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The Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs has now entered its seventh year of publication. In that time, it has witnessed the tragic human consequences of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, traced the geopolitical fallout of continuing North Korean brinkmanship and testified to the horrific cost of the 2003 epidemic maelstrom that came to be known as SARS. Its pages have also borne witness to the emancipation of an unprecedented number of people from the shackles of poverty, discussed increasing pan-Asian cooperation through regional institutions like ASEAN, and debated Beijing’s triumph in its bid to host the upcoming 2008 Olympics. This issue brims with an astonishing breadth of analysis that the Journal has come to exemplify, showcasing at an international level both undergraduate theses and doctoral papers from leading institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom.
Amidst growing unrest in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) in the run-up to the Beijing Summer Olympics, Sarah Getzelman provides timely analysis of the 1996 Chinese ban of the Dalai Lama’s Image. Elsewhere in Greater China, Cynthia Liao offers a backdrop to the 2008 Taiwanese presidential elections by reviewing the seminal February 28 Incident in Taiwan. On Japan, Ke Wang examines the limitations of Japan’s “Peace Constitution” in dealing with rising Chinese military supremacy, while Annika Culver places Sino-Japanese ties in historical context with an account of Sino-Japanese cultural exchange in the turbulent 1920’s. Alex Dukalskis debates the relevance of contemporary human rights language in accounting for North Korea, and Loan Dao concludes this issue by bringing to light the subtle role of theatrical performances, cai luong, in mobilizing the masses of colonial Vietnam toward national liberation.

This issue also marks the return of short opinion pieces included in the Voices section. These lively articles discuss China’s actions in the Sudan, the rise of a new order in Central Asia, argue for official recognition of Korean “comfort women” in the Second World War, and debate the future of regional institutions like the longstanding Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), signed in April 2007.

The Journal has grown from strength to strength, and has slowly garnered a worldwide presence. We invite you to continue contributing to the discussions that take place within and beyond these pages, and to provide new insight on the compelling East Asian issues of our time.

Hin Sing Leung & Betty Manling Luan
Editors-in-Chief, Winter 2008
The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was founded by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand in 1967, and expanded its membership by accepting Brunei in the early 1980s and Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) in the late 1990s. On August 8, 2007, ASEAN celebrated its 40th anniversary, during which an ASEAN Charter was completed and ratified. The Charter aims to reform ASEAN (ie. regarding legal international status, people-oriented organization, market-driven integration, consolidation of democracy, and an established ASEAN identity), and pave the path toward a more integrated regional community.

During the 1960s-70s, the spread of the Communist threat in Southeast Asia motivated ASEAN leaders to emphasize ASEAN as an anti-communist alliance. Political cooperation was ASEAN’s foremost goal. As Michael Leifer points out, ASEAN was initially formed to manage regional order. The demand for regional cooperation primarily came from the collective interest to reduce the political and military presence of non-regional powers in Southeast Asia such as China, the Soviet Union, and the United States.2

In 2003, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, commonly known as the Bali Concord II, addressed a new objective, which was to build an ASEAN Community by deepening regional cooperation in areas of security, economics and socio-culture. A regional community requires members to transfer their national sovereignty to a regional institution and strengthen formal ties under a group charter. The ASEAN partnership, more often called the ‘ASEAN Way’, is known for non-confrontation, consultation, quiet diplomacy, consensus, and avoidance of conflict.3

The question now is what kind of an ASEAN charter will be formed. Due to the historical hostility and distrust among ASEAN members and their demand for preserving national sovereignty in domestic politics, the flexible recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) will most...
likely result in the establishment of a flexible charter. The first section of this article analyzes the main incentives for establishing a flexible ASEAN Charter. The second section examines the recommendations of the EPG on the Charter.

**Why a Flexible Charter?**

*Hostility and Distrust*

ASEAN members have a long history of unfriendly and distrustful relations. In the 1960s-70s, before the formation of ASEAN, the feeling of insecurity from the communist threat encouraged Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand to search for assistance from Western nations. Indonesia, however, where anti-Western sentiment dominated foreign and security policy, cooperated with other developing countries. The five ASEAN founding members thus had irreconcilable foreign and military policies due to different in extra-regional alliances.

There was also a feeling of distrust after the three major bilateral conflicts in the 1960s: (1) the Philippines’ claim to the Sabah – formally North Borneo, (2) the separation of Singapore from Malaysia (with the support of Indonesia), and (3) the Indonesian Confrontation policy toward the Malaysian Federation.

Relations between the five founding members of ASEAN (except Indonesia) and CLMV had also been hostile. CLMV were invited to join ASEAN at the time of ASEAN’s founding. However, CLMV declined due to differences in political ideology. The relationship between Vietnam and ASEAN further deteriorated after Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia.

Several contemporary bilateral and multilateral conflicts have also caused strains in the relations among ASEAN nations, including (1) the unsolved issue of national borders between Thailand and Cambodia, Thailand and Laos, and Cambodia and Vietnam, (2) the issue of the remaining Burmese refugees along Thailand’s border, (3) the South China Sea dispute among Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and extra-regional states such as China, and (4) the water supply and land disputes Singapore has with Malaysia and Indonesia. These disputes extensively hindered cooperation and increased distrust among Southeast Asian nations.

Therefore, any kind of ASEAN cooperation, even in economic affairs, has to avoid aggravating the existing political tensions. The policy of non-interference and the preservation of national sovereignty have thus been used by ASEAN members to ensure mutual trust, to prevent future conflicts, and promote economic and political cooperation. The management style of consultation, consensus, informal communication, and non-binding agreements tends to be the most preferable among ASEAN members.

*The Desire for National Sovereignty*

The diverse political and economic situation of ASEAN and CLMV nations complicate the movement toward a more integrated community. Currently, the political systems of CLMV favor an informal type of institution in order to preserve their national sovereignty in the midst of domestic and international clashes. In Myanmar, for example, the detention of the leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD), Aung San Suu Kyi, has drawn criticism from ASEAN. If the ASEAN community had a reward and sanction system,
ASEAN members could have voted on the issues of Suu Kyi and democratization in Myanmar, and even suspend Myanmar’s membership. Myanmar thus prefers an informal type of regional institution.

In the Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, recent trade liberalization and globalization have empowered the private sector and weakened the state sector, especially in Vietnam. As people have more freedom to trade, their behavior becomes increasingly determined by the market rather than the socialist state system. Private businesses are starting to replace the inefficient state-owned enterprises. The economic reforms in CLV were intended to restore the political legitimacy of the socialist parties, but instead challenged the governments’ control over their domestic politics, forcing them into political dilemmas. Hun Sen, a central-power regulator and a strongman in Cambodia, faced challenges to his usual methods of control – distributing economic benefits to local authorities, state agencies, and the military, while preventing the influence of the private sector from impinging upon his strongman alliances.5 Anti-Hun Sen campaigns have negatively impacted his popularity both domestically and internationally, as can be seen in the last election, where his party lost several seats in the parliament.6 In Laos, the socialist government also faces threats to its control from globalization and changes in international politics, especially in its socialist neighbor Vietnam. Vietnamese grassroots democracy campaigns have emerged as a formal representation of local interests and a means of commenting on the state system. Faced with the threat of losing control over their economic and political affairs, CLV are greatly concerned with preserving sovereignty at the regional level as an assertion of their governments’ capabilities to manage their own affairs and stabilize domestic politics.

Recommendations and Reactions

EPG’s Recommendations

At the 11th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2005, the ASEAN leaders decided to form the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to draft the ASEAN Charter. The report of recommendations on the Charter by the EPG was submitted at the 12th ASEAN Summit Meeting in January 2007. The recommendations significantly empower the legal status of ASEAN as a binding institution in terms of the “capacity to own property, enter into contracts, and…to sue and be sued.”7 Moreover, the EPG proposed three major changes to the decision-making process.

Firstly, the EPG suggests that the ASEAN summit, where ASEAN leaders meet once a year, should be replaced by an ASEAN Council and held twice a year. The Council will have the right to suspend membership upon the request of member states and become the supreme policy-making organ of ASEAN. However, the proposal of the member states to allow the suspension of rights and privileges will have to be recommended and approved by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers.8 This condition implies that the Council does not have real power or supremacy without the support of each country’s foreign ministers. Thus, politics will continue to dominate the structure of the ASEAN institution. Economic affairs that may involve the issue of suspension will also have to receive permission from foreign ministers. As a result, the Council of ASEAN Economic Community, which
is proposed to replace the ASEAN Economic Ministerial (AEM) meeting, will not have supreme control in its own affairs.

Secondly, the EPG recommends a voting method “either on the basis of a simple majority, or on the basis of a 2/3 or 3/4 majority” in the decision-making process of ASEAN. This method would be applied to issues not sensitive in the fields of security and foreign policy, or when consensus cannot be achieved in other areas. Constituting a voting system will strengthen the ASEAN institution in a way that helps to exercise a dispute settlement mechanism and a reward and sanction system. As a result, ASEAN members will be required to transfer individual sovereignty in order to enhance a sense of community and manage regional issues and policies more effectively. However, according to the report of the EPG, the definition of “sensitive issues” is not specified, which allows for different interpretations that may cause future problems. Moreover, the principle of consensus will remain a primary method of the decision-making process. At this point, the proposed voting method is just an option, and there is no guarantee that the member states will use it to resolve problems. The question of whether this option will be used to manage future problems is hence critical to predicting the actual development of ASEAN after the Charter is ratified.

Thirdly, the EPG recommends that the ASEAN Secretary-General be granted more authority in managing external relations such as signing “non-sensitive agreements on behalf of member states; representing ASEAN at the UN and other international, regional, and sub-regional forums” and conducting “discussions and negotiations on behalf of ASEAN with other international bodies.” In practice, the Secretary-General would also work more closely with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in administering ASEAN’s international relations. Regarding the intra-regional responsibilities, the ASEAN Secretariat would serve as an administrative body facilitating and coordinating all meetings of the Councils and all Councils of Community (security, economics, socio-culture, and external relations). The EPG suggests that the Secretary-General be given the ability to “harmonize, facilitate and monitor progress in implementation of all approved ASEAN activities and report non-compliance to the Council, initiate plans and programs of activities, bring to the attention of the ASEAN council, councils of community and ASEAN committees.” These functions are the same as the existing job descriptions of the Secretary-General written in the previous ASEAN agreements. However, the current organizational structure of the Secretariat still does not have an effective political body to perform these functions. The Secretary-General’s authority to monitor and initiate ASEAN projects and policies exists only in writing, since ASEAN members have never allowed the strengthening of the Secretariat in practice.

Reactions to EPG’s Recommendations

In response to the EPG’s recommendations, ASEAN member countries have reacted to the proposed Charter varying degrees of approval. Singapore former Foreign Minister and the current government advisor S. Jayakumar stated that ASEAN has no choice but to change, because if it does not, “ASEAN will become one of those organizations which will slowly fade into the
ASEAN as a “Regional Community”

Despite the different responses to the EPG model, the establishment of the Charter will still be expected this year to celebrate ASEAN’s 40th anniversary. The current ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong expressed his concern at the Annual Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in November 2007, stating that “our credibility would be badly affected if we cannot produce a charter.”

However, the history of hostility and problems of distrust among ASEAN members as well as the contemporary conflicts have yet to be resolved. It is possible that these disputes will reignite anytime. In domestic politics, CLMV are still struggling through the clashes of domestic and international politics. Giving up more sovereignty to a binding regional institution operated by voting rule, sanction, suspension, and legal binding agreements would be the last thing they want to do. With the pressures from below (changes in domestic politics) and above (globalization and trade liberalization), CLMV are thus likely to reserve their sovereignty at the regional level. As a result, a semi- or flexible Charter can be expected as a compromise between member nations. Even if ASEAN endorses the whole package of the EPG recommendations, there will still be much room left for political intervention regarding “insensitive” issues and a loose option for a voting system. If these issues are not fixed, the ratification of the (flexible) ASEAN Charter in November will not have much practical impact on constructing the real ASEAN community.

Conclusion

On the contrary, Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem implicitly expressed his concern about the EPG recommendations regarding the principles of consensus versus voting and the role of the ASEAN Secretary-General at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting. He reaffirmed that the Charter should stick to the fundamental principle of non-interference and consensus, meaning there should not be “regulations to expel or suspend membership from the group, but warning measures should be made for serious violations of the Association’s principles or agreements.” At the 12th ASEAN Summit in January 2007, after the ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed to support the EPG recommendations as a blueprint for drafting the Charter, some of the members “were not happy with the host [Philippines]’s idea.” Laos and Myanmar showed their apprehension in the issue of voting system because of their fear of isolation. Nevertheless, ASEAN members ultimately need to find a middle ground, rendering the creation of a strict type of the ASEAN Charter unlikely.

ENDNOTES

Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was welcomed to join ASEAN by Tun Razak and Adam Malik, but Tun Razak had reservations over the relationship between India and Pakistan. Ranjit Gill, ASEAN: Coming of Age (Singapore: Sterling Corporate Services, 1987), 42.


As a result, the government created over 200 ministries to re-magnetize the CPP’s loyalty – the network of local officials and military. Melanie Beresford, “Cambodia in 2004: An Artificial Democratization Process,” Asian Survey, vol. 45, no. 1 (2005), 135.


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It is no secret that in the last decade China and Russia have collaborated together with remarkable success. In summit meetings that rotate yearly between Beijing and Moscow, Presidents Hu Jintao of China and Vladimir Putin of Russia have settled border issues, increased military collaboration and arms trade, and removed restrictions obstructing economic ties. The two countries share many concerns, such as battling the terrorist and separatist forces they each face, as well as securing places as great powers in a multipolar international world. In the sometimes overlooked region of Central Asia, a battleground against forces of extremism where Chinese and Russian influence collaborates and competes with that of the United States, these goals have come to a head in the form of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Formed in 1996 as the Shanghai Five, the SCO provides an international forum for Central Asia to enhance military cooperation and counter extremism, as well as increase economic and diplomatic ties among constituent states. Membership consists of China, Russia, and four of the five countries of Central Asia – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan – as well as the recent additions of Iran, India, Pakistan, and Mongolia as partial members with observer status. The organization’s effectiveness, however, hinges on China’s lasting cooperation with its neighbor and partner, Russia. Due to their converging interests in domestic and international realms, the two countries continue to build on their recent diplomatic success, and with further cooperation between its two leaders, the SCO will maintain its ascent as an influential international organization, finally bringing a sense of regionalism to the embattled Central Asia.

Converging Strategies in Central Asia
For both China and Russia, Central Asia has become of vital importance to national interests, and their main priorities in the region are twofold: fighting terrorism and furthering economic growth. To this end, both powers have sought to promote social stability and political cohesion among Central Asian states, encouraging their development to produce strong allies that can deal
effectively with domestic extremism. Obstacles to international trade have been slashed, and Chinese and Russian investment in oil pipelines and other infrastructure in the region have boomed over the past decade. This has produced impressive results for the economies of the two giants, enabling Putin to consolidate Russian influence over former satellite states and allowing Hu Jintao to secure energy sources to support China's high rate of growth. Recipient governments in Central Asia are keen to see this relationship continue and, as economic advances reduce domestic unrest, public backing for extremist groups in the area will likely wane. Though these gains reveal themselves most clearly in the Central Asian states, they are even more important to China and Russia. With separatist movements in Xinjiang and Chechnya threatening the respective stabilities of both powers, it is these two nations that benefit the most from continued regional cooperation.

Situated in northwestern China and bordering Russia and Central Asia, Xinjiang is populated with ethnic Uigurs, Muslims of Turkish origins who have fought for independence under the state of East Turkestan. After seeing the progress made by their Central Asian counterparts, the Uigurs seek the same freedoms for themselves. However, should Xinjiang successfully wage a battle for independence, China fears a domino effect where similar forces in Taiwan and Tibet prompt their own struggles, wresting rule away from Beijing. Just as Moscow has treated Chechnya, Beijing has designated the separatists in Xinjiang terrorists and utilized the US War on Terror to suppress this domestic opposition movement. To control the Uigur separatists, China requires the assistance of its neighbors to secure their borders and crack down on similar extremist groups sympathetic to the Uigur cause. Halting the drug flow in Central Asia, from Afghanistan up through Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan, would cut off a significant source of revenue for these organizations, thereby striking a major blow to extremists and damaging the capabilities of the rebels in Russia and China. In order to fight these separatists effectively, however, these two powers require a joint commitment from all countries in the region to ensure government stability and security on the borders.

In addition to the security and economic dimensions of cooperation in Central Asia, a further concern for China and Russia is to counter United States advances in the region. While American cooperation in combating terrorism is essential, the two powers often seek a more expansive definition of extremism than favored by the US, and both would prefer not to share economic opportunities with their rival in the West. For Moscow, there is a continual desire to regain influence over the former USSR, attempting to counter NATO expansion into its former satellites by improving economic and military ties with the region. Similarly, China resents American influence halfway across the world in its backyard, preferring to keep its neighbors under its sphere of influence rather than that of the United States. Though these two Asian countries might not be unified on every front, they would both prefer to cooperate in a multipolar world order rather than seeing the US dominate international affairs. For these reasons, Russia and China look to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for support.
The SCO – A Common Solution

Originally, the SCO was simply an institution of mutual respect. In its formation in June 2001, it delineated its major aims:

The purposes of the SCO are: strengthening mutual trust and good-neighborly friendship among the member states; encouraging effective cooperation among the member states in political, economic and trade, scientific and technological, cultural, educational, energy, communications, environment and other fields; devoting themselves jointly to preserving and safeguarding regional peace, security and stability; and establishing a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

Signatories pledged not to use or to threaten military action against other members, and each agreed that all dealings should be made with consideration to the interests of other nations. The organization was developed mainly as a confidence-building forum, but after September 11 acquired more of a security dimension, producing affirmations that “SCO member states will strengthen cooperation in security fields, with the purpose of increasing efficiency of struggle against terrorism, separatism and extremism and protecting their common interests.”

Incorporating economic, security, and technological cooperation, it has advanced well beyond its original scope of “strengthening mutual trust and good neighborly friendship.”

As a multilateral forum for confidence-building and regional support, the SCO has provided an efficient outlet to address the concerns of its various members. For Central Asia, it allows former states of the USSR to address the leaders of Russia and China as equals, collaborating with the two countries and giving the smaller states a regional institution in which the two major powers compete for their support. Such status in an effective multilateral group imparts a sense of recognition for their equality and sovereignty. The group has also allowed them to maintain strong control over domestic politics, clamping down on terrorists and opposition groups with help from their two powerful neighbors, thereby avoiding the human rights and democratic concerns that often render Western countries reluctant to lend their support. With China and Russia feeling increased pressure themselves from separatist movements in Chechnya and Xinjiang, Central Asian states can lean on their SCO leaders for support against similar types of political opposition. Finally, the SCO has provided economic benefits to Central Asian states, helping secure foreign markets and investment for exporting their expansive energy reserves. The gains are considerable, as Tajikistan and Kazakhstan rounded out 2004 and 2005 with GDP growth rates approaching 10%, with their regional neighbors close behind.

Border disagreements between countries have been settled – such as the recent agreements between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan – and with their major concerns for regional and economic cooperation largely answered, Central Asian states look to the future with optimism.

For Russia, the situation looks similar. Its major concern of the past six years has been Putin’s ideal of gosudarstvannost, the notion of rebuilding Russian statism to regain its former position as a great power. To this end, it places significant weight on halting terrorism and opposition movements in areas like Chechnya. While the SCO has certainly provided an accommodating forum to address these concerns internationally, it has also given Moscow
an arena to address Beijing as diplomatic equals, matching its flourishing neighbor and monitoring China’s rise closely. Rebuilding its status requires international recognition, and by merging its interests with those of China, Central Asia, and South Asia, Russia has been able to advance in a multi-polar fashion.

Nevertheless, the SCO remains a Chinese initiative, and it is Beijing that perhaps has gained the most. China’s diplomatic status has been enhanced by heading an efficient multilateral organization, and without the participation of the United States, China is the most powerful nation involved. While the SCO has helped garner support to regulate Chinese borders, it has also presented an opportunity for greater economic integration into Central Asia, providing access to the region’s significant pools of oil and natural gas. Without this energy Beijing would be unable to continue its remarkable rates of economic growth, and rather than relying on resources from the volatile Middle East, it has increased its pursuit of Central Asian reserves in the spirit of diversification. Moreover, pipelines from Russia and Central Asia will pass through the Chinese border into Xinjiang, allowing Beijing to station troops in the unstable region to oversee construction and protect the investment. Operating under this pretext, these troops can then monitor opposition movements closely, move quickly to avert crises and act more efficiently to protect Chinese interests. In this way, access to Central Asian oil will have secondary benefits for China unrelated to the economic gains that the SCO has already secured, and with the cooperation of neighboring states, China will be able to deal more effectively with threats to domestic stability.

Sino-Russian Relations – Cooperation or Competition?

Even with the recent admission of Iran, India, Pakistan, and Mongolia in April 2006, the SCO will only go as far as Russia and China carry it. Despite the powerful influence of India’s booming economy in international markets, the economic and military potential of the SCO is extremely limited without Russia’s manpower and China’s considerable economic and military clout. The most significant barrier to continued cooperation is the two countries’ persistent underlying rivalry. Tensions in Central Asia, a region that has traditionally been Russia’s backyard, have the potential to erupt as Moscow tries to regain its former influence over its satellite states and Beijing attempts to increase its expanding sphere of influence. As Anatoly Klimenko writes in his article “Russia and China as Strategic Partners in Central Asia:”

On the Russian side, people are deeply apprehensive about China’s growing military muscle, its staggering population statistics, and, even more worrisome, by territorial claims that continue to be put forward by some media in China.

The distrust is mutual, and China, recognizing the area’s deep ties to Russia, has sought to use the SCO as an instrument to draw the Central Asian states further from their traditional partner into a more multilateral sphere. Beijing needs access to the energy in Central Asia, but aggressive action in the region will not be received well by Moscow. Furthermore, as Klimenko continues, the “absence of personal contacts and exchanges between the two countries’ nongovernmental organizations [is] a clear indication that relations
between Russia and China lack a broad-based popular support. Without increased attention to resolving this mutual jealousy, relations between the two countries will go nowhere.

A further example demonstrating the basic distrust that lurks behind the appearance of friendly Sino-Russian relations is the limitation on arms trade from Moscow to Beijing. The two countries engage in close military cooperation and exchange, with over 40% of Russian conventional arms transfers going to China and 90% of Chinese weapons purchases originating from Russia during 1997-2001. However, not all technology is transferred freely, and China seeks a much closer partnership. Since India, only a recent addition to the SCO and a country that has continuously flouted the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, has enjoyed full access to Russian technology, China feels entitled to the same benefits. Although trade between the two powers has reached astounding levels, this withholding demonstrates a lingering distrust that belies their outward appearance of a close “strategic partnership” voiced in the 1996 summit and maintained since.

Despite inevitable tensions, however, the two countries have shown a remarkable ability to resolve their problems without allowing minor disagreements to ruin a valuable partnership. For example, after considering proposals to build a pipeline to give energy access largely to either Japan or China, Moscow has compromised, agreeing to build a stage to the Chinese city Daqing first and then run an extension to the Russian port city of Nakhodka, allowing easier Japanese access. A line straight to Nakhodka would run exclusively through Russian territory, while also reaching South Korea and the United States, and it would be funded largely by a $7 billion loan promised by Japan. However, recognizing the damage this line would have on Chinese relations, and valuing the benefits of a shorter, safer line to the powerful Chinese market in Daqing, Moscow decided to honor its original agreement with Beijing, compromising with Japan in order to satisfy its SCO partner. With similar minor concessions, Russia and China can build upon the pipeline compromise as an example in overcoming their disagreements to keep their larger interests in mind, leaving their strategic partnership intact.

The Future of the SCO

By aligning the interests of two of the world’s largest powers, the SCO is poised to flourish on the international stage. However, due to basic distrust and the precarious nature of shifting regional interests, it is extremely unlikely that the SCO will ever develop into a pact of mutual defense. While countering the hegemony of the United States is a significant and shared concern for each of the member states, none are ready to sacrifice diplomatic and economic ties with the superpower should another member overstep its bounds and provoke American ire. The U.S. is simply too powerful and its economic support too valuable for members to risk losing its good favor. Immediately after the June 2001 meeting, Uzbek President Karimov echoed this sentiment, declaring that the pact to “join hands to battle the three evil forces of terrorism, separatism and extremism” would in no way be used to subordinate Uzbekistan to the interests of larger powers. Should it be called to arms in a struggle to regain Taiwan, for example,
Uzbekistan would have to reevaluate its policies. Similarly, the larger powers in the SCO would be reluctant to promise their support to the smaller nations in Central and South Asia. Emboldened by the backing of China and Russia, a smaller state might be overly aggressive in its dealings with others, laying claim to resources in neighboring lands, for example, or stepping up the production of illegal weapons. Fearing this possibility, Beijing and Moscow would prefer to reserve military action for situations that serve their own interests, rather than risking involvement in minor conflicts across the region.

