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Introduction to Special Issue: Japan–China Fragile Partnership: At Fortieth Anniversary of Diplomatic Normalization

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Japan–China rapprochement and the rise of China

The rise of China was not an issue in 1971 or 1972. Therefore, neither the United States nor Japan thought about the consequences of US–China and Japan–China rapprochement in the early 1970s (Kissinger, 2011). The diplomatic normalization between Japan and China took place in 1972 as an appendage of the United States–China rapprochement in 1971, at least in American eyes. At this time, the United States was waging war in Vietnam, while the Cold War was still at the heyday of massive nuclear buildups by the United States and the Soviet Union. China was in the midst of domestic turmoil called the Cultural Revolution, while facing the hostile Soviet Union. To ease their burdens, both countries concluded the surprising rapprochement. It was a great surprise to Japan because it had not been notified about this rapprochement even a couple of days before. In 1971, China entered the United Nations. Japan went ahead of the United States and had achieved diplomatic normalization by 1972. Japan wanted to develop a new market in China when its economy was booming whereby Japan wanted to alleviate the extreme of 'leaning to one side' (to the United States). China wanted to alleviate security threats coming from the Soviet Union ('anti-hegemonism') and to have Japan involved in the development of the half-frozen economy, especially with the massive Japanese official development assistance. On the disputed islands called Senkaku Islands/Diaoyu Islands, the Japanese government wanted to settle the issue, but the Chinese government saw no immediate urgency to do so. In 1978, both the United States and Japan consolidated their ties with China, again with Japan going ahead of the United States. In December 1978, Deng Xiaoping came back into power, paving the road to 'economic reform and the opening to the world'. His famous sentence, *yangguan taohui* (keep low profile, nurture strength), was propagated as the new Chinese policy line, both internally and externally (Vogel, 2011). He focused on economic development while keeping peace on all borders. China started to grow in the 1980s in a strident fashion, although voices for political reform were also on the rise. Such voices culminated in 1989 after the death of former Secretary General

Hu Yaopang, a reformist who was dismissed from office in 1987 by Deng Xiaoping. On 4 June 1989, large numbers of demonstrators assembled in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, demanding more freedom and democracy. Deng Xiaoping ordered the all-out suppression of the dissidents. The Tiananmen Square massacre led to embargos by the West and by Japan. The embargos were lifted in 1991. Both Japan and Europe were keen on this. The Chinese economy then registered a two digit annual growth rate for two decades until 2011. Meanwhile the terms of the Japan–China Friendship Treaty of 1978 – that is China forgiving Japan for not paying indemnity – became known in China, giving rise to opposition to the Friendship Treaty in the 1990s. The United States was preoccupied with anti-terrorism after 9/11 in 2001, and the thought of growth in China in the 2000s scarcely came to mind. But by 2011, the growth of China was visible and tangible; a fact that no one can deny is that China is expected to surpass the United States in terms of Gross National Product sooner or later.

Shifting public opinion and choices for Japan and China in the 1990s

Did the growth of China shift public opinion in the 1990s? In Japan, public opinion of the United States did not change much in terms of Japanese trust in the alliance with the United States. Yet, increasingly, voices, not constrained too much by the United States, were manifested. One of Prime Minister Hosokawa's study groups put multilateral diplomacy first rather than alliance with the United States. This document was looked at by the United States government with suspicion. In Japan, post-Cold War public opinion shifted in a direction that sought more freedom from the United States (Rose, 2005; Hagström, 2005). In China, patriotic consciousness was inculcated and consolidated in the 1990s after the Tiananmen massacre (Gries, 2004). It focused on anti-Japanese themes. It culminated in President Jiang Zeming's visit to Japan in 1998 when, although the communique was signed by both governments with the key message being 'reflect on the past, envision the future', Jiang kept repeating the anti-Japanese theme in his speeches throughout his Japan trip (Inoguchi, 2002). Since Japan's direct investment in China was booming and since the poverty gaps in Chinese society were enlarging year by year, Chinese leaders kept a low profile and nurtured strength (economic development) (Wan, 2006; Kawashima, 2007).

The unilateralist moment of the United States and Japan–China relations in the 2000s

The decade of the 2000s was overshadowed by the unilateralism of the United States (Krauthammer, 2004). In Japan, leaning to one side, that is to the United States, culminated in support for the Afghan and Iraq wars and anti-terrorist wars under Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. It was the period when Prime Minister Koizumi visited the Yasukuni shrine and when top Japanese and Chinese leaders did not meet each other (Inoguchi, 2011). It was also the period when both countries were preoccupied with domestic issues. The Japanese economy's long depression after 1991 ended circa 2006. Japan's business firms went abroad seeking less costly wages, rents, and other

considerations during these lost two decades. The economy was negatively affected by the Lehman shock of the United States, which increased the exchange rate for the Japanese yen, which in turn accelerated the exodus of Japanese manufacturing capital abroad. In China, thanks to the sway of United States unilateralism, the economy kept expanding, and without substantial constraints, arms building increased. However, domestic issues kept Chinese leaders focused. The alarmingly growing income gap between the extraordinarily rich and the poor and the incredibly frequent collective actions of protest which registered hundreds per month throughout China led Hu Jintao to propound the slogan of building a harmonious society.

