

REALITY CHECK

Burdens of the past

**Overcoming History, the Politics of
Identity and Nationalism in Asia**

It is an alluring proposition to contemplate: a new regional order marked by harmony and co-existence among the countries of Northeast Asia. The successful proliferation of various regional initiatives in recent decades and the enduring resilience of the European Union's great experiment with regional integration both encourage the vision.

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The optimism that attaches to the idea is rooted in growing economic interdependence, the collapse of the bipolar structure of the Cold War era, and the persistence of intricate social and cultural networks across the region.

There is considerable risk, however, that optimism could turn to despair. It is unthinkable to imagine the establishment of an EU-style order in Asia without first tackling the problem of identity politics and nationalism. Asia's collective historical memory is scarred by the effects of national identity and the politics of nationalism. To varying degrees, China, Japan, and Korea are at the center of this dilemma where the temptation to pursue parochial nationalism at the expense of regional cooperation and integration lures some politicians into striking what amounts to a Faustian bargain with the forces of the past. Here too, Europe, with its long history of regional conflict, serves up rich examples, but of a darker kind. If Europe has overcome much of this legacy, the tragedy of great power politics still haunts Asia.¹ Aaron Friedberg even predicts that "Europe's past could be Asia's future."²

A liberal regional order in Asia will require more than an accommodation of national interests and power politics in a collective security system. It will require building a collective identity that transcends parochial national interests. Some liberal political theorists go beyond this. According to them, a viable and sustainable regional order cannot be achieved without inducing the internal transformation of regional actors. In this regard, adoption of

a market economy and democracy are seen as essential.³ The ultimate liberal vision is total regional integration evolving from a free trade area, common market, and currency union into political integration that would accompany a collective security system.

None of this will occur without addressing the issue of national identity and the subjective understandings of its development and behavioral manifestations; identity is as important as power and national interests in shaping and sustaining a regional order. Simply because most countries in a given region are usually afflicted with the fractured pain of the past, identity and collective memory are crucial variables in forging shared values and common goals vital to the formation of a "community of security." It is virtually inconceivable for nations to engage in cooperative practices without first healing the pain and then recognizing and respecting the identity of others.⁴

FACING THE PAST: AN OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL ORDER IN ASIA

It is vital to understand the historical transformation of the Northeast Asian regional order before considering the impact of national identity and nationalism on its present and future. Northeast Asia has undergone four major transformations: China-centered tributary order; imperial order under Japanese dominance; American hegemonic order since 1945; and a still-emerging post-Cold War order whose shape has not yet been determined.⁵ Northeast Asian countries' national

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1 John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001)

2 Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, Vol.18, No.3 (Winter 1993/94), p.7

3 Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (ed.), *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ethel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998)

4 Consuelo Cruz, "Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Future," *World Politics*, Vol.52, No.3 (April 2000), p.276

5 This section draws partly on Chung-in Moon and Chae-sung Chun, "Sovereignty: Dominance of the Westphalian Concept and Implications for Regional Security," in M. Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Order*, pp.106-137

6 John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp.1-19

7 Takeshi Hamashita, Choko Shisutemu to Kindai Ajia [*Tributary System and Modern Asia*] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997). Also see Takeshi Hamashita, "The Intra-regional System in East Asia in Modern Times," in Peter J. Katzenstein and Shiraishi, Takashi (eds.), *Network Power: Japan and Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp.113-135

8 Chae-jin Lee, *China and Korea: Dynamic Relations* (Stanford: Hoover Press, 1996), pp.1-2

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identity has been greatly influenced by their relative position in the regional order and the related cognitive dynamics, and vice versa.

Prior to the 7th century, the region was in a rather anarchical state. Although China was the most powerful empire in the region, it constantly engaged in border conflicts with its neighbors. There were no commonly accepted norms, rules, or procedures governing inter-state relations, and territorial conquest and annexation became the principal rule of the game. However, beginning with the Tang dynasty (618-907), Northeast Asian political geography began to reveal a new outlook, which lasted until the Qing dynasty (1616-1912). China established itself as the "middle kingdom" and consolidated a hierarchical regional order by imposing an extensive tributary network. Most peripheral "barbarian" states paid tribute to China, which in turn reciprocated by bestowing its blessing. China's suzerainty was justified in the name of a heavenly mandate (*tianming*)⁶. While Korea and part of Japan paid tributes to China, an increasing area of South-east Asian states also either paid tribute to China or acknowledged Chinese suzerainty (e.g., Malacca). Of course, the tributary system was not

universally accepted. As the Japanese invasion of the Korean Peninsula in the late 16th century illustrates, Japan occasionally challenged Chinese hegemony. Various Thai kingdoms also attempted to consolidate their imperial base by challenging China.

The rise and spread of the Sino-centric system before the 20th century was founded on two factors: one was material, and the other moral.⁷ China was the only regional actor able to project hegemonic hard power, and no one could readily challenge it. At the same time, the reigning moral superiority of Confucianism contributed to enhancing China's status. According to Confucianism, which is based on hierarchical social relationships, China was the center of moral gravity, whereas other actors were peripheral barbarians to be enlightened through Confucian teachings. China's Confucian superstructure and moral superiority, coupled with its material power, universalized a regional order of 'respect the great, namely China, while China takes care of the small (*shita zixiao*)'. Although there were occasional territorial invasions and conquests (e.g., Mongolian invasion of the *Koryo* dynasty), China did not engage in territorial conquest and political domination. In fact, China was able to sustain Confucian peace by implanting an order of solidarity based on the notion of a Gramscian hegemony that emanated from culture and persuasion.⁸

The China-centered hegemonic order was primarily organized by tribute-blessing (*chaogong-huici*) relationships. Although local potentates

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9 J. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order*, pp.1-19

10 Dalchoong Kim and Chung-in Moon, *History, Cognition, and Peace* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1997), ch. 14

11 Takeshi Hamashita, *Kindai Chugoku no Kokusai teki Keiki: Choko Shisutemu to Kindai Ajia [The International Momentum of Modern China: Tributary System and Modern Asia]* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1990), pp.33-38; Takeshi Hamashita (ed.), *Higashi Ajia Sekai no Chiiki Nettowaku [Regional Network in East Asian World]* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1999)

12 Junji Banno, *Nihon no Rekishi 13: Kindai Nihon no Shuppatsu [History of Japan 13: Departure of Modern Japan]* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1993), pp.238-311

13 Taiichiro Mitani, "Higashi Ajia Chiikishugi no Rekishi teki Kosatsu to Sono Shorai eno Tenbo [A Historical Consideration of East Asia Regionalism and Its Outlook]," A Paper Presented at Japan-Korea Millennium Symposium: *Japan-Korea Relation in a New Era*, Waseda University, October 26, 2002

Those countries that were closer to China in terms of geography and culture were more equal than those that were not.