While the potential of the SCO may be limited in its military scope, the true promise of the organization lies in its likely development as an economic superpower. With its expanded membership, it now contains two booming economies in India and China, as well as the enormous amounts of oil in Russia, Central Asia, and Iran. This influence on world markets and control over energy reserves gives its members tremendous clout in the international arena. Steps toward integration found in the European Union, such as the adoption of a common currency and financial system, are unlikely, but the SCO can make enormous progress in securing the benefits of energy trade and greater liberalization. With an increased focus on economic development, member states can encourage greater investment amongst each other to further their mutual dependence, creating a common economic zone of free trade and financial cooperation.

Yearly summit meetings between Putin and Hu have been effective, and with the two major powers on board, the SCO has launched itself from relative anonymity to a role as a decisive player in international affairs. Economic integration has paved the way for closer regional cooperation, and joint military exercises have created a tight security environment that will deter any aggression from opposition movements as well as other world powers. While countering the unilateral influence of the United States is certainly a strong concern for both China and Russia, their shared interests for fostering political stability and economic growth across the region remain their top priorities. Should the two powers maintain their recent diplomatic contact and continue their progress against extremism, their common interests will ensure a lasting cooperation. As military and economic cooperation in Central Asia grows ever more robust, China and Russia will continue to gain further recognition as dominant powers in a new world order, and with continued unity of leadership, the SCO will soon become impossible to overlook.

ENDNOTES

3 International Monetary Fund, “Middle East and Central Asia Regional Economic Outlook,” May 2006.
Michael Snyder

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The euphemistic term *ianfu*, or “comfort women,” was invented by imperial Japan to refer to its military sex slaves, who were subjected not only to repeated rapes but also to hard labor, near-starvation, physical torture and verbal abuse.\(^1\)\(^2\) During World War II, the Japanese government used deceptive rhetoric to force an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 women from East Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Island countries into military brothels where each woman was raped daily by dozens of Japanese soldiers.\(^3\) About 80 percent of these women were from Korea, partly because Koreans were colonial subjects of Japan from 1910 to 1945.\(^4\)\(^5\) Laura Hein, a professor of Japanese history at Northwestern University, argues that young Korean women were also targeted because Japanese military planners considered them racially inferior to the Japanese, but free of sexually transmitted diseases due to Confucian preoccupation with female chastity.\(^6\) Following the pattern of most colonial operations, local personnel were involved, and a number of comfort women “recruiters” were Korean.\(^7\) But the driving force behind the human trafficking was always the Japanese government’s goal of filling their military brothels, using unscrupulous means if necessary. Traffickers lured unsuspecting girls into sexual slavery with promises of honorable jobs under the Jungshindae, or Women’s Voluntary Service Corps.\(^8\)\(^9\) The young women faced entirely involuntary fates, and the few who returned home continued to suffer from chronic health problems, unaddressed psychological trauma, and further isolation by their home communities.\(^10\)\(^11\)

Survivors, however, hid their experiences for half a century as Confucian notions of chastity reminded them of their personal guilt and the shame they brought to their communities.\(^12\) It was only with the support of a budding women’s movement in Korea that former comfort women could begin to speak. The first public testimony was given by Kim Haksun in August 1991, and marked the beginning of a process in which the burden of guilt were transferred from the victimized women to perpetrators of the crimes.\(^13\)\(^14\)\(^15\) A stubborn Japanese government refused to give an official apology or monetary compensation,\(^16\) but the publicity that was generated brought together activists from around the world who convinced the United Nations to...
bring up the issue in multiple conferences.\textsuperscript{17} In 1993, in the face of concerted international effort, the Japanese government acknowledged that it played an unspecified role in the establishment and running of comfort women stations. Nonetheless, it has yet to accept any binding responsibility, insisting that the San Francisco Peace Treaty and various bilateral agreements have settled all postwar claims of compensation.\textsuperscript{18,19}

Though historical evidence of the ianfu system had been in public archives and academic writings since the end of the war, the Korean government, too, seemed content to ignore the matter.\textsuperscript{20,21} After feminist groups placed the issue in the international spotlight, the government published several reports denouncing the Japanese government for evading blame.\textsuperscript{22} In 2005, however, declassified documents detailing negotiations that led to the normalization of Korea-Japan relations in 1965 revealed that South Korea had agreed not to make further compensation demands for Japan's colonial rule after receiving $800 million in grants and soft loans.\textsuperscript{23,24} This finding spurred advocates of war victims in Korea to file compensation lawsuits against the government.

The delay in public airing of former comfort women's experiences due to social stigma, and the poor efforts to distribute compensation on the part of the Korean government, reveal that it is important not to bypass or discount the ways in which years of sexual assault and oppressive living conditions during the war continue to affect the women after their emancipation. Yet, while Korean society and its government have succeeded in coming to terms with their responsibility in this matter, the Japanese government still evades blame for the trauma incurred on these women. It is critical for the closure of this issue that the Japanese government accepts its full legal and ethical responsibility by directly facilitating the rehabilitation of victims.

The term “sex slave,” while far more accurate than “comfort woman,” fails to capture the experiences of the victims. Since Kim Haksun spoke, dozens of women have broken their fifty-year silence in an attempt to achieve justice, regain part of their dignity, and secure the economic stability necessary to begin their healing. Their stories contain similar threads: deception that brought them into “comfort stations,” rapes and debilitating living conditions that were endured inside these stations, and continued suffering after the war as outcasts of family and society. The following account of an anonymous Korean comfort woman illustrates how testimonies that neutrally dictate the facts of their experience still evoke vivid images and emotions:

\textit{I was deceived by an agent from the Korean Peninsula. I thought that comfort for the army meant comforting the troops by dancing and singing, and that would be all right. And the agent told me the same thing. When we crossed the border into China, [he] ordered me to “take customers” . . . With no warning, they raped me. I became desperate. One after another, so many of them . . . When it is busy, I just lie down on my back, eating rice balls with my legs spread apart, and the soldiers come and mount me and leave, mount me and leave. There’s a heavy, dull pain that lasts all day.}\textsuperscript{25}

As the woman above discovered, deception was common during the recruitment of Korean comfort women. Japanese colonial forces made a policy of hiring locals to procure young women for their military, by whatever means necessary.\textsuperscript{26} Under encouragement of laws such as the National
General Mobilization Ordinance, kidnappings and forced recruitments became so frequent that many parents rushed their young daughters into marriage to reduce the likelihood of capture. Recruiters specifically targeted girls from poor families, luring them with promises of high-paying jobs and a chance to travel abroad and serve their country—a simple feat during the economic depression of the colonial period. Sixteen-year-old Song Shindo, for example, was approached by a beautifully dressed Korean woman who asked, “Won’t you go to the front and work for your country?” UN Special Rapporteur Radhika Coomaraswamy noted in her report “On Violence Against Women,” that Japanese authorities had hired unscrupulous Koreans to recruit girls under the guise of the Jungshindae, or Women’s Voluntary Service Corps, which allegedly provided women with jobs in factories or other war-related tasks.

Korean comfort women’s testimonies have been invaluable in exposing the inhumane conditions under which the Japanese military imposed “systematic rape”—a phrase used by the United Nations to describe sexual exploitation of the comfort women. Min Pyonggap, a Professor of Sociology at Queens College of CUNY, gleaned common experiences from interviews conducted by The Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, with seventy-six former Korean comfort women, as well as from his own interviews with nineteen survivors. His findings conform with nineteen first-hand accounts collected, translated, and published by the Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues. Most women serviced ten to thirty soldiers on an average day. As exceptions to this general trend, Kim Daeil and the forty girls with her “were forced to service forty to fifty soldiers a day.” The first-hand accounts, as well as the military notes and medical records, all reveal that soldiers frequently tortured, burned, beat, and occasionally stabbed the girls, who were housed in overcrowded, dirty, and disease-ridden shanties. Pak Duri explains how common physical punishment had been:

When one of us broke even a minor rule, we were all punished with beatings, mainly on our heads and legs. . . Sometimes when they beat us, I tried to cover myself with my hands. So they hit my hands and broke my fingers.

Sexually transmitted diseases and numerous suicide attempts crippled or killed many women. Even medical treatments contributed to morbidity and mortality. For example, a compound containing highly toxic arsenic labeled #606 was prescribed for syphilis, which induced abortion in pregnant women and contributed to sterility. Authorities insisted on the use of condoms, but the soldiers often refused to wear the thick, crude saku, meaning “sack.” When supplies ran short, as was often the case, some women were forced to wash used cloth condoms for reuse. Unsurprisingly, many women became pregnant. Most pregnant women miscarried, often because of beatings, and those who did not were forced to abort their babies.

Consequences of the Japanese government’s ianfu system did not end when the war concluded and the comfort women released. Survival meant the end of one nightmare and the beginning of another which entailed struggling on their own with disease, debilitating injuries, and severe psychological trauma. Victim-blaming attitudes
often drove them out of their parents’ homes and forced them to live, or often die from, a hard life of constant labor and suffering. Some women had to have their uteruses removed because of diseases and damage from countless rapes. In a society that attached great importance to the birth of heirs, the sterile women could not marry. Of those who managed to eventually marry, many divorced early because of infertility or because their husbands had found out about their past. On July 2, 1994, an anonymous comfort woman appealed to the Japanese government for recognition:

“If I were to speak to the Japanese government, there is only one question I would ask: is it right to ignore me like this as if they did nothing to me? Are they justified after trampling an innocent and fragile teenage girl and making her suffer for the rest of her life? How would you feel if your own daughter met the same fate as mine?”

The Japanese government’s response came too late and with too little sincerity. Historical facts regarding comfort women had long been available to the public; University of Tokyo professor and leading feminist scholar Chizuko Ueno states in her book Nationalism and Gender that as many as 30,000 war diaries and memoirs of former soldiers had been in public archives since the end of the war. In 1990, burgeoning women’s groups finally brought allegations of forced wartime prostitution to the Japanese National Diet. The Japanese government responded by issuing a statement denying government involvement in the comfort women system. Dozens of women’s groups immediately sent letters of protest, and in November of that same year, a group of women established the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. These revolutionary Korean feminists assured the rape victims that “ones who ought to feel shame are not the former comfort women.” They proved instrumental in convincing Kim Haksun and two other victims to file a class-action lawsuit against the Japanese government in December 1991. It took another year and eight months to uncover incriminating war documents with the help of academics such as Yoshimi Yoshiaki, disclosures by women’s groups and newspapers, testimonies of former Japanese military personnel, and condemning reports from the United Nations. On August 4, 1993, the Japanese government finally acknowledged some “direct or indirect” involvement in the operation of comfort stations.

As UN Special Rapporteur Gay McDougall revealed in her report “Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-like Practices During Armed Conflict,” the Japanese government, while admitting a role in the existence of comfort stations, has consistently denied any legal responsibility for the victims. The Japanese government cites the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea and other bilateral agreements to absolve itself of liability for the affliction of the women it once enslaved. Japan’s conservative faction, the Liberal Democratic Party, is mainly responsible for these evasive maneuvers and insincere rhetoric; more progressive parties such as the former Japan Socialist Party and the Democratic Party of Japan have insisted on an earnest apology and compensation.

In June 1995, the Murayama cabinet reached a compromise by creating the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF), a source of unofficial compensation raised by both the Japanese people and the government. Although official documents proclaimed the AWF
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as “an expression of atonement on the part of the Japanese people toward these [comfort] women,” the Japanese government “regularly reiterated that it supported AWF projects out of moral responsibility and that legal compensation issues had been settled.” Advocate groups in Korea and Japan were outraged at yet another tactic to avoid full acceptance of responsibility, and they advised the comfort women survivors to refuse the AWF money. Among the nineteen women interviewed by Min Pyonggap, “all but a few” agreed with their supporters and “expressed the strong feeling” that they should not accept money from the AWF. Seventy-year-old Kim Sooja articulated the sentiments of most of her fellow survivors:

It is more important to get a sincere apology than simply to get monetary compensation. I am not merchandise that can be traded for money. . . I will never accept money from the Asian Women’s Fund. The Japanese government should make a sincere apology and directly compensate me.

Conservatives in Japan must have lamented the fact that feminists, human rights activists, and at long last the comfort women themselves had come to join forces in the 1990s to “generate a problem where none existed,” after fifty years of silence. In 1998, the United Nations condemned the ianfu system as a “war crime” as well as a “crime against humanity,” refuted the Japanese government’s excuses, and unequivocally demanded redress in three forms: (1) “full and unqualified acceptance by the Government of Japan of legal liability and the consequences that flow from such liability,” which include (2) “individual compensation to the former ‘comfort women’ by the Government of Japan” and (3) the prosecution of “government and military personnel . . . for their culpability in establishing and maintaining the rape centers.” The government of Japan complied with none of these requirements. So when Japanese Prime Minister Murayama offered a handshake to former comfort woman Lee Jisook, she directly confronted the head of state, saying, “Your government destroyed my life . . . You should give me back my lost youth.” Kim Soonduk expressed similar regrets at losing her youth and at having “no place to go” when she returned to Seoul. But in her response to the shallow apologies, she speaks not of past oppression but of current need for government accountability:

[The Japanese government’s] apologies are only half-hearted. They try to let civilian organizations pay some compensation. But it was the government’s deeds. The Japanese government must compensate us.

While the Japanese government evaded formal legal responsibility for the comfort women system, the Korean government also failed to step up to its task of aiding the women in their compensation. Only after the comfort women survivors had filed suit in Japan did the Republic of Korea criticize the Japanese government for failing to fully investigate the ianfu system. In March 1993, South Korean President Kim Youngsam announced that Seoul would not pursue material compensation from Japan for former comfort women in compliance with the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations, but encouraged Tokyo to thoroughly and publicly investigate the issue. According to a May 2001 paper by Soh Sarah, a sociocultural anthropologist at Sogang University in Seoul, President Kim had in his speech intended to elevate Korea to a position of “moral superiority” over Japan in forging a new
relationship with the former colonialists.

While Soh legitimately argues that President Kim was innocently promoting nationalistic pride after a dark period in history, documents released by the South Korean government on January 17, 2005 brought to light its self-incriminating actions. These documents detail the minutes of the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations, and disclose that the South Korean government, after receiving $800 million in grants and soft loans, agreed not to pursue any further compensation from Japan. Of the $800 million, it had specifically demanded $364 million as compensation for an estimated 1.03 million Koreans conscripted to labor or military service during the Japanese occupation. When the government closed payments in 1975, however, it had only distributed a total of about $2.5 million to victims, using the remaining $361.5 million for large-scale economic projects.

Revelations that the Korean government had redirected compensation funds toward economic purposes in the Korean development era of the 1960s undermined its pedestal of moral superiority. Conservatives in the Japanese government were undoubtedly pleased, for besides shifting much of the political and media attention to Korea from their own backs, these sensitive documents gave powerful backing to their claim that an official apology was unwarranted because all legal matters concerning comfort women had been settled. In Korea, it was not comfort women survivors, but rather other victims of Japanese colonization who bombarded their government with lawsuits and demands for compensation. Much like comfort women victims, 79-year-old Kim Kyeongseok, head of the Association for Pacific War Victims, had been dragged into forced labor for Japan at the young age of eighteen, and desired government compensation:

*We make this request while we are alive, even if just for a little longer. . . Frankly, all I want is a little so-called compensation to buy just one box of medicine. . . We’re going to have to fight this for many days. The nation mustn’t turn its back on its people.*

Former comfort woman Lee Okseon then took the microphone from his hands, elaborating on what it meant for both governments to effectively evade responsibility:

*Many comfort women died of diseases or were massacred all at once, but the Japanese government might say it never happened . . . If we are discarded by Japan, and Korea ignores us, in whom are we to believe?*

As more comfort women offered to testify, their listeners discovered that they were also “unhappy with the Korean government,” as Kim Soonduk explained in October 1994. “They asked us to come out from hiding and to speak out to let people know the truth,” Kim said, “So I did. I spoke out my past that had been hidden even from my mother. Now I wish the Korean government would be more forceful in representing our interests.” Kim’s wish was representative of many more comfort women’s testimonies and came even before the release of declassified documents in 2005. After disclosing its clandestine negotiations with Japan, the Korean government came under fire from the Korean people as well as the international community. Unlike the Japanese government, however, the Korean government has taken a significant step forward by agreeing in May 2006 to compensate the victims of Japanese colonial rule, announcing that it will...
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divide a minimum of $400 million among “those conscripted as soldiers, military civilians, laborers or ‘comfort women.’”"81,82

Beginning with Kim Haksun’s landmark testimony in 1991, Korea as a nation stood behind the comfort women in their pursuit of justice. Certainly, the Korean government was quick to draw attention to crimes committed by its former colonial power. The question remains, however, of why it took fifty years before the ianfu system was challenged in the 1990s. An examination of cultural factors reveals a possible reason for the prolonged silence. Confucian ethics, incorporated into Korean culture during the 518-year Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), both glorified chastity and imposed a sexual double standard that discriminated against women well into the 20th century.83 The combined effect of venerating female chastity and tolerating male promiscuity distorted the experience of sexual abuse and created a situation where the female victim rather than the male offender was considered at fault.84

Sexist double standards not only influenced comfort women’s life after the war, but also were responsible for the formation of the ianfu system. A Japanese WWII officer’s disturbing views embody the type of androcentric thinking that resulted in the Japanese military’s crimes of sexual assault.

_I knew that as a result of (being without access to women), men’s mental conditions ends up declining, and that’s when I realized once again the necessity of special comfort stations. This desire is the same as hunger or the need to urinate, and soldiers merely thought of comfort stations as practically the same as latrines._85

The idea of comfort stations as being practically the same as latrines seems ridiculously exaggerated, and the androcentric mindset behind the officer’s words is obvious. First, the officer presumes that “being without access to women” is a causal factor for the decline of “men’s mental conditions,” not taking into account other, more likely, factors such as psychological trauma from the violence of war. Without giving thought to the fact that the women would be uprooted from families, debilitated with trauma and disease, and condemned to a future of stigma and isolation, the military chose as their “solution,” to force them into brothels.

Within brothels, the suffering of comfort women were intensified by Confucian values of chastity they had internalized. In the words of seventy-year-old Hwang Keuju, “[The soldiers] had no idea that for us, Korean women, chastity was more precious than life itself.”86 Internationally renowned historian and author of The Rape of Nanking Iris Chang notes that in the case of rapes in Nanking, the idea of female chastity “perpetuated the belief that any woman who could live through such a degrading experience and not commit suicide was herself an affront to society.”87 Chang suggests that Confucian values in China not only worked to idolize “female purity,” but also held victims of sexual assault solely responsible for finding a way to regain their trampled dignity, in extreme cases, through suicide. Considering that comfort women victims went back home to a similarly patriarchal society critical of unchaste women, it becomes less difficult to understand why the thousands of survivors hid their “degrading experiences” so fearfully and for so long.

Despite lingering gender inequalities, Korean society has in many ways moved beyond sexism originating from entrenched Confucian practices.
Modern Korean women are supported by public policy promoting equality and expect to be treated as equals at home and in the workplace. Behind the progress has been women’s movement whose growth has been accelerated by comfort women issues, and is still young and full of potential. The one arena in which participation of women remains disproportionately low is politics; women’s representation in national parliament was a modest 13.4 percent as of July 2007. The percentage for Japan was a lower 9.4 percent.

At the moment, the Japanese government continues to reiterate that they need not provide compensation for comfort women, especially since the South Korean government agreed not to make further compensation demands in 1965. According to McDougall’s 1998 UN report, however, the Japanese government is still legally responsible for the ianfu system, for Japan violated multiple international agreements prohibiting slavery, rape, and “crimes against humanity.” The third demand of the UN report, that government and military personnel be prosecuted for setting up and running rape centers, has no connection to the Korean government’s compensation of victims and should be carried out before the criminals pass away.

Both the explosive progress of the Korean feminist movement as well as the Korean government’s full acceptance of responsibility for victims of the colonial period underscore the Japanese government’s shortcomings. Although the Japanese government, the Korean government, and Korean society have all contributed to the physical and emotional trauma forced upon the comfort women, only the Japanese government still purports to be justified in ignoring the victims of sexual slavery. Throughout the years since the first investigation into the ianfu system, the international community has been unrelentingly clear in demanding that Japan follow instructions of the United Nations and provide the redress stipulated therein. By stretching to find loopholes that will absolve itself of formal responsibility, the Japanese government continues to send a message of having little concern for international law, public opinion, and the criminal nature of actions committed in the “comfort stations.”

ENDNOTES

4 Ibid., 941.
6 Ibid.
9 Yoshiaki, 103-104.
10 George Hicks, The Comfort Women (St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1995).
12 Ibid., 70-71.
13 Names are in Korean order with family name first, followed by the two-syllable personal name.

15 Ueno, 71.

16 Soh, “Japan’s Responsibility Toward Comfort Women Survivors.”


18 Soh, “Japan’s Responsibility Toward Comfort Women Survivors.”


20 Hereafter, “the Korean government” refers to the South Korean government.

21 Ueno, 69.


26 Yoshiaki, 103-108.

27 Ibid.

28 Hicks, 27.


30 Oh, 11.

31 qtd. in Yoshiaki, 103.

32 McDougall.

33 Min, 941.


35 Min, 941.

36 Hein, 343.

37 Yoshiaki, 139.


39 Min, 941.

40 Yoshiaki, 140-141.

41 in Schellstede, ed., 71.

42 Hein, 340.

43 Hicks, 65.

44 Coomaraswamy.

45 in Schellstede, ed., 45.

46 Hicks, 65.


50 Ueno, 71.

51 Akin, 19.

52 Hicks, 125.

53 Min, 941.

54 in Schellstede, ed., 105.

55 Ueno, 69.

56 Soh, “Japan’s Responsibility Toward Comfort Women Survivors.”


58 qtd. in Ueno, 70.

59 Oh, 16.

60 Ueno, 69.

61 Coomaraswamy, 125.

62 Oh, 16.


64 Soh, “Japan’s Responsibility Toward Comfort Women Survivors.”

65 Ibid.

66 Ueno, 181-182.

67 qtd. in Min, 946.

68 McDougall, par. 31, 69.

69 qtd. in Min, 945-946.

70 in Schellstede, ed., 40.

71 Oh, 16.

72 Soh, “Japan’s Responsibility Toward Comfort Women Survivors.”

73 “S. Korea Discloses Sensitive Documents.”


Defining Responsibility for Sexual Assault

Michelle Park

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On April 1 2007, the United States and the Republic of Korea concluded negotiations for the Korea-US free trade agreement (KORUS FTA).\(^1\) Trade representatives seemed to be touting that initial expectations of eliminating trade barriers had been met. South Korea counted the reduction of American tariffs on automobiles, textile, and electronics, as well as the legal framework for limiting the application of anti-dumping laws on its products and for exporting goods produced in the Kaesong Industrial Zone in North Korea as gains.\(^2\) The US listed relaxation of quotas and tariffs on agricultural and farm products, improved access to audio-visual and financial markets, and protection of American investors as main accomplishments.\(^3\)

The KORUS FTA has been the dominant political agenda in South Korea over the past year, although it went largely unnoticed in the US. Naively comparing the size of the American and South Korean economies, one might expect the agreement, if it does come into effect, to have a disproportionate impact on South Korea. In terms of GDP, the US economy is about fifteen times as large as that of South Korea. However, with South Korea being the twelfth largest economy in the world and the seventh largest export market for US goods, the KORUS FTA is the most significant commercial pact the US has concluded since NAFTA fifteen years ago,\(^4\) and its economic as well geopolitical consequences deserve much attention. An in-depth look at the terms of agreement and their long-term significance is overdue in the US.

**A Daring Bet by the Roh Administration**

That the current Roh administration has pursued the KORUS FTA as zealously as it has comes as a surprise given its left-wing roots and emphasis on autonomous relations with America. The agreement, if anything, promotes tighter economic interdependence between the two nations and is expected to increase the gap between South Korea’s upper and lower classes by deregulating the economy further.\(^5\) However, Roh’s administration has championed the deal as an opening of markets that will exert the right amount of pressure to make South Korea more globally competitive. In particular, it was initially asserted that the comparatively less developed service sectors of the South Korean economy would benefit in the long run from American competition in the domestic arena,\(^6\) although the near-exclusion of service sectors in the actual negotiations has made a significant impact less than likely.

