Narrating the War in Postwar Japan: The Interpretation of the Past & Its Implications for Japan's Relationship with Asia*

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The dispute over history shows that there are serious doubts about Japan's position both in and out of Japan and such doubts work as a critical obstacle in defining Japan's international role. In this study, I have examined how postwar Japan's view of the past was shaped and how it influenced Japan's relations with Asian nations as a way of explaining the present dispute and its international ramifications. In particular, I have shown the basic structure of postwar Japan's view of the past as it was shaped during the two decades after the defeat. Also, despite the apparent successes in normalizing relations with Asian nations, Japan has failed to fully resolve the issue of the past and its view of the past played a big part in the process.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Entering the 1990s, the notion of a new regional order in Asia has attracted a great deal of attention. It is often argued that the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union have reduced the impact of global factors in world politics and increased the weight of regional forces (Katzenstein 1997). In Asia, too, international and national developments are thought to be increasingly shaped by regional dynamics. In particular, the economic integration of Asian countries is considered to be a clear sign of the emergence of regionalism in Asia. However, even those who are optimistic about the possibility of Asian regionalism concede that the legacy of Japanese imperialism in Asia is a critical obstacle in the further integration of the Asian region (Katzenstein & Shiraishi 1997, 367).

Although the history of Japanese imperialism ended more than fifty years ago, the weight of the past¹ is still felt in Japan's relations with Asia. As the textbook controversy erupted in 1982,² the interpretation of the war³ surfaced as a key diplomatic problem for the Japanese government. Since the incident, the Japanese government has faced a series of accusations and demands for Japan's atrocities from former colonies and occupied territories.

Entering the 1990s, the issue also became the focus of nationwide debates in Japan as the fiftieth commemoration of the end of the war approached. In particular, between 1994 and 1995, the government's attempt to apologize for Japan's war responsibility in the form of a congressional resolution galvanized nationwide reactions, which revealed the division within the Japanese society over the issue. In sum, despite the passage of half a century, memories of the past remain a critical element in Japan's relations with Asia. This article begins with the simple question of why the dispute over history continues to exert such an influence on Japan's relations with Asian nations.

The dispute over history is a complex phenomenon, requiring analyses from various directions. In this study, I will approach the issue by focusing on the Japanese side. To be specific, I will argue that the dispute is closely connected to postwar Japan's failure in resolving the issue of the past. Japan began to rebuild diplomatic relationships with Asian nations during the 1950s and has successfully accomplished this process by establishing diplomatic relations with Korea in 1965.⁴ Considering that the process of re-establishing diplomatic ties with Asian nations required a mutual *rapprochement* through the resolution of war issues, Japan's successful restoration of its relationships with Asian nations might be interpreted as a sign of diplomatic resolution of the issues between Japan and Asian nations. However, the turning point in the dispute over history was

¹ Here, the "past" refers specifically to Japan's past as an imperialist nation in the prewar period, especially its behaviors related to the war in Asia between 1931 and 1945.

² For a detailed discussion on the development of the controversy, see Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, University of California Press, 1989.

³ In this paper, the war refers to a series of war Japan fought in Asia between 1931-1945. For a discussion on the appellation of the war, see Kisaka Junichiro, 1993.

⁴ Japan's relationship with China was normalized in 1972. However, North Korea is not yet resolved. Both nations were categorized as its adversaries during the Cold War.

the textbook incident of 1982, which resulted from Japan's attempt to rewrite and redefine the past. This points to the fact that Japan's settlement of war issues was not sufficient.

In this study, I will argue that the problems in postwar Japan's relations with Asian nations have been closely connected with its view of the past. In particular, I will show that a significant number in Japanese society have remembered and narrated the prewar history in ways that have been very different and, sometimes, contradictory to Asian neighbors and the remaining Japanese population. They have refused to accept the view of prewar Japan as an evil invader. In their refusal to repudiate prewar history lies the close connection between history and nationalism. In the late nineteenth century, the creation of national memories of the Japanese people played a central role in providing a national identity to modern Japan as a nation-state. As Japan took the route of imperialistic development, historical reckoning became intertwined with Japanese imperialism, thereby developing a narrative of imperial Japan around the notion of the eternal Japanese imperial rule. In the end, the memories of the national past were inextricably intertwined with Japan's nationalism and the memory of Japanese imperialism was not an exception. However, what's more important is the fact that their view of the past played a significant role in shaping the views and policies of the Japanese government in dealing with the settlement of diplomatic issues with Asian nations. Furthermore, I will show that the basic structure of Japan's view of the past and its impact on postwar Japan's relationship was shaped during the first two decades after the defeat. In other words, I will argue that the development of Japan's position during that period laid the ground for the present dispute and without changes in that structure, the dispute would not be resolved in the near future. Thus, in order to do that, I will narrow the focus on the period between Japan's defeat in 1945 and the normalization of relationship with Korea in 1965, during which the basic structure of postwar Japan's relationship was determined.

II. POSTWAR JAPAN'S NARRATIVES OF THE WAR

At noon, August 15, 1945, Japan's emperor had broadcasted the announcement of surrender, ending a series of war that had begun in 1931 in Manchuria. The date marked the beginning of the postwar period in Japan. The surrender was epoch-making in many ways. Japan lost its identity as an imperialist nation as it lost all the foreign territories. It lost its independence, as it was put under the Allied occupation. In addition, various aspects of society were reformed as the occupation authorities attempted to transform Japan into a democratic society. In short, "postwar" Japan is marked with discontinuity or historical severance (Gluck 1992, 3-4).

Among the changes following the defeat was the change in Japan's narratives of the war. During the war, Japanese called the war, "the Greater East Asian War," which argued that Japan's war efforts were to liberate the Asians from Western imperialism. However, by the end of 1945, the war came to be called, "the Pacific War," which denounced Japan's actions in the war as aggressive. Despite such a change in view point, it is wrong to assume that Japan's narratives of the war underwent a complete turnaround

on August 15, 1945. On the contrary, support for the narrative of the Greater East Asian War or, at least, objections to the narrative of the Pacific War, remained strong in postwar Japan.

The Defeat and the Narratives of the War

During the 1930s and the early 1940s, Japan was in a state of constant war. With the occupation of Manchuria in 1931 in the beginning, the Japanese military invaded China. By the end of 1941, the war had expanded to Southeast Asia and the Pacific, as Japan entered the war with America. The war ended on August 14, 1945 as the Japanese government surrendered to the Allied Powers. On September 2, the war officially ended as General Umezu, the Chief of Staffs of the Army, and General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in the Pacific (SCAP), signed the instrument of surrender on board the battleship Missouri. Since then, Japan was put under the Allied occupation until the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect in 1952.

