

THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN IN GLOBAL CONTEXT: 2021

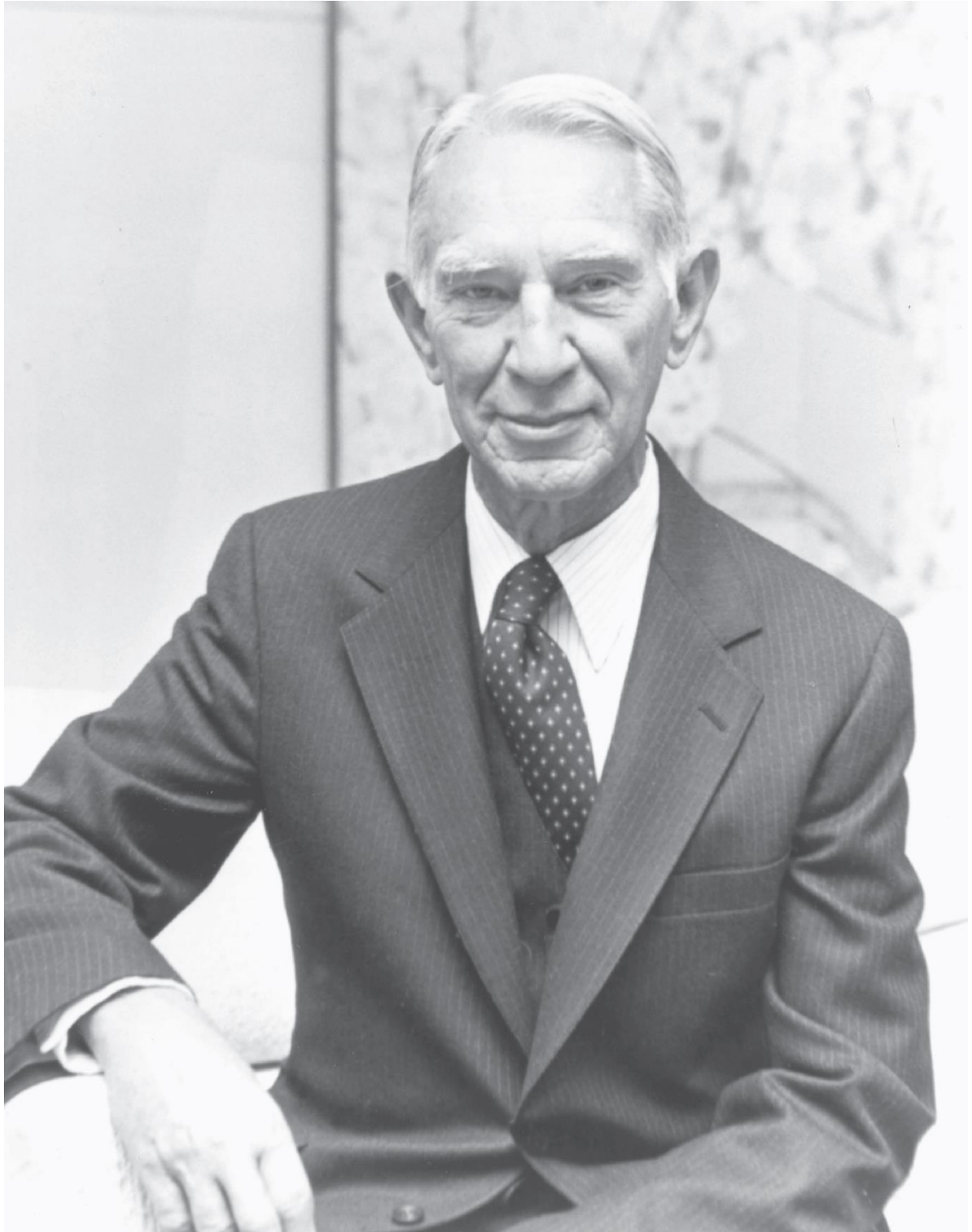


THE EDWIN O.
REISCHAUER CENTER
FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
WASHINGTON D.C.

The Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies

Established in 1984, with the explicit support of the Reischauer family, the Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) actively supports the research and study of trans-Pacific and intra-Asian relations to advance mutual understanding between Northeast Asia and the United States.

The first Japanese-born and Japanese-speaking US Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer (serv. 1961–66) later served as the center's Honorary Chair from its founding until 1990. His wife Haru Matsukata Reischauer followed as Honorary Chair from 1991 to 1998. They both exemplified the deep commitment that the Reischauer Center aspires to perpetuate in its scholarly and cultural activities today.



Edwin O. Reischauer
(Oct.15, 1910-Sept. 1, 1990)



YEARBOOK CLASS OF 2021

From top left:

Stephanie Mafri, Professor William Brooks, Visiting Scholar Kunio Uehara, Shuojun Dong, Visiting Scholar Satoshi Nakano, Joe Bauer, Kojiro Tonosaki, Visiting Scholar Daisuke Ueda, Emma Riley, Zhewei Zheng, Vivian Chen, Visiting Scholar Satoshi Kinoshita, Monica Weller

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The Year at the Reischauer Center

Since its founding in 1984, the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies at SAIS has been at the forefront of non-partisan policy research in Washington, with a primary focus on US-Japan relations, complemented by in-depth coverage of key Asian regional issues. We aim each year to contribute to the trans-Pacific dialogue with distinctive research that brings together the best international scholars and professionals. That goal was again reached in 2020-2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, with a full schedule of online conferences, seminars, round-tables, one major book publication, and other events of policy interest, as enumerated later in this chapter.

A key contribution to the Center's research is this yearbook of US-Japan relations in global context, authored entirely by SAIS graduate students. The Yearbook, which is unique among annual university publications in the US, is produced under the guidance of Professor William Brooks. His extensive and diversified career spans both academia and US government service, over more than three decades. After receiving his Ph.D. from Columbia University, Brooks taught history at the university level, including SAIS, before joining the State Department. He was posted to the US Embassy in Tokyo twice as an economic officer and a third time as head of the Embassy's translation and media-analysis unit. After retiring from the Department, Professor Brooks returned to SAIS as a key member of our research and teaching faculty in 2010.

Our research staff this past year included a broad variety of senior participants, in addition to the graduate students who produced the research included in this Yearbook. The Center hosted eleven Visiting Scholars from varied academic and professional backgrounds; and five post-graduate Reischauer Policy Research Fellows, supported sincerely and ably by Research Coordinator Neave Denny. During 2020-2021 a new system of Non-Resident Reischauer Center Fellows was also established, with participation from Europe and Asia as well as the U.S.



The 2020 Reischauer Memorial Lecture hosted by Dr. Heizo Takenaka, who presented on “The Japanese Economy Under the Suga Administration” on November 20, 2020.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies continued a vigorous program of research seminars. In November, the Reischauer Center welcomed a distinguished economist and long-time personal friend, Dr. Heizo Takenaka, former Japanese Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy, to deliver the annual Reischauer Memorial Lecture. Dr. Takenaka, who served for over five years (2001-2006), as the principal economic advisor to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, spoke on the emerging economic policies of Japan's Suga administration.

The overarching theme of the 26 research events during the year was, of course, the impact of COVID-19. In November, the Reischauer Center, in conjunction with the T-20 Global Think-Tank Summit, convened a major online webinar exploring Asia's role in global efforts to combat Covid 19, featuring participants from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, India, the United Kingdom, and Singapore, as well as the United States and Japan. In a second major Covid-related webinar, "Meeting the Challenge of COVID-19 in Asia", Asian Development Bank President Masatsugu Asakawa and his colleagues surveyed the global pandemic's impact on Asia. Finally, in April 2021, Japanese Minister for Economic Revitalization, Yasutoshi Nishimura, outlined Japan's policy response to COVID-19, with commentary from the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security specialist, Dr. Jennifer Nuzzo, and support by Reischauer Center Senior Researcher Kozo Saiki. Minister Nishimura introduced three new deal proposals on digitalization, a green growth strategy, and human capital investment. He also highlighted the importance of the US-Japan alliance in providing a globally coordinated response to the pandemic. The Reischauer Center is grateful for generous support from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for our COVID-19 research.

A second theme this year was the growing competition between the U.S. and China, focusing on Strategic Competition and the Future of the Liberal Order in the Post-COVID-19 World. I collaborated with Ambassador David Shear, Senior Advisor to the Reischauer Center, in hosting a seminar in October on regional sea-lane security, with panelists from Australia, Japan and the United States. Among the other events on this theme, Professor David Shambaugh of George Washington University spoke of the influence of China and the U.S. in Southeast Asia, while former U.S. Ambassador to Burma, Scot Marceil, discussed U.S.-China competition and the military coup in Myanmar. For support of our work on these broad regional issues we are grateful to the Center for Global Partnership of the Japan Foundation.

In March, Dr. David Lampton, professor emeritus of China Studies at SAIS, introduced his recent book on the influence of China in Southeast Asia, as seen in the China-built high-speed railway connecting China and that region.

In the same month, I launched my latest volume, *Global Political Cities: Actors and Arenas of Influence in International Affairs*. Six years in the making, the book is a major study of 15 major global cities and the roles they have played in shaping international policy agendas. Later in the year, I presented a version online at the Tokyo Media Center, during the Tokyo Olympic Games.



TMC Talk (July 25, 2021) – Global Political Cities: Actors and Arenas of Influence in International Affairs.

Two of our senior advisors also gave memorable presentations this year. Ambassador Rust Deming recalled his experiences during the triple disaster in Japan on March 11, 2011, during which he was serving for a second time as Director of Japanese Affairs at the U.S. State Department. Professor Bill Brooks also spoke of his unparalleled public-diplomacy experience, for well over a decade, at U.S. Embassy Tokyo.

In a five-part seminar series featuring our Visiting Scholars, Kunio Uehara of Japan’s Defense Ministry, led off in early April with an insightful presentation on Japanese and American policies toward Russia. He was followed by Satoshi Nakano of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), who gave a fascinating explanation of Japan’s plan to introduce imported hydrogen (in the form of ammonia) as a carbon-free fuel.

Following Nakano, Satoshi Kinoshita, a veteran journalist with the major daily *Seikyo Shimbun*, analyzed the China policies of the U.S. and Japan, focusing on the U.S. presidential election of 2020. He was followed by Daisuke Ueda from the Ministry of Finance, who compared the rapid growth of cashless transactions in American and Swedish societies, explaining why Japan is lagging behind.

METI official Yuta Tonegawa, in a late April presentation, discussed the energy policies of Japan and the U.S. from the perspective of climate-change imperatives. Closing the series in early May, Columbia University Professor Fumiko Sasaki, assisted by Neil Pedreira, shed new light on China’s outer space policy, focusing on China’s BRI-Spatial Information Corridor.

With great sadness, the Reischauer Center noted in May the passing of Professor Nathaniel Thayer, who for many years served as the director of Japan Studies at SAIS and senior advisor to the Reischauer Center. Thayer worked as a senior advisor to Ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer during the early 1960s, later authoring a classic study of Japanese conservative politics, and being decorated with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, by the Japanese government.



Professor Nathaniel Thayer

Toward the end of the academic year we received word that that Reischauer Center had been named among the top ten university-affiliated area-studies research centers worldwide, in the annual University of Pennsylvania-sponsored review of international think tanks. My dream since coming to SAIS in 2003 from a tenured position at Princeton University has always been to build the Reischauer Center into a major policy-research think tank in the nation's capital. I am deeply grateful that this goal seems to be moving ever closer to realization, and am immensely grateful to all who have helped us to realize this lifelong dream.

Dr. Kent E. Calder
Reischauer Center for East Asian
Studies Johns Hopkins University
SAIS Washington, D.C.
August 2021



THE EDWIN O.
REISCHAUER CENTER
FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Reischauer Center Seminar Series

<p>7/17/2020 10:30 - 12:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Kent Calder Director, Reischauer Center Johns Hopkins SAIS</p> <p>Dr. Karl Jackson C.V. Starr Distinguished Professor of Southeast Asia Studies, SAIS</p> <p>Dr. Nobuhiro Aizawa Associate Professor of Cultural Studies, Kyushu University Japan Scholar, Wilson Center</p> <p>Amb. David Shear Senior Advisor, Reischauer Center Adjunct Professor, SAIS</p>	<p><i>The U.S., Japan, and Southeast Asia in the Age of Great Power Competition: Cooperation in the Post-COVID</i></p>
<p>8/26/2020 8:00 – 9:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Cinnamon Dornsife Former U.S. Ambassador Asian Development Bank; Senior Advisor, International Development Program, Johns Hopkins SAIS</p> <p>Mr. Keiichiro Nakazawa Senior Vice President Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)</p> <p>Dr. Kent Calder Director, Reischauer Center Johns Hopkins SAIS</p>	<p><i>East Asia Cooperation with the Developing World in the Age of COVID-19</i></p>
<p>9/10/2020 11:30 – 12:30 Round-table</p>	<p>Reischauer Center & Japan Studies Members</p>	<p><i>Welcome Luncheon</i></p>

<p>9/23/2020 2:30 – 4:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Daniel Aldrich Director of the Security and Resilience Studies Program Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, Northeastern University</p>	<p><i>Japan Faces Disaster: A Look at COVID-19 and the 3/11 Triple Disasters</i></p>
<p>9/29/2020 1:00 – 3:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Alan S. Alexandroff Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy University of Toronto</p> <p>David M. Lampton Senior Research Fellow SAIS Foreign Policy Institute Johns Hopkins SAIS</p> <p>Dr. Jacopo Maria Pepe Researcher, Global Issues Division German Institute for International & Security Affairs</p> <p>Dr. Matthias Matthijs Professor of International Political Economy Johns Hopkins SAIS</p> <p>Dr. Stephan Haggard Krause Distinguished Professor School of Global Policy and Strategy University of California San Diego</p> <p>Dr. Wonhyuk Lim Professor KDI School of Public Policy & Management</p> <p>Dr. Kent Calder Director, Reischauer Center Johns Hopkins SAIS</p>	<p><i>International Relations in the Post-COVID World: Strategic Competition and the Future of the Liberal Order</i></p>
<p>10/06/2020 9:30 – 11:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Marsha McGraw Olive Former World Bank Manager, Professor, European and Eurasian Studies Johns Hopkins SAIS</p> <p>Dr. Nargis Kassenova Senior Fellow, Program on Central Asia, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University</p>	<p><i>Will COVID-19 Curtail European- Eurasian Integration?</i></p>

Dr. Jacopo Maria Pepe
Research Fellow, SWP-German Institute
for International and Security Affairs

Ms. Yun Han
Doctoral Candidate
Johns Hopkins SAIS

Dr. Kent Calder
Director, Reischauer Center
Johns Hopkins SAIS

10/08/2020
9:00 – 11:30
Conference

Panelists:
Professor Gordon Flake
Founding CEO of the Perth USAsia
Centre

Ms. Lindsey W. Ford
David Rubenstein Fellow in Foreign
Policy at the Brookings Institution

Admiral Michael McDevitt
Rear Admiral, US Navy, (ret.)

Ambassador Nobushige Takamizawa
Visiting Professor at the University of
Tokyo Graduate School of Public Policy

Prof. Hideshi Tokuchi
Visiting Professor at the National
Graduate Institute for Policy Studies
(GRIPS)

Dr. Joshua T. White
Associate Professor of Practice at Johns
Hopkins SAIS and Nonresident Fellow at
the Brookings Institution

Moderators:
Dr. Kent E. Calder
Director, Reischauer Center
Johns Hopkins SAIS

Ambassador David B. Shear
Senior Advisor, Reischauer Center
Adjunct Professor, Johns Hopkins SAIS

*U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation
Conference: Sea Lane Security*

10/15/2020
1:00 – 2:30
Webinar

Dr. William Brooks
Professor of Japan Studies
Senior Advisor, Reischauer Center
Johns Hopkins SAIS

*Introduction to Research Methods
and Report Writing*

10/30/2020
12:00 – 2:00
Conference

Panel 1:
“The Abe Doctrine: ‘Proactive Pacifism’
in Security and Diplomacy”
– **Zian He**

“Japan’s Evolving Security Policies”
– **Toshi Nakanishi**

“Japan’s Economic Statecraft in the
Technology Field”
– **Mariko Togashi**

Panel 2:
“Arctic Policies of the U.S. and Japan”
– **Madeline Wiltse**

“The Japanese Government’s
Path in Tackling the Declining
Population Crisis”
– **Zhanping Ling**

“Japan’s Mega-Trade Deals Point
Towards a Shifting Foreign Policy”
– **Sarah Pham**

Moderators:
Dr. Fumiko Sasaki
Professor of International Affairs
Columbia University

Dr. William Brooks
Professor of Japan Studies,
JHU SAIS

Executive Director:
Neave Denny
Program and Research Coordinator,
Reischauer Center

U.S.-Japan in 2020 Yearbook
Student Research Conference

11/11/2020
8:00 – 11:00
Conference

Keynote:

Mr. Alan Donnelly
Convenor, G-20 Health and
Development Partnership

Panel 1:

Dr. Kent E. Calder
Director, Reischauer Center
Johns Hopkins SAIS

Mr. Keiichiro Nakazawa
Senior Vice President, JICA,
Government of Japan

Mr. Vikas Sheel
Joint Secretary (Policy),
Ministry of Health and Welfare,
Government of India

Panel 2:

Ambassador Cinnamon Dornsife
Senior Fellow, Johns Hopkins SAIS

Dr. Martin Bloem
Director, Center for a Livable Future,
Bloomberg Center for Public Health,
Johns Hopkins University

Dr. Osondu Ogbuoji
Deputy Director, Center for Global
Health Policy, Duke University

Dr. Jessica Fonzo
Director, Johns Hopkins Global Food
Ethics and Policy Program

Panel 3:

Ambassador David Shear
Senior Fellow, Reischauer Center for
East Asian Studies

Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan
Former Permanent Secretary,
Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Yoichi Funabashi
Chairman
Asia-Pacific Initiative

Closing Remarks:

Dr. Fahad M. Alturki
Chair, T-20 Saudi Arabia
Vice President of Research, King
Abdullah Research Center

*T-20 Think Tank Global Summit:
COVID-19, East Asia, and the
Global Response*

<p>11/18/2020 4:30 – 5:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Geoffrey F. Gresh Professor of International Relations National Defense University</p>	<p><i>To Rule Eurasia's Waves: The New Great Power Competition at Sea</i></p>
<p>11/20/2020 10:00 – 11:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Heizo Takenaka Former Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy Professor, Toyo University Professor Emeritus, Keio University, World Economic Forum Foundation Board Member</p>	<p><i>Reischauer Center Memorial Lecture: The Japanese Economy Under the Suga Administration</i></p>
<p>12/10/2020 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Erin Aeran Chung Charles D. Miller Associate Professor of East Asian Politics Department of Political Science Johns Hopkins University</p>	<p><i>Immigrant Incorporation in East Asian Democracies</i></p>
<p>12/22/2020 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Reischauer Center & Japan Studies Members</p>	<p><i>End of the Year Celebration</i></p>
<p>1/28/2021 1:00 – 1:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Reischauer Center & Japan Studies Members</p>	<p><i>Welcome Back Discussion</i></p>
<p>2/17/2021 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. William Brooks Professor of Japan Studies Senior Advisor, Reischauer Center Johns Hopkins SAIS</p>	<p><i>Embassies & Public Diplomacy in U.S.-Japan Relations</i></p>
<p>2/18/2021 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Minister Shinichi Saida Economic Minister Counselor Embassy of Japan, Washington, DC</p> <p>Amb. Kurt Tong Executive Committee, The Asia Group Former Consul-General to Hong Kong</p> <p>Dr. Kent E. Calder Director, Reischauer Center Johns Hopkins SAIS</p> <p>Mr. Jonathan Canfield Policy Research Fellow Reischauer Center</p>	<p><i>Diversifying Medical Supply: Lessons from COVID-19 in the US and East Asia</i></p>
<p>2/25/2021 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Professor David Shambaugh Gaston Sigur Professor of Asian Studies, Elliott School of International Affairs Political Science & International Affairs Director, China Policy Program George Washington University</p>	<p><i>Where Great Powers Meet: America & China in Southeast Asia</i></p>

Mr. Masatsugu Asakawa
President
Asian Development Bank

Panel 1:

Amb. David Shear
Senior Fellow,
Reischauer Center

Dr. Yasuyuki Sawada
Chief Economist
Asian Development Bank

Dr. Jessica Fonzo
Director, Global Food Ethics &
Policy Program, Johns Hopkins

Dr. Eduardo Banzon
Principal Health Specialist
Asian Development Bank

Dr. Jennifer Nuzzo
Senior Scholar
Johns Hopkins Center for Health
Security

Panel 2:

Dr. Kent E. Calder
Director, Reischauer Center
Johns Hopkins SAIS

Mr. Joseph Zveglich
Deputy Chief Economist
Asian Development Bank

Mr. Thomas Abell
Chief of Digital Technology
Asian Development Bank

Dr. Martin Bloem
Director, Center for a Livable Future
Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

Amb. Cinnamon Dornsife
Senior Fellow
Johns Hopkins SAIS

Dr. Mia Mikic
Former Director of Trade
UN Economic &
Social Commission for Asia

3/3/2021
4:30 – 6:00
Webinar

*Meeting the Challenge of
COVID-19*

<p>3/9/2021 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Kent E. Calder Director Reischauer Center, Johns Hopkins SAIS</p>	<p><i>Global Political Cities: Actors and Arenas of Influence in International Affairs</i></p>
<p>3/11/2021 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Ambassador Rust Deming Senior Advisor Reischauer Center</p>	<p><i>Japan's 3-11 Triple Tragedy: 10th Anniversary Commemoration with Ambassador Rust Deming</i></p>
<p>3/24/2021 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. David M. Lampton Senior Research Scholar Foreign Policy Institute Johns Hopkins SAIS</p>	<p><i>China: The Implications of High Speed Rail to Southeast Asia</i></p>
<p>4/3/2021 12:00 – 3:00 <i>Online Forum</i></p>	<p>Monica Weller Booth Chair</p> <p>Neave Denny Coordinator</p> <p>Yaxiong Chen Policy Fellow</p> <p>Riyo Tanaka Policy Fellow</p> <p>Hana Anderson Policy Fellow</p> <p>Jonathan Canfield Policy Fellow</p> <p>Vivian Chen Student Researcher</p>	<p><i>Virtual Sakura Matsuri</i></p>
<p>4/6/2021 1:00 – 2:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Toshi Yoshihara Senior Fellow Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments</p>	<p><i>Dragon Against the Sun: Chinese Views of Japanese Seapower</i></p>
<p>4/8/2021 1:00 – 2:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Mr. Satoshi Nakano Visiting Scholar Reischauer Center</p>	<p><i>Hydrogen in a Low-carbon Economy</i></p>

<p>4/9/2021 8:00p.m. – 9:00p.m. Webinar</p>	<p>Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura Minister of Economic Revitalization Government of Japan</p> <p>Dr. Jennifer Nuzzo Senior Scholar Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security</p> <p>Dr. Kent E. Calder Director Reischauer Center, Johns Hopkins SAIS</p>	<p><i>Overcoming COVID-19: Opportunities and Challenges for Japan</i></p>
<p>4/15/2021 1:00 – 2:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Mr. Satoshi Kinoshita Visiting Scholar Reischauer Center</p>	<p><i>The 2020 U.S. Presidential Election and U.S.-China-Japan Relations</i></p>
<p>4/15/2021 4:30 – 6:00 Webinar</p>	<p>Amb. Scot Marciel Former Ambassador to Burma U.S. Embassy</p>	<p><i>U.S.-China Competition and the Coup in Myanmar</i></p>
<p>4/22/2021 1:00 – 2:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Mr. Daisuke Ueda Visiting Scholar Reischauer Center</p>	<p><i>The Spread of the Cashless Economy: The Comparison of Japan, U.S. and Sweden</i></p>
<p>4/29/2021 1:00 – 2:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Mr. Yuta Tonegawa Visiting Scholar Reischauer Center</p>	<p><i>Study of the Trends of Zero- Emission Energy Innovation in United States and the Role of Japan in this Field</i></p>
<p>5/6/2021 1:00 – 2:30 Webinar</p>	<p>Dr. Fumiko Sasaki Visiting Scholar Reischauer Center</p>	<p><i>Intersection of Geopolitics and the Politics of Outer Space: Risk Assessment of BRI-Spatial Information Corridor Projects</i></p>
<p>5/26/2021 10:00 – 11:00 Webinar</p>	<p>JHU SAIS Graduation</p>	<p><i>Japan Studies Students</i></p>

Introduction

William L. Brooks

The United States and Japan in Global Context: 2021 is a yearbook of original research papers written by the students in a course of the same name in the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of Johns Hopkins University. The course is both a series of lectures on major themes in modern Japan's diplomatic history, as well as a research seminar in which the students research and write papers on one of the many aspects of U.S.-Japan relations in the context of a changing international environment.

Normally, students also spend a week in Japan doing first-hand research on their projects, but due to the coronavirus pandemic, the class trip this year was cancelled. Students did most of their research in Washington, D.C., though some augmented that with Zoom interviews in Japan. The 2021 issue of the SAIS yearbook covers mid-2020 to mid-2021 and comes at a time when the world is undergoing a major inflection in history, marked by a pandemic that is still ravaging nations everywhere, rapid climate change that is now threatening the very existence of humanity on this earth, and tectonic shifts in international relations, centered on a rising power, China, that is challenging the status quo in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. Political turmoil in the US also has rocked the international liberal order set up under US lead after World War II.

The papers in the 2021 yearbook, written against that background, focus on how Japan's political leadership has coped with a changing international environment, engaged politically with the US and China during troubled times, strengthened the US-Japan alliance to face new challenges, tackled climate change, faced a growing wave of immigration, and tried to use its soft power tools in its diplomacy.

Year of the Pandemic

Although the period covered by this yearbook saw the world ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic that is still raging at the time of this writing, Japan has statistically fared much better than the US and other developed countries. Among those countries, Japan was slow to start vaccinating, and as of June 25, 2021, only 8.7% of the population was fully vaccinated. But the incidence of the disease was much less than other countries. Compared to the US' 33,588,163 cases, Japan only had a cumulative 791,699 cases as of June 24, 2021. The government predicts, though, that a vast majority of Japanese will be fully vaccinated by the fall. But at the time of this writing in late June, Japan still had not brought the spread of the virus under control.

The impact in terms of economic growth, however, was significant, with GDP shrinking 4.8 percent during the calendar year 2020. The economy is not expected to fully recover until 2023.

Evaluating Abe's Legacy

For Japan, a new US president being elected would normally not have been a startling moment, given the continuity and predictability of policies that usually accompanied a new administration in Washington. But the election of Donald Trump in 2016 and the four years of his term in office that followed was a constant series of challenges for the incumbent prime minister, Shinzo Abe, that required every bit of his ingenuity and resourcefulness to overcome. After all, Japan's very national interests were at stake, not to mention the future of the alliance with the US. Abe was faced with a US president who was unpredictable, whimsical, lacked a clear foreign or security policy strategy, and had a record of condescension for America's allies in Asia and Europe.

That is why **Joe Bauer's** skillful examination of the Abe-Trump relationship and its policy ramifications is an important contribution to understanding the Abe legacy in the face of the great difficulty of dealing with a leader who continued to rub European allies the wrong way and potentially, could take a wrecking ball to alliances and partnership in Asia. Not knowing what would likely come next with Trump, Abe put in an enormous effort to build personal ties with the US President and thus hopefully have a chance not only to be privy to his inner thinking on foreign and trade policy but also to possibly be able to steer Trump's policy courses in the right direction.

Thanks to the Shinzo-Donald rapport, Abe was able to make decisions that certainly irked the Trump administration, such as his approval of the effective cancellation of the Aegis Ashore project, a multi-billion dollar boondoggle that may never have been effectively deployed. Instead, he opted wisely for more Aegis vessels that would provide basically the same defense against North Korean missiles.

In addition, Abe somehow rebuffed the Trump administration's demand for an exorbitant amount of host-nation support (HNS) for US forces stationed in Japan.

Ironically, the quiet standoff occurred about the time in 2020 when the US and Japan were celebrating the 60th anniversary of the security treaty signed in 1960. But the news headlines in June were dominated by reports drawn from the words of former national security advisor John Bolton, whose newly released memoir revealed that President Trump had ordered him to demand \$8 billion in HNS funds from Japan, quadruple of what they are now, or face the possibility of US troops being withdrawn from Japan. Fortunately, wiser heads on both sides were able to kick negotiations on a new HNS agreement down the road, avoiding a clash. The issue has been resolved by the Biden administration.

Abe's multilateral contributions during his long tenure are also noteworthy. His achievements must include the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Initiative (FOIP), a strategy introduced in 2017 to rival China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that enticed the US administration to fashion its own cooperative counterpart. Even more significant, perhaps, was Abe's promotion of a quadrilateral security dialogue (the "Quad") among the US, Japan, Australia, and India. Abe introduced the

original concept as a “democratic security diamond” in a speech in India in 2007. This later morphed into the Quad.

Although still in an abstract phase, the Quad could develop into a security mechanism for the region in the future that would satisfy the security interests of the four member states.

Give Abe a B+ for his four-year effort to trump Trump. Bauer’s fine paper shows that Abe in the end left office with the Alliance stronger and deeper, still on close terms with the US President, and able to claim that most policies of the two countries were more or less in tune with each other -- a major accomplishment.

Abe Out, Suga In

The pandemic crisis aside, the year 2020 was otherwise devastating for Japan: the economy in recession, growing security threats in the region, and Abe’s proactive diplomacy placed on hold. Pandemic-related travel restrictions kept Prime Minister Abe and his aides at home. Declarations of crisis and fiscal stimuli to offset the impact dominated the news. The country also seemed to be preoccupied in an endless debate spilling over into 2021 over whether to hold the once-postponed Olympic in July 2021.

The pandemic took its toll on Prime Minister Abe, as well. By mid-June 2020, the Japanese press was wondering where the usually active premier was. His popularity slipped in the polls. Granted that his administration was then facing some political scandals, the real culprit seems to have been COVID-19. Abe was no longer able to hold his famous dinners with business leaders, press executives, and fellow politicians, the juicy details of which would later leak to the press. He could not even return to his home district in Kyushu because of the need to oversee the pandemic crisis from Tokyo. The press was merciless in pointing out the alleged mistakes he had made in managing that crisis. One plan that would pay compensation to everyone in Japan for the economic blow from the coronavirus impact failed miserably.

As the pandemic crisis spread across Japan, and it appeared that no vaccines were even ready to counter the virus, the political standing of Prime Minister Abe eroded rapidly. By June 8, 2020, in a TBS poll, the approval rate of the Abe Cabinet had dropped 8.2 points in one month to 39.1%. A Nikkei poll was no better, with an 11-point drop to 38% approval rate. The overwhelming reason people gave for losing confidence in the Abe Cabinet was perceived missteps by the government in handling the coronavirus before it became a crisis. Many Japanese now felt that the government’s response to COVID-19 as it spread across Japan was too complacent.

A shocking article in a weekly magazine in early July raised an alarm about Abe’s health. The report said that he had coughed up blood in an office meeting on July 6. Then, on August 28, 2020, only four days after he set a record as Japan’s longest running prime minister, Abe announced he was resigning for health reasons. A chronic intestinal illness long held in check had returned, making it impossible for him to fulfill his duties.

His longtime aide, Yoshihide Suga, who had served as Abe's chief cabinet secretary, was elected successor as prime minister on September 16. Inheriting a pandemic crisis and Abe-legacy policies that could not easily be implemented, Prime Minister Suga has struggled to hold his head above political waters since taking over from Abe. He was adept at behind-the-scenes domestic affairs, but he had absolutely no experience in foreign policy. He has since received mixed reviews in the polls for his performance in office, and at this writing, his support rate has fallen below his non-support rate.

Joe Biden's win in the 2020 presidential election may have been a political lifesaver for Suga, at least for the time being. The Prime Minister was able to schedule an early visit to Washington, where he enjoyed a warm reception by the President and his aides. He was able to fine tune Tokyo's policies to those of the new Biden administration. The visit not only served to reaffirm bilateral ties that were starting to wear thin during the chaotic Trump years; it also elevated China on the policy priority list, and in that context, placed the Taiwan issue frontstage.

Japan has always been reluctant to single out Taiwan for special attention in its joint statements with the US, but this time, the statement called for "peace and stability" across the Taiwan Strait and for a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue. But outside of Suga's oft-stated position that China has altered the status quo in East Asia, the Prime Minister does not want to go too far in condemning China for human rights and other internal issues due to its strong trade and investment ties with that country.

By June 2021, Suga's popularity had eroded. He was faulted by the opposition parties and the press for frequent absences from Diet hearings or for vague, short replies to questions when in attendance. He was seemingly content to let his cabinet ministers answer questions in his stead. Nonetheless, the Diet session was successful for Suga's government, with 61 out of 63 government-sponsored bills passed, including important ones on climate change and digital transformation that he had backed. The pandemic, however, continued to be his nemesis. The opposition camp and the press criticized him for his government's slow response to the pandemic, and Suga apologized 76 times in the 150-day Diet session.

In an apparent slight to the Okinawan people, Suga decided to skip attendance at the 76th anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa. He just sent a video message. In his message, he never mentioned the issue of the controversial base construction project at Henoko, which Okinawa has been trying for years to halt. An irritated Governor Denny Tamaki would like to initiate a three-way dialogue with US and Japanese governments on scaling back the US military presence in Okinawa, but Tokyo has so far been unresponsive.

Suga is hopeful that a successful Olympics this summer and a boost in the rate of covid vaccinations will turn around his weak ratings in the polls. The Nikkei reported on June 26 that the number of people who had received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine as of June 24 reached 25,556,855, exceeding 20% of the Japanese population. The number of people who had received their second dose was 11,657,345, or 9.2% of the population. By September, a

majority of the population will be inoculated. At this point, Suga is expected to dissolve the House of Representatives in September for a general election that he hopes will gain seats and improve his government's image.

Olympic Controversy

That the Olympics will be held at all this summer in Tokyo is almost a miracle. The pandemic crisis forced a postponement of the 2020 Olympics to 2021, starting on July 26, but in the meantime, Japan descended into one national crisis after another as the COVID-19 infections kept popping up all over the country. Public and expert opinions in polls were overwhelmingly against holding the Olympics at all.

Nevertheless, the International Olympic Committee and the Japan Olympic Committee forged on, imposing Draconian restrictions on participants and spectators, and at this writing in late June, the Olympics are still on track for late July, and authorities continue to assure all that it will be safe and secure and successful. The Japanese government, too, wants the games to go on, since it has already pumped about \$25 billion into them. However, if the games are invaded by a super spreader infecting players or spectators or both, the blame will inevitably fall on an already overburdened Prime Minister Suga.

Defense of Okinawa

Okinawa's geostrategic location in the western Pacific facing China has been reinforced in recent years due to China's expansionist moves in the East China and South China seas. Tensions between Japan and China over the disputed Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu Islands to China) and adjacent waters also claimed by Japan have remained high, with almost daily intrusions by official Chinese vessels. Beijing's intentions toward Taiwan are also raising concerns in Washington and Tokyo, with some analysts fearing that China ultimately will force unification with it.

In addition, the seemingly endless standoff between the Okinawa Prefectural Government (OPG) and Tokyo over US basing issues is once more bumping up against the reality of Okinawa's strategic importance as the security environment in the region worsens. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit Okinawa hard, has only added to OPG strains with Tokyo, with Okinawa accusing the US bases of being lax on curbing the spread of infections to the population outside the gates.

In that connection, two papers in this year's issue of the US-Japan Relations in Global Context examine the security environment around Japan from an Okinawa perspective. In last year's issue, **Kyoko Nakayama**, a student from Okinawa, wrote a fine essay that laid out in detail Okinawa's case against the Henoko project, focusing especially on the soft sea bottom problem that resolving will extensively delay the building of the runways. Apparently, some Japanese lawmakers agree with her feasibility assessment of the Henoko project, as explained below.

This year, **Stephanie Mafri**, a US Marine officer who recently served in Okinawa, gives us the other side of the basing issue in an exceptionally well-argued paper that details the current and changing roles of the US Marines in Japan, including Okinawa.

But Mafri's paper does not directly address the inability of the US to make good on a 1996 promise. Granted that the bases in Okinawa remain vital to the strategic interests of the US and Japan, two questions remain: why is MCAS Futenma still open 25 years after it was promised to be returned to Japan; and is the long-delayed Henoko FRF (Futenma Replacement Facility) – V-shaped runways being built for Ospreys, helicopters and small aircraft – still essential today? No one in Washington or Tokyo has bothered to even ask the questions, let alone answer them.

Although the Japanese and US governments continue to stress that the Henoko project to replace part of Futenma functions (the large aircrafts were transferred to Kyushu long ago) is the only option, that view these days is not necessarily shared in defense intellectual circles. For example, former defense minister Gen Nakatani, appearing on a TV news program on June 15, 2020, said that the plan to relocate Futenma to Henoko in Nago City needs to be reviewed. He said, "The plan will take more than a decade and cost one trillion yen. The international situation may have changed by the time the base is completed." In other words, the long-delayed runways may be obsolete and useless in strategic terms by that time. It would seem logical then to relocate the remaining function of Futenma – mostly Ospreys -- temporarily at another base like Kadena and then permanently at a base in Kyushu. Futenma could be expeditiously handed over to Japan.

In a companion paper, **Kojiro Tonosaki**, who is an officer in the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF), echoes Prime Minister Suga's charge that China is changing the status quo and making the region more dangerous. He focuses his research paper on China's new maritime law that has armed coast guard vessels and made them part of China's armed forces. He includes two case studies from past maritime incidents with China and suggests that the lessons learned from each may help Japan prepare for future encounters with a beefed-up Chinese Coast Guard.

As of mid-2021, the security situation in the East and South China seas remains tense. US Navy ships have begun intense surveillance of Chinese aircraft carriers deployed in those waters and have included the Taiwan Strait for freedom-of-navigation operations (FONOPS). China is constantly intruding into Japanese-claimed waters near the Senkaku Islands.

A US Navy guided-missile destroyer, the USS Curtis Wilbur, in a "routine transit," sailed through the Taiwan Strait June 22, 2021, as a demonstration of freedom of navigation in international waters. Meanwhile, Jiji Press reported on the same day that Chinese Coast Guard ships had entered Japanese territorial waters off the Senkakus, and only left after a Japanese Coast Guard warning. Such ships regularly enter those waters in a kind of cat-and-mouse game with the JCG.

Washington has begun to urge Japan to do more in the region, according to Nikkei Asia on June 23, 2021. The US wants Japan to increase the number of its own attack-submarines, now set at 22,

perhaps to 30 or so. In addition, the US wants Japan to extend the reach of its missiles to reach North Korea, as well as parts of China and even Russia.

Meanwhile, Japan has become increasingly concerned about Russia's militarization of the disputed Northern Territories near Hokkaido. The latest challenge to Japan's claim occurred in mid-June 2021, when the Russian military announced it would be conducted a large-scale military drill on the islands of Etorofu and Kunashiri (June 23-27). It would involve more than 100,000 troops, over 500 military vehicles, approximately 30 aircraft and about 10 naval vessels. Japan lodged a strong protest through diplomatic channels, which Russia has ignored. This was not the first such exercise: in February 2021, Russia conducted drills on a training ground on the same islands, with over 1,000 soldiers taking part.

As of mid-2021, the US and its allies are already on the move. According to the Nikkei on June 25, 2021, the GSDF's amphibious rapid response unit, based in Kyushu, will participate for the first time in a joint exercise with the US Marines, Australian Army, and the UK's Royal Marines, most likely aimed at keeping China's maritime forces in check in the region.

The reason for such an unprecedented exercise reflects the changing security situation in the East and South China seas, and specifically, the need to protect Japan's vulnerable southwestern islands (*Nansei-shotou*).

China and the Alliance

Japan's defense strategy is now centered on China and its drive to become the regional hegemon. But the growing "threat" from China in the East and South China seas may have actually served to shore up the US-Japan alliance, which in recent years seemed to be wavering in purpose. One could argue that China today has almost become a "silent partner" in the US-Japan alliance, simply because as its maritime assertiveness escalates, as Tonosaki argues in his paper, those moves have stimulated the US and Japan to strengthen and deepen their alliance.

Thanks to China's continuous challenges by its assertive maritime actions in waters around the Senkakus in the East China Sea, expansionist moves in the South China Sea, and recently, threatening gestures toward Taiwan, the Alliance has responded by significantly ratcheting up its capabilities to respond. Mafri's paper addresses that in describing the changing role of the US Marines on Okinawa, while Tonosaki's paper examines a deeply concerning new development that has changed the status quo in regional waters: China's enactment of a revised Coast Guard Law that not only upgrades its coast guard to a fighting force, which suggests that China will now use the coast guard to enforce jurisdictional matters that could include waters around the Senkakus and beyond.

Abe and the Historical Memory Issue

Japan's image in its Asia today is still discolored by the historical memory of its wartime acts and the perception in those countries that Japan still has not done enough to atone for those acts. Its apologies and other gestures are seen by some as insincere.

There are small but strong groups of historical revisionists in Japan who not only resent the fact that previous prime ministers have apologized for the suffering Japan caused during its militarist and colonialist past, they also downplay and even deny past atrocities, while seeking to rewrite the past, as in school textbooks, to justify those wartime acts. Former prime minister Abe has long associated himself with historical revisionism and has been a member of one of the movements most powerful groups, the *Nippon Kaigi* (Japan Conference). Yet, during his long second tour as Prime Minister (2012-2020), his reputation as a statesman seeking reconciliation with Asian neighbors, as well as with the US, over war memories grew stronger.

Zhewei Zheng, in a thoughtful and well-argued paper, tackles the seeming contradiction between Abe the nationalist with a revisionist background and Abe the pragmatic leader who put aside such views while seeking reconciliation with China and South Korea, as well as the United States, for the sake of Japan's national interests. He gives two case studies: Abe's courting of China's President Xi Jinping through summitry diplomacy so that the two countries could form a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests"; and the US, which resulted in Abe giving a major reconciliation speech to the US Congress in April 2015, followed by his visiting Pearl Harbor to lay a wreath and meet with survivors of the attack. Earlier, President Barack Obama visited Hiroshima as the first half of that reconciliatory process.

Unfortunately, Abe efforts with Xi were cut short by the pandemic, forcing Xi to cancel a visit to Japan, and then by Abe's sudden resignation. It remains to be seen whether Prime Minister Suga or his successor will pick up where Abe ended.

Gender Gap Keeps Growing

One of Prime Minister Abe's promises in an economic policy dubbed "Womonomics" was to create "a society where women can shine." He pledged to have women occupy 30% of managerial or leadership positions by 2020. That has not happened.

There remains no clear path for women in Japan to rise to managerial or other high-level positions. Traditional thinking on gender roles continues to exist in Japan's male-dominated society. Statistically, domestic violence and suicides among women have been rising.

In the latest Global Gender Gap Report, released by the Swiss-based World Economic Forum, in June 2021, Japan is ranked 120th among 156 countries surveyed and worst among the G7 countries. The country's regular poor performance in the annual report was highlighted by the sexist remarks uttered by Yoshiro Mori, a former prime minister who was forced as a result to resign his post as head of the Tokyo Olympic Committee in February 2021. He said that Japanese women "talk too

much” at meetings, so were not welcome. With such thinking by political leaders, it is no wonder that the gender gap in Japan will not go away.

