Chapter 5
Globalization, Politics of Historical Memory, and Enmification in Sino-Japanese Relations

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5.1 Introduction

State control of history education is vital to ensuring a national narrative capable of legitimating the modern nation-state. Teaching socially shared perceptions of the past is an important element in the formation of national, ethnic, or religious identities (Smith, 1999). Political elites try to control history education in order to institutionalize a particular memory that will reinforce the group's collective identity. This is a common phenomenon in newly independent states undergoing nation-building processes. These narratives and historical memory can become a major source of tension and enmification between different groups. Issues surrounding historical memory have played a pivotal role in the rise of identity-driven religious, ethnic, and interstate conflicts around the world. Smith asserts that ethnic, national, or religious identities are built on historical myths that define processes of moral and political inclusion and exclusion (Smith, 1999). Myths are created by political elites and institutionalized through various social channels such as textbooks, media, and commemorative ceremonies. These become engrained in the group's collective memory and shape its collective identity. Globally, the issue of historical memory in exacerbating conflict has been studied in the context of Northern Ireland, Cyprus, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and East Asia. These cases demonstrate how intractable conflicts are deeply rooted in historical memory and identity needs.

The recent escalation of conflict between China and Japan, triggered by the Japanese government's move to purchase the rights to the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands,

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is the most recent manifestation of a deeper incompatibility between the two countries that predates and flows from World War II. Japan's "historical amnesia" represented by its denial of the Nanjing Massacre, sanitization of its history textbooks, avoiding legal responsibility for the comfort women, and the controversial visits of its head of state to the Yasukuni Shrine has generated considerable Chinese hostility toward Japan. Similarly, memories of the "Bamboo Curtain," negative features of Maoism, Chinese human rights abuses, and, most of all, endless demands for apology for Japan's wartime past generate Japanese antagonism toward China. This chapter will explore the underlying dynamics of the Sino-Japanese "history problem" and how historical memory and conflicting interpretations of past trauma have become major impediments to reconciliation between the two countries.

In contrast to the solid development of official exchanges and economic cooperation, distrust and animosity seem to be increasing between the governments and peoples of both countries. On the one hand, economic ties between China and Japan have seen unprecedented growth. China is now Japan's largest trading partner, as imports from China surpassed those from the United States. According to a report released in 2014 by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO),[1] Japan's exports to China amounted to US$129 billion, and Japan's imports from China was US$189 billion. In 1972, less than 10,000 people traveled between the two countries; that number increased to over two million in 2002 and a record high of 4.35 million in 2004.

On the other hand, while the bilateral economic and trade ties remain strong, large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations have been on the rise. Immediately after the outbreak of the Senkaku/Diaoyu territorial dispute, Kyodo News Agency reported that more than 80,000 Chinese citizens staged anti-Japan rallies in over 50 cities to protest the purchase of the islands. These became the largest anti-Japan demonstrations in China in terms of participants and cities since the two countries normalized diplomatic relations in 1972.[2] These recent Sino-Japan tensions raise a question mark over the solidity of negative peace in Northeast Asia and challenge neoliberal assumptions that economic interdependence will always restrain conflicts and ensure durable peace. The recent escalation of tension between China and Japan has more to do with the activation of deeper sociocultural dynamics in defense of national values and identity than with the maintenance of functional economic and political relationships.

While many scholars have focused on Japanese and Chinese history and nationalism as major sources of conflict, they often do not explain the dynamics and underpinnings of the current enmification processes in both countries. This study will examine the political dynamics of historical memory in Sino-Japanese relations drawing on social identity theory. It will analyze the role historical memory plays

[1] Japan External Trade Organization's survey analysis of China-Japan trade released in 2014. https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/news/releases/20140228009-news

[2] "Over 80,000 Chinese in over 50 cites join anti-Japan protests," *Kyodo News*, September 16, 2012. http://english.kyodonews.jp/news/2012/09/182631.html

in shaping national identity and in the process of negative stereotyping of the "other." This article assumes that identity is constructed rather than given and that political leaders will choose to highlight different dimensions of cultural and political identity to secure government and regime interests. Because China and Japan share a lot of conflictual as well as cooperative history, neither is totally free to project national identity without this provoking interpretative questions from the other side. Both China and Japan share common war experiences—one as victim and one as aggressor—this gives rise to very specific kinds of historical memories which play into the present. It is vitally important to understand the role of this memory in shaping domestic and foreign policy decisions in both countries. Popular nationalism deeply rooted in historical memories can exacerbate mutual threat perception, shape foreign policy decisions, and become a catalyst for future Sino-Japanese conflict.

