

The Co-evolution of Korea and Japan for a New Era

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“The Co-evolution of Korea and Japan for a New Era”

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This special report is the translation of a report first produced in Korean and published on August 28, 2015. The Korean language version can be viewed by clicking [here](#). 2015 represented the 70th anniversary of Korea's independence from Japanese colonialism and the 50th anniversary of the normalization of relations between the Republic of Korea and Japan. In light of this significant year and given the deteriorated state of ROK-Japan relations, EAI researchers held a series of roundtable discussions on how the two countries could put their past behind them and work together towards furthering peace and prosperity in East Asia. This report is the product of their discussions and not only outlines the current issues in the relationship but also offers policy alternatives for opening a new era in ROK-Japan relations.

Introduction

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (ROK · KOREA) AND JAPAN celebrated the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations and the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II at a time when the relationship between the ROK and Japan is at its lowest point ever since normalization of relations. The two countries could not catch up with the quickly rolling wheel of history. Even though a significant amount of time has passed, the relationship between both countries has taken a turn for the worse. East Asia in the twenty-first century is undergoing a civilizational transformation. East Asian states have yet to move on

from the past paradigm of seeking national prosperity and military power (or “rich nation, strong army”) which focuses on individual nations despite the fact that it no longer fits into the current environment. Given the challenges of this transformation, both the ROK and Japan have to face the fact that they must meet each other anew. The reason that the East Asia Institute (EAI) has prepared a new report in the midst of the countless conferences and reports released in 2015 is that both countries must go beyond improving bilateral relations and think in macroscopic terms of the whole region with a long-term vision to readjust the goals, values, and roles of the relationship in order to contribute to initiating new era in ROK-Japan relations.

What we mean by civilizational transformation in the twenty-first century is that the past international system, characterized by the struggle for and balance of power wherein each individual nation was caught in a heated competition with other nations for its national interest, is changing in terms of actors, stages, and performances. Both inside and outside of countries, the influence of non-state actors is growing and stages such as climate change, culture, technology, and others are newly emerging while the traditional pursuits of wealth and power persist. The time has come in which complex roles for global interests for competition, cooperation, and symbiosis are being considered and not just national interests. Even in East Asia, power transition caused by China's rapid rise is happening right in the middle of the U.S. and China's traditional balance of power. Meanwhile diverse issue areas such as trade, finance, development, climate change, environmental pollution, energy, and culture are becoming more complex. This leads to overlapping issue areas for local governments, citizen associations, multinational corporations, and NGOs which are solving these issues through horizontal and flexible networks leading to a new international order of governance, rather than simply participating in discussions on these issues. Major nations are sensing a time of change where intense competition, the balance of power, and network governance are mixing with each other and showing an aspect of fierce competition while earnestly working to build regional orders to maximize their own national interests. The U.S. is putting up the banner of "re-balance to Asia" and joining the region in diverse ways while China is using flashy language such as "amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness," "a community of common destiny," and "One Belt, One Road" to describe their foreign policy as both countries try to hold onto regional leadership. Neighboring Japan, under the banner of making "proactive contributions to peace,"

clarified that it seeks to become a normal country while at the same time trying to solve regional and global issues through deepening of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

The effort to bring the whole region together is more important than the competitive aspect of the current order where each individual state thinks only in terms of its individual survival. From this point of view, ROK-Japan relations must seek new goals, values, and roles. In order to construct the complex order of East Asia with the value of symbiosis, the status of ROK-Japan relations should be reset and filled with new contents. Now is the time for Korea and Japan to both earnestly reflect on and discuss the future of their relationship and prepare a vision for a new standard of the future by tidying up the past.

In 1965 both South Korea and Japan decided to put aside the heavy baggage of the past and normalize diplomatic relations as both countries needed each other for the sake of prosperity within the Cold War order. Through economic cooperation with Japan, Korea was able to industrialize while Japan was able to become Korea's biggest trading partner, augmenting the gains of economic cooperation. Furthermore, as allies of the U.S. within the Cold War system, the two countries steadily built up security cooperation while acting in unison as an anti-communist bulwark in the region. Within the scope of these shared benefits, Korea and Japan consistently devoted effort to converging historical perceptions; the 1992 Kono Statement, the 1995 Murayama Statement, the 1998 Joint Declaration for a New Japan-Republic of Korea Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century, and the Kan Statement can be counted as some definite accomplishments.

Nevertheless, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, East Asia's strategic environment is changing. The rise of China along with Japan's long-term economic recession, Korea entering a period of slow economic growth, and the resurgence of nationalism, are



causing East Asia to undergo a process of dynamic change. The combined impact of these issues have made it difficult to foster bilateral relations between Japan and Korea and they can no longer follow the algorithms of the past which called for the exclusive pursuit of national interests. However, the setting and pushing forward of strategic goals by the current governments of both countries are assuming a considerably outdated tinge. The Abe government is actively seeking to become a “normal nation” using the logic of national prosperity through “Abenomics” and the logic of security through its military rearmament and the strengthening of its alliance with the U.S. Domestically the Abe government is deploying identity politics based on rightwing nationalism. Basing its stance on anti-Japanese nationalism, the Park Geun-hye government’s adherence to a firm position on historical issues has consequentially weakened its policy flexibility and resulted in restricted choices in its strategic space. In this context, if we look at ROK-Japan relations, tensions can be temporarily alleviated according to the situation, but it will be difficult to fully open up a new era of cooperation.

If both the ROK and Japan face the future of East Asia without a conceptual shift, their relationship will undergo structural risk beyond simple tensions and conflict. We are able to identify three potential international political risks by reflecting on coming future events. The first is the security conflict between nations. While twenty-first century East Asia took on a new aspect in which the emerging power China is challenging the established powers of the United States and Japan, both the U.S. and China have agreed in principle to build “new superpower relations” of peace, confidence, and cooperation and are carefully developing their relationship unlike the unfortunate historical precedents of other major power relationships. However, within the framework of deep-rooted mutual dis-

trust, the relationship between the ROK-U.S.-Japan cooperation network and China carries the risk of causing a security dilemma through an arms race. Second is interest conflict. Since the end of the Cold War, economic interdependence in Asia-Pacific region has grown rapidly, but as shown in the examples of potential conflicts between the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), economic cooperation among the countries shows the tendency of a “zero-sum” game rather than “win-win” competition. Meanwhile, cooperation on emerging stages, such as urgent climate change and environmental issues, and advanced technology and knowledge is not showing the same rapid progress as that made on cooperation for economic symbiosis. Especially, as the convention has been dominated by great powers, if international affairs are excessively viewed from the security perspective, it will be difficult to create a framework of cooperation based on interests. The third is emotional conflict. If ROK-Japan relations and China-Japan relations, which are marred by memory and identity conflicts developed during poor relations during the Cold War and the modern transitional periods, continue to be unable to depart from emotional conflict, Asian exceptionalism, which is characterized by the inability to promote mutual cooperation and trust, will never disappear. If this is the case, then not only will it have a negative impact on ROK-China-Japan trilateral relations as well as Asian regional cooperation in general, but it could also open up the possibility of security conflicts and even armed conflict.

Both the ROK and Japan should build a relationship to assure that the trilateral ROK-U.S.-Japan relationship does not form a confrontational relationship with China which would lead to the deterioration of security, interest, and emotional tensions, that inter-

est-based cooperation can be maximized to form a symbiotic environment, and that the new complex order can be established to relax emotional conflicts by transforming national identities into a regional identity. Also, both countries should focus their bilateral relationship on building a complex new order which can combine individual national identities into a regional identity and ease emotional confrontations. These goals cannot simply be achieved by the coordination of individual policies between the two countries. Domestically, they should move beyond exclusive nationalism and build the foundation of “global nationalism” which moves toward symbiosis. At the same time, externally, both countries should co-evolve by preparing a complex diplomatic paradigm. New ROK-Japan relations can be realized by the two countries co-evolving to build a complex new order in East Asia.

Searching for this co-evolution aimed at building a new East Asian order through reflecting on coming up future events begins by carefully diagnosing the circumstances of twenty-first century East Asia. First, in Section II, we will provide an outlook of the future. Given the competition between the U.S. “rebalance to Asia” policy and the “new type of great power relations” policy of China surrounding the establishment of the East Asian regional order and after analyzing the dynamics of the U.S.-China relationship, the inherent systematic factors of East Asia, three domestic political factors, and three risks that East Asia may face, we will suggest corresponding tasks. Section III will diagnosis the present state of ROK-Japan relations from a historical perspective, and analyze the background and factors of the degeneration in relations. Then, a short-term prescription will be offered. Additionally, forward-looking and comprehensive public diplomatic methods will be examined. Section IV will suggest measures to overcome past history issues using multi-lateral approaches such as gathering historical recogni-

tion, soothing historical conflict, realizing the reconciliation of history, and constructing a collective identity. Finally, in the conclusion, a “three-track” approach will be suggested beyond the current “two-track” promoted by the governments of both countries as methods to overcome risk in the future. First, cooperation to expand both countries’ common benefits in security, prosperity, and the emerging stages; second, a proposal for avoiding mutual stimulation, healing inherent factors, and reconciling history; third, efforts to construct a collective identity of nations and regions in long term; these three approaches may contribute in constructing a better ROK-Japan relationship and a new East Asian order.

The Future Landscape of East Asia and ROK-Japan Relations

Competition between U.S. and China over the Construction of the East Asian Order

Following the end of the Cold War, a firm unipolar system centered on the U.S. was maintained for about ten years. However, with the rise of terrorism and the resultant war on terror, international opposition to the unilateral military actions of the U.S., and the 2008 financial crisis, the unipolar system has deteriorated considerably. There was an inevitable balancing mechanism for the hegemonic U.S. in the unipolar system, and the system also declined due to the overwhelming nature of the U.S. trying to manage the variety of problems that arose in the twenty-first century on its own. After suffering through a financial crisis, the U.S. could not help but enter a process of adjustment in which it had to focus on its core interests on the international level. With the steadily growing importance of East Asia in the world economy, the U.S. decided to pursue the rebalance to Asia policy by investing a larger



amount of resources in this now indispensable region as it sought to revive its hegemonic position.

The rise of the importance of East Asia in U.S. diplomatic strategy is also influenced by China's growing strength. The rapid and continuous economic growth of China has not only increased its economic might, but also its diplomatic and military capabilities. China has advanced a variety of strategies in light of the economic crisis to increase its own regional and global influence, and one aspect in particular appears to be challenging the American led order. China has been making a push for the realization of its mid and long-term goal of the "Chinese Dream" as it attempts to overcome the national difficulties it has suffered since the middle of the nineteenth century and into the modern era. As China goes through the process of reaching the China Dream, which calls for the rise to the status of a powerful state realized through Chinese nationalism by the 100th anniversary of the founding of the country in 2049, the plan for building a regional order in East Asia is also taking shape.

U.S.-Sino relations went through a variety of changes during the beginning of the twenty-first century. Especially after the economic crisis in 2008, China at first pushed an aggressive strategy of challenging the American led order, but then in 2009 shifted in the direction of pursuing coexistence with the U.S. In 2013 at the U.S.-China summit, both countries shared their vision for a "new type of great power relations" as they constructed a consensus on their desire to avoid falling into the Thucydides trap which posits that power transition between two strong countries will boil over into a hegemonic war. This confirmed both countries basic position that they would not clash or fight militarily, and were seeking mutual respect and win-win cooperation. However, considering that China is currently widening the scope of its core interests with its increased power thus invoking the U.S. desire to place checks on China,

whether or not the vision of the new type of great power relations policy is something that can be applied to real issues in the long run should be considered

It is difficult to predict how the balance of power shift between the U.S. and China will conclude over the mid to long-term. Both countries are exceptional great powers, a title that is uncommon in human history, and both have histories that are difficult to generalize. The U.S. is looking to strengthen its bonds with existing allies and strengthen cooperation with new strategic partners. The strategy calls for the sharing of strategic visions and interests with countries in East Asia which neighbor China and for them to together peacefully absorb the influence exerted by a rising China which is causing changes to the status quo.

On the other hand, China is pushing, on the basis of a peaceful rise narrative, a great country strategy which seeks to realize the Chinese Dream. On the one hand China is pursuing a counter approach to control U.S. containment in the west Pacific through Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD), while on the other hand China is firmly seeking bilateral, mini-lateral, and multilateral institutions so it can maximize its economic means on a regional level. While paying close attention to the U.S. centered bilateral alliance system, China has proposed new China-centered multilateral institutions including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) as an alternative. The Xi Jinping government has pushed the "peripheral diplomacy" based on amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness, and has stepped up with a charm offensive for persuading others that the rise of China is a peaceful rise. Recently, a genuine start is being made through the "One Belt, One Road" strategy which links land and maritime Silk Roads. The One Belt, One Road initiative, which aims to create multi-layered economic cooperation centered on China with

countries to its west, goes through west Asia including India, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. The target area of One Belt, One Road spans 86 countries and China is proposing active investment and cooperation on infrastructure as inducements. China is increasing the opportunities for strategic cooperation with these countries and has also been able to safely procure energy imports from the Middle East on the basis of these economic inducements. Additionally, China has been able to expand its regional strategy that was originally limited to East Asia on the global level while at the same time has also been able to cooperate with non-Asian regions in the global governance of various areas which are led by the U.S. China has on the one hand been strengthening its command over the South China Sea which is the maritime foothold of the One Belt, One Road strategy, and on the other hand is organizing the strategy's institutional environment with the establishment of the AIIB. In 2015 following the apprehension over the stock market and other factors, China's economic growth prospects have become unclear and China is also faced with the need to ease into a "new normal" which is aimed at strengthening domestic consumption. In the middle of all this, China is pursuing the goal of fostering an external environment conducive to continuous economic growth through the One Belt, One Road policy.