The defeat initiated a new phase in Japan's development. Most importantly, the defeat led to the end of the hegemony of Japanese imperialism in Asia. Following the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, Japan lost its colonial empire and was put under the Allied occupation. Also, the defeat marked a turning point in Japanese history, as the occupation authorities led by General MacArthur aimed at destroying all remnants of Japanese militarism and transforming Japan into a democratic society. In order to achieve this goal, it introduced far-reaching reform policies to the Japanese society. During the postwar reform, thus, prewar Japan's institutions and ideologies were blamed for the calamities and discredited. Instead, new institutions and concepts were introduced and adopted.

The Defeat and the Japanese Government's View of the War

The process of deconstructing prewar Japan included the radical transformation in the way Japan's past was conceived and narrated. As it is known, prewar Japan's official term for the war was the Greater East Asian War. The *raison d'être* behind this name was to liberate Asians from the Western imperialism and to construct a sphere of co-prosperity for Asians. Thus, the name, the "Greater East Asian War" embodied the ideology of Japanese expansionism in Asia.⁵ While the Japanese government propagated the war as a struggle for Asians against Western imperialism, the Allied Powers defined the war as a conflict between democracy and militarism and emphasized the illegitimacy of Japan's actions in the war. Thus, the Potsdam Declaration depicted the Japanese government as having "irresponsible militarism."⁶ In this sense, Japan's defeat in the war was tantamount to the victory of the view of the Allied Powers. Consequently, the replacement of the narrative of the Greater East Asian War with the view of the

⁵ For a discussion on the ideology behind the narrative of the Greater East Asian War, see J. Victor Koschmann, 1997.

⁶ For an original text of the Potsdam Declaration, see *Political Reorientation of Japan, September 1945 to September 1948*, Vol. 2.

Allied Powers became inevitable.

However, the defeat itself did not change the way the Japanese viewed the war. The Japanese government still maintained that the war was the Greater East Asian War, which fought for the liberation of Asia from Western imperialism. The fact that Japan's surrender did not change the Japanese government's position is found in the imperial rescript ending the war. Japan's surrender became public with the announcement of the imperial rescript, which accepted the Potsdam Declaration. While accepting the Potsdam Declaration, it maintained that Japan had fought a just war. It stated that Japan's goal in the war had been to keep the self-existence of the empire and the peace in East Asia, not to proscribe other's sovereignty and to invade their territories. By contrast, it denounced the Allied Powers for using atomic bombs. It argued that Japan's decision was not only to avoid the ruin of the Japanese nation, but also the destruction of the civilization of mankind. Furthermore, it concluded by expressing apologies to the nations in Asia which, it claimed, had cooperated with the empire for the liberation of East Asia throughout the war, and to the Japanese who had died or lost beloved ones in battles. In short, the rescript maintained the legitimacy of Japan's position in the war (Gaimusho 1965, 636-37).

On August 17, the Higashikuni government was formed to deal with the issues following the defeat. Being the first postwar cabinet, the Higashikuni government was faced with the issue of explaining the causes of the defeat and the issue of war responsibility. In the press conference for Japanese reporters held on August 28, the new Prime Minister argued that the defeat was due to the loss of war capability, the dropping of atomic bombs, the entry of the Soviet Union in the war, and the excessive wartime control of the bureaucrats. While recognizing partial responsibility of the government, shown in his statement, "the policies of the government were not good," he argued that the decay in people's morality (*kokumin no sutareta mona*) was another cause (Yoshida 1995, 26). In other words, his approach to the issue of war responsibility denied from the viewpoint of having been defeated, not of the war itself. As for the nature of the war, there was no recognition for Japan's wrongdoings. In the next press conference held for foreign reporters on September 20, the Prime Minister faced inquiries about the war responsibilities of the emperor. He answered the question by saying, "the war was put into action in a secret manner by the hands of a few members of the army and the navy," and strongly denied the responsibility of the emperor (Awaya 1980, 334). Although he recognized the responsibilities of the key military leaders, the focus was not on clarifying their responsibilities but on avoiding the war responsibility of the emperor. In short, the statements were made not to repudiate the narrative of the Greater East Asian War, but to defend the Japanese government and the emperor.

In October 1945, the Shidehara cabinet replaced the Higashikuni cabinet. The new Prime Minister was a moderate diplomat and known for his conflicting views with militarists in the 1930s. However, he was not much different from his predecessors in his view of the war. The Shidehara cabinet's position regarding the war is found in a document entitled, "The Issue on War Responsibility," which was passed by the cabinet on November 5, 1945. Two points about the bill need to be noted. First, it called the war the Greater

East Asian War and maintained that the war had broken out due to the inevitable circumstances surrounding Japan. Because Japan was under military and economic pressures, it argued that the declaration of the war was nothing more than an act of self-defense. Secondly, it strongly denied the war responsibility of the emperor. It argued that the emperor had done nothing but followed the decisions made by the military and the government. Instead, it depicted the emperor as the defender of peace (Awaya 1980, 341–42). In short, the Shidehara government did not view the war as a war of aggression. Not only did it use the name of the Greater East Asian War, but it also embraced the notion of the war as an act of unavoidable resistance against Western pressures.

In sum, Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration did not mean anything more than the recognition of Japan's defeat to America. The Japanese government did not accept the view of Japan's war as an act of "irresponsible militarism." In line with that, its position regarding war responsibility was only limited to searching for the causes of the defeat.

SCAP and the Construction of the Narrative of the Pacific War

As with other areas of the postwar reform, the occupation authority played a central role in the reconstruction of the narrative of the war. Before SCAP intervened in the narrative of the war, the war was still called the Greater East Asian War. The Japanese government continued to defend Japan's position in the war and many Japanese shared the same view. It was the initiatives from SCAP that served as the initial push for the construction of new war narratives.

The view of war by the occupation authorities was based on the Potsdam Declaration. The declaration, which was issued on July 26, 1945, defined the war between the Allied Powers and the Triple Alliance and as a struggle between democracy and militarism. It depicted the Japanese government as having "irresponsible militarism" and demanded "the elimination of power, authority and influence of those who have led the Japanese into the path of world conquest." When the occupation authorities began to build their own narrative of the war, it was this notion of Japanese militarism that served as their basis.

Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in the Pacific (SCAP)'s first move toward building a new narrative was made in December 1945, when it forced major newspapers to publish a series of articles ranging from the 8th to the 17th, entitled "*Taishōseiyōsensushi – Shinjitsu Naki Gunkoku Nihon No Bokai*." The title is a good indication of the content of the article. For example, the war was called the Pacific War (*Taishōsenso*), which replaced the Greater East Asian War as the official name of the war. It defined prewar Japan as a militarist country (*gunkoku*), implying that its collapse was a natural outcome of its unfaithfulness. Also, the introduction made clear that it was written in order to highlight the crimes of Japanese militarism. According to Yui Masatomi, the view of the war can be summarized as follows. First, the Manchurian Incident of 1931 was viewed as the beginning of the war. Therefore, Japan's war was regarded as having been continued from 1931 to 1945 without pause. Second, it assigned the responsibility

of the war to the militarists of the military and contrasted them from the emperor, the court group, and the conservatives in the business. Third, it depicted and denounced the cruelties of the Japanese army, such as the Nanjing Massacre, in detail. Fourth, in regard to the fights before 1941, the main emphasis was on the diplomatic activities of the United States while disregarding China's efforts. In sum, its emphasis was not on the entire period of the war from 1931, but on the phase of the American-Japanese War fought over the Pacific (Yui 1994, 3).

