights into Russian security policy that help explain Moscow's keen interest in a two-plus-two dialogue with Japan.

Kashin states near the outset of his piece that "the topic of possible threats from China is a taboo for Russian officials participating in public discussions." While acknowledging that "all precautions taken by Russia are associated not with a direct but potential threat to its interests, sovereignty and territorial integrity that may come from China," he makes the case that "the Chinese threat, however hypothetical, is one of the key factors underlying Russia's foreign and defense policies." His argument rests largely on the following points:

- Each year Russia carries out large-scale military exercises to practice redeployment of troops from European Russia to the Russian Far East, a key scenario in the military's war games.
- In 2010, Russia combined the Pacific Fleet and the Far Eastern and Siberian

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<sup>2</sup> Vassily Kashin, "The Sum Total of All Fears: The Chinese Threat Factor in Russian Politics," *Russia in Global Affairs*, April 15, 2013. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-Sum-Total-of-All-Fears-15935> (English).

Military Districts into the Unified Strategic Command “Vostok,” also known as the Eastern Military District. It is the largest unit within the nation’s armed forces and is directly responsible for defending the Russian border with China.

- An analysis of new weapons supplied to the Russian army reveals that a large share is directed to the Eastern Military District.
- Most of the press statements on espionage issued by the Federal Security Service (FSB) relate to China.
- Russia clearly restricts Chinese investment in strategic sectors of the national economy.

Probably because Moscow’s official position on such matters tends to influence writing at the academic level, full frontal analyses of Russian foreign and security policy from the perspective of a Chinese threat have been virtually absent in major Russian journals (as opposed to its unofficial government reports) in recent years. The appearance of such a comprehensive piece as Kashin’s in a publication like *Russia in Global Affairs* would suggest that the taboo on serious discussions of the Chinese threat is gradually lifting.

### **Russia, China, and the INF Treaty**

One particularly noteworthy feature of Kashin’s piece is his frank discussion of the role of tactical nuclear weapons and nuclear submarines in a hypothetical conflict with China. Noting that Russia’s defense capability vis-a-vis China is built primarily on nuclear arms, including tactical weapons, Kashin suggests that the China factor accounts for many of Moscow’s recent decisions and statements concerning strategic arms limitation and reduction.

He notes that Russia declines to discuss any further cuts in strategic nuclear weapons with the United States unless the other nuclear powers join in. It refuses to disclose the composition of its tactical nuclear forces and, far from showing any inclination to reduce those weapons, it continues to invest vast sums in their development. (Tactical nuclear weapons are considered more useful for defending against nearby China than strategic nuclear weapons, with their longer range.) Kashin states with confidence that it was the China factor that motivated former Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov’s to suggest that Russia might withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

The last assertion requires some explanation. In January 2005, then Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov visited Washington and met with then Secretary of De-

fense Donald Rumsfeld. According to a March 10, 2005, article in the business daily *Vedomosti*, when Ivanov asked Rumsfeld what the United States would do if Russia were to withdraw from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Rumsfeld raised no objections. This is undoubtedly the episode to which Kashin is referring.

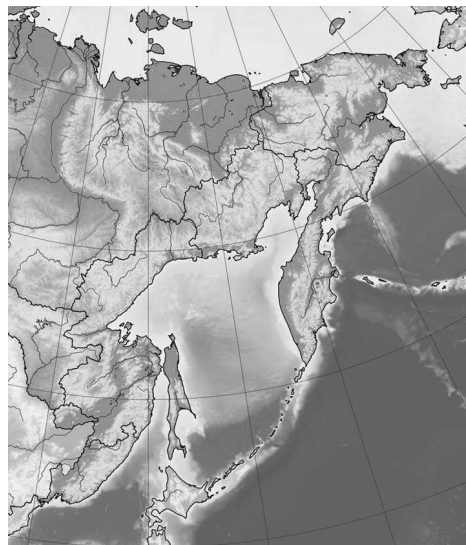
Several years ago, I asked a top US defense official who worked under Rumsfeld at the time whether he could verify that story. He told me it was true. As he explained it, Russia and the United States had a mutual understanding regarding the threat from the “south,” meaning Iran, Pakistan, and China—another confirmation of Kashin’s theory.

### Kamchatka Submarine Base

With regard to Russia’s submarine capability, Kashin makes the following points.

- In a hypothetical military clash with China, Russia’s only nonnuclear trump card is its Pacific Fleet. The technical superiority of Russia’s nuclear-powered submarines and China’s growing dependence on maritime trade would make it theoretically possible for Russia to inflict severe economic damage on China. This would not halt a Chinese advance in the Far East in the event of an actual conflict with Russia, but the potential costs to China could act as a deterrent.
- Since 2004, Russia has been actively renovating and upgrading the nuclear submarine base in Vilyuchinsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula—this after the Russian General Staff proposed closing it in 2003 for lack of funding. Development of the base, where most of Russia’s new Project 955 *Borei*-class and Project 885 *Yasen*-class nuclear submarines are to be stationed, is under the direct supervision of Putin, who has traveled there several times to inspect progress.

One possible focus of all this activity is the Arctic Ocean. As the polar icecaps



*The Sea of Okhotsk*

continue to recede under the impact of global warming, the thaw is expected to open up the Arctic Ocean for resource exploration and new shipping routes between Asia and Europe, and many are eager to stake their claims. Between July and September 2012, the Chinese icebreaker *Snow Dragon* passed through the Soya Strait (La Perouse Strait) and the Sea of Okhotsk to cross the Arctic Ocean and back, a feat that did not sit well with Moscow by most accounts. The Sea of Okhotsk is a military bastion for Russia, where the Pacific Fleet's nuclear submarines are deployed in a state of combat readiness. As long as Russia controls the islands stretching from the Kamchatka Peninsula to Hokkaido, including Kunashiri (Russian: Kunashir) and Etorofu (R: Iturup) in the Northern Territories, ships entering the Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific face great difficulties.<sup>3</sup> But if China henceforth continues to employ the route taken by the *Snow Dragon*, dramatic changes in the strategic environment around the Sea of Okhotsk could result.

### The Northern Territories' Strategic Significance

Russia's expansion of the nuclear submarine base on the Kamchatka Peninsula could also have a direct and indirect impact on the territorial dispute with Japan. As noted above, Russia regards the Sea of Okhotsk as a military bastion. It so happens that the preferred route from the Sea of Okhotsk to the Pacific and vice versa is the channel between the islands of Kunashiri and Etorofu, which is deepest in the chain of islands from the Kamchatka Peninsula to Hokkaido and remains ice-free year round. Such military factors help explain Russia's insistence that resolution of the Northern Territories dispute center on the return of just Shikotan and the Habomai islets.

On April 25, the *Sankei Shimbun*, citing a well-placed anonymous source, reported that Abe and Putin were planning to use the upcoming summit to "conclude an agreement on maritime security cooperation between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Russian navy, to include joint search and rescue operations in the Arctic Ocean." No such announcement was actually made, although an agreement to launch a two-plus-two dialogue did emerge from the summit. It is not known whether the information conveyed to the *Sankei* originated on the Japanese or the Russian side, but the leak is highly suggestive, particularly in view of the new strategic significance of the Northern Territories.

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<sup>3</sup> "Rossiya voorydzaet kurili radi podvodnix lodok," *Izvestia*, October 13, 2011.