These strategies of the U.S. and China seem to have an ambivalent form of cooperation and conflict. In the past, rising countries have refused to be included in the order of the existing hegemon and instead pursued an alternative international order. However, China is successfully leading a development strategy within the America centered market order. In addition, economic interdependence between the U.S. and China has deepened and they have a considerable degree of common interest. They have also assumed common issues that they should solve together. For example, the

Strategic and Economic Dialogue which has been held by the U.S. and China since 2009 shows the amount of issues the two countries have in common. During the Strategic and Economic Dialogue held in June 2015 there was a total of 127 sessions and discussions were held on a variety of issues including security, economics, environmental issues, energy, cyber security, private exchanges, among others. Especially the issues of the environment and energy had risen to become so important that roughly one-third of the sessions dealt with these topics, and these issues can be said to be problems that both countries along with East Asia and the entire world need to solve together. Both countries are simultaneously promoting their interests and providing common principles that they can agree on which is thus pushing forward a multilayer conversation.

However, the truth is that the core interests of the U.S. and China are colliding with each other. The South China Sea and cyber security are representative issues of this problem. The U.S. suspects China of constantly hacking its core governmental agencies while China argues the U.S. collection of data is ruining the global information order. The South China Sea is a problem where the strategies of the U.S. and China in East Asia are coming into acute conflict with each other. China is expressing its position that the area inside of the so-called nine dash line is its own territorial waters and recently China has seen its interests collide with those who also have a stake in the region including Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and others. In the South China Sea especially, policies actively declaring sovereignty over territory are being pushed into other topics such as oil rig construction, land reclamation, or the deployment of weapons. The U.S. is adhering to a principle of nonintervention in sovereignty disputes, but the U.S. is also advocating for adherence to the freedom of navigation principle and supporting its allies. The U.S. is considering the strate-



gic implications in the case of China successfully taking possession of a large part of the South China Sea. Accordingly, on the one hand the U.S. is strengthening its economic and military support of the Philippines and Vietnam as well as others, and on the other hand is welcoming actions such as the Philippines moves to file a suit against China with the International Court of Justice and Japan's expressions of its willingness to intervene in the situation. At the same time, the U.S. is trying to make sure its policy on the South China Sea does not make it seem like it is pursuing a policy of laying siege to China, and it seems the U.S. position is that a principle based multilateral effort is needed and that it is not an issue for only those countries directly involved.

While recognizing that competition over East Asia is inevitable, it seems the two countries are tending to have reasonable and practical competition based on principles they can share and emphasizing conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent the emergence of unwanted clashes. This is positive in that this change will not cause direct confrontation over the short-term. However, the key points are whether or not the two can continue to agree on common principles and whether or not this kind of conflict is placing too large of a strategic burden on neighboring countries. For example, in the South China Sea China is stating that it is completely abiding by the freedom of navigation in international waters principle. China's interpretation on military surveillance activities inside exclusive economic zones also is also in conflict with that of the U.S. While appearing to accept the American statement that it is acting based on principle, a serious conflict is also being pushed. This is making it difficult to predict how the conflict between the U.S. and China will unfold from here on out. But there are reasons to be positive including the rejection by both countries of the idea of solving their differences based on military might and power and they are engaging in needed mutual cooperation as they

pursue processes to deal with the immense economic issues they both face. As the U.S. is reducing its military spending in order to solve its huge budget deficit, it is maintaining a cooperative relationship with China. China as well, in order to improve the constitution of its economy and deliver constant development during the new normal period, needs a stable external environment. These factors will serve as a continuous structural barrier to prevent the breakdown of the U.S.-China relationship for a considerable period of time.

Henceforth, the future order of East Asia will be formed in the midst of cooperation and competition between the U.S. and China with their new foreign policies including the U.S. rebalance to Asia policy and China's new form of great power relations and neighborhood diplomacy. The U.S., which is grounded in markets, democracy, and human rights, is doing its utmost to secure strengthened bilateral relationships with its existing allies and new strategic partners, and maintain its structural power in East Asia's diverse multilateralism. It is restraining China's changes to the military status quo and seeking to include China into the existing order through a rule based transition. The U.S. is inducing China so that even as it rises to become a great power, it will not challenge the established order and accept the standards the U.S. has long advocated.

China, on the other hand, is trying its utmost to push the U.S. out of the western Pacific and secure influence over the regions inside the first and second island chains which were devised by strategists of the People's Liberation Navy. China is also seeking to acquire territorial waters inside its nine dash line in the South China Sea and succeed with its One Belt, One Road initiative to expand its influence in areas to the west of China. Furthermore, as it competes with the U.S. on the global level China is offering an alternative order as it rises to the level of a globally powerful state. As it goes through these processes, it is seeking to sta-

bilize the new normal economy and provide continuous economic development. Domestically China is pursuing a strategy that can maintain a stable one party system under the Communist Party.

In order for the building of the order between the U.S. and China to co-evolve peacefully, the first and most important priority should be an effort to maintain the new form of great power relations. If the power transition turns into a military clash and a war easily arises, this would bring about consequences to the entire world that could not be undone. Second, both countries need to do their utmost to avoid unwanted and accidental conflicts and escalation of sensitive issues. To do this, ample amounts of dialogue and trust-building measures are needed during ordinary times and preparation of reaction plans is required in case a crisis arises. Third, both countries need to climb out of the security dilemma. China has been criticizing the U.S. as a status quo challenging agent which seeks to frustrate China's rise as it views the U.S. intervention in Asia as unjust. On the contrary, the U.S. sees China as trying to thwart the U.S. strategy through aggressive attempts to change the status quo as the scope of Chinese core interests gradually widens. Even if neither country is unilaterally aggressive or tries to change the status quo, given the difficulty of predicting the future of U.S.-China relations preparations for the worst scenario should be made and balancing of the uncertainty should be pursued. Considering that there is no third power that can solve the security dilemma of these two great powers, many are concerned about how the architecture of the U.S.-China regional order will be concluded.

The Strategic Space of Korea and Japan

The competition over the regional order architecture of East Asia between the U.S. and China is on the one hand a serious challenge for the countries of East Asia,

and on the other hand an opportunity. This is because, due to their mutual distrust, the U.S. and China seem high-handed as they are coercing the countries of East Asia into making strategic decisions. But at the same time opportunities are available since the two countries also seem conciliatory as they are providing many concessions and benefits in an effort to gain favor with these East Asian states. China is using its economic might as a foundation to strengthen its charm offensive as it seeks to convince other countries that its rise is a peaceful one. The U.S. is doing its best to accommodate the demands of its allies while making efforts to share its vision and policies toward China.

After the end of the Cold War, Japan has made a steady effort toward realizing the national effort to become a normal country. As the U.S.-China power struggle reaches its stride, Japan has had a great opportunity fall into its lap. Even with pressure from China, Japan is able to secure the power, especially the economic power, needed to survive, and as it accepts the U.S. rebalance to Asia strategy it is also securing the asset of security. Therefore, as it sacrifices some cooperation with China, it is leaning in the direction of increasing its national security through the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The Abe administration is taking advantage of the territorial dispute in the East China Sea and historical disputes with China in order to steadily strengthen its alliance with the U.S. and remove legal restrictions that serve as obstacles to strengthening its national security. Japan has been succeeding in changing the interpretation of its right to exercise collective self-defense. Japan has been revising a variety of laws on security which will allow it to pursue its goal of becoming a normal military country or even allow it to become a military great power. During this process, Japan has been actively supporting the U.S. rebalance to Asia strategy while also pushing a much tougher strategy toward China than the strategic coop-



eration approach of the U.S. Japan is using this firmer China policy because the effort to move toward becoming a normal country can be justified both at home and abroad if the China threat exists and is growing. It is very likely that until Japan can realize its goal, it will continue to have a more active interpretation of the U.S. rebalance to Asia than the U.S. itself and exert great effort toward realizing its goal.

The strategic distrust between the U.S. and China and the competition between the two over the architecture of the regional order is presenting a very serious dilemma to Korea. Compared with Japan, Korea is relatively less powerful, and not only is Korea closer geographically but is also in a very sensitive position within the U.S.-China rivalry. Moreover, Korea is a divided country that is in a situation where the surrounding great powers may abuse that state of division which places a large burden on Korea in the midst of the U.S.-China tensions. Additionally, Korea is facing the threat of North Korean weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons and missiles in addition to constant North Korean provocations. With Korea also needing to achieve unification, cooperation with both the U.S. and China is an essential prerequisite for realizing this goal; strategic cooperation with China is especially needed given its alliance with North Korea. In order to complete the goals of denuclearizing North Korea, leading improved inter-Korean relations, and realizing unification, Korea has no choice but to strengthen strategic cooperation with China. The Korean position can come into direct confrontation with the China policy of Japan and may also seem to be deviating from the American China policy as well. It is very likely that given the state of a power struggle between the U.S. and China, Korea and Japan's differing structure of interests may result in a variation in each country's vision and perspective on the architecture of the East Asian order.

Structural Constraints

The legacy of the inherently incomplete modernization of East Asia and the current socio-economic problems that are unfolding on the global level are simultaneously exerting influence on the competition between the major powers over the architecture of the regional order in the twenty-first century. First we can take a look at the system instability as an intrinsic variable that affected East Asia during its modernization process. East Asia has been saddled with inherent problems in the region which are a result of going through a rapid and compressed transition into the modern international order from the traditional hierarchical order which lasted through the mid-nineteenth century and was historically based on the principle of Sino-centralism with the remainder of the world being understood as barbaric. The transition to the Westphalian sovereign nation-state system which was imposed on Asia by the West was a manifestation of modern imperialism and it did not take place quickly. It was not until after the end of World War II when the vestiges of western imperialism were finally gone that countries in the region had a chance to agree on the boundaries between territory and people and accepted the modern standard of respecting the mutual equality of each other's sovereignty.

The San Francisco Conference of 1951 was the occasion on which Japanese territory that had been forcibly annexed was newly demarcated while at the same time Japan returned to the status of a normal country and promised to respect mutual sovereignty. However, the logic of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War interfered with the process of moving beyond imperialism and colonialism in East Asia and resulted in Japan struggling to completely leave behind its imperialist ambitions. Division became a fixture in Korea and China. The vestiges of Japanese imperialism were not

removed and territorial disputes including those over Dokdo, the South China Sea, and Japan's northern islands remain unresolved to this day. For this reason, the order of modern nation-state in East Asia was not fully completed as clearly defined territorial boundaries were not established. As a result, Korea and China have had to deal with the problem of historical borders that are not in accordance with the current state or national borders. This means that conflicting entities have been competing to be recognized as the only lawful sovereign state in international society, a situation that is quite abnormal. The countries of East Asia have been inclined toward modern international politics including the forming of multilateral institutions, alliances, and the balance of power, but, given the incompleteness of the sovereignty of each unit, the stability of the Westphalian system could not be enjoyed and instead an international political order with a series of conflicts and tension has been maintained.

As the Cold War came to a close, China has been earnestly seeking unification with Taiwan, Japan has been pushing for its return to a normal country, and the ROK has been trying to strengthen its influence on a weakened North Korea while also attempting to achieve unification. Within these pursuits of each country, a fierce game over sovereignty has complicated the conditions of post-Cold War international politics. China cannot help but compete with Taiwan's benefactor the U.S. in its quest for unification while Japan, in order to push forward its goal of becoming a normal country, has been put in a position where it should prevent China's checks and strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance. Accordingly, competition between China and Japan is structurally inevitable and a structure of cooperation is becoming very difficult to envision. Korea, however, needs the cooperation of the U.S. and especially China for improving inter-Korean relations and unification, but this is at odds with Japan's

strategy. On the one hand, Korea and Japan are afraid that China, who was traditionally an imperial country, will again have imperialistic aspirations as it seeks to become a unified and strong state, included as part of the Chinese Dream. On the other hand, Korea and China are concerned that a normal Japan may revive its nineteenth century imperialist vigor. In short, we can say that the doubt, confrontation, and tension between Korea, China, and Japan is the structural state of international politics in East Asia given that each country has never historically recognized each other as a completely established modern nation-state.