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exercised absolute authority over their subjects within their own territorial boundaries, political suzerainty belonged to the imperial court of China. The launching of a new dynasty and monarchical succession by a tributary state required a prior investiture by the Mandarin court. Failure to win Chinese imperial approval often led to local political crises over legitimacy. Under the principle of suzerainty and the tributary system, the external sovereignty of peripheral states was profoundly limited. Juridical equals were not allowed, and external sovereignty was by and large compromised by the hierarchical order, which was tied to geographic and cultural proximity to China.⁹ Those countries that were closer to China in terms of geography and culture were more equal than those that were not. For example, China was considered the big brother, Korea, a middle brother, and Japan, a younger brother.¹⁰ China intervened whenever this order was jeopardized. The Ming dynasty intervention in Korea during the 1592 Japanese invasion offers a prime example. The Sino-centric hierarchical order brought about a relatively long peace in Northeast Asia because relationships were mutually beneficial and the peripheral states voluntarily accepted the arrangement culturally.¹¹

In the late 19th century, however, the Japanese imperial order began to replace the Sino-centered tributary system. Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895, and the *Shimonoseki Treaty* was signed, through which China gave up its suzerainty over the Korean Peninsula, and recognized the independence and autonomy of the *Chosun* dynasty.¹² Japan's influence grew phenomenally following the war, which also paved the way for Japan's annexation of the Korean Peninsula after its victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

Beginning in May 1927, Japan began projecting its power onto the Chinese mainland by sending its troops to Shandong province, ostensibly to protect Japanese citizens and their property. Japan's successive victories in the Manchurian War (1931) and the China-Japan War from 1937 further consolidated its power and influence in the continent. By the time Japan declared the Pacific War with the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, it had completed the conquest of the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, and Taiwan.

The Northeast Asian regional order under Japanese hegemony was founded on imperial power and naked territorial conquest. However,

14 Kenichi Goto, "Kindai Nihon-Tonan Ajia Kankei Shiron Josetsu [On the History of Japan-Southeast Asian Relations]," in Kenji Tsuchiya (ed.), *Nashonarizumu to Kokumin Kokka [Nationalism and the Nation State]* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1994), pp.38-40; Victor J. Koshiman, "Asianism's Ambivalent Legacy," in Katzenstein and Shiraishi (eds.), *Network Power*, pp.83-110

15 Shigenori Nomura, *Senso to Shiso [War and Philosophy]* (Tokyo: Fukyo Nihon Kyokai, 1942); *Keiichi Eguchi, Nihon no Rekishi 14: Futatsu no Taisen [History of Japan 14: Two World Wars]* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1993), pp.351-352

16 Re-quoted from Eguchi, *Futatsu no Taisen*, pp.43-44

Japan beautified its conquest under the slogan of Pan-Asianism.¹³ Central to Pan-Asianism was the concept of a New East Asian Order (*Toa Shinchitsujo*) that was designed to form a vast regional economic bloc under the guidance of Japan. In 1940, the Konoe Fumimaro Cabinet announced the Basic National Policy Outline (*kihon kokusaku yoko*) that formalized the doctrine of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere (*Daitoa Kyoeiken*), which was composed of five categories of actors: guiding state (Japan), independent states (Republic of China, Manchurian, Thailand), independent states under Japan's protection (Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia), colonial states under Japan's direct rule (Korea and Taiwan), and colonial states outside the sphere (French Indochina and Portuguese Timor).¹⁴ All were incorporated into the sphere under the principle of "one extended Japanese imperial family" (*hakko Ichiu*).¹⁵ On January 21, 1942, then-Prime Minister Tojo Hideki, who was later convicted and hanged as the principal war criminal of the Pacific War, justified the construction of the *Daitoa Kyoeiken* in the following way:

*The fundamental objective of the Daitoa Kyoeiken consists in the establishment of a [regional] order for co-existence and co-prosperity that is based on self-restraint of each state and nation in Greater East Asia as well as morality of the empire... Some parts of the region, albeit [with] abundant resources, have experienced underdeveloped culture due to excessive exploitation by Great Britain and the United States for the past one hundred years. The Japanese empire will work together with these regions in order to establish perpetual peace in Greater East Asia and will build a new world order along with our allies.*¹⁶

The concept of the *Daitoa Kyoeiken* has several important implications. First, it was predicated on imperial expansion through territorial

conquest. Although the doctrine declared Japan as a guiding state, Japanese hegemonic leadership was not benign. Second, the *Daitoa Kyoeiken* can be seen as a defensive move by Japan to counter Western economic penetration and domination as evidenced through the "Yellow Peril" racism of the West during the period. Thus the sphere, which was based on an intra-regional division of labor (industrial production in the North and agricultural production in the South) took the form of a closed regionalism that was mediated through the hegemony of the Japanese yen. Finally, as the notion of "one extended Japanese imperial family" illustrates, Japan attempted to develop the sphere into a unified organic entity through acculturation. Thus, the *Daitoa Kyoeiken* emphasized the importance of cultural identity as much as it served as a political and economic instrument for Japanese domination.

The allies' victory in the Pacific War again reshaped the Northeast Asian regional order. The Cold War bipolar system divided the region into two axes: the southern axis was comprised of the United States, Japan, and South Korea and the northern axis of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea. Rivalry between the two blocs contributed to altering the regional security landscape. Whereas the northern bloc loosened due to intra-bloc competition between the Soviet Union and China and newly emerging cooperative ties between the U.S. and China during the period of detente, the southern bloc was solidified by American bilateral alliances. In the early 1980s, the United States under President Ronald Reagan pursued a more assertive East Asian policy through offensive deterrence, forward deployment, and coalition warfare. American hegemony in the southern axis and passive strategic responses from the northern axis produced a

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17 Jong-Yun Bae and Chung-in Moon, "Unraveling the Northeast Asian Regional Security Complex: Old Patterns and New Insights," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7-34

18 Michael Mastanduno, "Incomplete Hegemony: The United States and Security Order in Asia," in M. Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Order*, pp.141-170

19 Chung-in Moon and Jong-yun Bae, "The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," *Asian Perspective* (Special Issue on the Bush Doctrine and Asia), Vo.27, No.4 (2003), pp. 9-45

20 For two contending views, see Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) and Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997)

hybrid form of loose bipolar order in the region.