Netizens twitting to streets, one hundred dissents blossom in the 2000s?

By 2012, Northeast Asian economies have grown very big with world No. 2 (China), No. 3 (Japan), and No. 15 (South Korea) economies geographically so close each other. Yet internally, restless citizens abound. After the Lehman shock and Beijing Olympic Games of 2008, economic downturns came in the Northeast Asian economies. In China, high numbers of college graduates are unemployed and many city commuters live in urban environments without normal wages, social safety nets, and other privileges; in Japan, most manufacturing firms have relocated abroad and part-time worker population have surged in number. Netizens, that is those using the internet, smart phones etc., have crowded civil society space, twitting each other on issues such as the Senkaku Islands/Diaoyu Islands, the village chief election in Guandong, corruption in local officials, the nuclear power plant, and the US military base relocation in Okinawa. Meanwhile, politics are messy both in China and in Japan. In China, Bo Xilai, a heavyweight of a Chinese Communist cadre, and to be promoted to a nine-manned politburo, was disgraced from office before the busy season of the Chinese Communist Party Congress which was due (every five years) to elect the State President and Party Secretary General in autumn 2012 (Endo, 2012). In Japan, the first Democratic Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama failed to live up to the promise he made *vis-à-vis* President Barack Obama; Prime Minister Naoto Kan failed to face and handle nuclear power plant disasters and the Senkalu Islands issue; Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda barely managed to carry out the tax hike legislation and yet 'invited' and poorly handled an array of territorial dispute issues *vis-à-vis* China, South Korea, and Russia.

Evolving public opinion in Japan and China in the 2010s

Most significant of all the changes in China and in Japan is the quiet shift of public opinion on national identity, national pride, and most directly the frustration about the country's place in the world. China and Japan have been independent since 1949 and 1952 respectively. China led by Mao Zedong was vehemently independent-minded already in 1949–1950 when China concluded in Moscow the treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union. Peng Dehuai, a high ranking general who argued the need to build the People's Liberation Army in close consultation with the Soviet Union rather than

creating nuclear bombs without the help of the Soviet Union (which happened to be Mao's view), was dismissed from office in 1959. Lo Ruijing, another high ranking general, was dismissed from office in 1965. He argued that in order to fight the United States in the Vietnam war, there would need to be a joint operation with the Soviet Union (in contrast to the People's War strategy of Lin Biao, a close ally of Mao Zedong). It is clear to see from the above that China was at unease with the Soviet Union from the very beginning (Dittmer, forthcoming in 2013). China felt threatened initially by the United States and later by the Soviet Union as well. China made rapprochement with the United States in 1971 to cope with the Soviet threat. After the rapprochement with the United States and with Japan, China followed a low-key strategy of spending all its energy on economic development. In winter 1979, China intervened in Vietnam to teach a lesson to Vietnam, which according to China illegitimately occupied Cambodia in 1978 (Inoguchi, 1980). Since 1979 what is called the East Asian peace (Kivimäki, 2012) ensued. There have been no battle deaths in East Asia since then, except small skirmishes in a South Korean island and the Thai–Cambodian border, and small-scale civil wars in Asia.

In the following three decades, China's rise took place. Chinese frustration occurred with regard to the primacy of the United States. Chinese frustration about the Soviet Union dissipated as the Soviet Union's significance in the world diminished and it became less of a threat. Judging from the data on public opinion in China, in tandem with the rise of China, the Chinese have become increasingly frustrated with what they see as the Chinese place in the world. Chinese Gross National Product has become world No. 2, surpassing Japan in 2010. China has purchased and held massive US Treasury bonds, that is China has been helping the United States to recover from the depression and to keep US wars going abroad. Annoying especially to China is the claim of freedom of navigation and of flight. When much of China's activity is concentrated on the East Coast, both in terms of agriculture but especially of industrial production, China has been extremely uneasy regarding the almost free movement of US reconnaissance and intelligence ships and aircrafts along the East Coast and further inland areas, both for security and economic reasons. In tandem with the rise of China, demands for energy, food and other resources have become astronomical. To secure the stable and ample supply of such resources, one needs to be assured of maritime security. The first priority is the East China sea and South China sea, where disputes have been taking place with China's neighbors, South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, and others. The second no less important priority is the sea routes to the Middle East where petroleum resources abound. On the first priority, some Chinese military leaders envisage China's sphere of influence as encompassing the space west of Hawaii, whereas the Pacific east of Hawaii is naturally America's. To discourage China's ambition and dream in this respect, the United States have come up with the idea of anti-access, whereby the United States Armed Forces can act as freely as possible without the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Navy, and Air Force preventing the movements of US submarines, warships, reconnaissance and fighter aircrafts, cruise missiles, and