Another structural factor that is causing instability is the result of a more universal and global trend. This is the trap in domestic politics which is brought about by the phenomena of low growth, aging, and polarization. Following the 2008 crisis, the possibility of another financial crisis has markedly weakened, but the world economy has yet to find new growth engines and is in a state of stagnation. The great imbalance, which arose during the golden age of capitalism in the latter half of the twentieth century through the accumulation of a huge amount of assets, which are no longer producing any returns, is bringing about a state of deflation and stagnation in accordance with an aging and polarized society. The current economic growth rate in China in 2015 has slowed down to 7.4 percent and Europe, which has been dealing with the situation in Greece, is experiencing a long period of stagnation that is incomparable to any other economic bloc. Even the U.S. economy is showing signs of a decreased ability to recover its economy in the face of the world-wide stagnation. Japan and Korea are no exceptions.

The Japanese economy entered a state of long-term deflation with the bursting of its bubble economy in the 1990s and had been struggling to get out of the swamp of stagnation. From the latter part of 2012, the second Abe administration has been striving



for a revival of the Japanese economy through a grand economic revitalization, the so-called Abenomics policy. The policy, which aims to boost consumption by increasing the country's money supply and increase the competitiveness of its exports through devaluation of the Yen, seems to have been partially effective. However, without a fiscal policy to reduce the national debt which stands at 230 percent of GDP and without structural reforms being implemented, a skeptical view of Japan's ability to overcome its current situation of long-term low growth is warranted. More crucial than these structural problems is Japan's aging society. Japan became an "aging society" in the 1970s as the portion of its population over 65 years of age increased to over 7 percent and became a "super-aging society" in 2006 when the same figure climbed to over 20 percent. Today 1 in 4 people in Japan are over the age of 65. A long average lifespan, low birthrate, and a high-rate of unmarried women (in 2010, 20.2 percent of women between the ages of 35-39 were unmarried) have led to a low birthrate and an aged society in which the portion of the population that is economically active (15-64 years old) has gradually decreased. If we compare Japan with other major countries in the OECD, there are 4 economically active members of society to support each senior citizen in the U.S., 3 to support each senior citizen in the UK and France, but only 2 for each aged member of society in Japan. A decrease in the size of the economically active population means a shrinking of economic activity and the consumer market. This is a vicious cycle where a low birthrate and shrinking working population leads to shrinking economic activity and consumer market, only worsening the employment environment and lowering the standard of living that causes a lower birthrate.. This kind of structural demographic issue is the biggest cause of the rising national debt as welfare expenditures increase to address the aging population's needs..

In addition to the low birthrate and aging of society, polarization is also causing a rise in the instability and threat perceptions of Japanese society. During the era of high growth, 90 percent of the Japanese people identified as members of the middle class which led to the coining of the phrase "the mass mainstream of 100 million people." But this symbol of social integration has collapsed. Beginning in the mid 1990s an upturn in the Gini coefficient began and it deteriorated further in the 2000s. The income and property gaps worsened leading to the appearance of the expression "gap society" which has become a fixture in everyday life symbolizing the disparity between class economic opportunities. In the latter half of the 2000s, Japan's Gini coefficient stood at 0.33, 24th among the 34 rich nations in the OECD, which ranks it as a highly unequal society in terms of income. 16 percent of the entire Japanese population makes less than 50 percent of the median income thus classifying them as poor. Among OECD members, Japan ranks among those with the largest percentage of its entire population who were classified as poor in 2010. This is because of the worsening quality of employment characterized by a high number of Japanese who have given up on employment and 1/3 of those being employed as irregular workers.

Korean society is repeating the mistakes of Japan. Putting aside the period of rapid growth, the average annual rate of economic growth fell from 8 percent in the 1990s to 2-3 percent in recent decades. As the potential for growth rapidly declines and the growth engines slow, a condition of low growth, the rate of which is lower than that of Japan or Ireland, is taking root in Korea. Amid this background, the 1997 financial crisis led to the decisive development of rapid polarization in the labor market. The number of irregular workers as well as the income gap has been increasing. The percentage of irregular workers in 2014 was 32.4 percent and the ratio of low-wage workers sharply increased

with Korea ranking second at 25.2 percent following the U.S. in the OECD. Korea has the sixth highest poverty rate (16.5 percent) and the youth employment rate (those between the ages of 15 and 29) was much lower than the OECD average of 50 percent at 39.7 percent. Korea's society is aging at the fastest rate in the world and the threat of this phenomenon to society is increasing. With increasing life spans and declining retirement ages, the poverty rate among the elderly has reached serious levels. Korea has the highest elderly poverty rate and the highest elderly suicide rate in the OECD. In short, we can say that Korean society is experiencing the low growth, aging society, and polarization phenomena that Japan went through but in a more compressed period of time.

As mentioned above, the economic realities in Japan and Korea are greatly influencing the socio-political reality. In general, low growth, polarization, and the aging of society is amplifying social weaknesses and causing the spread of social extremism, the revival of nationalism and the strengthening of inward-focused policies, among other things. Dissatisfaction with the established political system and political elites in particular has led to a political environment, which makes the appearance of leaders touting bold policies and strong leadership easy. The rise of leaders in Korea, Japan, China, and Russia who emphasize nationalistic fervor and highlight their governing style based on strong leadership and nationalism is related to worldwide changes. The revival of rightist nationalism in Japan and the strengthening of anti-Japanese nationalism in Korea are related to this structural flow. The increasing tendency toward nationalism and chauvinism, along with the rise of introverted policies are acting as large roadblocks to the policymakers in both Korea and Japan in their efforts to bring about a breakthrough in the restoration and development of ROK-Japan relations.

Three Major Risks and Responses

Given the inherent instability of the East Asian regional system and the increase in social weaknesses that has brought about an environment in which nationalism and inward-focused pressures easily exert significant influence, Korea and Japan find themselves in a difficult situation both externally and internally. In response to the current situation, the two countries will likely be facing the following three international geo-political risks as they seek to improve bilateral relations.

The first is security tensions in international politics. In terms of military security, the future of East Asia includes an aspect of China challenging the established order that has been led by the U.S. and Japan. On April 28, 2015, the "U.S.-Japan Joint Vision Statement" was issued during the U.S.-Japan summit. The statement is symbolic in that it suggests that the security and prosperity of the two countries in the new century is intertwined and cannot be defined by borders. The U.S., as it tries to compensate for its weakened economic influence by strengthening its strategic relations with existing allies, has made Japan its core partner in its effort to absorb the pressure on the status quo caused by China's rise. The problem is that there is a subtle difference in the perception of China between the U.S. and Japan. Despite strategic distrust toward China, the U.S. has agreed in principle to build the new type of great power relations with peace, trust, and cooperation and has been carefully developing the relationship. While promoting mutual benefits, the U.S. is devoting multilateral attention toward establishing common principles that can be agreed upon. On the other hand, Japan has competed strategically with China in the frame of mutual distrust that has deep historical roots. The Abe administration used the China threat politically to alter the constitutional interpretation regarding collective self-defense and is pressing forward in



the process of becoming a normal country through strengthening its military. Therefore, Japan has a more firm strategic perception of China than the U.S.

If the ROK-U.S.-Japan cooperation network is woven together in this manner, it is possible that the network with China will develop in a even more hostile manner. Given that these countries interpret the other in offensive realist terms rather than defensively, the risk of a security dilemma is increasing as a result of increasing defensive and offensive military spending.. If this situation is neglected, East Asia in general and the ROK in particular, given its weak military force compared to even Japan, high level of economic dependence, and the fact that it is a divided state, will be in severe strategic trouble. If this is the case, the ROK is likely to be exploited by the surrounding great powers. To avoid such a situation, the development of a security dilemma among the ROK-U.S.-Japan network and the Chinese network should be prevented, and a strategy leading toward mutual symbiosis and evolution should be found. This can be said to be a process of building a complex network between the ROK and Japan and even more so the construction of a network that embraces China together with the ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral group.

The second is the conflict over interests in international politics. During the financial crisis, with the economic status of the Asia Pacific region increasing and economic interdependence among countries in the region rapidly rising, a competition over building institutions for economic cooperation which would be at their own disposal broke out.. Recently, as seen by the competition between the AIIB and the ADB and between the RCEP and the TPP, a competitive structure is forming between the U.S.-Japan and China on the economic stage as well. Accordingly, the future of East Asia is comprised of three paths: 1) the dominant position of the established order based on the ADB and

TPP; 2) the so-called rollover of the established order by the new through the AIIB and RCEP; or 3) both co-exist and harmoniously evolve. The potential problem is if a “zero-sum” competition rises in which a strategic choice must be made due to security concerns between the ADB and AIIB, and between the TPP and RCEP rather than a “win-win” competition based on calculating economic benefits. Likewise, if the negative effects of security concerns are felt on the process of cooperation for symbiosis, or more importantly on emerging transnational issues like climate change and environmental protections as well as advanced technology and knowledge given the reign of great power politics, then the possibility for cooperation will decline further.

Therefore, the core task now is to minimize the influence of strategic security competition between the great powers on interest areas such as trade, investment, finance, technology, etc. as well as emerging areas such as climate change and environmental issues, energy, cyber security, disaster relief, infectious diseases, etc. Additionally, the unearthing of cooperation between the two countries to expand common interests is needed. Korea and Japan need to collect ideas for mapping out a process of co-evolution in which the competing networks and institutions of the U.S. and China can coexist and be compatible with each other and, moving forward, a process for combining the two.

The third risk factor is the emotional tensions in international politics. East Asia is struggling to climb out of the emotional, conflictual relationships that arose because of historical identities and memories made during the unfortunate experiences during the modern transitional era and the Cold War period. The difference in perceptions of the history of imperialism during the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century between Korea and Japan, and China and Japan, has created emotional conflicts between these countries. These differing perceptions are also

exerting negative influence on security and economic cooperation as well. Multiple incidents from the past have been important factors in how groups have formed their identity and perceive others in strategically tense situations. Korea and China have a strong tendency to view Japan's efforts to become a normal country or increase its military power as another imperialist expansion. This is the result of the two countries having formed a militaristic perception of Japan due to their emotional tensions. Likewise, Japan and Korea's tendency to see China becoming a great power and the Chinese dream as an expression of imperialist desires derive from their memories of the past which have led to the perception of China as imperialistic. With this in mind, the U.S. has hoped to transition to rational relationships through the use of institutionalization and diplomacy centered on universal values. However, with the contrast of universal values and Asian exceptionalism, which has come about due to the rapid rise of China and the revival of Japan, likely to continue to be a force in the region, progress on security cooperation has been slow and security conflicts may arise.

Korea and Japan need to accept the fact that emotional tensions about the past need to be relieved in the name of regional security and symbiosis, not simply ROK-Japan relations. In short, new ROK-Japan relations must place the values of ROK-Japan cooperation on symbiosis and cooperation in East Asia, and should be defined by the co-evolution of both countries in order to realize the goal of alleviating tensions over security, interests, and emotions.

Questions and Solutions for ROK-Japan Relations

Background on Deteriorated ROK-Japan Relations

It could be said that the friction surrounding ROK-Japan relations' most urgent conflicts, Dokdo and historical perceptions, increased in frequency and profundity in the 1990s. Since then, the conflict intensified more and more and was further amplified in the 2000s.

First, with the end of the Cold War the underlying discord in ROK-Japan relations became all the more intense. During the Cold War, the primary force behind Korean-Japanese solidarity was the U.S. strategy of anticommunism in East Asia. In the Cold War system, the U.S. pushed a strategy of containment of the communist bloc based on a cooperative relationship with the ROK and Japan. Given this international system, the underlying discord in the ROK-Japan relationship over issues like Dokdo and historical perceptions had to lie dormant. However, following the collapse of the Cold War system, the underlying nationalistic discord began to abruptly surface.

In the late 2000's, East Asia's international order underwent significant upheaval; China's meteoric rise to great power status combined with Japan's relative decline and South Korea's arrival as a middle power. The appearance of a U.S.-China bipolar structure in East Asia greatly influenced the changing nature of ROK-Japan relations. The structural cause of the rise in the severity of conflict and friction in the ROK-Japan and China-Japan relationships after 2012 has been the fluid state of the balance of power which was brought about by a power shift in East Asia together with political leadership changes in both Korea and China.

Second, when looking at the ROK-Japan bilateral relationship, politicians and businesspersons' personal connections and networks have undergone rapid



changes. Since the 1990s this situation has become more aggravated by the frequent domestic power shifts and changing political generations in both nations. In particular, the informal and unofficial political ties formed and maintained under Korea's authoritarian political system have been ruptured. After the 1965 normalization of relations, the two nations' politicians had numerous official and unofficial channels through which frequent meetings or secretive exchanges allowed communication on sensitive political issues or conflicts. Behind the scenes adjustments and compromises were common. This kind of personal network gradually deteriorated and after the 2000s ceased; its value to the relationship was lost. Not only did politicians' relative level of connectedness and access decrease, but also the capacity to solve emerging conflicts dropped precipitously. ROK-Japan relations changed from having a special nature to being a more typical bilateral relationship. Rather than politicians handling political issues between the two nations, the tendency for these issues to go through diplomatic officials became apparent. On the other hand, there was a boom in societal, industrial, and local government exchanges. While the daily operations of ROK-Japan relations are changing, the political mechanism that could patch up conflicts and ease tensions is becoming less and less functional.