The Northeast Asian regional economic order also underwent a profound transformation. While Washington's containment strategy drove China and North Korea to pursue self-reliance for most of the Cold War era, Japan and South Korea rose from the ashes of wartime destruction under American patronage. The United States was a benign hegemonic leader that provided extensive military and economic assistance. It methodically pushed Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to adopt an export-led growth strategy that was partly responsible for their economic miracles. American containment strategy allowed these countries to enjoy economic benefits under a liberal international economic order. As rapid industrial transformation and strategic state intervention enhanced the international competitiveness of Japan and South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s, trade frictions between the United States and its Northeast Asian partners intensified. Nevertheless, the multilateral trade order pursued by the United States continued to govern the economic behavior of Japan and South Korea.

Since the late 1980s, however, Northeast Asia has undergone another round of major changes.¹⁷ The demise of the Soviet Union ended the bipolar confrontation, and the advent of the post-Cold War era began to reveal signs of strategic change in the region. First, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Northeast Asia has encountered a unipolar moment of American hegemony, but it is still unclear whether the United States has the will and intention to play the role of hegemonic leadership in the region by capitalizing on this unique moment in human history.¹⁸ The attacks of September 11, 2001 made the U.S. role even more uncertain because of the change in strategic posture under the Bush Doctrine, which has

shifted the emphasis of security concerns to global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD), moral absolutism, increasingly hegemonic unilateral behavior, and offensive realism, signals a major realignment of American policy in Northeast Asia.¹⁹

Second, the preponderance of American power and presence can no longer be taken for granted. Supported by its dramatic economic growth, industrialization, and technological upgrading, China appears to be catching up with the United States, leading to fears of a power transition and potential regional conflicts.²⁰ In addition, there is increasing domestic pressure for Japanese remilitarization. As long as the United States remains in the region, Chinese hegemonic ascension and Japanese remilitarization can be delayed but American disengagement could terminate a collective defense based on the hub-and-spoke model, while reviving and intensifying old wounds by pitting regional actors against each other. Unless a multilateral security cooperation regime is formed and cultivated during the American presence, it seems highly unlikely that Northeast Asian will experience a smooth transition from collective defense to cooperative and collective security.

Finally, the forces of globalization and increasing intra-regional economic interdependence could enhance opportunities for multilateral security cooperation through shared norms and values as well as intra-regional economic integration. A multilateral economic order under World Trade Organization (WTO) framework still serves as the dominant regime for Northeast Asian countries. But they have recently been deliberating on diverse strategies to form preferential trade arrangements involving bilateral (e.g., Japan-South Korea) and trilateral (Northeast Asian) free trade agreements

21 In-gyo Chung, *Korea's FTA Policy: Focusing on Bilateral FTAs with Chile and Japan* (Seoul: KIEP, 2002).

(FTAs).²¹ China, Japan, and South Korea have also been actively seeking to reach bilateral FTAs with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The current regional economic order can be characterized as an overlapping structure of bilateralism, sub-regionalism, and multilateralism.

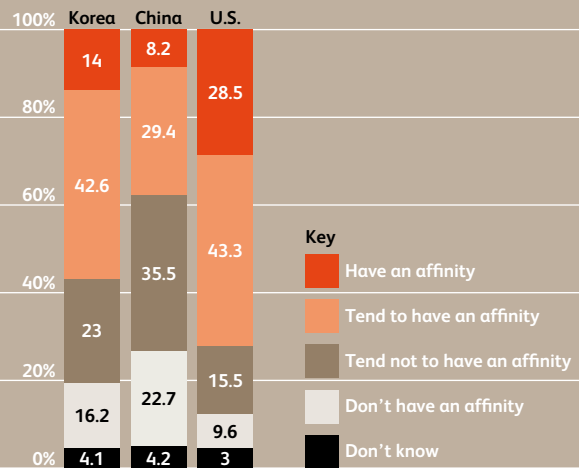
Given the historical legacy of Northeast Asia's past forms of regional order, the transformative dynamics suggest a rather gloomy outlook for the future of intra-regional cooperation. Although the institutional foundations of the old Sino-centric tributary system were completely demolished, lingering legacies still affect the pattern of conflict and cooperation among Northeast Asian countries. While Chinese memory of its central hegemonic role in the old order has remained a source of inspiration for the creation of a greater China sphere, Japan has also not completely graduated from the old glory of *Dai-toa Kyo-eiken*. Meanwhile, Koreans have not yet overcome the psychological trauma stemming from its status reversal under Japanese colonial domination. Collective memory has amplified the cognitive dissonance among these countries. Indeed, no country in the region has escaped the memory of domination and subjugation, while national identity and nationalism have significantly undercut efforts to create and sustain a harmonious regional order.

A REVIVAL OF NEO-NATIONALISM IN NORTH-EAST ASIA; NEO-NATIONALISM IN JAPAN

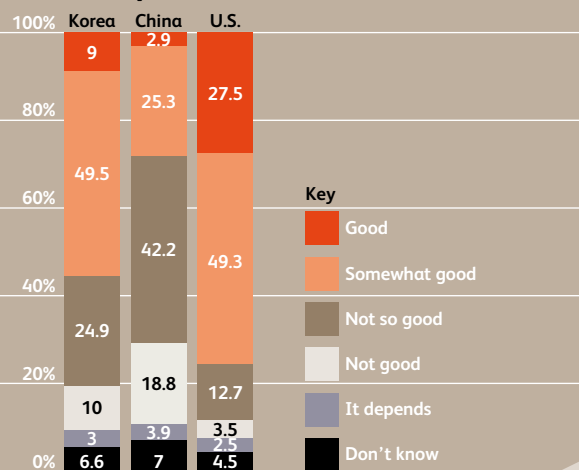
Japan, South Korea and China have all experienced a notable resurgence of nationalism in recent years, and this has had a marked impact on public perceptions within each country of the others (see box, right). This, in turn, has negatively reinforced and amplified vicious nationalism across national boundaries.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION IN JAPAN

1. Levels of affinity with:



2. Japan's relations with:



Graph 1 source: "Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy by the Cabinet Office of Japan (Abridged)," October 2004, www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-6.htm

Graph 2 source: Joint survey conducted by Donga Ilbo (South Korea), Asahi Shimbun (Japan), and the Chinese Academy of Social Science (China), 2005.