The Case for Immigration

On June 24, 2021, NHK reported preliminary data of the national census in Japan showing the population as of October 1, 2020, as 126,226,568, which is a 0.7% drop from the last survey five years before (minus 868,000). This was the first decrease in the population since the census began in 1920. It could have been worse: there has been a growing number of foreign residents in Japan, and many Japanese returned home during the pandemic.

A rapid decline of Japan’s birth rate is behind the precipitous drop in the population. The government has issued various policies and programs to slow the rate but to no apparent avail. In 2019, according to the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry, Japan’s net population decrease (subtracting the number of births from the number of deaths) reached a record high of 515,000. The effect is being felt in a growing labor shortage, prompting the government to import more workers to fill the gap, and it is exerting a downward pressure on economic growth over the long term. Moreover, the burden on younger generations to support the elderly, through taxes directed at elder care, or personally, if the aged parent needs home care, is becoming excessive.

With only 865,000 babies born in 2019 – 50,000 less than in 2018 – Japan’s fertility rate was only 1.36 that year. The government’s goal is to raise it to 1.8 by 2025, but how?

In that ominous context, **Vivian Chen** carefully examines Japan’s immigration policy, which some would think might be a panacea for the demographic crisis. She finds that despite some efforts to increase the pace of imported labor, the system set up to assimilate foreigners into the society, let alone the labor market, is woefully inadequate. For starters, the children of immigrants are not even required to go to school, where bilingual education does not exist anyway. Chen’s paper shows that immigrant workers are now being treated more as an inconvenience than as a possible solution to the labor shortage Japan now faces.

Japan’s Forgotten Indigenous Populations

In July 2020, the Japanese government opened in Hokkaido the first national Ainu cultural center as a long-overdue effort to help preserve the language and culture of the indigenous population known as the Ainu. UNESCO in 2009 designated the Ainu language as critically endangered, so the new complex, known as *Upopoy* (meaning, “singing together in a large group”), opened at a time when Ainu culture itself is on the brink.

Monica Weller’s excellent study not only looks at the Ainu and their struggle to be recognized by the Japanese government as an indigenous population, she also examines the efforts of the indigenous people of the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa), who face a different set of problems in achieving indigeneity. The new cultural center in Hokkaido is a good start, but implementation to save the Ainu may not matter if it is too slow and ambiguous. The Ryukyu islanders seem to have

anchored their cultural heritage through their activism, but their political voice in Tokyo continues to be muted.

Japan Confronts Climate Change

Emma Riley's meticulously researched paper demonstrated the potential for the greening of Japan even with a pandemic ravaging the country. Still, decarbonizing Japan will not be easy. Even without the COVID-19 pandemic impacting Japan's ability to keep its climate-change commitments to the international community, decarbonization efforts even before the crisis had fallen short. One hurdle was created by the meltdown of the Fukushima reactors in 2011 after a great earthquake. Not only were most reactors taken offline, with only a small number restarted, the accident created a fear of nuclear energy among the Japanese people that has not gone away.

Another hurdle is Japan's reluctance to jettison coal as a major source of energy. Riley's paper examines this issue, but she also notes that policy changes are in the works, finally. As early as July 2020, the government announced that it is aiming at a huge jump in offshore wind power over the next ten years that would replace fossil fuels as a source of electricity. At the same time, Tokyo has decided to stop a much-criticized aid program of providing coal-fired thermal power plants as part of its export growth strategy.

Riley stresses in her paper that Japan is one of many countries that adopted an ambitious decarbonization strategy and promoted the creation of green jobs, even during the pandemic. Japan had one of the largest initial fiscal stimulus packages in response to the Covid-19 crisis in the world. The first package mostly promoted grey industry and Japan's Nationally Determined Contributions announced in Spring 2020 were criticized in the international community as falling short of the actions necessary to meet the Paris Agreement target limiting total global warming to under 1.5 degrees Celsius. Employing the concept of a "policy window", Riley's paper explores how the pandemic as well as increased adoption of renewable energy and a change in the national administration has the potential to create an opportunity for Japan to scale up its climate strategy.

In December 2020, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) announced a "Green Growth Strategy" (GGS) and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) declared the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 to be set in law. Her paper critiques those recent measures, the potential pathways to decarbonization being discussed, and opportunities for international cooperation on climate strategy through technology sharing, promotion of nature-based solutions, subnational partnerships, and circular economy frameworks.

But implementing commitments may be the biggest problem. Prime Minister Suga at his April summit meeting with President Biden declared that Japan aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 46% in fiscal year 2030 from its fiscal year 2013 levels, setting an ambitious target which is aligned with the long-term goal of net-zero by 2050.

Efficacy of Public Diplomacy

Japan in recent decades has become adept in reaching foreign audiences through its public diplomacy programs, particularly cultural diplomacy, which stresses the exchange of ideas and information, art, and other aspects of culture in order to foster mutual understanding.

But Japan's success over the decades in building mutual understanding has not been primarily due to government programs managed by diplomats and other officials. Since at least the 1970s, Japanese cultural goods that include manga, anime, TV shows, video games, *kawaii* (cute) goods, and even social media have been reaching highly receptive audiences all over the world.

The success of these exports of popular Japanese culture have been the results of the ideas and clever marketing by the artists and others who created these goods. Most of them were already successful in saturating the domestic market in Japan before being exported to other countries.

Tourism and to a lesser extent educational exchange have also been pillars of Japan's cultural diplomacy. Food cuisine is the latest addition to the string of successes for Japanese cultural exports. In her perceptive paper on Japan's cultural diplomacy, **Shuojun Deng** has focused on how Japanese cultural exports have created goodwill and friendly feelings in China and the United States. Young people in both countries apparently have been starving for such delightful morsels of pop culture from Japan, and in some cases, their experiences at that entry level have led to lifelong pursuit of things Japanese.

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The Donald-Shinzo Bromance: Prime Minister Abe's Diplomatic Courting of President Trump

Joe Bauer

Introduction

“We assembled here today are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital, and in every hall of power, from this day forward: a new vision will govern our land, from this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first.”ⁱ These were the words spoken by President Donald Trump on January 20, 2017, just moments after being sworn in as the 45th President of the United States. His message, as it had been on the campaign trail, was clear: The United States had for too long been abused by foreign nations both friend and foe, and that from then on, the priorities of the United States, and only the United States, would be the driving force of the country's policies. This rhetoric sent shockwaves through capitals across the world, but perhaps no place more deeply than Tokyo, Japan.

By 2017 Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was well into his second stint in office and working to establish himself as a leading global statesman befitting the world's third largest economy. The election of Donald Trump thus presented a unique challenge, one in which the Prime Minister would have to flex his array of diplomatic skills to curry favor with a President who at times seemed intent on pulling the U.S. out of its commitments abroad. To this end, Abe went to great lengths relentlessly looking to shape and influence the President's policy decision-making on areas of immense importance to Japan. Whether on topics of foreign policy or trade, Abe hoped to act as President Trump's navigator and advisor on the world stage. With these grand ambitions came great challenges, and it often seemed as if Abe's efforts were in vain, leading some to speculate whether he had truly achieved much, if anything, he had set out for.

This paper will reflect on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's diplomatic courting of President Trump for the sake of Japan's vital national interests, and evaluate how successful he was to forge and then guide the friendship to the benefit of Japanese policies and national priorities. It will first explore the historical precedent of the relationship between Japanese Prime Ministers and their U.S. counterparts before examining Abe's relationship with Trump's predecessor, President Barack Obama. It will then detail Abe's various attempts to influence and shape President Trump's stance on various policy issues, the benefits and challenges that emerged throughout the process, and whether or not Abe was successful in his mission. Finally, the paper will consider the path both countries may follow now that both Abe and Trump are no longer in office and the way in which bilateral relations may continue to develop at the leadership level.

Historical Precedent

Throughout the post-war era, no diplomatic relationship has been more important for Japanese Prime Ministers than that with the President of the United States. As Japan's chief security partner, ensuring goodwill with Washington has sometimes been both a challenging and potentially rewarding task. One of the earliest instances of a budding relationship between the two nation's leaders dates back to the premiership of Nobusuke Kishi, who led Japan from 1957 until 1960. Despite having been imprisoned as a Class A war criminal for his actions during World War

II, Kishi's anti-communist ideology made him a willing partner to President Dwight Eisenhower during the Cold War. Their relationship is perhaps best illustrated by the pair's famous golf outing in 1957. The idea for the occasion was first broached by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in a telegram to U.S. Ambassador to Japan Douglas MacArthur II. Ambassador MacArthur replied that Kishi was "visibly delighted", and "accepted with greatest pleasure."ⁱⁱⁱ Photographs of the outing were captured in newspapers across the globe and sent a strong message of the two country's strong ties. In following years Kishi strove to further build relations with the U.S., with particular focus on issues relating to Japan's security. The endeavor ultimately led to his downfall and resignation from office amidst massive protest, but not before Kishi was able to force a revised version of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty through the Diet in 1960, granting Tokyo more equal footing in the bilateral alliance.

Two decades later in the 1980's a new friendship took hold, this one dubbed the "Ron-Yasu" relationship. The term, referencing the first-name basis on which Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and President Ronald Reagan stood, highlighted the pairs close bond. Nakasone's time in office was a mark of stability following a cycle of five Prime Ministers in just the past 10 year period. Nakasone was unique in this era for having previously served as the Director General of the Japan Defense Agency, the predecessor of the current Ministry of Defense. Nakasone's more hawkish style suited him perfectly for the cold-warrior dynamics of President Reagan, and the two formed a close bond. Nakasone championed the U.S.-Japan alliance, even famously declaring Japan as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" in opposition to the Soviet threat. Reagan openly admired his Japanese counterpart, even penning in his diary that "Yasu Nakasone is the best P.M. Japan has ever had."ⁱⁱⁱ Together, the pair set a benchmark on U.S.-Japan relations involving the two countries defense and security ties which still carry over to this day.

The better part of the following two decades however was once again plagued with a cycle of short-lived rotating Prime Ministers. For instance, during his eight years spent in office President Bill Clinton was paired with an astounding seven Japanese Prime Ministers.^{iv} This all changed in 2001 with the arrival of a maverick. Despite his family's political lineage, Junichiro Koizumi was anything but the typical Japanese politician. Considered by many an eccentric, Koizumi campaigned on a populist message going so far as to even declare that he would, "destroy the LDP", his own political party.^v Koizumi entered office in April 2001 just months after the inauguration of President George W. Bush in Washington. Eager to build an early relationship with the U.S. President, Koizumi's first trip overseas brought him to Camp David where the two quickly bonded, famously being photographed tossing a baseball and discussing their love of cinema and westerns. Koizumi further won the trust and support of the U.S. Administration with his prompt decision to support the U.S. and visit New York City just days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.^{vi} Swearing not to make the same mistakes as his predecessors during the Gulf War, Koizumi vigorously lobbied the Diet to loosen restrictions of Japan's ability to assist the United States in security operations and to serve as an active partner in the War on Terror.^{vii} Shinzo Abe was Koizumi's hand-picked replacement in 2006, though his term was short-lived due to illness, and followed by a dismal streak of six basically ineffective Prime Ministers over as many years. Not to be deterred, a now healthy Abe made an incredible comeback, regaining the Prime Ministership in 2012 and promising to bring Japan back to the global stage.^{viii} With this lofty goal in mind, Abe knew this would require strong relations with the United States, and with it, personal ties with the U.S. President.

Abe-Obama, a Pragmatic Approach

Upon Abe's return to office in 2012, he was matched with a U.S. President who had expressed the desire to "pivot" or "rebalance" America away from the Middle East to give more priority to the Asia-Pacific region. While the notion of a more engaged U.S. in the region was welcomed by Tokyo, the relationship between Prime Minister Abe and President Barack Obama was not always smooth sailing. Abe's controversial decision to visit Yasukuni Shrine and pay tribute in December 2013 sent shockwaves across the region, sparking condemnation not only from neighboring China and South Korea, but surprisingly from Washington, as well. "[T]he United States is disappointed that Japan's leadership has taken an action that will exacerbate tensions with Japan's neighbors," read a statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo.^{ix} Annual visits to the shrine by Prime Minister Koizumi in the early 2000's had irritated Washington, but the close relationship between Koizumi and President Bush allowed a more subdued reaction. For this reason, the Obama Administration's public rebuking initially caught Abe and company by surprise.

Despite this rough start, Abe was not to be discouraged. Pushing aside some of his more nationalistic tendencies, he instead opted to focus on reinvigorating the slumped Japanese economy through his three-pronged policy agenda dubbed "Abenomics," while working closely with the United States to enhance Japan's role and capabilities within the security alliance. His approach to foreign policy tended to be pragmatic and realistic.

Although Abe and Obama never developed deep personal ties, they were able to navigate the waters of the bilateral relationship relatively smoothly, including the knotty issue of historical reconciliation. This was demonstrated in Abe's 2015 trip to Washington, which included an historic address to the U.S. Congress designed to bring the remaining issues of WWII to closure. In his speech, Abe called for the continued deepening of relations, remarking, "Let the two of us, America and Japan, join our hands together and do our best to make the world a better, a much better, place to live."^x "My dear friends, on behalf of Japan and the Japanese people, I offer with profound respect my eternal condolences to the souls of all American people that were lost during World War Two," he said, to warm applause. Abe also acknowledged that Japan had "brought suffering to the peoples in Asian countries", adding: "We must not avert our eyes from that."^{xi}

Abe's speech to Congress was not the only highlight of his trip that Spring. Speaking alongside President Obama, Abe further proclaimed that Japan would work with the U.S. "hand and hand...to spread basic values throughout the world, such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights, and rule of law."^{xii}

Though Abe's statements in Washington voiced his ambitions for the future, perhaps no two events better illustrated the strides both countries had made than the pairs' 2016 visits together to Hiroshima, Japan, and then to the site of the Pearl Harbor attack in Hawaii. In both locations each leader, flanked by survivors of each tragic incident, spoke not only of the horrors that had occurred, but the reconciliation that has since emerged. Together their speeches spoke of friendship and highlighted the "incredible journey of transformation from adversaries to allies traveled by generations of Americans and Japanese."^{xiii} Despite their differences both politically and diplomatically, Abe and Obama were able to engage in a pragmatic and realistic approach to find the common ground needed to strengthen and enhance the alliance. The 2016 U.S. Presidential election that Donald Trump one and the arrival of a new American counterpart with a history of bad-mouthing alliances, however, would prove challenging.

Abe's Full-Court Press

As the 2016 U.S. Presidential election cycle began to unfold, Tokyo immediately perceived that an unexpected and often overlooked challenger had begun to gather momentum. Throughout the early stages of the election few took Trump seriously as a candidate. For decades, the business tycoon had flirted with the notion of a run for political office, hopping between party affiliations having previously self-identified at various points as both a Democrat and Republican, and even as potential third-party independent candidate during the 2000 campaign.^{xiv} However, this time around Trump's populist messaging criticizing foreign powers and promising that as President he would put America's interest "first" resonated deeply with a wide swath of mostly white voters across the country. While Trump's unorthodox style earned him much scorn from the liberal segments of the media, for many who tuned in to the right-wing segments, it was viewed as a breath of fresh air and symbolized a politician who was not afraid to say it how it is. Trump was anti-elitism and anti-establishment just like they were.

Even as Trump secured the nomination as the Republican party's candidate, few believed he could overcome the challenge of defeating Democratic nominee and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Despite the perceived odds, as the votes poured in on November 8th, more and more states flashed red and the seemingly unimaginable had happened: Donald Trump was the victor and declared as the soon-to-be 45th President of the United States.

In Tokyo, the Abe Administration seemed to be caught completely off-guard. The Nikkei 225 stock index tumbled over 900 points as the Prime Minister addressed the results, congratulating the President-elect and expressing the hope that alongside Trump, the two could make the U.S.-Japan alliance "even stronger."^{xv} This would be no simple task. Throughout the campaign Trump had lambasted the country, both criticizing Tokyo's trade practices and for what he viewed as unequal footing on security ties. "When did we beat Japan at anything? They send their cars over by the millions, and what do we do? When was the last time you saw a Chevrolet in Tokyo? It doesn't exist, folks. They beat us all the time," Trump proclaimed when announcing his candidacy in 2015.^{xvi} On the topic of the security alliance, Trump openly questioned America's benefits, telling a 2016 campaign rally, "You know, one of the things with the, with our Japanese relationship... That's a pretty one-sided agreement... if we're attacked, they do not have to come to our defense, if they're attacked, we have to come totally to their defense. And that is a, that's a real problem."^{xvii} Such statements sent a clear signal to Tokyo that a Trump Presidency not only threatened Japan economically, but the nation's national security and defense as well.

In order to combat these risks, Abe had to act swiftly. When, during a congratulatory phone call to the President-elect, Trump off-handedly welcomed the Japanese Prime Minister to visit at any time, Abe was keen not to let the opportunity pass him by. Just days later Abe was landing in New York City, parading into Trump Tower and becoming the first foreign leader to congratulate Trump on his victory in-person.^{xviii} Knowing Trump's penchant for showmanship, Abe came bearing gifts. Channeling the spirit of his grandfather Nobusuke Kishi and being well-aware of the President-elect's love of golf, the Prime Minister presented Trump with a nearly four-thousand dollar golden driver.^{xix} Looming reservations notwithstanding, Abe after the meeting expressed confidence that Trump the dealmaker was someone with whom he could work with. He stated, "I'm convinced president-elect Trump is a leader I can trust."^{xx} What transpired over the next four years would be a whirl-wind of diplomacy, featuring countless phone calls and personal visits,

numerous rounds of golf, and a more unique relationship with the U.S. President than that enjoyed, or in some cases dreaded, by any other foreign leader.

North Korea



Trump and Abe modeling pro-alliance hats during the President's 2017 visit to Japan
(Credit: Reuters)

Stemming back to the 1990's, when North Korea came out as nuclear threat, the hermit country has always been a key area of personal focus for Abe. It was not just nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them, the young lawmaker cut his teeth in the Diet as a vocal critic of the North Korean dictatorship for its past abductions of Japanese citizens, and he later went on to serve as one of Prime Minister Koizumi's chief counselors during the latter's foray and first visit to Pyongyang in 2002. Now, nearly two decades later, Abe believed that in Trump he had possibly found a partner who was more than willing to help pressure and punish the dictatorial regime. Japan views North Korea as an existential threat and desperately wants denuclearization. That notwithstanding, Abe was instead forced to navigate Trump's distinctive and everchanging style of diplomacy, which often led to unpredictable and in the end results unfavorable to Japan's interests.

Still, Abe was able to form an early bond with Trump on the North Korea issue almost immediately. Thanks likely in part to his timely visit to Trump Tower following the election, Abe was awarded with being the first foreign leader to visit the President at Mar-a-Lago, the Trump owned resort in Palm Beach, Florida. Still less than a month after the Presidential inauguration, Abe hoped to take advantage of the opportunity and to mend Trump's views at an early stage. This opportunity likely came earlier and more direct than expected then Abe could have ever imagined, as the first national security crisis of the Trump administration was set off while the two sat around the dinner table. As the pair dined, halfway across the world Pyongyang was welcoming Trump to office by launching a long-range ballistic missile with a range capable of reaching the continental United States. Rather than be ushered to a more secure location to discuss a response, Trump, who

as a candidate had warned of dire consequences were such actions to take place, instead opted to evaluate the situation alongside Abe at the dining table amidst numerous resort guests and visitors. Photographs quickly surfaced of the group huddled over the table, passing documents with cellphones in hand to act as flashlights in the darkened courtyard. This chaotic approach to the North Korean threat would only be the beginning.^{xxi}

2017 was a whirl-wind year for Abe and Trump on North Korea. Over the course of Trump's first year in office, the pair spoke over the phone on at least 15 occasions, totaling more than seven hours of discussion. Additionally, the pair met six times throughout the year equaling the most of any period during the Trump Presidency.^{xxii} Abe seemed intent on forging this relationship and establishing himself as the President's go-to international consultant on all issues relating to North Korea. In this regard, Abe's early efforts appear to have returned some dividends, such as that Trump phoned him twice on the day of a September 2017 North Korean nuclear weapons test, while not even calling South Korean President Moon Jae-in until the following day. Kunihiko Miyake, a former Japanese diplomat, attributed Abe's persistence to the need for "common goals and a common set of strategies or tactics" on North Korea. "Once is not enough. Reconfirmation should be continual and frequent. All the options are on the table."^{xxiii}

Throughout 2017, Trump's continued to dish out relentless criticism towards North Korea, threatening "fire and fury" and dubbing North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as "little rocket man."^{xxiv} As the war of words continued, both leaders touted the strength of their respective nuclear arsenals causing widespread concern, especially in Japan, that conflict could erupt at any moment. Though Abe was no fan of the dictatorial regime he still understood the place of diplomacy and knew that were war to break out between North Korea and the United States that Japan was almost certain to be caught in the cross-hairs. In this sense, although Abe supported the continuance of maximum pressure to force North Korea to the negotiation table, he was keen to stay in near constant communication with Trump to ensure the situation would not spiral out of control to dangerous results.

However, in a Trump-esque change of heart and hoping to display his credentials as a deal maker, the President's bombastic rhetoric soon began to shift towards a stance more open to dialogue and summitry. The unexpected news in early 2018 that Trump and Kim were preparing to meet in Singapore, in what would mark the first ever meeting between a North Korean leader and a sitting U.S. President, sparked a media frenzy. But an undeterred Abe was determined to stay in loop. In the months preceding the summit when it was still unclear whether it would even take truly place, Abe was persistent in his deliberations with Trump. Between April and June of that year the two leaders officially spoke over the phone on five different occasions and met in person twice, including at the G7 summit in Canada just days prior to when the U.S.-North Korea summit was set take place. Outside of 2017, this marked the busiest three-month stretch of dialogue between the two leaders and highlight the importance Abe placed on having Japan's voice heard in the high-level talks.^{xxv}

Stemming from Abe's persistent urging, when meeting with Kim, Trump pressed the North Koreans on the issue of Japanese abductees demanding greater information on the status and whereabouts of still unknown victims. Although the full extent of Kim's response was not made public, reports allege that the North Korean's were less forceful in their replies than previously so and even expressed some openness to further dialogue and summitry with Japan in the near future.^{xxvi} In spite of the fact no binding parameters set in the joint statement released following

the summit, that the issue was raised by Trump himself could be perceived as at least some form of accomplishment from Tokyo's perspective.

In the months that followed, due to the lack-luster results of the Singapore summit and the continued stalemate on other issues relating to sanctions and weapons testing, both North Korea and the U.S. once again agreed to come to the table for a second summit dialogue, this time taking place in Hanoi, Vietnam. In the lead up to this second meeting, Abe once again proactively engaged Trump and secured further commitments from the U.S. President to raise concerns on the abductee issue. Unlike the first summit however, not even modest agreement on a joint statement could be reached and Trump abruptly departed from Hanoi earlier than anticipated. From Abe's point of view, it is likely he was disappointed that little came about on the abductee issue, though no major concessions to the North Koreans were made. Abe was probably still frustrated by the lack of progress in addressing shorter range missiles aimed at Japan. The breakdown of summitry likely gave Abe the realization that in order to make further strides on the issue, he could no longer rely on Trump and would need to take the initiative himself, declaring, "I know that I need to face Chairman Kim myself next."^{xxvii} He was willing to meet without conditions.

Kim Jung-un's carousel of summit diplomacy saw the North Korean dictator meeting with not only Trump, but also South Korea's Moon Jae-in, China's Xi Jinping, and Russia's Vladimir Putin, compiling of all the leaders Northeast Asia's major powers bar Abe.^{xxviii} Further, much to Abe's dismay, in spite of the perceived failures of the Trump-Kim summits, the vast remainder of Trump's Presidency took a more ambiguous approach to North Korea that included the stalling of various joint-military exercises with Seoul and hesitation to re-engage a maximum pressure campaign so as to leave the door open for possible further talks.^{xxix} Trump's early foray into a "maximum pressure" campaign against Pyongyang did impose economic cost on the regime, but also served as an impetus for North Korea to more resolutely pursue its nuclear capabilities. Although Abe initially believed that his close ties with Trump could shape the President's policy towards North Korea, and though early success may have been seemingly evident, in the end Trump's desire for showmanship and solving the unsolvable through personal talks with Kim Jung-un ended miserably, leaving Abe coming up short.

Trade

"My style of deal-making is quite simple and straightforward. I aim very high, and then I just keep pushing and pushing and pushing to get what I'm after."^{xxx} As shown by this excerpt of Trump's 1987 book, *The Art of the Deal*, the U.S. President first and foremost viewed himself as a dealmaker. Throughout the 2016 election cycle and well into his Presidency, Trump continually reminded the world that while he was in charge, foreign countries would no longer get away with abusing America on trade and that if they wished to continue their economic relationships with the United States, they would need to make deals. But first, came the pushing.

Upon entering the Oval Office in January 2017, one of Trump's very first actions was to sign an executive order withdrawing the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The U.S. had begun negotiating such a multinational trade deal as far back as 2008, which, had it been officially ratified by the U.S. Congress, would have been the then-largest international trade agreement of all time.^{xxxi} Trump wanted to do away with large-scale multi-nation trade deals, opting instead for new bilateral agreements. To pressure foreign capitals and to appease voters at home, Trump then partook in a widespread campaign of applying fluctuating tariffs across an array

goods and products from wide ranging sectors on not only adversarial states, but U.S. partners and allies as well.



Trump and Abe during a round of golf in Kawagoe, Japan.
(Credit: AFP/Getty Images)

These sporadic actions were of great concern to Tokyo. Since his return to office in 2012, Abe had given high attention to revitalizing the Japanese economy through “Abenomics”. While much of the strategy was not directly designed around international trade, Japan’s status as the world’s fourth largest exporting country (with the United States being a primary destination) crippling trade warfare threatened to place a stranglehold on any hopes of further economic revival.^{xxxii} Though the U.S. Administration’s decision to levy tariffs on foreign steel imports had only a modest impact on Japan, the White House’s 2018 decision to launch a national security investigation into foreign automobiles and auto parts (with threats of raising tariffs on said goods up to 25%), was of considerably deeper concern. Nearly 40% of Japan’s total exports to the U.S. fall into these categories, meaning such a move could prove lethal for the nation’s economic resurgence. Abe had to act. Quickly going to work, he looked to carefully balance Trump’s desire for a new deal against the Japanese public’s strong apprehension towards a full-on free trade agreement. Abe and his aides spent months painstakingly working to appease U.S. negotiators and hoping to extract greater leniency, since certain U.S. sectors began to increasingly suffer due to the more wide-reaching trade war Trump had opened with China. At the same time worries also soon began to rise as to how ongoing negotiations might impact the LDP’s chances in the forthcoming upper house elections, which could potentially upset the party’s current majority. Abe expressed these concerns with Trump directly at the G20 summit in Osaka and was able to extract and agreement from the President into delaying any potential deal until after the Japanese elections that July.^{xxxiii}

As time wore on, despite speculation of a forthcoming phase-one agreement with Beijing, the U.S.’s prolonged trade conflict with China seemed far from letting up and Trump was

increasingly eager for political victories to tout on the upcoming campaign trail. The Japanese side in turn took advantage of these desires, leveraging the prospects of a deal to gain greater leniency from U.S. negotiators who were being pressured for results. To further assuage Trump's rhetoric, the Prime Minister also continually touted Japan's surging investments into the United States, much of which directly benefited pro-Trump states and counties.^{xxxiv}

Following the LDP's victory in the summer election, on September 25, 2019, President Trump and Prime Minister Abe together signed both the US-Japan Trade Agreement, as well as the US-Japan Digital Trade Agreement. The first agreement would lower tariff and trade barriers on a variety of goods (particularly within the Japanese agricultural market), while the latter deal comprised a comprehensive set of rules to govern the two countries nearly \$40 billion in bilateral digital trade. Abe did receive some domestic criticism that the deal did not directly address the U.S.'s threat of auto tariffs, however a joint-statement assured that neither party would pursue measures that go against the spirit of the deal. Expanding on this point, Abe further elaborated that President Trump had personally assured him the U.S. would keep the matter at bay.^{xxxv}

Over the course of his roughly four years dealing with Trump, Abe appears to have gained a fair amount of success regarding trade. Before even entering office, Japan has for decades been perceived by Trump as cheating the U.S. on trade and looked likely to be a primary target of his angst. However, although the country is still subject to some of the Washington's wider sweeping international tariffs, Tokyo was successfully able to avoid more costly tariffs, such as those on the automotive industry. Abe navigated domestic pressure to avoid a one-sided deal, while simultaneously coaxing Trump to avoid greater pressure until after the upper-house elections in the summer of 2019. The two sides did eventually reach an agreement that Fall, and though Japan did make certain concessions on agricultural goods, the deal was still enough to appease both the Japanese public and Trump himself.

Iran

Early into his presidency, North Korea was not the only "rogue state" Trump set his eyes on. Throughout the 2016 campaign, he continually chastised the U.S.'s participation in the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), more commonly referred to as the "Iran nuclear deal", often declaring that Tehran was not abiding by set restrictions and was looking to further develop and expand its nuclear arsenal. This ultimately culminated in May 2018, when the United States announced it would be unilaterally withdrawing from the agreement and reimposing international sanctions on Iran. This decision presented a new challenge for Tokyo. Lacking its own natural reserves, Japan is one of the most resource scarce countries on earth and forced to import an estimated 94% its primary energy supply.^{xxxvi} The seriousness of the dependence has only been further exacerbated in recent years as Japanese public opinion has turned sharply against nuclear power in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster brought forth by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami.^{xxxvii}

The 2015 JCPOA presented the Abe Administration a new opportunity to reinvigorate trade relations with Iran. The two countries have had a long relationship as energy trading partners dating back to the 1970's when Iran accounted for roughly 44% of Japan's crude oil imports.^{xxxviii} Relations between the two countries fluctuated up and down through the latter half of the twentieth century, but by the 2000's Japan was once again ramping up investments into Iran with imports reaching nearly JP¥2 trillion before international pressure on Tehran nearly halved this figure in the early 2010's. The signing of the JCPOA offered hope that this economic relationship could be

salvaged, but the Trump Administration's withdrawal and new sanctions seemed destined to eliminate any such possibility.

With the U.S.' withdrawal and the reimplementation of sanctions however, Abe saw an opportunity not only to flex his international diplomatic credentials, but also to act as an arbitrator and intermediary between the two feuding nations. Because U.S.-Iran relations were so strained, it was not expected that Abe would be able to forge a major break-through, but he hoped to at least use his close relations with President Trump to perhaps find some common ground to alleviate further decay. To this end, in June 2019 Abe arrived in Tehran to engage in talks with Iranian leadership, including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In Tehran, Abe hoped to find balance, presenting a softer approach to help coax Iran to convene with the U.S. for further talks and possibly reach some form of reconciliation. Instead, he was greeted with contempt. Breaking from traditional protocol, Khamenei invited in State press and proceeded to dress down the Prime Minister as essentially acting as a lackey to President Trump, and outright refusing to negotiate while U.S. sanctions remained.^{xxxix} To make matters worse, Abe's venture was further overshadowed when on the same day as his visit two oil tankers, including one operated by a Japanese company, were attacked in the Gulf of Oman. The U.S. was quick to blame Iranian-backed militants for the incident, and shortly thereafter responded by sending an additional 1,000 U.S. troops to the region. Although aspects of the U.S.' claims were disputed by the operators of one of the vessels itself, by that point it was made clear that Abe's attempt to mediate the quarrel was futile.^{xl}

Ultimately the bombastic rhetoric by both the U.S. and Iran created an unamenable environment and Abe's mission was doomed to fail before it even began. Abe may have hoped to find some area of common ground (much to the benefit of the Japanese economy) or to at least present himself as an international role player, but he ultimately walked away with little more than perhaps a bruised ego. Like his approach to Trump's North Korea policy, Abe hoped he could be the President's right hand man and a guiding voice of reason on U.S. strategy. However, in the end his ambitions once again fell short, and Tokyo was left scrambling to react to Trump's ever-changing and often unpredictable approach.

Although North Korea and Iran gave Abe an opportunity to play second-fiddle to Trump's grander ambitions, there was one area of foreign policy where Abe looked to separate himself from the President and play both sides, namely, striking cooperation and collaboration with both sides amidst a budding U.S.-China rivalry.

China

The Japan-China relationship has always been a tricky conundrum. The neighboring countries have relations that stretch back centuries with near continuous cycles of engagement and rivalry. When Abe returned to office in 2012, bilateral relations were at one of their lowest since WWII. Rising tensions over territorial issues had reached a new high under Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) rule during 2009-, and now Abe was hopeful to bring back some semblance of normalcy in diplomacy, particularly amidst growing concerns in some circles that the U.S. could potentially look to form a G2 type of relationship between the world's two leading economic powers.

Abe had his work cut out for him as China's new leader, Xi Jinping, began centralizing power, cracking down on dissent, and further igniting nationalism on the quest to achieve the "Chinese Dream". Xi's belligerence stances helped Abe work alongside the Obama Administration in developing a more strategic approach to China's rise, but the election of Donald Trump opened new questions as to where relations among these countries might go.

Trump's first year as President presented a variety of mixed signals onto how the U.S.' policy on China would develop. Xi Jinping, like Abe, was one of the first foreign leaders to be received by the President at his Mar-a-Lago resort, and Trump often seemed openly envious of the Chinese leaders tight grip on power. Trump, always the deal maker, however had trade on the back of his mind. Similar to his campaign rhetoric on Japan, Trump frequently derided China's economic practices, noting the two countries massive trade imbalance and accusing Beijing of stealing jobs and massive amounts of U.S. intellectual property. In the early stages of his Presidency, particularly following Trump's grand state visit to Beijing in November 2017, it appeared as though the bilateral relationship might be salvaged. That said, the President's predilection for a trade deal coupled with the prevailing view that China was purposefully dragging its feet on would-be concession, soon led to major escalations including widespread and frequently fluctuating tariffs, sanctions, and other trade barriers.

As U.S.-China competition hardened, Abe once again found new ground to test his diplomatic repertoire. As always, the U.S. security alliance took precedent, and to Abe's relief (and despite Trump's past rhetoric questioning the alliance's benefit), the President stuck with protocol. And in early 2017 he declared that the disputed Senkaku Islands fell under the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and that the United States would oppose any unilateral actions by other countries, meaning China, from attempting to contest Tokyo's administration of the isles.^{xli} With this assurance in hand, Abe could now look to form a new approach to China policy and hopefully find a much more conciliatory Beijing amidst heating tensions with Washington.

Based on Abe's revisionist view of wartime history with China, and especially following his 2013 visit to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, one would expect an array of challenges to reproachment. Trump's arrival on the world stage, however, in some ways actually created an environment more amenable for repairing Sino-Japanese ties. While neither side expected a total budding of relations, each still sought to hedge their bets and find at least some form of conciliatory collaboration to continue upholding the global trading system that each nation's economy so heavily relied on. At the time, negotiations over the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) were still ongoing (the trade agreement was eventually signed between 15 countries including China and Japan in 2020) along with continued hopes for a possible three-way free trade agreement between Beijing, Tokyo, and Seoul. Like the U.S., Japan did take issue with certain Chinese trade tactics, but it viewed cooperation rather than confrontation as the means to best settle such scores.^{xlii}

In many ways, Abe could take a much more straightforward approach to Beijing due to its simmering tensions with the U.S. The two countries past animosity towards one another created the chance for a much clearer approach to reconciliation than did the potential risks emanating from ever-shifting U.S. rhetoric. Beijing and Tokyo saw benefit in expanding their regional and multilateral ties and looking to prioritize economic issues rather than security concerns. While the United States was crafting a more hardline attitude towards China, Japan was still obligated to find

some form of balance in large part due to the fact that Beijing, not Washington, was Tokyo's largest trading partner.^{xliii}



Trump, Abe, and Xi. (Credit: Jacques Witt / AFP/Getty Images)

To this, Abe put aside the two nation's security dilemmas and opted instead for diplomatic outreach. This culminated in October 2018 when Abe landed in Beijing marking the first official visit to China by a Japanese leader in over 7 years. Abe met with various high-ranking officials including Premier Li Keqiang, National People's Congress Chairman Li Zhanshu, and President Xi Jinping himself. Both sides stressed an emphasis on free trade, with specific mention of multiple looming trade agreements and partnerships that were still in the works. Although this moment seemed to be a direct 180 degrees from the tensions built after Abe's visit to Yasukuni in 2013, he was still keen to make clear Tokyo's commitment to upholding values such as human rights in reference to China's treatment of Uyghur ethnic minorities in the western region of Xinjiang. Abe closed the trip with an offer for Xi to visit Japan in turn^{xliv}, which would mark Xi's first official visit to the country since his trip as Vice President in 2009.^{xlv} As Tobias Harris, the author of a recent biography on Abe states, the "forging [of] a new relationship with Beijing was intended to preserve strong commercial ties while also reducing a source of anxiety at a tense moment for relations with the US," with the circumstances providing an opportunity for Abe to assert "strategic independence" diplomatically as well.^{xlvi}

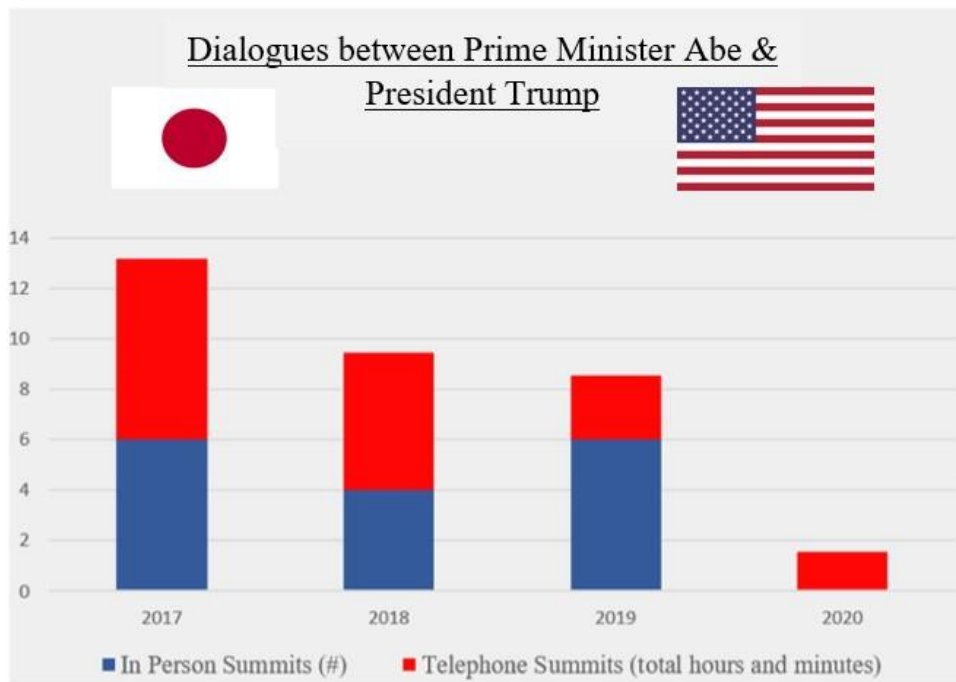
The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has delayed (and in all likelihood dashed entirely) the hopes for a reciprocal visit by Xi to Tokyo in the near future, and China's continued aggression and assertiveness both at home and abroad will likely spell an end to any further extended reproachment regardless. That said, although Abe's apparent gains with China may seem minimal and the two nation's semi-détente short-lived, he did ensure that the relationship between Asia's two largest economies didn't crater entirely as a time when U.S.-China relations often seemed to be in free fall. It remains to be seen if further progress can be built from these initial steps, or whether a chill will return to Sino-Japanese ties in years to come. With Abe and Trump now gone, both their successors have initially seemed to follow relatively closely in their predecessors' policy towards China. For Tokyo however, regardless of who holds the premiership,

major challenges will remain, for as Gideon Rachman of the *Financial Times* states, “Responding to the rise of China is a generational challenge for Japan. Mr. Abe’s successors will need luck, as well as skill, to navigate an uncertain future.”^{xlvi}

Was Abe’s Trump Diplomacy a Success?

By 2020 amidst the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Abe appears to have realized the futility of his quest. Although he continued to regularly meet Trump in person (both in individual summits and at international gatherings such as the G7 and the UN), the pair’s cycle of

Figure 1: Dialogues between Prime Minister Abe and President Trump



(Source: Japan-United States of America Relations Archives)

telephone diplomacy gradually dwindled over time. According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during President Trump’s first year in office, Abe spoke to his U.S. counterpart via telephone for over 7 hours. This amount however soon dropped to less than 3 hours in 2019, and less than 2 hours during the nine months Abe served as Prime Minister in 2020.^{xlvi} There are likely a multitude of reasons as to why this decrease took place. Trump’s arrival in 2017 and his rhetoric regarding North Korea in his first year in office raised tensions in the region as threats of military action spurred North Korea to rapidly increase the pace of its nuclear ambitions. Given his country’s proximity to, and history with North Korea, it makes sense as to why Japan (which hosts over 50,000 U.S. troops) would be keen to play a role in helping to shape American policy. Further, Trump’s rhetoric on international economic relationships and the looming threat of auto tariffs threatened Japan’s economic stability at a time when Abe was looking to revitalize growth at home. By building a personal friendship with Trump, Abe hoped to coax the President enough to where no critical tariffs were placed on Japan and the two countries could reach a comparable trade agreement.

This was no easy task and Abe spent considerable political capital to court a President who most other international leaders chose instead to chastise and critique. Despite these challenges, as former senior director on Asia of the U.S. National Security Council Evan Medeiros pointed out in 2017, “Abe is one of the few...leaders who has been able to pretty deftly navigate the unpredictability and eccentricities of Trump to his substantial advantage.”^{xlix} In this context, Abe’s greatest success vis-à-vis Trump may not be so much vast visible gains, but rather his ability to steer the relationship and keep things afloat. Trump’s rhetoric throughout the campaign threatened to upend the alliance set back US-Japan relations decades, and concern Abe was determined to overcome. Though he may have limited tangible results to show for his efforts with Trump, it is arguable that his more impressive feat was his ability to minimize potential damage to the extent he did.

While his methods and results may be questioned and, in some cases, even mocked, had Abe instead chosen to take a more hands off approach, it is likely Japan would have been victim to much wider display of neglect and negligence as implied by the history of Trump’s comments on the nation. Though areas of foreign policy, such as those with North Korea, Iran, and China were often difficult to manage, Trump’s intention to retreat from multilateralism and the international order gave Abe an opportunity to shine as a leading global diplomat and voice of reason. He established himself on the world stage as a prominent proponent of free trade and diplomacy and gave Japan a voice on the international stage that many had thought it once lost. In hindsight many may be prone to question the achievements of Abe’s feat opposite Trump, however likely few other Japanese leaders past or present could have confronted the challenge so effectively.