Third, the former top-down vertical ROK-Japan relationship is gradually being displaced by a horizontal relationship and this factor is relaxing the bilateral relationship. Beginning in the 1960's, South Korea's economy underwent continuous and rapid growth finally and vaulted to the status of an advanced economy. Meanwhile since the mid 1980's, Korea became a reliable democracy as a result of its political democratization. Korea's membership in the OECD in the 1990s as a developed nation can be seen as emblematic of this transition. Because Korea achieved political democratization and rapid economic growth in such a relatively

short time, citizens' vocal demands for a more stately diplomatic position based on its increased strength became stronger. Compared to today, deep-rooted historical problems rarely became diplomatic issues in the ROK-Japan relationship during Korea's authoritarian era. However, with Korea's democratization and growing national power the relationship experienced a great change. After democratization, the Korean government dramatically increased support for Korean citizens' extreme sentiments toward Japan, which was exploited to push forward more hardened policies toward neighboring Japan. Particularly following the arrival of a new generation of political elites and democratization, Korea's younger generation's influence intensified using the internet as a means of communication to express intense nationalistic sentiment. It would not be wrong to say that the younger generation leads the strong public sentiment advocating the government policy towards Japan.

Fourth, Japan's domestic leadership cannot be overlooked. After the late 1990s, the increasing strength of the rightwing conservatives in Japan's political landscape became clearer day by day. Now, trends towards reforming the pacifist constitution as well as transitioning the National Self-Defense Forces into a normalized military and other varied changes are being noticed in Japan. The opposition movement against dignitaries and ministers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine has been crippled considerably. Since the 2000's, Japanese citizens have gradually returned to a more conservative vision of their own historical perceptions, where Japan's current view resides. This tendency could be described in short as the transformation from a pacifist country into a militarily normalized country, but the Japanese citizenry is accepting this without resistance.

The Japanese trend towards conservatism has been greatly affected by the political arena's generational shift. The post war generation of politicians is leading a

push for a U.S.-Japan alliance-centric hard-line foreign and national security policy. Through this process the importance of regional diplomacy with Korea, China, and others has been weakened. In this climate, given the deteriorating affects of the Dokdo problem and historical friction in ROK-Japan relations, serious diplomatic issues cannot be brought forward to Japan. The Japanese post war generation that has wrestled itself free from the bondage of history is, in general, unrepentant about the past colonial rule and aggressive history in Asia. Accordingly, there is a heavy tendency toward taking action and speaking bluntly in relation to territorial and historical perception disputes.

This trend faltered in 2009 when Japan's Democratic Party seized power, but because of the rise of the Abe administration in 2012, the conservative push reappeared and appears to have reached its zenith. The December 2012 lower house election and the July 2013 upper house election saw landslide victories for the Liberal Democratic Party. It would not be wrong to say that Japanese politics have become near unanimously conservative. Meanwhile, the so-called liberal coalition with the responsibility of playing a balancing role in Japan's swing to the right has become aged and weak. Basically, Japan's opposition is in disarray. Moreover, civil society, which should function as a critic and judge of this trend towards conservatism, has seen its political power weakened.

The Direct Cause of the Deterioration of Relations

ROK-Japan relations can be said to be at its lowest point. The cause can be found in the absence of communication between leaders and the appearance of mutually held extreme perceptions of each other on the citizen level which have spread through media reports. As it were, the drastic deterioration of the ROK-Japan relationship has occurred on the epistemological level

more than the ontological level. More worrying is that as an overly simplified epistemology becomes increasingly prevalent in terms of bilateral foreign policy, the fundamentally important strategic perspective has gone by the wayside and strategic thinking is losing ground.

Simply put, the Korean people view Japan under Prime Minister Abe's rule as taking a dangerous right-wing path. Abe's comments during the election of the Liberal Democratic Party's president and the lower house elections are likely feeding the fire behind this perception. Those comments mentioned the possibility of withdrawing the Kono Statement which is related to the Japanese Military's use of "comfort women." He also expressed his desire to amend the Murayama Statement which unifies all of the Japanese government's posturing on expressions of regret and apologies, and issue a new statement on Japan's history in 2015. Campaign promises including constitutional reforms, changes to security policies, Japan's so-called escaping the postwar regime and the slogan, "Restoring Japan" that were announced one after another and received light treatment by the media added to the Korean perception of Abe as a dangerous right-wing politician. This led to the Korean media collectively accepting the rise of the Abe administration as a sign of extremism and danger followed by the production of articles on whether or not Prime Minister Abe's Japan would return to its past militarism invoking a sense of crisis amongst the Korean population.

Given Korea's historical perception of Japan and colonial rule's dark hold on a large portion of historical memory, prejudice and bias have advanced. Korea's perception of Japan is gripped by an oversimplified understanding of Prime Minister Abe's political heritage. Given this background, there is a strong tendency in Korea to view Prime Minister Abe's leadership on historical perception, reform of the pacifist constitution, and attempts to change policy on security and territori-



al disputes through a rightist lens as one dangerous all-encompassing package.

Meanwhile there is also the problem of Japan's oversimplified and subjective perception of Korea. Korean President Lee Myung-bak's sudden visit to Dokdo along with calls for an apology from the Japanese Emperor and derisive comments on Japan's international stature in the summer of 2012 were decisive in the recent rapid negative tilt in Japanese perceptions of Korea. Together with this, the Korean Constitutional Court issued a ruling in August 2011 rejecting the notion that claims made by comfort women were unconstitutional. Then in May 2012, the Korean Supreme Court passed a ruling holding Nippon Steel Corporation and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' responsible for compensating coerced Korean laborers and obliged the companies to provide unpaid wages. Following these rulings, the pressure to solve the comfort women issue increased and conscripted labor victims surfaced one after another as part of a Korean movement demanding compensation. Meanwhile, Japanese society tired of Korea's ceaseless request for apologies leading to anti-Korean sentiments. As Korea emerged as a strong competitor in various fields such as the economy, industry, culture, and sports, Japan has struggled to adapt themselves to this changed bilateral relationship which has become horizontal, replacing the previous asymmetrical relationship. It can be said that a vague fear and uncomfortable feeling towards Korea's use of its middle power status is surfacing in Japanese society, potentially leading to anti-Korean sentiments.

Lately, however, the most important aspect of Japan's negative view of Korea can be explained by Korea's tilt towards China. In particular, this view became stronger when President Park Geun-hye's foreign policy team first made diplomatic overtures and the two countries began commenting on Japan. While President Park has not formally raised historical perceptions, she

has made tough comments regarding the normalization of relations with Japan. Above all, President Park has criticized Japan's stance on historical understanding in the normal course of diplomacy with the U.S., China, and major European countries. The Japanese media and right-wing magazines tend to give argumentative reports describing Korea's public stance as a return to sycophantic diplomacy.

Japan's public perception can be succinctly summarized as fearing the China threat. At the center of the recent sharpening of the Chinese-Japanese conflict over the Senkaku-Diaoyu islands is the Japanese peoples' general aversion to China. China has been successful at bringing about enormous economic growth and has become a power both politically and militarily. But on the other hand it is grappling with a host of contradictions and issues like economic inequality, rampantly corrupt political authoritarianism, ethnic minority issues, and a bubble economy among others. It's not just that Koreans are unaware or naively ignore this side of China, rather a sense of anti-Japanese solidarity over historical issues is steadily increasing, fanning the flames of harsh views of Japan.

Along with this, for the past two and a half years, by way of extremist tendencies, the mutual perception of Korea and Japan can be understood to be based on misunderstanding and prejudice. As time goes on and this twisted mutual perception fails to subside, it is worrying that things will only continue down this increasingly deteriorating path.

The Increasing Costs of Deteriorating Relations

Both Japan and Korea are paying considerable diplomatic, political, and economic costs due to their poor relationship. In terms of diplomacy, both countries are wasting resources by dragging out each other's weaknesses in mudslinging attacks, and the attitudes of the

people of both countries toward each other have become twisted with “anti-Japanese” or “anti-Korean” rhetoric. Wrinkles have also developed in the economic sector during the period of poor relations. Trade, investment, tourism, education, culture, and personal exchanges between Korea and Japan have all conspicuously shrunk and the lives of Korean-Japanese people have become more difficult.

From the Korean perspective, the cooperation that has been built with Japan in the economic field on such things as trade, finance, investment, and tourism among others is very valuable. However, adverse effects have begun spreading during the rapid deterioration of the ROK-Japan relationship. There have been warnings circulating in business circles about red lights on the smoothness of supranational production networks between businesses in both countries, direct investment of Japanese capital in Korea, and Korean exports to Japan. Also, as anti-Korean sentiments and emotions have spread in Japan, those traditional Korean-Japanese people with professional bases in Japan or newcomers who crossed over to Japan in the 1980s and are doing business have found it difficult to conduct their affairs amongst themselves.

The cost of poor relations is also great in terms of diplomacy. Prime Minister Abe established a “new honeymoon period” in U.S.-Japan relations when he visited the U.S. in April 2015. It is also hard to deny that the U.S. government and American people are growing tired of the expanding tensions between Korea and Japan. Even China and Japan, who have fought fiercely over history and territorial issues, have already held two summit meetings and have opened up revitalizing and practical diplomatic relations. In this context, if Korea sticks to one fundamental approach toward Japan centered on historical issues and cannot develop a policy toward Japan based on practical interests, then Korea will have given itself a diplomatic disadvantage.

President Park’s diplomacy during her visit to the U.S. in October 2015 will either be a success or failure based on whether or not she can convincingly show that Korea’s strategy and vision for realizing peace and common prosperity in East Asia, which is faced with a complicated dilemma, can be utilized alongside China’s new type of international relations on which the U.S. rebalance to Asia and Japan’s active pacifism are based. She must also show that the Korean strategy contains the essential core factors for constructing a new order in the Asia-Pacific region. In order to do this she will need to show how Korea’s design can remedy the limits and instability in the competition over the construction of the East Asian order between the U.S., China, and Japan, and how this plan can complete the building of the order in East Asia.

When looking long-term, the key element to consider with regards to Korea’s Japan policy is Japan’s relationship with the issues of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and unification. Even with the rapid rise of China and the relative decline in the hegemonic status of the U.S., the stature and role of Japan cannot be underestimated. Japan’s main concern historically, geopolitically, and geo-economically has been the Korean Peninsula. Considering that since the Meiji period the Korean Peninsula has been perceived to be a critical factor in the security of Japan, the management of the Japan variable during the process of unification is an extremely important task. To this day Japan has certainly been together with Korea as the most directly involved nation regarding the threat of North Korean weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons, missiles, etc.

Finally, there should be consideration of Japan’s future reparation funds to North Korea which may be essential in the reconstruction of the North Korean economy and infrastructure. If we think about the huge role that Japanese economic cooperation, including



capital and technology transfers, played in the success of Korea's industrialization and economic development after 1965, then the reparations (economic assistance) Japan will provide to North Korea will be the most pivotal resources that can be utilized for rebuilding North Korea. In the future, these funds can play a decisive role in reducing the cost of unification. In this way, it would be desirable if future official development aid (ODA) to North Korea from Japan can build and continue to develop an intimate dialogue and system of mutual assistance with Korea. In the long-term, the best scenario for unification is one which results in a liberal democracy, a market economy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, and whose process should be fulfilled peacefully through Korean initiative. The fact that the two countries share common opinions about these values and the process of Korean unification should also be considered.

Open Talks on Normalization

In order to find a breakthrough for improving the currently abnormal state of ROK-Japan relations, it would be desirable to hold a summit as early as possible. Developing ROK-Japan relations, which has been rounding up clues on how to improve relations since June of 2015, through a summit is very important. President Park and Prime Minister Abe both made clear their intention to improve bilateral relations while attending events celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries held at the respective embassies in Seoul and Tokyo on June 22, 2015. President Park suggested "making a turning point for opening a new future of cooperation and co-prosperity." Prime Minister Abe responded by saying, "let us go forward hand in hand and open up a new era for the next fifty years." With this, it seems that bilateral relations, which have been

under heavy strain for the past two and a half years, has pushed past an inflection point and is progressing to a new stage. The rupture in ROK-Japan relations was mended and talks between the ministers of defense, finance, trade, and tourism resumed. ROK Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se visited Japan and met with his Japanese counterpart to provide some flexibility by creating a positive background and concrete foundation for improving the relationship. The most important issue was that Prime Minister Abe in his speech marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, a subject of much interest in Korea and in China and the U.S. as well, although he did not apologize directly, continued the expressions of regret and apologies from the Cabinet. The following day, during her Independence Day speech, President Park appraised this as a forward looking attitude and emphasized the cooperation between the two countries. Considering the symbolism of the 50th anniversary of the normalization of relations between the ROK and Japan and the political schedule, the second half of 2015 was the perfect time for a summit. Because an immediate visit for holding a summit was difficult, the two leaders met on the sidelines of a ROK-China-Japan summit held in Seoul in November 2015. The Seoul summit paved the way for a landmark agreement reached on December 28, 2015— that may open the road for improving the bilateral relationship after both sides agreed to "finally and irreversibly" resolve the long-standing issue of "comfort women." Prime Minister Abe expressed a sincere apology and remorse to the comfort women while also conceding that Japanese military authorities played a role in the sexual enslavement. Tokyo offered to set up a fund of one billion yen (83 million USD) to be paid directly by the government, and to provide care for the "comfort women."