5.2 Deteriorating Popular Perceptions in Sino-Japanese Relations

Recent public opinion polling demonstrates that these dynamics are widespread and pervasive across a broad cross section of Chinese and Japanese public opinion. Various scholars have argued that the recent rise of anti-Japanese public sentiment in China should not be simply viewed as an outcome of politically orchestrated nationalist tactics employed by the Chinese Communist Party to legitimize its rule (Gries, 2005, p. 105). He stresses that the historiographic divergence caused by conflicting war narratives has stimulated mutually popular negative emotions and ambivalence. Public opinion polls seem to suggest that ambivalence if not hostility in the Chinese perception of Japan is widespread among the general Chinese public.

A public opinion poll conducted in 2014 by Genron NPO,[3] a Japanese think tank, and the China Daily showed that the percentage of Japanese public who harbored unfavorable/negative view of China climbed to its highest ever level of 93 %, surpassing the previous record of 90 % appearing in the 2013 survey. As reasons for their negative views of China, 53 % of the Japanese cited the territorial dispute and confrontation between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, and 52.2 % claimed that they were annoyed by "China's criticism of Japan over historical issues." The ratio of Chinese who had negative opinions of Japan was 86.8 %. As for the source of their negative impressions of Japan, 64 % of the Chinese respondents cited the bilateral territorial dispute, and 59.6 % said it was because of "Japan's lack of proper apology and remorse over the history of invasion of China."

[3]Genron NPO is an independent nonpartisan think tank that monitors Japanese government's policy making. The organization conducts an annual survey on Chinese and Japanese people's attitudes toward each other. See http://www.genron-npo.net/en/pp/archives/5153.html

These findings seem to be consistent with the polls conducted ten years ago, suggesting that national war narratives continue to feed into mistrust and threat perception toward one another. In seeking the source of distrust between the two countries, a joint public opinion poll by *Asahi Shimbun* and the Chinese Academy of Social Science in 2002 revealed that whereas 40 % of Japanese cited a "lack of mutual understanding" and "differences in political systems" as two problematic areas in Sino-Japanese relations, 80 % of Chinese cited the problem of "historical awareness" such as the Japanese prime ministers visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and the controversy over revisions to Japanese history textbooks. In the same survey, the number one public image of the Japanese reported by the Chinese respondents was "Japanese aggressor," and 60.4 % expressed concerns over "Japan's militarization." These poll results demonstrate that the Chinese public's negative sentiment arising from conflicting historical memories and narratives is the primary factor causing Chinese mistrust of the Japanese.[4] These sentiments have some distinct historical and narrative sources which will be explored in the following sections.

5.3 Theoretical Framework

Henri Tajfel and John Turner's social identity theory is useful in understanding the dynamics of national identity formation in China and Japan specifically because these two countries have generated much of their contemporary identities on the basis of the negative stereotyping of the other. Social identity theory assumes that people are motivated to achieve a positive 'social identity,' or membership in a social group, with all of the attached values and emotional significance to it (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255).

Consistent with this theory, Michael Hogg and Dominic Abrams further proposed a self-esteem hypothesis which posits that there is a direct relationship between self-image and prejudiced views of the out-group—that successful out-group discrimination elevates self-esteem and threatened self-esteem promotes intergroup discrimination (Abrams & Hogg, 1988, p. 317). The simplest way of generating strong in-group identity is therefore by devaluing the out-group, creating an us versus them dichotomy (Volkan, 2009).