The Future

Shinzo Abe’s abrupt resignation in August 2020 and President Trump’s subsequent election defeat in November later that year set the stage for a new era of relations. While Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is viewed by many as only a temporary placeholder, he has followed a diplomatic course similar to that of his predecessor, particularly on his emphasis of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Likewise, President Joe Biden has reaffirmed the importance of the partnership, inviting Prime Minister Suga to be the first foreign dignitary to visit the White House under the new Administration. Early on, top aides and officials in both countries have engaged in deep dialogue and discussion, setting a promising pathway for the continued growth of the bilateral relationships in years to come. As it stands, it would seem unlikely that Biden and Suga will develop the same level of comradery boasted by Trump and Abe, comments made by both leaders during Suga’s visit seem to indicate at least some level of familiarity. When speaking to the press, President Biden referred to Prime Minister Suga as “Yoshi”, with Suga returning the conviviality and addressing the President as “Joe”.¹

Whether Suga remains in office beyond the general election in October 2021 remains to be seen, there is a plethora of leaders poised to potentially further carry on Abe’s mantle. Although various names have been mentioned in the press, three LDP politicians seem particularly well poised both in terms of their potential for election as well as for their prospects of being able to develop close personal ties with the leadership in Washington. Taro Kono, the Minister for Administrative Reform & Regulatory Reform is the current overseer of the country’s coronavirus vaccine rollout and stands as a top forerunner. Having formerly served as minister of both Defense and Foreign Affairs, Kono has long been an active supporter of the U.S.-Japan alliance and brings a unique charisma often unseen in Japanese politicians. A graduate of Georgetown University,

Kono has deep ties and personal relations with many current and former U.S. officials. Kono's bluntness and candor has caused some to question whether he could gain wide-support from various LDP faction, though his mannerisms and social media outreach have attracted attention and popularity from younger demographics who may be key to victory.^{li}

Toshimitsu Motegi, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, also stands out as a potential future Prime Minister. A Harvard University and University of Tokyo graduate, Motegi has played key roles including as a leading Japanese negotiator for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and more recently squaring off with the U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer when negotiating the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement.^{lii} In his current role, Foreign Minister Motegi has had the recent opportunity to further build his reputation with foreign leaders and officials in the face of the ongoing pandemic and the forthcoming Olympic games.

A third name is Shinjiro Koizumi. The son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Shinjiro has emerged as one of the nation's most popular politicians and upon being named Minister of the Environment in 2019 at the age of 38, became the third-youngest cabinet minister in post-war history.^{liii} Koizumi has a master's degree from Columbia University and like both Kono and Motegi, is more than comfortable dialoguing and fraternalizing with foreign leaders in English. Though he is likely still several years away from deeper consideration due to his young age and relative experience, he remains a key figure seemingly destined for higher office. Whether Suga, one of the names listed, or any other assortment of rising political stars, it will likely continue to remain crucial that whoever holds the role as Prime Minister seeks to establish close relations with their U.S. counterpart whether Democrat or Republican. Prime Minister Abe set a high benchmark on the lengths Japanese leaders may go to build these ties, and his many of his hopeful successors will undoubtedly look to achieve similar results.

Conclusion

Shinzo Abe left office on September 16, 2020, as the longest serving Prime Minister in Japanese history. In his over 3,000 days at the helm, Abe visited over 80 different countries was paired with a multitude of foreign leaders including three U.S. Presidents. His final years saw him matched with Donald Trump, a distinctive and unpredictable leader who many feared could upend the U.S.-Japan relationship entirely. Faced with this daunting task, Abe took the challenge head on, modeling himself as the U.S. President's closest international ally, and forging a rapport unique to that of any other foreign leader. President Trump's loathing of the traditional international system often put Abe in an uphill battle, and he did not always escape failure. In many ways it was not Abe's gains vis-à-vis Trump that stand out, but rather his ability to mitigate damage and to keep things together when they appeared destined to fall apart. In all, Abe's time in office, particularly opposite Trump, paid unexpected dividends to deepening the connections between Japan and the United States. Despite facing a President who at times seems determined to pull America out of its international commitments, Abe forged ahead and helped ensure the alliance continued to progress. He set the stage for future Japanese leaders to expand this trend and has left a profound personal and political legacy on the U.S.-Japan alliance ever more.

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The Changing Role of the US Marines in Japan and the Indo-Pacific

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The views expressed or implied in this commentary are solely that of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Marine Corps, the Department of Defense, or any other US government agency.

Introduction

The US Marine Corps' traditional role as America's amphibious force in readiness is evolving to maintain stability in the Indo-Pacific region in an increasingly complex operating environment. Historically, US Marines' rapid response to any crisis or contingency has contributed to peace and security across the globe. As an amphibious force, US Marines relied on the US Navy's maritime supremacy to project power from ship to shore. Due to the vast geographic distance in the Pacific, maintaining US troops and military capabilities on land bases in Japan allows the US to fulfill its US-Japan alliance defensive partnership and project power in the region with fewer naval vessels.

Unfortunately, power projection has become more dangerous and less effective due to the rise of increasingly far-reaching weapon engagement zones combined with the growth of other naval forces. Today, ships can no longer safely sit offshore and send in the US Marines without significant risks. Also, the US military cannot mass forces on large bases in a few locations, as more bases become within the range of an increasing weapon engagement zone. This need for dispersion and desire to deter conflict rather than respond to it, requires a closer relationship than ever before between the US and its allies.

To better operate within weapon engagement zones and prevent conflict from occurring in the Pacific, the US Marine Corps is redesigning its force over the next ten years to become a forward deployed force that can better maneuver in the littorals. Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) is a new operating concept the Marine Corps is developing to "persist and operate forward as a critical component of a naval campaign."¹ This newly designed force will deter aggression, ensure regional stability, and protect key sea lines of communication in the Indo-Pacific without incurring the risks of power projection from ship or permanent land bases.

The US Marine Corps' new force design has implications for the military realignment efforts in Japan. By virtue of its strategic position, Okinawa Prefecture remains a vital territory whose defensive posture is key to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific and preventing conflict in the region. Protecting Okinawa Prefecture, deterring aggression in the East and South China Seas, and responding to crises in the region, are just a few of the reasons the US and Japan have maintained US Marines on the main island of Okinawa for over 75 years. While Marine Corps Air Station Futenma should be shut down and the land returned to Okinawa, the relocation of US Marines outside of Okinawa Prefecture increases the risk of aggression against areas of Okinawa Prefecture, like the contested Senkaku islands.

While the US and Japan remain committed to returning US bases to Japan, consolidating military troops to fewer bases while reducing port and airfield options greatly increases the ballistic missile threat to Japan's defenses. Reducing permanent bases gives adversaries increased odds to target bases with less missiles needed to damage defensive capabilities. Within the constraint of reduced permanent bases, the US Marine Corps' new force design and EABO concept are designed specifically to counter an adversary's growing weapon engagement zone by increasing the number of targets and making those targets move. Because this concept is expeditionary in nature, the Marine Corps new force design can increase the defense of Japan while resolving the MCAS Futenma relocation disagreement. Ultimately, the US Marine Corps will need the continued trust and support of the Government of Japan (GOJ) and Okinawa Prefecture, along with the partnership of the Japanese Self Defense Force, to deter aggression within this increasingly complex security environment.

Shared Interests Between Japan and the US

Japan National Security Policy

Japan's 2013 National Security Strategy (NSS) communicates Japan's national interests and objectives, while acknowledging a shifting security environment in the Indo-Pacific requiring Japan to take an active role to secure peace and promote stability and cooperation in the international community.ⁱⁱ Japan defines its national interests as maintaining its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as achieving prosperity for the Japanese people. To safeguard these interests, Japan's national security objectives include strengthening deterrence, the US-Japan Alliance, and the international rules-based order.ⁱⁱⁱ

Japan's economy benefits from the current international order. As a maritime state, Japan relies on freedom of the seas to facilitate trade that fuels its economy.^{iv} "As part of Japan's national defense, the importance of marine security and stable 'sea lanes of communication,' stretching from the waters surrounding Japan through the Straits of Malacca to the Persian Gulf, cannot be overstated."^v Japan imports 80 percent of its oil from the Middle East through these crucial waterways.^{vi} Defending these sea lanes is within Japan's national interests as it protects both Japan's territory and its economy.

As a peace-loving nation, Japan has relied on the US military for protection of its territories and preserving freedom of navigation. Tokyo's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" policy has three pillars: 1) "promotion and establishment of rule of law, freedom of navigation, free trade, etc.;" 2) "pursuit of economic prosperity (improving connectivity and strengthening economic partnerships including EPAs/FTAs and investment treaties)"; and 3) "commitment for peace and stability" (capacity building on maritime law enforcement, HA/DR cooperation).^{vii} Although Japan gives priority to diplomacy and negotiations and, based on its Constitution, has no military option in its international responses, it has been able to maintain its diplomacy-first option in part due to the presence of US military forces in Japan and the overall Alliance partnership. The ability for the U.S. to maintain forces in this key location guarantees regional stability in the Pacific and prevents other powers from extending hegemony over global maritime commons. The US forces and Japanese Self Defense Forces (JSDF) must work together to provide support to Japan's peaceful diplomatic efforts, as well as maintaining a viable deterrence in the region.

This “Proactive Contribution to Peace” concept serves to justify the reasons why Japan should invest in capabilities to support its sovereignty, the defense of Japanese citizens, and also the greater international order which benefits Japan. Japan recognizes that US military presence in Japan is an important aspect of deterrence, but also recognizes the burden placed on the prefecture of Okinawa in hosting a majority of US troops.^{viii} A series of bilateral agreements between Washington and Tokyo has aimed at reducing the excessive presence of the US military in one prefecture.

US National Security Policy

From 2016-2019, the US Department of Defense obligated \$20.9 billion for its presence in Japan,^{ix} while the GOJ provided \$12.6 billion to support the US military in Japan.^x Beyond the obligation to defend Japan created by the Alliance, there are two main reasons why the posture of US military capabilities in Japan coincides with US national interests. First, the United States is a maritime nation whose security and prosperity depend on the seas.^{xi} American military presence in Japan benefits US national security by maintaining forces in the vicinity of critical shipping sea lanes for American commerce. US forward deployed military posture helps maintain regional stability by enforcing laws and deterring bad actors from attempting to control these maritime shipping lanes. Thus, the US military presence promotes a free and open Indo-Pacific, which includes supporting good governance and economic prosperity in the region.^{xii}

In addition to maintaining fair access to maritime shipping lanes, the US military presence in Japan serves as a forward defense of the US homeland. US capabilities within the first island chain of Japan serves as a defensive layer to protect US territories in the second island chain and beyond to the homeland. Guam, in the second island chain, is home to approximately 160,000 American citizens.^{xiii} Without forces forward of Guam and the second island chain, these Americans could be vulnerable to a first strike as the range of weapons systems continue to reach further across the Pacific Ocean.

Okinawa and the US Marines

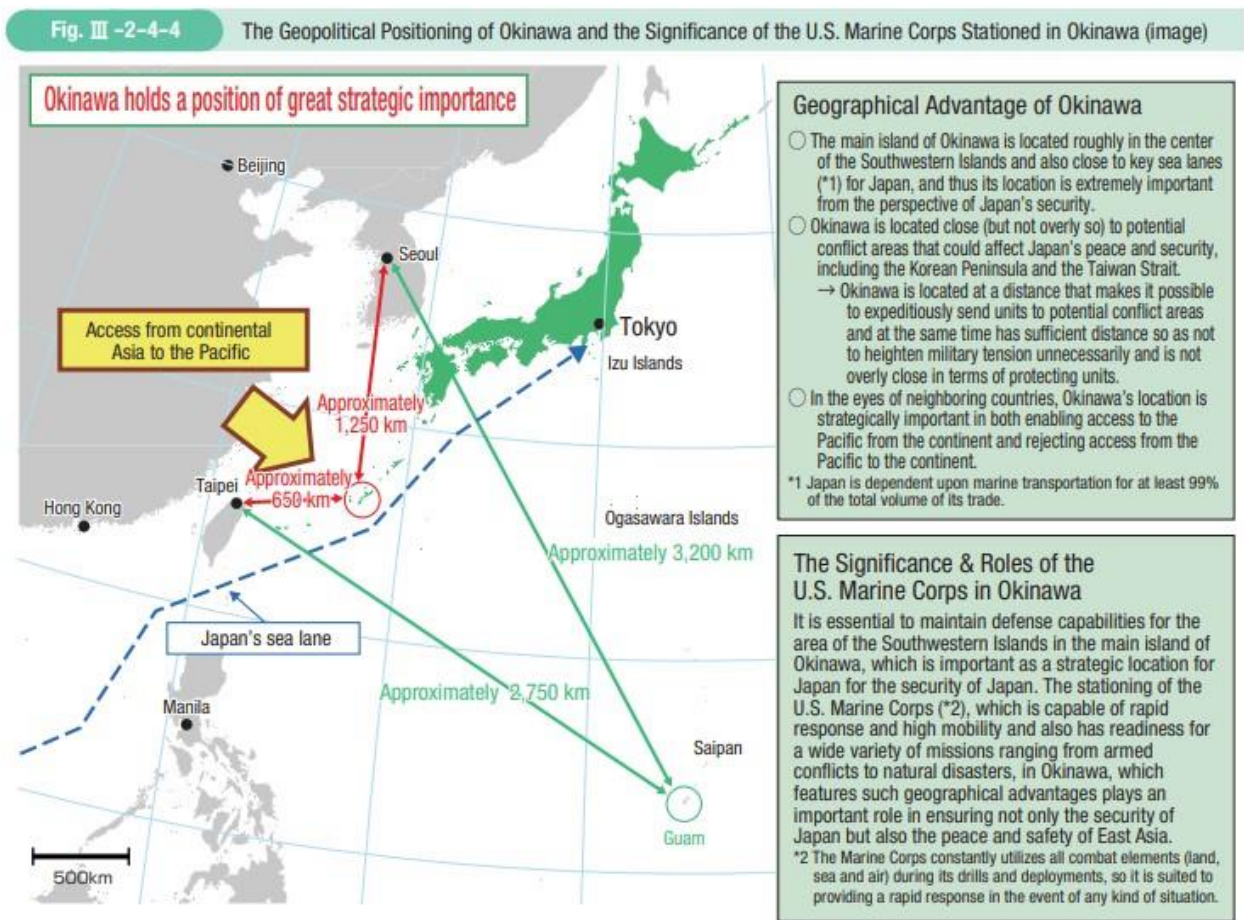
Importance of Okinawa to Indo-Pacific Regional Stability

Okinawa’s location as the southernmost prefecture makes it uniquely positioned in geostrategic terms. The island prefecture is critical to support the defense of Japan and greater stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Okinawa is close to key sea lanes for Japan, which depends on marine transportation for almost all of its overall international trade. The military forces on Okinawa are close to key maritime chokepoints, making Okinawa essential to maintaining freedom of the seas. When compared to Guam or Hawaii, Okinawa is located closer to potential conflict areas that could affect Japan’s peace and security. At the same time, since Okinawa is sovereign territory of Japan, the long-standing US military presence does not heighten regional military tensions unnecessarily.^{xiv}

For decades now, China’s naval and air forces have continued to grow in capability and deploy around Japan’s territorial waters.^{xv} The Miyako Strait links China to the Pacific Ocean, and

thus Okinawa serves as a strategically important target in both making access to the Pacific from the continent and rejecting access from the Pacific to the continent.^{xvi} Japan’s Ministry of Defense (MOD) reports increased sightings of carrier fleet and air forces around Okinawa in an attempt to normalize these new patterns. In April 2020, a Chinese naval fleet, including aircraft carrier “Liaoning,” passed through the waters of the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island multiple times. Chinese carrier-based fighter aircraft take-off and land from the Liaoning while deployed in the Pacific. Additionally, the early warning aircraft, PLAN Y-8, along with loaded bomber aircraft H-6K, have increased flight patterns between Okinawa and Miyakojima.^{xvii} Chinese submarines are regularly penetrating the important Japanese sea lines of communication.^{xviii}

The Japanese government depends on the US Forces in Okinawa to further ensure the effectiveness of the Alliance, strengthen deterrence, and contribute greatly not only to the security of Japan but also to the peace and stability of the region.^{xix} Japan’s NSS discusses the requirement



(Source: Defense of Japan 2020 White Paper, p.323)

for the GOJ to “strengthen the domestic foundation that supports national security and promotes domestic and global understanding.”^{xx} Japanese citizens must be informed and educated in important state matters and the international situation to understand why military forces, ports, bases, and airfields are necessary in Okinawa. If the residents of Okinawa understood the

importance their prefecture plays in defending Japan and maintaining the international order, those opposing all of the US military presence on the island might take a different view.

Ultimately, Okinawa is too geographically important for Japan and Indo-Pacific stability and thus must maintain a proportionally larger number of defensive forces and capabilities, whether US or JSDF. Without military bases on Okinawa, it is likely that civilian capabilities, such as Naha airport and port, could be targeted instead as they provide the same potential as military bases do. The government of Okinawa (OPG) should continue to advocate for military ports and airfields to be located away from population centers, but it should also explain to the population that a reasonable level of military bases should stay on Okinawa to serve as initial targets and protect civilian targets in Naha.

US Forces Japan (USFJ) Military Posture on Okinawa

When Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, the government of Japan (GOJ) provided 83 facilities and areas covering approximately 278 square kilometers for exclusive use by US Forces Japan (USFJ).^{xxi} Since then, both Japan and the US have continued to realign, consolidate, and reduce USFJ bases on Okinawa to ease the burden of hosting US military basing. As of January 2020, USFJ has exclusive use of 31 facilities covering 185 square kilometers of Okinawa.^{xxii} However, despite this reduction Okinawa Prefecture still bears most of the burden for US military bases for the nation of Japan. Approximately 70 percent of USFJ facilities and areas for exclusive use within Japan are concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture, occupying approximately 8 percent of the land area of the prefecture and approximately 14 percent of the main island.^{xxiii} Most of those bases are located in the heavily populated southern part of the island.

Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma

The GOJ supports US military realignment efforts in Japan primarily through two bilateral agreements: the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) and the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI).^{xxiv} In addition to these bilateral agreements, the GOJ established the Okinawa Action Council to discuss the realignment between the GOJ and Okinawa Prefectural Government (OPG). The SACO was created in 1995, in part due to a renewed effort on the part of the GOJ and the US to conduct realignment in reaction to a heinous crime committed by three US servicemen in Okinawa. Two US Marines and one US Navy Sailor kidnapped and raped a 12-year-old Okinawan girl.^{xxv} Although the US Marines were stationed at Camp Hansen in the northern part of the island, protests began at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma. MCAS Futenma is a Marine air base in Ginowan City, located in the central, more populated part of the island. By April 1996, the US government agreed to close MCAS Futenma. The agreement reached would relocate its helicopter and other air transport facilities to other locations, including a site in Okinawa.^{xxvi}

Despite the GOJ and US reaching an agreement to close MCAS Futenma in 1996, MCAS Futenma is still open today. The OPG has opposed relocating MCAS Futenma to another part of Okinawa from the start of the agreement, seeking to delay the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF), located in a remote northern part of the island. After several legal disputes over revocations of landfill permits by the OPG, the Japanese Supreme Court ruled in December 2016 in favor of the GOJ.^{xxvii} However, once construction began, the discovery of soft

seabed increased the complication of constructing the FRF at Henoko Point. Construction completion dates for the facility now range from the early to mid-2030, assuming there are no further legal disputes. But, because of the soft seabed, the GOJ must modify the existing approved landfill permit which was approved by the Supreme Court in 2016. The cost of building the facility has naturally escalated.

Future progress on the FRF will likely be impacted if the OPG governor declines to approve the permit modification request. This will then return the GOJ and OPG back to court to seek a decision to continue progressing landfill operations. While the courts have previously sided with the GOJ on FRF-related litigation between GOJ and OPG, the continued legal disagreement will delay the completion of the FRF, thus delaying the return of MCAS Futenma to Okinawa.^{xxviii} The US and Japanese government maintain that the current site for the FRF is the only option. There has never been a high-level review of the project that might produce other options, such as temporarily removing Futenma's remaining aircraft, mostly Ospreys, in order to speed up the return of Futenma.

Although the OPG has repeatedly delayed the relocation of MCAS Futenma in an attempt to move the FRF Okinawa, the OPG and the people of Okinawa must understand the risk of reducing defense forces on Okinawa as a political and not a strategic decision. Distant from the US and JSDF forces in mainland Japan, Okinawa must host forces to provide security for its prefecture and protect the sea lines of communication that enable maritime shipping. The common understanding that US forces simply never left Okinawa after World War 2 occupation^{xxix} grossly misunderstands the reason why US forces have maintained a presence in Okinawa.

The inability of the two governments to replace remaining functions of Futenma airfield of a smaller airfield off Camp Schwab and finally close Futenma makes the project a lightning rod for local protests. Strategically, the long delay ultimately reduces the ability for either JSDF or US military forces to protect Okinawa and maintain stability in the region. Additionally, just because a replacement airfield is located in Okinawa, does not mean a large, persistent US military presence is required to stay on that base like it was when MCAS Futenma was established. In fact, the FRF is rather small in size. However, there is a new element: today's security environment requires a more distributed, and highly mobile force and the US Marines are redesigning the force to adapt to that new situation.

The Future of the US Marines in Japan and the Indo-Pacific

US Marine Corps Force Design 2030^{xxx}

The US Marine Corps has historically served as America's "Force in Readiness," rapidly deploying across the world to assist in any contingency, ranging from war and hostile conflicts to disasters requiring humanitarian aid. Within the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps is a maritime force with a doctrinal focus on amphibious operations and littoral combat operations. Over the past several decades, prior to the growing maritime capability of China, the US Navy maintained a global naval supremacy. At the time, US strategic interests required the Marine Corps to support ground combat operations in the Middle East more often than sea-based operations in littoral regions of the Indo-Pacific. Based on the US 2018 National Defense Strategy^{xxxi} the

changing security environment requires the Marine Corps to tailor its future force design to specifically counter “malign activity by actors pursuing maritime gray zone strategies.”^{xxxii} This newly designed maritime force will serve as a deterrent to aggression in the Indo-Pacific and in other littoral areas across the globe.

The 2018 NDS discusses a global operating model, which describes military posture to effectively compete below the level of armed conflict. It comprises four layers: contact, blunt, surge, and homeland. These are designed to help the US compete more effectively below the level of armed conflict; delay, degrade, or deny adversary aggression; surge war-winning forces and manage conflict escalation; and defend the US homeland.^{xxxiii}

Previous to the 2030 force design, the Marine Corps organization and operating concepts assumed US supremacy in the maritime, space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum domains. With no competitors in the maritime domain, the Marine Corps could focus its operating concepts on power projection from the sea. Previously, US naval forces had sea control because of a lack of maritime competition but now, contested seas require a new emphasis on sea control.^{xxxiv} The Marine Corps 2030 updates force organization, equipment, and operating concepts to take into consideration the competition within these domains. Specific to the maritime domain, the Marine Corps must assist the Navy and Coast Guard in maintaining sea control.

Sea control operations are designed to secure use of a maritime area to allow freedom of operation for US and allied forces.^{xxxv} Maintaining sea control in key maritime chokepoints, like the Miyako Strait, Luzon Strait, Taiwan Strait, and the Strait of Malacca, ensures freedom of navigation for international shipping and protects economic prosperity for maritime nations. The US and Japan mutually agree that maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific is within their interests, which includes maintaining freedom of navigation in crucial maritime chokepoints.

The Marine Corps’ force design centers around a new unit called the Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR), responsible for executing the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) concept. Small teams of Marines are widely dispersed throughout key maritime terrain, networked together and integrated with naval ships and air forces to provide sensor or shooter data in expeditionary locations. Within the EABO concept, these small teams maintain a low electromagnetic signature and can provide intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) or, if necessary, long-range fires to deter naval vessels from violating international laws. These small teams would be integrated with the Navy and Air Force to draw in their capabilities without risking the loss of a capital ship or aircraft. These teams need to be highly mobile within an Anti-Area Access Denial (A2AD) littoral environment, moving to from multiple expeditionary bases. These forces serve as the contact and blunt forces within the US 2018 NDS global operating model, seeking to deter aggression and deny a fait accompli by being already located within A2AD bubble and making the success of aggressive actions more uncertain and make it more likely that aggression would face consequences.^{xxxvi}

Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO)

Permanent advanced military bases, referred to as main operating bases,^{xxxvii} are necessary for forces to rest, rearm, and refit between conducting operations. Unfortunately, permanent bases within a growing weapon engagement zone are placed high on adversary target lists as they are known and permanent locations. This is why dispersion is important for military forces located within a weapon engagement zone so that all forces are not easily targeted by a small number of munitions.

Expeditionary advanced bases (EABs) differ from permanent, main operating bases in that they are intermittently operational and can move quickly enough to maintain a relative advantage. While key capabilities of this base may move, some elements may not move and thus not always be manned with troops. EABs can use pre-established capabilities such as airfields, landing pads, launch pads, communications cables and pedestals, or pre-positioned supplies and equipment, to provide more rapid and robust support to the MLR. The risk of building up capabilities for an EAB too much is that the location then becomes targeted like a permanent military base. However, because forces are not permanently stationed there, the risk of the forces being lost in a first-strike is reduced. An EAB may be mobile, using trucks, barges, ferries, etc. to provide mobility and continuity of mission support from different locations. For example, a mobile forward arming and refueling point (FARP) using fuel barges and fast domestic ferries to move equipment.^{xxxviii} Or an EAB could be rapidly established on one, or dispersed among several locations, such as host-nation military bases or host-nation civilian locations such as towns, airports, and naval ports.

US allies are critical to the concept of EABO. The more options available to the MLR to establish an EAB, the better the concept works to deter aggression and protect the force. Planning coalition-use EAB locations ahead of time increases cooperation between US forces and host-nation militaries. Within the context of the US-Japan Alliance, by increasing the number of locations the US Marines can intermittently operate, improves the dispersion of US forces making it more difficult for adversaries to pin-point and target military capabilities, while concurrently reducing the burden on the local civilian population of permanent military bases. In Okinawa Prefecture, locations off the main island like the newly established JSDF capabilities on Miyako-jima and Ishigaki-jima^{xxxix} could serve as places for US Marines to maneuver throughout the region. The GOJ and OPG should commit to intermittent use of JSDF bases, civilian airports, and other locations by US Marines to support the EABO concept and enable the movement of US Marines and reduce the permanence on the main island. The OPG should also allow the completion of the FRF, with the understanding that this facility will serve as a way for US Marines to move to and from the main island more often, and exist as a much safer way to do so, than the previous MCAS Futenma.

Legally, once an armed attack or anticipated armed attack situation is declared by the GOJ, the US can request to use any facilities, military or civilian. The law allows for the GOJ to coordinate with civilian authorities to assist the US in accessing any port, airfield, or facility needed. If a local authority refuses at that time, the GOJ can order compliance and directly grant access, however this process could be time consuming and occurs after conflict begins.^{xl} Deterrence, rather than crisis response, is the best way to maintain stability in the region. This

means that the best way for a local government to prevent a future conflict is to agree to intermittent military use of facilities, ports, and airfields before a conflict begins.

Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2)

Although the US Marines Force Design 2030 and EABO concept will provide a deterrent to aggression in the sea lanes surrounding Japan, this concept is part of a larger network of deterrence connecting all the available resources of the Joint Force. This interconnected network is called Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2). JADC2 is the US Department of Defense's (DOD's) concept to connect sensors from all of the military services—Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force. Commanders can then make better decisions by collecting data from numerous sensors, processing the data using artificial intelligence algorithms to identify targets, then recommending the optimal kinetic or non-kinetic (like cyber or electronic weapons) to engage the target.^{xli} The DOD wishes to make the JADC2 concept coalition integrated to provide an automatically interoperable network of sensors and shooters which provide a resilient deterrent umbrella against aggressive enemy actions.^{xlii}

Sharing information in real time among multiple sources further complicates the situation for any actor who wishes to violate international laws or commit acts of aggression. Not only will adversaries be unaware where exactly Marines are located, but those forces will connect to capabilities such as naval gun fire, submarines, or air force fighter and bomber aircraft. This will make it more difficult for adversaries to conduct a *fait accompli*, and also more difficult for them to target high-value US capabilities. Integrating additional sensors or shooters into the network only aids in providing more options for US and coalition forces and more uncertainty for adversaries. Thus, the GOJ should consider integrating the JSDF into this network concept to provide better defense of Japanese territories and the sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific.

The US Marines and the Japanese Self Defense Force (JSDF)

Mission of Japanese Self Defense Force

According to JSDF law “the prime mission of the SDF is to defend Japan from direct and indirect aggression.”^{xliii} The third set of guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation of 2015 expanded the roles of the JSDF to include collective self-defense in the South China Sea, on the Korean Peninsula, and in the cyber and space domains.^{xliv} By virtue of their location within Japanese territory, JSDF forces are within the increasing range of weapon engagement zones from other nations, such as North Korea, China, or Russia.

The preponderance of JSDF forces are located on mainland Japan. The JSDF has only a limited number of facilities on the main island of Okinawa, including Naha air base and Naha port. While relocating US forces to mainland Japan may silence some anti-American sentiment in Okinawa, the removal of these forces leaves the southernmost islands and sea lanes vulnerable. Having military capabilities equally distributed across Japan's prefectures might seem like a fair way to share the burden of military bases. However, this type of organization does not take into account the most vulnerable territories and slows response time for any incident in the East or South China Sea when compared to deploying forces from Okinawa Prefecture. Thus, forces

located in mainland Japan, whether US or JSDF, cannot serve as a deterrent to aggression but instead can only react to a situation already at hand in the global maritime commons.

Japan has increased JSDF units within Okinawa Prefecture within recent years. Several units from all three services within the JSDF have been established, or are planning to be stood up, among the southern Okinawa islands around the Miyako Strait and close to the Senkaku islands. These forces include air defense, anti-aircraft artillery, surface-to-ship missile defense, observation, and guard units.^{xlv}

JGSDF Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB)

In April 2018, Japan Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) created a new unit, the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB), which is composed in a similar manner to the legacy Marine Corps prior to force design 2030 considerations. Located in Ainoura on the western side of mainland Japan, the purpose of the ARDB is to serve as a rapid response capability in the defense of Japanese territory. The JGSDF plans to employ the ARDB in a phased sequence, immediately deployed by helicopter or tilt-rotor in response to a contingency.^{xlvi} While the ARDB is becoming more operationally capable, there is still some question over how quickly it can gather its forces and deploy from mainland Japan in response to a conflict in the East or South China Seas.^{xlvii} Additionally, another concern identified from the creation of the ARDB is JSDF joint integration. Generally, each service within the JSDF is more integrated with their US service counterpart than with each other. For the ARDB to rapidly deploy in response to a crisis, the JSDF will need to seamlessly operate as a joint force.^{xlviii}

Creating the ARDB to respond to a crisis does not counter gray zone threats or prevent a fait accompli. The best way to prevent these actions is to deter an adversary from fulfilling its intent to act.^{xlix} Thus, Japan and the US must prevent revisionist powers like China or Russia from using gray zone threats or a fait accompli to resolve territorial disputes or balance the international order in their favor. Japan and the US should consider how to best position military capabilities to deter conflict before it begins instead of responding to a conflict that has already started.

Maintaining US Marines and ARDB forces on a rotational basis within the southwestern islands of Okinawa Prefecture is one way to position forces in place to deter conflict and protect these key territories and sea lanes. Having rotational forces dispersed on more islands can mitigate the negative impacts of permanent bases on the Okinawa main island without sacrificing the benefit of having forces located where it is most important to protect Japan and the US's common maritime interests. This requires an investment in logistics and communications support for austere locations and preplanned civilian airfield and port use before a crisis occurs. Continued cooperation between JGSDF ARDB and US Marines, and continued discussion with the OPG on the importance of Okinawa Prefecture is required to ensure peace and stability of the entire region.

Conclusion

The resiliency of the US-Japan Alliance is a testament to mutual benefit both countries share due to their close partnership. Despite drastic changes in the security environment over time, the GOJ and US government maintain effective communication and conduct coalition negotiations to serve the interests of both states. The US Marine Corps new force design and operating concepts, along with the JGSDF Amphibious Rapid Deployment Bridge, both have the potential to provide significant value to the alliance. Returning MCAS Futenma and completing the FRF must occur, but consolidating military troops to fewer bases while reducing port and airfield options greatly increases the threat to Japan. Prior to a crisis, the GOJ, US, and OPG must agree to the intermittent use of other facilities, ports, and airfields by the US Marines as Expeditionary Advanced Bases (EABs) within Okinawa Prefecture. This preparation will ensure military forces are used to prevent conflict instead of responding to one already underway. With the continued trust and support of the Japanese people, along with the partnership of the Japanese Self Defense Force, the US Marine Corps will serve to maintain the international order and prevent conflict within the Indo-Pacific's increasingly complex security environment.

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Impact of China's New Coast Guard Law on the US-Japan Alliance?

Kojiro Tonosaki

Introduction

In their joint statement issued during their summit meeting on April 16, 2021, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and President Joe Biden expressed opposition to China's illicit claims and activities in the waters of East Asia. The meeting came just days after China sent 25 aircraft, including fighters and nuclear-capable bombers, near Taiwan, which Beijing has vowed to eventually "unify."ⁱ

"We committed to working together to take on the challenges from China and on issues like the East China Sea, the South China Sea," they stated. They shared "concerns over Chinese activities that are inconsistent with the international rules-based order, including the use of economic and other forms of coercion."ⁱⁱ Such words in the first face-to-face summit for the two leaders foreshadowed the beginning of a new Japan-U.S. relationship, especially from a security perspective.

As Tsuneo Watanabe, a senior fellow at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, points out, "Looking objectively at Japan's geographic location, it is well positioned to face China from the Pacific — it is not connected to China by land, and it is a part of the first island chain, which can block Chinese advances further into the Pacific Ocean, while being some distance across the East China Sea," China's recent excessive maritime forays have been enough to make the Biden administration re-recognize Japan's geographic importance.ⁱⁱⁱ Before joining the administration as National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan coauthored an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine with Hal Brands, a professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), titled "China Has Two Paths to Global Domination." The authors argued that even though China is trying to build regional hegemony, strong ties between the U.S. and its allies would prevent such a possibility from happening.^{iv}

Past decades have seen an escalation of maritime conflicts between China, its neighbors, and the U.S. in East Asian waters. A 2017 report by CSIS, "Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia," cited nine incidents, including the 2009 harassment of the USNS Impeccable, the 2010 Senkaku Islands trawler incident, 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff, Japan's 2012 nationalization of the Senkaku Islands, China's 2013 announcement of the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone, the 2014 harassment of Philippine forces near Second Thomas Shoal, the 2014 China-Vietnam oil rig standoff, the 2014 "Top Gun" incident, and Spratly Islands land reclamation and construction beginning in 2013.^v Then, on February 1, 2021, China put into legal effect a game-changer: the Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China, which lays out new activities of the China Coast Guard (CCG) in international waters. Since the publication of the draft in November last year, many questions and concerns have been expressed both domestically and internationally in Japan and the U.S.

Wataru Okada, Lieutenant Commander in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, argues, "China claims that the CCG Law is consistent with international law and customary practice. However, the law conflicts with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in several areas."^{vi}

The main body of this paper focuses on the CCG Law and the implications for Japan's security. In particular, there are three potentially serious concerns about the law (Articles 2, 3, 21, 22, 25, and 83): First, the CCG is now considered a part of China's armed forces; Second, the CCG may not hesitate to use weapons if they decide they need; Third, the definition of "jurisdictional waters" remains ambiguous and worrisome. The second and third sections detail case studies of two maritime/air incidents in East Asia: the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff and China's 2013 announcement of the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Based on these case studies, this paper draws three implications for security officials and experts in Japan and the U.S.:

- Lesson 1: Maintain and strengthen the bilateral alliance.
- Lesson 2: Increase the number of like-minded countries.
- Lesson 3: Aid affected countries to build maritime security and air surveillance capabilities to deal with China's assertiveness.

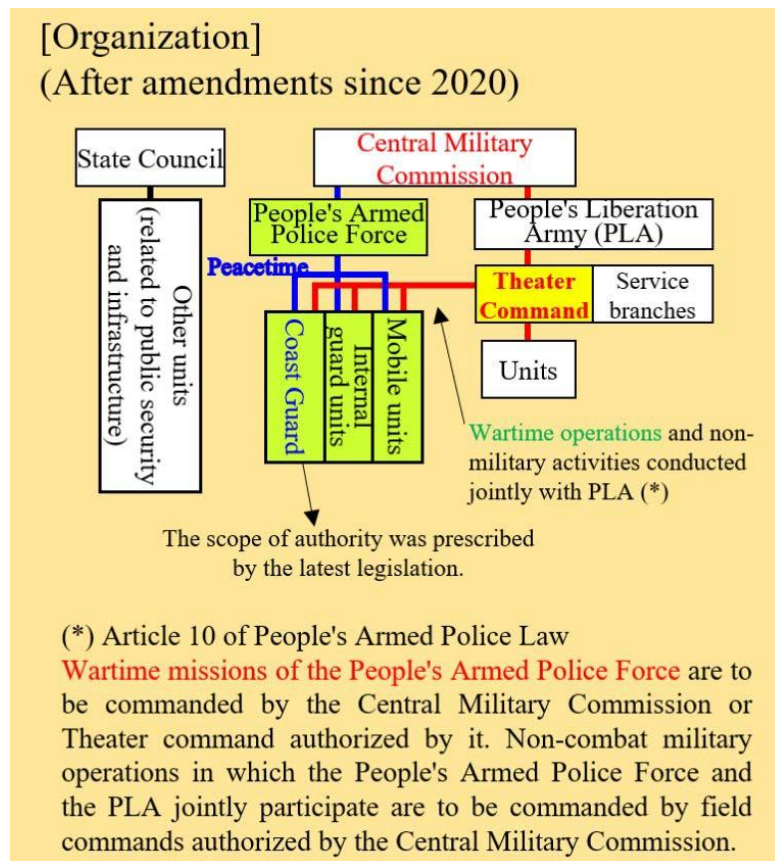
In 2012, the United States and the Philippines allowed China to take de facto control of Scarborough Reef, despite the existence of a Mutual Defense Treaty. Then, in 2013, China unilaterally established the East China Sea ADIZ, which was famously rendered inoperative due to opposition from the international community. Each case study includes a timeline and some key takeaways. The final section analyses the two cases and draws lessons that can be used in dealing with the new CCG Law.

In Japan, the CCG Law is usually linked to the issue of the Senkaku Islands, which China claims. But, the implications of the law must also be viewed from the broader perspective of East Asian security. In that context, it is essential to discuss how to enhance Alliance cooperation in order to factor in the new law. I hope the policy recommendations presented below can provide insight into securing regional security and international order in the near future.

China Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China

On February 1, 2021, the PRC's new China Coast Guard (CCG) Law came into effect. Since the initial draft was released in November 2020, many questions and concerns with the law have rippled across the international community.^{vii} This paper's research into the law finds three particularly worrisome aspects related to Articles 2, 3, 21, 22, and 83 that could be sources of future issues in the region. First, the law makes the CCG a part of China's armed forces; second, the CCG may not hesitate to use weapons if they decide they need; third, the definition of "jurisdictional waters" remains ambiguous.

Figure 1. The Position of the CCG in the Chain of Command



(Source: Japan Ministry of Defense^{viii})

Article 2 of the China Coast Guard Law defines the characteristics of the CCG.^{ix} There, the term “maritime armed force” present in the initial draft that placed the CCG under the navy has disappeared. However, this does not mean that China has dropped the idea that the CCG is a part of its armed forces.^x The Constitution, National Defense Law, and People’s Armed Police (PAP) Law, which are all superordinate to the China Coast Guard Law, clearly state that the PAP is a part of the armed forces, and the opening of the coast guard law describes “the PAP’s Coast Guard.”^{xi} It logically follows that the CCG is a military force. Katsuya Yamamoto, Director of Education at the National Institute for Defense Studies, argues, “More specifically, domestic law clarifies that it is a force under the Central Military Commission, which is independent from the State Council, the chief administrative authority in China’s central government. Some international commentators have described the CCG as “paramilitary,” but the laws of the People’s Republic of China stipulate that the People’s Liberation Army, the Chinese Militias, and the PAP – and with it the CCG – are each equally the country’s armed forces.”^{xii} Accordingly, it is clear that from China’s perspective that the CCG is not “an organization that conforms to a military force,” but rather an “unmistakably military force.”^{xiii} In Figure 1 above, we can see the position of the CCG in the Chain of Command.

Concerns about Overuse of Weapons against Other Countries' Ships

Article 22 lays out the use of weapons to foreign organizations or individuals in the seas.^{xiv} In addition, because Article 21 stipulates that forcible eviction may be taken against illegal acts committed by foreign military vessels, if the CCG decides they need to do so, they can use weapons.^{xv} As long as there is a mismatch of perceptions between the international community and China, this provision cannot erase the anxiety that the use of firearms by the CCG is up to their judgment.

The Definition of "Jurisdictional Waters" Remains Ambiguous

As the Ministry of Defense points out, "ambiguity as to geographical areas the CCG Law applies," the definition of "jurisdictional waters" is still vaguer.^{xvi} It is clear that "jurisdictional waters," as viewed by China as intended to include parts of the East China Sea around Senkaku Islands as well as the area inside the nine-dash line. Yamamoto argues that China's "jurisdictional waters," in other words, almost everywhere inside the so-called "first island chain."^{xvii} China's claims to these "jurisdictional waters" differ significantly from maritime claims made by Japan and other neighbors. Many of China's claims, such as the "nine-dash line" claim to historic rights in the South China Sea, have been rejected by international arbitration and are unilateral assertions that are not recognized by the international community.^{xviii}

China's unchanging, if more subtle, assertions of maritime control threaten international law and order. The international community must unite to confront the Chinese if it attempts to implement those assertions forcefully. Otherwise, China could successfully change the status quo in its favor. Two examples from recent history show that is happening and have implications for the future. In 2012, a Philippine warship intercepted several Chinese fishing boats at Scarborough Shoal. Before the arrest could be carried out, Chinese law enforcement vessels arrived there. This event led to a two-month standoff. Even though Manila sought help from ASEAN and the United States, such did not arrive. China finally denied entry to Filipino fishers in those waters and achieved a de facto seizure of control that still stands.

In 2013, Beijing suddenly announced its air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea. The United States, Japan, and other regional states quickly criticized the decision because the application of rules was unacceptable to the international community. Beijing abandoned its original attempts by facing strong criticism due to realizing the difficulty in effectively monitoring, even though it has not officially withdrawn the ADIZ.

