Today's Objectives

- To look at Japan's relations today with other countries in Asia, particularly China, South Korea and Russia.
- To stop thinking of peace and friendship as the ideal and start thinking about who benefits from perpetual conflict.
- To understand how broader historical contexts and third parties affect Japan's bilateral relations with its neighbours.

The History Issue and Territory Issue

Is peace really the aim?

Peaceful Japan

- How does Japan see its position and role in the postwar?
- Let's have a look at the document: “60 Years: The path of a nation striving for global peace”. (This link and all other links are available on the class website).
- This stance is also explicit in The Constitution of Japan.

Peace Without Reconciliation?

- According to the dictionary definition, Japan has largely achieved reconciliation: “the restoration of friendly relations”.
- There has been no armed conflict since, except when Japanese coast guards sank a suspected North Korean spy vessel in 2001.
- But has reconciliation really been achieved?
  - No peace treaties with Russia or North Korea.
  - Frosty relations over “history”.
  - The potential for a military clash over territory.

Reconciliation as Process

- Reconciliation requires ...
  - seeking common ground in historical interpretation.
  - a common desire to reconcile among both perpetrators and victims.
  - a broader context conducive to reconciling.
  - agreement on when the reconciliation process has run its course for long enough and to all sides’ satisfaction.
  - an absence of actions that will derail the process.

Prime Minister Abe’s Statement

Japan has repeatedly expressed the feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology for its actions during the war in order to reach such feelings through concrete actions, we have engaged in our hearts the histories of suffering of the people in Asia as our neighbours: those in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, and Taiwan, the Republic of Korea and China, among others, and we have consistently devoted ourselves to the peace and prosperity of the region since the end of the war.

… Taking this opportunity of the 70th anniversary of the end of the war Japan would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to all the nations and all the people who made every effort for reconciliation.

In Japan, the postwar generations now exceed eighty per cent of its population. We must not let our children, grandchildren and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with that war be predestined to apologize. Still, even so, we Japanese, across generations, must squarely face the history of the past. We have the responsibility to inherit the past in all hardships, and pass it on to the future…

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, 14 August 2015

The “end of reconciliation”?
Benefits of Being Pro-Japan

1. Stable conditions for trade
2. Securing direct investment from Japan, financial/technological assistance or developmental aid
3. Having Japan as an ally at regional conferences
4. "My enemy’s enemy is my friend"

Benefits of Being Anti-Japan

1. Fostering national identity through anti-Japanese sentiment.
2. Diverting attention from one's own historical issues.
3. The vested interest for some in continued conflict: military contractors, ideological politicians, scaremongering media.

The Pro- / Anti- Balance

• Ultimately, no country is completely "pro" or completely "anti".
• It depends on times, circumstances and issues.
• And being "pro" might not bring so many benefits, just as being "anti" might not be harmful: trade relations are different to politics, for example!

The BBC / Globescan “Positive or Negative Influence” Poll

The Macro Context of Views About Japan
Differing Historical Backgrounds

- Five main categories of wartime relations:
  1. Countries Japan fought against on their and/or Japanese territory: China, USSR, USA
  2. Countries Japan fought against in their Asian colonies: UK, Holland, France
  3. Countries Japan colonized pre-1931: Manchuria (China), Karafuto (Russia), Korea, Taiwan
  4. Colonies of other powers that Japan occupied post-1941: Indonesia, the Philippines etc.
  5. Wartime allies: Germany, Italy, India (Free India Army)

Collaboration vs Resistance

- In most countries occupied by Japan there were collaborators as well as resistance movements.
- These divisions often form the basis for postwar political divisions within the liberated nations (esp. Korea).
- Many countries had civil wars or wars of independence immediately after WWII ended. Japanese troops sometimes fought in these wars (esp. China and Indonesia).

Liberation vs Independence

- In those countries colonized or invaded by Japan, 1945 is remembered as a time of liberation or victory (esp. China, Korea).
- But, did they “liberate themselves” through successful armed struggle, or were they “liberated” through the victory of someone else?
- In the colonies of other powers, the Japanese occupation is remembered as both a period of brutality and a stepping stone toward independence (esp. Indonesia).
- Japan feels it was occupied by the USSR in 1945.