SCAP's proposal of the narrative of the Pacific War was accompanied by the prohibition of the name, the "Greater East Asian War" from public usage. On December 15, SCAP issued a directive on the dissolution of religion of the State (*kokka shinto ni kansuru shirei*), which ordered the separation of shintoism from the state. In addition, it prohibited the use of phrases with connotations of state shintoism, militarism, and ultra-nationalism in official documents. Among them was the name the Greater East Asian War.⁷ As a result, by the end of 1945, the Pacific War came to replace the Greater East Asian War as the name of the war (Yui 1994, 3-4).

However, the impact of SCAP's attempt to discredit the prewar narrative of the war was limited in scope and nature. Most of all, as the name, "the Pacific War" indicates, SCAP's attention was focused on the war between America and Japan. In contrast, Japan's aggression against Asia did not attract much attention. The neglect of Asia in the narrative of the Pacific War was reflected in the process of the Tokyo Trial. One of the criticisms of the trial was over the unbalanced treatment of Japan's war crimes in Asia. Although Japan's aggression in China (since the Manchurian Incident) was included in the list of crimes, it was the war with America that was the focus of the trial.⁸ Consequently, those who advocated the war against America were punished, while those who opposed the war with America were not tried at all (*Wakamiya*). Furthermore, the development of the Cold War, as well as the America's preoccupation with the Communists, worked to end the trial prematurely. Thus, after announcing the sentences of twenty-five criminals in November 1948, the trial came to a halt and other suspects awaiting the trial were released.

In short, the construction of the narrative of the Pacific War was an important step in overcoming the prewar view by officially repudiating prewar Japanese militarism. At the same time, however, it contained significant limitations in perspective, opening the door to challenges made by the conservative camp in Japan soon after the independence.

The Impact of the Narrative on the Pacific War

The establishment of the narrative on the Pacific War marked a turning point in the Japanese view of the past. The publication of the articles in newspapers informed the public of the atrocities of the Japanese military in Asia. Also, as the Tokyo Trial proceeded, some unknown facts about Japan's atrocities in Asia became public. Therefore,

⁷ For an original text of the directive, see *Political Reorientation of Japan, September 1945 to September 1948*, Vol. 2.

⁸ In fact, America intentionally covered up many of Japan's crimes in Asia. See Gavan MacCormack.

it is possible to say that the narrative of the Pacific War laid the ground for a critical re-examination of the war in the Japan. In particular, Marxist scholarship in postwar Japan adopted it as the basis of its view. They rejected prewar Japan's history, as they considered it to be militaristic and aggressive, and adopted the narrative of the Pacific War instead. It is not to say that these scholars embraced the narrative without modification. There were significant differences between American and Marxist intellectuals. Japanese intellectuals found the causes of the war in the socio political structure of prewar Japan, while Americans tended to blame the scheme of militarists and their collaborators (Yui 1994, 11). Consequently, they tended to reject the war in its entirety. In general, however, Japanese scholars did not pay much attention to the war itself. When describing the war, their main interest was in economic structures and political institutions, especially in the emperor system (Yui 1994, 9). It was only in 1953 that they produced the first full-scale work on the war entitled, the *Taibeiyō Sensōshi*. Published in five volumes, it attempted to place the wars between 1931 to 1945 within the movements of world history and grasp the meaning by combining various elements of the military, politics, society, economy, and culture in an unified way (Nagahara Keiji 1977, 17-18). The lack of interest in narrating the war can be attributed to the fact that their main concerns were to accomplish postwar democracy and to view Japan's history in terms of the laws and stages of historical development.⁹ In short, although Japan's progressive intellectuals rejected the prewar narrative of imperial history and aimed at the construction of a new historical narrative, they did not pay full attention to the explanation of the war.

In the meantime, the Japanese government under Allied occupation was forced to adopt the narrative of the Pacific War, thus recognizing the view that Japan was the aggressor in the war. However, it did not mean that the Japanese government whole-heartedly accepted its responsibility in the war. Its basic position toward the issue of war responsibility was to evade and minimize the issue, which is well-revealed in the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Because the treaty meant final resolution of the war between Japan and the Allied Powers, the issue of war responsibility was a central issue when signing the treaty. The issue was mentioned in the eleventh and fourteenth article of the treaty.¹⁰

It is true that the treaty was significant in the sense that it marked the first official recognition of Japan's war responsibility. However, the way Japan recognized its responsibility was very limited. Japan avoided mentioning the issue of war responsibility in a direct manner by stating that it would accept the result of the Tokyo Trial. Also, it restricted its responsibility to the Allied Powers and did not mention the responsibilities toward Asian nations. Most of all, what the clauses meant was that Japan would neither openly

⁹ For instance, the themes of the annual meetings of the "Rekken" in 1949 and 1950 were "Basic Laws of the World History" (*Seikaido No Kibon Hōshaku*) and "Stages of State Power" (*Kokku Kenryoku No Shodankai*). See the discussions on Nagahara Keiji, pp. 5-13.

¹⁰ Article 11 reads that Japan accepts the judgements of the International Military Tribunal for Far East and other Allied War Crimes Courts both within and outside Japan and will carry out the sentences imposed upon the Japanese nationals imprisoned in Japan. Also, Article 14 (a) reads that it is recognized that Japan should pay reparations to the Allied Powers for the damage and suffering caused by it during the war. Nevertheless, it is also recognized that the resources of Japan are not presently sufficient if it is to maintain a viable economy, to make complete reparation for all such damage and suffering, and at the same time meet its other obligations. See <http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty/collection/series/search.htm>

challenge nor eagerly support the narrative of the Pacific War. Since then, the Japanese government maintained the principle of avoiding any mention of its war responsibilities. It was only in the Sino-Japanese Communiqué of 1972 that it broke the rule and officially apologized for its wrong doings during the war.

Independence and the Changes in the Narratives of the War

The Allied occupation of Japan officially ended in April, 1952. The advance of Communism in East Asia, particularly the outbreak of the Korean War, forced America to consider a peace treaty as a way of ensuring Japan's strategic partnership with the U.S. in the Cold War. Thus, following the negotiations, peace treaty was signed in September 1951 and went into effect in April 1952. As a result, Japan regained independence. The independence marked a turning point in Japan's development as it freed Japan from foreign control. Most of all, Japan gained the freedom to decide its own policies without overt intervention from the American government.