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22 See Yasuhiro Naksona, "Sengo no Sokessan kara 21 Seiki Sekai no Nihon e [From Complete Evaluation of the post-War Period to the 21st Century Japan]," *Jiyu Minshu* (March 1984), p.30; Sekai Heiwa Kenkyusho (ed.), Nakasone Naikakushi: Rinen to Seisaku [History of Nakasone Cabinet: Philosophy and Policy] (Tokyo: Marunouchi Shuppan, 1995)

23 Hidetaka Ishida, Satoshi Ukai, Yoichi Komori and Tetsuya Takahashi, "Datsu Parasato Nashonarizumu [Getting Rid of Parasite Nationalism]," *Sekai* (August 2000), pp.189-208; Sekai Henshubu (ed.), 21 seiki no Manifesto [A Manifest of the 21st Century] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), ch.2. On the other hand, Brian McVeigh categorizes Japanese nationalism into two types. First is the state and official nationalisms such as economic, educational, ethnics, and state cultural nationalism. Second is the popular and nonofficial nationalisms, those of popular cultural, postimperial ethnics, gendered, and mainstream and marginal

nationalism. Brian J. McVeigh, *Nationalisms of Japan: Managing and Mystifying Identity* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004)

24 Atarashi Rekishi Kyokasho wo Tsukurukai [The Society for Making New History Textbook] (ed.), *Nihon no Bijon [Vision of Japan]* (Tokyo: Fusosha, 2003); Rekishi Kento Inkai (ed.), *Daitoa Senso Sokatsu [Blanket View on the Great East Asia War]* (Tokyo: Tendensha, 1995)

25 Ishida, Ukai, Komori, and Takahashi, "Getting Rid of Parasite Nationalism," pp.189-20

26 John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), Epilogue

27 Shintaro Ishihara and Akio Morita, *Japan that Can Say 'No'* (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1989)

28 Shintaro Ishihara, "Ima koso America no Tomo e [Now Japan should be a real friend of America]," *Shokun* (December 2001), pp.36-49

Japan has experienced two waves of nationalist revival since the early 1980s. The first came from the top as the country's right-wing political elite, emboldened by Japan's status as an economic superpower, began to lay claim to Japan's own identity. Yasuhiro Nakasone led the way, calling on Japan to overcome the masochistic view of history nurtured by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. He stirred the nationalist revival by not only paying tribute to the *Yasukuni Shrine*, which houses the remains of Class A war criminals, but also campaigning for the "internationalization of Japan."²² A number of conservative politicians followed his lead and underlying the first revival of Japanese nationalist sentiments was the realignment of Japan's international political status to benefit its economic power.

The second wave of nationalist revival emerged in the mid-1990s. Ishida and others identify four variants of this neo-nationalism.²³ The first is the historical revisionist movement, led by the Society for the Study of Liberal Historical View and the Society for Making New History Textbooks, among others. According to them, contemporary Japanese history was gravely distorted by the United States in order to implant a masochistic view of history in the minds of the Japanese.²⁴ Among the revisionist historical claims: the Pacific War was initiated to liberate Asia from Western imperial domination; the rape of Nanking is an outright fabrication by the Chinese; the existence of comfort women is fictional.

The second variant is what Ishida and others term parasitic nationalism.²⁵ It can be seen as a

conscious move by Japanese elite to promote their nationalist agenda by following the lead of the United States. Adoption of legislative and policy measures such as the new Defense Guidelines, overseas dispatch of non-combat forces, and the Emergency-related Act were, on the face of it, designed to accommodate American foreign and national security demands. But compliance was, in fact, tantamount to fostering Japan's own transformation by using American policies to realize Japanese nationalist goals, such as the recovery of military sovereignty.²⁶ Ishihara Shintaro, the controversial Tokyo governor, belongs to this category. He was initially seen as a staunch anti-American Japanese nationalist, the co-author of the book, *The Japan that Can Say "No,"* meaning "no" to the United States.²⁷ But he has since shifted from anti-American to anti-Chinese nationalism by arguing that in order to cope with threats from China, North Korea, and global terrorists, Japan should strengthen its alliance with the United States.²⁸

A third strain of the latest revival is so-called primordial nationalism, which attempts to revive Japanese national identity through the resuscitation of the imperial system.²⁹ Traditional Japanese nationalism was rooted in the imperial system which deified the emperor as the essence of Japanese national identity. But the post-war constitution introduced by the American occupation government demoted the emperor to only a symbolic figure.³⁰ Proponents strive to enhance the internal cohesion and unity of Japan by resorting to the essence of na-

29 Sang-jung Kang, *Nashonarizumu [Nationalism]* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001); Sang-jung Kang and Hiroshi Morris, *Nashonarizumu no Kokufuku [Overcoming the Nationalism]* (Tokyo: Shueisha Shinsho, 2002)

30 On the establishment and role of the post-War emperor system, refer to Kenneth J. Ruoff, *The People's Emperor: Democracy and the Japanese Monarchy, 1945-1995* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001)

31 The whole statement by Yoshiro Mori can be seen at the Jinja Online Network Association website. <http://jinja.jp/jikyoku/kaminokuni/kaminokuni2.html>

32 Yoshibumi Wakamiya, "Hatoha no Fuyu [The Dove's Winter]," *Asahi Shimbun*, February 29, 2004

33 Takashi Sasaki, "Nashonarizumu no Jidai wo Yomu [Reading the Age of Nationalism]," *Tokyo Shimbun*, June 12, 2005

34 Jae-ho Cheon, "Minjokjuui Yongu ui Hyunhwang [Present Status of Study of Nationalism]," *Tongil Munje Yongu*, 23(May 1995), pp.230-246; Duk-kyu Jhin (ed.), *Hankuk ui Minjokjuui [The Nationalism of Korea]* (Seoul: Seoul Sasangsa, 1976)