Proximity

- In the debate next week we focus on territorial disputes between Japan and three immediate neighbours: China/Taiwan, South Korea and Russia.
- Shared borders are often a cause of deep-rooted historical enmity.
- Cultural proximity may generate rivalry.
- Often it is easier to be good friends with someone a little “distant”.

Cold War Relations

- China and the USSR were “on the other side” to Japan during the Cold War.
- This did not prevent bilateral ties emerging, but greatly shaped their context.
- South Korea was on the same side.
- This did not generate friendly relations, but generated some common issues, particularly the issue of US bases on national territory.

Relations With Third Parties

- Very often one needs to understand relations with a third country to see what is happening in a country's bilateral relationship with Japan.
- “My enemy's enemy is my friend": Taiwan is typically considered pro-Japan (and anti-China). The Philippines and Vietnam also have territorial disputes with China.
- South Korea and China can work together on “history issues”, but have considerable bilateral conflicts of their own.
Domestic Weakness or Strength

- When Japan was number two and the leading economy in Asia, it had more to offer.
- China’s rise to number two has given it more muscle.
- South Korea now rivals Japan in both electronic and pop culture exports.
- Following the collapse of communism, Russia has emerged into an energy superpower.
- Japan is no longer the only economic powerhouse in East Asia.

China, South Korea, Russia

China: Pre-1949

- 1894-5: First Sino-Japanese War
- 1900: Boxer Rebellion
- 1911: Revolution overthrows the Qing dynasty. Much of China under the control of regional warlords.
- 1927: Civil war (Communists vs Nationalists)

China: 1949-78

- 1950-3: China intervenes in the Korean War (900,000 killed - Bruce Cumings p. 35).
- 1958-61: The Great Leap Forward. 18-42 million deaths. Frank Dikötter (p. 298) estimates 2.5 million deaths through violence.
- 1966-76: Cultural Revolution. Persecution of the intelligentsia. 500,000 killed, millions more persecuted.

China: 1978-

- 1982-5: Worsening relations over textbooks and Yasukuni Shrine issues
- 1989: Tiananmen Square Incident. Pro-Democracy protestors killed in a crackdown.
- 1990s: China’s “peaceful rise” to the world’s no. 2 economy.
- 2008: Beijing Olympics

Internal Chinese Tensions

- Who killed more Chinese in the 20th century: Japan or the Chinese themselves?
- Great inequalities, ethnic tensions, pollution and corruption are sources of considerable internal divisions.
- Anti-Japanese sentiment is “useful” for maintaining domestic unity.
- Is focusing on Japanese aggression a smokescreen for Chinese imperial ambitions?
Tension in Sino-Japanese relations, therefore, must be seen as a combination of:
1. Legitimate grievances against Japan for Japan’s aggression and atrocities.
2. Political expediency given China’s many problems in the 20th and 21st centuries.
A dangerous strategy! Anti-Japanese anger easily spills over into anti-Communist party anger.

Is history now a lever in Chinese territorial ambitions?
We will debate the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute next time, but the dispute essential revolves around the following question:
Was Japanese control of the islands originally the result of Japanese conquest (and therefore part of the “history issue”) or is the territorial dispute a result of Chinese contemporary aggression and expansionism?

12th-13th centuries: Japanese piracy around the Korean coast.
1592-3 and 1597: Toyotomi invasions of Korea.
1875-6: Kanghwa Incident and Japan-Korea Treaty of Amity.
1894-5: First Sino-Japanese War fought on Korean soil for control of the Korean peninsula.
1910-45: Period of colonial rule.
1919: March 1 movement. Millions protest, thousands killed (around 7,000). Many taken to Seodaemun Prison for torture and incarceration.

Was Korea fighting with or resisting against Japan during World War II?
How should we regard Korean war crimes during WWII (recruitment of “comfort women”, POW abuse)?
Why do the exhibits at Seodaemun Prison focus solely on Japanese colonial period and not the years of military dictatorship?