As Kashin explains it, "Since the long-term future of China remains unclear, Russia cannot rule out a situation where the Chinese threat will turn from a hypothetical into a real one. Therefore Russia is interested in having effective channels of communication and cooperation with the United States and its allies in the Asia-Pacific Region, which could be stepped up whenever necessary."

Dmitry Mosyakov, one of a small group of Russian experts in Southeast Asian affairs, has asserted that the Russian Pacific Fleet's unprecedented participation in RIMPAC 2012—the massive war games hosted by the US Pacific Fleet—came about largely because of deteriorating relations between Russia and China.<sup>4</sup> I also had the opportunity to speak with a different Russian ASEAN expert regarding a recent Russia-China "track two" meeting, where, he noted, "the Chinese took a very imperious tone with the Russians, sermonizing about economic development and other topics. It got to the point where one of them declared that Russia's sale of submarines to Vietnam was 'outrageous.' I'm sure the Kremlin is very displeased with this attitude on China's part."

Given this background, it seems safe to regard Moscow's pursuit of two-plus-two dialogue with Japan as an integral part of a larger effort to establish "effective channels of communication and cooperation with the United States and its allies in the Asia-Pacific Region," in the event that the hypothetical threat from China turns into a real one. We can thus expect Moscow to approach maritime security, including shipping routes spanning the Sea of Japan and the Arctic Ocean, as a major theme in the development of bilateral cooperation with Japan henceforth.

This also raises the possibility that the Northern Territories dispute will begin to take on a different character, given the islands' new strategic significance. With this in mind, government and private bodies alike should seize the moment and begin building a multi-tiered bilateral framework for strategic dialogue oriented to medium- and long-term concerns.

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<sup>4</sup> RT, July 12, 2012. <http://rt.com/op-edge/rimpac-war-russia-china/>

July 24, 2013

## Considering Edward Snowden

*Paul J. Saunders*

*Edward Snowden's disclosure of US intelligence collection methods has raised important issues and deserves serious discussion, but media attention has been simplistic. Paul Saunders argues that more seriously thought should be given in view of what is at stake for the United States and others.*

Edward Snowden's high-profile disclosure of US intelligence collection methods has provoked widespread anger at the United States and won some support for the former National Security Agency employee, both in America and overseas. Snowden's case raises important issues and deserves serious discussion; unfortunately, however, much media attention has been misplaced and simplistic. In view of what is at stake for the United States and others, we should think more seriously about what we have learned.

### In Over His Head



*(Laura Poitras/Praxis Films)*

First, it is widely agreed that Edward Snowden the man is clearly in over his head, with no clear plan and little understanding of the implications of his activity. A more sophisticated individual might have traveled to his intended destination and applied for and received asylum before beginning his disclosures, for example, avoiding his bizarre extended stay at Moscow's Sheremetevo airport.

Someone more committed to his principles might have stayed in the United States, seeking to use his trial to provoke debate and change policy. Advance planning could have helped here too; a wide array of domestic civil liberties organizations, as well as liberal and libertarian politi-

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*Paul J. Saunders      Project Member, Tokyo Foundation's Contemporary American Studies Project; Executive Director, Center for the National Interest (Washington, DC).*

cians, could have defended him if he were more careful in his approach to his goal.

Likewise, Snowden's dramatic flight and his unexpectedly long stay in an airport the international arrivals area have meant more American media attention to Edward Snowden and his fate than to the policies he apparently sought to challenge. This is too bad.

### **No Whistleblower**

Second, Snowden is no "whistleblower." Much reporting and commentary on the case describes him this way, but being a whistleblower requires disclosing illegal conduct. As has become clear in the wake of Snowden's revelations, US surveillance operations have been entirely legal. Whether the methods and extent of the surveillance programs are appropriate is a separate question—but that is a public policy issue, not a legal one.

A consequence of this is that Snowden has indisputably violated the law. He has also publicly acknowledged that he planned his violations in advance, stating that he deliberately took a job with government contractor Booz Allen Hamilton in order to obtain the information that he released.<sup>5</sup> The US legal case against him appears quite strong.

Third, the Obama administration appears to be applying heavy pressure on foreign governments to enlist assistance in returning Edward Snowden to the United States, to obstruct his further travel, and to block his efforts to obtain asylum. While it is impossible for publics in America or other nations to know what Snowden may have, the US response suggests that US officials are deeply concerned.

For example, American officials did not deny a role in a search of Bolivian President Evo Morales' official airplane in Vienna in early July, or in what looked like refusal by some governments to allow the plane into their airspace, as Mr. Morales returned from an international natural gas producers' summit in Moscow. As this is a massive breach of standard diplomatic practice, top US officials must have believed the stakes to be quite high. (They also appear to have been willing to take considerable risks without much evidence, in a manner that has damaged the US international reputation, especially in Latin America.)

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<sup>5</sup> *South China Morning Post*, "Snowden sought Booz Allen job to gather evidence on NSA surveillance," June 25, 2013, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1268209/snowden-sought-booz-allen-job-gather-evidence-nsa-surveillance>

## Lack of Options

Fourth, the episode has demonstrated both the extent and the limits of US power. On one hand, the United States has successfully stranded Snowden in Moscow for an extended period and appears to be steadily whittling down his options—it is precisely Snowden's lack of options that have forced him to remain in the Sheremtevo airport. America's European allies have been willing to go to great lengths to help the United States—despite domestic anger in some countries at apparent US intelligence gathering there—as made clear in the Morales incident.

Similarly, all but the most anti-American governments have been unwilling to consider harboring Snowden; he had to leave Hong Kong quickly, and is clearly an unwelcome guest in Russia, where the government is in the unhappy position of not wanting to keep him, not wanting to turn him over to Washington, and not having somewhere else to send him. Conversely, Washington has been unable to extradite Edward Snowden and seems unlikely to be in a position to do so.

While Snowden's fate remains far from clear, recent reporting suggests that he is coming to terms with his lack of options and may seek to remain in Russia—even at the price of agreeing to Russian President Vladimir Putin's terms: "He must stop his activities aimed at inflicting damage to our American partners."<sup>6</sup> That would appear to prevent Snowden from any further participation in the debate that he tried to start in the United States. The future of that discussion is even less certain than Edward Snowden's.

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<sup>6</sup> *Politico*, "Vladimir Putin: Edward Snowden must stop leaking secrets to stay in Russia," <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/07/vladimir-putin-edward-snowden-russia-leaks-93617.html#ixzz2ZaESle3x>

August 26, 2013

## Dispatches from Ghana

### *(1) Breaking the Cycle of Poverty among Rice Farmers*

*Junko Tashiro*

*In November 2012, Junko Tashiro traveled to Ghana under an Acumen Global Fellowship to take part in an innovative social enterprise aimed at transforming the local rice industry and breaking the cycle of rural poverty. Tashiro's first report from the field combines nostalgic scenes of the good life on a modern Japanese farm with a clear-eyed look at the plight of Ghana's rice farmers.*

I was extremely close to my grandfather as a child, and I always looked forward impatiently to summer vacation, when my family took its annual trip to Miyagi to visit my grandparents. As the Shinkansen bullet train sped north, leaving hot, muggy Tokyo behind, I would gaze out the window at the rice paddies. Decked out in that rich, vibrant golden green that defies description, they seemed to stretch out forever and ever.

The vegetables we ate in the country were always fresh from the field, where they had been raised by my grandfather with loving care. I could never stand the pale, bland tomatoes that one saw piled in perfect rows in Tokyo supermarkets, but I willingly ate the sweet, bright-red tomatoes that came from my grandfather's fields. It was thanks to my grandfather that I learned to love vegetables.