The newly independent Japan was a nation very different from what it used to be before the defeat. During the postwar reform, Japan underwent far-reaching changes. However, by the time Japan regained its independence, the postwar reform had already taken the so-called, "reverse course," which refers to the trend to revise and reverse the democratic reforms during the early stage of the occupation.¹¹ The independence was to further accelerate the "reverse course." It is clear that the "reverse course" during the later stage of the occupation did not amount to the total reversal of the outcomes of postwar reform. Still, it is also clear that the policies of the "reverse course" strengthened conservative voices in Japan.¹² Before being ousted from the post in December 1954 by the members of his own Liberal Party, Yoshida took measures intended to reverse or diminish the reforms in the late 1940s.¹³ In line with it, the views opposite to the narrative of the Pacific War began to be voiced with increasing gusto.

The Conservative Government and Its View of the Past

The predominance of conservatives in the government is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Japanese politics in the postwar period. With the Karayama cabinet

¹¹ The American government's policy toward Japan began to change in 1947 as the rivalry with the Soviet Union became clear in Europe. In addition, the rise of Communism in China forced the American government to review its strategy in East Asia. As the military and strategic confrontation with the Communist camp became the first priority, SCAP's goal in Japan changed from the eradication of Japanese militarism to the consolidation of Japan's strategic role in the Cold War. As SCAP took the "reverse course," a considerable portion of the postwar reform was either modified or abandoned. See Asai Yoshio.

¹² For instance, SCAP allowed the Japanese government's decision to depurge individuals purged for having been exponents or agents of militarism, aggression, and militant nationalism. The depurge was proceeded in four stages: 10,090 people in October 1950; 2,958 in June 1951; 66,425 in July 1951; 13,904 in August 1951. Consequently, former army and navy officers and high government officials and leaders of business and industry, have been ousted from public life.

¹³ To sketch the measures Yoshida took, there was the enactment of the law concerning the prevention of subversive activities, the centralization of the police, and the re-establishment of the military force. See Mikiso Hane, pp. 356-58.

(1947-48) as the sole exception, postwar Japan's governments have been dominated by conservatives. Furthermore, after the merger of the Democratic and Liberal Parties into the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955, Japanese politics came to be characterized by one-party dominance.

It is difficult to define the ideology of conservative politicians in one word. However, it is possible to characterize their attitude toward the past as positive.¹⁴ One of the clues to their views of the past is their personal backgrounds. Many of them played active roles as politicians and bureaucrats during the war. For instance, Yoshida Shigeru, who first led the cabinet of the Liberal Party between 1946 and 1947, had formed the second cabinet in October 1948 until December 1954, and was a former diplomat in Manchuria. Kishi Nobusuke, the Prime Minister from 1957 to 1960, was active in Manchuria in the 1930s as a reformist bureaucrat and the Minister of Commerce and Industry in the Tojo cabinet. He spent over three years in prison as a war crime suspect until his release at the end of 1948, when the Tokyo Trial was suspended.

One way to understand the conservative government's view of the past is through their efforts to define Japan's national identity. From the beginning, the Japanese government was intent on relying on nationalism as a backbone of the newly independent Japan. By doing so, it relied on the symbols and sensibility of prewar nationalism in constructing postwar Japan's national identity and, consequently, was criticized as attempting to revive the "reminiscence of the glory of the Japanese empire" (Iuoue Kiyoshi 1959, 8).

One of the clues on how the conservative government envisioned a new national identity can be found in its attempt to reinstate the National Foundation Day (*Kigensetsu*). In 1952, the government first submitted a bill to restore it as a national holiday. First instated in 1872, it was based on the day of Jimmu Tenno's enthronement as recorded in *Nihon Shoki* and was one of the two most important national holidays in prewar Japan.¹⁵ By assuming the beginning of the imperial house in the record regarding Jimmu Tenno in *Nihon Shoki*, the celebration played an important role in instilling the belief in the perpetuity of the imperial house and the Japanese nation. Consequently, it was only natural that the occupation authorities abolished it in 1948. However, with the signing of the peace treaty, the Japanese government revealed the intention of reviving it as an official holiday and attempted to submit a bill. Although its attempt was thwarted due to the opposition by the progressive forces, it continued to push it forward and, finally, succeeded in enacting it into a law in 1966 (Toyama and Ienaga).

Another indication of the government's position was found in the area of history education. Education was one of the most important areas in postwar reform. The occupation authorities believed that prewar Japan's education had been one of the primary causes of Japanese militarism. As part of the effort, SCAP set up the social studies course in April 1947 in place of former courses on ethics, history, and geography courses. However, soon after the independence, the government attempted to reverse the education reform. The

¹⁴ Conservatism (sic) is an attitude or philosophy that places great emphasis on tradition. Conservatism promotes conserving (saving) traditional institutions, values, and ideas. Conservatives seek progress by keeping with the proven values of the past. (<http://www.netins.net/showcase/consience/hs/define.htm>)

¹⁵ The other one was the birthday of the emperor.

government's goals consisted of two elements: the emphasis on patriotism and loyalty to the nation and the control of the contents of education. Already in 1953, *Asahi Shinbun* reported that Ikeda Hayato, Prime Minister Yoshida's delegate to America, and his American counterpart agreed in a meeting that the Japanese government would be held responsible for the encouragement of the environment to enhance patriotism and voluntary spirits for self-defense through education and publicity. Also, the government went through several revisions of *Essentials in Teaching Guidelines* (*Gakushu Shito Yoryo*). According to the guideline revised in 1956, the goal of history education was defined "to elevate the realization of the Japanese and, at the same time, to enhance affections toward the nation (*minzoku*)" (Ienaga Saburo; Toyama Shigeki). Soon, the government began to impose the goal on the content of textbooks, which is noted in the Ienaga Trial. The legal battle between Ienaga Saburo and the Ministry of Education began when his history textbook (*Shin Nihonshi*) failed to pass the textbook authorization test in 1962 for including pictures highlighting the dark side of the war. When Ienaga reapplied for the test after some revisions in 1963, the ministry demanded that several additional changes be made. For instance, it demanded him to eliminate the description of the Pacific War as "reckless," by changing the place of the pictures of emperor and empress from the bottom of the page to the very top, and by calling U.S. military base "facilities."¹⁶ In the end, Ienaga filed for a trial arguing for the illegality of government demands in 1965. Still, the authorized history textbooks came to assume the following characteristics: deletion of war experiences; discourse on the status of the emperor; elevation of international status; and emphasis on culture (Yokoyama 112). In short, the government policy on history textbooks was to construct an emperor-centric history, while de-emphasizing the negative elements of history such as the war experiences.