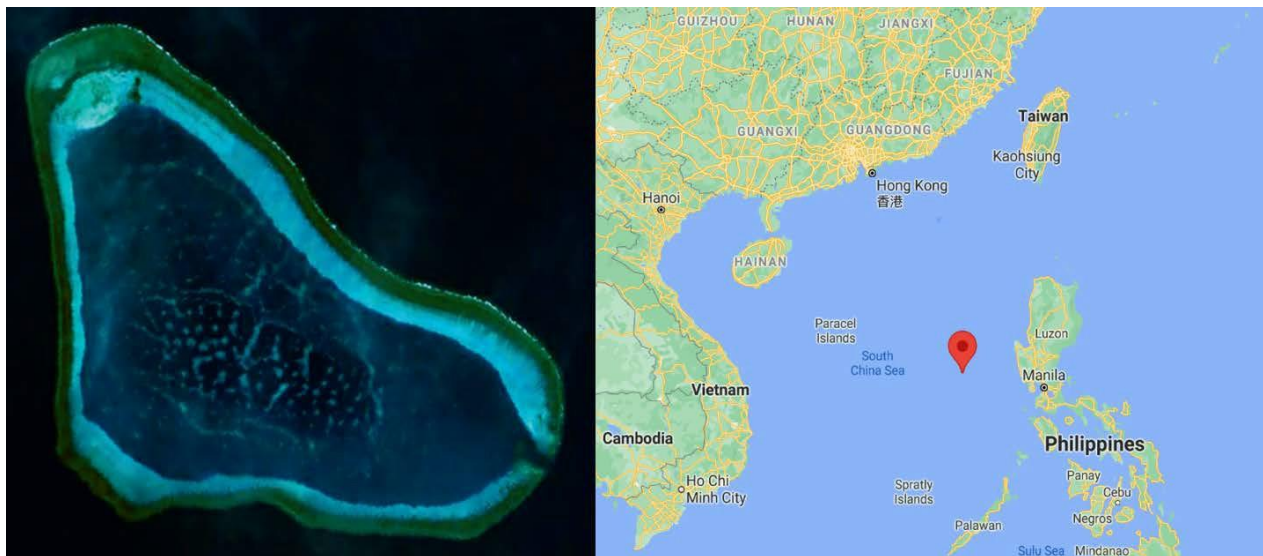
These examples illustrate that China will continue its aggressive actions when the international community is less responsive or convinced that there is no strong American commitment. Therefore, in order to effectively counter such aggression, the international community must directly confront China each time to increase the associated risks and costs. The next two sections will detail these incidents as case studies.

Scarborough Shoal Standoff

On April 10, 2012, a Philippine warship intercepted several Chinese fishermen at the disputed Scarborough Shoal, leading to a two-month standoff when two Chinese law enforcement vessels arrived before Manila could complete the arrest. Despite initial de-escalations, the two sides could not agree on the terms of a total withdrawal.^{xi}

The CSIS report cited above describes this event succinctly. It reveals that China was able to change the status quo through force without negative consequences. Even though Manila has never conceded that it lost the shoal, former officials admitted that China had established “de facto control.”^{xx} That China was successful here in changing the status quo by ignoring international rules can be blamed on the U.S. remaining aloof from involvement, as well as the general indifference of the international community. The event unfolded in five stages: 1) the occurrence of the incident; 2) the stalemate after the failure of an initial negotiation; 3) the Philippines asked the U.S. for help; and 4) the second negotiation.^{xxi} Figure 2 below shows where the Shoal is.

Figure 2. The Landsat Image and Position of the Scarborough Shoal



(Source: CSIS and Google Maps^{xxii})

Stage 1: Occurrence of the Incident

On April 8, 2012, the Philippine Navy spotted Chinese fishing boats in the disputed Scarborough Shoal.^{xxiii} Because a patrol ship was occupied elsewhere at that time, the Philippine Navy’s biggest warship, the BRP Gregorio del Pilar, proceeded to intercept the Chinese boats.^{xxiv} The warship arrived on April 10, and according to a CSIS report:

Armed Philippine sailors boarded the Chinese fishing vessels inside the lagoon and allegedly shut off the ships' satellite navigation systems and radio communication equipment. Inspections lasted several hours. Large catches of giant clam, live blacktip shark, and coral protected under Philippine anti-poaching laws were discovered.^{xxv}

After this inspection, Chinese fishermen called officials in Hainan via satellite phone, and then two China Marine Surveillance vessels went to the Scarborough Shoal. Once these China vessels arrived there, they blocked the Philippine warship, even though the BRP Gregorio del Pilar argued that the shoal fell within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.^{xxvi} Then-President Aquino decided to send a coast guard ship to replace the warship because two China Marine Surveillance vessels seemed to be unarmed law enforcement ships.^{xxvii} Late in the evening on April 10, Philippine officials asserted Philippine claims to the Chinese ambassador.^{xxviii}

At the same time, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs was trying to start a negotiation to resolve this incident. Beijing also seemed interested in avoiding escalation and emphasized "the overall situation of Sino-Philippine friendship."^{xxix} In response to this, the Philippine warship, the BRP Gregorio del Pilar, was replaced by the BRP Pampanga, a Philippine Coast Guard ship, on April 12.^{xxx} However, the Chinese patrol ship remained at the spot. On April 13, Secretary del Rosario and the Chinese Ambassador met to seek a solution.^{xxxi}

Stage 2: Stalemate after the Failure of the First Negotiation

The meeting failed to make progress, and the situation was stalemated. On April 16, China stated that the China Marine Surveillance vessels would not leave as long as the Philippine Coast Guard stayed.^{xxxii} Meanwhile, on April 17, the Philippines announced that it would seek international arbitration of the Scarborough Shoal dispute, and Beijing rejected Manila's announcement quickly.^{xxxiii} On April 19, Manila declared that it would bring the shoal standoff to international arbitration. Responding to Manila's declaration, China tried to release the tension by announcing that Chinese ships had been withdrawn on April 23. On the contrary, Manila suspected this was a lie. It was hampered by a lack of capability for maritime situational awareness.^{xxxiv}

Stage 3: Philippines Asks U.S. for Help

Although Secretary Del Rosario formally asked ASEAN to take a stance on the incident, his ASEAN counterparts' reaction was not sufficient.^{xxxv} He, therefore, decided to seek direct support from the U.S., based on the Mutual Defense Treaty with the U.S.^{xxxvi} On April 30, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with their Philippine counterparts in Washington. During this meeting, they discussed the tension at the Scarborough Shoal. But Panetta and Clinton maintained the U.S. policy of neutrality on the underlying sovereignty dispute.^{xxxvii} According to Michael Green, "U.S. officials did not clarify whether the Mutual Defense Treaty covered the Philippines' offshore claims, nor did they promise any direct U.S. intervention."^{xxxviii}

Stage 4: Second Negotiation

The situation further deteriorated in May 2012, when China decided to implement a quarantine of Philippine fruit imports, such as bananas, pineapples, and papaya.^{xxxix} It seemed obvious that China was using the quarantine measure as a tool of economic coercion over the Scarborough Shoal issue, because the fruit industry in the Philippines was heavily reliant on the Chinese market.^{xi} In this situation, President Aquino started to change the approach toward resolving the shoal dispute by relying on Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, who had close connections to China.^{xli} Thanks to the senator's many informal negotiations, the number of Chinese ships at Scarborough Shoal decreased in late May, and Manila announced that Chinese quarantine had been eased.^{xlii} However, despite Trillanes's effort to find a diplomatic resolution of the crisis from May and July, China established "de facto control" by October.^{xliii}

Key Takeaways

An examination of the incident provides three takeaways. First, deterrence backed by a U.S. commitment did not work, despite the existence of the Mutual Defense Treaty. About 20 days after the incident occurred, the Philippines officially asked the U.S. to step in, but to no avail. Perhaps, it might have been different if it had asked the U.S. earlier. Close cooperation between the U.S. and the Philippines at an early stage may have prevented the escalation. Because of the failure to specify U.S. commitments in the joint statements and press conferences of the 2+2 meeting on April 26, China continued to escalate the standoff. In other words, the U.S. decision not to explicitly indicate its involvement sent a message to China that there would be no serious consequences of its actions.

The second takeaway is the weakness of ASEAN. Being a regional economic organization with no security apparatus, ASEAN failed to respond quickly and appropriately to the crisis. Del Rosario's ASEAN counterparts' inability to take decisive actions but only offer sympathy toward the situation signaled to China that surrounding countries were holding back on their criticism, even if China took more robust action. It more broadly meant that the indifference of the international community implicitly tolerated China's actions.

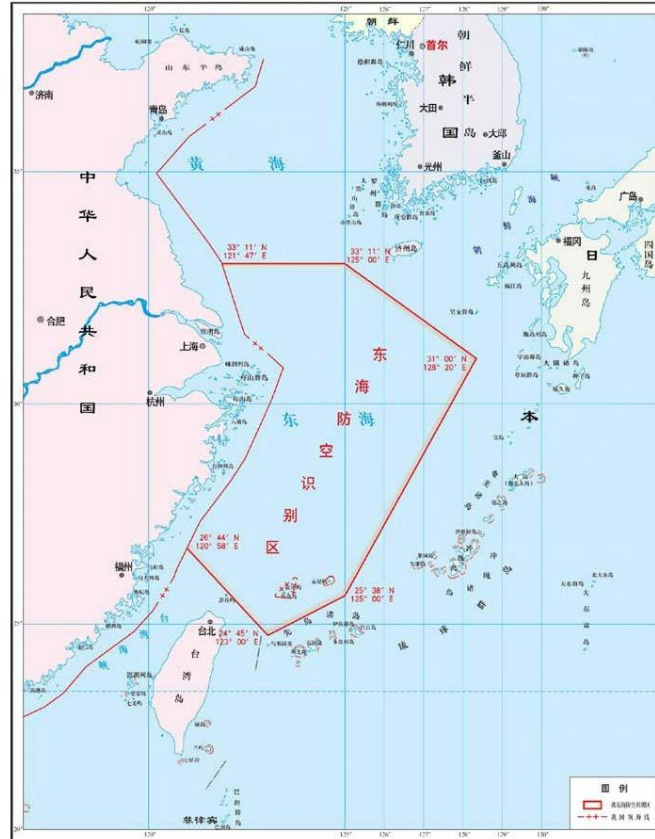
Third, the Philippine government was caught flat-footed. Flaws in the Philippines' maritime security capabilities prevented correct situational awareness of the Scarborough Shoal, and, as a result, it resulted in an ineffective response from Manila. Although it is difficult to accurately grasp the situation in the area at the time, it appears that the Philippine government's responses were not based on a correct situational awareness of China's actions in the shoal. It seems likely that the lack of marine surveillance capabilities may have hampered policymakers' accurate decision-making.

The Setting of the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone by China

On November 23, 2013, Beijing suddenly announced its first air defense identification zone (ADIZ) to better monitor and control international airspace in much of the East China Sea.

Figure 3. The East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone

东海防空识别区划示意图

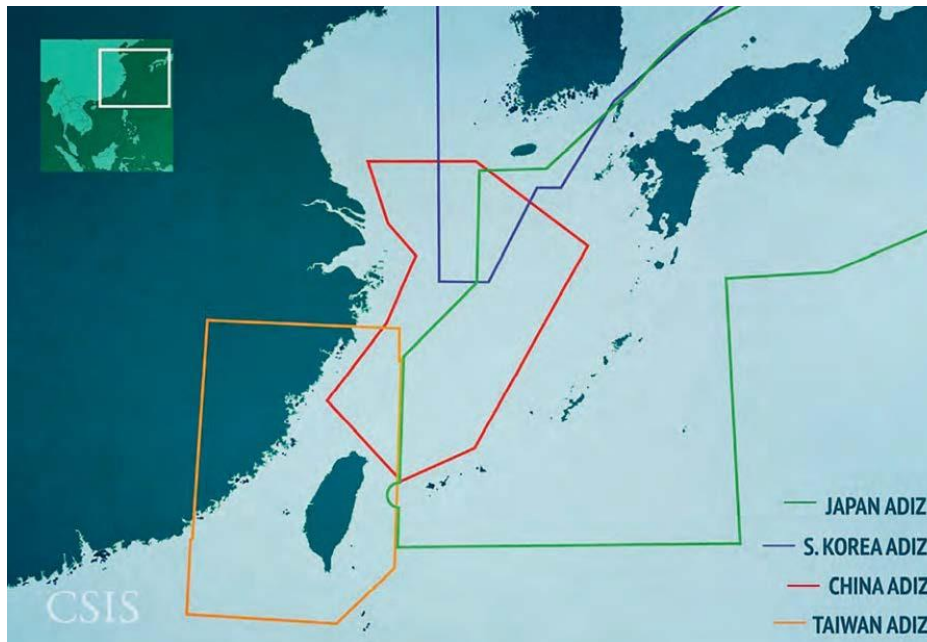


(Source: The Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China^{xlv})

Figure 3 shows it. The United States, Japan, and other regional states quickly criticized the decision, particularly for its perceived coercive intent; the application of rules to foreign aircraft transiting the zone but not entering Chinese national airspace; inclusion of airspace above disputed territory; overlap with the existing ADIZs of other states; and threats of “emergency defensive measures” against noncompliance.^{xliv}

While China successfully established “de facto control” at the Scarborough Shoal, in the ADIZ case, Beijing bit off more than it could chew. China could not effectively monitor and control this broad air zone in the East China Sea. Figure 4 shows how China’s ADIZ overlapped other countries. It was also broadly criticized by its neighbors, and in the case of the U.S., ignored. The incident was a total failure to change the status quo because China’s behavior deviated from existing international rules, and the international community, including China’s neighbor countries, knew it and responded sharply. The incident unfolds in two stages: the announcement of the East China Sea ADIZ, and the unified responses of the U.S. and China’s neighbors by criticizing it and then boldly flying through this area without Beijing’s permission.^{xlvi}

Figure 4. Overlapping ADIZs in the East China Sea



(Source: CSIS^{xlvii})

What an Air Defense Identification Zone Is

The U.S. government defines an air defense identification zone as a designated “area of airspace over land or water, extending upward from the surface, within which the ready identification, the location, and the control of aircraft are required in the interest of national security.”^{xlviii} According to the authors of “Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia,”:

[c]ountries typically establish ADIZs to help their aviation authorities distinguish between foreign civil and military aircraft and to give their armed forces adequate early warning about possibly hostile aircraft. These zones are usually located off the shores of coastal nations. They are often geographically expansive. ADIZs are distinct from Flight Information Regions, by which the International Civil Aviation Organization regulates commercial air traffic through international agreement. In contrast, an ADIZ is usually established for self-defense.^{xlix}

Stage 1: Announcement of East China Sea ADIZ

On November 23, 2013, China officially declared the setting of an air defense identification zone in the East China Sea. The Ministry of National Defense also issued a statement that identified the Chinese defense ministry as the primary state organ authorized the ADIZ and explained its procedures. It outlined “aircraft identification rules” applicable to “aircraft flying in the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone” effective immediately. These regulations required that aircraft must:

[1.] report their flight plans to the [foreign ministry] or the Civil Aviation Administration of China... [2.] maintain the two-way radio communications, are respond in a timely and accurate manner... [3.] keep the [secondary radar] transponder working throughout the entire course... [and 4.] clearly mark their nationalities and the logo of their registration identification in accordance with related international treaties.¹

At the bottom of this list was a vague warning that “China’s armed forces will adopt defensive emergency measures to respond to aircraft that do not cooperate in the identification or refuse to follow the instructions.”^{li} A map of China’s East China Sea ADIZ was also released and overlapped with those of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea.^{lii} While Beijing emphasized that its ADIZ was consistent with “common international practices,” many commentators said concerns that China was seeking to turn the East China Sea into some kind of no-fly zone for foreign military aircraft.^{liii} Leaders worried that China would use its ADIZ to challenge intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities within the zone.^{liv} In particular, China’s unspecified “defensive emergency measures” worried neighboring countries. Because Chinese military officers said that China had the right to shoot down aircraft if they disobeyed Chinese directives or warnings, there were widespread international concerns that the PLA would use force if foreign military or even civilian aircraft violated their directions.^{lv}

Stage 2: U.S. and Asian Countries Ignore ADIZ by Flying through It

On November 25, 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe insisted, “We will take steps against any attempt to change the status quo by use of force as we are determined to defend the country’s sea and airspace.”^{lvi} He vowed that China’s regulations would have “no effect” on Japanese military or commercial flights in the East China Sea.^{lvii}

On November 26, two U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers flew through China’s East China Sea ADIZ. Defense Department officials noted that it was intended as “a demonstration of long-established international rights to freedom of navigation and transit through international airspace.”^{lviii} On November 27, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense issued a statement on the U.S. B-52 flight, stating that Chinese forces had “monitored the entire process, carried out identification in a timely manner, and ascertained the type of aircraft,” thus demonstrating China’s capability to exercise effective control over this airspace.^{lix} However, it was evaluated as “probably an attempt to mollify domestic hardliners, or perhaps to mask an operational inability to track or intercept the mission.”^{lx}

On November 29, China’s defense ministry claimed it had closely monitored what appeared to be an assertion of freedom of overflight by U.S. and Japanese forces.^{lxi} According to a spokesperson, China scrambled Su-30 and J-11 fighter jets in an “emergency response to verify” a total of 10 Japanese aircraft, which included an early warning and control aircraft and an F-15 fighter jet.^{lxii}

Japan appealed to the international community to oppose China's air defense zone.^{lxiii} On December 6, the Japanese Lower House passed a resolution calling on China to withdraw its ADIZ—a stance repeatedly voiced by Japanese officials.^{lxiv} On November 30, Japanese diplomats asked the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to address the issue, which Tokyo claimed: “threaten[ed] the order and safety of international civil aviation.” Japan's proposal received the backing of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, but Beijing fiercely rejected it.^{lxv} On December 14, at a summit meeting in Tokyo, Japanese and ASEAN leaders issued a joint statement calling for “cooperation in ensuring the freedom of overflight and civil aviation safety in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law.”^{lxvi}

Key Takeaways

There are three lessons learned from this incident. Most importantly, strong protests by Japan and the U.S., as well as Japan's pointing out flaws in China's ADIZ, made Beijing give second thoughts to its scheme. From the beginning, the Japanese government pointed out that the content of the ADIZ deviated from the rules of the international community. In addition, Japan's Air Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Air Force entered the zone. As a result, close cooperation between the U.S. and Japan at an early stage prevented escalation. In other words, by clearly rejecting the ADIZ and cooperating with the U.S., Japan sent the correct message to China.

The second lesson was that Japan's earnest appeal to the international community about the flaws in China's ADIZ effectively blocked China from carrying out its plan. Perhaps China did not expect such a fierce reaction from the international community. The criticism came from many countries, not just one, prompting China to exercise restraint. It means that because Japan succeeded in the internationalization of this problem, China's ADIZ was not the only issue for East Asia, but it was one of the global security issues. Third, the air situational awareness of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force came from its long-standing ability to grasp aviation situations, as accumulated over many years. JASDF was able to easily point out the defects of China's ADIZ. At present, China has yet to officially withdraw the ADIZ, but it essentially no longer exists.

Final Analysis

The lessons learned from the two above case studies have significance for considering the future impact of the CCG Law in 2021. The case studies examined in this paper detailed the crises created by two unilateral actions of Beijing. In reflecting on the responses of the U.S., relevant countries, and of course China, it is obvious that in each case, China tried to unilaterally change the status quo. Moreover, the U.S. had a crucial role in whether the crises could be resolved satisfactorily or not. In the first case, reactions of the U.S., the Philippines, and Japan, were different. China was let off the hook. In the second case, international opinion, centered on the robust U.S. response, was swift and decisive. China quietly backed down. This pattern of response suggests how China's changes to the CCG Law might be approached by the U.S. and Japan. Based on the lessons learned from these incidents, what can be done to enhance regional security and ensure stability and prosperity in East Asia?

- Strengthen the bilateral alliance:

In the first case, the 2012 standoff, due to the U.S.' ambiguous attitude, China was free to escalate tensions and in the end, seized "de facto control" of the Scarborough Shoal. However, in the second case, the 2013 ADIZ announcement, the U.S. took specific action with Japan in the disputed area, and it urged China to exercise restraint. Hence, to deter China's excessive behavior, the U.S. must show a strong commitment from the beginning, with close communication with its allies such as Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. The alliance can only work as a deterrent if both countries are strongly committed from the start in case of an incident like this.

- Increase the number of like-minded countries.

The first case shows that ASEAN members were unable to help the situation the Philippines fell into. ASEAN is just not equipped to respond to a crisis. On the other hand, the second case tells us that because Japan rapidly appealed to the international community and it responded, China could not afford to take further action to enforce the zone and escalate tensions in the area. But such an international response will not come automatically. It is important to communicate and cooperate on a daily basis with countries that share values and interests. Increasing the number of like-minded countries makes it easier to respond to a common threat.

- Provide assistance to build maritime security and air surveillance capacity of relevant countries in the region

In the first case, the Philippines' maritime surveillance capability was weak and unable to make a quick and appropriate response. The country fell into a standoff because of a lack of situational awareness in the Scarborough Shoal. On the contrary, in the second case, because Japan and the U.S. could maintain such awareness in the disputed area, they could anticipate China's intention and implementation ability to some extent. To make an appropriate decision, it is essential to be accurately aware of the situation and calculate what the other is likely or is able to do. In addition, support to build maritime security and air surveillance capacities of related countries, in this case in Southeast Asia, is essential.

Conclusion

On April 28, President Biden, on the 100th day since his inauguration, addressed a joint session of Congress. In his speech, he mentioned a telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping, saying, "I also told President Xi that we will maintain a strong military presence in the Indo-Pacific just as we do with NATO in Europe – not to start conflict – but to prevent conflict."^{lxvii} While this means that the presence of the military is not immediately directly linked to conflicts and clashes, the emphasis was on the importance of deterrence. This is the key to avoiding needless conflict in the region.

As Edward Lutwak says, under the paradoxical logic of strategy, "because of the increased resistance evoked by its rising power, China could even become weaker at the level of a grand strategy because of its rising strength, a truly paradoxical outcome," China's excessive maritime forays seem to ironically, shape an anti-China response—an unwanted outcome fueled by China's unilateral behavior. China's actions, in short, are solidifying a broadening alliance to encircle or even constrain that country.^{lxviii} This is no the likely outcome that China is seeking.

Ned Price, the spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State, expressed “concern” at the Coast Guard Law, which allowed China’s Maritime Police to use weapons against foreign vessels. Price warned that the law “threatens to escalate the current territorial and territorial disputes” and warned that the Chinese Maritime Police “may use force to push through its claims over the East and South China Seas” on the basis of the law’s provisions.^{lxix} In light of the repeated intrusion of Chinese Maritime Police vessels into Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands (Ishigaki City, Okinawa Prefecture) and the Japanese government’s increasing alarm, he said, “the United States joins the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, and other countries in expressing concern with China’s recently enacted Coast Guard law, which may escalate ongoing territorial and maritime disputes.”^{lxx} In particular, he stressed, “We stand firm in our respective alliance commitments to Japan and the Philippines.”^{lxxi}

The Covid-19 pandemic often overshadows the challenge of China’s rise, but it is clear Beijing seeks to change the allocation of power around the world. Based on this, there are two points that are required to ensure the security of East Asia: deter hostile forces from threatening the United States and its allies, and maintain a stable and open international system based on rules. While it is clear that the CCG Law is contrary to the rules of international law, it ironically has become a catalyst for the strengthening of cooperation between the U.S. and Japan, and other countries.

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^{xi} By *Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China*, Article 83 says, “Coast guard organizations perform defense operations and other tasks in accordance with the “National Defense Law of the People’s Republic of China”, the “People’s Armed Police Law of the People’s Republic of China” and other relevant laws, military regulations and orders of the Central Military Commission.”

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^{xiv} By *Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China*, Article 22 says, “When national sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction are being illegally infringed by foreign organizations and individuals at sea, or are facing an imminent danger of illegal infringement, the maritime police agency has the right to take measures including those in accordance with this law and other relevant laws and regulations. Use all necessary measures, including weapons, to stop the infringement and eliminate danger.”

^{xv} By *Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China*, Article 21 says, "Coast guard organizations have the right to take necessary warning and control measures to stop foreign military ships and foreign government ships used for non-commercial purposes that violate my country's laws and regulations in the waters under my country's jurisdiction, and order them to leave immediately Relevant sea areas; for those who refuse to leave and cause serious harm or threats, the maritime police agency has the right to take measures such as forced eviction and forced towing."

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War, Turmoil and Historical Memory: Abe Politics that Harnesses China-Japan Relations

Zhe-wei Zheng

“I want there to be great expectations for Japan.” – Shinzo Abe

The Sino-Japanese War, Introduction

Historical Memory, Wartime Brutality & Japanese Imperialism

Eleanor Butler Roosevelt (Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt Jr.) penned an article for *The Saturday Evening Post* (August 15, 1937) of a once-in-a-life-time summer trip with her son Quentin Roosevelt II to China. In it, she reflected on the Japanese occupation of Shanghai is a part of a wave of atrocities militarist Japan was then inflicting on East Asia:ⁱ

A high degree of nervous tension existed and the troops were on edge...every soul in that great crowd on the Bund began to run...We stopped for a moment at the door of the Cathy, to leave a large tip with the telephone boy and a note for Bill Hunt, telling him where we had gone. Twenty minutes later, Bill Hunt, coming to look for us, stepped over the boy's dead body...That afternoon, half an hour before we got there, two bombs fell. Thirty-seven truckloads of dead were later removed. It was as if the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street had been bombed at the noon hour...on the corner of Jinkee Road, they passed a coolie woman, tears streaming down her cheeks, carrying a child. The child's face had been blown off, and blood was running down to the mother's knees...

This shocking incident was not unique during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Imperial Japan's militarism, expansionism and interventionism started as the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge incident with staggering “brutality and barbarity”, transgressed to the “Rape of Nanjing”, and conscripting Chinese women to become sex slaves of the military (“Comfort Women”).ⁱⁱ

Yoshiki Yoshimi argues that postwar Japan, faced with the need for a historical reckoning, was not mature or rational enough to come to terms with its wartime aggression.ⁱⁱⁱ Wartime Japan's aggression was arguably no more than a primitive, premodern fascism that emerged during the late 19th century as a reaction to Western imperialism.^{iv} Feelings of racial, ethnic and cultural superiority over other Asian countries by Japan served as a breeding ground for the Pacific War, fought in the name of liberating Asia from Western powers. There was no such liberation, however, for the aggression instead fulfilled a militarist, ultranationalist Japan's ideological and geopolitical ambitions. The memories of such a past have been hard for postwar Japan, now a democracy, to squarely face.

The Comfort Women Issue

Historical Revisionism, Nationalism & Neonationalist Ideals

From its early transgressions on the Asian continent in 1931 to its defeat by the US in 1945, Japan created and expanded a system of “comfort women” or sex slaves to serve the Japanese military. The system did not rely on volunteers; it was clear and simple a regime for human trafficking and sexual slavery through coaxing and coercion. It involved recruiting, enlisting and

transporting civilian women from (and originally established in) China, Taiwan, the Philippines, South Korea, Netherlands and other countries. These women were forced into prostitution for the sexual gratification of the Imperial army at brothels called “comfort stations.”

One of the grossest atrocities in Japan’s war with China was the rape and massacre of Chinese nationals, including women and children, by the Japanese 10th Army and 16th Division in Nanjing in late 1937, known as the “Nanjing Massacre”.^v It is hard to calculate the exact number of victims in the Nanjing Massacre; some estimate it at 200,000; others put it higher. But apologists, revisionists, and denialists not only dispute the numbers, stating that they were much lower; some of them deny that the massacre occurred at all. This tug of war between fact and fiction continues today in Japan.

In 2000, the activist-sponsored Women’s International Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery held a mock trial in Tokyo of the wartime Japanese government, nine high-ranking civilians and military officer, and even Emperor Hirohito, for their responsibility in the crimes of rape and sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during the war. The staged event followed years of human rights activism, with surviving comfort-women victims across Asia coming forward to testify about their treatment. The findings were sent to The International Court of Justice in The Hague (Netherlands).

Jeanne Ruff-O’Hearne was a Dutch survivor detained in Ambarawa camp with several other women and girls in 1944. Her testimony is documented in Tanaka’s book on Japan’s war crimes during WWII:^{vi}

We were forced into the trucks. We huddled together like frightened animals and drove through the hillside suburb of Semarang. The truck stopped in front of a large house. Seven girls were told to get out. I was one of them. We were made to understand that we were here for the sexual pleasure of the Japanese. In other words, we found ourselves in a brothel. We were to obey at all times; we were not allowed to leave the house. In fact, the house was guarded and trying to escape was useless. We were in this house for only one purpose: for the Japanese to have sex with us. We were enslaved into enforced prostitution...He (a big Japanese officer) took his sword out of its scabbard and pointed at me, threatening me with it. He was getting impatient by now, and he threw me on the bed. He tore at my clothes and ripped them off. He threw himself on top of me, pinning me down under his heavy body. I tried to fight him off, I kicked him, I scratched him, but he was too strong. The tears were streaming down my face as he raped me. I can find no words to describe this most inhuman and brutal rape. To me, it was worse than dying.^{vii}

Such evidence shows that the women were treated as “military supplies.” About 20,000 comfort women were required for every 700,000 Japanese soldiers, according to a military plan prepared in July 1941. This is one woman for every 35 soldiers for a night. Tanaka states that this “could well be historically unprecedented as an instance of state-controlled criminal activity involving the sexual exploitation of women.”^{viii} This barbaric behavior by the military, excused from legal judgment for rape crimes, was part and parcel of Japan’s aggression and dominance of “the conquered” during the Pacific War. It was characterized by a larger, almost universal patriarchal male-bonding psychology that condoned gang rapes and the need for sexual release by soldiers. Such patterns exist during war to a certain extent, such as sexual offenses committed by the American soldiers during the Vietnam War, for example, but have never been officially condoned.

Perpetrators were usually caught and prosecuted. But in Japan's case, the concept of colonial subjugation included the notion that military rape was a form of exercising colonial power.^{ix}

Historical revisionism in postwar Japan is based on the skewed notion that Japan was somehow the victim and not the aggressor during the Pacific War, and that it was forced by the actions of the Western powers to subscribe to imperialist and militarist conquests in order to survive. Revisionists in their attempt to glorify Japan's nationalist history deny the very existence – or distort the facts – of the atrocities perpetrated against other Asians and WWII prisoners of wars (POWs). They use history as propaganda for their political agenda.

Revisionists fault the United States for its “wartime responsibilities” including the firebombing of Japanese cities, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and even the War Crimes Trials after Japan's defeat. They bristle at the idea of apologies and other symbols of reconciliation with Asian neighbors or former enemies. For Asians and Americans, one of the persistent symbols of historical revisionism in Japan remains the moves to revise school history textbooks to remove passages repugnant to revisionists. For China and South Korea, Japan's official attempts to bring to closure the comfort-women issue through apologies, compensatory funds, and bilateral agreements are seen as inadequate and insincere.

Central to revisionist thinking is the treatment of Japan's wartime history, which rejects the stigma of historical “war stains”. Revisionists see the narratives of Japan's wartime aggression in standard textbooks as reflecting a lack of patriotic education. History book revisionists complain about the “masochistic” view in history texts. For decades, groups of politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), journalists and academics campaigned to restore Japan's image by rewriting history. These groups emphasize the legitimacy of the war, and claim that Japan was trying to liberate Asia by war and fulfill Japan's superiority.^x The LDP encouraged the display of Hinomaru flags and the singing of the Kimigayo anthem in public schools.^{xi}

During the 1990s, when Shinzo Abe was a young politician, he was one of the leading members of the LDP's historical revisionist movement. The group rejected the Japanese government's issuance of apologies for the war, which they called superficial and solely for satisfying international pressure. They rejected a 1993 statement by then-Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa that the Pacific War was a “war of aggression”,^{xii} a 1993 statement by then- Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono that verified the comfort-women system, and a 1995 statement of apology for the war by then-Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama that acknowledged the pain and suffering Japan had inflicted on Asia. Revisionists encouraged politicians to visit Yasukuni Shrine, where Class-A war criminals are enshrined, and pay respects to the war dead.

Controversy & Denial

Post-War Revisionism & the Appeal for Reconciliation

When Abe (fig.1a/b) was prime minister for the first time during 2006-2007, he became embroiled in a controversy over the comfort-women issue that even annoyed the US Congress. He and a group of politicians denied there had been direct or implicit coercion by the Japanese military in recruiting these women.^{xiii} In later iterations of this view, he repeatedly redirected and brushed off the issue of coercions of women to enter wartime human trafficking. In that respect, he received

much criticism.^{xiv} Historical revisionists like Abe uphold the belief that actions of the Japanese military during the Pacific War can be justified. Abe's remarks, over the years of his second time in office as prime minister, generally seemed to gloss over wartime atrocities. Even his reconciliation speeches, as in Washington DC in 2015, were centered on expressions of "remorse" and less on introspection. In a way, Abe represents the failure of postwar Japan to face and come to terms with the militarist past. The revisionists have been more concerned with restoring Japan's "honor" or image than with accepting and atoning for the realities of the past. The theme of "Japan as victim" rather than "Japan as aggressor" dominates their thinking.

The Japanese print news media have been split between liberal and conservative political leanings throughout the postwar period. On the left are these dailies: the *Asahi*, *Mainichi*, and *Tokyo-Chunichi*; while the right has been represented by the ultra-conservative *Sankei* and the family newspaper *Yomiuri*, which is conservative but less nationalistic in tone. The business daily *Nikkei* is generally centrist in its editorial bent. In addition, there exists an array of right-wing magazines and journals that sharply peddle revisionist lines. The left is woefully underrepresented, with only a few academic-like journals still publishing. In recent years, a bitter and seemingly endless feud has broken out between the right-wing media, led by the *Sankei* and like-minded magazines, attacking the *Asahi* on its alleged "fake" reporting of historical issues, especially the comfort women. Though *Sankei* scored some points, with *Asahi* retracting some early reporting, the liberal dailies' overall record on reporting historical issues remains laudable.

Academic circles generally tend to be progressive, and they often voice opposition to the revisionists. One liberal institution is the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility (JWRC), which has done extensive research on the comfort-women issue. JWRC concludes that the comfort women system was purely a systematic form of overt sexual slavery, with its initial report issued on February 23, 2007.^{xv} It has since become an advocacy group, as the issue increasingly became subject to worldwide discussion and critiques. JWRC felt that official efforts in Japan to deny the existence of the past could not be ignored, because "the result of this rejection would not only be a distorted view of historical fact, but also a discerning view of the Japanese people as a whole in the eyes of the international community."^{xvi}

Although the US House of Representatives in 2007 pressed Japan for a formal acknowledgement and apology to mitigate the comfort-women controversy, the effort that gained worldwide notice failed to convince a reluctant Japanese right to reconsider its denialism. Indeed, the Japanese right went on the attack, running a paid advertisement in the Washington Post - called *The Facts* - that featured denier talking points about the comfort women that had been debunked long before. The attempt failed to dissuade the U.S. House of Representatives from adopting a resolution urging Japan to "formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery."^{xvii}

The deniers claim that the comfort women were common prostitutes and that the use of their services was common throughout the war. In addition, the Japanese right have relentless attacked the integrity of Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono's 1993 apology, which acknowledges that the women were coerced and as victims, "suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds regardless."^{xviii} Similar attacks have occurred

against Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi's 1995 statement of general apology for Japan's conduct during the war.^{xix}

With his statement of apology to the comfort women, Murayama established "The Asian Woman's Fund" to provide funds from voluntary sources to the victims. Since the money was not from official sources, the scheme ultimately failed. Murayama, who happened to be socialist and not an LDP member, ironically issued the strongest statement of apology for the past that other prime ministers since have inherited and accepted as one of the limited reconciliation effort of the Japanese government for victim compensation. The comfort-women issue continues to fester today, even though a second agreement was reached bilaterally with South Korea in 2015 under the Abe administration. The issue is seen in Seoul as symbolic of the unhappy colonial legacy that Japan left behind. According to Jeff Hornung, "resolving the comfort women issue is not a panacea for all of the lingering historical issues between the two countries (Japan and Korea), but it does address the most emotional point of contention."^{xx}

The right's inability to reflect on the sins of the past, argues Rumiko Nishiro, overlooks the fundamental ideas of "colonial subjugation, occupation, and control".^{xxi} The author stresses that the deniers are unwilling to examine how these women "fit into the colonial power structure, with its hierarchy of Imperial Japanese administrators and military officials, local elites and law enforcers, Japanese and Korean profiteers, and subaltern Korean subjects."^{xxii} Such a distortion of reality, and a stubborn rejection of meaningful reconciliation, even blaming the victims, causes public shaming, re-traumatizes the victims, making them relive their painful pasts. Such an attitude has hindered progress toward a constructive solution. In the meantime, for many Japanese, the issue stirs little sympathy for the victims. It is seen as a fight between two governments, the left and the right. It is worth noting that "reconciliation (of war atrocities) needs to be achieved among the ordinary people of the Asia-Pacific region, including the victims, not among those in power."^{xxiii} Over the years, public pressure in Japan has never been such amount as to force the government to question its earlier stands.

A Diplomatic Discourse

China & America's Realist and Liberal Response to Atrocities

The Chinese government's responses to the wartime atrocities and later Japan's historical revisionism have been realistic, as Hayashi argues. Until 2008, Beijing remained relatively silent, given Abe's desire during his first time in office to prioritize the restoration of relations with China, damaged by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's frequent visits to Yasukuni Shrine. Abe, during his short first term in office, never visited the shrine. Abe resigned for health reasons in 2007 after only a year in office. He remained in the Diet, however, and in 2012 staged a comeback and was elected late in the year to the premiership for the second time. That long tenure, which lasted until 2020, witnessed a transformation in Abe and his policies, including stances toward China and the Republic of Korea. During his second time as prime minister, Abe initially was not as cautious about Yasukuni as during his first time in office, surprising even Japan's ally, the United States, by visiting the shrine at the end of 2013. The international outcry was so great that he never visited it again while in office.

Abe's goal, instead, during such time in office, was to improve political relations with China, that were seriously damaged over territorial rows during the Democratic Party of Japan's three years in power (2009-2012). Abe did this through summit diplomacy with Chinese President Xi Jinping (fig.2) (APEC, Nov. 2014; G20 in 2017, and G20 in 2019). A fourth summit was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A carefully planned series of top-level dialogues were designed to produce incremental cooperation on broad trade and economic areas.^{xxiv} It is observed by some that Xi didn't speak or lay a wreath at the December 13th 2017 massacre memorial service in Nanjing, as a gesture not to provoke too much wartime sentiments or overly confrontations towards Japan, notes Joe Renouard, an international relations professor at Johns Hopkins University.^{xxv} But despite such summitry, other aspects of Sino-Japanese relations, particularly the territorial issue, largely deteriorated.^{xxvi}

Zhang Xiaoming, a scholar at Peking University, observes that Abe's overall goal has been to elevate Japan to a tier-one great power in the world while seeking to "normalize" the country. Such an advanced status would involve enhancing Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF), being more proactive in the US-Japan alliance, acquiring a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and revising the Constitution's Article 9. Abe's alliance goals include responding to and balancing a rising China, as well as dealing effectively with a belligerent North Korea. Japan, also, is actively engaged in a far-ranging Indo-Pacific strategy (Free and Open Indo-Pacific) with the United States to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The two Sino-Japanese wars that left China with a bitter historical memory continue to haunt and harness China-Japan relations.^{xxvii} Eight decades after the Pacific War, emotions continue to fuel discord over the memory of wartime acts that should have been brought to closure long ago. As Zhang argues, collective memory of wartime trauma and atrocities inflicted on Asians will be passed on to future generations. Such scars have a lingering, debilitating impact on contemporary Asian politics and national identity. Emotions running deep challenge reconciliation and cooperation in the Northeastern Asian region, and aspirations for trilateral cooperation among China, Japan and Korea (ROK) for the sake of regional stability and prosperity, which remain a distant goal.^{xxviii} In that context, what the US can do to bring nations together remains quite elusive but practical.

In addition to historical issues, the volatile center of dispute between China and Japan evolves around the territorial ownership of the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. Since the Meiji government's discovery of the isles off Okinawa in the 1890s, Japan has claimed them as its own. But China, too, has laid claim to the uninhabited islands, located east of China, northeast of Taiwan, and west of Okinawa in the East China Sea.^{xxix} A large swathe of sea waters between China and Japan is also claimed by each country. The oil and natural gas deposits in that disputed sea area are sought by both sides, with China starting to explore and drill in the 1990s.^{xxx} A bilateral deal inked in 2008 for China and Japan to jointly develop those oceanic resources soon fell apart.

Since the Senkaku dispute erupted into a standoff between Japan and China in 2010 and again in 2012, the territorial issue has now escalated into a national security issue, with the US having weighed in on the Japanese side. The US now recognizes that the isles fall within the jurisdiction of Article 5 of the US-Japan security treaty.^{xxxi} If China were to attempt to resolve the

island dispute by force, it would find itself facing the security arrangements of the Alliance. There is absolutely no momentum on either side to resolve or even neutralize this flashpoint issue.

Yasukuni's Symbolism

Remembrance for Wartime Past, Patriotism, & the Imperial Remorse

Yasukuni Shrine (fig.4a) in Tokyo is another thorn in the side of Japan's relationships with its Asian neighbors. Established in 1869 by the Emperor Meiji to commemorate those who died during the civil war (Boshin War, 1868-1869) against the Shogunate. Yasukuni Shrine now houses over 2.5 million souls of the war dead enshrined since that time. Most Japanese visit the shrine to pray for relatives or friends who died in the Pacific War, but the shrine also attracts groups of right-wing nationalists who see Yasukuni as a mecca for their activities. Since Class-A war criminals were enshrined there in the late 1970s, the shrine has become a lightning rod for criticism by Asian countries, especially when a Japanese prime minister pays homage there. However, efforts to secularize the Shinto shrine or at least to remove the war criminals from Yasukuni have failed.

Visits to the shrine by Japanese Prime Ministers or other gestures of support for Yasukuni have become highly politicized in China and politically exploited. Chinese officials in lambasting Japanese leaders who visit the shrine, accuse them of seeking to revive Japanese war aggression and militarism, deeming those visits as “wrong practices of Japanese political leaders”.^{xxxii} China sees Abe's sole visit to the Yasukuni in 2013 (fig.4b), following the string of visits by Prime Minister Koizumi (for 6 consecutive years since 2001) as poisoning the bilateral relations. They were condemned by Beijing as “an effort to glorify the Japanese militaristic history of external invasion and colonial rule...and to challenge the outcome of WWII.”^{xxxiii} Beijing has never accepted the reasoning that Abe expressed: “[My] visit to Yasukuni Shrine (was) to pray for the souls of those who had fought for the country and made ultimate sacrifices. I (Abe) have made a pledge never to wage war again, that we must build a world that is free from the sufferings of the devastation of war.”

Despite the one visit to Yasukuni, Abe came into office in 2012 not to further wreck relations with China but to rebuild them, starting with summitry at the top, as discussed. According to Akihiko Tanaka, Abe, from the start, was keen to mend relations with Japan's neighbors and play down his hawkishness in foreign policy.^{xxxiv} Abe's fundamental thinking, is that China and Japan would benefit from a mutually beneficial relationship, centered on close economic ties and not restrained by one singular issue such as the dispute over the islands. This idea is because the two countries are economically interdependent, enriched by commerce, cultural and educational exchanges, tourism as well as shared traditions. The hope, as the author views, is that the reality of such mutual benefits and interdependence naturally deescalates and mitigates the seemingly irreconcilable tensions and sustains the now rocky or soured diplomatic relationship. Therefore, as previously argued, Abe reached for that goal with his series of summits with Xi, but it remains an open question whether his successor in a post-pandemic diplomacy will be able to build on such achievement.^{xxxv}

Great Expectations, Conclusions

Identity Politics, Ideologies, Abe's Duality & the Country's Foreign & Security Policies

The perception of the media during Abe's long tenure in office is that Japan has increasingly been turning rightward in its stances and policies. The shift toward nationalism, what Japanese experts would say a "healthy" one, has not been something that can be blamed on Abe, however. His diplomacy was pragmatic and realistic. Changes in Japan's security posture in the region toward strengthening defenses and the Alliance were largely in response to an increasingly dangerous security environment. Otherwise, there is no overall reason why Japan and China could not continue a rational approach to building a mutually beneficial and strategic relationship that Abe had envisioned, if serious dialogues and efforts to nurture mutual confidence were pursued.