What experts generally agree on is that the FTA itself will not bring immediate results of a
decidedly negative or positive kind, as critics and proponents have argued contentiously in the past months. Instead, depending on the success of long-term restructuring in response to the KORUS FTA, the South Korean economy will either become weaker due to the collapse of unprotected industries and domination of foreign capital, or rise above the challenge of the ‘sandwich’ presented by a developing China and an advanced Japan to become a hub of free trade in East Asia.

**A Hub of FTAs**

The articulated vision to be a “hub of FTAs” in East Asia can be gleaned in the South Korean government’s embrace of negotiations with countries beyond the U.S. As early as May 8, 2007, barely a month after negotiations for the KORUS FTA were completed, the first round of negotiations for an FTA between the E.U. and South Korea took place in Seoul.

Indeed, it is reported that the KORUS FTA prompted South Korea’s other trading partners – Australia, Japan, China, and the E.U. – to request consideration of similar negotiations out of fear that American products, with reduced tariffs, would out-compete their exports. For example, China’s premier Wen Jiabao, just days after the KORUS FTA was announced, expressed his hope that an FTA between South Korea and China would be established as soon as possible. It appeared that China was wary of America’s intentions to check its influence in the region. In South Korea, it has been suggested that FTAs with the U.S. and E.U. were merely planned as stepping stones for an FTA with China, which is projected to be the most profitable, as China is currently South Korea’s leading export market and trading partner.

**American Reasons**

On the flip side, much of the American motivation for negotiating the KORUS FTA lay in its desire to secure a market for its agricultural exports, as well to reduce its trade deficit by means of export in the service sector and direct investment. In exchange for opening up South Korea’s beef market and protecting its investors, the U.S. has had to give concessions on automobiles and textiles. The lowering of domestic tariffs on automobiles seems to be the single aspect of the free trade agreement that has caught any political attention to date. In a statement first in its explicit mention of the KORUS FTA, John Edwards, the Democratic presidential candidate, urged Bush to “shut down all trade negotiations with South Korea until they prove their willingness to open their market to American automobiles and other U.S. products and agree to trade fairly.” More recently, Hillary Clinton also came out in full opposition to the ratification of the FTA, citing its harm to the US auto industry.

**A Renegotiation**

Arguably, it was in the vein of allowing American producers to compete fairly that the U.S. Congress recently pushed for an agreement with the Bush administration, requiring the appendage of environmental and labor standards to pending free trade agreements which include the KORUS FTA. Although applicable to trade with developing countries that compete with cheap labor and natural resources, such regulations are next to irrelevant in trade with South Korea, an
industrialized nation with unions that are stronger than America’s in many industries.

However, the legislation made a renegotiation of the KORUS FTA inevitable, in light of gaining final approval in the US. South Korean negotiators had held the position that any renegotiation would be unacceptable as the delicate balance of benefits achieved during the original negotiations must be maintained. As of June 22, the U.S. has filed a formal request for renegotiation, with the chief negotiator stressing that it would in “no way alter the balance we achieved with the FTA,” and talks have been underway in Seoul to renegotiate labor, environment, and five other fields. It remains to see whether the legislative body in both countries will approve of a final agreement.

Meanwhile, it may be worthwhile for America to consider the long-term economic and geopolitical significance of the KORUS FTA that lies beyond the interests of specific industrial sectors. As seen in the rush of countries seeking trade agreements with Korea, many international competitors are trying to gain a foothold in the growing economy of East Asia. Without the FTA, the U.S. may be excluded in a growing network of trade relationships to its disadvantage. In political terms, a strengthened partnership with South Korea, a regional power that is also growing in global influence, will allow the US to continue as a stabilizing force in a part of the world with dynamic power relations.

ENDNOTES

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4 Ibid.
5 Sohn Chul, “HannmiFTAro Yanggyukwha Simwhu’ 52 Percent [KORUS FTA will Deepen Class Gap 52 Percent],” Seoul Economy, May 1, 2007.
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The continued conflict in Darfur has been a cause célèbre in the media for the past several years. The numerous human rights abuses committed by both sides of the civil war have led most developed countries to abandon investment in the region in order to reduce risk and in an attempt to end the genocide. However, one of the world’s most notable rising economic powers has not only refused to join the international embargo but has become Sudan’s primary investor. There are enormous benefits that come from trade with Sudan. However, the violence in Darfur has been raging on for several years. China’s rapid advancement has also pushed it under the international media’s merciless spotlight. China’s investment in Sudan has consequently attracted enormous attention from the international community. Nonetheless, China’s strict non-interventionist foreign policy and its population’s exponentially growing energy needs makes ethical and principled trade decisions regarding Sudan’s oil and gas fields a complicated and difficult issue.

**China in Crisis, Sudan in Need**

As a rising international power, China’s economy has seen unprecedented growth in the past few decades. However, this growth has contributed to the nation’s growing energy crisis. The Woodrow Wilson Center, a nonpartisan Washington think tank, issued a report in 2005...
detailing the extent of the energy crisis China is undergoing. According to the report, China has a growth rate of an unprecedented 10.7% in 2006, with electricity demand outstripping supply in 24 provinces. In the past two years, nearly two-thirds of the country has suffered from “brownouts” in the summer months.¹

![Figure 2 Oil Reserves by Region](BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2003)

According to Yuan Maozhen, chairman of the China Southern Grid Corporation, the power grid of Guangdong Province suffered an electricity shortage totaling 3.15 billion kilowatt-hours in the second quarter of 2005.² The government even went as far as requisitioning cargo ships from international shipping lines in order to prevent a crisis – an act that is already making China unpopular with many international shipping companies.³

At 2.9 million barrels a day, nearly half of China’s oil supply comes from overseas.⁴ The demand will only continue to grow as China’s industries develop and the population raises its quality of living. For the foreseeable future, China will continue to increase its dependency on foreign sources of power. The challenge now lies in how to strategically position itself in the global energy market. However, China suffers a considerable disadvantage, having entered the market only recently. In previous decades, China had been mostly sufficient in its energy needs, while other countries have formed close trade relations with the Middle East and extensively developed oil fields in the Americas and Europe.⁵ To compound the problem, the Middle East now accounts for the majority of the world’s oil reserves.

As for Sudan, its human rights violations have led many Western nations to set up embargoes. Western oil companies have also been reluctant to risk investing in Sudan, as violence in the region could lead to a loss of life and destruction of infrastructure. Since 1955, the Arab-dominated Sudanese government has fought two civil wars with the non-Arab southern region of Sudan (shown in Figure 4). Civil war has also been pervasive in the Eastern Sudan, where a peace treaty has recently been signed. Armed Sudanese militant groups have also entered into neighboring territories to persecute refugees, blatantly violating border laws and treaties. Financially strapped, the Sudanese government is now in ever greater need of international aid to sustain itself.⁶

![Figure 3 A map of Sudan. The lighter areas represent regions not controlled by the central government](Orthuberra)
Sino-Sudanese Relations

Faced with a debilitating need for oil and having been edged out of trading relations with the major oil producing countries, China has turned to nations excluded by the Western economies. In 1997, when the US imposed economic sanctions prohibiting trade with Sudan, the Darfur conflict began amassing negative media attention, causing many foreign companies to withdraw. The last major Western company to withdraw, the Canadian company Talisman Oil, left in November 2003, after its reputation had been repeatedly assaulted by human rights groups in Canada and the US. However, China moved quickly to fill the gap, and within two years of vigorous trade, China became Sudan’s largest international investor and trade partner.

While completely modernizing Sudan’s oil production, doubling its refining capacity, and creating billions of dollars worth of infrastructure in Sudan, the Chinese companies receive nothing up front. What they have gained is the expectation of future oil trade. To gain favor and influence with the Sudanese government, China has poured money not only into Sudan’s oil infrastructure, but also into Sudan’s economy in general. According to the London based think tank, Piankhi Research Group, China has initiated $20 billion worth of development and infrastructure projects involving dams, hydroelectric power stations, textile mills and agricultural schemes. China has promised to contribute $750 million in the construction of the new Khartoum International Airport, and another $750 million for a new dam on the Nile near in the Northern Province. Approximately $100 million has been spent by the Chinese on textile plants, and $500 million on a recently constructed oil refinery. China also provided Sudan with over $12 million in soft loans to fund a fishing project in the Red Sea.

The Merowe Dam, scheduled to begin operation in mid-2007, is one of the most powerful examples of Chinese largesse. Upon the dam’s completion, the dam will drastically make up for Sudan’s chronic electricity shortage. The only areas that had been connected to the power grid were the capital of Khartoum and a few large agricultural plantations. Now, the percentage of Sudan’s population with access to electricity is expected to rise from 30 percent to 90 percent, leading to improved communications and quality of life.
Aggravating the Darfur Conflict

Of course, the glaring problem of Sino-Sudanese trade and the cause of the tumult over China’s investment in Sudan is the violence occurring in Darfur. Both sides of the conflict in Darfur have committed atrocities, and UN officials estimate that more than 400,000 people were killed and some 2 million more have become homeless.

The Sudanese government has armed militant groups and unleashed them on Darfur, showing little concern for human rights. The vast majority of deaths in Sudan have been those of civilians. The Janjaweed, the umbrella name used for the Afro-Arabic militia recruited by the Sudanese government, arm themselves with submachine guns, helicopters, tanks, and jet planes, razing hundreds of villages and indiscriminately bombing the remaining ones. With a military machine powered by oil money, the government has done far more damage than it would otherwise be able to do.

A major issue regarding Sino-Sudanese relations is China’s role in the escalation of the Darfur conflict. It is the only nation willing to maintain an arms trade with the Sudanese government. China keeps its record of arms sales confidential. However, when a member of the Human Rights Watch visited a Sudanese town managed by the rebel militia, he documented eight Chinese 122 mm towed howitzers, five Chinese-made T-59 tanks, and one Chinese 37 mm anti-aircraft gun. Advanced technology such as these tanks and howitzers have been seen in use by Sudanese forces against the rebels. In 2000, a report issued by the Journal of International Affairs stated that the Sudan air force is equipped with $100 million worth of Shenyang fighter planes, including a dozen supersonic F-7 jets. In an attack in February 2002, a government helicopter gunship had killed 17 civilians, injuring many others and disrupting a food distribution operation by the World Food Program.

The funds vital to the war depend on the security of the oil fields. Sudanese officials have gone to great lengths to clear the regions of any possible rebel forces. Humanitarian organizations have confirmed such cooperation between the Sudanese government and the Chinese corporate oil interests. The Nobel Prize winning humanitarian organization Medecins Sans Frontieres provides a detailed account:

“According to [civilians from the road area], whose accounts were consistent, road clearing first began in 2000, often preceded by Antonov
bombings and helicopter gunship activity. Then the government of Sudan and Nuer troops, along with Chinese laborers, brought bulldozers to clear the site of the road and the surrounding area. After the bulldozers cleared a track, troops arrived in vehicles and burned all the tukuls in the path alongside the road. Government garrisons were then established at 30-minute intervals along the road." 19

Though the Chinese government has consistently denied accusations, it is clear from such eyewitness reports that the Chinese relationship with the Sudanese government has served to further the Sudanese government’s rule of terror over the population.

However, such statements should be asserted cautiously – the Western world has participated in more arms trade than China has. In an interview, Stanford University Hoover Research Fellow Dr. Alice Miller describes a double standard the Western world is applying to China: namely, that when the US sells between 50 to 60 percent of the world’s arms, and China less than 3 percent, the US should be wary of taking the moral high ground.20

A recent report by Amnesty International states that “China is the only major arms exporting power that has not signed up to any multilateral agreements with criteria to prevent arms exports likely to be used for serious human rights violations.”21 It is important to note also that the kind of accusations leveled at China by the international community seems not to refer to the quantity of arms traded but simply to the lack of discretion and transparency China has in its arms sales.

Additional Factors Affecting Sino-Sudanese Relations

In order to better understand China’s actions, it should be understood that in the present there are several other circumstances that make adopting a more humanitarian-based foreign policy difficult for the Chinese government. As a totalitarian government, China restricts the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion. Examples of these include China’s strict censorship of the internet, its suppression of Falun Gong, and the crackdown of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. The Chinese government has also disregarded international refugee laws, returning hundreds of refugees to North Korea, where they will face severe punishment. Because China is often accused of human rights violations, the Chinese government is reluctant to condemn other nations of human rights abuses.

China has also espoused a non-interventionist foreign policy for decades. This stems in part from the country’s long struggle to establish its sovereignty in the face of constant Western interference. Consequently, China remains sensitive to the violation of other nations’ sovereignties and right to self-determination.22 This policy of nation-state sovereignty is not unique to China. In fact, it forms the basis of Western international law, an inconsistency between practice and belief that China is quick to point out when accused by the West of irresponsibly investing in Sudan. Miller aptly presents the view China holds: “When it comes to other areas of the third world, the Chinese feel that they are acting in the pure spirit of Western international law, and that they are working very hard to establish themselves.”23

China’s stance towards resolving the Darfur conflict is fitting with its non-interventionist policy.
Rather than issuing accusations of human rights abuses and enacting trade embargoes, actions that are self-defeating from their viewpoint, the Chinese government has engaged in low-profile diplomatic talks and have worked to improve the quality of life in Sudan. By these standards, China is doing its best in Sudan, funding innumerable public works and economic aid programs, and applying political and economic pressure to end the conflict in Darfur without threatening the Sudanese government’s sovereignty. With the US embroiled in the Iraq War, a concurrent example of a failed intervention, the Chinese governments’ refusal to intervene in Sudan’s affairs seems logical. Furthermore, Chinese foreign policy is actually embracing the neoliberal idea promoted by the “Washington Consensus” that free trade, unrestricted by politics and other concerns, will result in the greatest gain for both parties in the trade.

Lastly, the party in power, the Communist Party of China (CPC), must maintain its legitimacy by ensuring the population’s quality of life. While the per capita GDP of China has increased tenfold since 1978, the income gap between the rich and the poor has continued to increase as well. To address this, China will have to both modernize its economy and develop its middle class, both of which will increase energy consumption. Only if the CPC is able to sustain economic growth, and control the increasing divide between its rich and poor will it remain a legitimate government in the eyes of its people.

**Putting it All Together**

China and Sudan’s partnership is a result of the circumstances that both nations face. China has an increasingly large energy deficit that is beginning to dampen its economic growth, and Sudan is a nation shunned by the West and desperate for foreign capital to fund its military machine for the conflict in Darfur. Sudan possesses the natural resources, and China possesses the non-interventionist policy and government needed to utilize those natural resources without appearing overly hypocritical and self-serving. The Chinese government sees a rare opportunity in the global oil market and has rushed to take advantage. As one of the few countries with untapped oil fields, Sudan is one of the only nations with which China could form such a strong trade relationship in such a short period of time. Sudan’s desperation to receive international investment has also ensured its government’s full cooperation with the Chinese. For China, a country diplomatically committed to staying out of other nations’ domestic affairs, including human rights abuses, its trade relationship with Sudan, in the rhetoric of Chinese President Hu Jintao, “和” – harmonious.

**ENDNOTES**

Pursuing a Harmonious Society


19 Medecins Sans Frontieres, "Violence, Health, and Access to Aid in Unity State/Western Upper Nile," April 2002

20 Interview with Hoover Fellow Dr. Alice Miller. March 15, 2007.


22 Interview with Hoover Fellow Dr. Alice Miller. March 15, 2007.

23 Ibid.


The visual image has long been recognized as a source of powerful human communication. Whether as a display of religiosity, cultural unity, or personal spirituality, images signal distinct and important messages to a community. In a relatively illiterate society they become all the more powerful. The image of the Dalai Lama has long been revered in Tibet. As a reincarnation of Avalokitesvara, the Dalai Lama acts as a living buddha, and his image is of great importance to practitioners. The role of the Dalai Lama, however, has changed drastically in the past century. The current and fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, has gone beyond sectarian issues to unite the exiled community of Tibet. It is this political role that has troubled the Chinese government, and prompted officials to prohibit the possession of the Dalai Lama's image in 1996.

Initially, this display of political power seemed to come at an arbitrary date in Sino-Tibetan relations. The accession of Tibet (now known as the Tibetan Autonomous Region or TAR) into the People's Republic of China (PRC) was completed in 1959. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the subsequent end of the Cultural Revolution, rebel uprisings within China's borders, including those in Lhasa and Tiananmen Square, brought international attention to human rights issues in China. Thus, the question one might ask is why Chinese officials waited until 1996 to impose a policy banning images of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

The events leading up to the ban provide a clear context for the PRC's iconoclastic agenda.
After 35 years of political control, the Chinese authorities had become concerned by the rising popularity of the Dalai Lama in the West. The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, which drew attention to the Tibetan cause and garnered sympathy and a new consciousness from the international community. Within the span of a few years, the Chinese government no longer viewed photographs of the Dalai Lama as personal mementos; rather, these images were seen as displays of solidarity amongst the ‘separatist’ Tibetan faction. Tenzin Gyatso’s image became an entity distinct from any other Dalai Lama image. By owning a photograph of the Dalai Lama, a Tibetan might not only be professing his faith, but also objecting to the Chinese regime.\(^5\)

As a result, the Chinese government perceived a need to repress such displays of solidarity and dissension. The timing of the ban suggests a connection between the continuation of the 1987 Anti-Splittist movement and the second wave of China’s Strike Hard campaign in 1996, detailed in this paper.\(^6\) Though the latter decree is generally seen as a reaction to non-political crimes, specifically in China proper, the ‘zero-tolerance’ effect of the campaign has affected Tibetan political violators of the former edict as well. This paper seeks to provide a historical context for the eventual ban by examining the political and social events that led up to it and to evaluate the effectiveness of such censorship in meeting the Chinese objective.

**Post-Mao Developments**

Political and social reformations in Tibet finally became possible after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976.\(^7\) Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Deng Xiaoping and other reformers under the newly reorganized government repressed propaganda measures against the Dalai Lama in place since 1959. In 1978, discussions between Beijing and the Tibetan Government in Exile led to the release of many political prisoners held captive since the Chinese invasion in 1959. An agreement was also reached by the Chinese government in 1979 allowing a delegation of the Dalai Lama along with his brother Lobsang Samten to visit Tibet and report to Dharamsala according to conditions outlined by the ruling Communist government. The Tibetan response to this delegation, however, may have unintentionally caused more paranoia in the minds of CCP leaders. Tibetans throughout the TAR greeted the delegation with cheers for the Dalai Lama’s long life and shouts proclaiming Tibet’s independence. A total of three delegations visited Tibet; the second was expelled and a fourth tour was planned but never executed.\(^8\) The Chinese authorities, perplexed by the continuing support for the Dalai Lama after 20 years of Communist rule, decided to pay a visit to the TAR.

CCP general secretary Hu Yaobang organized a fact-finding mission to the region in 1980. Hu’s shock at the complete lack of infrastructure and economic devastation within Tibet led to a six-point reform policy.\(^9\) Though the policy was in line with general Party rules, certain measures were taken to ensure success with the distinct situation in Tibet. The result of this 1980 visit and revision of rules imposed during the Cultural Revolution was a newfound sense of cultural identity in Tibet. The early 1980s marked a period of economic growth and acceptance of certain religious practices by the CCP. Though not all religious freedoms were
granted, individual practice was allowed and even encouraged as a unique characteristic that could eventually be marketed by the Chinese to tourists. This period also marked the reopening of several monasteries, though again, the rules governing the monasteries changed from the pre-Chinese society. The number of monks allowed at each monastery was drastically reduced, the content allowed within the teachings was monitored, and most noticeably, a clear division between secular and religious rights was enforced.\(^\text{10}\) Even with the new rules, many Tibetans gladly reclaimed their religious identities and openly arranged altars in their homes as well.

In 1985, Wu Jinghua, another reformer committed to a more open Tibet, became the secretary of the regional Communist Party in Tibet. Wu’s careful consideration of Tibetan culture and his ability to secure foreign aid attracted much attention to Tibet, and the region was officially opened for tourism. Wu’s liberal policies, though, would eventually be interpreted as a threat by the conservative element within the Party. Both Hu Yaobang and Wu Jinghua were ousted from the Party in 1987 and 1988, respectively. The progressive nature of the Party in Tibet again succumbed to uncertainty as Hu Jintao was named the successor to Wu. Hu Jintao’s political crackdown in Tibet exacerbated an already unstable social structure.

Additionally, the opening of Tibet to tourists in the early 1980s provided the Tibetan people with a network of information. The Chinese government has cited this influx of outside ideas as fundamental to the uprisings that would follow. However, in his comprehensive evaluation of political protests in Tibet, Ronald Schwartz finds no evidence to support such claims that any uprising was rooted in either foreign reactionary ideas or directions from the Tibetan Government in Exile.\(^\text{11}\) In order to tighten its control on the flow of information, the CCP confiscated any information determined to be reactionary or ‘splittist.’ This included documents like the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.\(^\text{12}\)

**Tibetan Uprisings**

Between 1987 and 1992, 138 separate uprisings or incidents were reported.\(^\text{13}\) The first began as a show of support for the work of the Dalai Lama when he presented the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus with a Five-Point Peace Plan in 1987.\(^\text{14}\) While the Dalai Lama was in the United States, the Chinese authorities executed two Tibetans accused of criminal activity. On September 27, 1987, the streets of Lhasa filled with political protesters for the first time since 1959. The Beijing Review linked the uprising to the influence of the West: “[the riot was] designed in faraway quarters as an echo to the Dalai Lama’s separationist activities during his visits to the United States and Europe…. [US support of these activities is] a gross violation of the norms of international relations and an act of interference in China’s internal affairs.”\(^\text{15}\)

Several days later the Tibet Daily published a government notice announcing the new Anti-Splittist Campaign that remains in effect to this day. Three directives were clearly defined to notify the public that neither support for the Tibetan Government in Exile nor any opposition to the Party would be tolerated. The goal of this directive was to identify the ‘troublemakers’ of the group and prevent future uprisings at the Jokhang in the heart of Lhasa.\(^\text{16}\) Three phases of the campaign followed,
with the final phase imposing martial law in Lhasa. The resulting ramifications were broad. Tibetans who had family members in India, specifically children in school there, were seen as political risks despite the fact that their ties to anyone in Dharamsala may have been quite tenuous. These otherwise innocent Tibetans had their rations for food and other subsidized goods cut off completely and their children were removed from registration lists that would have otherwise allowed them employment or education upon return to Tibet. In 1988, the Dalai Lama presented a proposal to the government in Beijing to end Tibet’s quest for a return to independence. This proposal allowed China to sustain control of foreign and militaristic matters, while giving true autonomy to the TAR. Unfortunately, the Strasbourg Proposal, as it was called, was unfavorable with both factions. Many Tibetans in the exile community thought the agreement was too weak, and those on the Chinese side opposed giving Tibet independence due to the national unity established under Mao. In response to his critics, the Dalai Lama explained that his main goals had changed because of the severity of the issue. Instead, he now requested a reversal of the Han population transfer policy, and more importantly, a cessation of the killings occurring during the series of uprisings. In December of that year, two days after another uprising, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) announced that “what had happened on 10 December had happened before and it might happen again. In every case it will be dealt with the same way, the demonstrators will be shot. This is the policy of the central committee in Beijing.”

By 1990, a new wave of religious intolerance had begun. Ten years after Hu Yaobang’s significant visit to Tibet, the Chinese authorities ordered four tanks to the square in front of the Jokhang. The symbolism of this move was clear—the streets of Lhasa had been free of such restrictions since the end of the Cultural Revolution. Due to the severe restrictions on foreigners, there were just eleven visitors present during this time of martial law. The Jokhang continued to serve as the heart of the political and religious fight between the Tibetans and the People’s Armed Police, a division of the People’s Liberation Army. Just one year earlier, members of the Chinese military had stationed themselves in front of the temple, aiming rocket launchers toward the building.

Though personal devotion had previously not been viewed as a threat, the Chinese authorities now relegated independent Buddhist acts to a manifestation of a solidarity faction. The government began to realize the problems with restricting political independence, yet at the same time allowing for other independent freedoms, namely Buddhist religious practices. Two of the more ubiquitous practices to be banned included the burning of juniper incense and the throwing of tsampa or barley flour. One of the more physical displays of support for the Dalai Lama included these practices in 1989, six days after the Tibetan leader received the Nobel Peace Prize. By circling the Jokhang and repeatedly throwing tsampa, the Tibetans were—to the ignorance of the Chinese guards on duty—showing support for the international award winner. One Tibetan described the gathering: “We threw tsampa at each other and at the soldiers and the police for hours before they realized why we were doing it…then
the PLA went searching for Tibetans with bags of tsampa and flour-covered fingers.” Those arrested for throwing tsampa were subject to three years in prison.