35 Young-hun Chung, '*Dangun Minjokjuui' wa Keu Cheongshin Sasangsajeok Seongkyuk e kwanhan Yongu* [A Study of the 'Dangun Nationalism' and Its Characteristics of Political Philosophy] (Seoul: the Graduate School of Politics and Diplomacy, Dankuk University, 1993), unpublished Ph.D. dissertation

tional identity again being manifested through the emperor. Former Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro's remark, "Japan is a *Kami no Kuni* (a divine country) with the Emperor at its center," well underscores this primordial sentiment.³¹

Finally, neo-nationalism has increasingly taken the form of xenophobic populism remi-

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niscent of the Kanto Great Earthquake in the 1920s, during which the Japanese massacred Korean residents in the Kanto area by spreading the rumor that they engaged in arson and thefts. Racism has become the driving force of this populist nationalism. Ishihara Shintaro's recent remarks attributing an increase in crime to Chinese and other foreign, mostly Asian, residents in Japan exemplify this trend.

Neo-nationalism has become a major driving force behind Japan's foreign and domestic policy. Japan's quest of national identity through assertive nationalism can negatively affect regionalism in several ways. For Northeast Asian countries, the revival of right-wing nationalism in Japan is closely associated with the memory of Japanese colonial expansion and *Daitoa Kyo-iken*. These perceptions will make it harder to

enhance regional cooperation with Japan and accept its regional leadership. The resurgence of nationalist sentiments has also led to a new domestic political geography in which 'doves (*hato ha*)' have lost their power and influence, whereas 'hawks (*taka ha*)' have taken a commanding height.³² Such realignment has negative implications for regional cooperation since 'doves' have traditionally valued close ties with China and South Korea and promoted the idea of Northeast Asian regionalism. Meanwhile, 'hawks' favor a confrontational foreign policy on neighboring countries, and have successfully exploited it for domestic political gains.³³

NEO-NATIONALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

As with Japan, South Korea is also witnessing resurgent nationalist sentiments that defy the forces of globalization and regionalization. South Korean militants took the lead in aborting the Cancun WTO meeting and organizing opposition to the liberalization of rice markets and bilateral free trade agreements (FTA). On the political front, concerns about China's rise have been muted while anger is often directed against Japan and America. Koreans have responded somewhat hysterically to the revival of Japanese neo-nationalism and the massive candlelight demonstrations held to protest the accidental death of two female middle school students at the hands of American soldiers in 2002 crystallized anger at what some view as Korea's neo-colonial status.

There are three contending variants of nationalism in Korea – the primordial, the instru-

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36 Sung-jo Han, *Hankuk Minjujuui- Irongwa Silje (Korean Democracy: Theory and Practice)* (Seoul: Hyunsul Chulpansa, 1984), pp.341-2; Ho-sang Ahn, *Minjok Jungwon (Right Thesis on Nation)* (Seoul: Sarimwon, 1982)

37 Jong-seok Lee, "Juche Sasang gwa Minjokjuui: Kue Yonkwansong e Kwanhan Yongu [Juche Ideology and Nationalism: A Study on Its Relationship]," *Tongil Munje Yongu* 21 (July 1994), pp.65-96, esp., pp.61-72; Chae-wan Im, "Bukhan ui Minjokjuui Iron gwa kue Byunhwa Chuyi [Theories of North Korean Nationalism and Its Changes]," *Cheongshin Munhwa Yongu*, Vol.17, No.2 (June 1994), pp.37-52

38 Yong-hee Lee, "Hankuk Minjokjuui ui Je Munje [The Issues of Korean Nationalism]," in Yong-hee Lee, et al. (eds.), *Hankuk ui Minjokjuui [Nationalism of Korea]* (Seoul: Hankuk Ilbosa, 1967) [reincite from Hak-joon Kim, "Tongil Inyum euroseoui Hankuk Minjokjuui [Korean Nationalism as a Unification Philosophy]," *Tongil Munje Yongu*, 21 (July 1994), p.43]; Ki-byuk Cha, *Hankuk Minjokjuui ui Inyum gwa Shiltae [Philosophy and Circumstances of Korean Nationalism]* (Seoul: Kachi 1978); Hong-gu Lee, "Hankuk Minjokjuui reul boneun Sae Shigak ui Mosaek [Searching for a New Perspective on Korean Nationalism]," *Asea Yongu*, Vol.27, No.1 (January 1984), pp.38-62

When the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was mistakenly bombed by NATO forces in May 1999, fierce anti-American demonstrations were held throughout China, the largest since the Cultural Revolution.

Neither socialist ideology nor the democratic values increasingly shared among Chinese intellectuals could prevent the rise of a new popular nationalism.

mental, and the post-modernist.³⁴ The primordial perspective argues that national identity, history, language, and culture flow from a common ancestor, *Dangun*, the legendary founder of Korea.³⁵ Being descendants of *Dangun*, Koreans are thus heaven's chosen people and their existence is believed to benefit the entire world. To its proponents, the *Dangun* legend is a historical reality and the blood ties make all Koreans part of one extended family.³⁶ This view is reinforced at an early age as most elementary schools have a statue of *Dangun* on campus and offer courses on *Dangun* that emphasize the organic unity of the Korean people. North Korea has been even more assertive in championing this form of nationalism by claiming the discovery of the original royal tomb of *Dangun* in a Pyongyang suburb in 1994 and declaring it the holiest site of the Korean nation.³⁷

The instrumentalist perspective views nationalism as a foreign concept borrowed from Europe.³⁸ Its proponents concur with the primordial view of the Korean nation (*minjok*) but they differ in the sense that nationalism as an ideology emerged as an instrument to resist foreign domination, foster modernization, and consolidate sovereignty and unification. According to their view, Korean nationalism has evolved through three different forms. The first, an anti-imperial nationalism during the Japanese colonial period aimed at restoring state sovereignty and served as a backbone of the independence movement.