The country's long term economic prosperity, argues Williem van Kemenade and Abe himself, relies on maintaining a strong, sustaining alliance with United States in dealing with China, Russia and North Korea. Such thinking harks back to the early 20th century when Japan allied with Great Britain, then the greatest naval power in the world. During the Trump administration, there was concern in Japan and the US that the US-Japan alliance would be weakened, but such was not the case. And now under the Biden team (fig.5), with "America being back," the alliance will likely regain its credibility and deterrence capabilities.^{xxxvi}

Abe took much flak from critics from the start of his tenure in 2012 for his long adherence to outmoded views toward history and a controversial revisionist agenda. He was not expected to do much in the area of reconciliation with WW II enemies. The critics were wrong. Abe, for the sake of national interests and based on wise advice from his aides, drew up a comprehensive policy agenda, starting with revitalizing the economy through his signature effort dubbed "Abenomics." The "revitalized economy, stable leadership, assertive diplomacy and a new approach to security policy" would have Abe return Japan to a tier-one great power status.^{xxxvii} He cooperated with the US in strengthening the Alliance to deal with China's assertiveness in the East and South China seas, as well as North Korea's nuclear volatility that existentially threatens Japan.^{xxxviii}

He renegotiated the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) after Trump pulled the US out, and then signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement that included China – both paving the way for a regional trade and investment architecture in the broader region. He also successfully had the Constitution reinterpreted to allow a limited use of previously banned collective self-defense actions.^{xxxix}

Ideologically, Abe straddles two identities, that of a conservative or nationalist, and that of a pragmatist. Without that mix, he could not possibly have achieved his policy goals. He tried to shed his cloak of revisionism in favor of donning one of a realist who is future-oriented and not backward looking. With China, criticism is well-taken in that he did not go the extra step for reconciliation, as he did with the US. Perhaps here his conservative views were too much of a constraint.

Jeff Kingston here seems to be explaining this contradiction:

Nationalism seeks to expunge the stigma of defeat and embrace a more robust security policy, pacifism emphasizes the moral obligations Japan must shoulder in its dealing with Asian neighbors and rejects moves towards militarizing Japanese foreign policy, while reconciliation seeks to reclaim a place in the region for Japan, and restore national dignity, based on a forthright acknowledgement of wartime misdeeds and atonement toward Japan's neighbors. These divergent paths intersect with the fault-lines of Japanese identity politics and as such are hotly contested as evident in the current debate over constitutional revisionism and the Abe Doctrine.^{x1}

As he melded into his role as Prime Minister with a strong desire to bring Japan back into the first tier of the world's nations, Abe projected two images to domestic and international audiences. His critics continued to see him as representing the unbending attitudes of an older, conservative generation willing to downplay the country's wartime record, while pursuing potentially worrisome and assertive defense and foreign policies. But many others came to see Abe as successfully boosting Japan's international standing, while satisfying its national interests. His supporters would say that Abe's instincts were correct, for he did go a long way in restoring Japan's pride at home and abroad. He was able to heighten the nation's identity and successfully pursue World War II reconciliation with the United States, and reach out to South Korea to try to resolve the vexing comfort-women issue (with mixed results). His failure to reconcile the same with China may likely reflect, to some extent, the frustration over the territorial issue that had become in itself a national security issue.

Article 9 of the Constitution, argues Akiko Hashimoto, was rooted in, and shaped Japan's postwar pacifist/anti-militarist civic identity, as exemplified in the longstanding Yoshida Doctrine that placed self-imposed restrictions on Japan's self-defense. Japan's adherence to the Constitution became "a symbol of Japan's quest for moral recovery."^{xli} That anti-militarist drive in postwar Japan found the nation agreeable with war renunciation, nuclear disarmament, and restraint of belligerence as well as the use of force from its security posture. The idea of pacifism "resulted from (not just simply wartime defeats and horrors but) gradually sedimented and conflicted internal narratives of remembering, forgetting, the East and the West."^{xlii} Ultimately, Pacifism had a pragmatic and not merely ideological aspect, not only to righting past wrongs but to channeling nationalistic energy into rebuilding and growing the economy.

In his various statements on the past, Abe has generally recognized Japan's wartime aggression against Asian countries and expressed remorse and apology for that, as well as Japan's colonial rule. For example, he has stated that "the 20th century was a century in which human rights were infringed upon in numerous parts of the world, and Japan also bears responsibility in that regard. I believe that we have to look at our own history with humility to think about our responsibility." In this respect, Kingston have critiqued that Abe's display of "proactive pacifism" or proactive contributions to peace (the Abe Doctrine) was dubious or even too ambiguous. But the Abe Doctrine must be paired with the National Security Strategy that spells it all out. And it contrasts well with Japan's earlier "passive pacifism" which posited that the less militarized Japan was, the more peaceful that the world would become.^{xliii} One thing, however, that should be clear at the end of Abe's long tenure in office, as the author views: Japan cannot possible be blamed for the increasingly tense and dangerous environment that has been built in the Indo-Pacific region. And its military buildup in cooperation with its ally the US is arguably a necessary response to changing security situations that Japan must face in the region.^{xliv}

Nationalism in Japan has been on the rise since the 1990s, and that some of that drive has been fomented if not encouraged by conservative elements in the political spectrum. Under Abe's leadership, the argument flourished among conservatives including himself that Article 9 had stripped Japan of its sovereignty, the nation's autonomy and political independence, and so, it ought to be revised. But in the end, the only language that Abe's government approved was the adding of a simple statement recognizing that the SDF were an armed force – not enough in itself to scare enemies abroad. The more grandiose schemes touted by the notorious Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference) in its campaigns favoring a much more robust rearmament and security capabilities and reciprocal restructuring of the Alliance on the ground have all fallen by the wayside as really being set in.^{xlv}

Obama's 2016 visit to Hiroshima's war memorial (fig.3), according to Leif-Eric Easley, followed by Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor, were symbolic events seen by many as bringing the war and its memory to closure. Neither leader offered an apology; each simply paid respect to the victims. The Hiroshima and Pearl Harbor visits were never intended to excuse Japan for its wartime imperialism; they intended instead to show symbolism that carried out with dignity and sincerity, which could make a difference in switching longstanding positions and bitter attitudes on both sides. This is about as far as reconciliation can go at this stage. As observed, Obama's speech "recognized the suffering of Korean victims and Abe's remarks suggested that Japan's commitment to pacifism is enduring...a symbolic effect on global nonproliferation and disarmament..."^{xlvi} Likewise, Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor in December, was, as Sheila Smith puts it, symbolic as "to embrace postwar reconciliation and remembrance...they (will) both have visited each other's tragic war sites and called upon this generation and the next to remember war's human costs."^{xlvii} At Pearl Harbor, as at Hiroshima, the leaders of the United States and Japan once again reminded us to honor the transformative power of peace and politics in the years to come.^{xlviii} Whether such a public gesture can ever occur between Japan and China remains an open question. The trajectory at this time seems to be moving in a different direction.

Images

Figure 1a: Shinzo Abe in his office



(Brookings Institution)

Figure 1b: Abe at Yasukuni



(Toru Yamanaka/AFP/Getty Images)

Figure 2: Xi Jinping and Abe at the G20 Osaka Summit



(Reuters)

Figure 3: Obama and Abe in Hiroshima



(Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images)

Figure 4a: Yasukuni Shrine and Worship



(AFP)

Figure 4b: Abe visits Yasukuni



(Toru Yamanaka/AFP/Getty Images)

Figure 5: Joe Biden and Yoshihide Suga



(Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images)

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Examining the Case for Indigenous Rights in Japan

Monica Weller

Introduction

There are very few places that have not been colonized or colonized others, and Japan is no exception. Within the modern Japanese state, there are two main indigenous populations apart from the majority Japanese, or *wajin*, ethnic group: the Ainu and the Ryukyu peoples. They both had separate societies, and in the case of the Ryukyu islands, an independent organized state. However, both ethnic groups were deeply intertwined with mainland Japan particularly after the advent of the Meiji era, when western-styled colonial practices were utilized to further dismantle and integrate both groups into mainstream Japanese society. In recognizing this history of interconnectedness, it is just as vital to recognize that Japan's indigenous groups continue to seek legal rights and cultural space to retain and revitalize their indigeneity. The effort to uphold indigenous rights does not occur in a vacuum, rather, it is an ongoing process influenced by indigenous groups around the world, as well as groups and individuals who seek to uphold the right to indigenous self-determination.

The Ainu and the Ryukyu peoples have historically been marginalized and their identities forcibly repressed. While Japan has begun to introduce more legislation and cultural efforts to preserve these identities, it has not been enough. In the eyes of the international community, Japan still fails to live up to certain standards, and to help Japanese indigenous groups survive and exist long into the future, more action must be taken. Thus, this paper seeks to understand the context of Japan's indigenous groups, compare this with strategies utilized by other indigenous groups to attain legal status and rights, and to present strategies that can be used by indigenous movements in Japan going forward to achieve a level of self-determination.

A Framework of Indigeneity and Japan's Role

Japan, and Asia in general, is not often considered a primary focus of indigenous studies. The word 'indigenous' is still a relatively new term to apply in Asian contexts, and indigeneity in Asia is a different application of the word than typically used in western contexts. Drawing from Dr. Ian A. Baird's "Indigeneity in Asia", in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, the term 'indigenous' distinguished the European colonizers from the non-European 'natives' they ruled over.ⁱ This was used in Asia throughout the 1960s and 70s, although a new conception of 'indigeneity' began appearing at this time. It redefined indigenous peoples as the 'original peoples' of a particular place.

While this remains the most common conception of indigeneity, Andrew Gray, a former head of the Danish indigenous support NGO, *the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs*, offered a redefinition of the concept that has been adopted by many indigenous activists in Asia. Gray noted that the most persecuted ethnic minorities in Asia were not the 'first peoples' to the places where they presently lived but were forced to migrate to these places. Thus, indigenous peoples in Asia were 'colonized peoples' or peoples who have been oppressed by other ethnic groups over history, rather than just 'first peoples'.ⁱⁱ

In the case of both the Ainu and Ryukyu islanders, both of the more modern definitions hold true. They are simultaneously the 'first peoples' of their region but have also experienced diasporic shifts and are oppressed by the dominant ethnic group in Japan, referred to as *wajin* or

the Yamato people. Thus, while I may at times use Japanese as a shorthand to refer to the Yamato ethnic group, all three ethnic groups are included under the label of Japanese, both in terms of citizenship and in their residence of the Japanese archipelago as ‘first peoples’. Ultimately, while there are multiple ways to define indigenous peoples, there is no international agreement on the term. Rather, through self-identification, indigenous peoples can decide whether they want to consider themselves indigenous.

This self-identification can also make it more difficult to define the size of indigenous groups in Japan, particularly for the Ainu. There are only around 20,000 people who are officially identified as Ainu, although it is estimated that more than 200,000 people in Japan are descended from the Ainu people.ⁱⁱⁱ However, because of the centuries long assimilation policies aimed at the Ainu, most people are either mixed, unaware of their heritage, or hiding it. While there has been a resurgence in the indigenous rights of the Ainu peoples particularly in the past twenty years, a successful pathway towards ensuring the indigeneity of the existing Ainu communities remains difficult to discern.

There is a clear distinction in who is Okinawan, as those descended from the Ryukyu islands have specific linguistic and cultural differences, which gives them a clear sense of identity. While these are becoming less prevalent with relocation and the use of Japanese over the six local Ryukyuan languages, or *uchinanchu*, as well as rigidity in cultural expectations and education systems tamping down local Okinawan culture, more than 2.2 million people identify as Ryukyuan, mainly in Okinawa and Kyushu.^{iv}

However, while both indigenous groups are at risk of being isolated from their existing cultural and linguistic identities, according to scholar Michelle Harris, there is a need to reject the idea of a ‘pure’ identity. Identity is not a static trait. It is an ever-changing phenomenon, based on particular historical moments, experiences, relations, position with the social order, and both the opportunities and constraints that govern their realities. This means that identities are “formative and constitutive, not merely reflexive”.^v

Despite the fact that indigenous peoples may not adhere to ‘traditional’ conceptions of their culture, that does not negate the fact that they are indigenous communities. Rather, it merely confirms that they are living, developing communities like any other ethnic or cultural group. This is what Japan needs to work to achieve. Not the preservation of indigenous identities, which assumes them to be unchanging, but vibrant, active communities that have their own right to self-governance and can work with national government to secure their rights as indigenous peoples. In comparing the two most notable indigenous groups in Japan, the Ainu and the Ryukyu islanders, Japan needs to move beyond passively allowing the reemergence of indigenous identity to actively upholding and progressing the status and autonomy of indigenous groups in Japan to maintain good standing as part of the international community. To fail to do this is to continue patterns of repression and colonization among victimized indigenous groups.

Indigenous Group Overview

While there are numerous comparisons to be made between the Ainu and the Ryukyu people as indigenous groups striving for recognition and self-determination within Japan, both are very different. While Japan has maintained trade and political connections over the two societies for centuries, the main focus for the Ainu is the reclamation of cultural, linguistic, and political

identity within Japan, whereas Ryukyu populations are equally focused on land reclamation and greater self-determination from mainland Japan and U.S. military presence.

Ainu History

The Ainu are an indigenous group who today largely reside in Hokkaido, but also formerly lived in northern Tohoku, the Kuril Islands, and Sakhalin, in what is now Russia. According to a Hokkaido prefectural government survey in 2013, the stated population was only 16,786 people.^{vi} However, this only documents people who recognize themselves as Ainu, and was only able to reach people through the Ainu Association of Hokkaido, which has seen a decline in membership in recent years. Outside of Hokkaido, the last documented government survey of the Ainu was conducted in the Tokyo metropolitan area in 1988, where there was an estimated 2,700 people of Ainu descent. There has never been a full nationwide survey of Ainu peoples in Japan, despite recommendations to do so by the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Only a few speakers are fluent in the traditional language, Ainu-itak, which is recognized by UNESCO as ‘critically endangered.’ Out of the three main Ainu dialects, only Hokkaido Ainu survives, with both Kuril Ainu and Sakhalin Ainu now functionally extinct.

Historically, the Ainu were hunter-gatherers, who maintained their own society largely stratified by gender. While increasing contact and pushback by the mainland Japanese was happening as early as the 1400s, the Ainu, now largely situated in Ezo – today known as Hokkaido - were officially annexed by Japan’s Meiji government in 1868. Up until that point, there had been provincial governments and merchant ruling lords in the area sent by the Tokugawa government, officially overseen by the Matsumae and Bakufu at separate points throughout the Edo Period, with the area mainly left to manage itself. During the Edo period, there were crackdowns on large scale uprisings by Ainu tribes, which resulted in the Japanese monopolization of fishing and fur trades with increasing exploitation of Ainu labor.^{vii}

With the advent of the Meiji Era and the rapid industrialization and militarization of Japan, the Japanese attempted to unify the country and protect what was known as Ezo from Russian occupation. First, the Hokkaido Colonization Office from 1869-1882, during which Ainu were forced to accept Japanese citizenship and livelihoods, and removed from their homelands under new Japanese land distribution policies. Drawing from similar colonialist campaigns promoted by Europe and particularly the United States, the Hokkaido Colonization was run under direct American influence. One major tactic borrowed from the Americans was land redevelopment projects. Besides from a few designated spaces for Ainu villages and newly constructed Japanese towns and administrative centers, Hokkaido was divided into small plots of land which were then given out to families to farm. Settler colonialism was encouraged through programs such as those recruiting former low-ranking samurai and other farmers to move to Hokkaido. The remaining land was “given” to the original Ainu residents of Hokkaido, under which they had to cultivate the land within eight years or have the land repossessed by the Japanese government. Naturally, the allotted land for Ainu peoples was the smallest and least cultivatable. These land policies were justified by the Japanese government as “the land was underutilized by a few people, thus not forced colonization.”^{viii}

This was followed by further assimilatory policies through the 1899 Former Aborigines Protection Act. These assimilation tactics included the exploitation of land, commodification of culture, and mandating Japanese as the compulsory language of society. All of these resulted in a mass cultural genocide of the Ainu. For example, while there was no explicit law prohibiting the

use of Ainu, the use of Japanese was forced. Children were educated in only Japanese, all government interactions were in Japanese, and beginning in the Meiji era, when a name was mandatorily registered for government purposes, only Japanese names were allowed.^{ix} Thus, the displacement of Ainu from their lands, language deprivation, and cultural shaming forced multiple generations of Ainu to lose their identities, or hide them for fear of the repercussions. By the end of the 19th century, surveys estimated Ainu people made up only 2% of Hokkaido's population.^x The Ainu continued to be marginalized as second-class citizens until 1945, when the new constitution declared them as equal citizens, but failed to recognize them as a separate ethnic group within Japan.

Ryukyuan History

The Ryukyu Islands, or Okinawa, have an altogether very different historical context from Hokkaido and the Ainu peoples. The Ryukyu population in Japan is estimated to be 1.4 million people), with an additional diasporic population of 3.5 million people worldwide.^{xi} A series of islands that maintained hunter-gatherer lifestyles until the 10th century AD, what is now considered Okinawa Prefecture consists of numerous interrelated but separate cultures, with six main languages, all of which are endangered.^{xii}

The Okinawan islands have always been linked closely with China and Japan, having at separate times been in tributary relationships with both nations. The Ryukyu kingdom (1429-1879) was the last independent kingdom of Okinawa.^{xiii} From around 1600 until 1850, Okinawa became a tributary state to Japan after a series of battles and the ultimate invasion of Ryukyu by Japanese forces in 1609. This relegated the Ryukyu kingdom to a tributary state of Japan, and further restricted its foreign trade to Japan and China. However, with the advent of the Meiji period, the pressure from Japan with the intent to incorporate the Ryukyu islands into mainland Japan. In 1875, the Ryukyu kingdom was forced to end its tributary relations with China, and without any other sources of external support, by 1879 the Ryukyu domain was officially abolished and reestablished as Okinawa Prefecture.^{xiv}

Many Ryukyuan fought this annexation and Japanese 'inner colonialism', but similar to the Ainu, their culture, religion, traditions, and languages were forcibly repressed by mainland Japan under assimilation policies after centuries of deepening Japanese influence.^{xv} Heavy taxation, decreasing sugar prices, and the abandonment of development in Okinawa in favor of new colonies including Taiwan and Korea left Okinawa destitute and led to mass emigrations of Ryukyuan from Okinawa.^{xvi} However, they were still considered second-class citizens in other parts of Japan.

World War II devastated Okinawa further, with a third of the population of the islands, 150,000 people, killed off during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945.^{xvii} After the war, control of the islands was first held by the United States Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands, which was replaced by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands from 1950-1972. This lack of self-determination in favor of military strategy inspired much of the anti-militarism and pro-independence movements in Okinawa. Although Okinawa is now integrated into mainland Japan, its independent history and ethnic differences have encouraged protest movements in favor of greater self-determination in the islands.

Post War – Modern Era

From the post-war era to the modern era, there were mixed responses by communities on what to do. For many among the Ainu and Okinawan peoples, assimilation was seen as the best tactic, as it could help them to avoid discrimination. Particularly among the Okinawans, there was a mass exodus and many Okinawans immigrated for greater opportunities abroad. However, until the late 1990s, there was no serious recognition of other ethnic groups within Japan, and Japan depicted itself as a homogeneous country. While “multi-ethnic harmony” became a buzzword in the 1980s, it was aimed at migrant laborers who were of Japanese-descent or Korean- and Chinese-descended people who lived in Japan. Conceptually, differences from within the state were not recognized. Thus, throughout this period there was greater focus on rebuilding community networks and organizing among Ainu and Okinawans using inspiration from outside groups and sources to rebuild cultural bases. While there were limited legal changes from the 1950s-1990s, organizing and activism in this period in spite of assimilatory practices supported the legal changes to come in the future.

One major legal change occurred within the new postwar Japanese constitution. Within chapter III of the constitution, all individuals were declared equal under Japanese law. For the Ainu, this meant that their status as “former natives” or *kyuudojin*, was legally removed.^{xviii} While this did little to support the economic marginalization Ainu experienced, it removed any legal differentiations between *wajin* and Ainu, thus, assimilation became the best option. For many Ainu, discrimination and lack of economic opportunities meant that their greatest chance of success was to move outside of Hokkaido, and migrate to more urban areas like Tokyo. While many people did not or could not move, some of those that did furthered pro-Ainu movements.

There were many individual activists and movements for greater self-determination prior to World War II, however, the most significant activist movements and political rights occurred in the postwar era. The movements started on a larger level in the 1960s, inspired by radical student protests movements in Japan and from anti-colonial and civil rights movements around the world, including the American Indian Movement such as the 1972 siege of Wounded Knee.^{xix} One of the most major changes of this was that the official Ainu organization, Utari Kyokai, which had been a conservative self-help movement in the 1930s, developed new welfare movements to support Ainu. In addition to this, many young Ainu people began working towards a cultural revival of Ainu traditions. One example of this was the distribution of a local Hokkaido newspaper from 1973-76, *Anutari Ainu – warera ningen* (We Humans / We of Humanity). While it only had around 600 subscribers, it highlighted the situation of the Ainu as a repressed group constantly reliant on state aide, and the constraints of being ‘Ainu’.^{xx} This, and other acts that encouraged a reaffirmation of “Ainuness” allowed for later waves of community activism that ultimately resulted in the Ainu people achieving legal indigenous status in Japan.

As cultural reclamation efforts were ongoing among the Ainu people, Okinawa was in a much more constrained position, as it was officially occupied and managed by the United States until its transfer to Japan in 1972. Following its reintegration with Japan, there was a major push to integrate the Ryukyu islands to make it similar to the rest of Japan. In many cases, this meant a second wave of repression against *uchinaaguchi* and other Okinawan languages. The earlier wave had occurred in 1880, when Japanese became the official government language. However, under American occupation there was an attempted revival of the use of Okinawan, but this was interpreted as an effort to prolong the US military occupation in Okinawa.^{xxi} Because of this, there

was an emphasis on displaying Japanese identity. In the 1980s, there was the development of *furusato* (hometown), which placed a renewed emphasis on local language and culture, and allowed for “Japaneseness” to be shown through culture. This was also when more attempts to contact the Okinawan diasporic community came into place, as immigrant communities in places like Brazil and Hawaii had maintained more direct connections to languages and cultural traditions that were replaced in Japan.

However, while efforts to reinstall language were ongoing, this did not (and has not) removed the burden of hosting US troops from Okinawa, which is additionally layered with Japanese control of the region that can undermine local Ryukyu leaders’ sway in decision-making. Indigeneity once again plays a significant role in this, because in addition to the role of the United States providing defense and security of the United States, Japan is not directly affected by a U.S. military presence in the same way that would be true if the majority of US bases were on mainland Japan and thus affecting *wajin*, rather than a minority that are viewed as outsiders and distinct from the rest of Japan – although not classified as indigenous.

Legal Recognition of Indigeneity

Ainu Recognition

The first official recognition by the Japanese government of a separate status for the Ainu in the modern era was in response to the protest movement against Nibutani Dam, the construction of which would flood land sacred to the Ainu. Ultimately the land was flooded despite legal attempts to stop it, but the ruling resulted in the Sapporo District Court acknowledging the Ainu as an ethnic group native to Hokkaido for the first time in 1997.^{xxii}

At the same time, the Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act of 1899 was replaced in 1997 by the current Ainu Cultural Promotion Act after continuous activism by the Ainu peoples’ movement.^{xxiii} Boosted by the dissent in the Nibutani Dam ruling, the new act officially acknowledged the existence of the Ainu ethnic groups in Japan, but it stopped short of recognizing Ainu as Indigenous Peoples. However, it marked an important milestone of indigenous recognition for the Ainu in Japan. Officially named the “Ainu Culture Promotion and Dissemination of Information Concerning Ainu Traditions Act”, it established a basis to promote Ainu culture including dance, language, and craftwork, but there remained a lack of provisions to grant rights for land loss and self-determination.

One of the other major turning points in the recognition of indigeneity in Japan was the organized indigenous rights activism upheld by the United Nations. By 1993, the establishment of a permanent forum was seriously discussed, and the first United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established in 2000.^{xxiv} This came into effect during an overlapping period of the two “International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People from 1995-2004, and 2005-2015 respectively. Throughout this period, workshops and forums on indigenous issues were held, however, while this forum provided the space to explore and protect indigenous rights, the most important step was the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, conceptualized in 1985.^{xxv} This declaration focused on:

- (i) The right to self-determination
- (ii) The right to be recognized as distinct peoples
- (iii) The right to free, prior and informed consent
- (iv) The right to be free of discrimination

Japan voted in favor of the resolution, and unanimously adopted the nonbinding Resolution to Recognize the Ainu as Indigenous People in 2008.

This was a key step to larger domestic and international recognition of indigenous groups within Japan, if only for the Ainu. The basis for the move was in large part due to community organizing that pressured Japan to support domestic indigenous recognition, but the result has been greater global awareness of the Ainu and other indigenous groups in Japan. Due to the passing of the Declaration of Indigenous Rights and explicit Japanese endorsement of Ainu as an indigenous people, there has also been more collaboration and pressure on the Japanese government to take further measures toward recognizing indigeneity in Japan.

In direct response to the recognition of Ainu as Indigenous Peoples, the Japanese government in July 2008 established the Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy. The panel recommended the government form a comprehensive Ainu policy department in the cabinet secretariat, based on which the Council for Ainu Policy Promotion was established.^{xxvi} In 2014, the cabinet approved the basic policy for the development and management of spaces to promote the revitalization of Ainu culture. While the policy is in line with UN recommendations on how to support indigenous communities, many of the recommendations seem to have limited implementation, at best.

Another notable legal change brought about by external pressure was the 2016 Hate Speech Recognition Act. Its passage by the Diet was highly influenced by the recommendation from the UN, and it became Japan's first postwar anti-racist legislation. However, there has been much criticism that it does not go far enough, for like many recent social laws in Japan, lacks the means of enforcement.

The most recent piece of legislation on behalf of the Ainu is the Ainu Policies Promotion Act of 2019, which, in comparison to the 2008 UN declaration, is legally binding for Japan.^{xxvii} The main purpose of the law is to create an environment conducive to cultural promotion based on the recognition of the Ainu as indigenous. It is focused on implementation of cultural promotion on a national perspective, rather than just promoting Ainu tradition and cultures, and it bans discrimination against the Ainu on the basis of ethnicity. While regional development campaigns and nationwide curriculum changes have yet to fully form, one immediate change has been the development of a national museum focused on Ainu culture on a larger scale than previous facilities. However, it remains to be seen if this will be more for appearances sake and lack a deep and meaningful impact on the status and welfare of the Ainu.

Lack of Okinawan Recognition

In comparison to the Ainu people, Okinawans have struggled to achieve the same legal recognition that the Ainu now have. A large part of the reason is that a distinct Okinawan ethnic identity is not recognized by Japanese society at large. While there is a long history of discrimination against Okinawans who move to mainland Japan, it is usually viewed as reflecting prefectural and class differences, rather than any ethnic difference. Additionally, because so much of Okinawan identity is subsumed into an anti-war narrative, rather than being an ethnic struggle, expressions of Okinawan identity are reduced to condemnations of pre-war nationalism and postwar discrimination.^{xxviii} Even though there is recognition that Okinawa is part of an archaic

proto-Japanese culture that even existed for centuries as a separate state, the core issue of identity politics and the recognition of Okinawans as indigenous has been ignored.

While Okinawans have participated jointly with Ainu representatives at UN indigenous forums and other events, due to the absorption of Okinawa into Japan, the amorphous nature of the differing cultures across the Okinawan islands; and the dual outside forces of Japan and the American military continuously occupying Okinawa since the 1860s, at this moment it is unlikely that Okinawans will gain recognition as an official indigenous group in Japan.

Legal recognition is a vital component of establishing self-determination for a group of peoples. Without this, it is much harder to access state protections or interact with the government on an equal footing. Having these protections guarantees certain rights, and while laws alone will not secure access to political platforms, they provide a basis from which further legislation and reforms can be made. For the Ainu, legal recognition has provided them more security and greater viability for their existence as an ethnic group in the future. While the lack of indigenous status for Okinawans is problematic and limits their ability to access protections and rights that would extend to international law, as a prefecture, they have more legal mechanisms built into the governing structure that allow them to address the Japanese government on a more equal level. However, as previously stated, by themselves laws cannot uphold language and culture. Therefore, civil society mechanisms within and across states provide an equally important service in maintaining cultural and linguistic heritage.

Civil Society Mechanisms

Civil society can be just as influential in sustaining and reinvigorating indigenous communities. One major facet that is particularly important is that it can work in separate channels than laws. If there are no legal protections in place or no way to implement laws, it falls on civil society to provide community support. Because of this, civil society can take many forms, ranging from micro-communities bonding together, or international icons shaping public opinion, or to collaborations between indigenous groups working in tandem. Thus, both the Ainu people and Okinawans benefit significantly from civil society, which helped give voice to force laws to be enacted but also uphold the heart of their cultural identities.

At the local governmental level, Okinawa has much more leverage than the Ainu over regional issues. While Okinawa's local government and activist groups are constrained in their ability to exert control over land, given the prefecture's geostrategic location. Over 70% of the land used as bases by the US forces in Japan is in Okinawa. Despite this overwhelming presence there are opportunities for community representation. In the example of the former Yomitan airbase, a micro-community alliance of 23 Ryukyu groups were able to enact a successful reclamation of indigenous land through the "Phoenix Plan".^{xxix} Once restored to community control, the community transformed the former airbase into a community center which now hosts a village office and a cultural center. One notable part of this particular land transfer were the talks between the local mayor and the US military commander overseeing the project. Because the commander was of Native American descent, the mayor felt solidarity between the two sides and was further made aware of the complex layers of settler colonization straining relations on both sides.

In addition to the steps to promote greater self-determination through land rights within Okinawa, there exists a strong foundation for preservation of Okinawa's unique culture. One of

the main reasons for this, in addition to the greater autonomy and large population of Okinawans in Japan, there is an expansive Ryukyuan diaspora around the world. In Japan, the Ryukyu population accounts for only around 1% of the total population (1.4 million people), but makes up 10% of the total *nikkeijin* population overseas (3.5 million).^{xxx}

There are large populations of people of Okinawan descent in Brazil, and Hawaii has the oldest and largest Okinawan community outside of Okinawa itself. The population of Okinawans in Hawaii is big enough that a 2.5-acre complex was created and dedicated to preserving, promoting, and perpetuating Okinawan culture.^{xxxi} Even in places as remote as New Mexico, yearly festivals are held by Okinawan diaspora communities through Okinawa *kenjinkai* to preserve dance and musical traditions. Because of the strong bonds and large populations of Okinawan-descended people, there are more failsafe measures already in place to help maintain Okinawan identities.

Thus, even when *uchinanchu* languages are not used on a daily basis, the common use of them in oral songs and traditions helps to preserve them and ensure they will be remembered long into the future.^{xxxii} To help merge the bonds between Okinawa and the Okinawan diaspora, there are multiple exchange programs and festivals to encourage the diaspora to bring their Ryukyu identity back to Okinawa and preserve cultural ties on both sides. One example of this is the World Uchinanchi Festival which has been held since the 1990s and brings in Okinawan communities from across the diaspora to celebrate with Okinawan dance and music. Another is the Uchina Junior Study Program, which brings thirty to forty high school students of Okinawan descent to Japan yearly to talk about ongoing issues in Okinawa and among diasporic communities.^{xxxiii} Thus, through civil society initiatives among the Okinawan diaspora, strong cultural connections endure which ensures that there is a larger population learning and preserving independent Okinawan identities.

Similarly, there is considerable representation for Okinawans through media. In Okinawa, there are local television programs and radio stations that broadcast information about Okinawa, some of which are held in the Okinawan dialect of Japanese if not the local languages. Additionally, there are numerous famous martial artists, singers, and pop culture figures both in Okinawa and abroad that have helped to popularize Okinawan culture.

Alongside the movements made by activists and indigenous organizations, there has been an uptick in Ainu representation in pop culture. The most well-known is the manga series “Golden Kamuy”, which features a young Ainu girl as one of the main protagonists. Set in the 1910s-20s in Hokkaido and Sakhalin, the series addresses daily Ainu life and indigenous self-determination in detail, even going so far as to hire an Ainu language expert for the series, Dr. Hiroshi Nakagawa.^{xxxiv} Other examples include “Silver Spoon”, which focuses on an agricultural high school in Hokkaido but briefly flashes back to Meiji era Japan during which positive representations of Ainu characters are included. More recently, the 2020 film *Ainu Mosir* depicts a young boy growing up in a modern Ainu community that caters to tourists but reckons with its ‘real’ identity. While media portrayals of the Ainu are still limited and cannot fully portray the scope of “Ainu-ness”, they can be instrumental for drumming up greater public support for indigenous communities. This is particularly true in a country like Japan that relies so heavily on mascots and other easily identifiable characters that can become symbols of a movement.

Collaboration with Other Indigenous Groups

Outside of media, collaboration with other indigenous groups is another major mechanism through which indigenous identity can prosper. One of these is the *Unma-no-kai* group, which as of 2015 set up joint academic conferences and indigenous activist planning circles to connect Ainu and Okinawan activists. Similarly, Okinawan and Ainu representatives gave joint presentations of the state of indigeneity in Japan at the 2014 UN World Conference of Indigenous Peoples.^{xxxv} Through another group, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, three Japanese indigenous groups are represented: the Ainu Peoples Council, the World Indigenous Peoples Network-Ainu, and the Association of Indigenous Peoples in Ryukyu.^{xxxvi} Founded in 1992 and aligned with 46 member organizations across Asia, the group works to connect Indigenous groups to resources and help organize campaigns for greater indigenous self-determination.

In addition to bilateral indigenous campaigns and regional organizations, there are also more direct exchanges with other indigenous groups. One such exchange program is the Aotearoa-Ainumosir Exchange Program, which has continued since 2012, and is hosted by a Maori group.^{xxxvii} In New Zealand, the Maori have been successful in their tireless work to advance the revitalization of their rights as indigenous people since the 1970s. Furthermore, the Maori people are contributing significantly to the development of New Zealand society in all of fields, to the point that the Maori language is an official language along with English. Thus, through the program, Ainu researchers, activists, and students spend several weeks in New Zealand among the Maori peoples studying activist tools, ways to incorporate indigenous traditions into modern-day life, and advocate for greater self-determination locally.

More indirectly, indigenous groups in Japan have pulled directly from other groups' campaigns to promote further language exchange. For example, in April 2001, Shigeru Kayano (1926-2006), an activist for Ainu identity and the first Japanese parliament member of Ainu descent, financed the creation of a radio station, FM Pipaushi, that airs a show in Ainu locally in central Hokkaido two Sundays a month.^{xxxviii} Efforts like this are critical because they can spur more interest in revitalizing a language. The inspiration for this came from the successful campaign to revitalize the Hawaiian language begun in the 1970s and 80s.

At the time less than 50 people under the age of 18 were fluent in Hawaiian, but Dr. Larry Kimura, alongside other native Hawaiians, started an all-Hawaiian language radio show at the University of Hawaii. This led to a revitalization of linguistics, ultimately founding a series of Hawaiian immersion preschools that led to a chain of Hawaiian language-only public schools from pre-school through twelfth grade.^{xxxix} As of 2019, there were an estimated 5,000 native Hawaiian speakers under the age of 18.^{xl} While this remains a critically small mass of speakers for Hawaii's 1.4 million population, it shows that the revitalization of indigenous languages can be successful.^{xli}

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism can be a critical tool for marginalized communities to share knowledge and familiarize outsiders with their culture. If done respectfully, it can help promote understanding, and provide increased access and funding for native traditions and the normalization of cultural practices. However, it is a difficult balance to master, as "cultural tourism" can just as easily perpetuate the cultural exploitation of native communities, with cultural practices and symbols commodified into economic gain for majority populations at the expense of indigenous groups. Beyond this, it can be used to propagate stereotypical, static understandings of "indigenous

culture”. Furthermore, local culture can be and has been used by the Japanese to reframe and sanitize history, from erasing the presence of past peoples to using select in-group individuals to justify colonization. While the current cultural commodification of Okinawa and the Ainu is nowhere near demeaning as it was in the past, for example, the Human Pavilion held in Osaka at the 1903 industrial exposition where ethnic minorities in the Japanese empire were paraded around in traditional garments for the viewing pleasure of visitors, cultural tourism remains a prominent and occasionally exploitative part of indigenous society.^{xlii}

For both Okinawans and the Ainu, tourism has been a vital part of the economy. In Okinawa Prefecture, 84.4% of the gross production composition relies on tourism-related service industries.^{xliii} The Ryukyu islands have long been regarded as the “Hawaii of Japan” – a tropical paradise beautiful and just exotic enough to provide mainland visitors with a visage of foreignness within the framework of Japanese familiarity. Because tourism is such a vital part of the island, many Okinawans have made it more tenable by working to separate “tourist areas” from “community areas.” In this way, they can still help endorse the islands’ economy, but maintain room for more personal relations and traditions as well.

Tourism as a source of economic revenue is relatively small for the Ainu who remained in Hokkaido instead of moving elsewhere to blend in to *wajin* populations. In the past, though, cultural tourism was one of the only ways poor Ainu communities (*kotan*) could financially provide for themselves. Starting in the 1950s, the term “kankou Ainu”, or ‘tourist Ainu’ as applied to such tourism that stereotypically fit *wajin* Japanese perceptions of what Ainu life was like. It became a common term used within Ainu communities to insult those who chose to put on such shows for audiences.^{xliiv} While Ainu tourist villages still exist to cater to such demand, many of the ceremonies and practices conducted now are shown in more nuanced ways, particularly within the context of the new national museum that provides greater insight for visitors.

With multiple support systems and mechanisms to draw from, whether it is local civil society organizations, international indigenous collaboration, greater media representation, or tourism, civil society is a vital part of indigenous existence. While the effects of civil society can be mixed, they provide a vital space for organizing to help pass laws and ultimately provide the main means of implementation once laws are passed.

Backlash

It is not surprising to find that there is still significant discrimination against Ainu and Okinawan communities. Both face issues of structural and societal discrimination, seen by the government and those in mainland Japan as “backwards-thinking”. In terms of access to land, Okinawa still lacks the majority of control over the repossession of land for the Japanese government and U.S. military use, whereas Ainu still lack access to historical fishing grounds and other sacred areas. However, despite the recent recognition of the Ainu as indigenous, and the strong sentiments from Okinawa and the international community on the need to recognize Okinawans as indigenous, much of the societal discrimination focuses on the need to de-emphasize identity issues and nullify any ethnic distinctions between the three groups.

Okinawan Issues

At a societal level in Okinawa, there is still a lack of curriculums focused on teaching local dialects and languages in school, and students who use their local dialect and the different

words and grammatical structures might be shamed for showing linguistic diversity. There are also continuous problems in providing legal and financial protection for Okinawan women and their children abandoned by US military spouses or partners who have returned to the United States. However, most of the issues are focused on structural discrimination through lack of self-determination and land rights.

Okinawan claims to indigeneity could strengthen Okinawans' right to self-determination over land, and thus could force the Japanese government to negotiate moving US bases to other prefectures and reconfigure the security of the state. Even following Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972, the national government continued to impose 75% of US military presence on Okinawa, and used a kind of economic blackmail to influence local elections to suppress votes for anti-base candidates. Thus, one of the reasons Okinawan is unlikely to be granted indigenous recognition is because the Japanese government values its relationship with the United States over considerations of fairness to Okinawans. Therefore, it is unlikely that past discrimination and dispossession of Okinawans will be resolved.

Ainu Issues

In the case of the Ainu, there has been an increase in hate speech since 2014. This may have been largely spurred by reaction to greater recognition for Ainu indigeneity since 2008. Moreover, more steps were taken by the government by 2014, thus heightening the backlash against government intervention. It came to the point that there was an anti-Ainu demonstration held in Tokyo in 2014. There are several ongoing areas of concern, including textbook revisionism, the non-repatriation of ancestral remains, and universalist racism, as well as individuals that use their position to strengthen anti-Ainu sentiment.

Similar to other right-wing target issues, there have been attempts to revise school textbooks, changing the content on Ainu from "the expropriation of land" to "giving land to Ainu people".^{xlv} Concerning the repatriation of remains, between the 1930s and 1950s, Japanese scientists conducted racialized, pseudo-science research on the corpses of Ainu people to justify racial classification. Even as of 2019, the remains of 1,574 Ainu individuals remain stored at twelve universities, with the procedures to repatriate the remains difficult for Ainu communities to access.^{xlvi}

The other main issue is universalist racism, and over who is defined as Ainu. As previously mentioned, to be considered Ainu one must self-identify as Ainu in addition to having at least one of three traits: 1) someone of Ainu descent; 2) someone married to another person of Ainu descent; or 3) an adopted child of people of Ainu descent.^{xlvii} Some scholars such as Kono Motomichi view this as exclusionary, twisting the narrative to state that it is based only on blood, but because there is so much intermixing with *wajin*, "true" Ainu no longer exist.^{xlviii} Similar narratives focus on achieving universal parity rather than raising living conditions of the disenfranchised, and see Ainu activists calling for indigenous status as a way to oppose other class and anti-poverty measures. Thus, there is a focus on continuing a welfare approach by the Japanese government rather than considering reparations to Ainu peoples, which opponents compare to a policy of "reverse discrimination" against *wajin*. Furthermore, many praise Ainu who live "independently" as members of the "general public", rather than calling attention to indigenous issues.

Among the group of scholars and politicians who use their position to oppose the Ainu as an indigenous people, one of the main antagonistic figures is former Sapporo City Assemblyman

Onodera Masaru. He denies the existence of the Ainu, seeing it as a fake ethnicity created during the Edo and Meiji periods. In his position, he advocated for all funding to Ainu welfare to be reevaluated and ultimately revoked, as well as forced the closure of thirteen Ainu language classrooms after ordering a comprehensive audit of the Ainu Association.^{xlix} Although he retired from office in 2015, he continues to propagate racist sentiments on Twitter.

While media portrayals of Ainu peoples have become more considerate in general, with the advent of social media it has become easier for more disinformation to spread and hate to reach beyond radical anti-Ainu groups. Even as of March 2021, a comedian on an NHK program was called out for insulting an Ainu woman by comparing Ainu people to dogs.¹

Discrimination is ultimately a way to further undermine rights to self-determination and reduce the power of targeted groups, usually by blaming them for societal wrongs or refusing to recognize atrocities committed by those in power. Considering the breath of unresolved discriminatory practices occurring in Japan, further action needs to be taken to remedy legitimate grievances by indigenous groups against the Japanese state.

Policies to Implement

The actions of organizers have led to a renaissance in indigenous recognition in Japan over the last twenty years, and the further globalization of Japan present a hopeful future moving forward. However, there are still serious issues that need to be resolved in order to ensure the continuation of indigenous diversity in Japan, as Okinawan and Ainu right to self-determination is still limited, and thus the cultural, linguistic, and nature of ethnic diversity are still at serious risk of near extinction. Thus, what should we expect to see in the future?

Creating Harmony

According to Ainu indigenous scholar Dr. Jirota mokottunas Kitahara, three steps are necessary for a more inclusive and equitable society:

- 1) Recognizing the existence of minorities
- 2) Making concessions in favor of those minorities once recognition is established
- 3) Normalizing the reality of ethnic minorities in a heterogeneous society.