The Dalai Lama continued to focus his efforts towards US policymakers in Washington. President George Bush signed a bill with amendments promoting Tibetan language radio broadcasts and reserving one million dollars for Tibetan refugee scholarships. In 1990, Congress declared May 13th the National Day in Support for Freedom and Human Rights in China and Tibet. Martial law was lifted from Tibet a few months later and tourists returned to Lhasa. George Bush’s opposition to Chinese policy and reforms manifested a new strategic support for the Dalai Lama and his proposals. For example, in October 1991, Bush signed a State Department Authorization Act including the statement:

*That it is the sense of Congress that Tibet, including those areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai, is an occupied country under established principles of international law whose true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile as recognized by the Tibetan people.*

On the heels of this declaration, the Dalai Lama requested a trip to his homeland to speak with the Tibetan people about the situation there and possible negotiations; Beijing refused. By 1995, the Chinese government orchestrated aggressive attacks against the Dalai Lama, which appeared regularly in national newspapers. An article in Zhongguo Xizang condemned the ‘Dalai clique,’ criticized the ‘guise’ of the human rights movement, and argued that the Tibetan independence movement would be much weaker if the Dalai Lama were no longer around.

### The Strike Hard Campaign

The 1983 Strike Hard Campaign focused on criminal activity in China proper. It vowed to provide “severe and speedy punishment” to all offenders. Soon after, Amnesty International questioned the CCP’s protection of human rights in a system with no fair trials in place. According to these reports, defendants could be tried without warning, without the assistance of legal counsel, and without knowledge of the crime with which they were accused. The campaign also allowed courts at the provincial level to approve death sentences and executions to be carried out immediately. Though the 1983 campaign did not apparently affect the TAR, the second incarnation of the program would prove to be a catalyst in the breakdown of Sino-Tibetan relations in 1996.

The second Strike Hard Campaign, equally dismissive of fair trials in favor of swift punishment, reappeared thirteen years after the initial program. On April 29, 1996, People’s Daily, the official Party newspaper, called on judicial and public security personnel to “seriously adhere to the principle of severely and quickly punishing criminals.”

Although this second wave of the campaign was introduced into Tibet for less than four months, its impact, in accordance with the Anti-Splittist campaign, remains. The correlation between the introduction of this zero tolerance policy and the prohibition of the Dalai Lama’s image is clear—Tibetans branded as ‘splittist’ were now targeted by the campaign.

The second incarnation of Strike Hard undoubtedly came as a result of the Fourth Tibet
Work Forum, yet another Party-led gathering of new reforms aimed at Tibet. Though the first two forums administered liberal policies to the region largely due to the influence of Hu Yaobang, the Third Work Forum criticized these decisions. By the Fourth Work Forum, the language used specifically referred to the Dalai Lama as the prime target of official attacks on splittism. Attention towards the Dalai Lama’s activities intensified as an unnamed authority commented on the campaign: “Those who make use of religion to interfere with administrative, judicial, martial, educational, and other social affairs, especially those who take advantage of religious reasons to split the country, must be severely cracked down upon according to law.”

The Dalai Lama became a major focus of Strike Hard as the Anti-Splittist movement added its Patriotic Re-education campaign. The intent of this campaign was to infiltrate the monasteries and nunneries—the sources of previous uprisings—and enforce a rejection of the Dalai Lama. In essence, the Chinese authorities subverted the legal problems with directly enforcing Strike Hard against political dissidents by introducing political reformation at the source of the problem. The oaths mandated by the Chinese Government were:
1. Agree to the historical unity of China and Tibet
2. Recognize the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama
3. Deny Tibet would ever be independent
4. Denounce the Dalai Lama as a traitor or splittist
5. Declare opposition to separatism.

The three major monasteries of the Gelug order—Drepung, Ganden, and Sera—received the majority of the focus from work groups assigned to reeducate all of the monks in Lhasa. The campaign was instituted “for the purpose of educating [monks] to oppose completely any activities aimed at splitting the motherland.” Besides using this opportunity to physically remove images of the Dalai Lama from all public and private spaces in the monastery, the work cadres informed the monks that they also had to denounce the Dalai Lama as a ‘splittist.’ This demanded far too much from the monks; several left the monastery to return to their villages or escaped through Nepal. There is at least one account of a monk committing suicide rather than denounce the Dalai Lama. The monks that remained on diplomatic grounds agreed to some of the earlier Party arguments, though they were able to convince work teams that denouncing the Dalai Lama was inconsequential.

Progress made by the Dalai Lama began to lose momentum on the international stage and the Chinese gained an economic stronghold on several key countries. In 1993, the United States threatened sanctions against China unless a list of human rights violations was addressed. However, these rights were never addressed, and, by 1994, the US revoked its previous threats and renewed trade agreements with China.

The Ban of the Image
Politics and imagery are inextricably linked in the Chinese Communist tradition. The famous 1953 Dong Xiwen painting, The Founding Ceremony of China, had to be repainted three times to remove (literally, paint over) the political figures who fell out of favor with the Party. Though the Dalai Lama was never in favor with the Party,
his emerging international support and mere visual presence within the TAR became problematic for government officials. His image would be accordingly removed, though on a much larger scale than the repainted artwork.\(^{39}\)

On April 5, 1996, Tibetan newspapers announced the absolute ban on all images of the Dalai Lama.\(^{40}\) In a calculated move, officials decided to introduce the ban gradually. A group of enforcement officials visited public buildings in Lhasa on April 24th to further ensure enforcement of the ban. In May, the Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign set its sights on the schools within Tibet. On May 16th, all middle and secondary school children were informed that the possession of Dalai Lama images would no longer be permitted.\(^{41}\) Official work teams arrived at several monasteries to ensure the ban was followed.

To a lesser degree, the ban had actually begun two years earlier with the enforced restriction of religious materials in TAR governmental offices. The Tibet Policy first changed after the Third Work Forum with the repeated message to officials that the Dalai Lama was a ‘serpent’s head’ which must be ‘chopped off’ in order to kill the serpent.\(^{42}\) The first stage of the anti-image agenda was enacted when all governmental officials within the TAR were completely banned from any displays of religious affiliation. This same time period brought about several new restrictions to be followed by the monasteries; the most severe repercussions were executed against those responsible for an image of the Dalai Lama on the premises.

The methods of relaying this information to the general public differed depending on location. In Shigatse, the second largest city in Tibet, public announcements were made on loudspeakers informing Tibetans that anyone with photos of the Dalai Lama would be required to surrender them to officials.\(^{43}\) Subsequent reports indicate that officials required several Tibetans to burn these images or trample on them in a manner not unlike practices from the Cultural Revolution. Additionally, the red cord often worn by Tibetan Buddhists (sung-du) was also banned, despite the fact that these cords are generally conferred upon practitioners by lamas in Buddhist ceremonies and do not imply a connection to the Dalai Lama. The ban of this additional display of religiosity pushed the Chinese agenda further toward the eventual removal of all religious practices deemed to be simultaneously political in nature.

The following is an excerpt from a Chinese governmental news media report in which the importance of harnessing the influence of the Dalai Lama was detailed:

> Tibetan journalists first face the challenge of and struggle against the Dalai clique in media airspace supported by hostile Western forces. In other words, our Tibetan journalists are faced with the living reality of class struggle on an international scale. Since we are fighting the Dalai clique, it is a life-and-death class struggle of infiltration versus anti-infiltration and subversion versus anti-subversion. The main infiltration means used by the Dalai clique is exploitation of media tools, and exploitation of certain Western media for propaganda and attacks against us.\(^{44}\)

The Chinese government’s ban on all Dalai Lama images may have also been a reaction against the influence of foreigners. Prior to 1996, it was not uncommon to see tourists with pictures of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan flag attached to their backpacks. The ban reinforced a break between what was otherwise a unifying visual image. After
the 1987 uprisings, the Party restricted travel for foreigners and posted a notice detailing the proper etiquette required of all visitors. This posting included many abstract rules, such as respecting state sovereignty. It also included a direct ban on photographing disturbances, most likely with the desire to prevent international attention toward the issue. The tourists who were arrested for involvement or association with the uprisings were strongly reminded of these restrictions.

For the several visitors who have been to Tibet in the last ten years, it is clear that there is no true freedom of religion. A true sense of freedom would include the ability to display images of the Dalai Lama. As a monk from Drepung stated, “Reciting om mani padme hum, visiting temples, and making offering to deities are not considered real freedom of religion.” Though there are no longer any posters prescribing proper etiquette for tourists, those planning visits to the country undoubtedly read of the image ban in travel books. Lonely Planet bluntly states the rule: “It is currently illegal to bring into China pictures, books, videos or speeches of or by the Dalai Lama. Moreover, you may be placing the recipient of these in danger of a fine or jail sentence from the Chinese authorities. Pictures of the Dalai Lama with the Tibetan national flag are even ‘more’ illegal.”

Success?

The Chinese and TAR officials apparently regard the past decade as a success, though they are still well aware of the threat posed by ‘splittists.’ A Chinese website details the benefits of programs such as the reeducation campaign citing Qamba Puncog, deputy head of the TAR Office for Patriotism Education for Lamaseries:

"Previously, many lamas lacked understanding of the reality and history of Tibetan society, an overwhelming majority of the lamas have now realized that Dalai Lama is not their spokesman, nor their spiritual leader but the head of the clique which always seeks to split up China and hinder construction of a normal order in Tibetan Buddhism or Lamaism."

Reports of dissidence from both individuals and monastic communities surfaced. In November of 1996, World Tibet Network News reported an article titled “Artist Found Traumatized After Alleged Torture.” In a chilling account, the article describes the punishment endured by artist Yungdrung. As a specialist of Dalai Lama portraiture, Yungdrung was a clear target for authorities newly persecuting those possessing images of Tenzin Gyatso. The painter was held in custody for 58 days, after which he was found barely conscious and in a state of severe shock in a public toilet near the Barkhor. According to unnamed sources, police raided the artist’s house and confiscated all of the offending paintings.

It is impossible to ascertain the extent to which individual artists were sought after and punished. The incidents reported at the major monasteries of Lhasa—Sera, Drepung, and Ramoche—provide insight into the severity of the issue, though each community responded with different measures.

On May 7, 1996, the majority of the monks at nearby Ganden monastery chose to refuse cooperation with government officials. Rather than sign documents denouncing the Dalai Lama, these monks either returned to their villages or attempted escape through the Himalayas. Some of the monks
were arrested, though the numbers cited vary from 7 to 70.45 There were also reports of gunfire during this incident that were perhaps the possible cause of death of two monks and numerous injuries. Only a handful, the eldest and youngest of the 500 monks from Ganden remained. Just an hour outside of Lhasa, Ganden monastery was once again deprived of its pre-Communist status as a major Tibetan Buddhist monastery. Though Ganden was officially closed to foreigners, the Tibet issue was already prominent on the international stage.

In 1997, Washington again turned its attention to Tibetan matters when Madeleine Albright announced to congressional leaders the intention of the Clinton administration to create a specific Tibetan affairs position within the State Department. The US State Department Report on China clearly acknowledges the incidents of the preceding years. Besides reporting on human rights violations, the report mentions the ban on the Dalai Lama image, and cites the use of house-to-house searches by government officials. The report also details the Patriotic Re-education campaign and notes “Hundreds of officials participated in the campaign, during which monks were forced to attend sessions on law, patriotism, and support for national unity and were coerced to sign statements criticizing the Dalai Lama.”

Conclusion

Ten years have passed since the umbrella ban on all images of Tenzin Gyatso in Tibet. Have the Chinese authorities achieved their goal? If the objective was to lessen outward signs of independence, then it has been a success. If the goal was to stop Tibetans from unifying under their political and religious leader, the Chinese authorities have underestimated the Tibetans.

During a recent visit to Tibet, I noted numerous instances of people surreptitiously defying the ban. I spotted one monk working on a painting, and though he was initially hesitant as I approached, he quickly showed me a painting sitting next to him—a portrait of the Dalai Lama. I was allowed to enter his living quarters where another image of the Dalai Lama was displayed prominently in the center of the room. The risk involved in creating such images is obviously great. However, the importance of practicing one’s faith seems to have superseded the Chinese government’s policies. Thus, the Tibetans continue to create and possess images of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

On September 13, 2006, US Congress passed a bill awarding the Dalai Lama the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor in the nation. Across party lines, the Senate and the House supported the bill originally proposed by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Craig Thomas as well as House Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Tom Lantos. A spokesman for China’s Foreign Ministry immediately criticized the decision, saying it “seriously interferes with China’s internal affairs and damages China-US relations….We express our strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition.”

The Dalai Lama will most likely accept the medal in person during his next visit to Washington, tentatively planned for October 2007. This event is coincidentally scheduled twenty years after the first uprisings in Lhasa took place when Tibetans first learned of the Dalai Lama’s address to the Senate. Undoubtedly, the Chinese authorities will realize the significance of the date and have reinforcements
ready in Lhasa. Regardless of the potential threat, Tenzin Gyatso’s message of hope and perseverance continues to thrive in the minds of many Tibetans, awaiting a time in history when at least the photographs, if not the leader, can return.

ENDNOTES

2. Tom A. Grunfeld, The Making of Modern Tibet (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1996), 226. In a 1990 census, 44.43 percent of Tibetans over 15 years old and 79 percent of women of childbearing age were illiterate. Only 18.6 percent of Tibetans attended primary school, with the numbers for further educational experience reported as minimal.
3. Donald Lopez, Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 181-207. The role of the Dalai Lama in the past fifty years has been much different than any previous incarnation. As an international hero, Tenzin Gyatso is forced to make many decisions his predecessors could not have possible foreseen; specifically, he has become a unifying force for an otherwise quite diverse population of Tibetans. The concept of nationality discussed at length by Donald Lopez in Prisoners of Shangri-La, did not exist in Tibet. Though the Dalai Lama’s role is traditionally largely spiritual (relying on the Kashag for many political decisions), Tenzin Gyatso now epitomizes a political symbol of Tibet.
4. There are several boundary distinctions between the cultural region referred to as ‘Tibet’ and the political area known as the ‘Tibetan Autonomous Region.’ For the purposes of this paper, I have used the terms Tibet and TAR interchangeably to emphasize the Chinese political role.
5. It is difficult to ascertain information regarding the popularity of the current Dalai Lama’s image before the ban. Certainly, the photographs became much desired after 1996. On a recent trip to Tibet, I was often asked for an image of the leader. These requests indicate the continuing quest of Tibetans to practice their religious beliefs and possess a sense of unity with each other.
6. The movements known as Anti-Splittist and Strike Hard are sometimes referred to in quotation marks (i.e. “Anti-Splittist”) as a reminder to the reader that the translations from Chinese differ according to source. I have omitted these marks as an attempt to further validate the phrasing of the movements.
7. Robert Barnett, Lhasa: Streets with Memories (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 151. Barnett mentions an interesting theory regarding the death of Mao and rise of the Dalai Lama’s popularity surmised by Chinese intellectual Wang Lixiong. Wang writes of the effective policies within Tibet as related to the living deity that Mao had become; that is to say, the Tibetans replaced one god the Dalai Lama with another. After the death of Mao, the Tibetans again turned to the Dalai Lama to fulfill this centuries-old dependence on a central figure: “Only Mao had succeeded in dissolving the religious and ethnic unity of the Tibetans, by introducing the element of class struggle. Renouncing this without creating any new ideology has left a vacuum that can only be filled by a combination of lamaist tradition and ethnic nationalism.”
8. Ronald D. Schwartz, Circle of Protest: Political Ritual in the Tibetan Uprising (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 14. Schwartz describes the political tension that surrounded these missions, though the specific reasons behind the success/failure of each delegation are omitted. One can surmise that the trips were deemed unsuccessful by the Chinese Party leaders, as the Party Secretary for Tibet, Ren Rong, was fired shortly thereafter.
9. Ibid., 15. The policy as cited in Schwartz: “1. To exercise national autonomy in the region fully that is to say, to let Tibetans really be the masters of their own lives. 2. A commitment by the Central Government to relieve and reduce burdens on the people, exempting them from agricultural and animal husbandry tax over the next three to five years in order to allow the Tibetan people a chance to recover. 3. To adopt a special policy to revive the Tibetan economy, including the adoption of a system of private economy in line with Tibetan circumstances. Nationwide this initiative was developed into the economic (household) responsibility system. 4. To make great efforts to develop agriculture and animal husbandry as well as the manufacture of consumer goods, in order to promote economic prosperity and enrich people’s lives. 5. To make efforts to develop Tibetan science, culture and education, and to prepare for the establishing of the University of Tibet. 6. To implement the policy on minority nationality cadres correctly, to strengthen the unity between the Han and Tibetan cadres, and to transfer a large quantity of Chinese cadres who had worked in Tibet for many years back to the interior.”
10. Schwartz, 7.
11. Ibid., 8.
13. Ibid., 186. The majority of these uprisings occurred at the Jokhang. Generally, on a pre-determined date, a group of monks from one of the nearby monasteries would peacefully circumambulate the Jokhang, gradually gaining other Tibetan protesters (many of the younger generation) as the circuit continued. Schwartz details several of these events in Circle of Protest.
14. Grunfeld, 232. The Five Point Peace Plan:
   1. Tibet to be a zone of peace
   2. An abandonment of Chinese migration to Tibet
   3. Respect for human rights and democratic freedoms
   4. Respect for the environment
   5. Negotiations on the future status of Tibet.
16. The Jokhang is the most sacred Buddhist temple in Tibet. Practitioners believe the Buddha image in this building is the Jowo statue. This most revered path traveled by Tibetans and the location of most of the uprisings.
17. Schwartz, 53.
18. Barnett, Resistance and Reform in Tibet, 203. Another point of contention between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government would arise in 1989. In January, the Panchen Lama spoke to Communist Party members in Shigatse, somewhat uncharacteristically challenging the benefits of development under Party members. Though the Panchen Lama was generally viewed as more sympathetic to the economic desires of the Chinese government, this speech may have antagonized the wrong people. Five days after his speech, the Panchen Lama unexpectedly died under dubious conditions. Six years after his death, the Panchen Lama remained a controversial figure as the Tibetan Government in Exile and Chinese authorities debated the true reincarnation.
20. It is interesting to note the tendency of the Chinese government to hold religious celebrations (again, in an attempt at partial tolerance) at the Norbulingka. The Norbulingka is generally regarded by Tibetans as the more secular of the two palaces of the Dalai Lama (the Potala being the sacred). The degree to
which the Chinese have been successful seems irrelevant to the practitioners. Though the annual yogurt festival and official gatherings are conducted at the summer residence, it is the Jokhang that remains the heart of the city.

Barnett, Resistance and Reform in Tibet, 239.

Schwartz, 86.

Barnett, Resistance and Reform in Tibet, 243.

Ibid., 251.

Grundfeld, 237.

Ibid., 238.

Carlson, 34. The end of the Cold War added additional focus to the Communist country. Ties between the Dalai Lama and Washington remained intact with the departure of George Bush and the arrival of the new Clinton administration. Upon reflection of these two years, one party official in Beijing stated: "Yes, we placed a stronger emphasis on state sovereignty over Tibet in 1991 and 1992. The rest of the world changed at this time, and it was clear to us that the US was starting to challenge China on Tibet to an extent that it hadn't since the end of CIA involvement in the region in the 1970s."

Schwartz, 58. A monk who fled Tibet in 1988 recounted the response of monks to a Chinese radio announcement against the Dalai Lama: "The monks spoke against this, saying: 'It's not the Dalai clique, but Chinese beating corpses (the joke in Tibetan plays on ru tsog <Dalai, but ro dzog —beating a corpse)."

Ibid., 37.


Ibid., 1996.

The three major points of Strike Hard (as cited in "Strike Hard Campaign") are 1. Forceful Crackdown 2. The Severest of Capital Punishment 3. The Swiftest of Execution. The Party Secretary of Xinjiang discussed the need for this difference in his comment to the South China Morning Post: "The Strike Hard campaign is a national campaign and different regions have a different focus depending on their local situations. In Xinjiang, Strike Hard is aimed at burglars, thieves, and those participating in violent crimes. But [we also have] the separatists, religious extremists, and terrorists. These people are conspiring to jeopardize national security."

Ibid., 27. The Strike Hard campaign would actually be launched a third time, shortly after September 11, 2001. Under the guise (and actual wording) of a 'War on Terror,' the Chinese government arrested Tulkhu Tenzin Delek and Lobzang Dhondrub, the first Tibetans to be labeled terrorists.

Ibid., 29.


There are numerous images of previous incarnations of the Dalai Lama throughout Tibet, though these images are seen as strictly religious by the CCP. Images of the Dalai Lama, current or previous, were regarded as emanations of compassion, the spiritual side of the Dalai Lama's role. Though the previous incarnations served as secular leaders for several centuries, their painted images do not invoke the same sentiment as that of the current exiled leader, and thus, do not pose the threat of being a visual symbol of unification.

The operations of the Chinese government follow a pattern difficult to trace: the announcement of the ban or order is made by the official to the media, this information is related to the people through the local newspapers, and the ban or order is enforced by lower ranking officials thereafter. Though the date of this newspaper ban is debated, April 5 is cited in "Artist Found Traumatized After Alleged Torture," World Tibet Network News (TIN), November 26, 1996, <http://www.wtibet.ca.cn/wtmarchive/1996/11/26_1.html>. In Lhasa, a Tibetan commented on the ban to a member of the Tibetan Information Network: "This act has made us feel resentful, and deep ill feeling has been surfacing amongst Tibetans here." Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign Shifts to Schools, World Tibet Network News (TIN), May 20, 1996, <http://www.wtibet.ca.cn/wtmarchive/1996/5/20_2.html>.


Schwartz. 41. Schwartz reproduces the foreign traveler warning: "1. We extend welcome to friends from the different countries in the World who come to our region for sightseeing, tour, visit, work, trade discussion and economic cooperation. 2. Whoever comes to our region must respect our State sovereignty, abide by the laws of our country. They are not allowed to interfere in internal affairs of our country and engage in activities that are incompatible with their status. 3. Foreigners are not allowed to crowd around watching and photographing the disturbances manipulated by a few splittists, and they should not do any distorted propaganda concerning disturbances, which is not in agreement with the facts. 4. In accordance with our laws we shall mete out punishment to the trouble-makers who stir up, support, and participate in the disturbance manipulated by a few splittists."

Schwartz, 73.

Bradley Mayhew and Michael Kohn, eds., Lonely Planet: Tibet (May 2005), 298.


"Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign Shifts to Schools."

"Artist Found Traumatized After Alleged Torture."

Ibid. The article further investigates the general role of the artist by interviewing the prominent Tibetan artist Gongkar Gyatso. Though the ban was not in effect in the 1980's, Gyatso discussed his fear of offending authorities: "In 1985 or '86 when for the first time I heard a cassette a (sic) speech by His Holiness, then I got a very good feeling about him, and I thought about doing a portrait of him. But we knew it was dangerous, that maybe I would lose my job or end up in prison or something like that. I know it was quite a serious thing so I always took care not to make the government angry."

"China Strengthens Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign." The restrictions continued in 2001 with the ban of celebrations of the Dalai Lama's birthday. The commemoration, known as Trunglha Yarsol, had been celebrated for years with relatively few incidents. A circular issued by the Chinese government was distributed on June 24, 2001, two weeks before the July 6 celebration. This document, titled "Strengthening Abolition of the Illegal Activities of Trunglha Yarsol Celebration and Protection of Social Stability" was undoubtedly an extension of the earlier Strike Hard Campaign. Once again, the lines blurred between political protest and criminal activity.

Ganden monastery was almost completely physically destroyed in the Cultural Revolution. Most of the structures that comprise the modern Ganden monastery were rebuilt in the early 1980s.
The US State Department lists its annual human rights reports on its website: http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/. However, the earliest listed report is 1999. The 1997 report is found on numerous pro-Tibetan websites, each with the same content. I have chosen to cite the version from the following web address <www.Historywiz.com/primarysources/reportonchina-tibet.htm>.


Carlson, 38.

For the security of the Tibetans involved, I have chosen to omit names and specific locations.

Schwartz, 21. The influx of tourists to Tibet is undoubtedly a blessing and a curse to the Chinese government. Though the economy in the region has stabilized through international dollars, the connections made between outsiders and Tibetans are of great concern to the Party. As Schwartz writes, “many Westerners visiting the region have had the experience of Tibetans slipping into their hands or pockets handwritten notes, often addressed to the United Nations. The notes typically proclaim the independence of Tibet, the oppression of the Tibetan people by Chinese invaders, and the loyalty of Tibetans to the exiled Dalai Lama.”