But the best treat of all was the rice from my grandfather's paddy. A plain bowl of steamed rice, all plumped up and glistening, seemed like a dish fit for royalty. It nearly spoiled me for other rice. (Even today, I'm pretty fussy about the rice I eat.)

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*Junko Tashiro* Was selected as a Tokyo Foundation–Acumen Global Fellow for 2012–13 after working at McKinsey & Co and attending the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, where she received an MPA in economic development and management.

## Life Comes Full Circle

I remember one day when my grandfather made me a grilled rice ball for a mid-afternoon snack. It was a great big thing slathered in miso paste and beautifully browned on the outside. Enticed by the aroma, I reached out to grab one without thinking. My grandfather gently restrained me; he had something he wanted me to hear. He told me about the rural poverty that had forced young Japanese men like him to enlist in the army and go to war. He talked about how the nation had rebuilt after the war's devastation, embarked on a period of rapid economic growth, and developed into one of the world's most advanced economies in a few decades' time.

"Today," he said, "most Japanese people take all the good things they have for granted, but if you take a look at other parts of the world, you'll realize how blessed you are." He told me that I should always be thankful and never forget that, while I was eating my fill of all my favorite foods, millions of people around the world were going hungry. He also admonished me to think about what I could and should do to help those less fortunate once I grew up.

I approached my snack a little more thoughtfully than usual that day. Of course, I grabbed it and ate my fill, but I chewed each bite carefully and respectfully, savoring each grain of rice. Looking back, I realize that my interest in the global poverty issue all stems from that afternoon with my grandfather.

Now here I am, almost 25 years later, cultivating rice in Ghana as an Acumen Global Fellow. It's not something I would ever have imagined myself doing. Yet it feels so right that I can't help but believe that this is what fate had in store for me all along.

## Rural Poverty and a Market Disconnect

Rice is a familiar food item in Japan, having been a staple of the Japanese diet since ancient times. But when we look at other countries, we realize that rice is often perceived in quite different ways.

In Ghana, for instance, people have traditionally relied on starchy root vegetables like cassava and yams, or in some cases plantains, as their main source of calories, and these foods still serve as staples in rural areas. In the cities, however, rice is an important and rapidly expanding component of the Ghanaian diet.

This trend is attributed to changing lifestyles accompanying rising incomes and the increasing concentration of the middle class in Ghana's major cities,

such as the capital of Accra and the second-largest city of Kumasi. A growing number of urbanites seem to share the opinion of my Ghanaian colleague that “rice is a cool food” –high in nutrition, healthy, and easy to cook. As a result, demand has been rising at an annual rate of 40%.



The important thing to note is that this new consumer demand is almost entirely for premium rice. Although the taste for rice is a relatively new phenomenon, Ghanaian urbanities are already pretty particular about the rice they eat. Unlike the Japanese, they prefer long-grain rice. They insist that the grains be whole and intact, not broken in the milling process, and they won't stand for rice that is mixed with inferior varieties. They prefer their rice factory-packed in neatly labeled plastic packages. And above all, they like the aromatic varieties, such as Thai jasmine rice. Unfortunately, Ghana's farmers lack the skills and capacity to meet this end consumers' demand for premium rice, and as a result the country depends on imports from Asia and elsewhere to meet more than 70% of domestic demand. Ghana currently imports upwards of \$500 million worth of rice annually.

Yet Ghana is an agrarian economy, like most sub-Saharan nations in Africa. The majority of its citizens earn their living from farming. So, why should Ghana have to depend on other countries to meet its domestic demand for rice?

The biggest reason is that the majority of Ghanaian farmers are smallholders cultivating tiny plots that generate little income. They lack ready cash to buy fertilizers, herbicides, and other essential inputs. Some resort to borrowing money at high interest rates and are still unable to invest the minimum required to make farming profitable.

Rice farming poses special challenges for these smallholders. The premium seed varieties are expensive and are often unavailable in the open market in any case. Without access to irrigation facilities, many farmers have to gamble on precipitation to support this water-intensive crop. Moreover, rice cultivation is a science, and Ghanaian farmers have relatively few opportunities to learn the sophisticated techniques needed to maximize yield. As a result, rice farming in Ghana is plagued by missteps and inefficiencies.

Rice farming is also extremely labor intensive unless one has access to combine harvesters and other machinery. Of course, buying such equipment is

out of the question for most Ghanaian farmers, and rental raises its own problems. Because demand is rising faster than supply, rental rates are high, and farmers sometimes find themselves waiting weeks for the equipment they have reserved. Some give up and hire seasonal workers to ensure the crop is harvested, while others wait, only to find that the crop has been damaged or ruined in the meantime.

The combined effect of these problems is that crop yield among Ghana's small rice farms is 40% below the global average.

The travails of Ghana's rice smallholders continue beyond the harvest. Farmers lacking access to combine harvesters or threshing machines must remove the chaff manually by pounding. This tends to crush or break the kernels, leaving farmers with less rice to sell and making what remains ill fit for the urban consumer market. The alternative is to sell unthreshed rice to private traders in the open market—in other words, middlemen and “market mommies”—at unfairly low prices. After more than four months sweating in the fields and struggling to make ends meet until the harvest, the farmers are lucky if their proceeds cover their expenses.

As a result of these circumstances, the domestic market for premium rice is largely closed to domestic producers, who remain locked in a hopeless cycle of poverty. Policymakers also worry that this disconnect between local production and consumption could jeopardize Ghana's food security in the long run.

### **GADCO: Breaking the Vicious Circle**

GADCO (Global Agri-Development Company) was founded to address the two important and interrelated problems of food security and the cycle of poverty in Ghana. Social entrepreneurs Iggy Bassi and Toks Abimbola, the co-founders of GADCO, realized that Ghana had plenty of potential for agricultural production but lacked the system needed to unlock that potential. So they began working to build such a system from scratch.

Before GADCO came on the scene, Ghana's rice production value chain was extremely fragmented.

Even if small farmers were able to get hold of premium rice seeds, they often lacked access to milling facilities and were forced to sell their harvest to private traders, who



*GADCO nucleus farm operations.*



## PARTNERSHIP WITH ACUMEN

bought the rice as cheaply as possible in order to make a profit after paying the high cost of milling. Next, the processed rice went through various distributors before reaching end consumers, and the distributors naturally sought to maximize their own profits by buying as cheaply as possible. Ultimately it was the producers, or the smallholders, who got squeezed. GADCO saw that the only way to boost producers' revenues was to reform the entire system. To connect producers directly to the end-consumer market, GADCO built a vertically integrated rice production value chain encompassing each phase of the business, from R&D to end-market distribution.

Since its beginnings in an empty field in a rural village four years ago, GADCO has grown into Ghana's largest commercial rice producer, growing premium rice for the end-consumer market year-round on about 1,000 hectares of farmland. Its large-scale nucleus farm carries out R&D to develop improved, high-yield varieties and continually explore ways of maximizing productivity, such as by introducing cutting-edge Brazilian technology designed for large farm operations.

After harvesting, the rice is milled, packaged, and labeled at a large, modern processing facility (as of May 2013, GADCO was still using a third-party mill, owing to volume considerations, but with production capacity swelling, construction of GADCO's own mill is under way and should be completed soon.) The rice is then distributed by Finatrade, which boasts the most extensive retail network of any rice distributor in Ghana, and sold on the domestic premium market. GADCO is the only agri-food business in Ghana that integrates the rice value chain in this holistic way.