Japan has taken the steps to recognize the existence of indigenous minorities in Japan – to a degree. Okinawa, while lacking indigenous status, has greater political mobility because the majority of the Ryukyu population remains on the Ryukyu islands, creating a minority-majority status that comes with the opportunity to mobilize on a larger scale. However, the Japanese government still opposes collective rights for ethnic minorities, and thus indigenous groups lack access to concessions that would allow for a more equitable state.^{li} Thus, Japan must first ensure greater self-determination for ethnic minorities within the state, and go beyond recognition to allow for implementation of measures that would benefit indigenous communities and, by extension, the Japanese state as a whole.

Room for Sharing Continuous Cultural Traditions

Following the third part of the previous point, Japan continues to fail to recognize the necessity of total state awareness and involvement of indigeneity. Even among ethnic groups in Japan, there is a hesitancy to use the term “indigenous” to describe themselves because it has bad connotations in Japanese. Especially among Ryukyuan, there is skepticism towards indigenous rights because

it would simply become a performance of indigeneity without creating meaningful change.^{lii} Thus, in order to deter this thought process, Japan needs to conduct an entire society shift in its perspective towards indigenous groups, in order to increase understanding of indigenous groups that would ultimately lead to broader acceptance of diversity within Japan.

The only indigenous studies program in Japan, the Department of Ainu and Indigenous Studies, was founded at Hokkaido University's Graduate School of Humanities and Human Sciences in 2019. Worldwide, only five people of Ainu descent with PhDs are focused on indigenous studies, and the first scholarship established to support students of Ainu descent, the Urespa Scholarship, was established in 2010.^{liii} There is work to be done, but there is also room to grow. While Japan has historically failed to allow for indigenous identity exploration, there are increasingly more opportunities to do so.

If this can extend beyond indigenous groups to encompass the Japanese population at large, the future of Japan will be much brighter, and provide greater heterogeneity in Japanese society that will benefit everyone. Thus, moving forward Japan needs to provide space not only for cultural and linguistic expression, but establish political mechanisms for minority representation and implement laws that will combat discrimination.

Lobbying for Official Language Status

For the Ainu, the 2019 law further secured the indigenous status for Ainu. The newly opened National Ainu Museum and Park, Upopoy, aims to focus on sharing continuous cultural history. All museum materials are presented in Ainu, and thus have allowed for the use of Ainu and the creation of new concepts and words not previously used in Ainu. These strategies heavily pull from those developed previously among other native groups, particularly those in Hawaii. If this can be used as a jumping-off point to incorporate greater minority language usage in classrooms, at a prefectural level if not a national one, this will impact linguistic and therefore cultural continuity immensely. There are currently only an estimated 15 people that remain native speakers of Ainu, however, according to a 2013 survey conducted by Hokkaido's Office of Ainu Measures Promotion, 64.2% of the Ainu people said they either "proactively want to learn the Ainu language," or "want to learn the language if they are provided with opportunities."^{liv} This proves that the will to learn is there, it is simply reliant on the state to provide the space to do so.

The Ryukyu languages in Okinawa are in a similar position. While there is a larger population of speakers, *uchinaguchi* has been removed from daily conversation to such a large degree that "Okinawan" is more likely to refer to the Okinawan dialect of Japanese than the original languages spoken in Okinawa. Thus, providing local populations systematic methods to encourage indigenous language use, particularly by supporting the growth of the language in youth populations, is essential to the natural evolution of native languages beyond the preservation of it in specific cultural settings.

Language is only one aspect of indigeneity, and indigenous status remains vital regardless of whether or not native language usage is maintained. However, indigenous language usage is deeply impactful, both in the preservation of ties to previous generations and to the future reclamation of culture through language creation. Today, Japan stands at a crossroads where the Ainu and Ryukyuan languages are critically endangered, but the government has the opportunity – and responsibility – to provide the populous with the tools needed to restore the languages the Japanese state previously removed.

Conclusion

Ryukyuan indigenous scholar Dr. Megumi Chibana states that “indigeneity is a useful tool to reclaim the self, but mobilization must occur in order to restore control over one’s life.”¹⁴ Within Japan’s indigenous groups, as with any group, there is a diversity of opinions and perspectives on the usefulness of indigeneity. For the Ainu, indigenous status has provided the national and global recognition needed to attain greater self-determination. However, it has also come with the drawbacks of criticism that it still weathers, and recognition has not translated into implementation at the levels needed. For Okinawans who still lack indigenous status, despite their greater nominal power at a state level, they are still limited by both Japan and the United States. Thus, their autonomy is reduced to local government and is threatened even at that level. Moving forward, much more action needs to be done by the Japanese state to right the ongoing ramifications of colonization and attempted genocide of both indigenous groups.

There is no possibility of a return to eras of pre-colonization. The Ryukyans and Ainu are deeply embedded into the Japanese state, and the societal context for those periods no longer exists. However, this does not negate the viability of Japanese indigenous groups moving forward. Explicit recognition of the ongoing existence of indigenous groups native to Japan is vital, and allows for the reclamation of indigeneity in the context of Japan. What this means going forward needs to be an ongoing series of decisions between the Japanese state and indigenous groups, recognizing the unequal power that Japan has over its indigenous populations. If Japan takes the political steps to enact and implement indigenous status, reparations, and inclusive frameworks going forward, all of society will benefit. Thus, indigeneity provides a context through which to allow society to progress for the Ainu and Ryukyuan peoples, as well as Japan as a whole.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Ian G. Baird, “Indigeneity in Asia: An Emerging but Contested Concept,” *Asian Ethnicity* 17, no. 4 (October 2016): 501–5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2016.1193804>.
- ⁱⁱ Baird.
- ⁱⁱⁱ “Actual Living Conditions of the Hokkaido Ainu,” Ainu Association of Hokkaido, 2013, <https://www.ainu-assn.or.jp/>.
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Integration of Immigrant Children in Japanese Schools

Vivian Chen

Introduction

Japan has never been known as a country that welcomes refugees. In 2014, Japan accepted a mere 11 out of 5,000 global refugees applying for asylum there.ⁱ Less than 0.5% of total applicants were granted refuge, despite Japan's ongoing demographic crisis, contracting population, and tight labor market. In response to international criticism of Japan's strict asylum policy, then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the press after his United Nations General Assembly speech in 2015: "It is an issue of demography. I would say that before accepting immigrants or refugees, we need to have more activities by women, elderly people, and we must raise our birth rate. There are many things that we should do before accepting immigrants."ⁱⁱ

Immigration still remains a taboo topic in a country where conservatives value self-perceived cultural and ethnic homogeneity while politicians fear diminishing support from Japanese voters worried about domestic job loss. Public support for increased immigration is missing. In public opinion poll data taken in 2018, only 23% approve admitting more immigrants into the country while the majority of 58% take a position that immigration numbers should stay about the same as they are now.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite such views though, Prime Minister Abe, backed by his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), pushed forward controversial expansive foreign worker acceptance reforms through the Diet in 2018. While Abe stated that the reform bill "is simply to address labor shortages and is different from accepting immigrants", the proposed legislation marked a significant shift in Japanese policy towards allowing more foreign laborers to work in the country for longer periods.^{iv} Ultimately, the gravity of Japan's shrinking workforce, estimated to drop by approximately 24 million by 2050, propelled the ruling LDP into passing legislative reforms promoting more foreign worker acceptance.^v

These legal revisions went into effect in 2019, authorizing a new visa system that enabled labor migration for two categories of medium-skilled workers in 14 labor-shortage sectors.^{vi} One category allows temporary workers to stay in Japan for up to five years, while the other category notably permits unlimited visa renewals and family member accompaniment, essentially opening a path to permanent residency for foreigners and their families in Japan.^{vii} The latter visa category demonstrates that Japanese leaders are taking the first steps towards formulating a concrete immigration policy.

With more long-term foreign residents in Japan, that in turn requires the development of policies that facilitate greater integration of immigrants in everyday Japanese society. One of those first key areas in need of reform is education. Building more flexible Japanese schools and teaching schedules with specific educational resources for immigrant and other foreign students is crucial to ensure their success and livelihood, while also contributing to Japan's future productivity and viability as a country.

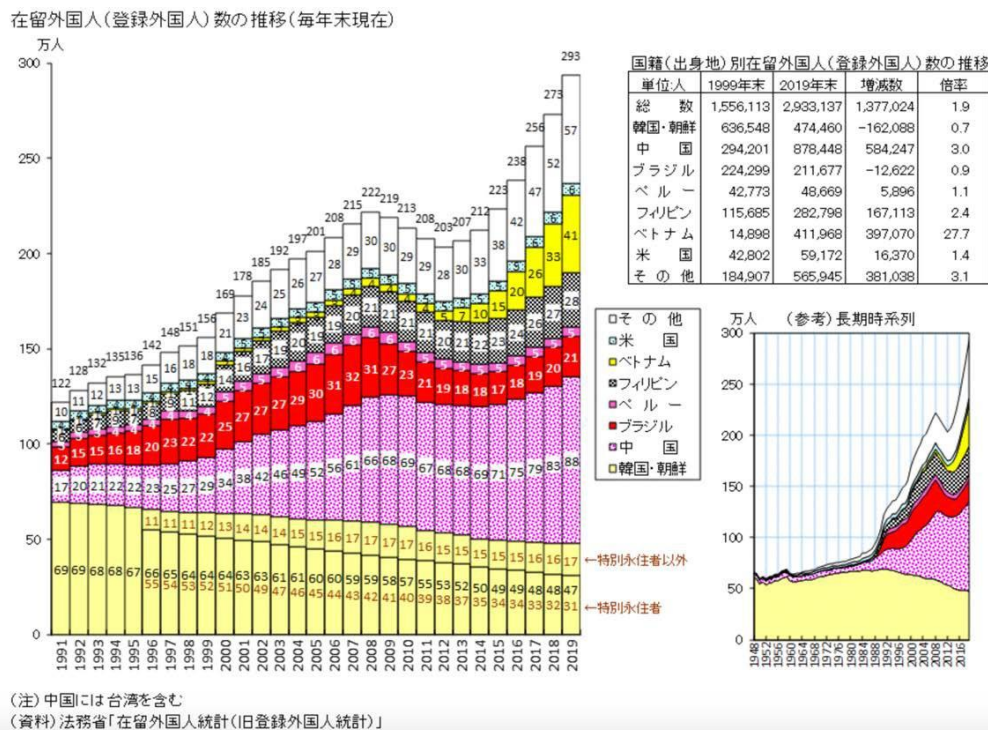
This paper will first examine the history and current policies of Japan's immigrant children education system, while highlighting the unique challenges foreign students experience in the Japanese classroom, focusing on a case study in Shimane Prefecture. A comparative analysis will then be done on policies for integrating immigrant students in the United States, a nation that in contrast with Japan, has a long history of welcoming vast numbers of foreign students since the late 1800s.^{viii} Despite differences with Japan's education system, some US integrative best-practices like bilingual education curricula and diversity teacher training may serve as useful references to Japan in refining the country's own more inclusive educational programs and policies.

Overview of Immigration to Japan

Immigrant Population Dynamics

Japan has traditionally been considered an ethnically homogenous country, but it does have an established history of providing for residents from minority groups. The country has not only been home to small and indigenous minority populations for a significant period of time but has had a number of foreign nationals residing within its borders since Japan's colonial era. Those groups have consisted of war-displaced Japanese returning from China and Indo-Chinese refugees coming from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.^{ix} For the greater part of Japan's immigration history, the majority of these foreign residents have been the *Zainichi*, descendants of ethnic Korean, Chinese, and Taiwanese conscripted laborers during Japan's imperial rule.

Figure 1. Trends in the Number of Foreign Residents in Japan by Ethnicity



(Source: Japan, Ministry of Justice)

However, as exhibited by the figure above, the *Zainichi* population has been decreasing steadily in recent decades. While the population of approximately 600,000 *Zainichi* comprises a tiny fraction out of the entire Japanese population, they have historically dealt with the brunt of discriminatory attitudes from both the Japanese public and government. These aggressions towards them range from hate speech and assault incidents to systematic discriminatory policies such as forced cultural and linguistic assimilation and limited employment and socioeconomic opportunities enforced by the government.^x The steady decline of the *Zainichi* population has been attributed to various factors such as the rise in the number of intermarriages with Japanese nationals and natural elderly mortality.

On the other hand, the previous figure indicates the polar opposite trend for immigrants coming from other countries during the same time period. For clarity, the term “immigrant” in this paper will now be used to refer to foreigners arriving in Japan beginning in the 1970s known as “newcomers”, in contrast to the existing ethnic minorities mentioned before like the *Zainichi*, the “oldcomers”.^{xi} These “newcomers” represent immigrants coming from outside countries like Brazil, Peru, Nepal, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The total number of foreign residents in Japan has nearly doubled within 20 years due to the influx of “newcomers”. This distinctive surge, especially those coming from South American and Southeast Asian countries, was a result of the Japanese government’s loosening of immigration restrictions during the country’s economic boom in the late 1980s, which will be detailed next.

Immigration Policy History

Before delving into the Japanese government’s policy in the 1990s to favor greater acceptance of immigrants, the first iteration of an immigration policy dates back nearly 70 years. To manage the various groups of “oldcomer” minorities residing in Japan at the time, the government enacted the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA) of 1952 at the tail end of the US Occupation.^{xii} The law instituted an alien registration system which has been one of the Japanese government’s primary methods for keeping track of foreigners living in Japan. Legally, both long-term and recent foreign residents are required to sign up for the alien registration system and to notify authorities when they move or re-enter the country after traveling outside.^{xiii}

For years, the issue of immigration flew relatively under the radar. It was not until Japan’s economic boom in the 1980s that immigration from other countries became a major domestic political issue. Increasingly acute labor shortages were linked to the rapid development of Japan’s postwar economy, and the government in turn slackened its limits on its immigration laws with the essential goal of importing more foreign labor. The most notable reforms during this period were amending Japan’s ICRRA in 1990 and introducing the temporary foreign laborer recruitment system known as the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) in 1993.^{xiv}

After the revisions to the ICRRA, *Nikkeijin*, members of the Japanese diaspora in South America up to the third generation, were granted permission to live and work in Japan without any restrictions through a designated “long-term” residence status known as *teijuusha*.^{xv} The government’s purported logic behind this decision was that they believed that *Nikkeijin*’s shared ethnic heritage would facilitate easier assimilation into Japanese society while also filling

necessary gaps in the labor market.^{xvi} This striking change in the law gave thousands of *Nikkei* Brazilians and *Nikkei* Peruvians, often with their spouses and children, the ability to enter Japan to work in so-called “unskilled jobs”, mainly in the manufacturing sector.

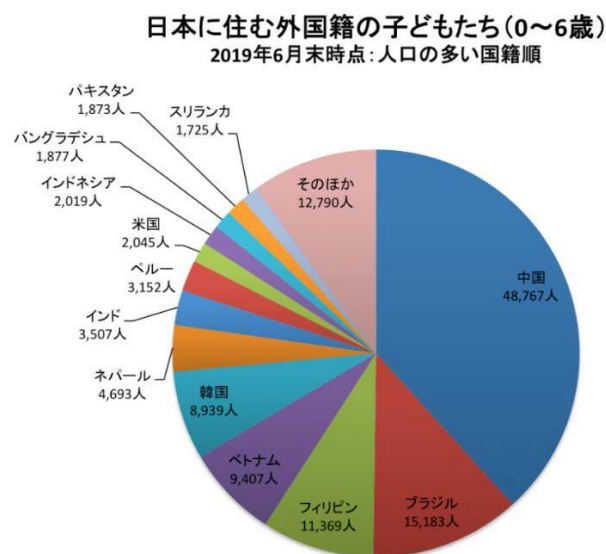
Japan also has seen an upsurge in its legal foreign resident population as intermarriages increase. Particularly, the number of marriages between Korean, Chinese, and Filipina women and Japanese men has grown and more mixed heritage children have entered public Japanese schools visibly beginning in the 1990s.^{xvii} Additionally, recently increased visa issuances for skilled workers, students, and TITP trainees have boosted the population of South and Southeast Asian immigrants, especially Nepalese and Vietnamese workers.^{xviii} Despite stringent immigration regulations, Japan’s foreign population has continued to grow even after the country’s economic bubble burst around 30 years ago. Japan’s Immigration Services Agency reported that the number of foreign nationals peaked at a record-high 2.93 million at the end of 2019, up 7.4% from the previous year and equating to over 2% of the country’s total population.^{xix}

Japanese Education for Immigrant Children

Characteristics of Japan’s Immigrant Children Population

Over 30 years after the ICRRA amendments, countless immigrants are choosing to settle in Japan as their permanent home, making families and building communities throughout the country. Japan’s immigrant children are diverse in various aspects besides just their ethnicity, such as their language, class, religion, generation, family composition, and status of residence. Some immigrant children were born in their home countries like Brazil, China, and the Philippines, and later moved to Japan. Others are second-generation immigrants born and raised in Japan or were raised in families joined by international marriages. One similarity they all may share is the common struggle with adjusting to living in Japan culturally, linguistically, and academically.

Figure 2: Nationalities of Japanese Immigrant Children Ages 0-6 Years Old



(Source: Japan, Ministry of Justice)

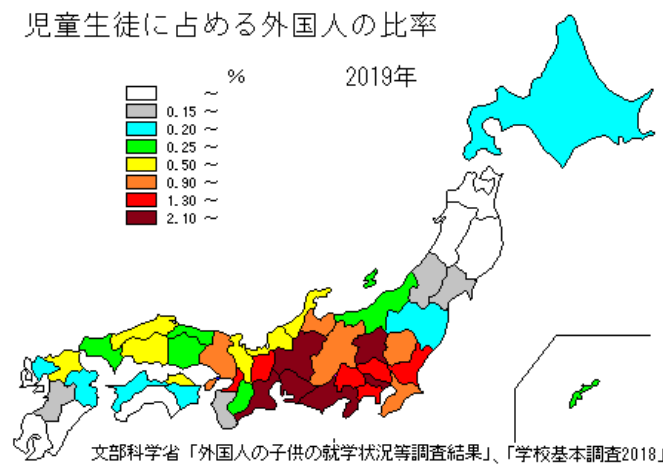
The number of immigrant children and youth in Japan skyrocketed by 25% between 2007 and 2017.^{xx} At the end of 2015, there were 288,749 foreign children, under 19 years of age, equaling 12.9% of the total registered foreign population.^{xxi} Furthermore, that statistic does not take into account immigrant children with Japanese nationality, made up of naturalized or *hafu* (one Japanese parent and one foreign parent) youth. If that overlooked group was to be added, Professor Yukari Enoi of Osaka University estimated that in 2017, the number of immigrant children with Japanese nationality could be over 428,582.^{xxii}

Specifically, Japan is becoming more diversified, especially among youth. In Tokyo, for example, one in every eight new adults who turned 20 in 2018 had a foreign background.^{xxiii} The figure on the previous page also displays how nationality of very young children in Japan, ranging from zero to six years of age, has become even more heterogeneous, with more than half of those youth possessing citizenship from South, Southeast Asia, or Middle Eastern countries in 2019.

Japan's Education System and Foreign Student Composition

The Japanese primary and secondary education system is comprised of six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school, and three years of senior high school. While only elementary school and junior high school completion are compulsory for all children of Japanese nationality, the vast majority of pupils go on to attend high school. In 2019, 98% of junior high school graduates entered senior high school.^{xxiv} Japan's higher education institutes include four-year universities, two-year universities, and technical colleges. Based on data from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), 58% of high school graduates entered a university or junior college in 2018.^{xxv}

Figure 3. Geographic Concentrations of Immigrant Students



(Source: Japan, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

As indicated by the figure above, the largest concentration of foreign students resides in the Kanto and Kansai regions of Japan. In 2018, the top five prefectures are Tokyo, Aichi, Kanagawa, Saitama, and Osaka, and account for more than half (57.2%) of the total number of registered foreign students in public schools.^{xxvi} 98,927 foreign children were enrolled in Japanese

schools: 59,747 in elementary school, 23,963 in junior high school, and 15,217 in senior high school.^{xxvii} The top five most common native languages spoken by pupils were Brazilian Portuguese (26%), Chinese (24%), Tagalog (18%), Spanish (10%), and Vietnamese (4%).^{xxviii} While most immigrant students are based in urban areas, there is a growing trend of both public and private recruitment of *Nikkeijin* and TITP trainee residents to move to rural areas.

Challenges Facing Immigrant Students in Japanese Schools

Lack of Academic and Language Support

One of the biggest challenges facing immigrant students is the absence of academic and language resources for them in Japanese schools. As mentioned before, under Japan's constitution and education laws, the first nine years of schooling are required. However, this does not apply to immigrant children or any children that do not possess Japanese nationality. MEXT urges public schools to accept and provide free tuition to any parent who desires to enroll their child based on international treaties.^{xxix} However, figuring out the enrolling process can be especially daunting for many immigrant families with limited or no Japanese proficiency.

Figure 4. Growing Number of Foreign Students Needing Japanese Language Support



(Source: Japan, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

As summarized in the figure above, the skyrocketing population of non-Japanese students requiring Japanese language support has multiplied 1.5 times within the decade between 2006 and 2016. In 2016, the number of foreign students needing special instruction in Japanese at all levels of school (40,755) was nearly four times higher than their Japanese national counterparts (10,371). That same year, the percentages of foreign students at the elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school levels needing special instruction were respectively 65%, 26%, and 8.5%.^{xxx}

Particularly for areas of Japan with smaller foreigner populations, immigrant families are often left with no one to depend on but themselves. If they want their children to attend Japanese public schools, they need to obtain permission from local school boards.^{xxxii} Furthermore, almost 40% of local governments do not tell foreigners how to enroll their children in school.^{xxxiii} Even those municipalities that do send out notices usually do so in Japanese, a written barrier from the start for many immigrant families. As a result, a large number of non-Japanese pupils never end up registering for school in the first place. To quantify the disparity, a MEXT survey in 2019 revealed an estimate that more than 19,000 elementary or junior high school-age children of foreign nationalities in Japan do not attend school at all, including international schools.^{xxxiii}

With the progressive growth of the non-Japanese student population, MEXT has striven to implement programs and initiatives to help the upswell in foreign students studying at Japanese schools. The ministry implemented the CASTA-NET online program in 2011, where teachers can access and download learning materials and documents written in multiple languages to aid them in teaching foreign students.^{xxxiv} MEXT has also put into practice in-person workshops for teachers on Japanese language instruction for foreign children.^{xxxv} Furthermore, in 2014, the ministry began the Children Living Abroad and Returnees Internet (CLARINET) service that presents dialogue-formatted assessment tools for not just immigrant students but for *kikokushijo*, Japanese returnee students.^{xxxvi}

Moreover, some public schools are now providing the option for delegating students to special Japanese language programs differing from regular classes.^{xxxvii} However, not all schools offer these services and distribution across the country is uneven in favor of more populated prefectures with funds to spare. For those municipalities that can afford to, boards of education have adjusted their budgets to employ full- and part-time Japanese language teachers or found volunteers. However, Japanese teachers are in short supply. More than half of those teaching Japanese to foreign pupils are volunteers.^{xxxviii} In addition, these volunteers tend to fall on the older side in age and are unlikely to keep working over the long term.^{xxxix}

Monolithic Nature of the Japanese School System

Another issue that has hindered immigrant children from excelling in Japanese classrooms relates to how Japan's schools and curricula are linked with promoting monoculturalism and monolingualism. Article 1 of Japan's School Education Law establishes the school system, while the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education legitimize primary and secondary schools' organization and standards.^{xl} The minimum criteria for setting up all schools are based on the ordinances put forth by MEXT. These regulations span the range from stipulating curriculum requirements and class organizations to the number of teachers, staff, equipment, and facilities.^{xli} Unfortunately, while Japan's centralized school system under MEXT guarantees children's access to quality education in schools, that purpose is not designed to benefit immigrant students who come from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

The fundamental structure and official curriculum of Japanese public schools emphasize homogeneity and assimilation, pushing foreign students to adapt to the Japanese academic setting while discouraging them from studying their native culture, history, and language. For school textbooks, publishing companies are not mandated to consult minority groups when drafting new

books and consequently, the majority of textbooks still portray Japan as a largely homogenous nation.^{xlii} Peer pressure to conform and not stand out in Japanese schools has been attributed to negatively impacting immigrant children’s academic performance and livelihood, such as by lowering self-esteem or triggering individual identity crises.^{xliii} Furthermore, immigrant children are more likely to become a target of bullying and harassment at school because of their unique upbringings.^{xliv} All of these risks are amplified due to the low average number of non-Japanese students in a typical Japanese school. As displayed in the figure below, between 2007 and 2018, the trend remained that nearly three-fourths of Japanese schools only had between one to four non-Japanese national students on average.

Figure 5. Breakdown of Number of Japanese Schools with Only 1-5+ Foreign Students



(Source: Japan, Ministry of Culture, Education, Sports, Science and Technology)

Despite the Japanese education system’s rationale that the best way to assimilate foreign students is by forcing them to focus on learning Japanese and adapting to the teaching environment, some research studies contradict that position. Some research supports the effectiveness of using students’ native tongues as their primary language. For example, work done by University of Toronto Professor Jim Cummins has shown that education programs that assist students in acquiring a high level of bilingual proficiency improve both native and non-native students’ academic potential.^{xlv} Professor Takako Watanabe of Gunma University also has argued that

native languages should be evaluated as cultural resources, not detractors, and that more bilingual instruction and holistic pedagogy are needed to help immigrant pupils.^{xlvi}

Regardless, Japan's current education system has been disadvantageous for foreign students due to the various aforementioned factors that entrench the traditional school structure. As a result, a major issue surrounding the education of immigrant students is their low rate of entry into senior high schools compared to that of Japanese nationals. While almost all students with Japanese nationality go on to study at high schools, the advancement rate is significantly lower for foreign students, varying from 11% to 60% depending on the students' nationality.^{xlvi} Not surprisingly, the rate of university advancement is estimated to likely be even lower among immigrant students, although there is no empirical data yet to corroborate.

Local Initiatives Supporting Immigrant Students

Importance of Non-traditional Schools

Even though national educational policies have remained relatively stagnant, some regional changes are gradually happening at actual sites of education for the schooling of foreign children. These adjustments include night-time junior high schools (*yakan chuugakkou*) and part-time high schools (*teijisei koukou*) that are flexible when it comes to accepting students older than usual. These non-conventional schools operate as important spaces serving marginalized immigrant students that were unable or unwilling to attend regular schools. Night-time junior high schools date back to Japan's postwar period and were constructed to provide education for impoverished Japanese youth who had been forced to leave school in order to work and survive.^{xlvi}

There are 31 *yakan chuugakkou* sites found in eight prefectures, all funded by local governments.^{xlix} The age range of participants spans from those in their teens to those who are over 60 years old.¹ Pupils learn various subjects besides just the Japanese language and some even study to prepare to take high school entrance examinations. It is important to note that most *yakan chuugakkou* students are foreign students. In 2017, an overwhelming 80.4% (1,356) of pupils were foreigners; nationalities in order of percentage were Chinese (41.9%), Nepalese (16.6%), Koreans (14.9%), Vietnamese (9%), Filipinos (8%), and others (0.6%).^{li}

Image 1. A *Yakan Chuugakkou* Class Held in Sakai, Osaka, in 2017



(Source: *The Sankei News*)

Part-time high schools also act as a crucial safety net for foreign and other nontraditional students, providing them greater flexibility timewise when it comes to learning opportunities. To make it easier for pupils' schedules, *teijisei koukou* offer classes three times a day from morning until evening.^{lii} In comparison to full-time high schools, part-time high schools have diverse and smaller class sizes with a relatively relaxed curriculum and a less rigid school culture.^{liii} All of these features make it easier for a spectrum of students not limited to just immigrant students, but students with physical disabilities, social anxiety disorders, or working jobs, to learn in a safe and comfortable educational setting at their own pace. Like night-time junior high schools, foreign children also make up a dominant share of pupils in part-time high schools.^{liv}

Lastly, Japan has an established history of “schools for foreigners” known as *gaikokujin gakkou*. *Gaikokujin gakkou* run the gamut from international schools to country- or ethnicity-specific schools such as Brazilian, Peruvian, Chinese, and Korean schools. The key characteristic that all these foreign student schools share however, is that they are not designated as “clause-1 schools”, *ichijoukou*, but as “miscellaneous schools” (*kakushu gakkou*) by the Japanese government.^{lv} These schools do not have *ichijoukou* status because they do not fulfill the stipulated requirements needed such as using their own textbooks instead of MEXT-approved ones.

The unfortunate result is that *kakushu gakkou* are then without legal status and therefore do not qualify for government funding nor tax exemptions.^{lvi} In 2017, 25,948 students attended 125 *kakushu gakkou*.^{lvii} The trade-off for students is that while they are able to learn their native language and culture in a tailored environment with classmates that share similarities with them, they also must pay much higher tuition and deal with accreditation issues due to their schools' *kakushu gakkou* status.

Since most Japanese public schools do not have an established multicultural education system for students, these three types of schools mentioned provide vital lifelines to immigrant students and their families wishing to affirm their diverse and unique identities. However, access to these kinds of alternative schools varies heavily depending on the density of immigrant populations across the nation, resulting in a disproportionate distribution of resources to foreign students depending on their locations.

The Rise of Civic Organizations

Mirroring the growth of the immigrant student population in the 1990s, the number of grassroots organizations, such as NPOs/NGOs that provide academic and other means of support to immigrant children, has climbed rapidly.^{lviii} Mainstream Japanese schools primarily serve the needs of Japanese students, so instead, local civic organizations have endeavored towards responding to academically, linguistically, and professionally assisting immigrant students originating from diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic upbringings.^{lix}

Another key difference between Japan and numerous Western countries is that Western countries typically have an extensive history of grassroots movements and public support for community agencies. Meanwhile, Japanese civic organizations are mostly volunteer-run and have comparatively unstable funding and resources available to them that vary by municipality and region.^{lx} Regarding structure, some organizations are simply informal clubs, groups, and programs.

On the other hand, others have been officially recognized and granted status as NPOs or social welfare service corporations. Civil organizations' budgets can range from being 100% volunteer-based to those receiving public or private subsidies from local companies and governments. There is also a great amount of diversity among organization leaders and staff. Community leaders vary in age, ethnicity, nationality, and occupation, including local retirees, teachers, researchers, and even college students.^{lxi}

One key area that local civic organizations and educational actors have succeeded in collaboratively aiding immigrant students is high school admission guidance, known as *shinro gaidansu*. In order to strengthen the support system for immigrant students, these networks of civil organizations and educational actors including NPOs/NGOs, researchers, schools, and teachers, offer services to immigrant communities on the Japanese high school entrance examination process. For example, such *shinro gaidansu* networks provide immigrant students sessions on a variety of Japanese school-related topics through the medium of the students' native language.^{lxii} Beginning in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1995, the high school admission guidance program has since spread to other regions of the country with organizers from each area meeting annually to share information, network, and propose policy recommendations.^{lxiii}

Another vital role that these grassroots agencies fulfill is creating an *ibasho*, a place crafted for immigrant students where they feel they can naturally belong. Foreign students often feel isolated from Japanese school, society, and even their own family home since it is not uncommon for immigrant children's parents to be working long hours.^{lxiv} These civic organizations become a significant cultural and linguistic bridge between schools and immigrant families. Recently, some organizations have also encouraged foreign youth-created art like dance, music, and photography for boosting immigrant children's self-empowerment and community diversity awareness.^{lxv}

However, disparity among the number and quality of educational assistance and other support for immigrant children through these organizations and programs exists depending on regional availability. Similar to accessibility to alternative schooling, some immigrant families lack adequate access to these services, especially those who reside in areas with small immigrant populations.^{lxvi} Even large differences exist within the same prefecture, as illustrated by the following case study done between two localities in rural Shimane Prefecture.

Case Study of Shimane Prefecture: Tsuwano and Izumo

Tsuwano

The valley town of Tsuwano lies on the western side of Shimane, the second-least populated prefecture in Japan. Like countless countryside hamlets, the town's population has declined since the 1950s. In 2019, the town's population recorded 7,251 residents, calculated as an approximate 75% drop within 70 years.^{lxvii} Despite its small population of only 59 foreign residents, Tsuwano sees around 1.2 million tourists (both Japanese and foreign tourists) visit the town each year thanks to its reputation as the "Little Kyoto" of the Sanin region of Japan, famous for its Kyoto-esque Taikodani Inari Shrine and its yearly *yabusame* (horseback archery) festival.^{lxviii}

Returning to its foreigner population, of those 59 residents, only a handful were young students attending Tsuwano Elementary, Junior High, or High School. After interviews with members of the Tsuwano Board of Education, primary and second teachers, and one Japan Exchange and Teaching Program Assistant Language Teacher (JET Program ALT), the overall consensus was that resources for the immigrant students were minimal. Based on responses given from those aforementioned staff, not many academic resources were in place for assisting the foreign students.

One story of an immigrant junior high school student from Malaysia named Sara (pseudonym) illustrates Tsuwano's lack of academic structures for foreign students. According to her teachers, while Sara performed well in most of her academic subjects and was active in the school's choral club, her Japanese language proficiency had not changed much since her family had arrived a year ago. To allow her to pass the mandatory Japanese course, she was given a different grading standard of a pass/fail system. When asked if more Japanese language support could be given, one teacher confided that it was not fiscally feasible to hire a specialized Japanese language teacher for not just Sara, but for even all the immigrant students, a problem that numerous municipalities with small immigrant student populations share across Japan.

Izumo

Contrasting with Tsuwano, Izumo is located on the eastern side of the prefecture and has actually seen its total population increase in recent years thanks to the city's promotion of its Multicultural Living Promotion Plan, an initiative originally targeted to increase the number of long-term foreign residents to 30% by 2021 through a bilingual recruitment and retention campaign.^{lxxix} English and Portuguese advertisements were produced to appeal to Brazilian *Nikkeijin* and thanks to relatively active recruiting, Izumo met its acceptance target early by two years in 2019.^{lxxx}

As of April 2021 data, Izumo recorded a population of 174,822 residents of which a significant 2.8% (4,948) were foreign.^{lxxxi} To keep these long-term foreign residents, Izumo has undertaken multiple projects to make the city more foreigner-friendly such as setting up a multilingual translation and interpreting support center and future bilingual preschool.^{lxxxii} Local companies have also introduced Brazilian cuisine into their work cafeterias and sponsored multicultural exchange events.^{lxxxiii}

For immigrant students specifically, numerous civic organizations and volunteer group-run Japanese language schools have sprung up in the city. One example is *Manabiya*, a volunteer group-based language school established in 2017 by Yumi Goubara, a Japanese language teacher who had previously taught in Brazil.^{lxxxiv} The group teaches Japanese language to young foreigners in Izumo. Regarding *Manabiya*'s purpose, Goubara stated, "These days, there are an increasing number of foreign children and young people in the city who are shutting themselves in at home. For many of them, the only reason they give up on education is because they moved to Japan. I think the most important thing is to let them know that people care about them and about their futures."^{lxxxv}

21-year-old Lopes Renan is one of those young students in Goubara's group.^{lxxxvi} When he was 15, Renan moved to Izumo with his parents but decided not to enroll in a Japanese school

because he believed his language abilities were not strong enough. Feeling alienated and discouraged, Renan rarely left home for three years. However, after entering *Manabiya*, he credits meeting Goubara as fundamental in helping him reintegrate into society and finding a manufacturing job in Izumo. Besides learning Japanese, *Manabiya* and Goubara herself emphasize the school's mission of making young foreigners feel comfortable about sharing their worries, highlighting the importance of generating more *ibasho* spaces for immigrants in Japan.^{lxxvii}

Image 2. Volunteer Japanese Language School *Manabiya* in Izumo, Shimane



(Source: *Eigo-manabiya*)

US Education Policies and Practices for Supporting Immigrant Children

Overview of US Programs Supporting Immigrant Students

Turning over to comparative analysis, the United States could offer a variety of different policy prescriptions and proposals that may be beneficial to helping Japan further integrate foreign children into its education system. While the US track record on admitting and integrating foreign children into public and private schools is mixed, there have been notable successes and data released from its comparatively longer history than Japan in bringing and keeping foreign families. Schools in the United States have welcomed new immigrant children to their classrooms with recent data revealing more than 840,000 immigrant students and more than 4.6 million English learners.^{lxxviii}

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data also highlights the effective integration of immigrant and refugee students into American schools. For example, among those countries and economies where at least 5% of the student population were immigrants between 2003 and 2012, in the United States, the difference in mathematics performance between students with an immigrant background and those without narrowed during the period.^{lxxix} The data also substantiated that first-generation immigrant students expressed a stronger sense of belonging at school than other students in US classrooms.^{lxxx} In addition, OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data pointed to the share of disadvantaged students who perform in the top quarter of all students who participated in PISA testing is larger among immigrant students than among non-immigrant students in the United States.^{lxxxi}

Best-Practices

The United States has also produced successful outcomes for immigrants by granting them a wide-ranging list of existing resources and policies that are useful to communities welcoming immigrant children or newly-arrived children from abroad to their schools. Unlike Japan, the United States has a long history of having robust grassroots and civic organizations tied to immigration like the American Immigration Council and United We Dream, sponsored by both public and private funds.^{lxxxii} Four programs and practices that assist immigrant students, as well as teachers in accommodating diverse classrooms, are listed in the figure below.

Figure 6. Immigrant Student Best-Practices in the United States

Name	Summary
English Language Acquisition Programs	States are required to set aside up to 15% of their education funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) that have a significant increase in immigrant students. Funds can be used for a range of activities like improving instruction, providing tutoring and intensified instruction, and conducting <u>community participation programs</u> .
Migrant Education Programs (MEP)	MEP funds are awarded to states under the ESEA. The MEP offers educational and supportive services to children who are migratory agricultural workers or fishers or to those whose parents are either. Newly arrived immigrant children may qualify as eligible migratory children as long as they meet the program requirements and fit the program-specific definition of a migratory child.
National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition	This Clearinghouse provides non-monetary assistance in research-based strategies and approaches such as academic language development and can also share data and models for the creation of Newcomer Centers to serve recently arrived immigrant students and English language learners.
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)	CRP is a theoretical teaching model that focuses on multiple aspects of student achievement and supports students to uphold their cultural identities while also challenging their perceptions of societal inequalities. There are three main components: 1) a focus on student learning and academic success; 2) developing students' cultural competence to assist students in developing positive ethnic and social identities; and 3) supporting students' critical consciousness or their ability to recognize and critique societal inequalities.

(Source: US Department of Education)

In the case of Japan, more research that informs practice and policies to assist with immigrant children's issues and needs is necessary. However, drawing from effective US policies and practices like those above may be of use to Japanese education system reforms. Japan's centrally controlled educational system, standardized curriculum, and instructional styles are stymieing immigrant children's academic progress and development because of the systematic objective of homogenizing their variety of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Policy Proposals

In Japan, most local governments except for those of wealthy cities are heavily subsidized by the national government and as a result, it is challenging for local municipalities to conduct any immigrant student supporting initiatives independently without regional inequities in accessibility and quality. Consequently, top-down reform beginning with MEXT is needed to institute sweeping change to schools all across Japan ranging from making primary and secondary education compulsory for non-Japanese students to diversifying content in school textbooks. Japanese language education support must be increased through methods such as establishing more bilingual preschools and supplementary classes to improve immigrant children's Japanese skills.

On the Japanese teaching system side, MEXT could also offer incentives to encourage more Japanese youth to train to become Japanese as a second language teachers, such as through starting new scholarships and tuition reduction programs. Another alternative may be to design a similar JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program-like initiative where Japanese teachers are sent overseas to teach in immigrants' countries of origin so that they can acquire experience educating a diverse pool of students abroad. Expanding opportunities for Japanese teachers to work overseas may yield similar returning success stories like how Yumi Goubara's experience teaching in Brazil led her to found *Manabiya*. Greater flexibility within the teaching curriculum and schedule, such as reducing junior high school teachers' commitments to club activities, could lessen the overwhelming amount of work they have to instead participate in professional development programs related to immigrant students like diversity training courses.

Additionally, due to the paucity of academic support for immigrants in Japanese public schools, drafting nationwide education policies and reforms from elementary to high school level is critical. Besides Japanese language and academic support, schools could cooperate with regional companies, governments, universities, and NPOs/ NGOs to develop specific multicultural extracurriculars, career education, and college preparation programs as more *ibasho* sites for immigrant students to join. Furthermore, a large share of foreign students from working-class backgrounds struggles to go to college because of financial strains, socioeconomic disadvantages, and linguistic barriers. To advance educational equity, income-based scholarship programs and quota systems in higher education could be launched to bridge the advancement gap between non-Japanese and Japanese students.

Recent Developments

More recently, Japan's Minister of Education Koichi Hagiuda has emphasized delivering best-practice regulation at the municipality level to guarantee learning opportunities for foreign children. The policy was taken up based on the law on promoting Japanese language education that took effect in June 2019.^{lxxxiii} The policy will be reviewed every five years and if deemed necessary, stipulates that the central government must make legal changes and provide the financing amount needed to promote Japanese language education.^{lxxxiv}

The Japanese government wants to guarantee that all foreign children in Japan have the same educational opportunities as local students. The basic policy to promote Japanese language education states that it is the responsibility of the central and local governments to offer Japanese

language education to foreign children.^{lxxxv} Local governments will work closely with international schools and affiliated nonprofit organizations to better assess the situation and offer parents of foreign children information about their educational options under the policy. Amid the growing demand for Japanese language education, the law also supports the need to create new licenses for Japanese language teachers.^{lxxxvi}

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic as well, the Japanese government has been taking steps to shore up its educational support for immigrant families and their children. According to the MEXT, there are plans to allocate and strengthen resources for foreign children in need of Japanese-language education with a planned doubling of the budget to ensure they are not missing out on learning opportunities. MEXT has allotted a budget of around 700 million yen (\$6.6 million) this fiscal year for support measures, which included covering one-third of the labor costs of Japanese language tutors and assistants to provide tutoring in children's native tongues.^{lxxxvii} The ministry has also proposed a plan to create multilingual video materials and training sessions for teachers at public schools to facilitate the admission of more foreign children.^{lxxxviii}

Conclusion

Japan is gradually becoming a more diverse nation. There is a mounting number of immigrant students stemming from a range of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds that is entering the Japanese education system and diversifying the composition of Japanese schools. There has been a steady improvement in foreign student educational attainment since immigration reforms were instituted in 1990.^{lxxxix} Those improvements can be attributed to the imperative role collaborative community actors such as municipal governments, alternative schools, NPOs/NGOs, and other immigrant-supporting organizations, have played in responding to the varied educational needs of immigrant students. These civic and grassroots groups have worked hard to build immigrant student support networks and influence the policymaking process.

Yet, issues like high non-attendance and dropout rates along with low high school advancement rates have endured since the early 2000s. The national government still lacks a cohesive integration policy for these children and on top of that, ethnic and class differences also pose barriers to immigrant students from moving upward in higher education. The basic position of the government towards immigrant students has not changed as they are still not required legally to attend Japanese schools. Unfortunately, the education of students without Japanese nationality is still considered a supplementary purpose rather than one that, with reforms, could diversify and revolutionize the entire Japanese education system for the better.