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Sarah J. Getzelman is currently working towards a doctoral degree in Art History at Ohio State University. She received her BA in 2001 from the University of Colorado and a subsequent MA from the University of Denver in 2005, both degrees were completed in Art History. Sarah’s present research focuses on modern issues of Tibetan visual culture including Western and Chinese notions of Tibet and Tibetans, as well as the exiled Tibetan community and its perpetuation of Tibetan traditional imagery. In the summer of 2006, she worked on a photodocumentation project in Tibet under the leadership of Dr. Susan Huntington and Dr. Dina Bangdel along with other graduate students from OSU.
On February 27, 1947, an altercation between agents of the Chinese Nationalist government’s Monopoly Bureau and a female cigarette vendor brought native Taiwanese to the streets the next day. Demonstrations against the Kuomintang (KMT) spread throughout the island. The military under Governor-General Chen Yi responded with machine gunfire. During the first week of March, negotiations took place between the government and demonstration leaders even as the violence escalated. Chen Yi’s military reinforcements began arriving on March 8 and finally put down the insurrection. Collectively, these events are known today in Taiwan as the February 28 (or 2-2-8) Incident and March Massacres.

The history of the 2-2-8 Incident itself remains controversial, with different political groups telling different versions of the story. Part of the reason for the controversy is that the KMT, as the governing body of the Republic of China in Taiwan from the 1940s until the year 2000, has never dealt with the aftermath of the Incident in a way that the Taiwanese dissidents felt was satisfactory. The KMT largely blamed Japanese brainwashing and alleged Communist agents for inciting the riots. Interestingly enough, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has partially supported this claim, pointing to the unrest in Taiwan as evidence that all Chinese people were united in their revolutionary fervor and in their dislike of the corrupt KMT government.

Members of the Taiwanese independence movement that grew out of the Incident offered a third interpretation. For them, the 2-2-8 Incident was just one more episode in the longer history of Taiwan’s struggle for self-determination. Only since the lifting of martial law in Taiwan in 1987 and the gradual democratization of Taiwan have the events of February and March 1947, as well as the circumstances leading up to them, been more openly discussed.
Regardless of what was officially recorded in textbooks or was permitted in public forums, the 2-2-8 Incident has become over the years a symbol of conflict between the native Taiwanese (the descendants of the 17th-20th century immigrants from mainland China) and the mainlanders (those who fled from Communist China with Chiang Kai-shek after 1949) in Taiwan. It proved to many native Taiwanese that the KMT was inept at governing and was insensitive to their needs. The uprising prompted the Nationalist government to declare martial law and reinforced the Nationalist elites' belief that the Taiwanese were in serious need of re-education if the “sordid, evil education” they received from the Japanese were to be replaced by patriotic Chinese values.³

The Incident marked a divide between the Taiwanese and the mainland Chinese, and served as a catalyst for the development of modern Taiwanese nationalist and independence movements. Much of the tension that has characterized Taiwan’s democratization, China-Taiwan relations, and by extension, US-China-Taiwan relations, have been born in this contentious historical period.

American Literature Review

The US had ardently supported the KMT throughout the Chinese civil war from during the 1930s and 40s and had taken charge of Japan’s post-World War II reconstruction in the late 1940s. The situation during February-March 1947 on Taiwan, soon to become the US’s strategic “unsinkable aircraft carrier,” could not have passed by unnoticed. What role, if any, did the US play during the uprising? How did US decision-makers respond to it and what did the American public know?

Unfortunately, there is relatively little scholarship on the US reaction to the 2-2-8 Incident or the Incident’s relevance to US-China-Taiwan relations. In some ways, this is not surprising, as the US's relationship with Taiwan has always been defined by and secondary to its relationship with mainland China. However, given that the Incident played an important role in the formation of the Taiwanese independence movement and given that cross-strait tensions today revolve around the threat of Taiwanese independence, it seems odd that Americans remain largely unaware of this event and the relevance it has for the US’s evolving relationship with Taiwan and its people.

The Incident has been under-studied partly because English-language accounts of the 2-2-8 Incident have been scarce. In “A Tragic Beginning,” one of the few books in English about the 2-2-8 Incident, scholars Lai Tse-Han, Ramon Myers, and Wei Wou identify two main American sources about the Incident. One is decidedly pro-Taiwanese in its sentiment, written by the then-vice consul in Taipei, George H. Kerr. The other account is the more restrained US Department of State version found in official memoranda transmitted during the Incident from Taipei and Nanking to the State Department.⁴ This paper will also take into consideration a largely ignored third source of information, the US media, which was distinct in its role as the interpreter of events for the American public.

Upon examination of these three categories of American responses, it becomes evident that Americans felt some sympathy for the plight of the Taiwanese under Nationalist rule, but there was not
enough outrage to make a difference in the US’s foreign policy. US policymakers ultimately decided that even though KMT repression in Taiwan was reprehensible, good relations with the KMT were too important for the US to jeopardize. Then, as now, US relations with greater China, whether ruled by the CCP or the KMT, took precedence over the US’s relationship with Taiwan and the Taiwanese.

Kerr's Account

As mentioned, the 2-2-8 Incident continues to be highly controversial. It is difficult to find an unbiased account of what actually happened in Taiwan during February and March 1947, insofar as it is possible to find “unbiased” accounts of any historical event. George H. Kerr’s writing has been criticized for its obvious pro-Taiwanese bent. Regardless of his bias, he still provides the most complete American account of the 2-2-8 Incident. As the American vice consul in Taipei from 1946 to 1947, Kerr was in a unique position to observe the unfolding of events. From 1942 to 1947, Kerr was the US military and State Department’s recognized “Formosa Specialist,” which gave him influence in shaping the US State Department’s understanding of the situation. Kerr cites the ineptness and corruption of Governor General Chen Yi’s government and the resulting decline of the economy and in standard of living in 1946-47 as reasons for Taiwanese discontent. For example, Japanese businesses were confiscated and re-organized into branches of larger companies, which were in turn organized into syndicates controlled by General Chen Yi and his commissioners. Native Taiwanese were denied management positions even after the Japanese left. Instead, these top positions were given to the commissioners’ less qualified friends and relatives from the mainland. Furthermore, many

the “Japanese half-century,” which started in 1895 when China ceded Taiwan to Japan after its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. Under the Japanese, the Taiwanese had built a strong economy, learned advanced technological skills, and achieved a high standard of living, qualities that were missing from the mainland. Politically, while the Taiwanese had been kept out of top positions in the Japanese colonial government, there certainly had been some experience with local self-government. There had also been a persistent, if futile, fifteen-year effort to petition Tokyo for home rule based on Wilsonian principles of self-determination. This political tradition reveals a long-standing desire and potential for political participation by the Taiwanese. Many Taiwanese hoped that liberation from Japanese rule would mean more democracy and self-rule, as had been advertised in the Allies’ wartime propaganda. Yet, despite all the indications that Taiwan’s return to China would be beneficial for both sides, what could have been a relatively smooth integration of Taiwan into China somehow led to the disaster of the 2-2-8 Incident.

In Kerr’s opinion, the island of Taiwan, then known as Formosa, which was returned to the China in 1945, is “China’s richest prize of the war.” Not only did the Taiwanese eagerly anticipate reunification with the motherland, but they also brought with them the fruits of their labor from

The February 28 Incident
of the Taiwanese who occupied lower positions in the bureaucracy were fired to make room for immigrants from the mainland.

As managers and directors of the syndicates, the commissioners and their relatives were able to give themselves bonuses and government subsidies for failing or even non-functioning companies. Because of their simultaneous monopoly of virtually all of the island’s important industries and government positions, officials from the mainland were even able to squeeze profit from the relief supplies sent by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which passed through their hands before being sold at exorbitant prices to the people.¹¹

As a result of the KMT’s mismanagement, industrial and agricultural production levels all dropped significantly lower than pre-war levels. Sugar production was one of the most outrageous examples. In 1939, 1.4 million metric tons were produced. In 1947, a mere 30,000 tons were produced, similar to pre-modernization levels from 1895. It did not help the island’s production crisis that coal, grain, and sugar reserves were being depleted. Originally produced to support the Japanese war effort, the stockpiles still left in Taiwan at the end of the war were shipped out for use on the famine-stricken mainland. The loss of the rice reserves combined with crop failures as a result of the government’s ill-maintenance of irrigation systems and hoarding of fertilizer from UNRRA caused a rice shortage in Taiwan in 1945-1947.¹² Kerr and the Taiwanese blamed Chiang Kai-shek’s brother-in-law T.V. Soong, then the president of the Executive Yuan, for the disappearance of Taiwan’s reserves and suspected that the government was selling the materials on the black market in Hong Kong.¹³ In response to the people’s complaints, General Chen chided the Taiwanese for their selfishness and lack of patriotism.¹⁴

In mid-year of 1946, bubonic plague and cholera returned to Taiwan after a thirty-year absence. Kerr traced the first four cases of plague to mainlanders arriving on junks from China; he blamed incompetent government officials for not implementing a strict quarantine system as the Japanese had done in the past. The cholera epidemic also offered another example of the government’s callous attitude toward their duties. The Director of Public Health refused to keep clinics open longer than normal hours during the epidemic and also declined to take action when human excrement was found to be contaminating commercial fishing waters. UNRRA personnel had to pick up the director’s slack. According to Kerr, this further lowered the Taiwanese people’s opinion of the government while enhancing their opinion of Americans, whom they associated with UNRRA.¹⁵

In addition to the island’s public health and economic problems, another source of discontent was the dashing of Taiwanese hopes for increased participation in the government. In January 1947, Governor Chen Yi announced that anticipated local elections of mayors and magistrates would be postponed until December 1949 even though the Republic of China’s new Constitution would be implemented on the mainland starting December 1947. After fifty-one years of living under Japanese despotism, he claimed, the Taiwanese were too “politically retarded” to govern themselves.¹⁶ To be fair on the question of Taiwanese representation
in the Governor General’s government, there were a few token Taiwanese in the higher branches of government. But often they were “half-mountain men” (ban-shan ren), or Taiwanese who had grown up on the mainland, who were chosen for their loyalty to the Nationalists and were generally not trusted by the native Taiwanese.\(^{17}\)

Overall, many Taiwanese felt disappointed that they had traded one dissatisfactory ruler for another. If the Japanese had been harsh and foreign, they had at least been efficient and fair. The mainland Chinese, on the other hand, were unjustifiably arrogant and condescending toward the local population and were also incapable of effective government administration. “Dogs go and pigs come” went one popular saying at the time. The Japanese “dogs” at least were good for protecting property, implying that the mainland “pigs” were good for nothing.\(^{18}\)

On the evening of February 27, 1947, the Taiwanese people’s frustration came to a head. In Taipei, two Monopoly Bureau agents seized a female cigarette vendor’s goods and her small cash reserve, accusing her of selling untaxed cigarettes. A crowd began to gather, growing angrier as the woman protested the seizure of her goods. When the agents struck her down with a pistol, the incensed crowd moved in and the agents fired wildly, shooting and killing one bystander. The street vendor was later reported to have died as well. The next day, an unarmed crowd of 2,000 demonstrated in Taipei in front of the Monopoly Bureau and later the Governor’s office, where they were fired upon by the Governor’s guard. Protests spread to cities across Taiwan as news of the Taipei demonstration traveled by phone and radio. On March 2, Governor Chen was forced to deal with a delegation of Taiwanese local leaders and to allow the formation of a Settlement Committee after he unsuccessfully attempted to call in troops from the south ( Taiwanese in Hsinchu removed rails so that trains could not get through).\(^{19}\) It was agreed that the Committee would have until March 10 to present recommendations for reforms to the administration. By March 3, Kerr received reports that “all major cities on the island were in the hands of the Formosans with the exception of Kagi…In most cases the administrations in the various cities were surrendered to Formosan patriots peacefully and in many towns there was no molestation of mainlanders.”\(^{20}\)

Afraid that Chen was sending for more troops from the mainland and that March 10 would be too late, the Settlement Committee presented their 32 Demands to Chen three days early on March 7. Kerr grouped the 32 Demands into six general categories: 1) reforms to ensure equality and political representation for the Taiwanese, 2) reforms to ensure security of person and property, 3) economic reforms, 4) military reforms, 5) social welfare reforms, and 6) “subordinate” demands that were subject to compromise.\(^{21}\)

Of these, Kerr highlighted the fourth category because Chiang Kai-shek later used them to justify retribution against the Taiwanese. There appeared to be confusion about what the demands for military reforms actually were. Lai, Myers, and Wou’s version of the 32 Demands includes one that said military personnel should temporarily disarm. This, the authors thought preposterous because it would have negated the Nationalists’ “sovereign authority.”\(^{22}\) However, in Kerr’s account, these
more radical demands were not included in the official presentation to Chen, but were published on handbills and posters on the street by “individuals and groups not authorized to develop a reform program.” In Kerr’s opinion, the members of the Settlement Committee were sober and responsible individuals who were reformists, not revolutionaries.

On March 8, contrary to Chen’s repeated and explicit assurances that he would not send for more troops, military reinforcements from the mainland arrived in the night at Keelung harbor, north of Taipei. That day, while Nationalist soldiers rolled through the streets with machine guns, Kerr and other foreigners took shelter in a hospital. From an upstairs window, Kerr reported seeing “Formosans bayonetted in the street without provocation. A man was robbed before our eyes—and then cut down and run through. Another ran into the street in pursuit of soldiers dragging a girl away from his house and we saw him, too, cut down.” They also saw a Canadian nurse and her Formosan assistants dodging bullets as they brought in wounded people from the streets.

Kerr’s moral outrage on behalf of the Taiwanese is obvious throughout his book, but it is especially evident when he juxtaposes Chen and Chiang Kai-shek’s conciliatory rhetoric with his own eyewitness account of the March Massacres. He wrote, “The roadways, the river banks and the harbor shores were strewn with bodies at the moment, and the Nationalist troops were spreading out through the countryside, to bring ‘peace and protection’ à la Kounintang.” The initial force of 2,000 troops eventually was followed by 50,000 to 60,000 more. On March 9, martial law was declared again and on March 10, Chen called for the dissolution of the Settlement Committee, which he claimed had “acted beyond its province.” Feeling betrayed, many Taiwanese came to believe that Chen had never meant to listen to any recommendations, but had instead used the first week of March to identify Taiwanese leaders and activists—students, doctors, businessmen—so they could be targeted for arrest and execution in the days of terror that followed.

Individuals who had participated in the uprising escaped to Japan if they could. Of those who did not, many were arrested and killed. Kerr reported Nationalist soldiers using enrollment lists to round up students, whose dead bodies were left mutilated and unclaimed in the streets. Students and teachers had formed a voluntary corps to police the streets during early March when local Taiwanese had temporarily controlled the island. Because they were young, hot-headed intellectuals and potential leaders of future resistance, students were seen by the KMT as political hazards. On March 13, Kerr received a report that an estimated 700 students had been seized in Taipei over the course of five days. Foreigners in Taiwan at the time reported seeing dead bodies floating in Keelung Harbor for days following the initial landing of Nationalist troops, wharves and beaches being favored sites for executions. Altogether, approximately 10,000 Taiwanese were estimated to have disappeared or been killed in the month of March.

What was the true cause of the violence in Taiwan in 1947? Were the Taiwanese right to oppose the government? Was the KMT justified in putting a stop to the uprising? Lai, Myers, and Wou criticize Kerr for being too pro-Taiwanese and not sympathetic enough to the mainlanders’
point of view. Much more sympathetic to the KMT themselves, these authors cite the different “worldviews” of the Taiwanese and the mainlanders as the primary cause for conflict. As much as the mainlanders were wrong to underestimate the Taiwanese’s intelligence, political capability, and loyalty to China, the Taiwanese should also have been more sympathetic to the soldiers who had just spent eight years fighting the Communists and the Japanese on the war-torn mainland. Also, they argued, the Taiwanese had set themselves up for disappointment by expecting too much from the KMT, for “in 1945, no Chinese political organization had yet acquired the political understanding and skills needed to overcome their economic and political problems.”

Kerr, with his unrestrained dislike of Chen and his questioning of Chiang’s sincerity toward the Taiwanese, gave little special consideration to the plight of the mainlander soldiers or to the KMT’s learning curve. American memoranda and news accounts at the time also understood the uprising as a consequence of Nationalist misrule rather than a hiccup in the KMT’s learning process. Unlike Kerr, however, other American state officials could not put the US’s relationship with the Taiwanese above the US’s special ties to the KMT.

Responses of the US State Department and the US Embassy in Nanking

At the time of the Incident, Kerr’s bias toward the Taiwanese was already known by his colleagues, though they continued to use him because of his extensive experience in Taiwan. Twice, his memoranda were forwarded to higher-ups accompanied by qualifying notes from his immediate superiors, expressing their reservations about his overly emotional writing. Minister-Counselor W. Walton Butterworth wrote that Kerr’s comments might appear “highly keyed in tone and in certain instances categoric in content. However, with the continuation of Chen Yi’s regime in power in Taiwan, there is coming to be less and less middle ground which can be occupied by coolly impartial opinion.”

Clearly, Kerr’s fellow diplomats were aware of the magnitude of the violence in Taiwan and were personally somewhat sympathetic to the Taiwanese. However, they were also guided by a firm “This is China now” principle. The “This is China now” principle, as Kerr derisively called it, meant that all the restrictions placed on US policy toward China, whether for ideological, geopolitical, or domestic political reasons, now also applied to Taiwan. For example, in response to a US senator’s inquiry about civil unrest in Taiwan, then-Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote,

> It can be stated that dispatches and telegrams received through Departmental sources generally confirm press reports indicating harsh measures were employed to suppress the recent uprising there. However, by virtue of the Cairo Agreement [of 1943], a copy of which is attached, this Government is committed to the return of Formosa to China….Therefore, this Government would not be in a position to register with the Chinese authorities a formal protest in regard to its activities in suppressing Formosan unrest.

In other words, in order to maintain good relations with the KMT, the official American policy toward Taiwan had to be “hands off.”

Along the same lines, it was deemed imprudent for the American Consulate in Taipei to take sides in the conflict. On the night of February 28,
eleven mainlanders showed up at the consulate seeking asylum, with twenty-two more mainlanders finding their way there the next day. Not wanting the consulate to become a sanctuary for more refugees, the embassy in Nanking instructed Taipei Consul Ralph Blake to strictly follow protocol on temporary refuge and to ask local authorities to remove the refugees as soon as possible, which he did.\textsuperscript{35} During the first week of March, Taiwanese leaders asked the American consulate for assistance at least three times. One request was to pass along a petition to US Secretary of State George Marshall asking for UN administration of Taiwan. Another request was for the consulate to disseminate news of the situation in Taiwan to the rest of the world. Blake denied both requests, with the embassy’s approval.\textsuperscript{36} Even in regard to the consulate’s primary duty of ensuring safety of US citizens, Blake was advised by the embassy:

\begin{quote}
At this critical time you should be most careful to avoid any external appearance of prejudging the merits of present dispute or becoming a participant in it in any manner whatsoever. You will also realize that in this situation American officials must only look to the constituted authority, whose responsibility it is to afford you adequate protection.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

In other words, Americans must not take sides and must not appear to challenge the KMT’s “constituted” authority.

But though the US was reluctant to overly antagonize the KMT, the consulate and embassy still felt compelled to push the KMT to make reforms. On March 3, the consulate in Taipei suggested that the US should intervene “in its own right or on behalf of UN to prevent disastrous slaughter by Government forces.”\textsuperscript{38} This suggestion was ignored, but Kerr’s recommendation that the Generalissimo replace General Chen with a civilian governor was eventually taken up by Ambassador John Leighton Stuart.\textsuperscript{39} Concerned that Chiang was getting information only from extremely biased sources, Stuart offered to forward him one of Kerr’s memorandum detailing possible courses of action, which was done on April 18.\textsuperscript{40} On April 22, Wei Tao-ming, a civilian and a former ROC ambassador to the US, was finally appointed governor of Taiwan. Chen Yi was removed from Taiwan and later made governor of Zhejiang province before being executed in 1950 for conspiring with the Communists.

What motivated Stuart, Kerr, and others to push Chiang to make reforms in Taiwan? Sympathy for the Taiwanese, to be sure, but also concern for the KMT’s reputation and, by extension, the US’s. The KMT’s talent for misrule and its inability to win the people’s hearts on the mainland were already well-known, at least in policy circles if not to the American public. Taiwan had been an opportunity for the KMT to prove that they could rule successfully, and, by extension, a chance for the US to justify their extensive support of the KMT. The unrest in Taiwan threatened to negate all of that. This assumption can be drawn from Kerr’s arguments in the memorandum that made its way to Chiang. Kerr stressed that “there can be no question that the Formosan-Chinese have felt loyalty to the Central Government and toward the Generalissimo” and that “Formosans have been ambitious to see Taiwan become a model province of China,” not to become independent. He believed that the situation was still salvageable as long as the KMT did more than use the military to suppress opposition. If economic and political
reforms were made, Formosa could still be “put to work earning foreign credit for China” and, by association, for the US.

**US Media Accounts**

Accounts of KMT misrule in Taiwan started appearing in American newspapers in early 1947, but for most Americans, it was probably not on the radar until the violence began. During the actual protests and street violence, Western journalists did not have access to Taiwan, but had to rely mostly on the Chinese media and the American consulates for news, except for some first-hand accounts from witnesses who had managed to leave Taiwan. After martial law was declared on March 9, independent media sources in Taiwan were shut down and the Chinese Central News Agency became the only official news source out of Taiwan. As a result, many of the details of the events were unclear, with most official-sounding quotes only coming from the Chinese side.

Because of the influence of the Chinese media, many of the reports that appeared in US media harped on the Communist connection – what role Communists played in the uprising and what potential there was for Communism to take hold in Taiwan after the KMT’s violent suppression of it. In The New York Times, for example, a story appeared about Formosan soldiers in Shantung province deserting to the Communist side. There was speculation that even though there did not seem to be any direct connection between the CCP and the uprising, the CCP would not pass up the opportunity to capitalize on anti-KMT sentiment in Taiwan.

Another example is Newsweek and Time’s coverage of the uprising, which seemed to serve two purposes: first, to protect the Nationalists’ reputation and second, to battle Communism. True to its China Lobby heritage, the Time articles placed sole blame for the uprising in Taiwan on “carpetbagger” General Chen Yi’s shoulders, implying that his oppressive measures in no way represented the rest of the Nationalist government. The Nationalist government in Nanking is credited with sending a mission to Formosa to “comfort the people” and with restoring order to Formosa so that it could be run like any other province of “metropolitan China.” This image of China under the KMT as more modernized than Taiwan contrasts sharply with Kerr’s description of Taiwan as the more economically robust, technologically advanced, and politically sophisticated place at the time.

An article in the April 1947 issue of Time, “China: Snow Red and Moon Angel,” focused on Taiwanese Communist Party leader Hsieh Hsueh-hung (the “Snow Red” of the title) even though most accounts except the KMT and CCP’s agreed that Communists played only a minor role in the uprising. Playing the Communist card in the article fulfilled multiple interests. First, it made for a more sensational story. Second, it explained why the KMT was crushing the insurrection in Taiwan, thus partially exonerating them for their actions. Third, as a function of the second reason, it placed the US in the superior position of tutoring the KMT in liberal democracy and in winning people over from Communism.

Peggy Durdin’s article on Taiwan in a June issue of The Nation cited the 2-2-8 Incident as an example of the corrupt and undemocratic nature
of the Nationalist government, and as a reason to question the US’s continued idolization of Chiang Kai-shek and unwavering support for the KMT, which was so unpopular in China. Durdin was one of few that questioned the Nationalist government’s competence to the point that she thought Taiwan would be better off without them. She advocated that the US help administer a UN mandate on Taiwan, warning that if this did not happen, the Taiwanese would rebel again and the US would lose its popularity on Taiwan as it already had on the mainland “and for the same reason—that it supports bad government.”

In general, American news coverage of the 2-2-8 Incident reflected the US’s relationship with Taiwan and with the KMT. Interest in Taiwan was generated through interest in the US’s relationship with Nationalist China. The US’s relationship with the KMT was defined as both an alliance against Communism and as a mentor-student relationship in which the US taught the KMT how to govern properly. Except for a few, most writers thought the Taiwan uprising was a sign that the Nationalist government needed to reform, rather than a sign that Taiwan should be separated from China either temporarily or permanently through US administration of a UN trusteeship.

