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Introduction to Special Issue

Japan as Studied in Japan's Neighbors and Japan Itself

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This special issue highlights one of the important subjects of this journal, Japanese politics and international relations, as studied in Japan's neighbors, Korea and China, and Japan itself. The aim is to elucidate the angles taken by these three countries when examining Japan.¹ Before going into the similar and different angles taken, it may be helpful to note two noteworthy features of their interactions and transactions. They are, first, the steady integration of these economies and societies; second, the tenacity of ill-feelings held toward Japan. First, if the lifting in 1991 of the embargo imposed on China for its Tiananmen massacre of 1989 is a key benchmark for the steady and swift regional integration in East Asia since, it did not take a dozen years before the intra-regional trade ratio over total trade went beyond 50%. As compared to parallel figures for Europe at various time points, say 1962 when the Rome Treaty was signed and 1990 when the Maastricht Treaty was signed, the number of years necessary for intraregional trade over total trade to exceed 50% are a dozen years for East Asia versus thirty odd years for Western Europe. It has a lot to do with the pattern of inclusion in East Asian regional integration. It includes China and the United States. In Europe regional integration was meant to enable Western Europe to stand alone. Both *vis-à-vis* the United States and *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union, Western Europe wanted to band together and bind together those with shared values. East Asian regional integration differs from this European model. The East Asian model is first to strengthen themselves, while seeking opportunities regionally and globally to attain, as a result of their self-strengthening strategy, high regional strength and high regional integration.²

¹ The workshop which led to the special issue was organized by the University of Niigata Prefecture with financial assistance extended by the Japan Foundation. It was held on October 16, 2009 at the University of Niigata Prefecture.

² As for the primarily 'functional' integration strategy adopted in East Asia, see Takashi Inoguchi, 'Europe to Asia no chiikiteki ketsugou (Regional Integration in Europe and Asia), *Gakujutsu no doko* (Science Council of Japan Forum), May 2009, pp. 10–13.

All three countries adopt their respective global strategies, while their regional harmony strategy somehow lags far behind. Only recently do the heads of the three countries meet annually. Needless to say, of late regional coordination and regulation to guide economic, technological, and financial movements in the region have become dense. But it is not meant to shape an integrated region on the basis of values, norms, and rules.³ Second, shared values are not made to be the basis of regional integration. Communist parties reign in China and North Korea. Capitalism of various kinds thrives. And democracy has strong local characteristics, often with diluted content.⁴ One of the few value elements that makes East Asia somewhat different from Western Europe is the salience of the history issue.⁵ The fact that Japan and Korea on the one hand and Japan and China on the other organized respective bi-national research commissions reveals that they find that the history issue is perhaps affecting negatively what they each strive to achieve. While in the world Japan is positively received in almost all the countries, Korea and China retain overall negative feelings toward Japan according to the AsiaBarometer survey conducted annually from 2003 through 2008.⁶ Whereas China is enthusiastically liked by some countries in Asia, China is clearly disliked by other countries in Asia; so is the United States. The Japanese pattern is unique in a sense. One of the explanations offered lately is Asia's ontological security.⁷ By this is meant that when the meaning of the arduous modern nation-building in an international environment of Western dominance is questioned and almost denied because of their war against the Allied Powers in the Second World War, their historical interpretation squeaks. Turkey and Japan belong to this pattern. Both countries have been very successful in their modernization. But Turkey and Japan cannot lean to one side. They sit uneasily between achieving Westernization and retaining cherished identity and indigenuity.⁸

³ In the immediate post-Cold War years, the Asian values thrust was made by some Malaysian and Singaporean leaders. As for the non-predominance of Asian values among Asian citizens. See Jean Blondel and Takashi Inoguchi, *Political Cultures in Asia and Europe* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁴ As for the diversifying profile of East Asian regime types, see Satoru Mikami and Takashi Inoguchi, 'Diagnosing the Micro Foundation of Democracy in Asia: Evidence from the AsiaBarometer Survey, 2003–2008', in Yin-Wah Chu and Siulong Wong (eds.), *East Asia's New Democracies* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 246–92.

⁵ As for the Japanese conceptions of the history issue, see Takashi Inoguchi, 'How to Assess World War II in World History: One Japanese Perspective', in David Koh (ed.), *Legacies of World War II in South and East Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2007), pp. 138–51.

⁶ Tanaka Akihiko, 'Ajiashokoku niokeru kakukoku nitaisuru eikyouryoku no ninchi nituite, Kyoutsu seronchousa bunseki' (On the Perception of Each Country's Impact among Asian Countries), *Ajia Jihou*, 37(5) (2006): 20–45

As for the AsiaBarometer survey, see Takashi Inoguchi, 'The AsiaBarometer: Its Aim, Its Scope and Its Development', *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 5(1): 179–96; Takashi Inoguchi and Seiji Fujii, 'The AsiaBarometer: Its Aim, Its Scope and Its Development', in Valerie Moller, Denis Huschka, and Alex C. Michalos (eds.), *Barometers of Quality of Life Around the Globe* (Springer, 2008), pp. 187–232.

⁷ Ayşe Zarakol, 'Ontological Security and State Denial of Historical Crime: Turkey and Japan', *International Relations*, 24(1) (2010): 3–23.

⁸ Note intermittent uneasiness is manifested in the controversies of whether the secular Republic Constitution accommodates the Islamic female head scarf for public figures in Turkey and whether

The seven articles assembled here do not further examine the above-mentioned two features. Their primary and exact aim is to survey Japanese studies in political science and international relations in their respective style and format. Yet it would be good for readers to keep in mind the underlying currents of Japanese studies carried out in Japan and its neighbors. What follows are one Japan–Korea–China comparison of Japanese political studies/international relations, two Korean papers, two Chinese papers, and two Japanese papers. Keisuke Iida gives a first insight into three-country comparison in terms of quantity and quality as well as in relation to Japanese political developments and developments in other areas. Cheolhee Park surveys thriving Japanese studies in Korea with clarity and competence. SeungWon Suh and SangJoon Kim survey Korean works on Japanese international relations in significant depth and width. It might come as a surprise to some readers to find that Koreans have dug this far. Helped by their linguistic capacity, in the future Koreans might play a similar role as the Poles used to play in Russian/Soviet studies. Dingping Guo surveys Chinese works in Japanese politics with good comparative eyes. He has published books not only on Japanese politics, but also on Korean politics and on Chinese politics. Jiangyong Liu surveys Chinese works on Japanese international relations in good harmony with the Chinese party line. The focus is on the bilateral relations between Japan and China. Takashi Inoguchi surveys Japanese works on Japanese politics circa 2000, highlighting emerging subjects and methods, the steady increase in comparative politics, the growing trend to historicize Japanese politics, and the construction of the research infrastructure. Koji Murata surveys Japanese works on Japanese international relations. He focuses on the bilateral relations between Japan and the United States. Murata argues that the Japanese work on Japanese foreign policy without too much delving into international security environments. Together the seven articles making up this special issue give ample food for thought when examining and contemplating why the three get along with each other most of the time, whereas at other times they are simply at odds.

Japanese public figures pay a visit to the Shintoist Yasukuni Shrine where some war-crime-tainted military and officials were buried along with millions of war dead.