Much more work needs to be done on the ways in which historical memory, identity formation, and the need for self-esteem influence and affect Sino-Japanese relations. In particular, it is important to focus specific attention on the formation of negative stereotypes and enmification of the other in Sino-Japanese relations. Hogg and Abrams highlight the centrality of negative evaluation of the other for enhancing self-esteem. Terrell Northrup explains how enmification is closely linked to identity and can be described as a four-stage process of threat, distortion, rigidification, and collusion (Northrup, 1989). People have a fundamental human need for identity,

[4] "Polls: China-Japan Relations Worsening," *Asahi Shimbun*, September 28, 2002

recognition, and belonging. Events that are perceived to invalidate one's core sense of identity create a sense of threat, which is the first stage. Distortion is the second stage of enmification and is an individual's way of reducing the level of threat to one's identity by denying or altering the meaning of an event. Distortion therefore allows for a rationalization of deep-seated hostility and can lead to dehumanization of the other. The third phase, rigidification, is when individuals become so rigid in their positions that their hostile imagination of the "other" and their prejudices and stereotypes are viewed as truth, despite exposure to other types of information from the social environment. Rigidification acts as a protective wall to defend against attacks and criticisms to the created collective sense of identity. The reactions that constitute the process of rigidification are incorporated into the formation of history and collective identities of the involved parties. At this stage, the conflict satisfies the identity needs of the parties, and hating of the other becomes mutually rewarding. Ultimately, colluding in maintaining the conflict becomes a unifying group aim, around which patriotism coagulates (Tidwell, 1998, pp. 135–136).

Unresolved trauma, historical memory, and identity anxieties generate deep contextual elements for the negative dynamics of enmification. Both China and Japan have been constituting and reconstituting their popular and national identities ever since the end of World War II. In doing so, opinion leaders, intellectuals, and political leaders have drawn on a variety of historical narratives in the process of constructing an ideal national identity. Enmification framework helps us understand better how China and Japan have sustained their mutual animosity over the years.

5.4 China's History of Victimhood and the Patriotic Education Campaign

To understand the process of enmification in China, it is vital to examine the psychological links between massive large-group traumatic experience and the development of nationalist ideology. Volkan refers to this concept as "chosen trauma" as groups "choose" to mythologize the shared mental representation of the massive trauma experienced by its ancestors at the hands of an enemy group. The group carries the mental representation of the traumatic event, together with associated shared feelings of hurt and shames, which becomes deeply incorporated into its identity and transmitted as historical enmity from one generation to another (Volkan, 1997, p. 48).

The formation of modern China's national identity can be characterized by the "victimhood" narrative in which Japan plays an integral role as the negative "other," the aggressor who inflicted traumatic sufferings on the people of China (Wang, 2008).

Reconstruction of historical narratives is seen to occur at a time of a group's identity crisis. Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government faced the so-called three belief crises: crisis of faith in socialism, crisis of

belief in Marxism, and crisis of trust in the party (Zhao, 1998, p. 288). The outbreak of the Tiananmen prodemocracy movement weakened the legitimacy of Chinese leadership and the Communist regime. With the declining credibility in communism, the government resorted to a new ideological framework—nationalism. The patriotic education campaign was launched in 1991 as a history education campaign to teach Chinese young people about China's humiliating experience in the face of Western and Japanese incursion, as well as explaining how the Chinese Communist Party-led revolution changed China's fate and won national independence (Wang, 2008, p. 789).

In 1994, "Outline for the Implementation of Patriotic Education" was published providing official guidelines for the campaign:

> The objective of conducting a patriotic education campaign is to boost the nation's spirit, enhance cohesion, foster national self esteem and pride, consolidate and develop patriotic united front to the broadest extent possible, and direct and rally the masses' patriotic passions to the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. (Cited from Wang, 2008, p. 790)

According to some scholars, the patriotic education campaign was an attempt by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at large-scale ideological reeducation. In 1992, the official People's Education Press published new history textbooks in which the previous "class struggle narrative" was replaced by the "patriotic narrative." The new textbooks no longer focused on ideological and political conflict between the Communist Party and capitalist Kuomintang (He, 2007a, p. 7). Gries argues that "during the 1990s . . . the Maoist "victor narrative" was joined by a new and popular "victimization narrative" that blamed 'the West,' including Japan, for China's suffering" (Gries, 2005, p. 109). Beijing's nationalist propaganda campaign can be viewed as China's attempt to discriminate and devalue the "other" to establish higher levels of self-esteem and in-group solidarity. It represented the "othering" of the Western out-group, including Japan, in order to glorify the Chinese in-group. As He notes, "A country that had invaded and humiliated China in the past, and whose historical amnesia was notorious, Japan became an easy target of China's assertive nationalism . . . Those who now replaced the KMT as the worst villain in the history of the war were the 'vicious Japanese imperialist aggressors'" (He, 2007b, p. 57).