drones. As of 1 October 2012, China's military capabilities are far inferior to those of the United States'. Especially annoying recently is that US allies and friends in the Asia Pacific have been enhancing alignment with the United States, thus blocking China's actions. Some of those potentially big powers (Japan), middle powers (South Korea and Vietnam), and even minor powers (the Philippines) often gang up against China, even if they seem to be hierarchically controlled by the United States in the Chinese eye.

In Japan, public opinion on the Japanese place in the world has been shifting quite remarkably. Available data enable me to analyze the shift with more precision than in China's case. Most important is the decrease in Japan's trust in the United States and in China (Inoguchi, forthcoming in 2013). In tandem with and in light of the increasing competition between the United States and China, trust in the United States and China has been steadily declining. In disproportion to the decreasing trust in the two big neighbors, Japanese public opinion has been diffusing in three directions: (1) tough and defensive: Japan to develop solid independence, even heavily armed with conventional and nuclear weapons; (2) soft and globalist: Japan to become less vulnerable to competitors, both scientifically and technologically; (3) geographically: Japan to become a good member of the most powerful Northeast Asian economic community. The three lines go hand in hand with one another.

The internet survey, 'Japan and the World Trend' (Kawato, 2012), asks the following questions with the following options: 'When the United States and China are competing, which foreign policy line do you think Japan should adopt?: (1) neutrality at current defense level, (2) neutrality at conventional defense built up, (3) neutrality with nuclear weapons acquisition, (4) alliance with the United States and entente with China, (5) East Asian community formation with the Americans and Europeans excluded, (6) other options, (7) do not know. The current Democratic government line and the largest opposition Liberal Democratic party line both support (4). However, in this survey about 25% of respondents choose (4); more than 50% opted for neutrality of one kind or another (1 + 2 + 3); option (5), an Asianist option, amounts to slightly more than 10%. This is incredible in one sense. Broad category, neutrality, is not easy to grasp correctly. It might reveal the increasingly autonomous foreign policy line of a post-US hegemony era. It might also reveal the increasingly inward-looking and defensive line. At any rate, Japanese public opinion seems to be increasingly divergent, in good contrast to big newspaper surveys on international affairs, especially on the alliance with the United States (Inoguchi, forthcoming in 2013). All this evolves in tandem with the alleged overstretch and decline of the United States and the rise of China together with more domestic economic and political forces in Japan.

Concluding remarks

The three articles that will follow this Introduction were written in the midst of the 2010–2012 Japan–China turmoils. Sun Xuefeng examines bilateral relations in what he regards as the East Asian quasi-anarchical structure embedded in US-imposed

hierarchy. Chisako Masuo focuses on fishery disputes in the functional framework of the maritime resources management regime formation. Gilbert Rozman examines national identity questions in each of political, economic, cultural and historical domains to argue that without handling these issues head on bilateral relations could not hope to improve much, especially in relation to how to handle the Korean question. The three articles are not only excellent in that they each reveal one facet of the core issues of bilateral relations, but are also strikingly divergent in pointing to what each regards as key in grasping bilateral relations. Whether this trio of articles as a whole gives a balanced angle to understanding bilateral relations, which needs to be watched with utmost care and caution, remains for readers to judge.

About the author

Takashi Inoguchi is Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo and President of the University of Niigata Prefecture. He specializes in Japanese politics, comparative political behavior, and international relations. He has published numerous books and articles, amongst which are *Japanese Politics: An Introduction* (Trans Pacific Press, 2005), *Political Cultures in Asia and Europe* (Routledge, 2006), *Citizens and the State* (Routledge, 2008), *Globalisation, Public Opinion and the State* (Routledge, 2008), *The Quality of Life in Confucian Asia* (Springer, 2010). *American Democracy Promotion* (Oxford University Press, 2000), *Reinventing the Alliance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), *The Uses of Institutions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), Japanese Politics Today (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), *The US–Japan Security Alliance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and *Quality of Life in Asia* (Springer, 2012), *Political Parties and Democracy – Contemporary Western Europe and Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in 2013), and *The Troubled Triangle: Economic and Security concerns for the United States, Japan and China* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in 2013). He is Executive Editor of the *Japanese Journal of Political Science* (Cambridge University Press) and Director of the AsiaBarometer project.

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