Pushing Forward Looking Public Diplomacy Toward Japan

Thanks to cosponsoring the World Cup in 2002 and the boom of the Korean Wave, the Japanese people’s sense of friendliness with Korea improved greatly. However, following the Korean president’s visit to Dokdo and the comments regarding the Japanese emperor in 2012, anti-Korean sentiments rose sharply. According to a survey commissioned by the Japanese Cabinet Office in October 2012, the number of people who “felt close” with Korea dropped 39.2 percent from 62.2 percent in 2011 to 23 percent in 2012. Conversely, the percentage of people answering that they “did not feel close” with Korea rose 23.7 percent over the course of one year with 59 percent of Japanese people disliking Korea in 2012. Those who thought ROK-Japan relations were not doing well also surged upward 42.8 percent from the 2011 survey to 78.8 percent in 2012 leading to reports following the Japanese Cabinet Office survey stating that the deterioration in ROK-Japan relations had reached a new zenith. Japanese public sentiment toward Korea has remained steady since that time as Prime Minister Abe’s administration took office at the end of 2012. Prime Minister Abe’s rightist interpretations of history and his behavior has irritated the Korean government and people bringing about strains in diplomatic relations and criticism of Japan which has furthered the development of anti-Koreanism in Japan. This can be easily seen through the annual survey jointly carried out by the East Asia Institute (EAI) and Genron NPO between 2013 and 2015. As can be seen in Figure 1, the percentage of Japanese people with negative views who answered that they had an “unfavorable” or “relatively unfavorable” impression of Korea rose over the course of the three year survey from 37.3 percent in 2013 to 54.4 percent in 2014 and 52.4 percent in 2015. On the other hand,

the percentage of people with positive views who had a “favorable” or “relatively favorable” impression of Korea dropped to 23.8 percent in the 2015 survey.

Figure 1. Japanese Peoples’ Impression of Korea

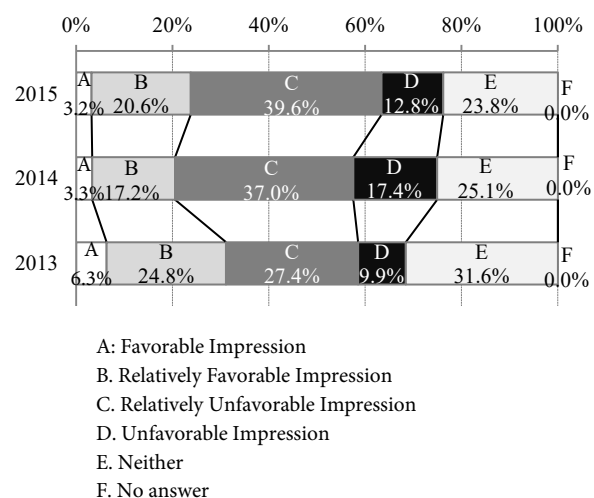
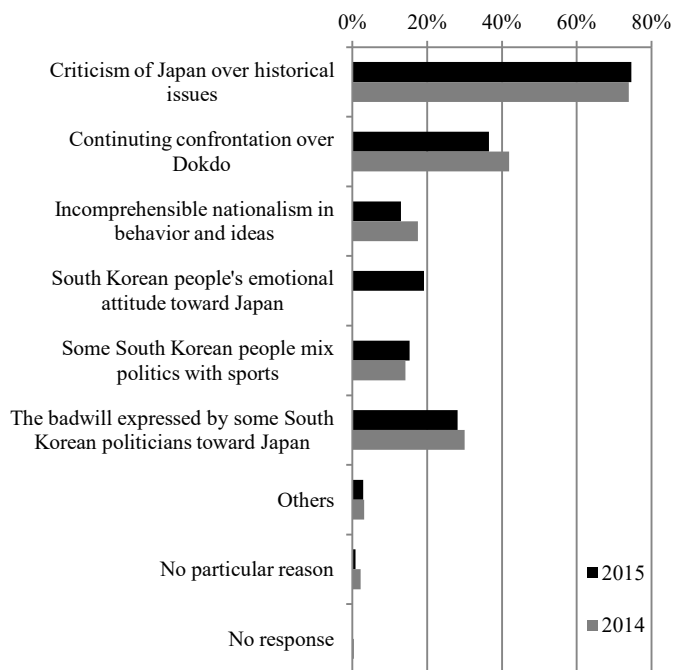


Figure 2. Japanese People’s Reasons for Lack of Improvement in ROK-Japan Relations





Another relevant factor pointed out by the EAI and Genron NPO survey is that the Japanese people perceive their anti-Korea sentiments to be caused by Korea's anti-Japanism. As seen in Figure 2, the Japanese people selected the Korean people and Korean leaders' anti-Japanese attitudes and the Korean media's anti-Japanese reports as important factors that are preventing ROK-Japan relations from improving. In ROK-Japan relations, emotional factors are important in how Koreans perceive Japan, but such factors were relatively less important in Japanese perceptions of Korea. However, recently a perception has been spreading amongst the Japanese people that Koreans are definitely opposed to and dislike anything related to Japan or the Japanese people. This is mainly due to reactionary anti-Koreanism, characterized by the attitude of the Japanese disliking Korea because Koreans dislike Japan, and skepticism over the effectiveness of Japan's apologies due to the perception that no matter how many times Japan apologizes for past transgressions Koreans will not be satisfied. This distorted perception can be seen through a report prepared by a group of experts who helped write Prime Minister Abe's speech to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in early August 2015 in which Korean's perceptions of Japan were called unreasonable and emotional. Accordingly, the report did not include the phrase "invasion" in reference to Korea, nor did it contain an apology for Japan's colonial past.

The tendency of the Japanese people to view Korea's socio-political system as "nationalistic" or "patriotic" is much stronger than the tendency to see it as democratic or liberal. However, one bright spot is the fact that close to 70 percent of Japanese citizens felt that the poor situation and emotions of the people of both the ROK and Japan were "undesirable and worrying" (29 percent) or felt that "this is a problem and improvement is needed" (38.8 percent). Over 60 percent

of the Japanese people evaluated the current state of ROK-Japan relations as poor, but the percentage of Japanese people that felt ROK-Japan relations are important was also over 60 percent. Considering these public perceptions, in the following we suggest several public diplomacy tasks needed in order to quickly cut down on the anti-Korean attitudes in Japan and improve the image and understanding of Korea.

Public Diplomacy Regarding Japan's Apology and Remorse

The root cause of the vicious cycle of the Korean public's anti-Japanism and the Japanese public's anti-Koreaism comes from the large discrepancy in each nation's understanding of the settlement of historical issues. Japan as a nation and of course the majority of average Japanese citizens believe that the 1965 agreement settled the issue of compensation claims and take the position that both the emperor and Prime Minister have sufficiently expressed public apology and remorse. In a 2015 public opinion survey conducted by the Japanese media, respondents who felt that Abe's statement should not include the central phrases that would maintain previous administrations' statements regarding historical issues were 10%-20% more than those who felt that he should include such statements. Despite this widespread apology fatigue, the survey did find that slightly more Japanese acknowledged the necessity of apologizing.¹ On the other hand, Korea be-

¹ The Sankei Shimbun asked in a survey in February 2015 whether or not expressions such as "invasion," "remorse over colonization," and "apology" which appeared in the Murayama Statement made on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II should be used and 51.6 percent believed the expressions should be used while 36.6 percent felt "they did not need to be used," a gap of 15 percent. A survey by the Asahi Shimbun a week earlier also found the 52 percent thought those expressions should be placed in the text of the speech while 31 percent felt the opposite for a gap of 21 percent. However, surveys at the beginning of February by the Yomiuri Shimbun found a smaller gap of

believes that these efforts to express apology and remorse are still insufficient and more importantly lack sincerity. Legally, regarding individual rights to compensation as “comfort women” and victims of forced labor, recent domestic court rulings have taken the stance that according to an agreement on claims, the legal process of settlement remains incomplete. However, Japanese leadership has very critical views of Koreans raising the issue of the Japanese army’s wartime use of “comfort women” in third party countries such as the U.S. or in international society. A public diplomacy competition between Korea and Japan will continue in the U.S., given its influence in foreign affairs and the fact that it is both countries main ally, as Korea continues pushing claims that Japan deal with the wartime sexual slavery issue in view of universal human rights values based on the shared norms and values of international society.

Despite Japan’s insufficient expressions of apology and remorse regarding its colonial era past and considering Japan’s apology fatigue, Korea’s general attacks and lecturing of Japan over historical issues is having the opposite of the intended effect in terms of public diplomacy. The most desirable outcome would be for the Japanese people to voluntarily self-examine the current arrangement and apologize to Korea regarding

only 10 percent favoring the inclusion of those expressions over those thinking they need not be included while the NHK survey had a gap between those two groups of only 13 percent. The fact that there is not a strong perception of the need to add expressions of remorse for history in the speech signifies the strength of the apology fatigue syndrome. A survey by Asahi Shimbun in April 2015 found that 57 percent of Japanese people believed that “Japan had sufficiently apologized to countries and people who suffered from the war,” while 24 percent felt the apologies are “still not sufficient.” This is a huge reversal from an April 2006 survey that found the rate believing apologies had been “sufficient” to be 36 percent while the percent saying apologies were “not sufficient” was 51 percent. The percentage of those believing the continued expression of apologies was necessary was at 46 percent while the percent of those who felt the opposite was at 42 percent in 2006. There were a few more Japanese people who felt that a sufficient amount of apologies had been made but that apologies must continue.

their troubled history. Through a framework of universal values and commonality, both victims and aggressors can find sympathy and transcend the current relationship. While working within this framework to reach shared goals and progress towards them, differences in posturing must be whittled away. Rather than the moral debates of Korean righteousness and Japanese wrongdoings that have existed in Korea up until now, discussions of how to alter public diplomacy regarding Japan’s past through sympathy and communication, where we can also heal the aggressor’s wounds must take place. Rather than targeting Washington with public diplomacy, it would be better for the Korea and Japan to devote time and effort to actively resolving the issues surrounding their bilateral relationship.

Public Diplomacy Embracing the Conservative Majority

Korea’s public diplomacy toward Japan is no more than passive cultural diplomacy. Japanese views of Korea are continuing to deteriorate, and in order to remedy this a strategic public diplomacy plan must immediately be put in place. Most importantly, public diplomacy must be aimed not at the liberal minority within Japanese society, but instead target those on the right. Within Japan’s civil society, liberal and left-leaning figures and organizations have, with relative consistency, indicated their apologetic and remorseful stance towards Korea. These elements speak for the pro-Korean opinion and have cooperative ties with elements of the government and domestic media. However, because these groups have limited influence within Japanese society, they are not the appropriate channel to create an amicable discussion to help remedy Japan’s right-wing majority’s view of Korea. The primary target of Korea’s public diplomacy should be the majority of conservative Japanese people excluding



the far-right wing. Veteran conservative politicians like former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro and some Japanese media outlets that are generally labeled as conservative are putting the brakes on the Abe administration's movements on history. Accordingly, Korea should seriously consider actively signaling that it also supports their pacifism and must placate this group's apology fatigue toward Korea.

First, in order to embrace the Japanese conservative majority, bilateral kinship must be emphasized. The two countries are geographically the closest developed nations within Asia and have established democratic and market-oriented systems. Efforts to persuade this group that the two countries are neighbors with shared political and economic systems with similar aspects in pop culture and lifestyles should be made. In order to achieve this, the role of government and government-affiliated organizations in Japan such as the Korean Cultural Center or Arirang TV is important, and they should try to encourage and expand communications, the provision of information, knowledge sharing, and cultural exchange. On the policy level, in order to raise awareness of Korea, the embassy and public officials on the ground must actively expand engagement and networking with Japanese society as a central part of their work. There is an especially urgent need to produce and circulate public diplomacy content that can counter discussions on Korea's tilt towards China and sentiments of disdain for Korea that are held by Japan's public opinion leaders. Not only the government but the media, economic institutions, various civil society organizations, educational centers, local governments as well as other non-governmental organizations must use their individual roles to increase the level of closeness and fellowship in ROK-Japan relations. In order to remedy the historical issues related to the troubled past, there must be two-way communication and exchange as well as the

progressive creation of favorable sentiments among Koreans that are respectful and complimentary towards Japan.