The campaign was launched in the early 1990s as an education program targeting young people and school students. Over time, it has gradually become a nationwide mobilization. All the employees of state agencies, school teachers and administrators, military officers, and soldiers have been required to take regular political classes on patriotic education. The CCP set the entire propaganda machine in motion for this campaign (Wang, 2008, p. 798). "Textbooks provided comprehensive coverage of Japanese war crimes, with figures of fatalities, gruesome pictures, and even names of villages and individuals that had fallen victim to the aggression" (He, 2007b, p. 58).

Bar-Tal stresses that the transmission of victim narratives begins already in schools, with textbooks that communicate narratives about the in-group's past suffering (Bar-Tal, 1998). The portrayal of the in-group's suffering in these text-

books make historical victimization personally salient after the immediate threat has subsided decades or even centuries later.

Museums and public monuments have also played critical roles in the reconstruction of Chinese historical memory and contributed to the negative stereotyping of the Japanese in different parts of the country. The CCP issued an order to local governments at all levels to establish national memory sites for conducting patriotic education. The museum in Beijing held a summer school which incorporated simulated military corps drills and battles with "Japanese devils" (*riben guize*) (Mitter, 2000, p. 293). War movies were produced and promoted to depict Japanese atrocities including the Nanjing Massacre and the biological warfare of Unit 731. The Nanjing Massacre Memorial was opened in 1985 to showcase photographs, documents, and testimonies to propagate China's national identity based on Chinese victimhood and demonization of the Japanese. On the front wall of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial, one finds the inscription "Never forget national humiliation."

The narratives enmifying the Other, propagated by Chinese political elites, have aroused a powerful public response. Some scholars view the top-down patriotic education campaign as the root cause of the upsurge of popular nationalism in China in the 1990s and 2000s. However, other scholars (Gries, 2005; Suzuki, 2007) argue that the elite-driven "national humiliation" would not have been effective without a large and sympathetic audience. Suzuki stresses that the narratives of trauma and humiliation are not merely "official history" in textbooks but real stories that they hear from their parents and grandparents. Suzuki argues that these negative memories of Japanese imperialism are fresh in their minds and the scars of war are deeply entrenched in the Chinese psyche (Suzuki, 2007, p. 26). Although the institutionalized narratives aroused visceral anti-Japan sentiments, the official history still differentiates Japanese militarists from the ordinary Japanese. However, the public discourse on Japan in popular media and on the Internet commonly packages and stereotypes the entire Japanese nation as evil.

When viewed through the lens of social identity and enmification theories, the reaction of the Chinese public to the Japanese government's nationalization of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands can be perceived as an important defense of Chinese national identity. The territorial dispute played into memories of humiliation, reminding the Chinese people of their traumatic past and augmenting the image of Japan as the "victimizing other." As Wang describes it, "in crisis situation of confrontation and conflict, especially when confrontation is perceived by the Chinese as an assault on fundamental identity, face, and authority, then history and memory very often serve as major motivating factors . . . .an isolated event is perceived by Chinese leaders as a new form of humiliation" (Wang, 2008, p. 802).

These examples demonstrate some of the ways in which the Chinese leadership's propagation campaign to construct official history has been able to tap into mass-based historical experiences of trauma. It has successfully generated a strong sense of in-group solidarity against historic perpetrators of violence. Some of these examples are based on historical "facts," others might have been symbolically contrived, but both produce rigid stereotypes of the Japanese as past aggressors and potential aggressors in the future. All of these dynamics generate a certain degree

of Chinese demonization of Japan and the Japanese people even if there is little postwar experience to justify such enmification in the twenty-first century.