The government's position over the past was more clearly revealed in its policy on the release of war criminals. As mentioned earlier, the Japanese government officially accepted the result of the Tokyo Trial in the peace treaty. However, as soon as the peace treaty went into effect, calls for the release of war criminals were voiced.¹⁷ As for those movements, parties responded by adopting resolutions demanding the release of war criminals. In the end, the last remaining A-level war criminal was released from the Sugamo Prison in 1956 (Sato Takao 83-84). Then, what was the view of the war in those resolutions? For instance, the resolution decided in the House of Representatives on August 3, 1953 argued that the full amnesty of those who have been convicted for war crimes was an earnest wish of the people, and being unable to achieve that was emotionally unbearable for them (Yoshida 1995, 84). What is striking in the argument was that it regarded the convicted criminals not as someone who had inflicted great harm onto others, but as someone who had endured sufferings. In short, it is possible to characterize the attitude of the conservative government toward the past as sympathetic.

¹⁶ On the issues and progress of the trial, see Natimimoto Katsutoshi.

¹⁷ For instance, over 15,000 people participated in a congregation held on November 11, 1953 for the release of war criminals. See Yoshida, p. 82.

Popular Consciousness and the Affirmation of the War

The Japanese government's view of the war was not an isolated one. Instead, it was shared by a significant number of people in the Japanese society. By the end of 1945, the official name of the war in Japanese society changed from the Greater East Asian War to the Pacific War. With the change in name, the official evaluation of the war also shifted from positive to negative. The establishment of the narrative of the Pacific War, however, did not result from fundamental changes in popular consciousness. Despite the defeat, the ideological claim of the war as the Greater East Asian War survived in popular consciousness. By contrast, the issue of war responsibility did not gain much attention and remained a marginal issue. It is true that consciousness about war responsibility has shown progress in the late 1950s (Ishida 1995). Takeuchi Yoshimi's discussion of Japan's responsibility toward Asia (particularly China) should be noted. At the same time, however, the popular mood in Japanese society was increasingly shaped by those who took opposite positions.

Challenges to the narrative of the Pacific War began to appear about the time of the peace treaty. One of the first indications was the publication of war experiences written by former military members (*senkimonos*). According to a survey, only thirty-six of such books were published between 1945 and 1949. However, that number suddenly increased from 1950. For instance, there were twenty-five volumes in 1950, twenty in 1951, thirty-two in 1952, and forty in 1953 (Yoshida 1995, 85). The popularity of war memoirs indicates that those who had experienced the war became much more assertive about their memories that had been suppressed under the occupation. However, more important than the number of books were their views of the war. It is impossible to generalize the views of the war in those books. However, it is possible to examine what the basic viewpoints of the military members were like by looking into *Daitōa Senso Zenshi* (DSZ), first published in 1956.¹⁸ While other such books were individual works, this book was a result of collaboration by former staff members who had been in charge of the strategies in each military operation. As the preface made clear, this book recorded the development of the war by focusing on the strategies of Japan's government and military in each operation.¹⁹

Then, what was their historical narrative like? The first indicator of their historical narrative is the title. This work officially used the designation of the war as the Greater East Asian War, which had disappeared from the public due to the prohibition of the occupation force. Simply adopting the title suggested a challenge to the narrative of the Pacific War. Also, the war was narrated in a way that supported the narrative of the Greater East Asian War. For example, when describing the causes of the war, it blamed England for searching for colonies throughout the world and expropriating people who were weak and backward in civilization. By contrast, it justified Japan's

¹⁸ According to Yoshida Yutaka, this book showcased the typical way of thought of the staff members. See Yoshida, p. 87.

¹⁹ According to its preface, this work was based on the official records of the government, the military and secret operation journals, the oral statements and writings of former military members and other related individuals. See *Daitōa Senso Zenshi*, p. 4.

position, saying, "because of narrow lands, material shortages, and growing population, Japan had no other option but to bind itself with the Asian continent, which was the only means of survival" (DSZ, 2-3). Thus, the second Konoe cabinet's decision to occupy the northern part of Indochina was viewed as an act to "gain the materials of the South, to break free from the economic dependency on England and America, and to consolidate the preparation for self-sufficiency" (DSZ, 22). In short, it adopted the narrative of the Greater East Asian War in explaining the causes of the war, thereby defending Japan's position in the war.²⁰

The historical narrative of this book was closely related to the nationalism of the former members of the Japanese military.²¹ In fact, it is not an overstatement to say that the book was a product of the restoration of conservative nationalism. In evaluating the occupation period, for instance, the author lamented that a great number of Japanese were devoting themselves not to the reconstruction of the fatherland, but to self-consolation by placing responsibilities on others and blaming one another. Moreover, he argued that they attempted to justify the present by denying anything that was traditional, resulting in spiritual panic and ideological confusion. As a result, he deplored that the Japanese lost their confidence and pride in their own nation and people (DSZ, 1018).

While the narrative of *Daitoa Senso Zenshi* was an indirect challenge to the narrative of the Pacific War, Hayashi Fusao's *Daitoa Senso Koteiron* (DSK) and *Zoku Daitoa Senso Koteiron* (ZDSK) were much more direct. Hayashi's view first appeared in *Chuo Koron* between September 1963 and June 1965, and was later published as two-volume books. Hayashi was in agreement with the author of *Daitoa Senso Zenshi* in adopting the name of the Greater East Asian War. However, he did not stop at using the name. As the titles of the books reveal, Hayashi challenged the narrative of the Pacific War in an open and direct way by affirming Japan's position in the war.

He began the book by declaring that the time had come for the Japanese to reexamine the Greater East Asian War through their own eyes (DSK, 11). What he implied was that the war had been viewed from the viewpoint of Americans. In fact, he criticized the postwar years, saying that Japan during that period had been in a state of demensia due to the defeat (ZDSK, chapter 19). He argued that the Greater East Asian War was the last stage of East Asia's Hundred Years War, in which Japan had fought against Western invasions for the goal of emancipating Asia from Western domination. Consequently, Japan was not the invader but the defender of Asia. As Japan ended in defeat, Asia came to be dominated by America and the Soviet Union (DSK, 23). Here, Hayashi presented a view of prewar Japan that was radically different from that in the narrative of the Pacific War. He depicted Japan as the defender of Asia from the invading Westerners. Thus, the war took on a quite different meaning. According to him, Japan was the defender of Asia, while America was the aggressor. Furthermore, his argument was presented in a way that appealed to the nationalistic sensibilities of ordinary people. For example, he was appealing to the national pride of the people,

²⁰ In relation to this, Yoshida evaluated it as "a book for the self-defense of those who were responsible for the war," p. 9.

²¹ The writings of former staff members were published mostly in the early 1950s when the peace treaty allowed the expression of formerly repressed nationalism. See Yoshida, p. 100.

saying, "some twenty years after the defeat have gone by like a bad dream. As a result, Japan achieved renaissance like a dream." Also, he appealed to the emotional wounds of the defeated people, saying, "I detest those who are calling the war a war of reckless crime and the deaths in the war useless. They are not only stupid but also sordid liars" (ZDSK, 367).