Active Public Diplomacy to Block the Anti-Korean Sentiments from the Right

A soft engagement strategy which utilizes dialogue is an effective method for public diplomacy. However, Japanese rightists' organized behavior including hate speech, street demonstrations, and obstruction of Korea businesses must be dealt with firmly. Diplomacy should seek to prevent racist hate speech, which should not be allowed in international society, to protect Korean nationals and ethnic Koreans living in Japan and to ensure that their rights are not violated. Of course it is also important that Japanese intellectuals and civic organizations along with the Japanese media recognize the seriousness of this issue and try to overcome the right wing's organized anti-Korean movement. For this kind of public diplomacy to be effective, cooperation with international organizations is highly desirable.

Public Diplomacy Aimed at Strengthening the Media's Responsibility for Their Reports

The people of both countries primarily receive their news about the counterpart country from the media through broadcasts, newspapers, and the internet. Sometimes the mass media has been known to exaggerate or distort the news in the pursuit of sensationalism. Especially the internet, which generally lacks fairness and objectivity, has become a channel for populist netizens from both countries to make slanderous comments. It would be advantageous to make use of public diplomacy toward the media and encourage them to set a good example, rather than seeking to regulate cyberspace which puts freedom of expression

above all else through anonymity and open access. It is important to properly circulate accurate information and news on Korea through networking with trustworthy blogs on the internet. In the case of TV broadcasts, which are the primary source of news for most Japanese people, the securing of objective news can be achieved by supporting the development of increased understanding through a variety of programming including documentaries, dramas, and investigative programs. When it comes to newspapers, while the tone on Korea varies across the ideological spectrum, there needs to be an attempt to provide substantiality to the forums of the existing media to promote balanced editorials and reports. The embassy should be more active in providing information by strengthening its network with the main media channels of Japan. It cannot be emphasized enough that diplomatic space must be secured so that strategic public diplomacy can take place through public relations activities including press conferences.

Public Diplomacy to Enhance Mutual Understanding in Future Generations

As in Korea, the younger generation in Japan is less anti-Korean than the established older generation and tries to understand Korea with an open attitude. There is a need for opening a public diplomacy effort tailored to those in their 20s and 30s as they will play a leading role in Japanese society ten or twenty years from now. Given that the spread of pop culture through K-pop singers or the televising of dramas, which helped initiate the Korean wave, is very important in raising feelings of friendliness toward Korea in the younger generations of Japan, supporting these kinds of activities is very crucial on the cultural public diplomacy level. However, just as market mechanisms operate for boosting business profits, it would be desirable that public diplomacy aim at supporting programs which

can contribute to the public good. Greatly expanding opportunities for college students and young workers to visit Korea through trips, working holidays, study abroad, training, etc. should be a priority as direct exchanges with Korea play a core role in promoting a positive image of Korea. Direct experiences with any society's culture and history is very important for deepening understanding of that country and Japanese people with these types of experiences can become friends that may serve as a bridge between the two countries. As a sign of reciprocity, the ROK government should permit the broadcasting of Japanese programs on public TV so that pop culture can be completely open.

Overcoming the History Conflicts

Convergence of Historical Perceptions

History issues are the main cause of identity conflict between Korea and Japan, and it is also a deep-rooted factor which hinders cooperation between the two countries in various fields such as politics, economics, and culture. Korea and Japan are neighboring countries which cannot be separated geographically nor historically. Therefore, they should try to harmonize their different historical perceptions in order to overcome the existing history conflicts. Each country needs to refrain from the obstinate position that its own historical perception is infallible and the other is wrong while demanding the counterpart change their stance. Instead, a more flexible and polished attitude is needed. The people of both countries have a special relationship and their perceptions of history resonate with each other. If the Japanese perception of Korea improves, then the Korean perception of Japan also improves and vice versa. Therefore, both people should keep this in



mind, and both should try to soften their own perceptions of one another. This is the easiest way to positively influence each other's perception.

Since the normalization of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan in 1965 there have often been many cases of Japanese political leaders distorting and disparaging Korean history which in turn harmed the Korean people's self-esteem and brought about anti-Japanese sentiments in Korea. Nevertheless, from the broad view of historical trends, historical perceptions of the Japanese government and people have been improving. The general trend is that perceptions of the governments and people of the two countries are converging on a shared point. More strictly speaking, if we review the statements of previous Japanese Prime Ministers, the historical perceptions of Japan are drawing closer to that of Korea step by step.

When relations between the two countries were normalized, the Japanese government did not express any apology or regret for its colonial rule. In the early 1980s, Prime Minister Nakasone recognized Japan's aggressive war on China, but he kept an ambiguous position, saying "It is regrettable that there has been an unhappy period between the two countries." When the Liberal Democratic Party's long-term seizure of power ended in the 1990s, Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro expressed apology and regret for Japanese colonialism referring specifically to the colonial policy which forced Koreans to take on a Japanese name. After the Social Democratic Party took power, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi apologized for the damage and suffering caused by Japan to its Asian neighbors in 1995 based on a Cabinet decision. However, the so-called "Murayama Statement" did not refer to Korea, but targeted all of Asia in general. Finally in 1998, Prime Minister Obuchi acknowledged the fact that Japan caused, during a certain period in the past, tremendous damage and suffering to the people of the Republic of

Korea through its colonial rule, and expressed his deep remorse and heartfelt apology for this fact in the "Joint Declaration on a New Republic of Korea-Japan Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century."

It needs to be noted that historical perceptions of the Japanese government and Prime Ministers have been coming closer to Korean's perception of history in the 1990s after 30 years of normal relations and this trend continued into 2000s. Although Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine caused a stir in Korea, he visited the Seodaemun Prison History Hall in Seoul during his official visit to South Korea and he expressed his will to continue the course of "apology and regret." These perceptions of history were also reflected in the "Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration" of 2002 and in the Koizumi Statement of 2005.

2010 was the 100th anniversary of "the colonization of Korea." Prime Minister Kan Naoto of Japan's Democratic Party made an address for the anniversary in which he stated "colonial rule was against the will of Korea." This was a roundabout manner of saying that "Korean colonization" was forcibly implemented. Regarding colonization and Japanese rule, the Korean government has argued it was illegal and unjust, while Japanese government has insisted it was legal. In the 1990s, the Japanese government changed its posture to "legal but unjust," and in 2010 there were hints that coerciveness may be mentioned. However, given that the Democratic Party was short-lived due to its rapid loss of popular support, the Kan Statement was soon forgotten by Japanese people. But this case shows that the historical perceptions of Japanese Prime Ministers were beginning to resonate with that of Korea.

Today, while Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is regarded as the very person who causes conflicts over history between Korea and Japan, he cannot completely free himself from the historical perceptions of

“apology and regret” regarding the Japanese colonial rule. He explained that he did not deny the fact that Japanese aggressively colonized and ruled Korea during an address before the National Diet. In addition, Abe’s Cabinet confirmed that it succeeded to previous Cabinets’ historical perceptions. Regarding the “comfort woman” issue, he also stated that he did not have any intention to change the Kono Statement. He may be trying to defend himself in order to appease the protests coming from Korea and China, but this is also the official position of Japanese government on historical perceptions.

We can also find a similar trend of improvement in history textbooks which display the general historical perceptions of Japanese society. Comparing statements in the textbook at the time of the normalization of diplomatic relations with those of today, descriptions of the history of Korea-Japan relations have not only increased quantitatively, but the contents have also changed qualitatively. Notable additions to textbooks are descriptions of Japan’s invasion and colonization of the Korean peninsula beginning with the Ganghwa Island incident in 1875, discrimination and coercive measures during colonial rule, and Japanization, mobilization, and exploitation of the Korean people. Though descriptions are often brief, most high school history textbooks deal with the controversial issue of the “comfort women.” For several years after 1997, seven middle school history textbooks contained one or two sentence explanations of the “comfort women.”

In summary, although the Abe administration has recently shown a reactionary tendency, the general trend is that the two countries’ historical perceptions are drawing closer to each other’s through persistent conversation and negotiation. The governments, scholars, media, and citizens of the two countries need to understand and evaluate the existing convergence trend, and

then they should find a way to make further improvements with wisdom and tolerance. In order to improve ROK-Japan relations with regards to historical perceptions, it will be more useful to praise what has been done well rather than criticize each other’s missteps.

Alleviation of Conflicts over History

Both governments of the two countries should take the initiative in pursuing the reconciliation and co-existence of various historical perceptions. As both governments have been deeply engaged in the people’s perception of history, they can do many things to improve the relations around history issues if they are truly willing to do so. However, considering that they are currently opposed to each other, it is difficult for them to take the initiative on reconciliation. Therefore, the second best option is to manage and mitigate history conflicts to a certain level so as to prevent these complications from spilling over into other issues. The goal now should be to bring the current situation to the same state as before 2010 by managing the situation carefully in order not to make it worse. Both the ROK and Japan have to refrain from impatient attitudes that call for the resolution of history issues promptly, and cease all careless behavior which can stimulate the other side’s temper.

Both governments need the wisdom to dissect the process that leads to the outbreak of history conflicts as well as the response to those outbreaks, and obtain lessons from previous achievements. Therefore, it would be a positive step if both could confirm the “Joint Declaration on a New Republic of Korea-Japan Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century” and then express their willingness to pursue its spirit. It will be even more effective if the leaders of both countries make an agreement to build a framework of historical percep-



tions according to the “Joint Declaration” and jointly announce it to the public.

If such a joint announcement is difficult, at least making regulations which can prevent key figures in each government from making any statement which can provoke history conflict should be attempted. Some may criticize such regulations as unreasonable given that in liberal democratic societies everyone has the freedoms of speech and thought. However, if someone is in an important position in government, they should respect and abide by agreements with other nations. Also, it is awkward if key government figures reveal their opinion and it harms an inter-governmental agreement, especially on such delicate issues as historical perceptions. Therefore, both governments may consider setting up guidelines for key figures’ behavior and statements about historical perceptions and pledge that they will observe these guidelines. By doing this, Korea and Japan may be able to prevent history conflicts from worsening due to deviant behavior and wayward statements regardless of administration changes in each country. Additionally, when a conflict over history bursts out even under the regulation system, a manual can be conceived which can control and extinguish it in a timely manner.

Both governments ought not to let their people think that history conflicts can be resolved through a private decision or their own behavior. History conflicts cannot spread out without a reaction from the counterpart. In addition, the standards for deciding which perception of history is right or wrong varies among people and nations. Therefore, when talking about historical perceptions, the tone of words and the implications of actions are also important as well as the righteousness of one’s historical view. While Koreans should accurately inform the Japanese of their own historical perceptions, they cannot disregard or condemn the Japanese perception. Both need to under-

stand why the other has that perception of history by standing in the other’s shoes, and then they can make their own historical perceptions richer than ever by understanding the other. If both can appeal to the other’s emotion with persuasive logic and noble words, then considerable movements can be made in overcoming history problems.

Supplementing the Handling of History Problems

In order to fulfill historical reconciliation between Korea and Japan and encourage peace and prosperity in East Asia, both countries must overcome their history problems prudently. This can be achieved by learning lessons and extracting wisdom from previous experiences. Both countries have seen fruitful results through frequent communication about history problems as well as their perceptions of history.

According to the San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan was to manage history problems by concluding an individual treaty with each individual country. This is not to say that Japan admitted its responsibility for the previous invasions and aggressive colonial rule and compensated for any wrong-doings. From the humanitarian perspective, it was also to cooperate economically. South Korea raised direct opposition to Japan’s way of managing history problems, but it was not able to change the international order of the San Francisco Peace Treaty which encouraged the restoration of Japan and not punishment. Therefore, the affiliated agreement to the Treaty on Basic Relations was given the noncommittal title the “Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea Concerning the Settlement of Problems in Regard to Property and Claims and Economic Cooperation.” Both governments agreed that they had finally finished dealing with history problems, including compensation for Japan’s colonial

rule, with the agreement. After that, in 1970s, the ROK government paid a certain amount of compensation for the victims who were conscripted by Japan as forced laborers or soldiers.

However, in the 1980s, the issue of historical perceptions and history problems rose up again. The issues which had not been sufficiently discussed in the Treaty on Basic Relations, such as Koreans residing in *Sakhalin*, Korean victims of the atomic bombings, “comfort women” of Japanese military, and compensation for these people were brought to the surface. As democratization in South Korea and Japan progressed and historical perceptions of the people of both countries improved, it is perhaps unavoidable that the history issues which had been yet to be fully resolved were brought up. The Japanese government sought to resolve these issues through an endowment for humanitarian consideration, while it maintained its national irresponsibility for previous events. The ROK government responded to the Japanese position by demanding what they could and accepting anything they could receive. Although the results were not satisfactory in the eyes of the Korean victims of the atomic bombings and those residing in *Sakhalin*, both governments were able to make considerable improvements.