Conclusion

In the tense last days of February and the beginning of March 1947, the official response of the American consulate in Taipei and the American embassy in Nanking was to stay uninvolved, except to make sure that American citizens were safe. Requests for help from the Taiwanese were rebuffed. However, behind the scenes, the consulate and embassy were busy reporting on the uprising and pushing Chiang Kai-shek to enact reforms in Taiwan. Kerr’s understanding of the situation played a large role in shaping the US State Department’s perspective, resulting in Ambassador John Leighton Stuart convincing the Generalissimo to replace General Chen Yi with a civilian governor. It was believed that the US should not play a larger, more overt role because it was not in its own best interest to overly antagonize Chiang Kai-shek when the Nationalists were the only non-Communist alternative for a Chinese government to be had. This line of thought extended itself into American media accounts of the uprising. There were some who used the uprising as a way to question the US’s tenacious and morally ambiguous decision to support for the KMT. Most, however, just saw a pressing need for the KMT to make reforms to prevent Communists from gaining a foothold in Taiwan.

Overall, the 2-2-8 Incident in Taiwan can be (and has been) understood as a symbol of several trends in US-China relations at the time. In the news, the situation in Taiwan was cast as a potential preventative battle against Communism, if not one in actuality. It was also an example of how the US tried to induce the KMT to introduce liberal, democratic reforms but ultimately felt they could not push too hard. Finally, Taiwan was a classic case in which the US supported “bad government” because it valued its strategic alliance with the KMT over the well-being of the people who lived under it.
ENDNOTES
2 Ibid., 1-5.
3 Ibid., 139.
4 Ibid., 3-5.
8 Lai, 42.
10 Ibid., 55.
12 Finkelstein, 57.
13 Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 111.
14 Ibid., 108.
15 Ibid., 179-181.
16 Ibid., 204.
18 Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 97.
19 Ibid., 266.
20 Note by Kerr, 3 March 1947, Kerr Papers, box 2, Hoover Institution Archives.
21 Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 286-287.
22 Lai, 175-176.
23 Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 287.
24 Ibid., 293.
25 Ibid., 297.
26 Finkelstein, 64.
27 Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 294.
29 Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 300-302.
30 Lai, 218.
31 Ibid., 168-170.
32 The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State, Apr. 15, 1947, FRUS 1947, 7: 445.
33 Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 144.
34 Telegram, The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Acting Secretary of State, Mar. 21, 1947, FRUS 1947, 7: 76.
35 Telegram, The Minister-Counselor of Embassy in China (Butterworth) to the Secretary of State, Mar. 1, 1947, FRUS 1947, 7: 427-428
36 Telegram, The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State, Mar. 5, 1947, FRUS 1947, 7: 430.
37 Telegram, The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State, Mar. 6, 1947, FRUS 1947, 7: 435.
38 Telegram, The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State, Mar. 6, 1947, FRUS 1947, 7: 433.
40 The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State, Apr. 21, 1947, FRUS 1947, 7: 451.
47 “China: Snow Red and Moon Angel,” 35.

Footnote Abbreviations:

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JAPAN
This article investigates an example of transnational cultural exchange of Japanese avant-garde writers and artists with their Chinese counterparts in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai, centering on the experience of the surrealist painter and poet Migishi Kôtarô (1900-1934). Frequent interactions between intellectuals in Tokyo and Shanghai stimulated cultural activities in this international city and even laid a foundation for the modernization of the arts and literature in China. From September to December 1926, Migishi toured this city and its surrounding towns of Hangzhou and Suzhou in the Zhejiang region with the popular Japanese writer Tanizaki Jun’ichirô (1886-1965) and artist Okada Shichizô (1896-1942). In Shanghai, Tanizaki and his group were hosted by the Japanese bookstore owner Uchiyama Kanzô (1885-1959) and the Chinese modernist playwright Tian Han, (1898-1968) who introduced them to China’s innovative May Fourth generation of intellectuals.

I examine the political situation in Shanghai at the time of Migishi’s 1926 sojourn in Shanghai and discuss his view of China by analyzing the paintings and prose poem *Shanhai no ehon* [Shanghai Picture Book]1 inspired by his visit. While Migishi exhibited his art in Japan soon after his return, his poem only appeared four years later. Both the artist’s poem and paintings show China as exotic and dissimilar from Japan, subsuming the modernity of Shanghai into colonial exoticism, and celebrating the poetic surroundings of the Jiangnan area as a wellspring of Chinese traditional culture. I also note Migishi’s literary use of cinematic reality and montage by comparing his images of China with other contemporaries such as the modernist author Yokomitsu Ri’ichi and the surrealist poet Kitagawa Fuyuhiko.

1 In academic texts, Migishi often plays only a minor role as a member of Tanizaki’s entourage during the celebrated author’s visit to meet Tian
Han and other writers representative of the “May Fourth” generation, later known as China’s most influential intellectuals and social revolutionaries. Despite Migishi’s usually peripheral position in scholarly literature, here I place him in a central observing role as an avant-garde artist and writer viewing China through urban Shanghai and its regional attractions.

**Shanghai’s Political and Intellectual Ferment**

At the time of Migishi’s visit, Chinese intellectuals debated Marxist ideas in the streets, salons, and cafés of the French quarter that served as a hideout for a socialist political underground and represented the fashionable aspirations of a Chinese bourgeois elite. Chinese avant-garde writers including Tian sympathized with the working class and believed in an international proletarian brotherhood. In 1921, the educational reformer Chen Duxiu, proponent of the vernacular and former exchange student in Japan, co-founded the Chinese Communist Party with Li Dazhao in Shanghai. Here, among returned Chinese students from Tokyo and Paris, anti-imperialism and transnational class-consciousness transgressing global boundaries provided the impetus for the founding and growth of the CCP. Migishi and Okada also expressed dilettantish left-wing tendencies like many of their contemporaries in Japan. They were interested in the Chinese cultural scene so inextricably linked to political developments between the two countries. In Shanghai and other cultural centers like Beijing in the interwar period, the Japanese influence on literature was considerable with many Chinese literary figures like Tian spending their formative years studying in Japan and maintaining these connections.

The city greeting the three Japanese in September 1926 was fraught with tensions unleashed over a half-decade before, erupting into demonstrations on May 4, 1919 and again in 1925 with the May 30th Incident sparked by the riots at the Japanese-owned Tôyô Muslin Factory. In the spirit of the May Fourth demonstrations, the 1925 cultural and political movement unleashed by Chinese students and intellectuals heightened political consciousness about Western and Japanese imperialism and championed the cause of the workers. Sun Yat-Sen’s death in March 1925 created a power vacuum leaving China vulnerable to civil war and political unrest. Though clashes between Mao Zedong’s Communists and Chiang Kai-Shek’s Nationalists had not yet transformed into warfare, competing factions played out their loyalties on this cosmopolitan, international stage in public protests, literary pursuits, debating salons, and energetic chats in cafés. Stimulated by the 1915 New Culture and 1919 May Fourth movements along with the politically radical 1925 cultural movement, the intellectual and political ferment characterizing Shanghai’s literary world was soon encountered by the three Japanese cultural figures. Yet, few signs of this turbulent era appear in Migishi’s written and painted works.

Migishi and his group reflect the increasing numbers of Japanese avant-garde writers and artists who traveled to China, and especially Shanghai, in the twenties and thirties. Touring the East Asian continent was often their first contact with a foreign country and represented their desire to see a traditional culture Japan had seemingly lost through
progressive modernization and industrialization. In not only geographical proximity, China appeared closer to Japan culturally, ethnically, and linguistically, while European countries prompted a higher degree of estrangement. The several days trip to China by ship was cheaper and quicker than to Europe, though travel there by Japanese cultural figures also accelerated with transcontinental shipping routes and the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The three-week overland trip to Europe often began at the Chinese port of Shanghai or Dairen followed by a succession of railways. Joshua A. Fogel asserts that, in the interwar period, it was “de rigueur” for Japanese literary figures to visit neighboring China, moreso than other countries in Europe. ³ Migishi and his companions were part of a select group of individuals involved in cultural production whose views had “an influence in shaping Japanese attitudes and images of China.” ⁴

The group, composed of an established Japanese writer with two aspiring artists, journeyed to China’s most modern city and its traditional environs of Suzhou and Hangzhou to inspire their work while sharing ideas with their Chinese counterparts. While Tanizaki was already a popular author by the mid-twenties, as struggling artists, Migishi and Okada nearly declined the trip. Luckily, their journey was funded by Okada’s Sinophile relative and Tanizaki’s former classmate Sasanuma Gennosuke, who ran the fashionable Chinese restaurant Kairakuen, [The Garden of Embracing Pleasure] often patronized by wealthy Tokyo literati. ⁵ A connoisseur of Chinese art and culture, Sasanuma had many friends in Shanghai, including the bookstore owner Uchiyama Kanzo to whom he provided an introduction for his writer and artist companions. Aided by these arrangements, Tanizaki arrived in Shanghai in September 1926 with Migishi and Okada with the intention of meeting the revolutionary writer Lu Xun and the avant-garde playwright Tian Han as well as other Chinese writers who had studied in Japan. During his previous 1918 visit, Tanizaki lacked contacts necessary to meet writers in Shanghai and Beijing. This trip served as an opportunity to scout out China’s new literary scene with antecedents in the New Culture and May Fourth movements. ⁶ The two painters also looked forward to displaying their work in the Japanese concession of Shanghai while meeting other Chinese avant-garde artists and literary figures.

After arriving in Shanghai with the two artists, Tanizaki stopped at the Uchiyama Kanzo shoten, [Uchiyama Kanzo’s Bookstore] where news of his visit in the local paper preceded the arrival of his entourage. Established in 1917 by Uchiyama, a Christian socialist intellectual, this Japanese concession bookstore served as a liaison point for visiting Japanese and Chinese maintaining their Japanese connections. The store’s lower level specialized in Japanese-language materials like novels, non-fiction, magazines, and dictionaries, and the second floor was for Sino-Japanese cultural associations and a teaching venue. Through Uchiyama, whom Fogel calls a “broker of Sino-Japanese cultural contacts,” ⁷ Tanizaki and the artists met Tian Han and nearly all of China’s most famous May Fourth generation writers, with an exception of the literary reformer Lu Xun at his Ministry of Education post in Beijing. ⁸ Though Uchiyama and Tian Han warmly hosted Tanizaki, he was disappointed that he could not meet Lu
Xun. Migishi and Okada most likely shared his feelings. When these Japanese cultural figures visited Shanghai, Chinese writers like Guo Moruo feuded bitterly against those in Beijing under Lu Xun’s direction—one of the reasons the group never met this famed revolutionary writer. Their feud indicates literature’s important role in shaping Chinese nationalism and constructing an imagined modernity in China. Tian believed, “Chinese writers usually had no significant amount of money to contribute to the anti-imperialist cause, but they could appeal to the people through poetry, fiction, and the force of art.” For Chinese intellectuals, ideas like the revolutionary potential of literature and art were first assimilated in their studies in Japan while Sino-Japanese interactions on a political level like the May Fourth Movement often informed their cultural activities in China, facts that also interested Tanizaki, Migishi, and Okada.

After Tian learned Tanizaki would visit with an entourage of artists, he enthusiastically welcomed the author and his group to a city reputed for a vibrant cultural scene and active political debate. He and the writer Ouyang Yuqian as co-chairmen of the Shanghai Literary Winter Endurance Society rallied with Uchiyama to organize a banquet in their honor. This allowed their Japanese colleagues to drink while speaking in Japanese with Shanghai’s most prominent Japan-educated Chinese intellectuals possessing varied political viewpoints and opinions about literary culture. Tanizaki, older than most of the Chinese hosting him, felt he was an “ambassador” of literary modernity from a successfully modernized East Asian country who could inform his Chinese hosts about recent literary developments in Japan. At this raucous reception featuring drama, poetry, song, and even swordsmanship demonstrations, he made the following pronouncements in a drunken speech to thank his Chinese hosts:

*A new artistic movement is thriving in China today. A novelist from your neighboring land, I could never have imagined holding such an enormous gathering... Not only as an individual but as a representative of the Japanese literary world, I want to express my deepest gratitude. Japanese writers are also divided into many cliques, and I’ll probably take a thrashing for speaking as a “representative” of them. So let me thank you as an individual.*

Quoted in *Shanghai kôyûki* [A Chronicle of Friendly Exchange in Shanghai] in the June and August issues of the magazine *Josei* [Woman], Tanizaki’s words leave no doubt he took his role as an exemplar of Japan’s community of writers and as witness to a flourishing new literary scene in China seriously. In a supportive tone, he notes that Japanese writers often differed in their views of literature’s role just like their Chinese counterparts while implying this is inherent to a thriving climate of literary production.

Christopher Keaveney asserts the aforementioned essay, crystallizing into print Tanizaki’s impressions of his Shanghai visit, portrays the Japanese writer’s paternalistic attitude towards his Chinese counterparts: “Based on comments made by the author in *Shanghai kôyûki*, not only did Tanizaki consider himself one to whom the young Chinese writers could look for advice and guidance, but he saw himself as an ambassador of good will representing the Japanese literary community.” While the Chinese writers and artists Tanizaki met certainly were impressed by his celebrity status and welcomed him warmly, he
enacted the colonial relationship of Japan teaching the successful application of modernity to its culturally "backwards" inferior, China, even though he tried to downplay his role as representative of the Japanese literary scene. Keaveney calls Tanizaki’s attraction to China “self-reflexive” in that he was more interested in the reception of his writing in China and the role it had in developing a new literature than truly appreciating indigenous talent in the country.

Migishi also may have believed he served as an artistic ambassador of modernity as a painter in the Western style using oils and the latest in artistic techniques inspired by the European avant-garde. Yet, Migishi’s interpretation of his role as a practitioner of oil painting is not evident since no writings on this topic remain. At this critical juncture in the artistic formation of these young painters, most of Migishi’s and Okada’s works are still derivations of the Nihonga style, a popular form of artistic expression in the Taishô era. According to Liang Luo, though their full names do not appear, Migishi and Okada are mentioned in Tian’s writings as “two Japanese painters who held solo exhibitions in Shanghai.” Tian shared with his Japanese guests the understanding of the importance of modern art in China’s fight against imperialism, so Migishi’s response would have been interesting. While the artists must have been keenly interested in the Chinese reception of their work, no written records by them exist though existing photos show them exhibiting works for sale. Presumably, Migishi’s visit to Shanghai and his meetings with Chinese writers and artists made a favorable impact on his hosts while stimulating his further artistic endeavors.

Conversely, how did Migishi’s Japan-educated Chinese hosts explain their views of Japan considering their divergence in political views? Fogel believes, “Only an outsider of Tanizaki’s stature, perhaps only a Japanese writer, could have brought Hsieh (Liu’i), Tian, and such an unusual assortment of people together at this time.” While their attitudes about Japan varied widely, Tanizaki’s Chinese counterparts, including Tian, felt significant shame that imperialist interference in Chinese domestic affairs had prevented socioeconomic conditions in their country from progressing as quickly as those in Japan. Sino-Japanese political relations had sparked protests and cultural movements in China on no less than three occasions in the eleven years since 1915, so these Chinese intellectuals educated in Japan surely must have expressed to their guests their feelings about Japan’s handling of affairs in China.

However, conversations with the three Japanese visitors were mostly cordial at the reception and afterwards. Only once, during a walk with Tian and Guo Moruo, when Tanizaki complimented China’s process of modernization, he is refuted by Guo, “who heaps blame on both the Imperialists, who have divided up China and robbed it of its dignity, and on China itself for being so slow to respond.” Tanizaki’s discussions of Chinese politics, culture, and modernization with his hosts made a deep impression on him since his literary vision of China changed to a more sober view reflective of contemporary realities. According to Atsuko Sakaki, his depictions of China after 1926 differed greatly from his impressions following his 1918 visit, where China was exoticized as, “something to recollect the past of, to eat, or to
have sex with.” In Sakaki’s analysis of Tanizaki’s post-1926 texts like *Shanghai kôyûki* and *Shanghai kenbun roku* [Observations in Shanghai], she notes, “It appears as though China had ceased to inspire Tanizaki’s creative imagination, and had become instead a place in the real, if not mundane, world.”

Chastened by his Chinese hosts, Tanizaki’s views of China changed accordingly.

Like Tanizaki, Migishi later chronicled his visit to Shanghai and its environs by writing *Shanghai no ehon* and painting a series of oils or watercolors. Unfortunately, unlike Tanizaki’s numerous essays on China after 1926, the artist’s views must be interpreted through his single literary work and art. Judging by Migishi’s extant work, a transformation like that seen in Tanizaki’s writings never occurred for this artist curiously unaffected by the political context of his visit and the contemporaneous tensions brewing in China. His views of Shanghai and the traditional Chinese cities of Hangzhou and Suzhou in his prose poem and paintings reveal an exotic fascination with China similar to Tanizaki’s after his first visit in 1918. Despite the artist’s meetings with Chinese activist-intellectuals, Migishi’s romanticized, rococo depictions of Shanghai elide the complex political situation evolving in mid-twenties China marked by competing political ideologies of left-wing Socialism and nationalism.

However, an excerpt from Migishi’s unpublished draft of *Shanghai no ehon* from a year earlier shows a darker image of Shanghai like Yokomitsu’s and Kitagawa’s views of China in the evocation of unpleasant smells and unflattering “racial” characteristics describing the Chinese masses. In the 1929 draft, Migishi writes, “I thought of the hotel’s grey-hued loneliness as I ploddingly walked along the alley following the large avenue which smelled of charcoal.//The smell of the gutter and the Chinamen’s [Shinajin no] yellow faces and rouge lips were a good accompaniment to this damp air.” Due to the fragmented nature of his earlier draft and his lack of extant writings, it is hard to contextualize the artist’s true reactions and feelings towards China during a turbulent political time. The artist’s nostalgic published work might be read as a retreat into romantic aestheticism in reaction to the contemporary factional turmoil in China, while his unpublished draft displays the gut feelings that the alienating surfaces and contrasts of Shanghai as a colonial city may have evinced in the artist. I base these assumptions on similar views of the Japanese avant-garde in the early Shôwa period.

**Kôtarô’s Prose Poem and Paintings**

Upon Migishi’s return to Tokyo in late 1926, his artistic style transformed from Fauvism to Expressionism and eventually into Surrealism by the early thirties, possibly through viewings of paintings sent from abroad exhibited in Tokyo. He also began writing poetry. In his work and that of contemporaries like Koga Harue (1895-1933), such experimentation before settling on an individual form of expression while dabbling in literary endeavors like poetry, was entirely common for Japanese avant-garde painters in the interwar period. John Clark believes Migishi “represents a much more typical late 1920s fauvist, one who became avant-garde after seeing surrealist works at the Tokyo Paris Exhibition of Rising Art in December 1932.” Even though he may not
have officially identified with Surrealism until late 1932 as Clark suggests, he circulated in similar groups as other Japanese surrealist painters from late 1930, met with important theorists like Fukuzawa Ichirô (1898-1994) after 1931, and read the poetry journal Shi to shiron [Poetry and Poetics] in the late twenties and early thirties. Therefore, Migishi must have been familiar with Surrealism as a revolutionary artistic and poetic philosophy even if his artistic work did not show its recognizable elements until the early thirties.

Japanese curators like Mizusawa Tsutomu characterize Migishi’s work as undeniably surrealist by the early 1930s. After the poem appeared in Select, he joined the Dokuritsu bijutsu kyôkai [Independent Artists’ Association], a group of artists including Ai Mitsu (1907-1946) working in the surrealist style, one of most modern avant-garde art movements in Japan and Europe at the time. Migishi became the association’s youngest member in November 1930, and was thereafter considered a precocious rising star in art circles. Through this group, he also befriended Fukuzawa, one of Japan’s staunchest proponents of Surrealism in art after his 1931 return from Paris.

Four years after Migishi’s Shanghai visit and during his rise to fame as an avant-garde artist in Tokyo, Shanhai no ehon appeared in the August 1930 edition of the mixed-media avant-garde poetry magazine Serekuto [Select] featuring sketches, poems, essays, and articles by writers and artists working in the mode of Surrealism. In this magazine, images were often coupled with text in frequent collaborations between Tokyo-based poets and artists. For a transnational, cosmopolitan flair, the editors used multilingual graphics in English, French, and Japanese kanji and katakana on the cover. Notably, the edition with Migishi’s poem features a cover illustration in ink of nude Western women bathing by Marjorie Nishiwaki resembling those of the French fauvist painter Henri Matisse. This foreign artist active in Japan in the twenties and thirties was the British wife of Nishiwaki Junzaburô (1894-1982), a poet, artist, and Japan’s leading theorist of literary Surrealism. On the cover, Marjorie states in English:

*I hate almost all paintings... and at the same time find something of interest in every picture I have ever seen. My preference is for Matisse. I don’t know what, I don’t know how, my next picture will be painted, as it is unusual for the object or objects to suggest themselves as a picture until after the preliminary black paint is mixed.*

While she professes to dislike art, she adores Matisse. Though this French painter can hardly be considered a surrealist, her words mimic the surrealist principle of the role of the unconscious in the formation of art where images appear to “suggest themselves as a picture” during the artistic process itself. Likewise, in Migishi’s prose poem, the dreamy transmutability of images and stream-of-consciousness narrative suggest a celebration of the creative potential of the unconscious championed in Surrealism.

Shanhai no ehon is also illustrated by Migishi’s sketch of a chair and café table with flowers in a vase on top. The artist signs his name in cursive Roman letters to note his identity as modern and Westernized. The image reveals no connection to Shanghai except that it boasted numerous modern cafés similar to those in Tokyo. This illustration curiously cites Kitagawa’s 1925 short poem “Stillness.” Migishi was certainly familiar with
the poet’s literary work and essays in the poetry magazine *Shi to shiron* in the late twenties and in *Kinema junpō* [Cinema Tri-Monthly] after 1927. In the surrealist poetic style, dream sequences, and stream-of-consciousness passages of his poem, Migishi seems to have been influenced by Kitagawa’s prose poetry movement featured in *Shi to shiron*. In the same journal shortly before his tragic death in Nagoya in 1934, he later published his own poetry collection *Chô to kaikaku* [Butterfly and Shell, 1934] composed of prose poems called *shikaku-shi* [visual poetry].

Structurally, *Shanhai no ehon* is arranged in thirteen passages that each show a cinematic “sketch” of Shanghai in a series of snapshot glimpses of the modern colonial metropolis and outlying towns of Suzhou and Hangzhou praised by Chinese poets for their traditional beauty. Migishi strings together transmutable, transient visual impressions coupled with a litany of foreign elements showing the exotic nature of the artist’s imagined space. The first scene shows a man rushing to an assignation with a courtesan in the pleasure quarters, followed by a “shot” of a view above a colonial-period bridge. Then, the image shifts to a walled mansion out of which fashionably dressed women emerge in a Cadillac. Immediately after this section is a description of a girl with a bob in a yellow dress on the lawn of a Western park under the “colonial system.” Next, a young man, possibly the painter, wakes up to go to the port to await a transnational ocean liner’s arrival while viewing bustling crowds of Indian and Chinese natives working as porters and sailors. This shot cuts to two carriages passing each other in the darkness, the occupants greeting each other on their way to a secret nocturnal engagement outside the city. Next, scenes of the Russian Isako Circus featuring acrobats, swordsmanship, dance performances, and trained horses portray the city’s cosmopolitan, exotic flavor. The eighth section returns to a park scene where cute European children surround the artist and demand he paint them a picture. The next part portrays horse racing at the famous track in the city center, with female jockeys and spectators. Then, an image of a finely dressed couple in a forest smoking a lit Chesterfield cigarette evaporates into the frame of an advertising poster. Now, the artist boards a train and notices a traditionally dressed Chinese man with a birdcage, who lets his bird out for a flight whenever the train stops. After this, three gorgeously attired Chinese singsong girls seemingly transform into a colorful oriental rug when viewed from above. The last scene features a lazy Persian cat in a Western chocolate shop disappearing into darkness.

This prose poem presaging Migishi’s later *shikaku-shi* is highly indebted to the visual technique of cinematic imagery revealing the exotic nature of Shanghai and its environs. Yet, little of the tense political atmosphere of the late twenties found in Shanghai’s cafés and debating salons appears in this text characterized by scenes of fantastic beauty in a dreamlike space aroused by the artist’s imagination. Instead, Migishi’s imagined vision is a place where vibrant color and eroticism imbue an urban landscape with an exotic Occidentalism, and traditional Chinese elements selectively appear contrasted against signifiers of Western colonialism. Shanghai’s intricate colonial hierarchy serves as an artifice providing local color that endows the bustling city with a vibrant liveliness and stunning vividness. While the city
Migishi Kôtarô's Shanghai Winter 2008

is characterized by transient scenes of colonial hybridity and Western modernity, its outlying areas are portrayed as quaint and traditionally Chinese. Any indications of urban poverty and commercial exploitation disappear as figures play their roles in an elaborate staging of erotic desire and instant commercial satisfaction where beautifully dressed sing-song girls accompany a gentleman in a white Western carriage, Chinese coolies erupt into song in loading baggage, and ethereal cats reign in chocolate shops. Migishi’s poetic stage-set unfolds in cinematic splendor with theatrical cues for each new tableau.