In Africa and South America, large agribusinesses have come under harsh criticism for "land grabbing." But GADCO's large-scale, highly mechanized, high-tech operation has taken a whole new approach to farm consolidation. The key is long-term contracts with local communities.

The vast majority of land in Ghana's rural communities is totally unused and undeveloped. The local residents lack the know-how to make the best use of these vast land resources. When seeking to expand, they generally resort to slash-and-burn techniques that quickly leave the land barren. GADCO's solution is to sign 30-year land leases with local communities so the farmland can be managed as part of the extension of GADCO's own nucleus farm in an effi-



*Local residents undergo training on a GADCO nucleus farm.*

## PARTNERSHIP WITH ACUMEN

cient and environmentally sustainable manner. Through this approach, GADCO aims to improve villagers' living standards over the long term.

What really sets GADCO apart is its practice of revenue sharing. GADCO returns a share of the profits from its rice operations to the community for distribution among all the households and investment in schools and hospitals. It also contributes to the community's long-term development by creating jobs and providing opportunities for education and training.

### Mission: Launch Copa Connect



Unfortunately, this approach takes time, since each new farm plot requires the consent of everyone in the community. Relying on this system alone, it would take many years of dialogue and hefty capital investment to replace all imported rice with domestic rice—an important step toward food security.

For this reason, GADCO is also working to integrate rice smallholders into its value chain as producers while helping them realize their own production potential. In this way, GADCO hopes not only to accelerate the pace of expansion of its rice production but also to pursue its core mission of breaking the cycle of rural poverty. GADCO's hybrid business model, connecting its large-scale nucleus farm operations with smallholder producers, promises to transform Ghana's economy and society.

As an Acumen Global Fellow, I was sent to Ghana to launch the Copa Connect smallholder program—named for GADCO's own rice brand, Copa, and the concept of connecting rice smallholders with the end-consumer market. The project's goals are ambitious: design a business model, define an operating blueprint, develop partnerships required for implementation, secure all resources needed for actual operations, and, finally, begin work on the introduction of smallholder-centric technologies with the goal of signing on 1,000 smallholders by the end of 2013 and eight times that number within the next five years.

It's an opportunity of a lifetime, but I wonder how much I can contribute to such an enterprise. True, I have a longstanding interest in rice, but I have never launched a business, and my knowledge of agribusiness, rice production, and Ghanaian farmers is minimal. Something tells me this is going to be a long, long journey.

August 14, 2013

## Bulgaria and Japan

*From the Cold War to the Twenty-first Century*

*Evgeny Kandilarov*

*The following article is based on Bulgaria and Japan: From the Cold War to the Twenty-first Century, an exhaustively researched 2009 book by Evgeny Kandilarov—a Sylff fellow at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski,” who used his fellowship to conduct research at Meiji University in Japan in 2005. The Tokyo Foundation asked the author, who is now an assistant professor at his alma mater, to summarize his findings, which have revealed intriguing patterns in the history of bilateral ties and international relations over the past several decades.*

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**T**his article aims to give a brief overview of the political, economic, and cultural relations between Bulgaria and Japan during the Cold War and the subsequent period of Bulgaria’s transition to democracy and a market economy.

Exhaustive research on the bilateral relationship between Bulgaria and Japan have revealed specific reasons, factors, and causes that led to fairly intense economic, scientific, technological, educational, and cultural exchange between the two countries during the Cold War. Furthermore, the study raises some important questions, perhaps the most intriguing one being: Why did the relationship rapidly lose its dynamics during the transition period, and what might be the reasons for this?

The study also poses a series of questions concerning how bilateral relations influenced the economic development of Bulgaria during the 1960s and 1980s, throwing light on the many economic decisions made by the Bulgarian government that were influenced by the Japanese economic model.

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*Evgeny Kandilarov* Sylff fellow, 2004, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and currently an academic coordinator and administrator of the university’s graduate program in the history and contemporary development of East Asian countries.

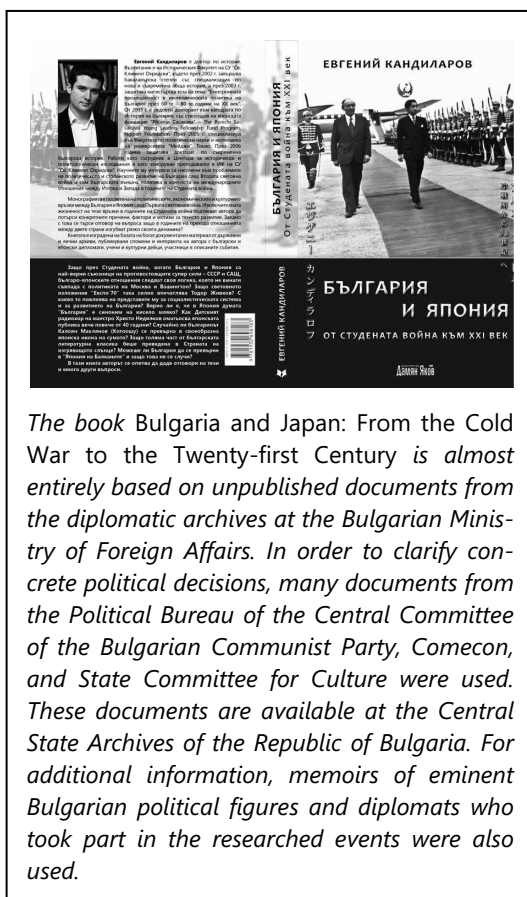
## Five Distinct Stages of the Relationship

The analysis of Bulgaria-Japan relations can be divided into two major parts. The chronological framework of the first part is defined by the date of the resumption of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Japan in 1959 and the end of state socialism in Bulgaria in 1989, coinciding with the end of the Cold War. This timeframe presents a fully complete period with its own logic and characteristics, following which Bulgaria's international relations and internal policy underwent a total transformation at the beginning of the 1990s.

The second part of the analysis covers the period of the Bulgarian transition from state socialism to a parliamentary democracy and market economy. This relatively long period in the development of the country highlighted the very different circumstances the two countries faced and differences in their character.

The inner boundaries of the study are defined by two mutually related principles. The first is the spirit of international relations that directly influenced the specifics of the bilateral relationship, and the second is the domestic economic development of Bulgaria, a country that played an active role in the dynamics of the relationship. In this way, the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s (through 2007, when Bulgaria joined the EU), and the years since 2007 represent five distinct stages in the relations between Bulgaria and Japan.

The first stage began with the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1959. This was more a consequence of the general change in international relations in the mid-1950s than a result of deliberate foreign policy. After the easing of Cold War tensions between the two military and political blocs and the restart



*The book Bulgaria and Japan: From the Cold War to the Twenty-first Century is almost entirely based on unpublished documents from the diplomatic archives at the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In order to clarify concrete political decisions, many documents from the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Comecon, and State Committee for Culture were used. These documents are available at the Central State Archives of the Republic of Bulgaria. For additional information, memoirs of eminent Bulgarian political figures and diplomats who took part in the researched events were also used.*

of dialogue, the whole Eastern bloc began normalizing its relations with the main ideological rival, the United States, as well as with its most loyal satellite in the Asia-Pacific region—Japan. From another point of view Japanese diplomatic activity toward Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, was motivated mostly by the commercial and economic interests of Japanese corporations looking to extend their markets.