However, with the country's ongoing demographic crisis, Japanese leaders must confront the reality that a tangible and inclusive immigrant education policy is desperately needed sooner rather than later. Constructing more adaptable and multicultural Japanese schools and teaching curricula will benefit not only immigrant students but native Japanese students as well. By delivering more specific and varied educational resources and support to immigrant and other foreign students, Japan could take fundamental steps towards walking down the path of promoting the country's future global growth and wellbeing. Japan's vitality as a country and people can be rejuvenated by beginning in the classroom and nurturing more open-minded, productive, and ultimately diverse generations to come.

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Japan's Green Economic Recovery from Covid-19

Emma Mika Riley

Introduction

Worldwide Overview on Pandemic Economic Responses

The Diamond Princess cruise liner, carrying passengers confirmed to have Covid-19, docked in Yokohama on February 3, 2020, over a month before the WHO declared a global pandemic. Initially, Japan managed to contain the spread of the virus with a few drastic measures, while severe lockdown orders were put in place across the world. The systemic shock of the Covid-19 crisis in 2020 led to a 17% drop in daily CO₂ emissions globally.ⁱ Government imposed lockdowns and grounded flights caused a decrease in energy demand, and oil prices fell dramatically to as low as negative \$37.63 per barrel in 2020.ⁱⁱ The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) observed in an October report that Japan was focusing on long-term investments and resilience in combatting the pandemic-induced recession, while the U.S. under the Trump administration centered its fiscal support on the pandemic's immediate economic impact.ⁱⁱⁱ Policies and strategies of the two countries differed in implementation and efficacy.

In the context of the Covid-19 crisis, there is great potential for a green economic recovery. Green recovery plans have been initiated around the world, starting with the European Union's nearly \$900 billion commitment to climate action through the Next Generation EU and Just Transition Fund. The Republic of Korea has plans to invest \$62 billion into a Digital and Green New Deal that focuses on green job creation, renewable energy investment, and energy efficiency.^{iv}

While Japan has not taken the lead on planning a global green recovery even within the region, the country is taking specific measures to combat the Covid-19 crisis through green solutions. Recently, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike has announced a Zero Emission Tokyo Strategy. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has promised to reduce the country's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net-zero by 2050 through the promotion of renewable energy and a shift away from coal-generated energy. The climate agendas of the current administrations in the US and Japan stand in stark contrast to those of the previous administrations. President Joe Biden has launched an ambitious climate plan, paired with the US' rejoining the 2015 Paris Agreement. The Biden administration also has promised that climate change will play a central role in all foreign policy decisions.^v In Japan, Environmental Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and Minister for Administrative and Regulatory Reform Taro Kono, both proponents of renewable energy, are popular figures who have a strong influence over Prime Minister Suga's policies.

Japan's Energy and Environment Policies

Since the Fukushima nuclear plant meltdown in 2011 shut down most reactors in the country, Japan has relied even more intensely on coal (28% of total energy consumption), leading to a predictable increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Before 2011, over 25% of Japan's energy was generated through nuclear power. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident resulted in

the immediate closure of almost all operating nuclear reactors in the country.^{vi} This completely reconfigured the energy fuel mix replacing nuclear sources mainly with coal, oil and other fossil fuels. Japan, which must rely heavily on energy imports, was the world’s largest liquid natural gas (LNG) importer in 2019.^{vii} While Japan is a signatory of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, the country’s targets are lower than those set by other developed countries.^{viii} In 2019, fossil fuels accounted for about 88% of the total primary energy supply. The most CO2 emissions intensive sector is the industrial sector followed by transportation. Within the industrial sector, the steel industry accounts for the majority of emissions at 40%.^{ix}

Japanese utilities were entirely state owned before the creation of 10 major regional companies after World War II. While recently there have been major decentralizing efforts, the high price of electricity is largely attributed to a lack of competition among these powerful companies. Japan employs a unique policy process that factors into its national climate-change agenda through public opinion, bureaucratic decision-making (based on the rivalry of two ministries with jurisdiction over the energy sector), and a balance of power among competing business groups like the Japan Business Federation (*Keidanren*), which favors heavy industry, restarting nuclear plants, and maintaining coal power plants.^x Over the course of decades, Japan has introduced renewable energy, decarbonization and environmental policies with varying levels of success ranging from mitigation to adaptation and disaster resilience responses outlined below:

Figure 1: List of Major Climate Policies and Laws

Year	Policy
1947	Disaster Relief Act (Law no. 108)
1948	Act on Provision of Disaster Relief Expenses (Law no. 82)
1961	Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act
1967	Basic Law for Environmental Pollution Control
1979	Law Concerning the Rational Use of Energy (Energy Conservation Act) (Update 2014)
1980	Law Concerning the Promotion of Development and Intro of Oil Alternative Energy
1997	Law Concerning Special Measures for Promotion of New Energy Use (Special Measures Law for Promoting the Use of New Energy)
1998	Act on Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasures (Law No. 107)
2002	Fundamental Law on Energy Policy (Basic Act on Energy Policy) and its Strategic Plans (Law No. 71)
2007	Law Concerning the Promotion of Contracts Considering Reduction of Emissions of Greenhouse Gases and Others by the State and Other Entities (Environment Consideration Contract Law) (Law No. 56)
2011	Act on Purchase of Renewable Energy Sourced Electricity by Electric Utilities (Law No. 108)
2012	Low Carbon City Promotion Act (Eco-city Law) (Law No. 84 of 2014)
2012	Act Partially Amending the Law on Special Tax Measures (Tax Reform Act 2012) (Law No. 16 of 2012)
2013	Basic Act for National Resilience Contributing to Preventing and Mitigating Disasters for Developing Resilience in the Lives of the Citizenry

2014	Act on Promoting Generation of Electricity from Renewable Energy Sources Harmonized with Sound Development of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
2015	Act on Rational Use and Proper Management of Fluorocarbons
2015	Act on the Improvement of Energy Consumption Performance of Buildings
2018	Climate Change Adaptation Act
2018	Act No. 89 of 2018 on Promoting Utilization of Sea Areas in Development of Power Generation Facilities Using Maritime Renewable Energy Resources

(Source: LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment)

The Feed-in Tariff (FIT) system of 2012 indisputably accelerated the adoption of solar photo-voltaic (PV) energy generation and noticeably reduced CO₂ emissions. Still, renewable energy remains low at about 15% of total electricity generation in Japan.^{xi} The energy types with the biggest increase in installed capacity after the FIT scheme was introduced were solar PV, onshore wind, and wood biomass. The levelized cost of energy for these three sources fell precipitously following the FIT Act.^{xii} For a variety of reasons including the higher upfront costs and time consuming required environmental assessments, the FIT Act did not have the same impact on offshore wind development. Since the passing of the Utilization of Sea Areas Act in 2018, there is more potential to increase offshore wind capacity. This law allows for wind projects to occupy sea areas for at least 30 years, complementing the FIT system that lasts up to 20 years.

The FIT system was not perfect, however, and adjustments had to be made when it was revealed that the scheme was fiscally unsustainable. The burden of the FIT expenditure was born mostly on utilities like Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), already financially struggling with over \$15 billion losses after the Fukushima nuclear disaster.^{xiii} In response, policy retrenchment occurred with METI allowing tax increases to compensate for the losses, which led to a surge in prices for electricity consumers.^{xiv} Moreover, environmental conservation regulations were not properly established leading to solar plant sites replacing natural forests and the degradation of natural habitats. Eventually a price adjustment tool was put in place.

Other measures, like the renewable portfolio standards (RPS) introduced in 2003, required renewables to make up a certain amount of energy generation. But this scheme was largely ineffective. Currently, auctions are one of the main policy tools facilitating the national transition to renewables since 2019.^{xv} By 2020, five Solar PV auctions have been completed that have helped drive down the price of solar PV, but renewable prices remain much higher in Japan than in comparable economies.

Methodology

Information for this paper was gathered from primary research centered on interviews and a review of secondary sources. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to generate a key repository of over 50 sources comprised of academic papers, grey literature and media coverage. The review was undertaken by first developing research questions and then using key word searches to identify relevant studies. Key search terms included ‘Japan renewable energy’, ‘clean energy policy’, ‘Japan Covid-19 green economic recovery’, ‘energy security’, ‘Japan climate targets’, ‘decarbonization strategy’, ‘circular economy’. Resources on Covid-19 green

strategies were limited to those published in English after January 2020. This repository is mutable and grows as the pandemic is ongoing, new strategies are being proposed, and new updated information becomes available. Research materials include both primary sources from government policy documents and secondary materials from academic papers. Findings from the most recent data and analysis of the Covid-19 economic crisis are supported by semi structured individual expert interviews conducted over the course of the semester.^{xvi} Interviewees ranged from actors in the government, academia, nonprofit, and private sectors.

This paper draws on the theoretical concept of policy windows from American political scientist John Kingdon, as applied to examine environmental policy-making.^{xvii} This concept provides a theoretical framework to discuss Japan's climate action policies as a response to the Covid-19 economic crisis. This conceptual outline argues that three process streams (problem, policy, and politics) interact to create policy windows that allow the uptake of knowledge and information to be translated into substantive policy creation and implementation.^{xviii} The Covid-19 crisis (problem) along with lowering costs of renewable energy (policies) and a change in administration (politics) has the potential to generate a window of opportunity for Japan to reinvigorate its climate action policies and take a leading role in the region on the fight against climate change.

Key Findings

Japan Post-Covid-19 Policy

Japan's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) were highly criticized by the international community when they were submitted to the UN in March 2020. Despite the growing urgency of the climate crisis, the country committed to the same 26% emissions reduction target as it initially announced in 2015.^{xix} An assessment from the original 2015 NDC showed that if Japan had had a more ambitious plan, the country would have benefitted with nearly \$25 billion annual savings in fossil fuel imports, prevented tens of thousands of premature deaths from pollution each year, and created nearly 70,000 new jobs in the renewable energy sector.^{xx} Climate Action Tracker rated the 2020 NDC as "highly insufficient" meaning that if all parties' NDCs received this rating, total global warming would reach between 3 to 4 degrees C, greatly out of the 1.5 degree limit set by the Paris Agreement.^{xxi} This is unsurprising as these goals were set without any major change in environmental or energy policy.

According to the Green Stimulus Index that compiled data from economic stimulus packages across the world, Japan received a negative score under the 'brown contribution' investment category, despite having the third largest initial Covid-19 economic stimulus.^{xxii} According to a representative from METI, the planned third economic stimulus fund will provide funding in line with sustainable decarbonization goals over the next decade, starting in the Spring of 2021. Stronger policies are necessary to achieve targets in line with Paris Agreement goals.

Covid-19 Economic Stimulus within Japan and the Green Growth Strategy

A more ambitious approach to climate policy is evidenced by Japan's newest commitments following the early stages of the pandemic in March 2020. Since then, Japan has committed \$19.06

billion to clean energy with no additional public funding commitments for coal.^{xxiii} According to the Environment Ministry, the 2050 carbon neutrality goal will be codified into law.^{xxiv} In December 2020, the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) gave a briefing of Japan's "Green Growth Strategy in Line with Carbon Neutrality in 2050" that includes plans to decarbonize electricity and electrify all sectors focusing on 14 areas of growth.^{xxv} Policy tools of this strategy include grant funding through the Green Innovation Fund of 2 trillion yen over a decade and 15 trillion yen of private R&D and investment. Other mechanisms part of the plan include tax incentives, a guidance policy on finance to attract international Environmental Social, and Governance (ESG) investment, regulatory reform, and international collaboration.^{xxvi}

Of the \$19.06 billion commitment to supporting clean energy, \$18.73 billion is earmarked for continuous funding of innovative technology development. The New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) will carry out this development in priority areas including decarbonizing electricity, achieving a transformative hydrogen-based society, carbon recycling, R&D for technology development and implementation.^{xxvii} Studies have shown that Japan's past fiscal stimuli have promoted "smart cities" and "Society 5.0" objectives implemented on a regional level that include integration of renewable energy in line with Japan's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda and resilience plans.^{xxviii}

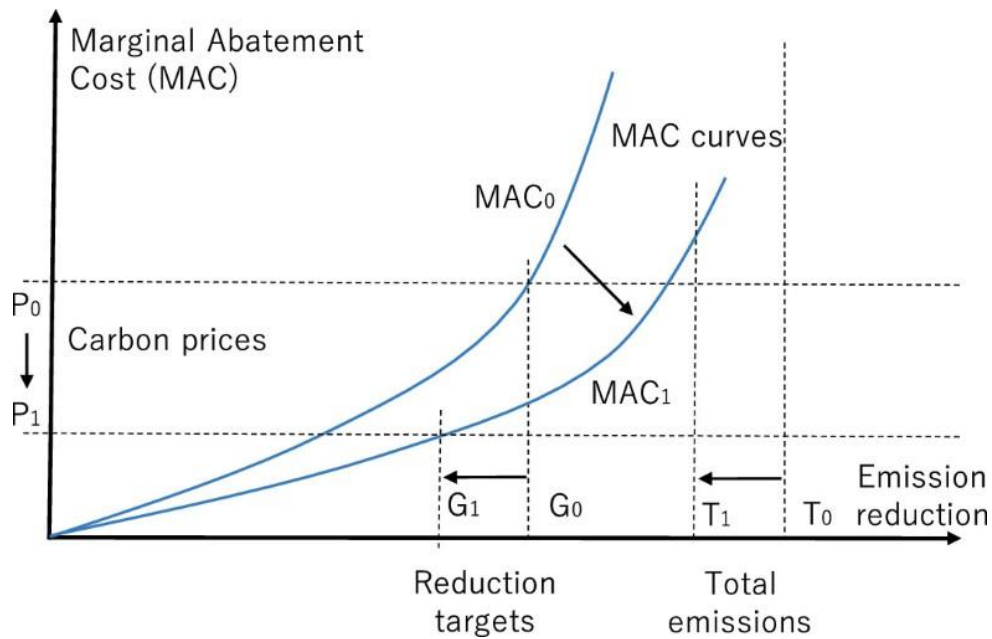
The "Green Growth Strategy" (GGS) has the potential to unite the competing goals of METI and the Ministry of Environment (MOE). While Japan's green bond market is the ninth largest in the world, in 2020 both the MOE and METI released updated green bond guidelines and a practice guide of corporate climate adaptation policies, respectively.^{xxix} According to a METI representative, the part of the GGS that declares "institutional design without hesitation" leads to two potential mechanisms being discussed, including: 1) a credit transaction that will determine the allocation of emissions, and 2) a carbon tax. Currently, METI officials worry that a carbon tax would be an excessive burden on the private sector, while the MOE prioritizes mitigating climate change. Currently, Japan does not have Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) or a mandate for the power sector. While Japan updated the Energy Conservation Act of 1979 in 2018 to increase efficiency standards under the NDC, the country's carbon tax is extremely low at about JPY 289 (~ \$2.50) per ton of CO₂^{xxx}. By contrast in the U.S., President Biden is aiming for a \$52 carbon charge, which some economists view as still too low.^{xxxi}

An associate professor at the University of Tokyo at the Policy Alternatives Research Institute (PARI) is wary of the "Green Growth Strategy's" emphasis on innovation. He suggests a carbon tax on the heavy industrial sector would facilitate reaching decarbonization goals but that currently the concept of a Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) is not used as a reference point in Japan and thus cost benefit analyses are difficult to conduct. He highlights the importance of implementing policy that targets early market creation, as well as funding research and development (R&D). Moreover, he cited that a lack of mentioning forward guidance as well as failing to put frequent price adjustments were two flaws of the 2012 Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) system. These considerations are important going forward with the implementation of a Feed-in Premium system planned for 2022.

A former MOE official echoed these concerns suggesting a marginal abatement cost approach to identifying the optimal carbon tax paired with a targeted tax on heavier industry would

effectively reduce emissions to meet the 1.5 degree C target set by the IPCC. A marginal abatement cost approach “assumes that the carbon price to achieve the given reduction target is equal to the marginal abatement cost corresponding to that target”.^{xxxii} Carbon pricing incentivizes renewable energy use, while funds from the tax can be allocated toward further energy efficiency measures. This positive feedback loop can lower the marginal abatement cost as shown in the figure below. The former MOE official suggested that a carbon price of around \$100 per metric ton could reduce the majority of carbon emissions (upwards of 85%), while the final 10-15% can be tackled through a sector-specific carbon tax imposed on heavy industry like steel and chemical sectors.

Figure 2: Marginal Abatement Cost Approach to Carbon Pricing



(Source: “Expectations for Carbon Pricing in Japan in the Global Climate Policy Context”; Economics, Law, and Institutions in Asia Pacific)

Overall, responses from interviewees in the academic sector found the GGS to be mostly inadequate. The main criticisms stem from a perception of insufficient grant funding and tax incentives without strong supporting evidence of long-term private investment. A comprehensive study conducted by The Renewable Energy Institute, Agora Energiewende, and LUT University illustrate the pathways that must be taken to reach a climate-neutrality in a 3-step timeline detailing the changes mainly in the energy conversion, industrial, building, and transport sector that must be made by 2030, 2045, and 2050. These pathways rely on three pillars namely, 1) energy efficiency and reduced energy demand, 2) 100% transition to renewable energy and electrification, and 3) the development of hydrogen and sustainable synthetic fuel source.^{xxxiii} The recommendations in this report calling for Japan’s expedited and enhanced climate action were reflected in multiple interview responses.

The Role of Nuclear Energy and New Technologies in the GGS

Japan faces many physical challenges in implementing renewables into the energy grid and creating carbon capture technologies including population density and poor natural resources. Energy generated from nuclear power was one method to ensure a secure, domestic supply of energy but since the Fukushima nuclear disaster, nuclear generation dropped from 13% to 3% of Japan's energy mix by 2019. Increased safety costs paired with a decline in electricity demand due to pandemic-induced lockdown policies make the future of this energy source uncertain.

Public opposition to nuclear energy in Japan is the largest obstacle in restarting this zero-carbon baseload energy source. Despite social resistance, nuclear power is projected to comprise 20-22% of the country's energy matrix by 2030, as part of Japan's decarbonization strategy through the improvement of nuclear power plants and extension of their operation beyond 40 years. Representatives from TEPCO and METI discussed plans to promote the development of next generation nuclear technology such as fast reactors and small module reactors (SMRs) to meet zero-carbon targets. Decarbonization options also include the innovation of improved safety of light water reactors. Proponents of nuclear energy argue that nuclear fuel is critical in the development of green hydrogen as a zero-carbon source and thus fundamental to the GGS that promotes a transformed "hydrogen-powered society".^{xxxiv} The Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan (FEPC) publishes nuclear safety information outlining aseismic and environmental radiation monitoring information to ensure the safety of nuclear power plants.

Despite these safety measures, public sentiment toward nuclear energy has worsened, with bribery scandals associated with TEPCO, pushback from fishing communities worried about nuclear waste water contamination, and setbacks from the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, removal of melted fuel from the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster has been delayed at least a year because of the worsening Covid-19 situation.^{xxxv} Disposing of melted fuel is one of the most difficult aspects of a decommissioning process projected to take over 40 years. There is a lack of public discourse surrounding the role of nuclear because it has become too highly politicized. A policy expert claims that conscious decisions about nuclear energy cannot be made without public debate.

Models have shown decarbonization pathways for Japan without nuclear power. A renewable energy and Japan policy expert suggests an alternative to domestic generation in the future could be to import renewable fuel through transmission lines or biofuel imports. Non-nuclear scenarios depict a large increase in offshore wind energy generation to make up for the absence of nuclear power.^{xxxvi} Many scenarios incorporate the concept of a circular carbon economy that support the continued use of fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies. The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan (IEEJ) presented a 4Rs scenario meaning a strategy focusing on reducing (through promotion of renewables and energy efficiency), reusing (for biofuel, agricultural, or jet fuel use), recycling (through chemical transformation of CO₂ for use of synthetic materials), and removing carbon (through CCS and direct air capture DAC).^{xxxvii} A representative from TEPCO highlighted the importance of CO₂-free hydrogen used for low-carbon solutions in large-scale transportation such as trucks, diesel trains, ships, and aircraft, as well as steel where electrification is difficult. Additionally, the Public-Private Council for the

Introduction of Fuel Ammonia in Japan published a roadmap for ammonia usage while electric power companies announced their visions of zero CO2 emissions in 2050 by expanding the use of ammonia.^{xxxviii}

US-Japan Cooperation

The concept of “*gaiatsu*” (外圧), or “external pressure” was echoed throughout interviews and is important in understanding Japan’s green recovery strategy within the international context and from a climate security perspective. This was demonstrated previously when Japan signed the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1987 banning chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), despite being a major producer.^{xxxix} A senior fellow for Asia-Pacific at The Center of Climate and Security discussed the Biden Administration’s responsibility to hold allies to account on climate initiatives. The US-Japan alliance is a channel that historically has proven to be indispensable in disaster response and to combat regional climate and environmental security issues.^{xl} As natural disasters grow in frequency and intensity due to climate change, military missions are increasingly tasked to respond as climate is viewed as a threat multiplier.^{xli} At the same time, the US and Japan can cooperate on technological advances in CCS, hydrogen fuel, and renewable energy facilitating their cost reduction. The climate security fellow mentioned the untapped possibilities of US-Japan collaboration suggesting that switching to renewable energy from coal would boost Japan’s standing in the international community. Of course, cooperation between the two countries will not flow in one direction, and external pressure from the US is not the sole factor catalyzing Japan’s decarbonization efforts. Unlike the US, Japan has not backed out of signed international climate treaties in the past, notably hosting the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 that the US failed to ratify. Both countries can gain from cooperating on climate strategies.

The US and Japan can learn from each other about different approaches in decarbonization tactics. Reports have shown that Japan tends to focus on demand-side technologies and emissions reductions through energy efficiency, while the US targets supply-side improvements through policies like Obama’s Clean Power Plan.^{xlii} A former MOE official and renewable energy expert recommended that METI should follow US practices in which the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Lawrence Berkeley Lab make renewable cost data easily available through publishing annual tracked prices for wind and solar costs by sector.

The national clean energy policy initiated in December 2020 will largely be carried out through the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO). NEDO will create a fund through the fiscal stimulus package to develop technologies aimed at removing all carbon from Japan’s economy by 2050.^{xliii} NEDO was established after the oil crises in the 1970s and has become one of the largest research organizations in the country promoting innovative new technologies to address energy and environmental problems around the globe through working with businesses, academia, and government. NEDO will play a key role in the development of technologies that comprise the core of the GGS. These technologies include green hydrogen, small modular reactors (SMRs), and distributed energy like microgrids. While microgrid technology has not entered the mainstream of energy generation in Japan, microgrids have the potential to act as an effective resilience mechanism in a natural-disaster prone region. The success of NEDO’s Sendai microgrid was demonstrated during the aftermath of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake in providing energy to the affected areas after outages from the utility grid

persisted for days. The microgrid was able to supply continuous electricity and thermal energy to medical facilities and elderly homes in the immediate area.^{xliv} In the context of the pandemic and Japan's demographic challenges, uninterrupted power for ventilator operation is critical. In this way, microgrid technology proved an effective disaster-resilient alternative to nuclear energy in a post-pandemic society.

According to a TEPCO representative, the government expects microgrids to be a means of building disaster-resilient cities by operating them in specific areas but resilience must be enhanced through battery storage and emergency power storage. Replacing these backup power sources with hydrogen or another CO₂-free fuel will be necessary to be a sustainable means of emergency energy in times of disaster. Microgrid technology remains expensive making its potential limited in residential areas. However, TEPCO is promoting the deployment of renewable energy microgrids on Japan's remote islands where fuel transport and energy supply costs are high. Other case studies, including a smart grid project in New Mexico illustrates more opportunities for US-Japan cooperation in distributed renewable energy initiatives. The project implemented between 2009 and 2014 was a joint effort between 19 Japanese companies and American utilities, stakeholders, and research organizations in Los Alamos and Albuquerque, New Mexico.^{xlv}

Finally, grassroots environmental activism in Japan and transnational movements are another channel through which the US and Japan can cooperate to put pressure on government and corporations to uphold decarbonization commitments. Japan has a tradition of domestic environmental activism from antipollution protests dating back to the 1960s to the early 1970s that successfully reduced pollution within the country.^{xlvi} These movements expanded abroad and made Japan a global leader in environmental regulations in the 1970s but failing to form significant interest groups, these movements were overshadowed by the rapidly growing industrial sector by the 1980s.^{xlvii} Today, Tokyo-based nonprofits like the Renewable Energy Institute and coalitions including Japanese chapters of Greenpeace, Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, and No Coal Japan have migrated events and organizing tactics online since the pandemic.^{xlviii} While online events facilitate international cooperation in continuing the movement, the pandemic has posed serious challenges in the environmental movement, as a representative from NoPlasticJapan said, citing an uptick in single-use plastic.^{xlix}

Opportunities in International Development with Nature-based Solutions

While METI announced a commitment to decommissioning inefficient domestic coal plants this past summer, Japan continues to be the largest funder of coal abroad. Japanese banks including Mizuho, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, and Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group have lent a combined total of \$315 billion to coal projects mainly in Southeast Asia over the last two years.¹ At the same time, Japan is one of the founding members of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) since 1966 and has committed \$22.91 billion in capital subscription up to 2019.^{li} Japan established the Asian Clean Energy Fund (ACEF) as part of the Clean Energy Financing Partnership Facility. As of June 2020, the Asian Development Bank has supported over 250 clean energy projects through the Clean Energy Financing Partnership Facility.^{lii}

The US and Japan can coordinate on supporting low-carbon development in developing countries with financing mechanisms like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank

and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). A nascent area that Japan could be a leader on is in building climate resilience in India and Southeast Asia through nature-based solutions. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines nature-based solutions (NbS) as “actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”.^{liii} Building resilience to natural disasters that are increasing in intensity and frequency due to climate change will be central to an effective green economic recovery from the pandemic.

The ADB recognized the importance of NbS in a report citing a Global Commission on Adaptation study that estimates investing \$1.8 trillion globally over the next decade in building up climate and disaster resilience could create \$7.1 trillion in new benefits^{liv}. Nature-based solutions are key, cost-effective measures to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters while promoting socio-economic and cultural co-benefits to communities. A former US ambassador to the ADB cited in an F20 Foundation Nexus Report in a “Meeting the Challenge of Covid-19” seminar called for devising NbS actions to protect and sustainably manage the environment that simultaneously addresses sustainable development goals (SDGs) while improving climate and biodiversity goals. She states that these goals can be met through opposing the relaxation of environmental protection enforcement, maintaining support of civil society, the press, and political actions as a transparency system, providing income support for poverty-induced encroachment into nature, repurposing subsidies (like agriculture subsidies) to support NBS projects and public goods, investing in human capital, particularly youth, and mobilizing public international development organizations to help developing countries.

Japan has successfully implemented nature-based solution projects in the past to increase urban resilience after disasters. These ecosystem approaches along with investment in technologies should be scaled up as part of Japan’s Covid-19 green recovery plan. The support of nature-based solutions implemented through the “building back greener” post-disaster recovery plan following the Fukushima nuclear disaster is a useful case study in the context of disaster risk reduction plans in the current public health crisis. A study identified ecosystem services that were included in the post-disaster plans of 8 municipalities in Futaba County that showed cultural ecosystem benefits were integral to the recovery plan.^{lv} Ecosystem services identified included provisioning, regulating, habitat supporting, and cultural services. The analysis also revealed a lack of technical knowledge in assessing ecological services identifying a gap in expertise requiring further investment in research in this field.

Challenges and Recommendations on Subnational Cooperation under a Circular Economy Framework

The adoption of a circular economic framework is an effective strategy in combatting the structural demographic issues Japan faces as well as address climate change as a path to recovery from Covid-19. In 2018, Japan announced a Circular Ecological Sphere (CES) in its Fifth Basic Environment Plan that builds off of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).^{lvi} There are multiple methodologies to implementing the CES including rural-urban linkages, ecosystem-based solutions, decarbonization, and resource circulation.^{lvii} Another approach follows a “Triple R framework” that refers to response, recovery, and redesign in the context of the pandemic.^{lviii}

Studies analyzing the macroeconomic impacts of Covid-19 on supply chain vulnerabilities as well as consumer behavior and setbacks toward reaching SDG goals, demonstrate the value of circular economy schemes to meet climate targets as well as build pandemic resilience.^{lix} A circular framework is being considered as part of the Covid-19 economic recovery as Environment Minister Koizumi discussed with Dutch Minister van Veldhoven a circular transition at the World Economic Forum's Circular Economy Initiative Roundtable.^{lx}

The pandemic also poses challenges to achieving a circular economy. Japan has the second highest per capita plastic use in the world and the pandemic has caused a surge in medical supply waste.^{lxi} Compact Smart Cities policies to centralize city and development around transportation nodes to combat suburban sprawl in a shrinking population is complicated by the social distancing measures of the Covid-19 pandemic.^{lxii} Small Japanese companies and municipalities are promoting circular business models. Saga City in Kyushu and Kamikatsu in Shikoku have created a furniture recycling program and programs through a "Zero Waste Declaration", respectively.^{lxiii} While many businesses have adopted circular economy projects in Japan with international partners, many are struggling since the onset of the Covid-19 crisis.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has a role to play in promoting climate policy as it oversees international negotiations like the Paris Agreement. Both the climate security and council on foreign relations fellows emphasized the importance of subnational cooperation. With over 400 sister city relationships, there are many opportunities for Japan and the US to collaborate on climate change strategies at the regional level.^{lxiv} While EU treaties include mandated subnational cooperation, Japan has yet to establish subnational participation requirements. Still, an MOE survey conducted in 2002 revealed that 68% of subnational government officials have participated in some form of international cooperation on the environment.^{lxv} The Kitakyushu-Dalian bilateral efforts in the 1980s to combat pollution was recognized by MOFA as a successful example of subnational cooperation.^{lxvi} The Hawaii-Okinawa Clean Energy Partnership initiated in 2010 is also cited as a subregional cooperation initiative.^{lxvii} A workshop was held in 2020 put on by METI and the US Department of Energy through this partnership. Another example of this subnational cooperation is between the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization or NEDO of Japan and the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-BIZ) on electric vehicle demonstrations projects.^{lxviii} These projects aimed at promoting EV use by showing that EVs are suitable for long distance trips. In this way, lessons from compact and zero-carbon city initiatives in Japan can be shared and expanded through collaboration with their US counterparts.

Future Challenges and Conclusion

The Covid-19 crisis is ongoing and strategies to counter its negative effects and mitigate against future pandemics are still in development. The combination crisis of Covid-19 and climate change means that the post-pandemic recovery is a decisive moment for mitigating the impact of climate change. Japan's reliance on coal have been the target of international criticism and the success of past climate policies have been limited. The immediate economic response to the pandemic focused on supporting grey infrastructure. Most recently however, Japan nearly doubled its ambition in decarbonization targets pledging a 46% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030 after the international climate summit held by President Biden.^{lxix}

While the “Green Growth Strategy” is an effort in the right direction to decarbonize and catalyze the energy transition, the emphasis on long-term targets, innovation, and research and development make it difficult to evaluate its efficacy. Unlike green stimulus packages in other economies such as the EU and the US, the GGS avoids immediate large costs to the economy. In contrast to President Biden’s infrastructure plan, the GGS does not address the operation and construction costs of building much needed transmission lines for offshore wind, of which Japan has great potential capacity. It is hard to measure the success of these strategies as new developments arise.

In a country with a dwindling population exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic and projections of slower rates of future electricity demand, a plan fully focused on growth may be misguided. Instead, strategies centered on sustainability and circularity may prove more successful. These initiatives can be executed in partnership with the international community, particularly with the US, to collaborate on green energy projects and sustainable policies on the subnational and regional level.

Stories of Japan’s successful containment of the pandemic without strict lockdowns like those implemented in the EU have now been eclipsed with reports of Japan’s most deadly phase of the pandemic in Spring 2021. Over a year since the WHO declared a pandemic in March 2020, Japan is entering a third state of emergency with the highest rates of infections since the onset. Just over 1% of the population is fully vaccinated as of May 2021 with the slowest vaccine rollout of OECD countries only a few months ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.^{1xx} It is paramount that governments continue to address the acute public health needs while also maintaining the priorities of a decarbonized economic reconstruction.

II. Appendix

List of Interviews

Interview Number	Description	Date
1	The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research	04/12/2021
2	Center for Climate and Security	03/25/2021
3	PARI at University of Tokyo	03/26/2021
4	Nuclear Energy Company	03/27/2021
5	Asian Development Bank	04/05/2021
6	METI	03/30/2021
7	UC Berkeley Energy Resources Group/formerly MOE	04/06/2021
8	JEPIC-USA	05/05/2021
9	TEPCO	03/31/2021
10	Council on Foreign Relations	04/09/2021

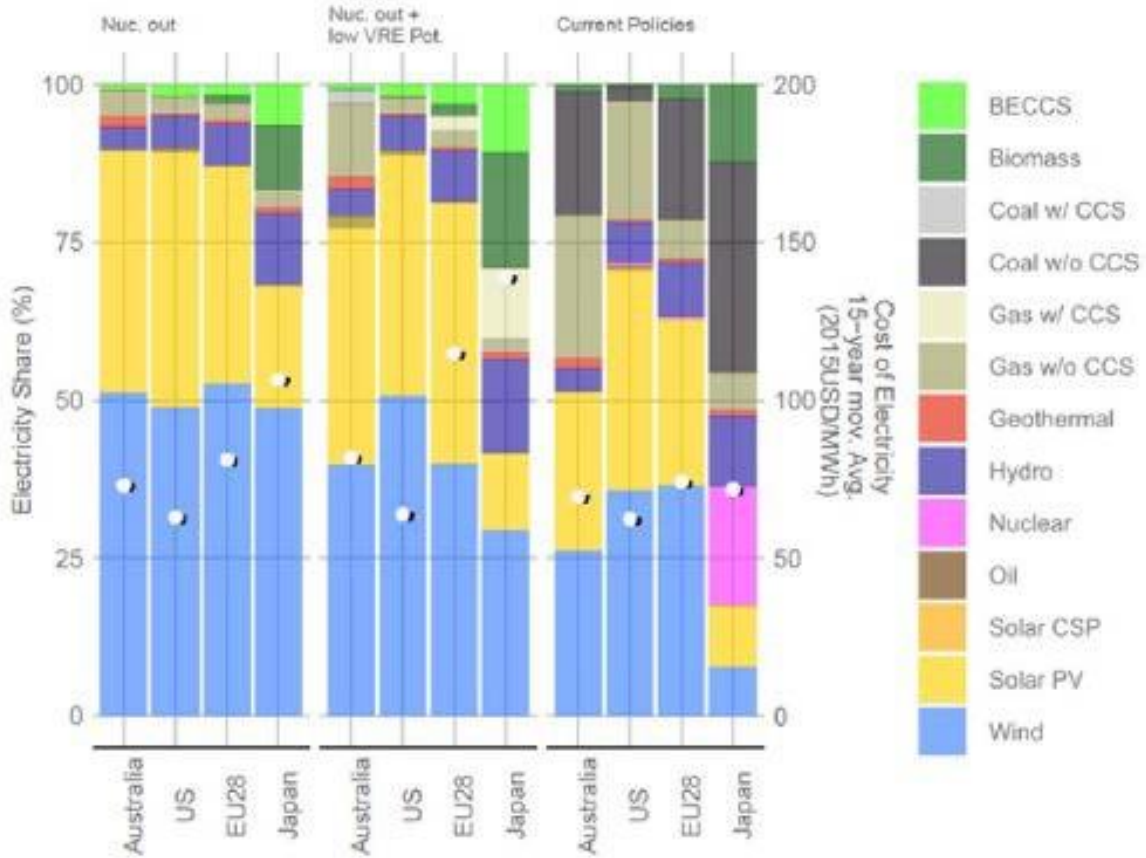
Charts and Figures

Figure 3: Greenness of Covid-19 Economic Stimulus Packages across Countries



(Source: Vivid Economics, February 2021)

Figure 4: Different Energy Mix Scenarios for 2050



(Source: Felix Schreyer et al 2020 *Environ. Res. Lett.* 15 114016 “Common but Differentiated leadership: Strategies and challenges for carbon neutrality by 2050 across industrialized economies”)

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The Power of Japan's Cultural Diplomacy: Two Case Studies

Shuojun Dong

Introduction

Lacking a hard-power option in its foreign policy, Japan has long used the tools of soft power as a means of enhancing its diplomatic ties with countries across the globe. Among its soft-power tools, the one most successfully used has been cultural diplomacy. In assessing the efficacy of that tool, this paper examines the United States and China as case studies.ⁱ In recent years, a major tectonic shift in global geopolitics has been occurring with the rise of China and the relative decline of the United States as the sole superpower in the post-cold war period. Likewise, public diplomacy, spearheaded by cultural exchanges and the like, has become the driving force for Japan, as the US footprint decreases in the world. The four years of isolationism under President Donald Trump have escalated that trend.

As the US seemed to withdraw within its domestic cocoon, China has automatically stepped in. Of necessity, the shift has compelled Japan to attempt to increase the quality and effect of its own soft-power signature policies, including cultural diplomacy centered on the exporting of aspects of its popular culture or goods designed to have universal appeal. So far, Japan has been holding its own, and its pop culture is held in high esteem across the world.ⁱⁱ

The arrival of COVID-19 and the ensuing pandemic that ravaged nations around the world has arguably been a game-changer affecting the dynamics of international diplomacy and the soft-power tools applied to carrying foreign policies. Since the arrival of COVID-19 in December 2019, the quality of international relations among countries has been altered, with the eruption of nationalism in some and emergence in altruism in others. The US under President Joe Biden has just weighed in by committing a half-billion vaccine shots to poorer countries seriously affected by the pandemic. Relations between Japan and the US have actually improved during the COVID-19 crisis, despite the chaotic period that marked 2020. But the pandemic has had a negative impact on the US' relations with other countries, as seen in the recent eroding of the relationship between the US and China.

Cultural exchange is not a recent phenomenon. In the distant past, culture and religion or religious philosophy were inseparable. Many countries in the distant past thrived from their exchanges or imports of cultural goods and religious ideas, as seen for example in Japan's imports of Buddhist art and culture from Korea and China for centuries before closing off its ties during the Tokugawa period. The ancient model of cultural interaction goes back thousands of years in global history. During the 13th century, when the Mongols revived Silk Road contacts, Marco Polo and the European traders who followed tapped into the rich cultural well of Asian societies.ⁱⁱⁱ At that time, Japan, too, was busy adopting the best aspects of Asian high culture that often had its origin in ancient India.^{iv}

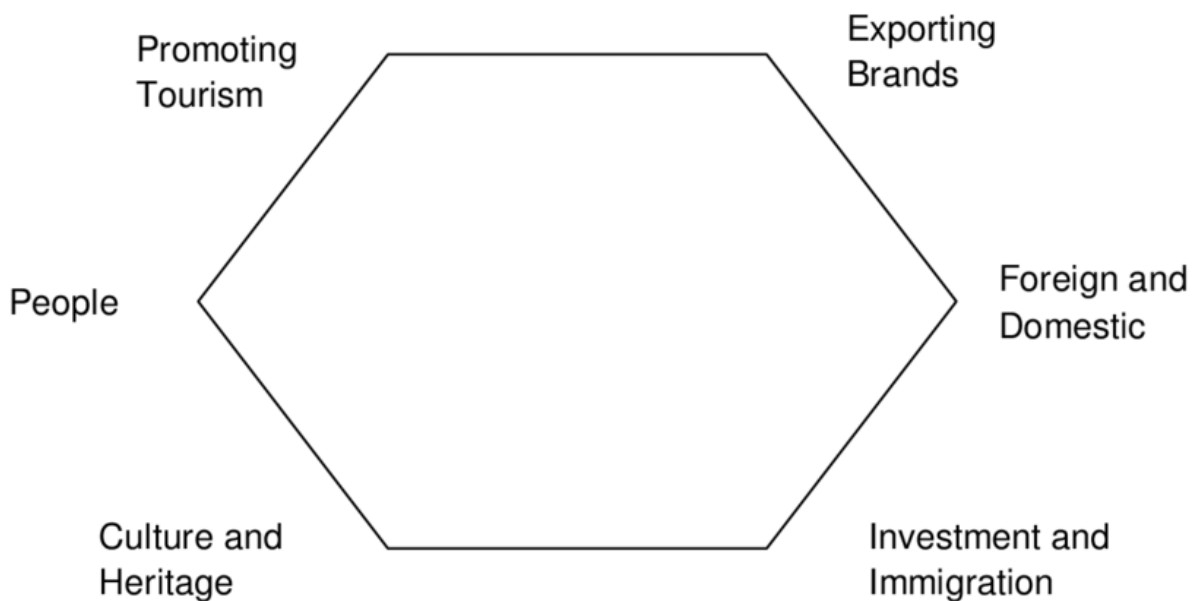
In modern times, however, the concept or main framework of culture definition in many countries has been changing along with the evolution of societies and technology. Such changes have influenced cultural diplomacy between Japan and the US, as well as with China.^v By

examining Japan's use of soft power, this paper aims to evaluate how the country's cultural diplomacy has evolved in recent decades, and how Japanese culture as a result has had a significant effect in the world. There seem to be few countries left in the world that do not know the contents and appeal of Japan's popular culture. This study, largely based on existing studies of Japan's public diplomacy and cultural exchanges, will evaluate the influence of such public policy on relations with China and the US, while exploring the effectiveness as well as the weaknesses of such policies. In the conclusion, the paper will explore ways to use cultural tools to enhance friendly ties with those nations.

Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power

Social development greatly influences the nature of relations among countries. With globalization, the rate of cultural exchanges between countries has increased, enhancing mutual understanding and, presumably, toleration of each other's uniqueness. One of the techniques used by countries to facilitate such understanding is cultural exchange. Although cultural diplomacy is subjective in nature, it is described as an approach, in which two or more countries exchange crucial ideas, traditions, and values to strengthen the quality of their relationships.^{vi} Diplomacy can be significant in promoting cooperation between countries within the countries with the merge of various cultures in one geographical location. Cultural diplomacy may be practiced by either private or public sectors.^{vii} On the same note, some individuals can be able to practice cultural diplomacy either knowingly or unknowingly.^{viii} Elements of cultural diplomacy are flexibly changing from one country to another thus making it one of the subjective topics in diplomatic relations. Cultural diplomacy might include but not be limited to arts, sports, tourism, health, heritage, culture, and sociology-cultural policies.

Figure 1. The Paradigm of Cultural Diplomacy



(Sterling, "A New Era in Cultural Diplomacy")

The paradigm that defines a country's culture entails various concepts as shown in Figure 1. The first concept outlines the quality of tourism in a given country. Tourism that facilitates the movement of individuals from one geographical region to another influences the quality of cultural diplomacy between countries. Tourism allows individuals to visit different countries and interact with a variety of individuals, while learning about new cultures during the process. However, cultural interaction changes according to the type of tourism in the country.

Heritage tourism has a high rate of cultural democracy, as compared to other types. Heritage and cultural tourism allow individuals to visit a country and learn about a new culture thus ensuring the interaction between different communities. Unlike other forms of traditional models, cultural democracy is more controlled by the actions of people as opposed to the actions of a government. Cultural democracy uses cohesion instead of other techniques of strengthening bilateral relations.^{ix} A large percentage of the success of cultural democracy is controlled by the quality of cohesion between people from different countries. Culture and heritage also have a significant role in facilitating cultural democracy. Different countries have various cultures with each having its own characteristics and beliefs. The interaction between individuals, which allows for the interaction of culture and heritage, can facilitate a high degree of cultural democracy. Despite the sophisticated dynamics and composure of cultural democracy, it entails the triangulation of both government policies and people. The quality and complexity of policies introduced by the government facilitate the degree of cultural democracy to a large extent in the country.^x Countries have introduced effective foreign policies such as the increase of cultural sites and investment in education with numerous exchange programs with the primary focus of enhancing the quality of cultural diplomacy. The component evaluates what the country is importing or exporting cultural-wise and its influence on the quality of bilateral relations. The paradigm that explains cultural democracy is subjective in nature thus changing from one country to another. In addition, it depends on the rate and flexibility of the country in adopting new social policies and frameworks.