The following article in the Financial Times demonstrates the impact of elite-driven education campaign contributing to the rise of popular nationalism:

> After 21-year-old Cai Yang was arrested in September for beating a Toyota-driving Chinese compatriot with a bicycle lock during an anti-Japanese protest, his mother tried to explain his action. "The education at school always instills the idea that Japanese are evil people and if you turn on the television most of the programmes are about the anti-Japanese war," Yang Shuilan said. "How can we possibly not resent the Japanese?"[5]

5.5 Japan's Politics of Historical Memory

The analysis of the Japanese rise of militarism, war propaganda, formation of national identity through the State Shinto ideology, and the use of education to mobilize the masses to glorify the cause and prosecute the wars of aggression during World War II is a subject that has been extensively researched by scholars over the years. This section will focus on the more recent development in the 1990s of neonationalist narratives surrounding the textbook revisionism and the Yasukuni Shrine controversies which led to heated debates about Japan's historical memory and seriously strained its diplomatic ties with China and Korea.

At a time of crisis, when there is a threat to a group's identity, memory is used to valorize the group and restore its collective esteem. As identity is challenged, undermined, or possibly shattered, memories are drawn on and reshaped to defend unity and coherence, to shore up a sense of self and community (Bell, 2006, p. 6). The rise of neonationalist discourse in the 1990s can be viewed through the lens of Japan's identity crisis, a reaction of a nation struggling amidst feelings of insecurity and frustration. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the "bubble economy" created a mood of insecurity and desire for renewal in Japan. The economic downturn in the 1990s reminded Japan that it was no longer the developmental model for the world. Such national crises as the Hanshin earthquake and Aum Shinrikyo's sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway further revealed the weakness and unreliability of the "Japanese system" leading to a serious crisis of Japanese national identity (Yoda & Harootunian, 2006, p. 16). There emerged a view that these political and economic problems were all in the end rooted in a failure to clarify the question of national identity. The 1990s saw a vigorous campaign to reorganize the state and economy and regain a coherent, national self-hood and purpose.

The 1990s was also a time of huge political shifts. In 1993, the long rule of conservative Liberal Democratic Party was replaced by the Japan New Party, and the new Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa made clear-cut public statements on

[5]Jamil Anderlini. "Patriotic Education distorts China world view." *Financial Times*, Dec. 23, 2012

the Asia-Pacific War: "I personally recognize it as a war of aggression, a mistaken war." In 1995, Hosokawa's successor, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, issued a statement to China and other Asian nations, containing formal expressions of apology and regret (Rose, 2005, p. 19). This spurred Japanese right-wing political movements and various revisionist groups to go on the offensive to counter the trend. These conservative actions spanned a wide range, from academic efforts to revise the history textbooks to popular nationalist *mangas* that portrayed Japan's imperialist past in a positive light and presented highly contentious positions on issues such as the Nanjing Massacre and the comfort women. In 1993, the Committee on History and Screening (*Rekishi kento iinkai*) was formed with more than a hundred senior members of the Liberal Democratic Party. Their objective was to publish a new textbook which claimed that the Greater East War was one of self-defense and liberation, that the Nanjing Massacre and accounts of the comfort women were fabrications, and that a new textbook battle was necessary in light of the emphasis on damage and invasion in recent textbooks (Rose, 2005, p. 67). The conservative political elites of Japan were not prepared to embrace Japanese war crimes into the national narrative and collective memory. And in constructing this "bright" narrative, it was essential for them to exclude the "dark" chapters of Japan's wartime history and to reinterpret the war in a positive way (Saaler, 2006, p. 25).

History books are key components in the construction and reconstruction of national narratives. Michael Apple argues that school curricula are not neutral knowledge. Selection and organization of knowledge for schools is an ideological process that serves the interests of particular classes and social groups (Apple, 1992, p. 8). Textbooks are often used as powerful tools to promote a certain belief system and legitimize the political regime. Ever since the rise of the nation-state, history textbooks have been used by states as instruments for glorifying the nation, consolidating its national identity, and justifying particular forms of social and political systems (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 10). The teaching of history has always been a controversial issue in modern Japan. Since the Meiji era, the state has been closely involved in the substance and administration of education in Japan. From 1965 to 1997, the manner of official involvement in their development of history textbook content became a subject of heated debate when a series of court cases were filed against the Ministry of Education (MOE) by Ienaga Saburo, history professor and author of text books, over the MOE's demand to revise the term "aggression/invasion" into "advancement" when describing Japanese military action in China in the 1930s (Ienaga, 2001, p. 104). In 1982, when major Japanese newspapers revealed the MOE's demands to the textbook authors to water down descriptions pertaining to Japanese military aggression, China and South Korea immediately responded with official protests to the Japanese government about the factual inaccuracy and demanded that the newly authorized textbooks be revised. International pressure from the Asian neighbors resulted in the Japanese MOE's concession to add criteria for textbook authorization called the "Neighboring Countries Clause," which stipulated that consideration should be given to neighboring countries' perspectives when it came to critical texts referring to the Nanjing Massacre (Rose, 2005, p. 56). These concessions later led