This period in Bulgarian-Japanese relations in the 1960s was characterized by mutual study and search for the right approach, the setting up of a legislative base, and the formulation of main priorities, aims, and interests.

Analyses of documents from the Bulgarian state archives show that Bulgaria was looking for a comprehensive development of the relationship, while Japan placed priority on economic ties and on technology and scientific transfer.

### Budding Commercial Ties



*Bulgarian Prime Minister Todor Zhivkov and Japanese Prime Minister Eisako Sato, 1970, in Japan (Central State Archive of the Republic of Bulgaria)*

One of the most important industries for which the Bulgarian government asked for support from Japan was electronics, which was developing very dynamically in Japan. In the mid-1960s Bulgaria signed a contract with one of Japan's biggest electronics companies, Fujitsu Ltd. According to the contract, Bulgaria bought a license for the production of electronic devices, which were one of the first such devices produced by Bulgaria and sold on the Comecon market. The contract also included an opportunity for Bulgarian engineers to hone their expertise in Japan.

In the 1960s the first joint ventures between Bulgaria and Japan were established. In 1967 the Bulgarian state company Balkancar and the Japanese company Tokyo Boeki create a joint venture called Balist Kabushiki Kaisha. Another joint venture that was established was called Nichibu Ltd. In 1971 these two companies merged into a new joint venture, Nichibu Balist, engaged in trading all kinds of metals and metal constructions, forklifts and hoists and spare parts for factories, ships (second hand), marine equipment, spare parts, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and chemical products.

In 1970 Bulgaria and Japan signed an Agreement on Commerce and Navigation, which was the first of its kind signed by the Bulgarian government

with a non-socialist country. According to the agreement, the two countries granted each other most-favored-nation treatment in all matters relating to trade and in the treatment of individuals and legal entities in their respective territories.

At the end of this stage of Bulgarian-Japanese bilateral relations, by participating in the Expo '70 international exhibition, Bulgaria already had a clear idea of the "Japanese economic miracle" and how it could be applied to Bulgaria's economic growth.

The Bulgarian government led by communist ruler Todor Zhivkov were very much impressed and influenced by Japan's industrial, scientific, and technological policy, which led to the so called Japanese miracle. That is why the economic reforms and strategies adopted in Bulgaria over the following few years, although conducted in a completely different social and economic environment, were influenced to some extent by the Japanese model, especially in the field of science and technological policy.

### **Peak of Political and Economic Activity**

The second stage in bilateral relations in the 1970s marked the peak of political and economic activity between the two countries. The goals set during the previous period were pursued and achieved slowly and steadily. The legislative base was broadened, and the number of influential Japanese partners increased. The international status quo in East-West relations, marked by the Helsinki process, presented the possibility for Bulgaria and Japan to enjoy a real "golden decade" in their relations.

In 1972 the Japan-Bulgaria Economic Committee for the development of trade, economic, and scientific and technological ties between the two countries was established in Tokyo. Committee participants included a number of large Japanese manufacturers, financial institutions, and trading companies. The head of the Committee was Nippon Seiko (NSK) President Hiroki Imazato. The same year in Sofia, Bulgaria established the Bulgaria-Japan Committee for Economic, Science, and Technical Cooperation, headed by Minister of Science, Technologies, and Higher Education Nacho Papazov.

In the mid-1970s the Bulgarian government undertook some legislative changes regarding the rules for foreign company representation in Bulgaria. These changes were influenced mainly by the attempt by the Bulgarian government to encourage the further development of Bulgarian-Japanese economic relations. After the legislative changes Japanese companies received the right

to open their own commercial representative offices in Bulgaria, and in just a few years 10 Japanese companies opened offices: Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Sumitomo, C. Itoh, Fujitsu, Tokyo Maruichi Shoji, Nichibu Balist, Marubeni, Nissho Iwai, and Toyo Menka Kaisha. In 1977 the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) also opened an office, greatly contributing to the promotion of the trade and economic relations between Bulgaria and Japan.

### Historic Summit Meeting

A political expression of the peak of Bulgarian-Japanese relations during the 1970s was the first official summit visit in the history of bilateral diplomatic relations—the visit by Bulgarian state leader Todor Zhivkov to Japan in March 1978 for a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda.

During the visit, the two sides agreed to establish a Joint Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation, which has held working sessions every year, engaging both governments to further promote and extend the bilateral economic relationship.

Following the state visit by Todor Zhivkov, the Bulgarian government created a very detailed strategic program for the development of Bulgarian-Japanese relations for the decade up to 1990. The main focus of the program was the following idea: “The strategic direction in the economic relations between Bulgaria and Japan consists in the rational use and implementation of modern and highly effective Japanese technologies, equipment and production experience for the promotion of the quality and efficiency of the Bulgarian economy.”

Another key point was that the Bulgarian government would focus its efforts on strengthening cooperation with leading Japanese companies in such fields as electronics and microelectronics, automation and robotics, heavy industries, chemicals, electronics, and engineering.

In response to the Bulgarian state visit in 1978, the next year, in October 1979, Bulgaria was visited by Crown Prince Akihito and Crown Princess Michiko as the official representatives of Emperor Hirohito.



*Bulgarian state leader Todor Zhivkov and Japanese Prime minister Takeo Fukuda, 1978, in Japan (Central State Archive of the Republic of Bulgaria)*

## 1980s: Broadening Spheres of Cooperation



*Bulgarian state leader Todor Zhivkov and Japanese Emperor Hirohito, 1978, in Japan (Central State Archive of the Republic of Bulgaria)*

During the third period of Bulgarian-Japanese relations, the momentum of the preceding stages still kept the relationship stable and growing. The sphere of cooperation and mutual interest widened, and the Bulgarian government relied more on the Japanese support and the advantages offered by the Japanese economic model.

At the beginning of the 1980s the Bulgarian government undertook another step toward the liberalization of the Bulgarian economy. It gave an opportunity for Western com-

panies to invest in Bulgaria by concluding contracts for industrial cooperation and creating associations. These changes in the Bulgarian economy caused great interest among Japanese economic circles, and within the next few years six Bulgarian-Japanese joint companies were created. The names and activities of the joint companies were as follows:

— **Fanuc-Mashinex** with the participation of Japanese company Fanuc Co: Service and production in the fields of electronics, automation, and engineering.

— **Atlas Engineering** with the participation of Japanese companies Mitsui, C. Itoh, Toshiba, and Kobe Steel: Design, supply, and implementation of projects in Bulgaria and third countries in the fields of mechanical engineering, chemicals, and metallurgy.

— **Sofia-Mitsukoshi** with the participation of Japanese companies Mitsukoshi and Tokyo Maruichi Shoji: Production and trade in the field of light industry as well as the reconstruction of department stores.

— **Tobu-M.X.:** Manufacture and sale of machinery for magnetic abrasive treatment of complex-shaped parts. Production was based on Bulgarian technology, and the products were sold in Japan and in third countries.

— **Medicom Systems** with the participation of Japanese company Tokyo



*Crown Prince Akihito during his official state visit in Bulgaria, October 1979 (Central State Archive of the Republic of Bulgaria)*



Maruichi Shoji: Research, production, and sale of equipment and software for the medical and education markets.

– **Farmahim-Japan** with the participation of Japanese company Marubeni: Collaboration in the pharmaceutical field.

### **1990s: Transformation of the Relationship**

The subsequent crisis in East-West relations in the 1980s, the growing economic crisis in the Communist bloc, and changes in the political leadership in Moscow brought about the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new era in international relations. During the 1990s, these new factors completely transformed the relationship between Bulgaria and Japan.