The second is a modernizing nationalism. Upon gaining independence in 1945, Korea was

39 Hyun-chaе Park et al. (eds.), *Hankuk Minjok Undong ui Inyum gwa Yoksa* [Philosophy and History of Korean Nationalism Movements] (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1987); Ul-bung Chang, Uri Shidae Minjok Undong ui Kwaje [Challenges of the Current Nationalism Movements] (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1987)

40 Hak-joon Kim, "Tongil Inyum euroseoui Hankuk Minjokjuui [Korean Nationalism as a Unification Philosophy]," *Tongil Munjae Yongu*, 21 (July 1994), p.50

41 See Shin and Robinson (eds.), *Colonial Modernity in Korea*; Jie-hyun Lim, "Minzokjuui: Cheontong gwa Keundae ui Byunjeungbeop? [Nationalism: A Dialectic of Tradition and Modernity?]," *Sungkyunkwan Inmunkwahak*, Vol.30 (February 2000), pp.357-370; Jie-Hyun Lim, *Jokdaejok Gongbumjadeul (Adversarial Accomplices)* (Seoul: Sonamu, 2004)

42 Henry H. Em, "Minjok as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Shin Ch'aeho's Historiography," in Shin and Robinson, op.cit., p.336

43 Carter Eckert, "Epilogue: Exorcising Hegel's Ghosts: Toward a Postnationalist Historiography of Korea," in Shin and Robinson, op. cit., p.366

left with two national mandates, modernization and state-building on the one hand, and unification on the other. In order to expedite the process of state-building, the South Korean government used official nationalism as a vehicle to mobilize people and resources. Park Chung-Hee utilized this form of official nationalism to justify authoritarian state corporatism. This eventually triggered the rise of populist nationalism (*minjung minjokjuui*), an ideological movement that challenged the legitimacy of Park's modernizing nationalism while focusing attention on demands for democracy, equality, and a more self-reliant economy.³⁹ Dialectical interactions between official and populist nationalism shaped the discursive landscape of Korean nationalism in the 1970s and 1980s.

Finally, Korean nationalism has been closely associated with national unification. Having attained modernization, it seems quite natural that Korean nationalism is now focused on unification. Hak-joon Kim claims that "Overcoming national division, namely national unification, is the very ideology and ideal of Korean nationalism. But Korea still remains divided, and, therefore, Korean nationalism encounters a major setback. Self-actualization of Korean nationalism can be achieved only through national unification."⁴⁰ With unity the ultimate goal, the instrumentalists view nationalism as a powerful means to carry out the incomplete task of national union.

Most recently, both primordial and instrumental perspectives have been subject to immense critiques by post-modernists.⁴¹ They contend that

nationalism in Korea is nothing but a social construct to bind Koreans to an imagined community through cultural identity and shared memory. Henry H. Em refutes both the primordial and instrumental views by stating that "...narratives on 'Korean' identity did not simply accumulate over time; not all such narratives got transmitted, and even those that were, were invariably translated (reinvented) for use in the present."⁴² Underlying motives are to legitimate state power, enhance social integration, and maintain order in through selective interpretation rather than objective reality. As Carter Eckert succinctly puts it, "nationalist paradigms have so dominated intellectual life in Korea that they have obfuscated, subsumed, or obliterated virtually all other possible modes of historical interpretation."⁴³ Thus, post-modernists believe that it is time for Koreans, especially Korean intellectuals, to cast aside myopic nationalism in favor of post-modern, post-nationalist, and pluralist discourses.

South Korea's search for identity through nationalism carries with it inherent contradictions that can have harmful consequences for a harmonious regional order. First, the South Korean government has been pushing for regionalization and globalization but such efforts have been undercut by nationalist sentiment as evidenced by delayed negotiations over free trade agreements with Japan and China. Second, assertive nationalism has instilled a rather ambivalent perception of neighboring countries among Koreans. Improving economic and social ties have not ameliorated the feel-

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44 Although the Koguryo dynasty is integral part of Korean history, some Chinese historians have been undertaking a massive historical project that attempts to justify it as a part of China's peripheral history. For details, see Koguryo Research Foundation, *Jungkukui 'Dongbuk Gongjung'—Keu Shilche wa Heogusung (China's Northeast Project – Its Reality and Fiction)* (Seoul: Koguryo Reseach Foundation, 2004)

45 Qiang Song, Cang-cang Zhang, Zheng-yu Tang, Qing-sheng Gu and Bian Chao, *Zhongguo Keyi Shuobu [China that Can Say 'No']* (Beijing: Zhongguo Gongshang Lianho Chubanshe, 1996)

46 James Townsend, "Chinese Nationalism," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No.27 (January 1992), pp.97-130, esp., p.128

47 Prasenjit Duara, "De-constructing the Chinese Nation," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No.30 (1993), pp.1-26

48 According to a 1994 survey in the Guangdong province, 84 percent of respondents identified the Chinese people (Zhonghua Minzu) as the total sum of 1.1 billion Chinese in mainland and overseas Chinese. Those who identified it with the Han race (Hanzu) were 3.5 percent, and those who identified it with only mainland Chinese were 12.5 percent. Kazuko Mori, "Chuka Sekai no Aidentiti no Henyo to Sai Chuzo [Transformation and Recasting of Identity in Chinese World]," in Kazuko Mori (ed.), *Chuka Sekai: Aidentiti no Saihen [Chinese World: Reorganization of Identity]* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2001), p.30-32

49 Zhimin Chen and Junbo Jian, "Lijie Zhongguo Waijiao Zhengce: Yi Minzuzhuyi Wei Xiansuo (Understanding Chinese Foreign Policy: With Reference to Nationalism)," *Guoji Wenti Rundan*, No. 36 (Fall 2004), <http://irchina.org/news/view.wp?>

ing of suspicion and distrust toward Japan and China. Disputes over Dokdo, revision of Japanese history textbooks, and Koizumi's tributes to the Yasukuni Shrine have critically impaired Seoul-Tokyo ties, which were improved by the Kim-Obuchi Joint Declaration on Future Partnership in 1998 as well as the joint-hosting of the 2002 World Cup. The same can be said of relations with China, where Chinese historical distortion of the Koguryo dynasty through the Northeast Project (*Dongbei Gongting*) has tarnished South Korea's image of China.⁴⁴

Finally, for South Korean nationalists, the formation of a Korean commonwealth (*hanminjok gongdongche*) is preferred to any other form of regional community. The preference originates from Korea's historical experiences and the belief that Korean division was a product of the politics of divide and rule among major powers, and that China, Japan, Russia, and the United States do not favor Korean unification for their own national interests. Thus, they feel that any meaningful discussion of regional integration should occur only after Korean unification is achieved.