to further counter offensives from neonationalist politicians and groups unhappy with textbook references to "comfort women." In 1997, 107 Diet members born in the postwar period formed the Group of Young Diet Members Concerned with Japan's Future and History Education (*Nihon no zento to rekishi kyoiku o kangaeru wakate giin no kai*) with Abe Shinzo (current prime minister) as its secretary general, to study the issue of comfort women and history education (Nozaki & Selden, 2009).

In the 1990s, the key group at the center of the textbook debate was the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Tsukuru-kai*) headed by Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu. He launched a campaign to challenge the "masochistic" view of Japanese history and build a "proud and confident Japan." Fujioka's view is that Japanese history is steeped in self-negation, written "to reflect the combined perspectives of the Asian nations' hatred of Japan, and the national interests of the Western Allies" (Fujioka, 1996, p. 2). In terms of specific issues, it was the mention of "comfort women" in junior high-school textbooks that provoked the group to campaign for a rewriting of Japan's history. The group argues that there was no such thing as comfort women. These women were not forcibly recruited by the army but were prostitutes, and prostitution was not illegal in prewar Japan. The rightist camp argues that the mentioning of "comfort women" in school texts will lead to "the spiritual degeneration of the Japanese state" (Tawara, 1997, p. 2). The group also questions the veracity of the Nanjing Massacre, doubting the accuracy of the estimates of the statistics of the victims. Because there has been inconsistency of these figures, the group claims that perhaps the massacre itself did not happen at all (Fujioka, 1996, p. 22). It must be noted, however, that the authors of this group tried to whitewash the country's colonial actions to such a degree that the conservative textbook examiners at the Ministry of Education were compelled to demand more consideration for neighboring countries (Schneider, 2008, p. 111). The *Tsukuru-kai*'s *New History Textbook* was finally approved in 2001 after a high number of officially demanded revisions. Saaler states, however, that the group has come to a dead end, and its *New History Textbook* will remain a marginal presence in the textbook market (Saaler, 2006). Marginal or not, Japanese textbook revisionism still remains an object of deep contention to China and Korea as the group's rhetoric about purifying the historical record, and restoring Japanese people's pride in their "unsullied and sublime self-hood" continues to resonate with the younger generation in Japan.

The Japanese political and social elites' efforts to reinvigorate nationalism seem to have resonated with a young audience seeking for a stronger collective identity. Kobayashi Yoshinori's *mangas*[6] gained popularity especially among university students and school children. Jin Qiu observes that as many Japanese are eager to

[6]Kobayashi Yoshinori is one of the founding members of *Tsukuru-kai*. His *mangas* have become best sellers in Japan. *On War*, published in 1998, sold over a million. Kobayashi's objective is to "cure" the Japanese youth of their passivity. For Kobayashi, Japan's wars in the 1930s and 1940s were "conventional imperialist wars, not acts of aggression". They were acts of self-defense with the ultimate aim of liberating Asian nations from the imperialist yoke. A war conducted with such

find something tangible that they are able to cling to in order to regain confidence in their country, glorification of the country's imperial tradition may work as a psychological remedy to the public (Qiu, 2006, p. 43). An article in the New York Times demonstrates how some young Japanese today feel about their country's past and restoration of their positive esteem:

> Hironobu Kaneko, a 21-year-old college student, remembers the powerful emotions stirred in him three years ago when he read a best-selling book of cartoons that extolled, rather than denigrated, the history of Japan's former Imperial Army. The thick cartoon book, or *manga*, is called "On War" and celebrates the old army as a noble Asian liberation force rather than a brutal colonizer. It lauds Japan's civilization as the oldest and most refined. And it dismisses as fictions well-documented atrocities, from the 1937 Nanjing massacre to the sexual enslavement of 200,000 so-called comfort women in World War II.
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> "This cartoon was saying exactly what we were all feeling back then," said Mr. Kaneko... "The manga was addressing matters that many Japanese people have simply been avoiding, like we've been putting a lid over something smelly. I just felt it said things that needed to be said.... That we should not be so masochistic about our history."[7] (Cited in Qiu, 2006, pp. 43–44)

The motivation of the revisionists to deny Japan's war atrocities in China and South Korea and defend the nation's pride and positive identity is represented in the recent exchanges between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and a nationalist novelist Naoki Hyakuta:

> What is the purpose of teaching the pure and innocent children fabricated lies (by China and South Korea) about "300,000 massacred in Nanjing" or "Forced sexual slavery of the comfort women"?... it only serves to make the children disillusioned by their country, hate their ancestors and become ashamed of their evil conducts. That will lead to an even more horrifying outcome. It will rob them of a sense of pride to live as worthy individuals. (Abe & Hyakuta, 2013)

The complexity of what can be called the social psyche of Japan puzzles and irks its Asian neighbors. Kato Norihiro argues that the Japanese psyche is suffering from schizophrenia induced by the defeat of the war and the occupation. This split personality of Japanese political identity is reflected in how the nation is torn between its reformist "self" that supports Japan's postwar constitution and its universalist values and calls for an apology to Asia and the conservative "self" that wants an "autonomous" constitution and recognizes Japan's war dead as heroes (Kato, 1997). He refers to these conflicting forces in postwar Japan as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde:

> For example, Prime Minister Hosokawa's 1993 apology was followed by a statement by the director of the Defense Agency to the effect that the 1946 "peace Constitution" should be reconsidered, and then in August 1994 Prime Minister Hata Tsutomu's minister of justice expressed his view that the so-called Nanjing massacre was nothing but a "frame-up." (Kato, 1999, p. 73)

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noble aims as the liberation of Asia could not sustain accusations of war crimes and atrocities (Kobayashi, 1998, p. 37).

[7]Howard W. French, "Japan's Resurgent Far Right Thinkers in History," *New York Times*, March 25, 2001.

Japan's condition of schizophrenia is chronic and can also be observed in the public's reaction to Prime Minister Koizumi's repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine which for many years has been at the center of international controversy and the source of dire tension with Japan's Asian neighbors. The heart of the problem is the fact that those honored and worshipped there include 14 convicted Class-A war criminals including Prime Minister Tojo Hideki. Every year, public and private debates surrounding the Yasukuni Shrine intensify in the lead up to August 15. The repeated visits of Japan's prime ministers to the shrine, especially those in recent years by Koizumi Jun'ichiro, have strained Japan's diplomatic ties with China and Korea. Although Koizumi never clarified his motives, he repeatedly claimed that the visits were "a matter of the heart" (*kokoro no mondai*) and a domestic affair that foreign countries should not meddle in.

There are two dimensions to the Yasukuni controversy. First is the constitutional issue of the shrine and its ambiguous relationship to the state. Much of the domestic political debate about the Yasukuni controversy is about the legal status of the shrine (Deans, 2007, p. 272). The domestic debate on Yasukuni is defined by the unresolved paradox of the shrine's ambiguous role as a religious shrine and a state memorial for the war dead in a country where the division of religion and state must be respected.

Many Japanese see the Yasukuni Shrine primarily as a domestic issue, and from this perspective, criticisms from outside Japan—especially the virulent protests and pressure from China and Korea—are seen as undesired meddling in Japan's internal affairs. This attitude was expressed most starkly in Koizumi's repeated arguments that his visits stemmed from his desire to pray for peace so that Japan would never go to war again and that "every country wants to mourn their war dead, and other countries should not interfere in the way of mourning" (Kajimoto, 2005).

China and Korea do not see the Japanese heads of state's visits to the shrine in the same light. For them, the issue is not so much about whether or not these visits contradict the constitutional separation of the state and religion as the revisionist message these visits send. For them it is an issue about Japan's lack of remorse and outright denial of its responsibility for the war of aggression. These visits are seen as a resurgence of the traumatic war history and provocative stirring of the embers of Japanese imperialism and Asian victimhood.