In the next period, during which Bulgaria began a long and arduous transition to a democratic political system and functioning market economy, an abrupt switch came about in the direction of Bulgarian foreign policy. The governing parties during this period made every effort to incorporate Bulgaria into the Euro-Atlantic military and economic structures, namely, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

This required a great deal of effort to transform the political and economic systems. The focusing of national energy on these social transformations created a totally different environment for Bulgaria-Japan relations. Bulgaria became a developing country and was placed in an unequal position in terms of the international hierarchy. For a long time, relations between the two countries consisted largely of Japanese disbursements of official development assistance (ODA).

Despite the dialogue between Bulgaria and Japan from 1959 to 1989, the 1990s was a period of steady decline and stagnation in the bilateral relationship, being reduced, to a large extent, to one between donor and recipient.

All this led to a paradoxical situation: economic relations between Bulgaria and Japan were much closer when the countries were politically and ideologically far apart than during the period after 1989, when they stood in the same ideological framework. The underlying reasons for this are related to the question of what were the driving forces of the relationship during the Cold War.

### **Nurturing a New Partnership**

A detailed study of the relationship between 1959 and 1989 shows that for the most part the initiative came mainly from the Bulgarian side, which showed

keen interest in and reaped benefits from the relationship. Bulgaria was driven by commercial and economic interests and the need for scientific and technological cooperation. Moreover, Japan was both a good model and a suitable partner for Bulgaria. Japan saw in Bulgaria and other socialist countries an opportunity to expand its export markets and to import cheaper food commodities and raw materials.

At the same time, ties with a highly developed country like Japan provided an opportunity for the Bulgarian government to identify the defects and shortcomings of the closed, centralized, planned economy. This underlined a persistent set of problems, the major one being the lack of competitiveness of Bulgarian products stemming from poor quality, low labor efficiency, poor level of technology, unstable stock exchange, limitations in the number and variety of goods, mediocre design, and the failure to adapt to a highly dynamic and competitive market environment.

As late as January 1, 2007, both countries took a step to set up a new partnership framework on equal terms. After Bulgaria joined the EU, relations between the two countries became almost entirely dependent on the geopolitical, economic, and to some extent cultural interests of the respective countries in the region. From this perspective, the starting points of the relations between Bulgaria and Japan at the beginning of the twenty-first century did not seem very strong. This could be clearly seen in the empirical data on Japanese investment in Bulgaria, financial transactions, the traffic of tourists, cultural presence, and other areas, as well as in the peripheral position of Bulgaria in Japan's foreign strategy toward the region, underlined by then Japanese foreign minister Taro Aso's 2006 concept called the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity.

Unfortunately, even almost seven years after Bulgaria joined the EU there has not been any significant change in Bulgarian-Japanese relations, which remain very much below their optimal potential. The reasons for this can be found both in the lack of political and economic stability in Bulgaria as well as in the continuing economic instability of Japan over the last 20 years. Whether Japan and Bulgaria will once again see a merging of interests and revive a mutually beneficial relationship is a matter for another analysis. The most important thing is that there is already a very good base for a fruitful relationship, even though it was set during the Cold War, and it should be used as a starting point in the attempts by the Bulgarian government and its Japanese partners to find a more efficient and beneficial approach in developing bilateral relations.

August 21, 2013

## Voicing Violence

### *Constructing Meaning from Narratives by Children in Red-Light Districts of South Kolkata*

Anindita Roy

Anindita Roy received her Sylff fellowship from Jadavpur University in India in 2012 and conducted research in the United Kingdom using a Sylff Research Abroad grant from April to June 2013. In this article, she writes of children's psychological development under adverse conditions in India, based on an analysis conducted in the UK of the field data she gathered over a year of research in Kolkata, India.

\* \* \*

Interests drive passion. Sometimes, they also help to shape paths that lead one to journeys of exploration. In my case, an interest in children and their development have led me into landscapes of the mind and how it constructs meaning. Specifically, mine has been an academic endeavor to understand the meaning-making process and its relation to identity formation, especially in children living in adverse environments. My research was carried out in two red-light districts of Southern Kolkata, and its participants were girls and boys aged between 8 and 14. During this year-long research, I was often asked about my choice of research site: "But, why the red-light district?"



### **Empowering Children in Economically Deprived Areas**

Through a community involvement project I undertook at Jadavpur University, I had the opportunity to access the red-light neighborhoods of Kalighat and Khidderpore (which are the sites I chose in my research for a master of philos-

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Anindita Roy     Sylff fellow, 2012, Jadavpur University, India.

ophy degree). The project was designed to empower children in economically and socially deprived areas whose needs and concerns, it was felt, were largely under-represented and often misrepresented. The participants of this project were trained to become radio reporters so they could express themselves on the platform of a community radio station located on the Jadavpur University campus.

There was one young and promising participant from Kalighat who suddenly stopped attending the training sessions after an enthusiastic involvement over half a year. We were informed by the institution that introduced us to the children in this sensitive area that the participant had left the city and returned to the village and would no longer be able to join the project. It was some weeks later that this participant was seen (by several members of our project) standing with a couple of young girls on the lanes of Kalighat, trying to get clients. We assumed from what we saw that the child, who was still a minor, had become part of the flesh trade. Over the course of the project, a few more children left to “go back to their villages.” (This is not to suggest, though, that they, too, entered the same profession, for unlike the first participant, they were never seen again.) I was less troubled about the truth of what we were told and why than about the kinds of thoughts that must have run through the children’s minds as they made their choices.

How did they make their choices? This was my chief concern: How do these children perceive their lives and the environments in which they live, as well as the meaning and consequences of the choices they make? The current research is part of an organic work in progress—an attempt to understand some of the questions that had seized my mind a long time ago.

### **Narratives of Abuse, Violence, and Suffering**

Coming back to this work, made possible when my proposal was selected for a Sylff Research Abroad award, gave me an opportunity to carry out advanced research in the United Kingdom, where I was guided by scientists and teachers in the fields of psychology and childhood studies. A significant objective of my SRA project was to identify patterns from narratives created by children to understand their psychological development. For my fieldwork, participants were asked to take part in semi-structured interviews and story-telling sessions based on pictures that were presented to them.

Whether in reconstructing narratives from memories of lived experiences or in creating new tales for characters in their stories, the participants selected

and conveyed narratives that were indicative of abuse, violence, and suffering. This repetition of certain information emanating from the participants' memories defined and described their narratives. Understanding such field texts required a co-construction process based on familiarity with the field of research. Understanding violence starts from reading between the lines of what appears on tape in interviews and stories. The facts that are explicitly stated, though, helped me to categorize various expressions of violence. These categories may help lend meaning to the violence the participants recreate for their characters and elucidate the way they understand it in their own experiences.

Violence renders characters helpless. They protest but without support often succumb to the adversities in their environment. It entraps them:

*"He started to hit his son, saying that he should work. The son protested, since his sister was studying, and said that he wanted to study too. He did not want to go to work. But the father hits him again and forces him to work. The son is frustrated and sad. He isn't being allowed to do what he likes. He is not being allowed to gain an education or obtain a sense of security. The parents are forcing the son to do what they want. The boy weeps and cannot communicate." (Participant A, story, excerpt)*

The voice of the protestor surfaces but is silenced by authority—the father in this case. The "son is frustrated and sad" but has no resources that might extend support to him. In another story, the narrator finds his character equally distressed.