The influence of Hayashi's view in Japanese society was limited (Yoshida 1995, 128). Hayashi's argument met strong reactions from both the conservatives and the progressives. His open advocacy of the war was apprehended as a signal of revival of militarism by many of his contemporaries. Nonetheless, it is also true that his view was not an isolated one. His argument survived the torrent of criticisms and served as a prototype for the numerous books published thereafter.

III. THE ISSUE OF THE PAST AND JAPAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ASIA

One of the consequences of Japan's defeat was the collapse of Japanese hegemony in Asia. With that, Japan's official relationship with Asia was also cut off. It was after the signing of the peace treaty that Japan began to normalize its relations with Asian nations. The central issue in Japan's negotiations with Asia was the issue of the past. As for Asian nations, the bitter memories of Japanese dominance worked as the most important obstacle in the rehabilitation of official relationships. Consequently, the settlement of the issue of the past occupied a central place in Japan's relationships with Asia.

The basis of postwar Japan's approach to the issue of restoring official relationships with Asia was provided by the San Francisco Peace Treaty, in which Japan recognized its war responsibilities. In line with that, the issue of war reparations emerged as the main focus in the negotiations for the re-establishment of official diplomatic relationships. However, Japan's settlement of war issues was proceeded with many problems. In particular, throughout the negotiations, the gap between Japan and its counterparts in assessing and dealing with the past became evident. Japan's position throughout the negotiations was characterized by two elements: avoiding the explicit mentions of Japan's war responsibilities and minimizing the amount of war reparations.

The Occupation Period (1945-1952)

Japan's relationship with Asia was on ice during the occupation. The absence of Japan's official relationship with Asia during this period contained two facets. On the one hand, Japan lost sovereignty to the Allied Powers. Consequently, Japan was not in a position to pursue the normalization of relations with Asia. On the other hand, the issue of the past, particularly of the war, emerged as a main problem in restoring the relationship with Asia, delaying Japan's reintegration into Asia.

During the occupation, Japan's sovereignty was in the hands of the occupation authorities, which meant that it was the American government, not the Japanese government, that took control of Japan's foreign relations. Consequently, America's view of prewar Japan

and its war played a decisive role in shaping Japan's relations with Asia.

America's view of the war influenced Japan's relations with Asia in two ways. First of all, it was directly related to the disintegration of the Japanese empire. As mentioned earlier, America viewed prewar Japan as being dominated by militarists and repudiated its aggression into Asia. Thus, during the war, it made it clear that Japan should be deprived of all its foreign territories. The Potsdam Declaration demanded that "the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as we determine."²² Consequently, when the Japanese government accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and surrendered to the Allied Powers, the disintegration of the empire became a matter of fact. With the surrender, Japan had to give up newly occupied territories in China and Southeast Asia, but also colonies such as Korea and Taiwan. Also, following the defeat, Japanese nationals living in Asia were repatriated home. In all, Japan's relations with Asia entered a period of total halt.

Secondly, America laid the foundation for future negotiations between Japan and the Asian nations by introducing the principle of war reparations. War reparations refer to the payments of reparation paid to the nations that have been victimized by Japanese imperialism. In other words, America assumed that prewar Japan had inflicted harm on to other nations by conducting the aggressive war and, consequently, the resolution of war issues was a prerequisite for the normalization of the relationships with those nations.

The issue of war reparations was first raised during the war by the Allied Powers, which defined Japan as the aggressor.²³ The eleventh article of the Potsdam Declaration stated that "Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those [industries] which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted." During the early phase of the occupation, the American government adhered to this position and repeated it in the United States the initial post-surrender policy for Japan.²⁴ In other words, SCAP made it clear that Japan should bear economic burdens toward Asian nations that have been victimized by Japan's aggression. As a result, the payment of war reparations emerged as a key element in the settlement of war issues between Japan and the Asian nations.

In the early phase of the occupation, the Allied Powers maintained the principle of war reparations and pushed forward with reparation payments. Having arrived in Japan on November 13, 1945, the Edwin Pauley Commission argued that Japan's industries were predominantly for military purposes and, despite the destruction during the war,

²² <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/decade/decade17.htm>

²³ For a discussion on the development of the concept of war reparation, see <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/decade/decade17.htm>

²⁴ The original text is as follows: "Reparations for Japanese aggression shall be made: (a) through the transfer of Japanese property located outside of the territories to be retained by Japan (b) through the transfer of such goods or existing capital equipment and facilities as are not necessary for a peaceful Japanese economy or the supplying of the occupying forces." *Political Reorientation*, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 25.

their industrial capacities exceeded the demands of the peaceful economy. Thus, it advised that the occupation authorities should transfer the surplus in Japan's industrial capacities to the invaded countries as a way of demilitarizing Japan. In line with that, in April 1947, the Far Eastern Committee decided on the interim plan for reparation and issued a directive to MacArthur to send a portion of Japan's industrial facilities to the nations that have been inflicted with damages by Japan's aggression. As a result, the four nations including China, the Netherlands (for Indonesia), the Philippines, and Britain (for Malaysia) have received reparation payments that came to a total of approximately 165 million yen (Utsumi, 132-33).

However, America's reparation policy began to change in 1947. As the Cold War escalated, the focus of the occupation policy moved from democratization to stabilization. Thus, in December 1947, the Clifford Strike Commission, dispatched by America, reported that the industrial facilities that could be effectively utilized within Japan should not be removed, with the exception of military facilities. Furthermore, in March 1948, the William Draper Commission, dispatched by the Department of the Army, called for a fundamental review of reparations by reporting that the transfer of Japanese industrial facilities was harmful to the goal of the occupation. In October 1948, the American government decided that the economic recovery would be the first priority of the occupation policy. In the end, the Allied Powers decided to suspend of the interim reparations that were already in progress on May 12, 1949 (Utsumi; Hara). In short, the escalation of the Cold War changed America's occupation policy and resulted in the abandonment of the reparation policy.

The impact of the Cold War on America's policy of war reparation grew even clearer following the Korean War. Soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, the American government began to prepare for the peace treaty. In November 1950, America presented the principles for the peace treaty, which included the renunciation of the right to seek reparation by the Allied Powers (Utsumi, 134). America's plan to exclude war reparations was met with strong objections by Asian nations, of which the Philippines voiced the strongest opposition. As a consequence, America had to concede and include in the peace treaty that Japan had the obligation to pay reparations. However, at the same time, Article 14 allowed Japan to avoid or delay the payments, saying that "the resources of Japan are not presently sufficient, if it is to maintain a viable economy, to make complete reparation for all such damages and sufferings, and at the same time, meet its other obligations."