Notably, the artist’s cinematic prose poem only appeared in print in 1930, four years after his visit. This year prior to the Manchurian Incident was a turning point in Japanese history after which events in China formed a greater part of the popular imagination, and the Japanese government began to tighten suppression of avant-garde literature while the aesthetic philosophy of Surrealism in art began to flourish. Yet, the poem and paintings inspired by his trip later displayed in public exhibitions only show a romanticized image of an idyllic, politically static China with beautiful scenery, in contrast to the rising political tensions brewing in Shanghai. Migishi’s products of his visit to Shanghai reveal little about the political and cultural issues discussed with Tian Han and other leading Chinese May Fourth authors creating a new revolutionary literature to reflect political realities and fight against imperialism.

Yet, certain aspects of Tian’s influential artistic personality surfaced in the form of Migishi’s cinematic writing of poetry and in his evocation of fantastic tales from Chinese literary history in his paintings of the famed Taihu area. The Chinese writer was well known for his obsession with the figure of the femme fatale and traditional Chinese literary descriptions of the fantastic—also common tropes for Tanizaki. He enthusiastically shared his interest with Tanizaki and the two painters during their visit. According to Liang Luo, in late 1926, Tian brought a Japanese artist (most likely Migishi) to see his filming of traditional scenery near the celebrated cultural area of Hangzhou by the West Lake for his movie Dao minjian qu [Going to the People], based on a movie he saw during his sojourn in Tokyo in the twenties. Tian was so captivated by the Japanese film Jasei no in [The Lust of the Serpent, 1921], with a screenplay by Tanizaki based on Ueda Akinari’s story Ugetsu monogatari [Tales of Moonlight and Rain, 1776], that it prompted him to experiment with screen writing and to later direct his own revolutionary version of the film in the exact location of the fantastic story’s traditional plot. This fairy tale, originating in Ming China as the “Legend of the White Snake,” was imported into Tokugawa Japan and reinvented as an indigenous folk tale. During the visit of the three Japanese cultural figures, Tian told Migishi that Tanizaki was so enthralled by Ueda’s enchanting version of the Chinese tale that it inspired him to write the screenplay for Jasei no in during his tenure at the Taihatsu Film Studios in Yokohama.

The poetic stories and cultural sites of the Lake Tai area experienced via Tian’s narrative guidance similarly charmed Migishi and Okada, who depicted its fantastic atmosphere in their paintings. Vapor, fog, or mist appears as an aesthetic device in the works of Song dynasty painters of the Taihu area to
communicate transience and the ephemerality of life. Similar qualities are captured in the Chinese-inspired paintings by these Japanese artists and appear in *Shanhai no ehon*, where the realm of fantasy is intimated with fog, clouds, and mist in cinematic descriptions of unfolding scenes. Water for Migishi in his poem serves as a clear, reflective surface that shows only beauty, or a purer reality of dreams or fantasy like in the opening passage where desires unfold in the pleasure quarters. Spanned by a bridge or as a fog in the entertainment district, water serves as a transitional element representing the crossing into a world of desire and social advancement or the entrance into the colonial world marked by nebulous social hierarchies. For Migishi, this uncertainty or dreamlike fog transforms Shanghai into a place of ephemeral desires at a time when political realities increased the likelihood of war on the Continent. His fictive, aesthetic world reveals a vision of the city and its traditional environs that is both illusory and ephemeral, reflecting a projected dream of China as an exotic “othered” space while eliding its tenuous political situation at a time of centrifugal factional tensions. In his poetry and artwork, Migishi takes refuge in a fantasy of China where a romantic, aestheticized ideal takes precedence over reality.

This trope clearly appears in his artistic works, including over five canvases with a Chinese theme that Migishi sent to the Tokyo-based fifth *Shunyōkai* [Spring Sun Group] exhibition in Japan upon his return from China in late 1926. Notably, none of Migishi’s images show the Shanghainese version of Tokyo’s “modern girl” or the glamorous glitz of the contemporary city evident in his prose poem. Chinese depicted by Migishi appear only in a portrait form placed outside of the context of their surroundings, where they are invariably attired in traditional long gowns and caps with women wearing their hair in a long braid in back with bangs in front. While the artist’s scenes of Shanghai show idyllic tree-lined boulevards void of people or the bustle of a large metropolis, he also painted scenery around Suzhou and Hangzhou featuring lonely traditional houses with black tile roofs and white stone walls. In his art, Migishi detaches Chinese from their place in China, while Chinese locales are emptied of people to allow for the artist’s ideal visualization of Chinese culture projected onto a romanticized fantasy space. Clark asserts that, “Perhaps the 1920s was that period when a centuries-old nostalgia for a distant but culturally superior China in Japanese culture and specifically in its painting discourse could be mapped onto actual Chinese subjects and scenes.” Tanizaki’s literary fascination with China and Migishi’s paintings and prose poem reflect the yearning of Japanese interwar period intellectuals to find a romanticized version of a lost cultural identity projected onto China as unchanging and traditional.

**Contrasting Japanese Images of China**

Two of China’s largest port cities in the twenties, Shanghai and Dairen, were administered as semi-colonial territories by European powers and Japan, or by Japan alone. While these cities looked modern and boasted impressive stone buildings in a Western architectural style, they were part of a China “other” to a Japan that had advanced in modernization while this nation was left vulnerable to predation from other imperialist powers. In
order for a Japan to emerge that was modern and a leader of Asia, an oppositional other was created in a concept often appearing in the works of Japanese artists and writers, including the avant-garde. Sinologists like Naitô Kônan developed the theory of Shinaron [Discourse on Chineseness] with Japan the new cultural center of Tôyô [Orient] due to a faster pace of development. Many Japanese intellectuals viewed Japan as more modern than China after its perceived stagnation and decline following the 1895 loss to Japan.

Each of the three East Asian cities of Tokyo, Shanghai, and Dairen commonly described in modernist or avant-garde literature were characterized by a high degree of European influence in their architecture and physical structure, and showcased new fashions in dress, eating habits, and leisure. Here, cosmopolitan urbanites strolled down wide promenades lined with restaurants and cafes in a practice known in Tokyo as Ginbura. These new patterns of consumption and spectacle constituted part of the Western modern lifestyle popularized in Taishô-period Japan, existing in any large European or US city at the time. These new habits made the traditional Chinese lifestyle and living quarters found in Shanghai and Dairen appear outdated and anachronistic in comparison, as if left behind by the progressive tide of modernity. Urban scenes of an exotic traditional culture that Japan had in the past emulated were now unnerving to the Japanese male observer in Shanghai or Dairen who had only recently witnessed the rapid transformation and modernization of his own cities, such as Tokyo after the 1923 earthquake.

For Migishi, Yokomitsu, and Kitagawa, the charm of Shanghai and Dairen arose out of the fact that as part of semi-colonial Shina [China], these cities were chaotic and colorful but still somehow like Japan (represented by Tokyo) in terms of the varied urban pleasures they offered in the form of films, cafes, and prostitution while possessing a sufficiently foreign European and Chinese flavor of exoticism. Dairen, Shanghai, and Tokyo (Yokohama) were port cities and windows to Europe as nodes of communication in a global market with geographical points where information transited the globe through the transfer of goods and people, and with them, ideas and cultural knowledge. On the steamship route, Shanghai served as a hub of transit between Tokyo and Paris, two cities representing the modernity of both the East and the European West. Fueled by transnational capitalism and the desire for progress, a homogenous “aesthetics” of modernity spread across the globe through the legacy of imperialism and colonialism, first via Europe and the US, and then through Japan. Featuring a look often called “Shanghai Modern” by Leo Ou-Fan Lee and others, Shanghai came to represent its own particular aesthetic as a geographical nexus favorably positioned between Europe and Asia.

The strange environment of the concessions purportedly “leased out” by China to France, Great Britain, and Japan in the International Settlement (since 1845) and French Concession (since 1849) were colonial possessions carving the city into spheres of competing political influence with a highly stratified society in nation, class, and race. Naoki Sakai believes that, in his novel, Yokomitsu viewed Shanghai as:

…a city fraught with complex tensions, a testing ground for the various colonial characters to
negotiate their own personal feelings of self-esteem or shame as connected to their social status, economic privilege, race, and nationality, which dictate how one would behave in relation to people of other nationalities and races.43

Shanghai’s unique geographical situation between East and West created a space for the transgressions of boundaries and the interplay of these transgressions onto supposedly “pure” territories. Dennis Washburn views Shanghai as “a genuinely international city that was in China, but not of China.”44 This colonial mentality of foreigners in Shanghai in the twenties prompted Sun Yat Sen’s famous 1924 statement before his death that “Shanghai is China.”45 In the eyes of both the Chinese and Japanese avant-garde, the city’s hybridity enabled a Creolized aesthetic of depayésment where markers of social class, race, and nation assumed a hyper-importance as signifiers. For Yokomitsu, Shanghai’s concessions held the key questions of modernity within its borders, including the unevenness of development and the split between East and West. He believed, “The question of the International Settlement remains the most obscure among the world’s problems and yet contains all the questions of the future. Simply put, there is no other place in the world where the character of modernity is so clearly revealed.”46 Shanghai is portrayed as a unique contradiction by many Japanese authors including Migishi and Yokomitsu who viewed it as a fast-paced locus of glistening attractions and a jewel of the modern, but which still harbored pockets of internal squalor, hidden vices, and quaint inefficiencies characterizing colonial regions.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Japanese writers’ descriptions of Chinese natives in Shanghai or Dairen. This equivocating view of China reflected onto literary characters is seen in Migishi’s description of a colorfully-attired Chinese merchant at a Shanghai wharf “making a face like it matters nothing whatsoever to him if he sells or does not sell;”47 in Yokomitsu’s exotic Marxist lover Fang Qiu-Lan in Shanghai whose beauty refreshed the jaded protagonist Sanki, “…like the others looking at her, he felt revived. Compact lips. Large dark eyes. Swept up bangs. Butterfly necklace. Light gray coat and skirt;”48 and in Kitagawa’s bribery-prone Chinese mailman in Dairen, who “goes about his job in a capricious way…Rather, it’s because he’ll drop off plenty of mail if you give him a hefty tip.”49 Yokomitsu’s physical description of the alluring Qiu-Lan in traditional Chinese dress differs little from Migishi’s depiction of a courtesan he sees while looking out of a hotel window:50

In light blue satin Chinese garments, with a high-sewn collar, and on the white coral buttons used to decorate the neck, the gold of her earrings beautifully flickered, a skinny young girl, with the name of Miss Elegant Zither.51

Though Chinese are endowed with limited agency, like when Qiu-Lan educates Sanki about socialism, they are usually portrayed by these three writers as moving props in an environment strikingly different from that of Japan and serve as reflections of the thoughts of their Japanese male narrators.

In Shanhai no ehon, Migishi’s gentleman in a suit resembles a European aesthete who rushes to the port to view scenes of the colorful, exotic natives at work described as “pretty complexioned,” “shining,” and “smiling.”52 Kitagawa also depicted coolies with an erotic fascination for their strength and musculature, but described the abjection of their quarters in his short stories published in
His descriptions echo the cynical tone of a scene from Migishi’s 1929 unfinished manuscript where the narrator, possibly the artist, staggers outside of his lonely gray hotel in Shanghai seeking a bar to relieve his estrangement in drink. In the novel *Shanghai*, Yokomitsu’s Japanese main character Sanki schizophrenically passes between moments of attraction to the exotic and repulsion for the abjection accompanying it. While in a rickety Shanghai café featuring Japanese waitresses, he feels a homesick moment similar to the man in Migishi’s unfinished manuscript. While gazing at the bubbles of his soft drink, he envisions China dangerously in ferment like the bottle’s rising globes of gas with the Chinese masses as a volatile, uncontrollable element. Here, the exotic is dangerous, and the comforts of domestic Japan are sought to combat a growing feeling of insecurity or estrangement while lost in a defamiliarizing urban space in a Chinese city.

Like in Yokomitsu’s Shanghai and Kitagawa’s Dairen, Migishi portrays a world starkly divided between Japanese and Chinese spaces in opposing binaries of modern and traditional, Western and native, and cleanliness and abjection. Chinese quarters of these cities emerged as even more exotic when contrasted against Western or Japanese trappings of modernity. For Migishi, Shanghai is a place where the artist discovers himself in its transforming surfaces providing a romantic, spectacular diversion from the clean, ordered normativity of Japan. Both Yokomitsu and Kitagawa are fascinated by the underbelly of Chinese society. Yokomitsu’s world is one of rotting wetness, decay, and flows of dirty water and masses of people, while Kitagawa fetishizes the dry yellow dust of southeastern Manchuria that imbues the landscape with a decadence apparently issuing from the territory itself. Like in much late-twenties Japanese printed matter, Migishi uses the word *Shinajin* to describe Chinese natives, and equates Japanese modernity and Japan’s territorial concessions with de-facto Western status.

In these texts, the mind of the Japanese characters experiencing the colonial space is the first territory to be colonized. For the characters in Yokomitsu’s novel, Migishi’s prose poem, or Kitagawa’s poetry, the physical map of Japan or its imprint in Shanghai or Dairen is no longer needed as a point of reference since territories exist purely as reducible concepts. This is evident in Yokomitsu’s descriptions of Sanki musing about the Shanghai General Labor Union strike against Japanese textile mills:

> The huge vortex of Asia did not appear enormous to Sanki. Instead, it was for him, a map folded up inside his head. He gazed at the dry loose ring around the leaves of the cigar he held in his fingers, and wondered if reality for him was this dried cigar or the map inside his head.  

His objectification of China and his distance from what he observes resembles Migishi’s comparison of the scene outside of his hotel to an oriental rug, “In the pale light of the great outdoors, he saw the top of a beautifully-colored Turkish carpet.” For Kitagawa, Dairen is likewise reducible to a single point on the map in his poem “Flower Inside a Flower”:

> The wildflowers atop the cliff face fell into disarray. Among them, one flower. The port city gradually compresses. Finally, a green dot.

Like in this allegorical scene of flowers precariously perched on a cliff, unpredictable events and violence
erupt onto a scene irreconcilable with Japanese order and predictability. Dairen is portrayed in an aerial view with the city a web of roads and railways chaotically arranged like weeds. Yokomitsu’s Shanghai is similarly amorphous and constantly changing, like a chimera that refuses to fully reveal its form where people burst forth like forces onto the scene in a rich tapestry of political allegory. The unpredictability of Migishi’s city arises in its ephemeral beauty, like in the first scene of the city wrapped in a shroud of clouds in a dream-like vision where nothing is substantial and beauty is glimpsed behind capriciously opened doors. All three Japanese authors portray a vision of China in Shanghai or Dairen that is a reflected projection of fantasy onto the colonial space in new techniques of literary description influenced by the cinema and popular graphic media.

**Cinematic Reality and Montage**

In 1924, Yokomitsu initiated the *Shinkankaku-ka* group to rebel against conventions of the literary establishment. The group’s aesthetic vision dabbling in European avant-garde forms of expression premised that the city generated new sensations and visual modes. Yokomitsu’s 1925 *Shinkankakuron* [Discourse on New Sensations] essay emphasized new forms of visual perception and sensations related to speed, avant-garde art, and cinematic views of urban space. For writers and artists, the city generated new modes of perception through the sensations it engendered. The urban space encountered in a foreign context like in Shanghai also stimulated new feelings of otherness and alienation differing from the thrall of a vibrant modern Japanese metropolis like Tokyo. As a rising fiction writer and *Shinkankaku-ka* proponent, Yokomitsu composed the novel *Shanhai* after a month-long sojourn. This fictional work printed over a year prior to the publication of Migishi’s prose poem was serialized in *Kaizô* from 1928-1929, and came out in book form in 1932. In this text, Yokomitsu evocatively captures civil unrest in the semi-colonial city following the 1925 May 30th Incident in his depictions of the three layers of Shanghai society: the colonial elite, the revolutionaries, and the native underclass. *Shanhai* forms an interesting counterpoint to Migishi’s poem, as both authors created modernist imagery of the same Chinese city where Yokomitsu obsesses about the political situation that Migishi elides altogether.

Through the cordial relations initiated by Tanizaki, his artist colleagues, and Uchiyama, Yokomitsu traveled to Shanghai fifteen months later to meet Tian Han, now a film officer representing the Nationalist government. He explained *Shinkankaku-ka* principles to Tian and his Chinese hosts in a cultural exchange that significantly influenced Chinese modernist literature, film, and modern art in the 1930s. Migishi, like Yokomitsu, proposed that, “From a new social environment, new aesthetic values are born,” and furthered the uniting of architecture and painting through cinematic views of space. He believed that this new vision of space in visual techniques popularized by film also explained the recent creativity of the European urban avant-garde. Both Migishi’s and Yokomitsu’s cinematic depictions of Shanghai show the authors’ sensitivity to place, physical structures, and the social environment.

One of the newest forms of entertainment,
cinema influenced international artistic and cultural production in unprecedented ways. Around the world and in the film industry centers of Tokyo and Shanghai, the popularity of film as a mass culture medium of expression flourished in the 1920s with the growth of movie palaces and cults of veneration for popular actors. Film also promoted a transnational aesthetic in an international style featuring modern architecture, bright city spaces, and uniform patterns of urban consumption. The Japanese and Chinese writers or artists discussed here, whether Tanizaki, Migishi, Yokomitsu, Kitagawa, or Tian Han, all introduced a cinematic form of description into their work or were connected to the film industry as critics and screen writers.

In addition to film, advertising graphics also influenced these writers' and artists' descriptions of urban space. In Shanghai and Tokyo, posters promoting films and popular products like cigarettes were pasted onto city walls forming a unique urban graphic featuring famous actresses glamorously consuming luxury products. Ellen Johnston Liang argues that these posters by Shanghai commercial artists formed an important part of Chinese urban modernity with their bright feminine images of the modern urban consumer. In colorful advertisements, women appear in Western interiors promoting a lifestyle merging East and West in self-consciously modern fashions. Migishi viewed these colorful posters conspicuously pasted onto Shanghai’s buildings or in variety magazines, and even included a description in his poem. Here, a surreal scene like in a Luis Buñuel film unfolds with the hint of a sexual encounter in an overgrown forest. This image evaporates into the square confines of a Chesterfield cigarette poster pasted onto the walls of a city intersection:

In a forest overgrown with weeds, the moon rises, and a far-away owl watches with a quick, nimble eye, whoo, whoo whoo, a gentleman in riding clothes and an aristocratic lady, clip-clop, clip-clop, clip-clop, they are galloping. He and she. Strangely enough, the two both have purple smoke at their fingertips—this is a Chesterfield. Pasted at the crossing of Three Horse Lane, this is an extraordinarily beautiful poster of Turkish tobacco cigarettes.

This ad appears in the stratified social atmosphere of the International Settlement’s central entertainment district close to movie theaters and courtesan houses. The poem’s fantasy of an aristocratic man and woman hunting in a forest collapses into its paper boundaries, like a scene of pure artifice and imagination promised by consumption patterns in the pleasure quarter. The mysterious atmosphere in the beginning disappears in cigarette smoke in a filmic scene cut. Migishi creatively incorporates an image from an urban advertising poster into his prose poem like in a visual collage from a film clip.

Collapsible, fragmented cinematic conceptions of urban space like the one above were also reflected in the prevalence of photographic montage and collage in 1920s and 1930s Japanese magazines like Kaizō and Chūō kōron [Central Review] in Tokyo, and Chinese publications like Liangyou [Young Companion] in Shanghai. Photographic montage in these media displayed a cinematic view of the city, while collage juxtaposed contrasting activities or objects in the spirit of word play and poetic association, a technique refined by Max Ernst that captivated surrealists in the mid-twenties. In the early thirties, Migishi painted in collage along
with his colleagues Kôga and Fukuzawa. As seen in Shanhai no ehon, cinema, advertising graphics, montage, and collage influenced other forms of fine art in East Asia in the twenties. As an oil painter in a modern, avant-garde style circulating in cutting-edge art circles and reading leading poetry and art journals, Migishi assimilated new trends and innovations in art from Japan, China, and Europe, including cinema and montage.

Each of thirteen sections in Shanhai no ehon resemble collage-like sketches in a series of movie scenes or film clips. East Asian film at the time of Migishi’s visit to Shanghai was silent, with sound only emerging in the late twenties. Many films had words interspersed between scenes, making the cinematic experience a combination of written text condensed into poem-like panels with moving shots in between. A similar effect appears in the shorter sections between longer passages of Migishi’s prose poem, where the camera-like “eye” briefly focuses on clothing, colors, and vehicles or animals in motion like carriages, horses, or dogs. For example, the second and the fourth passages capture the effect of a brief interlude of succinct captions after film shots. The second passage after the introductory scene depicts an aerial view of Shanghai from a bridge or atop a bronze eagle ornamenting a skyscraper:

“For Free for Foreigners Bridge.”
Milling crowd

From the shadow of the large bronze eagle, the hue of a pearl globe

Purple. Yellow. Red.
A light-embracing globe of rare beauty

American Independence Day.
Fireworks throughout the night.70

The scene switches from ground level to high up with people as insignificant parts of a crowd. The city is viewed from above with its colonial character intimated by the bridge’s historically-loaded name, its essence reduced to a luminous pearl. Like a shimmering dot on a colonial map, the urban landscape of Shanghai is seen from above in the new stereoscopic vision enabled by the film camera. Such shots became standard in films of the 1920s in East Asia as technology progressed and influenced the other arts.

As contemporaries of Migishi, Yokomitsu and Kitagawa each introduced cinematic elements into their work to create a mood of simultaneity, speed, and displacement heightened by the foreign context of Shanghai or Dairen. Kitagawa’s poetry collection Sensô [War]71 included numbered ciné-poèmes set in Dairen that read like fragmented shots of film scenes.72 Yokomitsu’s most quoted description of Shanghai is one resembling a camera slowly moving past scenes of abjection ending with the surreal vision of a clock peeking like an eye through hanging animal carcasses. William Gardner characterizes his literary technique as closely resembling “expressionistic montage that was used by some contemporary filmmakers to establish atmosphere and location in film.”73 In Shanhai, he employs a form of description where the stereoscopic lens of a camera seems to jump from far to extremely close, a technique also appearing in Kitagawa’s poetry like in “Scene Down from a Height,”74 and in the above-quoted opening scenes of Migishi’s poem. This technique generates a feeling of simultaneity and estrangement, in that the urban environment causes displacement and alienation ("location") but also provides a foreign
environment for the unexpected romance of the exotic (“atmosphere”)—a sensation intuited by the reader when Migishi, Yokomitsu, and Kitagawa use a form of cinematic description to depict the foreign urban spaces of Shanghai or Dairen as an estranging locus of Orientalist fantasy. The city serves as a projection of dreams and erotic possibilities where Migishi, like Yokomitsu, “…uses Shanghai as both a historical site and an imaginary landscape onto which his characters project their desires.”

Like for Migishi, Yokomitsu’s literary technique of cinematic views of Shanghai create an imagined locus for the desires of the characters in a foreign atmosphere at a tenuous political time.

**Conclusion**

Migishi, Yokomitsu, and Kitagawa each visited the Chinese port cities of Shanghai or Dairen during the politically turbulent mid-to-late twenties. What unite this artist, novelist, and poet are their vivid visual imagery and cinematic depictions in an equivocal view of China despite their sympathy for the Chinese struggle against Western and Japanese colonialism. Though all three men profess anti-imperialist political sympathies for international left-wing movements, their ambiguous descriptions implicate them in the complex project of a Japanese modernity inextricably linked to imperialist ambitions emphasizing Japanese cultural and economic hegemony and the acquisition of colonial territory. They project their own biases and preoccupations onto their views of late twenties China. Despite their avant-garde sensibilities, they echo a contemporaneous mentality of China as backwards and lacking in modernity, and therefore vulnerable to or in need of Japanese control and organization. In *Shanhai no ehon*, Migishi takes refuge in a romanticized, nostalgic vision of China at a moment when political loyalties were forming to take a stand against progressive Japanese encroachment onto the Continent.

**Endnotes**


7 Ibid., 589.


10 Fogel, 591.

11 Quoted in Fogel, 592-593.

12 Keaveney, 7.

13 Ibid., 9-10.

14 Ibid., 10.

37 Stefan Tanaka, “Artists and the State: The Image of China” in Tipton, 82.

35 Migishi’s most famous painting, the placid portrait

22 My translation, Migishi Kôtarô, ‘Shanhai no ehon no kiroku’—Chûgoku modan toshi no shi [‘Shanghai Picture Book’—A Poem About China’s Modern City], 15.