*"One day, the boy was sent home from school for not being able to pay the fees. He went to his father and requested that he pay the fees. The father said that he had no money and that all the money was gone. The boy had to leave school. The boy requested that the father take up a job and help support the family. The father slapped the boy and said, "Why should I work? You will work." And he sent the boy to a brick factory. The boy got 1000 or 2000 rupees a month. The father would snatch all the money from the boy and not even let him eat properly. The father would eat first and then give the leftovers to the son. The son was falling ill from not eating." (Participant B, story, excerpt)*

## Death of Aspirations

In the face of discouragement, constant pressure, and abuse, the protestor's voice is silenced. There is not only a metaphorical annihilation in terms of

communication but also a physical extinction in certain cases. This reiterates the sense of seclusion, isolation, and neglect that the participants often mention in the process of their interviews, too. Not many are willing to listen or interact, and possibly the protestor may stop protesting altogether.

In the case of the first example, the narrator ends the story by saying, “He cries and declares finally that he will work, for his sister’s sake. He goes to work.” (Participant A, interview, excerpt). The voice of the character of the child in the story—the protestor—is dead. Their voice is possibly just as dead as their aspirations to study. The lack of voice eventually becomes the loss of voice.

*“My parents have a fight between themselves. My mother works even in the night. My father comes in the morning and fights with her for money. He gambles and is unemployed. He comes home, eats, gambles, snatches money from my mother, and goes away. He does not let my mother sleep and hits her. I have tried so much to explain to him, but he will only beat me up. When I was seven, he hit my mother so badly that her skull cracked and was bleeding. I tried to stop him, but he slapped me so hard that I fear him from that day.”* (Participant B, interview, excerpt)

Reconstructing the experience, the participant mentions the atrocities and the efforts made to check them by trying to convince the father against torturing the mother but is beaten up in response. It seems that there is no one to whom the participant can reach out for support, none that is consciously available in the participant’s mind at least. In the lack of support and a sense of helplessness, there arises the emotion of fear, which eventually swallows the participant’s voice in expression.

### Perpetuation of Violence

In some cases, the expression of violence as a ‘should’ is also prevalent. This norm is in keeping with a social code of disciplining the child, for example: “If I were to choose between the father and the son, I would want to play the role of the father. I will have to become a father once I get married. I am hitting the boy because he doesn’t listen to me. I asked him to get a bucket from the market but he ran away.” (Participant C, story, excerpt)

It is as if, just like the character who feels he “will have to become a father” once he gets married, he will “have to” hit his children to help them learn. Another participant tells in a story, “If I were to play the role of the father, I would

hit my son, too. I would hit him, if there is a need, to get things done. Sometimes it is important to hit, or else children become disobedient.”

Very few cases look at violence through the lens of characters that resort to violence for the sake of it or for the fun of it. “There are some people who only need a trivial reason to pick up fights. They are always ready to fight.” (Participant D, interview, excerpt) The readiness to fight seems to be reason enough for a fight as well. Another participant says in a story, “And this older boy is now hitting the younger boy. The older boy just



*Children celebrating Durga Puja, the biggest festival of West Bengal, where the author conducted interviews for her research*

feels like it. The reason could be anything—he just feels like beating up this boy, or he may just feel like creating trouble. If he creates trouble, he will have fun.” Few in number, but qualitatively significant, is the concept of characters deriving pleasure from the troubles they create (usually for others). “We might wonder why the man should hit the boy at all; but the man might be enjoying this act of hitting a boy.” (Participant E, story, excerpt).

Succumbing to violence, whether as oppressor or oppressed, is the dominant pattern in most plots. The characters suffer physically through beatings, psychologically through trauma, and emotionally through frustration and anxiety. The characters’ sufferings could be reflective of the participants’ own suffering, including from the inability to choose more positive alternatives, even in the realm of imagination. I do not present these patterns as predictions about individual development or social adaptation. I only propose that these constructions be regarded as voices that demand understanding and keen attention. There must be an attempt to understand what the narratives mean to the ones making them. In the case of my research, an attempt has been made to understand the meaning of violence as a first step in understanding the environments within which these children live and grow.

### **Is Schooling Synonymous with Learning?**

In the recent past, the field of child development has been focusing on ap-

proaches to promote sustainable growth. While social theories and large-scale data have been constructively prevalent in India, so far, very little attention has been paid to children's development from the perspective of understanding the child's mind, emotions, and imagination. Well-meaning programs and policies have been formulated to accelerate growth in adverse conditions. In education, for example, programs have been introduced aimed at improving learning, such as a mid-day meal and free schooling until a certain age to promote education, especially for families in economically deprived conditions.

However, children may not necessarily equate schooling with learning. For example, in the course of data collection, some of my participants said that they would like to go to school, knowing that education is important, but also admitted that they are more interested in either the mid-day meal or in playing on the large school grounds from a lack of space in their own homes or their neighborhoods. The mid-day meal might thus help improve attendance at school but may not help improve learning. If school for these children means food and a place to play, then education will not be their first synonym for school. This is the dimension I hope to elucidate.

Such meanings will become clearer and more audible when the children are allowed to express and speak their minds. But sometimes, their realities are too difficult to share, even if they want to share them. In other parts of my research I have, therefore, analyzed the techniques of narrative construction as a means of expression and as clues to the understanding of the child. Henceforth, it would be interesting to explore and analyze the realm of the imagination and the use of it by children to renegotiate with their realities (or, maybe, to chance upon a completely new understanding).



May 20, 2013

## Japan's Ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

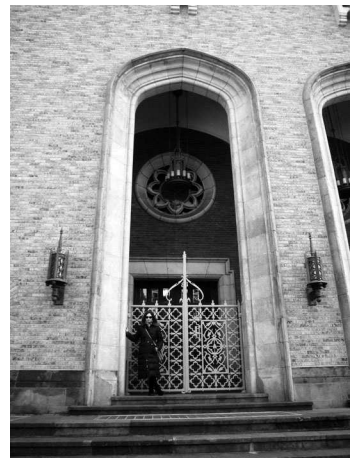
*Salla Garsky*

*Salla Garsky, a Sylff fellow at the University of Helsinki, used her Sylff Research Abroad (SRA) award to research the process of Japan's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). She presents an objective explanation of why Japan's ratification was prolonged until 2007 after voting for the Statute in 1998.*

The Rome Statute creating the International Criminal Court (ICC) was adopted in 1998 by 120 countries, including Japan. Since 2002, when the Rome Statute came into force, the ICC has been a permanent and independent institution. Its establishment was a historical achievement that permanently conferred jurisdiction to punish the masterminds behind heinous crimes, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression. No one who commits these crimes will thus be able to escape the consequences.

However, the power of the ICC depends entirely on member states because it has no resources of its own to make arrests and is financed by the state parties. Therefore, it is important to study the ratification process of the Rome Statute and explore potential obstacles for states' decision to join the ICC.

Japan acceded to the Statute fairly late. While most ICC member states had



*Salla Garsky, in front of the Okuma Auditorium at Waseda University's main campus.*

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*Salla Garsky Sylff fellow, 2011, University of Helsinki, Finland, where she is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of Political and Economic Studies. Was selected for a SRA award in February 2012 and conducted her research in Tokyo as an exchange researcher at the Waseda University School of Law.*

ratified it by 2003, Japanese ratification did not come until July 2007<sup>1</sup>. The objective of my research in Japan was to gather empirical evidence to answer the question: Why did it take almost 10 years for Japan to join an institution that it presumably supported from the beginning? Literature on Japan's accession to the ICC has thus far focused on the legal aspects<sup>2</sup>. My research is aimed at contributing a political aspect to this literature by analyzing different political motivations behind the ratification process. This short article discusses some of the findings of my research in Japan.