15 August 1945: Liberation
1950-3: Korean War
1952: Repatriation of North Korean prisoners
1961-79: Park Chung Hee dictatorship.
1966-79: Park Chung Hee dictatorship.
1965: Treaty on Basic Relations
1980: Kwangju Massacre (crack down on student protestors)
1988: Seoul Olympics
1993: Kim Young Sam is Korea’s first civilian president.
31 August 2011: Korean Constitutional Court requires government to press Japan on “comfort women” compensation.
December 2015: “Comfort women” issue “resolved finally … again …”
Joy and Pain of Liberation

• 15 August 1945 is celebrated as the day of Korean Liberation.
• Opens a new chapter of pain and division:
  ‣ Resisters against collaborators (many colonial period scores settled).
  ‣ Communists vs Right-wingers (against the backdrop of the emerging Cold War).
  ‣ North vs South (the Allies divide the peninsula at the Potsdam Conference).

The Korean War, 1950-3

• The peninsula is divided into two nations in 1948. Both claim to be the legitimate Korean government.
• Much bloodletting before war officially begins on 25 June 1950.
• War stalemated by 1951.
• Japan stays out of the fighting. How could it get involved constitutionally, historically or morally?
• Japan’s economy takes off: the Korean War boom.
• The bitter legacy of colonialism: Korean division but a united Japan.

The 1965 Treaty

• The main movers are Park Chung Hee (military dictator 1961-79) and Kishi Nobusuke (PM 1957-60). What right did they have to “resolve” the Korean-Japanese past?
• Problems:
  1. The compensation issue: the Treaty “settles” all state and individual claims.
  2. The legality of the annexation.
  3. Dokdo/Takeshima Island dispute is shelved.
• Korean-Japanese relations now locked into a highly problematic framework.

Costs of War

World War II
• Forced labourers 670,000 in Japan, many more (hundreds of thousands) in Manchuria and Sakhalin.
• Tens of thousands of “comfort women”
• 240,000 drafted into the Japanese military (22,000 died).
• Countless acts of repression.
• Immeasurable assault on national pride and culture.

Korean War
• North: 500,000 soldiers 2 million civilians killed.
• South: 250,000 soldiers and 1 million civilians killed.
• 10 million people displaced.
• The north’s cities obliterated by US bombing.

Korea’s Contested War Memories

• Korea’s has an incredibly complex history of war since the 1870s.
  ‣ Koreans as victims, perpetrators, collaborators & resisters.
  ‣ Korea as battleground for others, as occupied nation, as invaded nation, as site of civil war, as participant in a foreign war (Vietnam).
• Are Korean memories as contested as Japan’s, and if so, where does that leave the common “Japan vs Korea” framework on the history issue?

Russia/USSR: to 1945

• 1875: Treaty of St Petersburg settles the far eastern border with Japan.
• 1904-5: Russo-Japanese War Japan acquires Karafuto
• 1918-22: Siberian intervention
• 1936: Japan signs the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany.
• 1938-9: Border clashes in Manchuria at Lake Khasan (1938) and Khalkhin Gol (1939).
• 1941: Neutrality Pact
• 9 August 1945: USSR joins the war against Japan. Occupies Sakhalin and the Kurils (Northern Territories) by early September.
Russia/USSR: after 1945

- 1945-50: 600,000 Japanese interned in Siberia. 10% never return to Japan.
- 1956: Japan and the Soviet Union sign a joint declaration ending the war. But, no peace treaty.
- 1980s: Perestroika and the fall of the Berlin Wall
- 1990s-2000s: Negotiations fail to make progress on resolving the territorial issue.
- 2010: Russia makes 2 September its official Victory over Japan day.
- 1 November 2010: President Medvedev visits Kunashir Island.
- Japan becomes increasingly dependent on Russia for energy following the 3/11 tsunami and nuclear disaster.

Russo-Japanese Relations

- Russia is Japan’s closest neighbour geographically, but they are “distant neighbours” culturally.
- Apart from the Northern Territories dispute, there are few outstanding historical issues (Yasukuni Shrine visits are not big news in Russia, for example).
- There is no peace treaty between Russia and Japan to this day.
- Tensions are rising again over the Crimea, Syria and the US-Japan alliance.

Towards Next Time

Our Next Debate

- The motion is “The Senkaku Islands, Takeshima and the Northern Territories are Japanese territory”.
- Materials are available from the website. Plus, look for other materials in the library and online.
- In particular, think about how the three territorial disputes are similar and/or different.