NEO-NATIONALISM IN CHINA

China's nationalist resurgence became more pronounced after the publication of *China that Can Say 'No'* (*Zhongguo keyi shuo bu*) by Song et al (1996).⁴⁵ When the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was mistakenly bombed by NATO forces in May 1999, fierce anti-American demonstrations were held throughout China, the largest since the Cultural Revolution. Neither socialist ideology

nor the democratic values increasingly shared among Chinese intellectuals could prevent the rise of a new popular nationalism in China.

James Townsend classifies Chinese nationalism into four discernable but overlapping categories: state nationalism, Han nationalism, Greater China nationalism, and transnational Chinese nationalism.⁴⁶ The state nationalism has been dominant since the founding of the Republic of China by Sun Yat-sen in 1911. As Fredrich Hegel envisaged, the state was seen as a completion of nationalist projects, and state nationalism was a valuable instrument for independence, nation-building, and modernization. Han nationalism, meanwhile, is rooted in a shared history, language, and culture through which the Han Chinese believe they are superior to the outside world.⁴⁷ Greater China nationalism is predicated on the concept of an extended territoriality that includes not only mainland China, but also Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan while transnational Chinese nationalism is the most encompassing of all since it views all overseas Chinese as an integral part of China.⁴⁸ Zhimin Chen and Junbo Jian have suggested three more recent versions of nationalism related to foreign policy.⁴⁹ The first is positive nationalism, which Hu Yaobang conceived in 1982, and still constitutes the mainstream nationalism in China. Chen and Jian argue that it is an enlightened or benign nationalism which attempts to not only overcome the revolutionary, self-reliant nationalism of the past, but also seek harmonious international relations. Moderate and conservative, it emphasizes peace

50 For a rich discussion of mass nationalism, refer to Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

51 Ge Sun and Hiroko Sakamoto, "Sozoryoku no Hinkon to Shiso no Tetsuzuki [Poverty of Creativity and Procedure of Philosophy]," *Gendai Shiso*, Vol.29, No.4 (March 2001), pp.42-55; P. Gries, *China's New Nationalism*; Shigeo Nishimura (ed.), *Gendai Chugoku no Kozo Hendo 2: Nashonarizumu [Structural Change in Contemporary China 2: Nationalism]* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2000).

In spite of reform and the pressures of globalization, nationalist sentiments are on the rise in China.

and stability and seeks international recognition and respect. Internally, positive nationalism aims at mobilizing the Chinese for economic development, and national integration. The second variant is an official patriotism that emerged in the wake of the Tiananmen incident and the end of the Cold War. It places great importance on symbols such as the national flag and anthem and can be seen as an official doctrine of the Chinese Communist party in order to consolidate state power, ensure political stability, and promote national integration by emphasizing the primacy of the nation-state. The final form is popular nationalism founded on three cardinal tenets: traditionalism (Confucian, cultural nationalism), neo-conservatism (primacy of central authority), and *'shuo bu zhuyi* (say 'no' ism).⁵⁰ Whereas official patriotism is nationalism from above, mass nationalism rises from below. Chen and Jian contend that the future of Chinese nationalism depends on how to incorporate contending forms, official and defensive vs. popular and offensive, into a dialectical synthesis of positive nationalism.

In spite of reform and the pressures of globalization, nationalist sentiments are on the rise in China. What explains this? First is the rekindling of national identity in the context of a lingering collective memory – the humiliating subjugation to Japan and Western powers and

long-delayed modernization.⁵¹ Victimization narratives associated with a century of national humiliation have long governed the Chinese national psyche, beginning with the first Opium War in the mid 19th century. With the rediscovery of its rich cultural heritage and new national potential, Chinese nationalism, regardless of its form, has become a persuasive instrument to enhance national pride, cement national cohesion and unity, and strengthen national power. Moreover, Chinese nationalism is an expression of renewed confidence in the glory of the past and contemporary performance.

The second factor lies in the gap between power and status. Since the reform period began in the early 1980s, China has transformed itself into one of the most dynamic and powerful economies in the world. In 2005, China became the third largest trading nation (\$1.4 trillion) in the world trailing only the United States and Germany. Its Gross Domestic Product is the sixth largest in the world, while its foreign currency reserves (at over \$1 trillion) are second only to Japan. At the same time, China enjoyed a \$162 billion trade surplus with the United States in 2004 while holding \$500 billion worth of U.S. government and corporate bonds. Notwithstanding this transformation, China has not enjoyed the international standing commensurate to its economic power. As the recent campaign for a peaceful rise (*heping jueqi*) illustrates, a new form of positive nationalism has come to the forefront of Chinese discourse to narrow the gap between its power and international status.⁵²

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52 Bijian Zheng, "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.84, No.5 (September/October 2005), pp.18-24; Jisi Wang, "China's Search for Stability with America," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.84, No.5 (September/October 2005), pp.39-48

53 See David Shambaugh, "China's Fragile Future," *World Policy Journal* (Fall 1994), pp.41-45; Denny Roy, "Hegemon on the Horizon: China's Threat to East Asian Security," *International Security*, Vol.19, No.1 (Summer 1994), pp.149-168; Alstair I. Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?" *International Security*, Vol.27, No.4 (Spring 2003), pp.5-56

54 See Bill Gertz, *The China Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Regency 2002)

55 John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001)

56 A.I. Johnston, "Beijing's Security Behavior in the Asia-Pacific: Is China a Dissatisfied Power?" in Suh, Katzenstein, and Carlson, op. cit., p.67

57 See Xue-Tong Yan, "Qiangdajunli Caineng Baozheng Heping Jueqi (Strong Military Power Can only Guarantee Peaceful Rise)," *Huan Qiu* (Globe), No. 17 (September 1, 2005); Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.108-109

58 Yongnian Zheng, *Ibid*, ch.5

The Chinese government could be quite effective in pacifying negative nationalist sentiments, while pursuing pragmatic economic growth and regional strategic stability. But failure to curb unruly nationalist fever could be worrisome.

Third, recent Chinese nationalism also represents a reaction to a series of external events that interfere with its territorial and political sovereignty and national pride. The 1989 Tiananmen incident and economic sanctions by the West, American and French sales of advanced weapons to Taiwan, the NATO bombing, territorial disputes with Japan, the 2001 mid-air collision with an American reconnaissance plane, and the Western blockade of Beijing's bid for the 2000 Olympics precipitated massive nationalist sentiment in China. Concurrently, any Western actions that are seen to interfere with China's sovereignty over Taiwan and Tibet also spur nationalist responses.