Although I am interested in the political aspects of the ratification process, it is impossible to deny the role of the legal aspects. When countries consider joining the ICC, amendments to national laws are usually necessary. The Japanese legal system is a mix of civil and common law, with civil law characteristics, adopted from the German legal system, dominating the system<sup>3</sup>. Japan's ratification of the Rome Statute required the deliberation of three main legal issues.



*The Peace Bell, which Salla rang on her trip to Hiroshima.*

First, Japan had to consider whether and how to accommodate the crimes under the jurisdiction of the ICC with the national Criminal Code, which is very specific and, as such, takes time to amend. As Arai et al. point out, Japan decided not to amend the Criminal Code because almost all

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection, "Status of Treaties," Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General, 2012. Available at: <http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ParticipationStatus.aspx> (visited March 8, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Kyo Arai, Akira Mayama, and Osamu Yoshida, "Accession of Japan to the International Criminal Court: Japan's Accession to the ICC Statute and the ICC Cooperation Law," *Japanese Yearbook of International Law*, 51 (2008): 359–383; Kanako Takayama, "Participation in the ICC and the National Criminal Law of Japan," *Japanese Yearbook of International Law*, 51 (2008): 348–408; Yasushi Masaki, "Japan's Entry to the International Criminal Court and the Legal Challenges It Faced," *Japanese Yearbook of International Law*, 51 (2008): 409–426; Jens Meierhenrich and Keiko Ko, "How Do States Join the International Criminal Court? The Implementation of the Rome Statute in Japan," *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 7/2 (2009): 233–256.

<sup>3</sup> Veronica Taylor, Robert R. Britt, Kyoko Ishida, and John Chaffee, "Introduction: Nature of the Japanese Legal System," *Business Law in Japan*, 1 (2008): 3–8; CIA, *The World Factbook: Legal System*, March 5, 2013. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2100.html> (visited March 8, 2013).

crimes under the ICC's jurisdiction, with a few, rather irrelevant exceptions, are already covered by Japanese laws.<sup>4</sup>

As Meierhenrich and Ko elaborate, another legal issue, related to the jurisdiction of the ICC, was Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution:

"Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."<sup>5</sup>

Because of this paragraph, legislating war-related laws was initially complicated, as this would imply the hypothetical possibility of Japan engaging in war-related activities. This obstacle, however, was overcome in 2004, when the Diet adopted a package of emergency legislation that enabled Japan to ratify the 1977 Additional Protocols of the Geneva Conventions.<sup>6</sup>

The last important legal issue was cooperation with the ICC, which Japan resolved by adopting the ICC Cooperation Law, consisting of 65 articles<sup>7</sup>. Altogether, the elaborate legal review of national laws and the Rome Statute, as well as the preparation of the ICC Cooperation Law, slowed down Japan's accession to the ICC.

Besides legal questions, according to the interviews I conducted in Japan, the US policy on the ICC also delayed ratification. While the Bill Clinton administration was not enthusiastic about the ICC, the George W. Bush administration was openly opposed, starting a global campaign against the ICC and not hesitating to voice its dismay about the institution in bilateral and multilateral forums<sup>8</sup>. Since the United States is Japan's most important ally, this US

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<sup>4</sup> Arai, Mayama, and Yoshida, "Japan's Accession," p. 365ff.

<sup>5</sup> The Constitution of Japan, November 3, 1946. Available at: <[http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution\\_and\\_government\\_of\\_japan/constitution\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html)> (visited March 8, 2013).

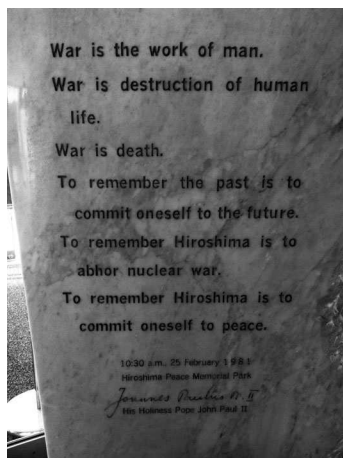
<sup>6</sup> Meierhenrich and Ko, "Rome Statute in Japan," p. 237ff.

<sup>7</sup> Takayama, "Participation in the ICC," p. 388.

<sup>8</sup> John R. Bolton, "Letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan," *Digest of United States Practice in International Law* 2002, Sally J. Cummins and David P. Stewart, eds., 148–149, Office of the Legal Adviser, United States Department of State (Washington, D.C.: International Law Institute, 2002); H.R. 4775, Title II, American Service-Members' Protection Act (Washington D.C.: Congress of the United States of America, January 23, 2002); H.R. 4818, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005. Washington D.C.: Congress of the United States of America, January 20, 2004; Human Rights First, "U.S. Threatens

policy affected Japan's willingness to join the ICC. The US opposition against the ICC started to ease after 2005, though, when the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC. Shortly thereafter, Japan started to consider ratifying the Rome Statute.<sup>9</sup>

Another aspect that delayed Japan's ratification of the Rome Statute was money. Due to its high gross domestic income, Japan was slated to become the



*Words of Pope John Paul II to the people of Hiroshima, which have been the beacon guiding Salla's research.*

main contributor to the ICC. Article 117 of the Rome Statute, defining the assessment of the contribution, left some room for interpretation, and Japan initially calculated that its contribution to the ICC would be 28% of the total budget.

Japan wanted to apply the UN ceiling of 22% to its ICC contribution, but the European Union hesitated to accept the proposal. Eventually, the ICC Assembly of States Parties approved the 22% ceiling, and ratification began to materialize.<sup>10</sup>

To conclude, unlike the European countries, most of which wanted to join the ICC quickly in order to show their support for the new Court, Japan was not in a hurry to ratify the Rome Statute. Rather, Japan wanted to wait and see how the newly established ICC would develop before it

joined. In general, there was not much political pressure in Japan to join the ICC, but the UN Security Council's referral of the Darfur case to the ICC clearly had a positive influence on Japan's decision.

The impact of the Jun'ichiro Koizumi administration on the ratification process has not yet been researched in depth, and this will be the subject of my future research. Tentatively, the delay in ratification can be explained in terms of the Japanese way of dealing with international treaties, which was described in many of the interviews I conducted.

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to Cut Aid to Countries That Support the ICC," December 7, 2004. Available at: <[http://www.iccnw.org/documents/HRF\\_Nethercutt\\_07Dec04.pdf](http://www.iccnw.org/documents/HRF_Nethercutt_07Dec04.pdf)> (visited March 8, 2013); John R. Bolton, "American Justice and the International Criminal Court: Remarks at the American Enterprise Institute," Washington, D.C., November 3, 2003; Philip T. Reeker, "Press Statement: U.S. Initiative on the International Criminal Court," U.S. Department of State, June 13, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Masaki, "Japan's Entry to the ICC," p. 418ff.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 415ff.

## VOICES FROM THE SYLFF COMMUNITY

Today, Japan is an active member of the ICC, and one of the Judges, Kuniko Ozaki, is Japanese. I hope that in the future, Japan will start to actively promote the ICC in Asia, as the region is clearly underrepresented in the organization.

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