Japan's Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power

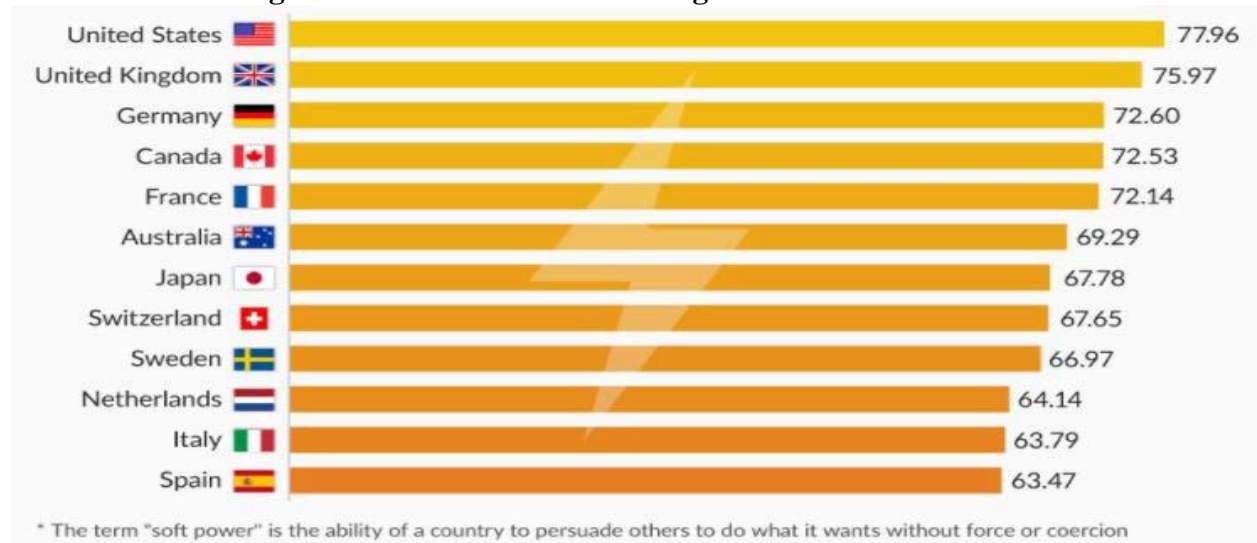
It is not true to say that Japan in the early decades after the war had no cultural diplomacy to speak of. Although the government's early public diplomacy programs were modest, with cultural diplomacy consisted mainly of promoting flower arrangement, tea ceremony and other aspects of traditional culture that projected the image of a peaceful country, popular cultural exports – cinema, literature, music, etc. -- continued to rise throughout the 1950s and 1960s to reach most Western countries and beyond. The government's emphasis remained in promoting traditional arts like Kabuki and Bunraku. There was a conscious avoidance, though, of promoting samurai culture, which was seen as evoking Japan's militarist past. However, some of Japan's best movies marketed overseas during that early period were samurai dramas and epics that won international fame. Indeed, one might say that from the start, Japanese popular culture, thanks to expert marketing by the innovative creators of such goods, has led the way in promoting a positive image of Japan in the minds of younger generations across the world.

The government's establishment of the Japan Foundation in 1972 provided a great boost to Japan's cultural diplomacy. The foundation's mandate was to provide assistance for Japanese

language education abroad; cultural exchange, including exchanges among artists and musicians; and the encouragement of Japanese studies abroad.

In recent decades, Japan's cultural interaction and policies have been developing pop culture that young people in Japan and other countries greatly enjoy. By the 1990s, Japanese society was evolving, and able to accommodate different ideologies and theories of social growth, thus increasing the rate of cultural interaction with Asia and beyond.^{xi} The rate of social interaction was facilitated by the increase of globalization through technological advances, thus promoting the rate of Japanese citizens interacting with other individuals all over the world.

Figure 2. The Soft Power Ranking of Countries as of 2016



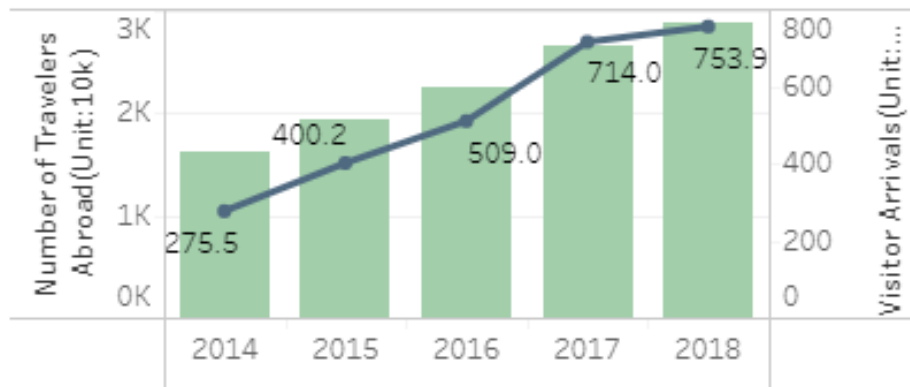
(Winkler, "Soft Power Is Such a Benign Animal", 483)

Thanks in great part to the evolution of a universal culture as the country globalized and to the smart marketing and exporting of widely popular cultural goods, Japan now enjoys one of the highest soft power rankings in the world. The soft power ranking shows the ability of a country or an individual to persuade another without the use of force by employing cultural interaction, for example. Japan has a soft power rating of 67.78% thus indicating a high level of cultural diplomacy with leading cultural and democratic countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom having a value of 77.96% and 75.96%.^{xii} The analysis indicates that Japan has been able to introduce various cultural policies that have earned it a high ranking. Tourism, educational exchange, religion, art, and music have been matched by the growing international attraction of such pop culture goods as anime, manga, video games, and “cute” (*kawaii*) goods like Hello Kitty.

Travel and tourism have become some of Japan’s biggest money-makers, at one time rising to 7 percent of the nation’s GDP. Tourism has brought huge numbers of Asians to Japan, with the experience of visiting Japan opening the eyes of many to the treasure house of Japanese culture and society. The beauties of nature, well-preserved historical heritage sites, fine lodging, tasty foods, and excellent transportation have made Japan a global attraction for tourists.

Figure 3. Tourism Growth in Japan (Number of Visitor Arrivals)

■ Trends in Number of Overseas Travelers and Visitor Arrivals



(Takamitsu Jimura, *World Heritage Sites: Tourism, Local Communities, and Conservation Activities* (Egham: CABI, 2018), 25)

Tourists have acted as one of the main catalysts for improving the rate of cultural interaction and diplomacy in Japan. In 2014, Japan recorded an average of 2.75 million visitors with the rate increasing to reach 7.5 million visitors in 2018. Naturally, the COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a blow to tourism until the crisis is over.

These tourists visit distinct heritage sites that represent different aspects of Japan's rich culture over the ages, with Kyoto, Nara, Kamakura, Nikko and of course Tokyo being the favorites.^{xiii} Kyoto, with a history of over 1,000 years of imperial culture, is the top tourist attraction, drawing more than ten million visitors from within Japan and abroad.^{xiv} Tokyo's blend of ultra-modern architecture and traditional sites gives tourists the best of both of Japan's worlds.

Sports have also become one of Japan's most exciting contributions to its cultural diplomacy, starting with the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 and continuing with the internationalization of Japanese baseball, exporting some of the best players and importing some of the best from the United States in return. Japanese players now excel in many Olympic sports, as well, such as swimming, skating, and acrobatic displays. Japanese soccer players rank among the top in that international sport. Traditional sports that Japan has exported or internationalized include sumo, kendo, karate, aikido, and judo. The Olympics and countless international competitions have allowed the international community to learn various aspects of Japanese culture in recent decades.

Popular culture is where Japan excels. Cultural exports include cinema, cuisine, television programs, anime, manga, video games, music, and goods considered "cute" (*kawaii*). These goods sell themselves in overseas markets and do not need promotion efforts by the government. Still, with their universal applicability to any country, they have enhanced the quality of cultural diplomacy in the world. First and foremost is J-Pop culture. Although J-Pop refers to Japanese pop music, it covers music of genres beyond what's typically classed as "pop". This includes rock, R&B and hip hop. The term "J-Pop" started appearing around the late 1980s and early 1990s, gaining popularity in the world with millions of fans. One example of a J-pop success all over the world was a song known as "*PonPonPon*" which came out originally in 2011.^{xv} It scored at the top of the hit chart in the United States (according to *iTunes*).^{xvi} The song was able to show

Japanese style and fashion to the rest of the world. It attracted more than 50 million views in YouTube. The song was able to attract to ensure cultural diplomacy by showing the world attributes about Japan culture including fashion taste. In 2013, Kyary the musician for “*PonPonPon*” embarked on her first world tour, which included the United Kingdom and the US, demonstrating a unique aspect of Japanese pop culture to the world.

How Has Japanese Culture Influenced China?

Educational Exchange

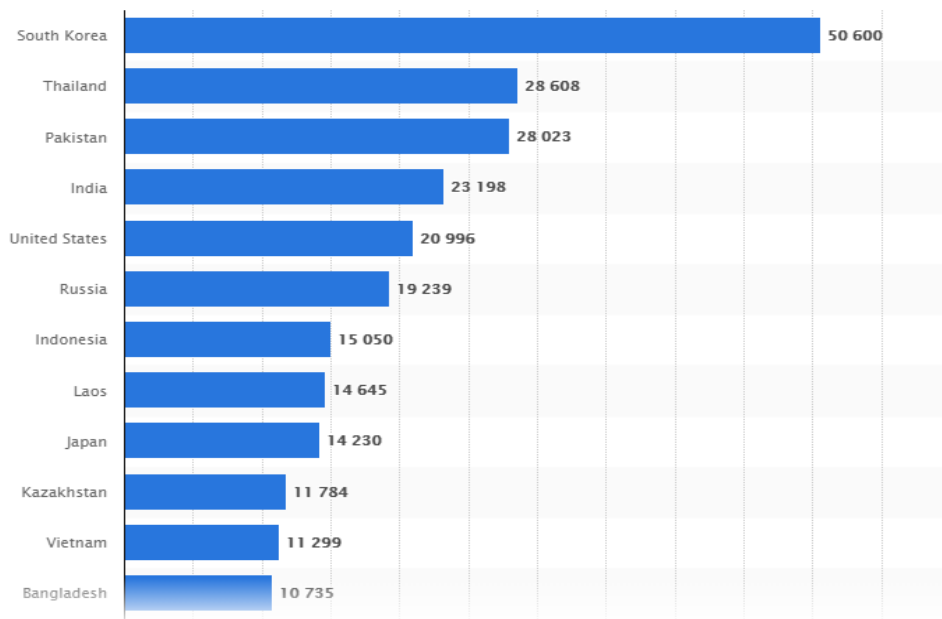
Despite the long history of cultural and religious exchanges between China and Japan over the centuries, that amiability did not survive into modern times. The two countries fought savagely with each other twice since the late 19th century, with the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945 leaving bitter memories among the Chinese people. It would take more than the return of cultural diplomacy to rebuild bilateral ties in the late 20th, early 21st centuries.

Japan and China normalized diplomatic relations only in 1972 as a result of the US’ surprise normalization of ties with Beijing under the Nixon administration. The result was initially successful, not just in the restoration of trade and economic ties, but also with the creation of effective cultural relations.^{xvii} The introduction of economic reforms by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 ushered in a period of good feelings between the two countries, with Japan initiating a massive foreign aid program to boost China’s modernization efforts. It was also the beginning of educational exchanges that have continued to flourish for decades. To start, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) founded the Japanese Language Research Centre in Beijing as a part of the Institute of Foreign Languages. Support for language education was designed to enhance the quality of diplomatic ties, and become a springboard to young people in both countries to study each other’s culture and language.^{xviii} Japan’s use of education as a soft-power tool was a success story that brought the two societies closer together.

There were serious bumps along the way. The Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989 disrupted the growing relationship between the two countries. Later, due to the impact of territorial rows (since 2010) and the insistence of some Japanese prime ministers to visit Yasukuni Shrine, where war criminals are enshrined, the number of Japanese students in China decreasing to a low of 14,230 in 2018. Other countries in Asia such as South Korea, Thailand, and India have a much higher number of students studying in China as compared to Japan.^{xix} The long-term negative impact on cultural ties and mutual understanding cannot be overstated.

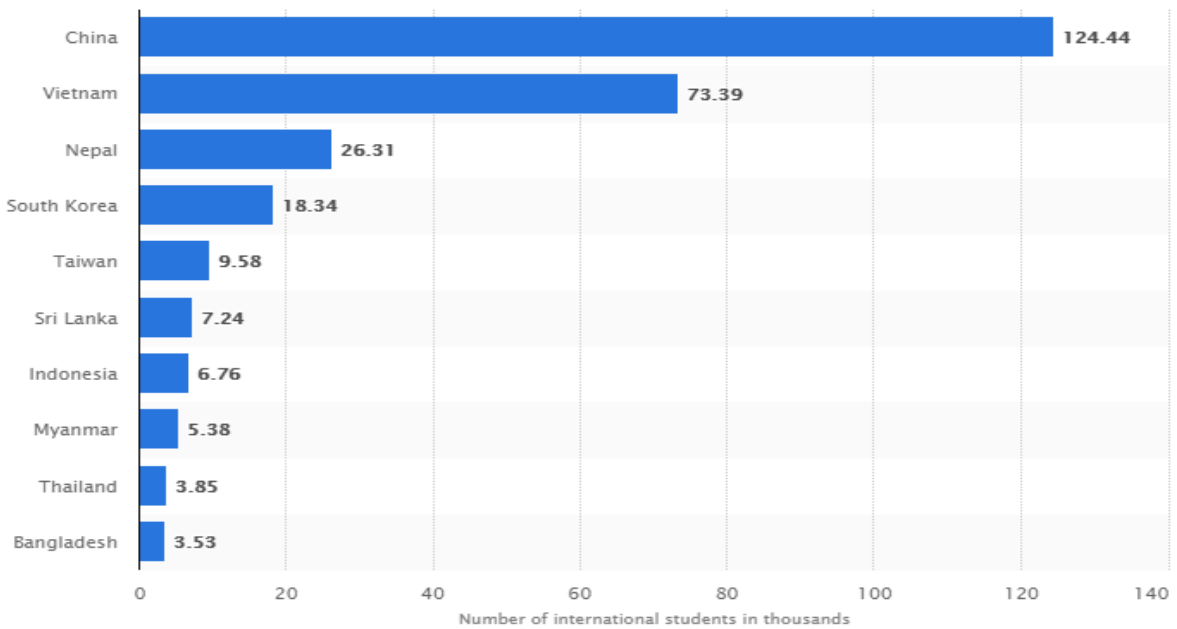
On the other hand, the trend of Chinese young people studying in Japan has been remarkably different. Before the pandemic, Chinese students - about 124,440 - seemed to be flocking to Japanese universities, and, in fact, were making up a majority of all international students in Japan. One must assume that economic opportunities may have been a driving force. But China has a huge population, and so, in relative terms, the number of young people studying in Japan is rather small. It is unclear how much of a multiplier effect those foreign students will have on bilateral ties as a whole.

Figure 4. Number of International Students in China



(Statista Research Department,
"Number of International Students in Japan in 2018, by Major Nationality")

Figure 5. Number of International Students in Japan

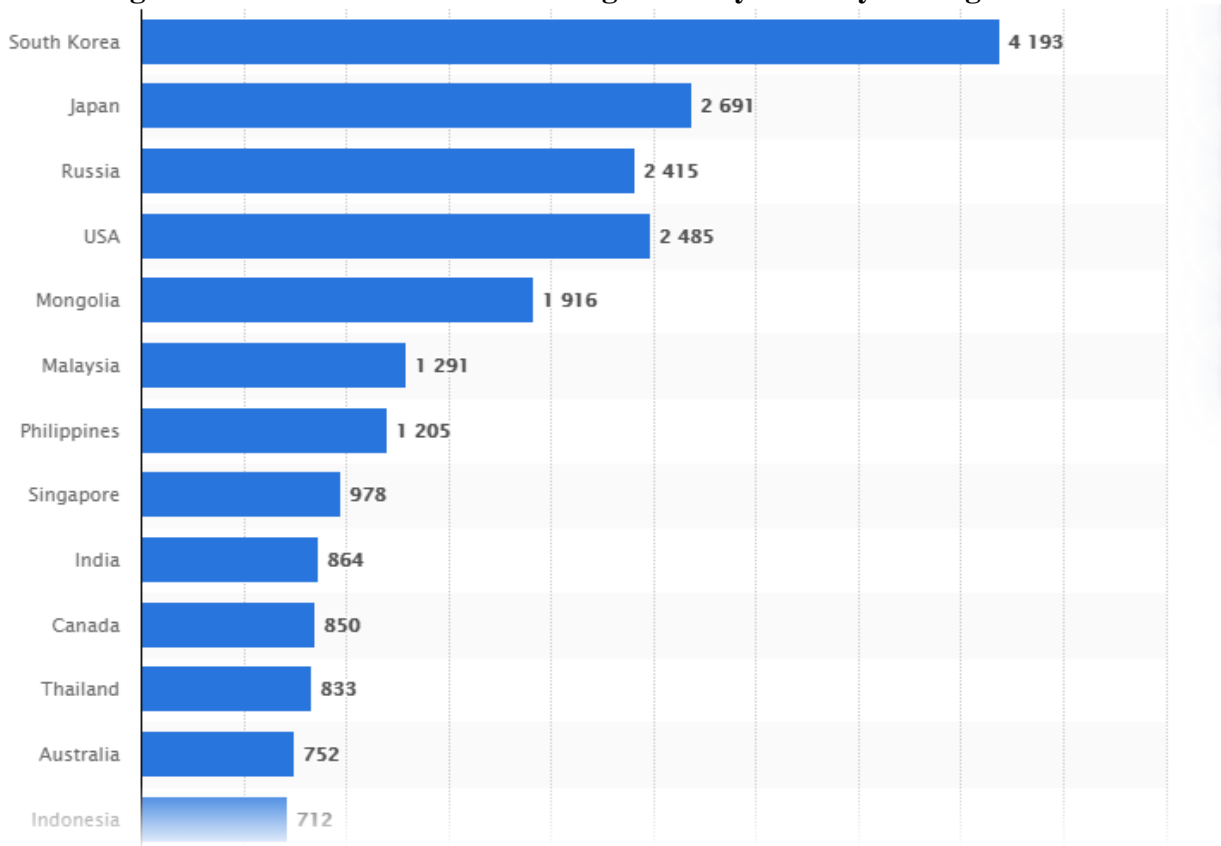


(Textor, "Number of Foreign Students Studying in China in 2018, by Country of Origin,"
Statista, May 27, 2020
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/430717/china-foreign-students-by-country-of-origin/>.)

Given their shared historical, religious, philosophical and artistic backgrounds, Japan and China have a natural affinity for each other's culture even today. One might even say that Japanese popular culture prevalent in China today is able to neutralize the influence of Western culture there. China has sought to limit the influence of Western culture with control over the Internet and strict media regulations. The gap ironically has allowed Japanese pop culture to penetrate and gain popularity among China's youth, even affecting their lifestyle. Japanese cultural goods have contributed to a new consumerism in China.^{xx} Its middle class resonated with Japanese popular culture because it matches their aspirations and material goals in life.

China's youth to a certain extent have become Japanophiles, adopting a subculture that is characterized by wearing Japanese fashions and becoming avid fans of anime and imported TV dramas.^{xxi} That subculture has managed to bring about a positive image of Japan that did not exist before.^{xxii} Naturally, the popularity of Japanese culture in China will do little to erase Japan's almost indelible negative image due to the atrocities carried out by Japanese military during the Sino-Japanese War. In the eyes of many Chinese, Japan will have to do more than it has so far in order to change bitter memories of the past.

Figure 6. Number of Tourists Visiting China by Country of Origin in 2019



(C. Textor, "Most Important Countries of Origin of Foreign Tourists in China in 2018," Statista, March 12, 2021 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/234149/tourists-in-china-by-country-of-origin/>, 1)

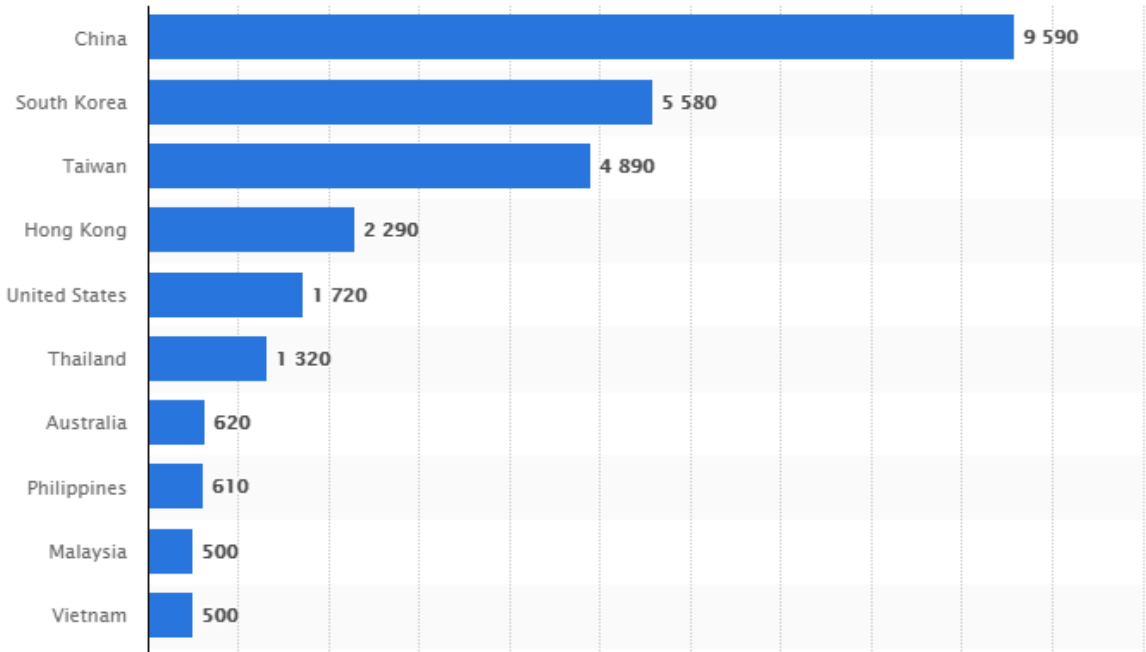
As shown in Figure 6, the number of tourists visiting China from Japan has been gradually increasing. Such cultural exchange has been stimulated by a common cultural background and the vast number of World Heritage historical sites in China. In 2019, China welcomed more than 2.6 million visitors from Japan, the second major source of tourists. In its turn, Japan welcomed more than 9.5 million visitors from China, outstripping by far the number of travelers to Japan from any other country.^{xxiii} However, tourism has been worsening for the past two years, obviously mainly due to the pandemic-related restrictions on travel.^{xxiv} But a general decline in tourism also mirrors the worsening of bilateral ties as the two countries face off over territorial claims, as well as political issues. The decline also reflects the slowdown in the economies of both countries during the pandemic.

Japan’s Diplomatic Relations with the United States

For the United States and Japan, World War II memories – bookended by the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and the American atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – long complicated overall relations between the two countries following the US Occupation.^{xxv} Formal reconciliation for the war did not occur symbolically until 2016, when President Barack Obama visited Hiroshima, followed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe making a pilgrimage to Pearl Harbor.

Japan and the US during the postwar period installed robust public diplomacy programs, centered on cultural and educational exchanges. In recent years, Japan’s pop culture in the forms of anime, manga, cinema, literature, cuisine and martial arts have made great inroads into Americana, and in turn, American music, blockbuster movies, literature, and foods have firmly established themselves in contemporary Japanese lifestyles.

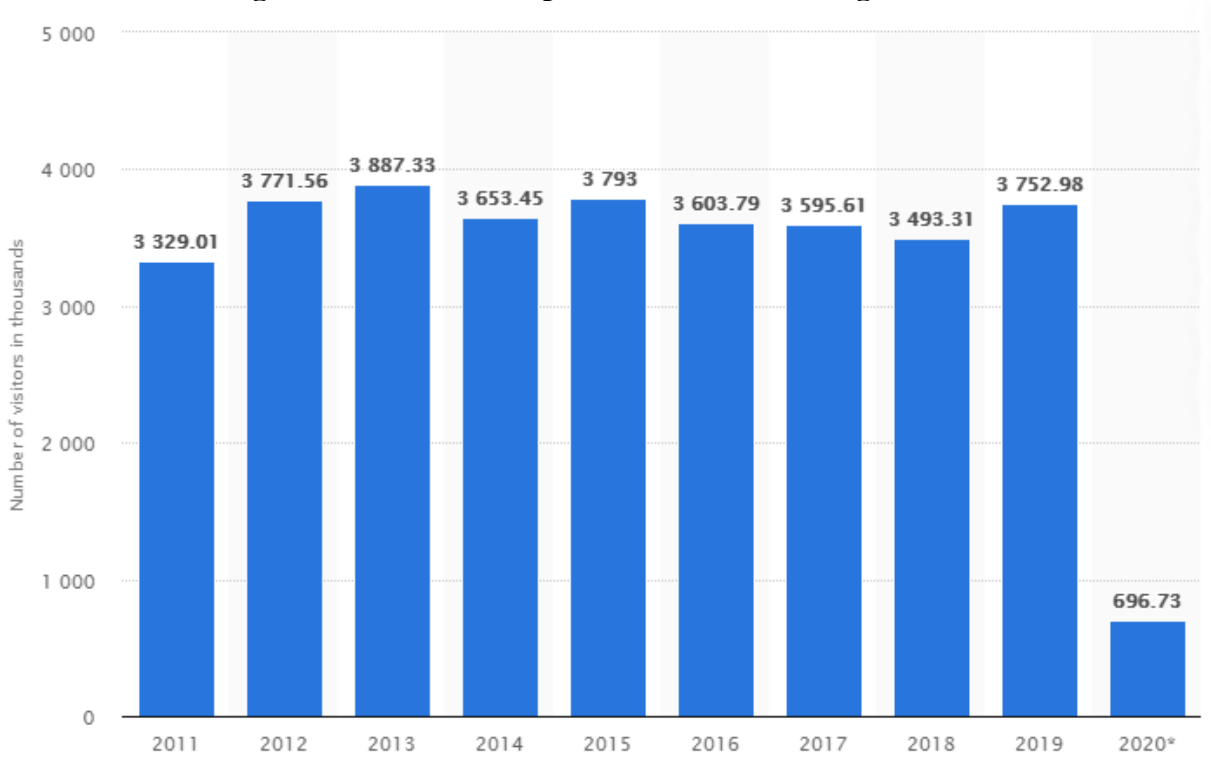
Figure 7. Number of Tourists According to Country Visiting Japan



(Statista Research Department, "Number of International Visitors to Japan in 2019, by Region of Origin")

Although the pandemic upended travel between Japan and the US during 2020-2021, tourism until then was starting to boom between the two countries. The chart above shows that more than 1.7 million tourists from the US visited Japan in 2019 alone, making it one of the top ten destinations. Americans visiting Japan are exposed to the finest aspects of its culture and history.^{xxvi}

Figure 8. Number of Japanese Tourists Visiting the US



(Lock, "Number of Visitors to the U.S. from Japan 2011-2020," Statista, March 16, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/214798/number-of-visitors-to-the-us-from-japan/>)

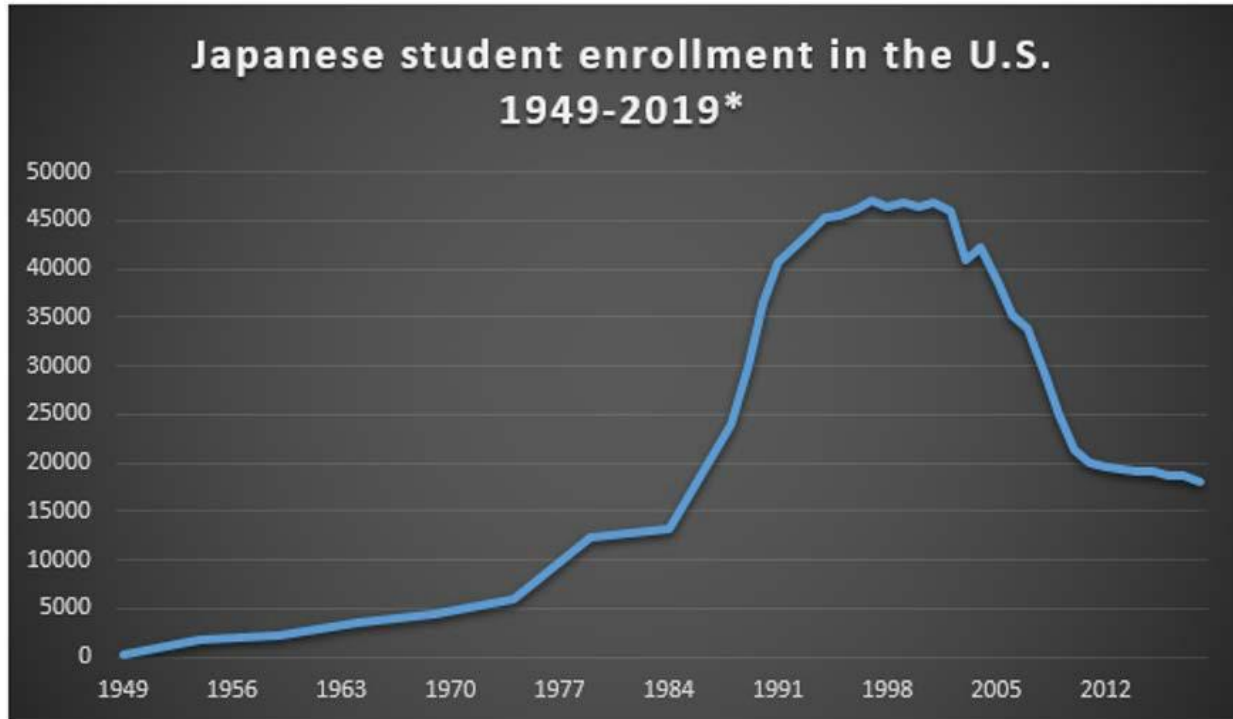
The number of Japanese tourists visiting the US has been somewhat stagnant, as shown in figure 5. In 2011, approximately 3.329 million Japanese tourists traveled to the US. By 2019, though, it had only increased to 3.75 million. Japanese tourists were going elsewhere. The pandemic in 2020 reduced the number to less than 700,000. The low rate of increase in the number of Japanese tourists before that suggests that the disappointing trend is not likely to go away soon.^{xxvii}

Tourism has allowed Americans and Japanese to greater appreciate and understand each other's culture, leading to improving attitudes. In the 1990s, Japanese had a low opinion of Americans, considering them too materialistic and lacking ideas and creativity. The ugly American image in Japan was probably shaped by the ferocious trade disputes between the two countries in the 1980s. Tourism over time may have helped change US opinion and vice versa to favor a positive image.

There is no shortage of educational exchange programs between the US and Japan, some dating back to the 1950s. There is no better way to promote cultural awareness and sensitivity. One of the oldest programs was educational exchange funding by the Rockefeller Foundation,

originally devised as a technique for fighting communism by promoting democratic institutions. Through American soft-power initiatives, Japan received educational-exchange support, being one of the countries that benefited from the Rockefeller Foundation to the amount of more than \$37.6 million. More than 19% of the money received under the Rockefeller Foundation was used for historical and cultural education.

Figure 9. Japanese Students' Enrollment in the US^{xxviii}

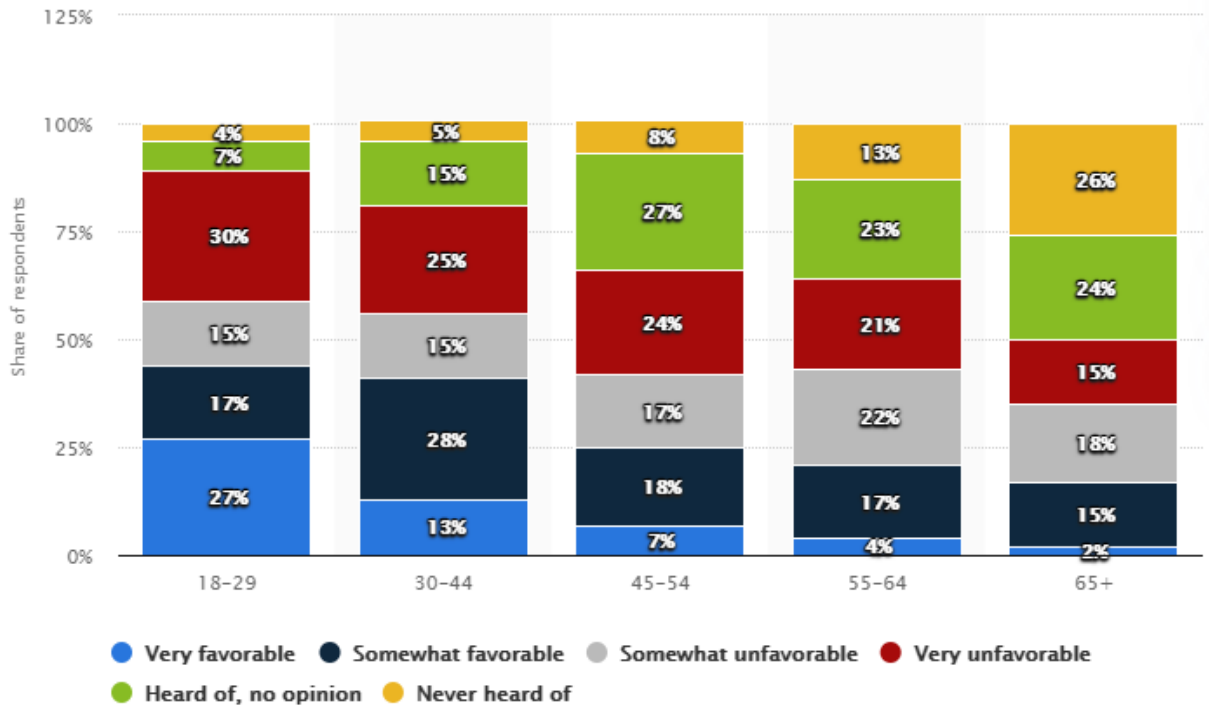


(Statista Research Department, "Number of International Students in Japan in 2018, by Major Nationality")

The programs, however, have been woefully undersubscribed. The number of Japanese students enrolled in various colleges and universities in the United States has been decreasing since around the year 2000, as shown in figure 9. The decline has been attributed to a variety of causes, including the rising cost of studying in the US, declining English-language skills among young people in Japan, and a low perception in Japan about the quality of education in the US. Demographic trends in Japan, marked by a shrinking number of babies born, mean that the supply of young people available for foreign study is also declining.

If there is one area of cultural interaction that has been successful, it is sports diplomacy. Baseball in particular has truly contributed to mutual interest and understanding. Many of Japan's best baseball stars, like Ichiro, have made a successful second career in Major League Baseball in the US. Sports as one of the social interaction activities have contributed to the growth of cultural diplomacy between the US and Japan.^{xxix} Japanese teams, too, have benefited from a steady stream of talented players coming from the US.

Figure 10. Anime Attitude and Public Opinion in the United States^{xxx}



(Julia Stoll, "Attitudes to Anime Movies among Adults the United States as of January 2020, by Age Group," Statista, January 13, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1095757/anime-movie-opinions-us-by-age/>)

Japanese animation (anime), starting with Osamu Tezuka's Astro Boy in the 1960s, has continued to capture large audiences of young people in the United States. Popular anime imported from Japan became mainstream in the 1990s with such series as Dragon Ball, Sailor Moon, and Gundam Wing. Pokémon also became a big hit as a video game. In addition, more sophisticated animation, like Hayao Miyazaki's Princess Mononoke, were major box office successes in the US. According to a survey by Statista, 44% of Americans aged between 18-29 years have a positive attitude toward anime movies and TV series.^{xxxi} On the other hand, 41% of Americans aged between 30-44 have heard and had a positive attitude to anime movies and series. But only 17% of people aged 65 years or more have a positive attitude toward anime, not surprising since such pop culture is aimed at younger audiences.^{xxxii}

The avid interest in manga and anime by American youth is not only a stimulus for further cultural exchange, as interest is sparked in other aspects of Japanese modern and traditional culture. Some of the youths may be stimulated to learn Japanese, visit or even study in Japan, and perhaps go on to colleges and universities where they take courses on Japan.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Japan's Ties with the US and China

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in early 2020 and continue to wreak havoc with public diplomacy efforts well into 2021. In the case of Sino-Japanese relations, the pandemic initially seems to have strengthened political ties, but that was short-lived. Cultural diplomacy will have to wait until the pandemic is over before restarting.^{xxxiii} In the meantime, diplomacy remains in limbo. Chinese President Xi Jinping was expected to visit Japan in April 2020, signaling a return to friendlier ties after 14 years of standoffs, tensions, and mutual distrust, sparked especially by the territorial row. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan, China, the Japanese government was able to support the country to cope with the pandemic by sending Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The donation of PPE was an act of humanitarian aid that was aimed at becoming a catalyst in promoting warmer relations between China and Japan.^{xxxiv} First, the initiative by the Japanese government aimed at lending a hand to the Chinese government during the crisis, and in so doing, build a relationship of trust between the two countries. The Japanese government even went so far as to attach a compassionate poem on the PPE boxes.^{xxxv}

But a year later, despite such gestures, relations between Tokyo and Beijing are once again frosty, mostly due to escalating tensions over territorial and security issues. And the window for a Xi visit to Japan may have closed, even though 2022 is the 50th anniversary of the normalization of Japan-China ties.

The Future of Japan's Soft Power toward China and the US

How far might a reinvigorated public diplomacy program go in improving Japan's ties with China? Even with increased budgeting, Tokyo's efforts are not likely to yield startling results. Once the pandemic recedes, tourism will pick up, but slowly at first. And there is not likely to be a burst of educational exchanges if political ties remain stagnant at best. Moreover, US and Japanese policies toward China seem to be converging as the Biden administration takes a harder-line position toward Beijing than its predecessor. Mutual concerns over China's apparent moves toward Taiwan are now the focus of policy attention. Moreover, there is still a holdover from the Trump administration's blame-China stance that continues to target the spread of COVID-19 to a Wuhan lab. Such rumors have made it even more challenging for diplomatic ties to improve.^{xxxvi}

Still, it must be emphasized that cultural exports of pop culture, particularly from Japan to China, as well as the US, have never depended on government money and programs. The successful marketing of *kawaii* goods, anime, manga and video games are the result of savvy companies that know what young people want. Technology, creativity and smart marketing beat government programs any day in reaching a global audience, and by so doing, create positive images of Japan in the minds of millions of satisfied customers.

Technology is playing a crucial role in enhancing cultural diplomacy between Japan and China, and the US. By using the Internet, starting in the 1990s, Japan was able to offer contents that introduced young Chinese and others in the middle class to social platforms that improved public perceptions of Japanese society.^{xxxvii} During the COVID-19 pandemic, online communication channels kept going, as physical travel stopped. It worked both ways, with one of China's social platforms, TikTok, bringing Chinese culture to Japan.^{xxxviii} Japanese and Chinese

citizens were able to share ideas on the quality of life during the lockdown thus entertaining themselves at home. Twitter and Facebook also added to social exchanges across borders.^{xxxix}

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Soft power and public diplomacy that tap into popular culture and modern technology have become for Japan and China the mainstays for positively influencing the views of the public in each other's country. Young people are grabbing up pop culture as fast as it is created and marketed. Governments are going along with the flow by promoting cultural goods that are already on the global market. In addition, the Internet, with or without government content, has become the main channel of communication between people in both countries, focusing on the social media. Japan, through cultural diplomacy, has been able to gradually change its overseas image as a wartime aggressor. China's public diplomacy, too, has been aimed at improving its image with foreign audiences by broadcasting its traditional, as well as popular, culture. Tourism has become for both countries a way of introducing the best of both cultures and societies, and public attitudes toward each other's country have been improving. Declines in tourism, due to the pandemic, diplomatic disputes and their effect on public attitudes are regrettable. Government programs to encourage tourism will hopefully help bring tourism back on track. The same may be said about educational exchanges, which over the long run are critical for improving mutual understanding and good will.

The following policy changes are suggested for Japan to implement to increase the effectiveness of Japanese cultural diplomacy with China and the US:

1. The Japanese government needs to facilitate and invest more in cultural tourism, and not just promote shopping sprees at Ginza stores. Tourism has proven to be one of the tools that have boosted mutual understanding between China and the US. Despite Japan having a high number of World-Heritage-class tourist attractions and a rich culture, that aspect of the country is not being marketed extensively. Tourism should not be used to prop up the businesses of second-rate inns. The government needs to invest more in cultural tourism that will lead to a greater appreciation of Japan's long history and rich traditions.
2. The government must reinvigorate its cultural-promotion policy used in the 1990s, based on technological innovation and Internet sites, such as social media. The government and the private sector need to partner to introduce new technologies and ideas that will attract those people whom traditional programs have overlooked.
3. Through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, the Japanese government needs to augment educational exchange programs. The number of Japanese students schooling in China and the US has been decreasing in recent years. There should be a comprehensive study to ferret out the causes, followed by a plan to resolve them. New subsidies and other enhancements would help convenience those young people with doubts about applying.
4. Japan's successes in creating and marketing such cultural goods as anime, manga, and J-pop are well known, but there are other aspects of Japan's popular culture, such as a

sophisticated movie industry with dynamic new directors, which could also be promoted. How many Chinese or Americans, for example, are familiar with the great films directed by Hirokazu Kore'eda.

5. Social media platforms have been indispensable in bringing young people together across borders, including Japan, China and the US. But the limitation may be language skills. More investment in teaching Americans or Chinese or Japanese to learn another language in depth will ultimately pay off, not just in educational exchanges but also in cross-cultural exchanges via the Internet. Social platforms such as Tiktok from China and Facebook and Twitter from USA were able to provide social interaction between individual all over the world allowing cultural interaction.
6. Policies should be flexible since modern societies and their cultural tastes change rapidly these days. Japan, China, and the US should review their soft power programs regularly or popular culture will leave them far behind.

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Highlights from Reischauer Center Events: Photo Album



Class of 2021 Japan Studies Graduation





Above: The “U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation Conference: Sea Lane Security,”
October 8, 2020

Below: “COVID-19, East Asia, and the Global Response” in collaboration with the T-
20 Think Tank Summit, November 20, 2020





Meeting the Challenge of COVID-19 in Asia,” in cooperation with President Masatsugu Asakawa of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), March 3, 2021



“Overcoming COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities for Japan” with Japanese Minister for Economic Revitalization Yasutoshi Nishimura, April 14, 2020



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