While managing the aftermath of the war, Japan arbitrarily judged who would be acknowledged as a Japanese citizen and strictly abided by a policy of providing benefits to only those considered to be Japanese. However, in the 1990s, the Japanese government’s position shifted and Korean victims of the atomic bombings were allowed the same access as Japanese to treatment and support. So while the Japanese government continued to adhere to the theoretical position that all history issues had been dealt with through the Treaty on Basic Relations, we can also see that they showed a humane attitude by trying to unburden at least part of the victims’ suffering.

Therefore, Korea and Japan need to conduct a detailed investigation of these experiences and records. Also, the people of both countries must be given all the facts about what was truly done well and what was mishandled, and seek to understand the facts. A method for overcoming the points that are found to be lacking should be prepared through close cooperation.

Currently, the “comfort women” issue is a very hot topic and is becoming even more complex. The reason that the “comfort women” issue has become more complicated than the other two problems previously mentioned is that the communication with the victims has been insufficient and ineffective. This has led to a situation where the driving forces behind the effort to solve this problem, namely the governments of both countries, the victims enlisted as “comfort women” for the Japanese army, and the civil society organizations that support the victims, have been unable to come to a mutual understanding.

Korean civil society organizations are demanding that the Japanese government acknowledge the crimes against the “comfort women,” organize a fact finding mission, apologize through a resolution by the Japanese Diet, provide legal compensation, add descriptions of the “comfort women” to history textbooks, build a memorial and a museum in their honor, and punish those responsible, among other things. The Japanese government, however, does not acknowledge the nation’s responsibility and furthermore insists that compensation for the victims was provided through the Treaty on Basic Relations. However, on a humanitarian level, the Japanese government established the “Asian Women’s Fund” and provided a defined amount of compensation to the “comfort women.” In addition to this, a letter of apology from the Japanese Prime Minister was delivered. In Korea, the opposition to this was severe and the actual number of people who received compensation from this fund was only about half. The



Korean government has been providing considerable support to the victims for their livelihood and medical expenses through acts of the National Assembly separately from this fund.

Considering these circumstances, measures for solving this problem need to be made by reviewing the uncovered details uncovered and the actions made concerning the “comfort women” problem so as to compensate for any shortcomings. Nevertheless, the argument that the Japanese army never took “comfort women” forcibly has been spreading throughout Japanese society. There are debates over the degree to which the recruitment process of “comfort women” was forced, but the notion that there was hardly any force at all is not only false, it is also rejected by international society. This type of “cannot see the forest for the trees” attitude only transforms the “comfort women” issue into a mudslinging contest and further twists and contorts the issue making a solution all the more unlikely. As the “comfort women” issue is discussed more and more, Japan only loses more of its dignity and further feeds the anti-Japanese attitude of the Korean people. For this reason the leaders of both countries need to reach a political resolution as soon as possible to solve this problem.

The issue surrounding the forced conscription of Koreans into the Japanese army is receiving renewed attention as of late following a ruling by Korea’s Supreme Court and the official position of both the ROK and Japanese government is that this issue was solved through the Treaty on Basic Relations. If that is the case, the ROK government must lead by example and exclude this issue from diplomatic affairs between the two countries. Furthermore, methods for solving this issue must be sought within Korea. The ROK government has already provided considerable compensation to victims of conscription through a series of National Assembly acts. If some remain unsatisfied with these

actions, then another method of overcoming this issue should be found.

However, the circumstances and public opinion of both countries must be considered and some leeway should be given to the Japanese government so that it may fully take responsibility, issue an apology, and provide compensation. It seems possible for the words used in expressions or the methods of implementation to be properly adjusted to a level both can accept. Also, the people of both countries should understand the efforts the Korean and Japanese governments made in their own way to overcome the history issues over the last few decades and evaluate them positively. Both governments need to seek the understanding of their people by fully explaining the details, outcomes, and remaining tasks. Among the populations of both countries, there is great number of people who think that the Korean and Japanese governments have not done anything regarding the overcoming of historical tensions. This kind of ignorance and misunderstanding may become the background of further history tensions.

Everything in the world comes with merits and demerits. It is not too late for the governments and people of both countries to reassess the details, outcomes, and tasks of overcoming their pasts with which they have wrestled until now. They must analyze the merits and demerits of their efforts and praise their successes and reflect on their mistakes. Also, the governments along with the people and victims need to sit down and have a frank conversation so that a better way of actually providing relief is found. Considering that all of the victims of history are of advanced age, the quicker measures are taken the better. In order to do this, both countries need to quit obsessing over minor quibbles and focus on their larger interests.

Regarding the Dokdo issue, traditionally when Japan makes a claim over the islands, Korea responded

by strengthening its assertion of territorial sovereignty. At the moment, Korea clearly exercises control over Dokdo. Because of this, it is very unlikely that just because Japan makes a claim that it will obtain sovereign rights over the islands. Therefore, Korea should take the lead and not make Dokdo an issue. Conversely, so that Dokdo does not become a “disputed territory,” it is better for Korea to carefully and sternly manage the issue. Japan must understand and accept Korea’s circumstances and policy. Instead, a method that is mutually beneficial should be found in a different area. Both Korea and Japan should take care so that the Dokdo issue does not become a larger problem between the two countries that overshadows other issues. Additionally, an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and exchange regarding Dokdo and the other matters discussed above needs to be strengthened. If this can happen, the Dokdo problem can be gradually separated from the issues that need to be solved immediately, and Korea’s sovereignty claim over Dokdo will harden into an established fact.

Realizing Historical Reconciliation

If there is an accurate understanding of the past and present of ROK-Japan relations as well as a firm conviction on the future vision of the relationship, then resolving the tensions and conflict surrounding the perceptions of history is not impossible. The people of both countries must first find the determination and will to solve history problems during the current generation rather than pass it off to the next generation. In order to do this, public perception and the environment in both countries needs to change direction. Here, the role of public opinion leaders including politicians, media figures, and scholars is important. The highest leaders of both countries must find the knowledge needed to interpret the history of ROK-Japan relations

from within the universal values of all humankind, and based on this awareness they must seek to keep the people of their countries from lapsing into exclusive nationalistic or patriotic mindsets. Furthermore, as contemporary leaders they must take the lead in realizing historical reconciliation.

In order to realize historical reconciliation, the ROK and Japan must put the following measures into practice.

First, scholars and educators of history, as well as those simply interested in history from both countries need actively discuss and debate perceptions of history together. Both countries history perception problems need to be removed from the list of pending political and diplomatic issues and returned to civil society in the realm of history education and research. A means for getting this process started would be for the “ROK-Japan Joint History Research Project,” which was supported by both governments, to be restarted. This project was designed to research and discuss topics that were bringing about tensions. The results were to be included in history textbooks of both countries and then used by history teachers. Scholars and educators of history from both countries are already accumulating experience in having dialogues on history and developing history textbooks. Based on this record, trust must be built between participants of this project and understanding and sympathy should be broadened into society. Continuing these efforts will provide encouragement.

Second, neither country can forget that history problems can arouse nationalism at any moment and can easily fall prey to politics and diplomacy. Private level dialogue on history must always guard against this tendency. Also, recognition of the fact that perceptions of history can differ between nations, peoples, and individuals is needed and breathing room needs to be created. Additionally, the objectifying and relativizing



of the history of ROK-Japan relations should not be done idly. History cannot be viewed through completely objective or relative lenses, but there needs to be a conscious break with attitude of excessively viewing the history of ROK-Japan relations through one's own country's perspective. In order to flexibly understand the history of ROK-Japan relations which is scattered with complications, an attitude which leaves behind absolutist histories from the perspective of one country and seeks to look back through bilateral or multilateral relationships is needed. This will help with accurately understanding the truth of both Korea and Japan.

Third, emphasis must be placed on Korea and Japan's history of peace and exchange. Over the course of the two countries more than two thousand years of history, there have been occasions when Korea and Japan have invaded and resisted one another in a diametric relationship. But compared to the long standing history of peace and exchange, these are very short periods of time. Therefore, in order to strengthen a friendly partnership between the ROK and Japan, we should give more attention to the history of peace and exchange between the two countries. Here, peace and exchanges found in ancient and modern history are important, but contemporary examples of peace and exchange should be emphasized more strongly. There is a special need for a correct understanding of history since the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1965. During this time there have not only been friendly agreements between the two governments, but there have also been private, cultural, and economic exchanges as well as activities aimed at building solidarity between the two countries by citizens of both countries. Activities conducted by schools, groups, and local governments as well as movements to build solidarity by the people of both Korea and Japan on issues such as the mobilization of "comfort women" by the Japanese army, Korean-Japanese people, and perceptions of his-

tory have had a positive impact by encouraging movements in public opinion and government by improving perceptions of history or promoting understanding. If these truths can be given more light then the next generation can have the confidence needed to co-evolve together in the direction of symbiosis through solidarity between the people of Korea and Japan.

Fourth, when discussing ROK-Japan relations, a broader view which includes North Korea is needed. In reality, because the relationship between the ROK and Japan is overwhelmingly more important, the gravity of North Korea cannot help but be weaker. However, if North Korea is ignored then neither contemporary history of the Korean Peninsula nor the truths of ROK-Japan relations can be completely understood. Also, constructing the history of the Korean people as a whole is difficult. Therefore, sufficient attention should be given to the various nuances produced by North Korea's relationship with the ROK and Japan within ROK-Japan relations.

Fifth, both Korea and Japan should reject the notion of only perceiving their counterpart through the lens of ROK-Japan relations. This seems obvious, but Korea and Japan have relationships with other countries too. From a historical perspective, Korea and Japan have both been widely engaged in international activities. This being so, it is extremely difficult to understand the history and culture of both countries just through the perspective of their bilateral relationship. It may be a bit of an exaggeration, but one could say that each country makes up no more than a part of the other's history. Therefore, in order for both countries to deepen their understanding of their counterpart, they should stop viewing the other through the narrow lens of the issues related to themselves and use a broad approach that views the other based on their diverse history and culture to accept the other "as they are." If both countries can adhere to this flexible attitude to-

ward their counterpart, then the time needed to reconcile historical animosity will shorten.

Sixth, the intellectuals and opinion makers of both countries need to lead the enhancement of mutual understanding and the improvement of historical perceptions. The media's role is especially important. Currently the media in both countries is taking the lead in instigating historical tensions. Japanese weekly and monthly magazines in particular have been desperately seeking to raise their circulation numbers by disparaging and insulting Korea. Worse yet, the mainstream media seems to be joining this trend. This makes it difficult to get over historical animosity. The media in both countries needs to refrain from emotional slandering and produce balanced articles and editorials which are based on facts.

History problems are important in ROK-Japan relations, but not to the degree that it should dominate all sectors of the relationship. History problems are just one issue among several others which should be resolved together. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the 70th Korean Independence Day, and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, the ROK and Japan should propose a joint vision of the future to the world. And one desirable way to achieve this would be to attempt to comprehensively solve history issues.

Advancing Joint Projects

If we take an international perspective, Korea and Japan, despite the frequent friction and tension, have made a fair amount of accomplishments which are worthy of attention through cooperative efforts since the end of World War II. Both countries have become states which share the universal values of democracy, a market economy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Also, both countries have acted as levers

for ensuring security and peace in East Asia as allies of the U.S. Furthermore, both countries hope to universalize the advancements in their people's lifestyles and culture. Evidence of this was provided by the recent trends of the Korean and Japanese cultural waves that were exchanged between the two countries. Therefore, if Korea and Japan can both positively evaluate each other's achievements and engage in exchanges and cooperation more actively, then they may follow a path of collectively contributing to the development of worldwide civilization.

The ultimate method for overcoming the past is for Korea and Japan to make a lesson of their unhappy history and push forward projects together which focus on realizing a peaceful and prosperous future. Here, referencing the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility, and Future" of Germany is useful. If the government and business of Korea and Japan can make a foundation for providing compensation to victims of colonization, studying and preserving history, educating and training the people of both countries, and remembering and commemorating various events, this may be evidence of historical reconciliation. A name for such a foundation could be the "Korea-Japan Future Foundation" or "Korea-Japan Friendship and Trust Foundation."

In Korea, some companies that used "Japanese reparations" to establish their business and grew into large companies have stated their intent to open a foundation such as the one mentioned above. It would be even better if Japanese companies that earned large amounts of money during and after the colonial period in Korea were to also participate. In the "reparation" trial, the Japanese Supreme Court recommended action through legislation in the case of the Japanese army's mobilization of "comfort women" and reconciliation with the responsible companies in the case of "compulsory labor mobilization." Therefore, if the Japanese



Diet, government, and business community truly have the will to solve these problems, then establishing and managing these kinds of foundations should not be an impossible task.

As it happens, the Park Geun-hye government is pushing the “Initiative for Peace and Cooperation in Northeast Asia” and the “Trust-building Process on the Korean Peninsula.” Here, in addition to peace and trust between North and South Korea, friendship and trust within international relations is also included. If through these types of projects trust and friendship between Korea and Japan can be built and a path toward peaceful cooperation and symbiosis in East Asia can be blazed, then the first example of reconciliation between an imperialist state and a colony can be made.