To recapitulate, America's view of the war and its policy on war reparations laid the groundwork for Japan's postwar relationships with Asian nations. America defined their relationship to be that of the aggressor and the victim. As a result, Japan was held responsible for paying war reparations to Asian nations. However, America's condemnation of Japan's aggression underwent critical changes due to the Cold War and was compromised in favor of Japan's interests. By the time Japan signed the peace treaty, it was endowed with room to shape the issue as to its own will. In contrast, the claims made by Asian nations were not sufficiently reflected in the peace treaty as showcased by the exclusion of Korea and China from the signing of it.

During the occupation, the initiative of the reparation issue was in the hands of the American government. However, it does not mean that the Japanese government did not have any influence over the issue. Unlike the case of Germany, the Allied Powers decided to leave the existing government in place and operate through it in order to rule Japan. The indirect-rule arrangement opened the way to much more Japanese influence in shaping occupation measures than had originally been expected (Passin 1970, 109). Thus, as for the development of the issue of war reparations, the Japanese government exerted influence, although in a limited way.

Then, what was the position of the Japanese government over the issue of war reparations? Japan's approach to this issue was different from that of America's. America's reparation policy was based on the view that Japan had inflicted great harm to the Asian nations through expansionist policies. However, as seen before, the Japanese government did not fully accept that view. In particular, the Japanese government tended to deny its responsibility about its actions prior to the war with America. As for its invasion of China since the Manchurian Incident of 1931, it continued to define it as an incident (*jihen*), not as a war (*sensu*). In a document prepared in 1949, for instance, the foreign ministry argued that it would not accept the view that defines the Manchurian Incident and the China Affair as wars. Thus, it insisted that the future peace treaty not be applied to the relationship between Japan and China (Tanaka 1993, 55).

A similar position is found in its relation to Korea. It is true that the case of Korea is different from that of China in that Japan had already colonized it. However, by the very fact of colonization, the issue of the past presented a much more serious problem in Japan's relationship with Korea. The Japanese government's position over the negotiation with Korea can be found in a couple of government documents. In 1950, the Finance Ministry published the results of a survey on Japanese-owned properties in its former colonies, including Korea. The goal of the survey was to provide legitimacy to the claims for Japanese-owned properties in former colonies (Takasaki 1990, 225). In line with that goal, one of the articles in the volumes challenged basic assumptions about Japanese rule in Korea. First, it denied the view that Japan's colonial rule in Korea had enslaved and expropriated Koreans in a way much worse than the Westerners had done. Second, it argued that Korea had achieved a great deal of development during the last thirty years, thanks to Japan's leadership. In other words, the author of the article denied the view that Japan should be held responsible for the colonial rule of Korea. Almost the same view is found in another government document prepared in 1949 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which also denied Japan's exploitation of Korea and insisted on Japan's contribution to Korea's modernization instead (Takasaki 1990, 225-27).

In short, two important, but contradicting, elements were shaped during the occupation period. First of all, the principle of war reparations was established as the basic solution to the issue of the past. Secondly, the Japanese government tended to minimize its war responsibilities. The inherent contradiction of the two elements did not surface during this period. However, once Japan regained independence, it served as a key problem in the normalization of Japan's relations with Asian nations.

The Post-Independence Era (1952-1965)

Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. The signing of the peace treaty opened the door for Japan's re-entry into the international world. Now, Japan formally regained the rights to conduct diplomatic affairs on its own. After the independence, thus, Japan sought to restore its international position diplomatically. As a result, beginning with its admission to the United Nations in 1956, Japan became an increasingly active member in international politics, as well as economic and social forums. The security arrangements with the United States, originally signed in 1951, were revised in 1960 with a view to make them more reciprocal. In the process, the re-establishment of diplomatic relationships with Asian nations was pursued with increasing emphasis.

As examined earlier, the settlement of war issues became the key factor in negotiations. The San Francisco Peace Treaty obliged Japan to pay war reparations to the nations that had been inflicted with harm during the war. However, the process of normalizing political and economic relations was not simple, for Japan had to overcome the resentment of the Asians caused by the war. Although Japan accepted the condition of paying reparations, there was a huge gap in the assessment of the amount of payments between Japan and the Asian nations. The difference was not only about the amount of payments. More important was the difference over the nature and degree of harm that Japan had supposedly inflicted upon those nations. Throughout the negotiations, the Japanese government showed extreme care in not openly recognizing its war responsibilities. In the end, negotiations tended to proceed from economic viewpoints, while the issue of Japan's war responsibilities was not dealt with sufficiently.

Japan's efforts to rebuild formal relationships with Asia began soon after the independence. The first occasion was the formalization of its relationship with Taiwan. Because China was a main battlefield during the war, it was inflicted with the greatest harm. Consequently, the settlement of war issues occupied the central position in restoring formal relations with China. However, the establishment of the Communist regime in the continent and the retreat of the Nationalist government into Taiwan created a diplomatic problem for the Japanese government. While Japan was intent on resuming its relations with the Communists in China, America urged Japan to side with Taiwan. In the end, Japan succumbed to America's demands and signed the peace treaty with Taiwan in April 1952. One of the most distinctive aspects of the treaty was Taiwan's renunciation of the right to war reparations. Although Taiwan called for reparation payments for the damages done to China, its claim was regarded groundless by the Japanese government, which argued that Taiwan did not have the jurisdiction over mainland China. In the end, Taiwan renounced its right to war reparations. Considering that the treaty with Japan was a welcome relief for Taiwan from international isolation, it was not difficult to understand why the issue of war reparations was sidetracked in the process (Tanaka 1993, 57). Japan succeeded in concluding the treaty with Taiwan without either reparation payments, or the formal recognition of war responsibilities.

In the meantime, despite its relationship with Taiwan, Japan continued to pursue intercourse with China during the 1950s. In particular, a considerable number of Japanese

people regarded China as an important partner not only in trade, but also in regional strategy (Iriye, 99-101). However, within the strategic confinement of the Cold War, it soon became clear that Japan's interests lay with Taiwan, not with China. The result was the policy of the Kishi cabinet, which pursued an Asian policy oriented toward the Southeast, while giving up the normalization of its relationship with China.²⁵ Consequently, the fact that the Nagasaki Flag Incident resulted in the rapid deterioration of Japan's relationship with China was not an accident.

The real test for the normalization of Japan's relationships began as the negotiations with the Southeast Asian nations took place. While most of the participants in the peace treaty renounced the right to reparations, six participants from Southeast Asia did not. Among them, Cambodia and Laos waived the right in 1954 and 1956, respectively. However, other nations actively sought the reparations and Japan's negotiations with these nations began soon after the signing of the peace treaty. In December 1951, for instance, negotiations with Indonesia began as it dispatched a delegation to Tokyo. Negotiations with the Philippines began in January 1952. As a result, reparation agreements were signed with Burma (1954), the Philippines (1956), Indonesia (1958), and South Vietnam (1959). However, the agreements were not made easily. Except in the case of Burma, the negotiations were stalled over the amount of reparation payments.²⁶ For instance, the first meeting with Indonesia ended without an agreement when Indonesia demanded seven billion dollars. The meeting with the Philippines met a similar fate, as the Philippines demanded eight billion dollars. Japan suggested the payment of the total of 435 million dollars to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Burma in late 1953. Consequently, negotiations were stalled over the amount of reparations. Another problem was that the Japanese government was not eager in pursuing the normalization of its relations with those nations. It was only when the Kishi government (1957-1960) sought to enhance economic development by building an economic network with the non-Communist Asia, that the negotiations were reinvigorated (Miyachi, 348). In the end, final agreements were made in the latter half of the 1950s and Japan was successfully reintegrated into Southeast Asia. However, the final sum of the payments was a portion of what those nations had demanded.²⁷ In short, economic considerations played a critical role in Japan's approach to the relations with Southeast Asia.