The revisionist narrative of war history is expressed in the Yushukan War Museum on the ground of Yasukuni Shrine. The following statement inside the museum summarizes Yasukuni's historical memory of the war: "The Yasukuni Shrine does not regard the conduct of Japan during World War II as an act of aggression but rather a matter of self defense and a heroic effort to repel European Imperialism." The narrative told in the museum praises militarism and whitewashes the war atrocities committed by the Japanese army. By paying obeisance and patronizing the Yasukuni Shrine, the Japanese prime ministers appear in Chinese people's eyes as officially sanctioning the shrine's public position that Japan was not at fault.

The interpretation of Japan's military past reflected in the Yushukan Museum is not supported by the majority of Japanese. It is met with criticism not only from

abroad but also in Japan itself (Saaler, 2006, p. 100). Seaton further highlights that the opinions of the Japan public inevitably incorporate a balance of the rational and emotional. But consistency is elusive; the emotional (identification as Japanese, family bonds, national pride) sits uncomfortably with the rational (20 million killed across Asia is not something to celebrate) (Breen, 2008, p. 175). The newspaper polls reveal that most Japanese believe that whatever the rights and wrongs of the cause, the state has a duty to remember those who sacrificed their lives for the country. One of the challenges facing any country that has precipitated a war is how to remember and mourn for its dead without glorifying or justifying its aggression. Japan has been struggling with this issue over the past 20 years but has not succeeded in getting the balance right between mourning and glorification.

The cause of China's distrust and threat perception toward Japan arises from Japan's division in its interpretation of the past. Japan's current insecurity and its desire to bolster its national identity and esteem feed into the resurrection of its past glorious memory and, together with its historical amnesia, lead to actions that fuel Chinese popular anxieties and animosity. Yasukuni stands as a symbol of Japan's undigested history—of how Japan chooses to remember or forget the war. The debate is likely to remain unresolved until Japan clarifies its official stance on its collective memory of the past.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways Japanese and Chinese historical memories have been major drivers of conflict and enmification processes in both countries. Based on a sociopsychological framework of the social identity theory, the chapter analyzed the role of historical memory and national identity in the process of negative stereotyping of the "other." It described the dynamics of political elites using history strategically to construct a national identity aimed at guaranteeing internal solidarity and protecting regime interests. Because China and Japan share a lot of conflictual as well as cooperative history, neither is totally free to project its own concept of national identity without provoking interpretative or skeptical questions from the other side. Both China and Japan share common war experiences—one as victim and one as aggressor—this gives rise to very specific kinds of historical memories which play into the present. Confronting these war narratives has led to simmering distrust and stereotyping of the other in both countries. Painful memory stemming from the traumatic experiences of Japanese invasion is deeply engraved in the Chinese psyche and continues to manifest itself in virulent public protests against Japan. The formation of modern China's national identity is deeply underpinned in the "war victimhood" narrative in which Japan plays an integral role as the negative "other." While the Chinese people continue to feel bitter about their suffering and the lack of genuine Japanese atonement for its war guilt, the majority of Japanese people, suffering from historical amnesia, feel frustrated with endless Chinese demands for apology and reparations. The endless reminder of the nation's shameful

past poses a threat to Japanese collective identity and motivates nationalists like Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to revamp the "masochistic" historical memory and build a "proud and confident Japan."

Popular animosity with deep roots in past trauma is not epiphenomenal and cannot be easily disposed of by functional economic and political relationships. Incompatibility based on different perceptions of history, national stereotypes, and rigid worldviews is as capable of triggering transnational conflict as clashes over values, interests, or sovereignty. Indeed these emotional factors can rapidly polarize negotiable disputes. When these factors become embodied in educational curricula, they become deeply entrenched in popular consciousness. The recent territorial dispute surrounding the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, for example, demonstrates how easy it is for popular sentiment to override prudent diplomacy. Decisions made by political leaders in both China and Japan were reflective of strong nationalist public sentiments in both countries and the enduring power of traumatic historical memory and stereotyped reactions to each other.

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