Fourth, the resurgence can also be partly attributed to the Western construction of a China threat thesis.⁵³ Beginning in the mid-1990s, conservatives in the United States began to portray China as a major challenger, or even threat, to U.S. hegemony.⁵⁴ The Bush administration and the rise of neo-conservatives have further amplified the China threat thesis. Its logic is rather simple: conflict with China is inevitable not only because China has been catching up with the United States in terms of national power, but also because China is increasingly dissatisfied with its international and regional status. The

only way to avoid the conflict is to slow the pace of China's growing power while pushing for a further deepening of the capitalist system and democratic reform.⁵⁵ The fear of rising Chinese power in the U.S. and Japan has in turn triggered "a process of malign amplification" where "cooperative actions are discounted and conflictual behavior becomes the focus of analysis."⁵⁶ China's response to this has been varied, ranging from the moderate 'peaceful development (*heping fazhan*)' and 'peaceful rise (*heping jueqi*)', to a more hardline 'preservation of sovereignty.' But it has become clear that outside pressure has contributed to more assertive nationalist sentiments that justify a greater Chinese military build-up.⁵⁷

Finally, both positive nationalism and official patriotism have been encouraged by the Chinese political leadership as an ideological alternative to the socialist governing ideology that has been subject to the law of diminishing returns.⁵⁸ Chinese market socialism was a great success. However, that very success began to erode the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Tiananmen revealed the CCP's political limits but the polarization of the Chinese economy and society also undercuts the Party's standing. Disparities in income distribution,

59 Guangqiu Xu, "Anti-Western Nationalism in China, 1989-99," *World Affairs*, Vol.163, No.4 (Spring 2001), pp.151-162

60 Ikuo Kayahara, "Chugoku no Kokubo Kindaika to Ajia no Kincho [China's Defense Modernization and Aisa's Tension]," *Chuo Koron* (May 2005), pp.204-215

gaps between the prosperous coast and the hinterlands and rampant corruption all pose a challenge. Official patriotism, which was initiated by Jiang Zemin on the occasion of the return of Hong Kong in 1997, was a well-calculated political and ideological move to supplement waning socialist ideology.⁵⁹

What then are the implications of the nationalist resurgence in China for the future of the Northeast Asian order? If China chooses a positive or enlightened nationalism, no profound conflict need emerge. Under the 'peaceful development' policy line, China will seek a more accommodating regional policy through cooperative bilateral relations, open regionalism, and compliance with multilateralism. The Chinese government could be quite effective in pacifying negative nationalist sentiments, while pursuing pragmatic economic growth and regional strategic stability. But failure to curb unruly nationalist fever could be worrisome. If the Chinese government tolerates popular nationalism in the name of 'patriotism is not guilty,' as shown in its silence over massive violent anti-Japanese riots (e.g., attacks on the Japanese embassy in Beijing and consulate in Shanghai as well as the boycott of Japanese products) in March 2005, a Northeast Asian regional order based on cooperation and integration is highly unlikely, for such hostile attitudes can negatively affect not only its relations with Japan, but also with South Korea and the United States.

The most troubling aspect comes from the correlates of assertive nationalism and China's strategic positioning. As long as China adheres to its traditional policy of peaceful co-existence, China can continue to play a constructive role in shaping a new regional order. However, if nationalism drives China to become a regional spoiler, Northeast Asia could face a

traumatic shift. This could happen under two circumstances. One is growing containment of China by the United States and Japan as a negative outcome of the China threat thesis urged by ultra-conservatives in Japan and the United States. The other is a state of internal fragmentation and subsequent unrest in China that could result from a combination of faltering economic performance, social and regional polarization, and political incompetence by the Chinese Communist Party. The former would serve as the pull factor by precipitating popular nationalism and making China adopt a more confrontational security and economic policy. The latter could be the push factor forcing the Chinese leadership to invoke official patriotism and inducing it to undertake a military adventure as it did through the invasion of Vietnam in early the 1980s. Such scenarios are no longer fictional in military terms. Although meager by American standards, China's defense spending has been growing by more than 10 percent per year since 1990, and progress in science and technology has greatly enhanced its military potential.⁶⁰ Nationalism-driven hard-line confrontation can readily endanger the region. It may well be said that the future direction of Chinese nationalism is the wild card in determining the shape of Northeast Asia's regional order.

OVERCOMING THE SPECTER OF NATIONALISM
Building a viable regional order in Northeast Asia seems a daunting journey. This is not only because of the strategic uncertainty of power transition, but also because of the incomplete stage of liberal transition lacking common values, norms, and interests. What is more troublesome is the resurgence of nationalist identity politics, which fuels a vicious circle of suspicion and distrust in the region. The specter of paro-

chial and often offensive nationalism complicates the tragedy of great power politics. The “masses” can be easily mobilized under the banner of nationalism to denounce another country, undermining the chance for community building in the region. Thus, it would be quite unthinkable to establish and sustain a new regional order of co-existence and harmony without first tackling the problem of destructive nationalism.

What should be done? The most important task is to prevent nationalism from being misused for domestic political gain. This requires not only prudence, self-restraint, and integrity by politicians, but also universal civic virtues and the vigilance of grassroots citizens. The pursuit of parochial nationalism at the expense of regional cooperation and integration would be a Faustian bargain.

Equally important is avoiding vicious nationalism across national boundaries. This can be done by cultivating transnational solidarity among liberal forces in the region as well as confronting and breaking down an unintended, inadvertent ultra-conservative alliance, which earns political capital from a nationalist war of attrition. As demonstrated by successful public campaigns to block the adoption of revised history textbooks in Japan, a new transnational liberal coalition can be a powerful social force to counter-balance conservative actions.

Countries should also develop joint programs to cultivate a new regional identity of co-existence, harmony, and cooperation. Despite bitter historical memories of domination and subjugation, Northeast Asia shares a common cultural and historical heritage that should be emphasized more than contentious past insults. The time has come for Northeast Asia to take away an important lesson from Europe’s early phase of regional integration by cultivating visionary leadership able to articulate a constructive agenda of cooperation and integration. That is the way forward.

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