Entering the 1960s, Japan resolved most of the outstanding diplomatic issues in Asia, except the cases of Korea and China. Considering that its relationship with China was defined by the Cold War, it is possible to say that its relation with Korea was the only remaining problem. The Japanese government began talks for the normalization of the relationship with the Korean government. The first talk was held on February 15, 1952, following the preparatory talk held in November 1951. With that as the

²⁵ For example, Kishi made an official visit to Taiwan in 1957.

²⁶ In Burma's case, the negotiation began in August 1954 and the final agreement was made in September. The main factor in the rapid resolution of the negotiation was Burma's foreign exchange crisis. See Hara, pp. 277-78.

²⁷ For instance, Indonesia received 223.3 million dollars and the Philippines, 550 million dollars. The total reparations to the four nations (Indonesia, the Philippines, Burma, and South Vietnam) was a little over one billion dollars. Recited from the table of Donald Hellmann, 104.

beginning, the talks between two nations continued intermittently until the final agreement in the seventh meeting of 1965 (Lee; Takasaki 1996).

One of the most critical factors in prolonging the negotiations was the gap in the views of Japan's colonial rule in Korea and the amount of reparations to be made to Korea. From the beginning, the Korean government made financial compensations for colonial rule as the key item in the negotiation. However, the position of the Japanese government was quite contrary. First, it did not accept the view that Japan's colonial rule had been harmful and repressive. The contradiction in the views of the past was evident from the beginning. According to a testimony by Korean participants, Chiba Hiroshi, one of Japan's representatives for preparatory talks, refused to accept the fact that Japan had invaded Korea against the will of the Koreans (Takasaki 1996, 24). In line with that, Japan demanded compensation for Japanese properties in Korea in the first official negotiation held in 1952 (Lee, 51-58). From that point on, Japan's claim to Japanese-owned properties in Korea became the focus of the dispute.

In this respect, the so-called, "Kuboda statement of 1953" was not an accident. His statement contained following claims. First, Japan's colonial rule had beneficial results to the Koreans. Second, the description of the Cairo Declaration of Koreans as being in a state of slavery was a result of war hysteria. Third, the confiscation of Japanese properties in Korea by a directive of the occupation authority was a violation of international law. Fourth, the independence of Korea prior to the signing of the peace treaty was a violation of international law. Finally, the forceful repatriation of Japanese nationals from Korea was a violation of international law (Lee, 66). With this incident as a turning point, the negotiation broke down and was not resumed until 1958.

In the meantime, the resumption of the negotiations did not come from the resolution of the contention over the past. It was rather by the change in the policy of the Kishi government, which sought to establish Japan's economic influence over Asia, including Korea. In line with that, the Ikeda government decided the policy of approaching the negotiation in the form of economic development grants and finally reached an agreement with Korea. As a result, Korea came to receive 300 million dollars between 1966 and 1975. However, it is important to note that Japan's payments were made in the name of economic development grants. The Japanese government had intended to eliminate the implication of compensation from the payments for the past (Lee, 209). Furthermore, the official treaty did not include Japan's manifest apologies over the past. It only hinted at the existence of the problem of the past in the opening phrase, which mentioned "the historical background of relationships between their people and their mutual desire for good neighborliness" as one of the grounds for the treaty.

To recapitulate, Japan achieved the goal of normalizing its relations with Asian nations by 1965, except the ones in the Communist camp. However, it was far from the fact that the normalization meant the full settlement of war issues. On the contrary, the process of the talks between Japan and its counterparts revealed the gap in the views of the past and, instead of resolving it, ended up equivocating on the issue.

IV. CONCLUSION

Postwar Japan has achieved a remarkable economic growth and became a leading country in Asia. However, there are many uncertainties in its future status and role in Asia. Among the reasons for such uncertainties lies the so-called, "the issue of the past," which refers to the history of Japanese imperialism in Asia. As the dispute over history shows, there are serious doubts about Japan's position both in and out of Japan and such doubts remain a critical obstacle in defining Japan's international role.

In this study, I examined how postwar Japan's view of the past was shaped and how it influenced Japan's relations with Asian nations as a way of explaining the present dispute and its international ramifications. As a result, I showed that the basic structure of postwar Japan's view of the past was shaped during the first two decades after the defeat. Also, despite the apparent success in normalizing relations with Asian nations, Japan failed to fully resolve the issue of the past and its view of it played a big role in the process.

There are many indications that Japan's view of the past is improving. Entering the 1990s, many in Japan began to raise the issue of war responsibilities and are looking for ways to resolve the remaining issues (*Ihida*). However, their attempts met serious challenges from the conservatives, who rejected the calls for war responsibilities and emphasized the sanctity of national memories (*Matsushima & Shiromaru*). In line with that, Japan's commemoration of the fiftieth year after the defeat in 1995 demands attention. The commemoration received special attention both within and abroad not only because half a century was passed from the point of the incident, but also because there were several remarkable developments. First, Japan was undergoing a political upheaval as the monopoly of the Liberal Democratic Party collapsed and a socialist occupied the seat of Prime Minister. Also remarkable was the growth of public awareness surrounding the war issues in the form of discourses on war responsibilities (*Senso Sekiminron*). In particular, Japan's parliament decided to make an official resolution over the issue. At the same time, however, opposites voices grew rapidly. Conservative politicians strongly rejected the government's attempt for a resolution. In the end, as a result of compromise, the resolution stopped at mentioning Japan's war responsibilities in a vague manner (*Wada*). In short, the commemoration resulted in revealing Japan's inability to deal with issues of the past.

Then, what do the recent developments hold for Japan's relations with Asian nations? I believe that recent developments in Japan show that the basic structure of postwar Japan's view, which was formed in the beginning of the postwar era, remains with little change, as it continues to be a key factor in Japan's reluctance in dealing with the issue of the past. Some argue that the passage of half a century should relieve Japan of its burdens from the past and that Japan and other Asian nations should look for the future. However, as the sheer intensity of the dispute over history within the Japanese society shows, the past will not go away easily. Consequently, the issue of the past will continue to overshadow Japan's relations with Asian nations in the future.

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