Building a Complex Identity

Korea and Japan, two countries divided by a thin slice of water, have been influencing one another for over two thousand years. The two countries adapted their own original cultures to the changes of time and the world, and have also accommodated Chinese culture and Western culture to create their own unique civilization in which they continue to live to this day. Neither country is one that created an individual culture which was disseminated to others as a core civilization, but both were able to assimilate Chinese and Western civilization into their own civilization and faithfully serve the role of an intermediary who passes down this civilization to others. Naturally, this process was not always smooth. While there are cases of peaceful transfers of civilization, there are also many cases that involved violence and coercion through invasions and control. If we say that Korea spread Chinese culture to Japan in prehistoric and ancient times, Japan, on the other hand, has spread Western culture to Korea in the modern and contemporary eras.

The movement of people played an important role in the changing of Korean and Japanese civilization. As people came and went and immigrated permanently, a broad-scale accommodation and progressive assimilation of civilization took place. According to the ups and downs of the times, immigrants, those captured in war, envoys, scholars, government officials, soldiers, and merchants, whether voluntarily or not, played an important role in the accommodation and transfer of civilization. The people of both countries sacrificed dearly in wars between the two countries which brought about great damage to both nations, but these wars also served as opportunities for the transfer of civilization. The Battle of *Baekchon* River, Japanese raiders, the *Imjin* War, the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the Anti-Japanese War of the Korean Righteous Army, the Fight for National Independence, World War II, the Korean War, among others were large nodes in Korea-Japan relations and times during which a great deal of civilizational exchange took place. Trade between Korea and Japan has a long history and has heavily influenced the lives and culture of the people of both countries. The rice, ceramics, iron, gold, silver, copper, ginseng, cotton, silk, yarn, Buddhist scriptures, books, semiconductors, and electronic devices that have been traded between Korea and Japan are the materials that have sustained livelihoods and culture in both countries.

When discussing the history of Korea-Japan relations, the Korean and Japanese people typically speak of “repaying kindness with ingratitude.” In Korea this refers to the notion that Korea transferred the advanced civilization that it assimilated into from China to Japan in pre-modern times, but Japan followed this with invasion and control in the modern era. Naturally, the Japanese people do not agree with this outlook. The Japanese believe they transferred the advanced civilization of the West which they had assimilated into to

Korea, but that Koreans only emphasize the invasion aspect. If the history of Korea-Japan relations is only viewed through these self-centered perspectives, then tensions and conflict are magnified and the people of both countries are left with unpleasant memories of each other. In truth, the conflict surrounding perceptions of history has become a chronic issue between Korea and Japan to level at which politics and foreign policy have become restricted. The fact that the two leaders have fallen into the “trap of historical perceptions” and cannot even hold a summit meeting shows how steady this problem has become.

Can Korea and Japan find a way to free themselves from the “trap of historical perceptions” and walk a path of mutual understanding and common prosperity? The exit can be found in thousands of years of history during which the two countries influenced and were influenced by each other by transferring civilization to each other, and in taking a wider and deeper view of East Asia and world history to learn and strengthen a complex identity. Despite their tensions and clashes, Korea and Japan have drawn closer and begun resembling each other. The result of this is Korea and Japan’s present day cultures which have mixed and developed together. Furthermore, the people of both countries have accommodated these new cultures and are enjoying them in their daily lives.

In the future, there will continue to be many complications in Korea-Japan relations. However, if we view this from the perspective of the history of world civilization, exchange and cooperation between the two countries has been more frequent and deepened. It would be best if we expected the two countries to move toward creating a joint civilization. That is, both countries will develop toward sharing a complex identity.

The famous scholar of the history of civilization, Professor Jared Diamond, has argued a similar point in the past. In his insightful article entitled “In Search of

Japanese Roots” he makes the following observation in the final paragraph:

History gives the Japanese and the Koreans ample grounds for mutual distrust and contempt, so any conclusion confirming their close relationship is likely to be unpopular among both peoples. Like Arabs and Jews, Koreans and Japanese are joined by blood yet locked in traditional enmity. But enmity is mutually destructive, in East Asia as in the Middle East. As reluctant as Japanese and Koreans are to admit it, they are like twin brothers who shared their formative years. The political future of East Asia depends in large part on their success in rediscovering those ancient bonds between them.²

Conclusion

ROK-Japan relations are facing a crisis. While the two countries have failed to respond adequately to the rapid transformations in the world order, history problems have been straining the relationship. Efforts to improve relations are currently being scraped together, but as past experience in ROK-Japan relations has shown it is hard to expect significant results while maintaining the same, inert approach to managing historical issues all the while seeking cooperation within a narrow definition of national interest. It is difficult to build the desired twenty-first century cooperation between Korea and Japan through the current “two-track” approach advocated by the governments of both countries which on the one hand hopes to resolve historical issues through negotiations between governments while on the other

² Jared Diamond, “In Search of Japanese Roots,” *Discover Magazine*, June 1, 1998, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://discovermagazine.com/1998/jun/japaneseroots1455/>.



hand seeks opportunities for security and economic cooperation. Various initial steps to improve relations should be advanced, but both countries must make efforts to fundamentally co-evolve in order to begin a relationship which is commensurate with the new age.

This report suggests that both countries adjust and co-evolve through the following actions in order to open up a new era in ROK-Japan relations.

First, both nations must properly understand the transformation unfolding in twenty-first century Asia. The changes that both countries are currently undergoing, while not a revolutionary change to the same degree as the shift between ancient, middle, and modern eras, come close to a civilizational transformation and demand new responses and new ways of thinking. The East Asian international order has been understood either based on the realism which emphasizes intense struggle for power and the balance of power between the great powers, or based on liberalism which puts forth that governance consists of horizontal networks between states and non-state actors and that there are win-win games and diffusion of peace following the deepening economic interdependence. Lately there is also increasing interest in the constructivist point of view, which pays attention to the distinction between individual nations' identities. However, currently a complex world order is unfolding which is a combination of the modern balance-of-power and post-modern governance, as well as differentiated identity. Meanwhile, an accurate understanding is needed of how the leading power and the challenger along with the middle powers of the current order understand the new order and what kind of rules and visions they are using as they prepare for the future in order to grasp the future roadmap of the twenty-first century. The governments of Korea and Japan especially should understand the complexity of the U.S.-China relations. On the one hand they balance

against each other which creates conflict, while on the other hand they engage in exchanges and cooperation on various stages. The governments of both countries should seek to minimize tensions between the two countries and must jointly take action to extend the possibility of cooperation.

Second, governments of both countries need to prepare a shared vision of the future which both countries will face together. The two countries must be able to provide each other with trust by designating a clear direction for the objectives of the ROK-Japan relationship and a strategic vision which emphasizes levels for cooperation. While bi-lateral ROK-Japan relations were previously formed through the sharing of common interests, the future of ROK-Japan relations should establish values and goals of bringing about prosperity in East Asia and the entire Asia-Pacific and also cooperating in order to form a symbiotic relationship. In more detail, the two countries should work together to change the future order in East Asia into a complex space in which various actors are connected through networks and adjust and manage modern and postmodern problems horizontally rather than an order characterized by modern power politics dominated by power politics.

Korea should deepen the ROK-U.S.-Japan cooperation network, while on the other hand expand the ROK-China network. Korea must cooperate with Japan to ensure that these two networks can mutually coexist and be cooperatively associated with one another. Both Japan and Korea must deepen their cooperation within the U.S. lead alliance structure, and, with regard to China, both countries should take an inclusive posture with a future-oriented network approach rather than using the post-Cold War type logic in consideration of the security situation and economic interests of China. Japan needs to carefully evaluate Korea's efforts to improve inter-Korea relations, revitalize its economy, and

bring China into the ROK-U.S.-Japan network in order to promote security and prosperity in East Asia. Japan also needs to understand that these efforts to broaden networks contribute to Japan's long-term national interests. Meanwhile, Korea needs to understand that Japan has had a competitive relationship with China over the last 150 years and that Japan is involved in a territorial dispute over islands in the East China Sea with China, a problem that threatens the safety of its people. Both countries must build a complex network in East Asia that tolerates China based on these mutual understandings.

Third, if both countries are to cooperate on the long-term macro objectives, then above all else both governments need to reduce the differences in mutual perceptions held by the people of their respective countries. There is an absence of communication between the leaders of both countries and the radicalized identities in both countries are being diffused through sensationalized media reports, eliminating strategic approaches in foreign policy and reduced space for strategic thinking. In Korea, internalized anti-Japan sentiments leads to excessive simplification of Abe's political lineage, and there is a dangerously strong tendency to view everything through the prism of Abe's actions related to history, efforts to amend the peace constitution, changes to Japanese defense policy, and his move to the right on territorial policy. In Japan, on the other hand, there is a tendency to oversimplify Korea's perception of Japan and a lack of objectivity. Within Japanese society, some have grown tired of Korea's demands for apologies and even an anti-Korean atmosphere has arisen. Therefore sarcastic comments that portray Korea gravitating towards and standing with China while criticizing Japan have become widespread.

Presently, the core problem in ROK-Japan relations is more of an epistemic problem rather than an ontological one. Therefore, efforts to reduce the per-

ception gap are crucial. Korea needs to keep in mind that Japan's current regional and foreign policies are not special products of the Abe administration alone and that even after Abe leaves office it is likely that Japan will maintain its policy of seeking to contain China through the U.S.-Japan alliance and continue to be critical of Korea. On the other side, Japan needs to recognize that despite deep rooted anti-Japan sentiments in Korea, there is a great deal of consumption of Japanese culture, study of the Japanese model, respect for Japanese economic development after the war within Korea. In order to reduce the perception gap between the people of both countries, there needs to be extensive efforts at public diplomacy. In the case of ROK-Japan relations, when providing a friendly image of each country, the most important thing is to promote an accurate recognition of reality in the counterpart state. Measures for developing contents to enhance mutual understanding, encouraging responsible media reports, and increasing and deepening exchanges between the younger generations should be prepared. Also, given that political leaders' behavior is an important aspect of mutual perception, leaders in both countries should observe each other's position and behavior based on broader views of history and the world, and pay attention to their own behavior so as not to increase tensions.

Fourth, both countries need to open a new era of finding and cooperating on interests they have in common on the stages of security, prosperity, and emerging issues. There needs to be an active collaboration on established stages such as cooperating for peace on the Korean Peninsula including North Korea's nuclear development, cooperating on regional and global security, concluding a comprehensive free trade agreement, designing a regional regime to protect against financial crises, etc. Also, the two countries should build a strong "win-win" relationship when it



comes to emerging stages which are rapidly increasing in importance. Cooperation is likely on issues such as climate change, environment, advanced technology, energy, knowledge, cyber-security, disaster relief, preventing the spread of infectious diseases, immigration, etc. On the both the traditional, established stages and newly emerging stages, which are complexly entangled together, Korea should not only increase its hard power but also strengthen its soft and network power related to knowledge, culture, and systems. Korea should thus take a leading role in establishing a cooperative relationship with Japan and making a regional regime.

Fifth, the largest cause of mutual distrust and the main obstacle to cooperation between Korea and Japan is the history issue. In order to solve this problem, the first move should be for the governments of both countries to decide to separate historical tensions from domestic politics. If the both governments, in order to build up domestic political support, continue to encourage and abet the tensions created by historical issues, then distrust between the two countries will continue to grow. Furthermore, in order to avoid emphasizing historical issues for domestic political gain, both countries should devise a standard recognition of history and a procedure for checking this at a bilateral summit. If this is too difficult, then the leaders of both countries should at least refrain from actions that cause historical issue tensions to flare up by agreeing to guidelines that regulate their behavior and share these guidelines with the domestic and international audiences. If done in this way, even when power passes to new leaders in both countries, expressions on and tensions related to historical issues can be avoided and a consistent recognition of history can be maintained.

In addition to these efforts, both countries need to prepare a long-term strategy for reconciling their historical animosity. In order to end the antagonism and conflict between both countries at the government level

which is caused by the history issue, as a rule historical issues should be removed from pending political diplomatic issues and the role of performing research and providing education on history should be returned to civil society. On the civil society level, there should be an effort to build solidarity and mutual trust through conversations on history by sharing experiences with similar historical development processes. This can lead to a greater level of sympathy and understanding between the people of both countries. In this way, there needs to be an end to attitudes in both countries that encourage viewing history from an excessively self-centered position or only recognizing the counterpart country through the lens of bilateral relations. Instead, what is needed is to leave behind narrow views of understanding each country only through these issues and cultivate an attitude with a variety of perspectives.

Finally, the co-evolution of Korea and Japan should ultimately be in the direction of shared identities. Throughout Korea and Japan's long histories of over 2,000 years, there have been a few mutations in each countries identity. The time for another mutation has come. Only when the people of both Korea and Japan identify simultaneously as not only members of their individual country but also as members of the broader East Asia region can there be a political answer to the zero-sum game played by the two countries that is made up of age-old historical issues and territorial disputes. Therefore, Korea and Japan need to pursue a creative project to build a comprehensive regional identity which will include China in the future. ■

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