27 Marjorie Nishiwaki, Serekuto—[Select] (August 1930), vol. 1, no. 8, 1. This derogatory name for China was commonly in usage by Japanese since the end of the Sino-Japanese War.

15 My translation of Migishi, 7.

49 “Diamond-Shaped Legs” in Kitagawa, 22.


18 Fogel, 590.

17 Topographies of Japanese Modernism


23 Ibid., 15.


47 My translation, Migishi, 6.

36 Clark, “Artists and the State: The Image of China” in Tipton, 82.


16 Liang Luo notes Migishi is named several times in Tian Han’s writings: “Tian Han mentioned Migishi Kotaro in his essay Nii yu she [Woman and Snake], part of a series of essays on film in Yuinie [Silver star, or Movie Guide] published in Shanghai in 1927, (and) later included in Tian Han sanwen ji [Tian Han’s Collected Prose Works] (Shanghai: Jindai shudian, 1936). You can also find (his name) in Tian Han quanji [Complete Collection of Tian Han’s Writings]. As far as I know, this is the only instance that Migishi’s full name was mentioned in Tian Han’s writings.” Liang Luo, July 13, 2006.

19 Keaveny, 8.

55 Washburn, 107.


mclc.osu.edu/rc/pubs/institutions/shen.htm.

62 Quoted in Yamada Satoshi, "'Tōbu chō' no yō ni [Like a 'Flying Butterfly']" in Mitsuura, 46.

63 Yamada in ibid.

64 See Ellen Johnstone Liang, Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early Twentieth Century Shanghai (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004).

65 For a discussion of contemporary styles in Shanghai, see Bao Mingxin, "Shanghai Fashion in the 1930s," in Danzker; Lum; and Zheng, eds., 318-330. For calendar posters, modern buildings, and art graphics, see 333-357.


67 According to Gail Hershatter, "In the Republican period this was the heart of the Settlement's commercial district, where fabric and clothing stores, pharmacies, and newstands and bookshops, opera houses, movie theaters, restaurants, and hotels line the streets near the courtesan houses." Hershatter, Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth Century Shanghai (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1997), 37.

68 My translation, Migishi, 7.

69 White foreigners crossed the bridge for free without paying tolls. For Chinese, the bridge's double system was an embarrassing symbol of Shanghai's semi-colonial status.

70 My translation, Migishi, 6.

71 This is Kitagawa's third and best-known poetry collection dedicated to his mentor Yokomitsu.


75 Washburn, postscript, 237.

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Annika A. Culver recently completed her doctoral degree in Modern Japanese Intellectual History at the University of Chicago in 2007, and will serve as a Visiting Assistant Professor of East Asian History at Skidmore College for the 2007-08 academic year. Annika received her BA in History at Vassar College in 1997. She went on to complete an MA degree in Regional Studies East Asia at Harvard in 2000. Her academic interests include colonialism in East Asia, the avant-garde in Japan and China, the interwar period, and Japanese imperialism and culture.
North Korea's October 9, 2006 nuclear test elevated security tensions in East Asia. Shortly thereafter, Japanese then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for a strengthened Premier's office to quicken military response time in the event of a crisis with North Korea and established a taskforce to build up his country's National Security Council. Japan's Defense Agency was upgraded to the Defense Ministry on Jan. 9, 2007, at a cost of about 55 million yen. Although Japan's newly appointed Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda has been regarded as more dovish and less assertive than Mr. Abe, there are no signs that he will change the fundamental direction of Japan's defense policy.

Japan's current security concerns also extend beyond North Korea. China has been continuously increasing its annual military expenditure, which was US$ 45 billion in 2007, a 17.8% increase on the previous year. At the same time, Japan is currently involved in territorial disputes with China over several resource-rich island chains in the North Pacific, most notably the Diaoyu Islands, and is also concerned about the potential for war across the Taiwan Straits, which would inevitably place pressure on the Japanese military.

As the second largest economic power in the world, a key U.S. ally in the Asia-Pacific region, a perennial rival to China, and North Korea's nearest "enemy," Japan's response to each of its security threats and concerns will have important ramifications in what is becoming an ever more fluid regional security environment in the Pacific-Asia region. The current article provides a framework for understanding the past, present, and future development of Japan's military. Currently there are two dominant theories used to explain Japan's security policy. First, "constructivists" argue that Japan's national security policy is influenced by the structure of the Japanese state, the incentives it provides for policy, and the social, legal, and normative context that defines policy interests and standards of appropriateness for specific policy choices. This theory predicts that state institutions and anti-militaristic social norms, as well as provisions within Japan's post-World War II "Peace Constitution," make it improbable that a strong military establishment will emerge in Japan. At the same time, "realists" argue that Japan uses a "buck-passing strategy" to provide for its own military defense, relying on the United States to protect it from external military threats while it focuses on...
domestic economic development.

The argument presented in this paper strays from these theories in at least two important ways. First, although domestic institutions and norms inevitably do play an important role in shaping how military policy is demanded and constructed within Japan, I argue that certain structural forces and incentives have pushed Japan's defense policy to break through the institutional constraints that initially limited Japan to simply being a viable defensive force. Broadly speaking, I argue that from the end of World War II until the mid 1990s, the impetus behind Japanese military policy was largely pressure from the United States to increase Japan's military capabilities and solidify its Self-Defense Force (SDF). This pressure was a result of Japan being one of America's most important strategic allies in the Asia-Pacific region, and was exacerbated by the breakout of the Korean War, Vietnam War, and later the first Gulf War. Not coincidentally, by the mid-1990s Japan had achieved an advanced defensive military capability, and the Japan-U.S. alliance had given the U.S. a strategic and militarily viable partner in the Asia-Pacific region.

While the U.S.-Japan alliance continues to be an important factor in the Asia-Pacific security situation, today threats from China and North Korea loom just as, if not more, important in Japan's military calculus. At the same time, Japanese nationalism, which concerns itself with, among other things, the protection of what Japan sees as its territorial sovereignty and rightful possession of the Diaoyu Islands (contested by a rising China), is gradually replacing American pressure as an ideological impetus for expanding Japan's military development. Thus this article also differs from the "buck-passing" explanation of Japan's defense policy, and argues that in addition to external pressure from the United States, both domestic security concerns and internal pressure may be just as, if not more, important in shaping defense policy today than the U.S. alliance.

Reflecting these emerging factors, today one already witnesses a growing policy trend in Japan towards the pursuit of a strong and independent offensive military capability that can both respond defensively to external threats and placate nationalistic demands for military strength capable of protecting contested lands. Although Japan is basically keeping a defensive posture, given current conditions it can be expected to substantially increase the weight of conventional offensive weapons in its military. Japan will eventually have nuclear weapons, but it will not rush to develop them in the current stage.

Historical Events and Japan's Defense Policy

Japanese defense policy has undergone a gradual but significant transition in the past six decades. Various post-World War II conflicts, such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and responses to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, have spurred and hastened this transition, even though Japan did not participate in these wars directly. During this period, Japan's Constitution has steadily been emptied of content and its constraints on military development have been dismissed. Specifically, although there are different explanations of the source of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution that was adopted in 1947, the aim of adding it was clearly to prevent Japan from having the ability to militarily threaten the regional and international
peace again:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized. 8

Article 9 outlaws aggression and denies Japan any offensive military forces at all. It implies that Japan's defense must not be militaristic and any military establishment is not permitted, even if Japan has the industrial capability to develop it.

However, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 undermined the restrictions of Article 9 only three years after its adoption. Most American occupation troops were transferred to the Korean theater, leaving Japan virtually helpless to counter internal disruption and subversion as well as potential external threats. This situation necessitated the creation of a “National Police Reserve” (NPR) in Japan. 9 The members of the NPR were equipped with light infantry weapons and later developed into the SDF. Rearmament was a very unpopular idea in post-World War II Japan, so the outbreak of the Korean War provided the Japanese defense establishment with the perfect opportunity to reassert itself. At the same time, the war forced the US to abandon its notion and policy of keeping Japan disarmed, seeing it as an important ally in the struggle against Communism during the Cold War. On September 8, 1951, the US and Japan signed the first Mutual Security Treaty, which provided the initial basis for the Japan’s security relations with the United States. Later, Japan announced its individual military security policy -the Basic Policy for National Defense (BPND)- in May 1957. The BPND opened the door to the quantitative and qualitative buildup of SDF military capabilities. 10 Furthermore, Japan’s First Defense Build Up Program (1958-1961) produced a quantitative increase in Ground Self-Defense Force strength to compensate for the phased withdrawal of US ground troops from its territory. Thus, Japan had successfully started its restoration of military system.

The Vietnam War (1959-75) led to another crucial change in Japan’s defense policy. US involvement in the Vietnam Civil War made Japan more significant in terms of US strategy, since Japan’s rapid economic growth gave it a greater capability to provide assistance, especially intelligence technology, to the American army. In an effort to cooperate with the American army and also strengthen its defense, Japan devised “The Second Defense Build Up Program” (1962-1966) and “The Third Defense Build-up Program” (1967-1971). The former augmented Japan’s Maritime and Air SDF through increased weapons procurements; and the later concentrated on qualitative improvements in Japan’s naval defense in Japanese peripheral waters and air defense in vital territories with high-technology scouts.

The Gulf War (1990-91), immediately following the Cold War, further contributed to Japan’s defense establishment. During the Cold War, Japan had scrupulously abided by the principle of “no dispatching troops abroad,” since the Constitution specifically prohibits the country from using force as a means of settling international disputes. But this condition has changed since the Gulf War —the Peacekeeping Operation Law,
which allows Japanese troops to venture out of Japan for UN Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO), was passed by the Japanese Diet in June 1992.

This development had its origins in the growing sense of “international contribution” in Japan during both the Cold War and the Gulf War. Japan wanted to contribute more militarily to develop a “big power” status. Former Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa pointed out that a security guarantee is a necessary component of international contribution. Pressure from diplomatic critique reinforced the notion to reconsider dispatching troops abroad in the wake of the Gulf War. At that time, Japan was criticized for only offering money but not manpower. For example, the former US Secretary of State James Baker claimed in late 1991 that Japan owed the new international order more than just “checkbook diplomacy.” Both internal normative development and external pressure thus induced Japan to begin considering foreign troop dispatch.

Alternatively, one can view the notion of “international contribution” as an excuse to circumvent Japan’s constitutional limitations. Japan clearly knew that if it wanted to become a true world power commensurate with its enormous economic importance, it must have international political and military influence. In light of the restrictions of the Peace Constitution, if the SDF suddenly began deployment to foreign arenas, the inevitable result would be domestic protests and its neighbors’ voiced opposition and increased vigilance. Therefore, “... the idea of sending the SDF abroad had to be ‘gift-wrapped’ in the guise of a greater international contribution.” And participating in the UN peace-keeping operation, as a result, became a shortcut for Japanese troops to venture out of Japan.

Despite difference of interpretation, the most dramatic implication of SDF participation in UNPKO is that for the first time Japan conducted operations on foreign soil; the SDF made its first real appearance on the international stage. Meanwhile, the participation in UNPKO let the world regard Japan as a pre-peace international power, which is of help to Japan in establishing a record of justified trust and confidence in the role of its military.

The 9/11 attack of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. further induced Japan to reshape its military forces. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) proposed three War Contingency Bills (which include the Law Regarding Response to Armed Attacks, the Law on the Establishment of the Security Council of Japan, and the Law to Amend the SDF) to cooperate with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). A well-equipped Japanese SDF troop deployed to the Indian Ocean in November 9, 2001 in support of OEF. It was the first time Japanese troops were dispatched overseas without UN authorization. The War Contingency Bills were passed by the Diet with over eighty percent approval on June 6, 2003. Under the contingency laws, the government will draft a plan of action when there is an attack against Japan or when the government determines that an attack is imminent. The plan, following Cabinet approval, must be endorsed by the Diet. In situations deemed particularly urgent, the government is empowered to mobilize the SDF before drawing up a plan, but
Japan has to halt the deployment of forces if the eventual plan is rejected by the Diet. The laws also allow the government to put the SDF on standby when it determines that a military attack is “anticipated.” Therefore, these bills have significantly increased the government’s power in military emergencies.

Later, the 2003 Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law allowed Japanese troops to go to non-combat zones in Iraq and offered the Japanese SDF bigger leeway to cooperate with US and U.K. in anti-terrorist military activities.

Furthermore, the Japanese Cabinet decided on December 19, 2003 to work with the United States to deploy a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system to protect itself against incoming missiles. The notion of “collective defense” proposed by then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2004 further indicates that the role of the Japanese military will not be confined just to defending the homeland but can also encompass combat at the side of allies in far-off theaters in the future.

As indicated by the four Defense Build-up Programs and three War Contingency Bills, Japan’s defense policy has become increasingly flexible – the substantial obstacles to SDF activity have gradually been eliminated and Japan’s defense policy is making a qualitative change. As Mr. Shigeru Ishiba, the former Minister of State for Defense of Japan said:

A reorganization process has been launched… During the Cold War period, the simple existence of the Japan Self Defense Force (JSDF) was enough to provide an adequate deterrent against the Eastern bloc. In retrospect, there were peaceful times. But at present, the Japanese people need and expect a JSDF that actually functions. So I’ll say the JSDF is currently in a transition phase from a ‘defense force in being’ to a ‘defense force in action.’

Japan realized the goal of breaking the restrictions of Peace Constitution and strengthening military capabilities by issuing new laws. Japan Defense Agency Chief Gen. Nakatani once had a very vivid description about the process: he called a 1992 PKO law as a “hop,” the 1999 guiding laws as “steps,” and the enactment of the special terrorism law as a “jump” in Japan’s national defense policy.

The US-Japan Security Alliance

The US-Japan security alliance, which is based on the “Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the US,” has played a substantial role in Japan’s postwar defense and greatly shaken the Constitution’s restrictions on it. In Masaru Tamamoto’s view, the US-Japan security treaty, inviolable like the prewar emperor, “stands above the constitution, presumably the highest law of the land.” In theory, the US-Japan security treaty limits Japanese military activities and ensures Japanese dependence on the US. But with regard to the strict restrictions of Article 9 of Japan’s Constitution, this treaty provided Japan more room to develop its military capability since its most important principle is that the US and Japan provide a mutual defense and that Japan takes the responsibility of appropriately increasing its armament. To follow this principle, Japan has been compelled to strengthen military power and develop military technology with growing US intervention worldwide.

Japan is important in US defense calculations because of its geographical location. During the Cold War, the US did not merely act as Japan’s
bodyguard, but used Japan as the forward position to confront the Soviet Union. After the end of Cold War, the US needed Japan, as an ally, to expand arms and play more political and military roles to check against China’s power in Asia and share the US global burden. To realize this goal, Washington has kept putting varying degrees of pressure on Tokyo through a variety of channels, such as bilateral meetings between the Japanese Prime Minister and the American president, meetings between defense heads, administrative level meetings, the demands voiced in the US House of Representatives and Senate and so forth.\(^\text{22}\)

More importantly, the influence and roles of both the Peace Constitution and the US-Japan security treaty have undergone subtle changes in the postwar era. First, Article 9 of Japan’s Constitution has continually been given an expanded interpretation in favor of increasing defense.\(^\text{23}\) After the end of Cold War, the “Constitution Survey Committee” established by Yomiuri Shimbun,\(^\text{24}\) the nation’s largest daily newspaper in Japan, brought the debate about “changing the Constitution” to the public. The newspaper even printed its own draft proposals for revising the “supreme law” – first in 1994 and then in 2000. When Japan dispatched its troops to Iraq for reconstruction missions in 2004, the long-simmering debate on changing the “Peace Constitution” gathered new steam.\(^\text{25}\) The Asahi Shimbun, which has traditionally taken a cautious position on constitutional change, reported in its edition on May 3, 2004 that “53 percent of the 1,945 respondents to a survey last month favored revising the Constitution...It was the first time that such respondents formed a majority since the Asahi started taking polls on the subject in 1995.”\(^\text{26}\)

A survey conducted by the more conservative Yomiuri Shimbun in March 2004 showed that a record 61 percent of 1,823 respondents wanted the Constitution to be revised.\(^\text{27}\)

While constitutional restrictions have weakened, the US-Japan security alliance has been progressively strengthened. The establishment of the US-Japan security alliance initially faced the public opposition. Mass protests occurred in Japan when the New US-Japan Security Treaty was signed in 1960. However later, the economic benefits that the US-Japan Security Treaty brought to Japan - not only direct profits from selling supplies to Americans but significant savings on military expenses under the US security umbrella - gradually won the public over. The US alliance has been accepted by most Japanese as being beneficial to the Japanese public. Japanese are less concerned about being dragged into war by the relationship with the US than they were in the Cold War period,\(^\text{28}\) and political leaders have regarded the US-Japan alliance as the core of Japanese foreign policy.\(^\text{29}\) Therefore, Japan has cooperatively increased and strengthened its military capabilities when the US consistently asked them to do so.

**Further in the Direction of Militarization**

Compared to previous conflicts, China’s ascension and North Korea’s nuclear tests represent a much more direct and serious threat to Japan’s national security. Therefore, Japan has responded to these threats more actively and with a stronger attitude.

**The rise of China**

China’s rapid economic growth has lasted more
than 20 years, beginning in the late 1970s. At the same time, its significantly increased international clout has raised concerns and uneasiness, especially in Japan, about potential threats to the regional peace and prompted discussion about how to deal with the reemergence of this “eastern dragon.” In fact, Japan, as the leading power in the Flying Geese Paradigm, has seen the economic ascent of other Asian economies before, and China’s impressive economic growth in recent years is nothing new. The four ‘Asian Tigers’—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong—recorded similar growth rates over long periods of time. Then, why is Japan afraid of China now, when they were not afraid of the four Tigers during their respective periods of high growth? Besides the obvious reason that China’s massive size, with 1.3 billion people, will have a much larger impact on the regional economy and political stability, another crucial reason for Japanese worries should be that China is still not a liberal democracy.

Democratic peace theorists hold that democracies rarely go to war with one another because of institutional constraints within democratic governments and the ideas or norms held by democratic societies. On the contrary, autocracies are war-prone because autocratic states, which have a larger rent-seeking ability but fewer constraints of domestic political institutions than democracies, can profit more by military expansion. Moreover, democratic transition theorists point out that the states in the midst of a shift from authoritarianism to democracy are likely to adopt disruptive foreign policies in order to win the competition for leadership. According to these theories, China, as an autocratic state in transition, may tend toward aggression. An increasingly powerful China, in Japanese eyes, is much more dangerous than the “Asian Tigers” were, which had democratic political systems (South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong) or illiberal/procedural democracy (Singapore).

The conflicts between Japan and China are manifold. First of all, both nations are competing to secure the sovereignty over Diaoyu Islands and new energy supplies—especially potentially large gas deposits in the East China Sea, which Japanese media have dubbed “the sea of conflict.” Moreover, besides the unhappiness caused by the textbook issue and Yasukuni Shrine issue, China has been uncomfortable with Japan’s ambition to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, mainly because of anger at Japan’s actions during World War II. This unease was most recently expressed during Chinese demonstrations in Beijing in 2005.

Besides the conflicts described above, the concept of “security dilemma” is another important cause for Japanese nervousness towards a rising China. A “security dilemma” occurs when a state’s actions to provide for its security may result in a decrease in the security of other states, especially its neighbor states. This in turn prompts those states to undertake actions to secure themselves, again making the other countries feel less secure. A spiral of defense buildup may result. Thus, more and more Japanese believe that China’s threat to them is becoming larger with China’s growing (yet also opaque) military expenditure and wide-ranging power. A Yomiuri/Gallup poll in March 1997 showed that the percentage of Japanese respondents who named China as a potential
threat had increased from 18 percent in 1994 to 39 percent in 1997.\textsuperscript{36} And in 2004, a Japanese survey shows that people in Japan feel less friendly toward China than at any point in nearly 30 years. According to a Cabinet Office survey on diplomacy, the percentage of respondents who said they felt friendly toward China fell 10.3 percentage points from a year earlier to 37.6 percent, the lowest level since the survey began in 1975.\textsuperscript{37}

\textit{Nuclear Threat of North Korea}

Hikari Agakimi’s latest research work “‘We the Japanese People’ – A Reflection on Public Opinion” notes that “45 percent of the Japanese today sense the danger of being involved in war. The figure is the highest it has been since the prime minister’s office began a survey series in 1969.”\textsuperscript{38} Japanese public uneasiness to North Korea has been directly caused and worsened by that country’s ballistic missile and nuclear tests.

North Korea test fired a Taepodong-1 ballistic missile over Japanese airspace in August 1998, declared its possession of nuclear weapons in 2003 and subsequently test-fired a short-range missile off its east coast on May 1, 2005. Recently, ignoring the protests from UN and other powers such as the US, Japan and China, North Korea has done seven missile tests since October 2006. As early as in 2003, Pyongyang was thought to have enough material to make two or three nuclear bombs and about fifty missiles. Its ballistic missile program had the capacity to strike Japan, which is only 8.5 minutes flying time from North Korea at the closest point.\textsuperscript{39} IAEA (the International Atomic Energy Agency) chief Mohamed ElBaradei, speaking at the UN on May 6, 2005, said a North Korean nuclear test would have grave political and environmental consequences: “There will be disastrous political repercussions in Asia and the rest of the world. I think there could be major environmental fallout, which could lead into dissemination of radioactivity in the region.”\textsuperscript{40}

Whether Pyongyang has such “destructive power” or not, the nuclear threat has created apprehension in Japan and has contributed more than any other factor to Japan’s growing concern over its national security. One of the reasons for Japanese unease is that even a low-level military attack may cause severe damage in Japan because of its high population density.\textsuperscript{41} Japanese leaders have to treat the change of North Korean military capability seriously. As we have seen, Japan’s SDF and the defense committee of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have proposed an expanded defense budget that includes a higher priority on and higher spending for missile defense. The FY 2007-2008 budget plan reportedly requests a 1.5 percent raise in overall spending, including 219 billion yen (about $1.88 billion) for missile defense, up 56.5 percent from the current 140 billion yen appropriation for FY 2006-2007 (that year’s budget request had been 150 billion yen).\textsuperscript{42} This is a big input for Japan, considering its recent economic depression. Meanwhile, the North Korean nuclear threat makes Japan completely dependent on America’s nuclear umbrella\textsuperscript{43} and weakens Japan’s commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

The Policy Research Council chairman of the LDP, Shoichi Nakagawa, has repeatedly called for the discussion about whether Japan should
develop nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{44} Two university of Kyoto Professors, Terumasa Nakanishi and Kazuya Fukuda, wrote that “The best way for Japan to avoid being the target of North Korean nuclear missiles is for the prime minister to declare without delay that Japan will arm itself with nuclear weapons.”\textsuperscript{45} Such sentiments appear regularly in Sankei Shimbun, a more nationalist newspaper.

In addition to the nuclear threat, the cloud of North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens remains, increasing Japanese uneasiness towards North Korea. As many as 80 Japanese citizens were abducted by North Korean agents from 1977 to 1983. Although the North Korean government confessed in late 2002 to having committed the abductions some twenty five years earlier, it only released the names of 13 abductees.\textsuperscript{46} Moreover, only five abductees could return to Japan because, according to spurious evidence provided by the North Korean government, the others had died.\textsuperscript{47} North Korea’s antagonistic and arguably terroristic activities have greatly stimulated Japanese public’s vigilance and uneasiness toward North Korea. Considering this situation, it is understandable that Japan wants to free itself from its current military limitations and increase offensive military power. Without offensive military capability, Japan feels too weak to respond North Korea’s provocations and cannot effectively prevent similar terrorist accidents from occurring again.

\textbf{Growing Japanese Nationalism}

From the 1950s to the 1990s, American pressure drove the change of Japan’s defense policy. Since that time, growing Japanese nationalism has replaced American pressure to become the new behind-the-scenes driving force.

Undoubtedly, Japan’s crippling failure in WWII taught the Japanese profound lessons, and painful memories remain. Most Japanese oppose Japan being involved in war again, and Japanese peace movements have not stopped since the end of WWII. Surveys indicate that more than 60 percent of Japanese people were opposed to Japan getting embroiled in the Iraq war.\textsuperscript{48} However, many factors have driven the growth of nationalism despite these anti-war voices. First, the Japanese public has been weary of or even resentful toward being pushed repeatedly to apologize for its WWII actions. Many Japanese now feel their country has apologized enough for its actions 60 years ago. Instead, they think Tokyo should start asserting itself and striving for an international position as a major power in a role that reflects its economic strength.\textsuperscript{49} They emphasize that postwar Japan has contributed much more, especially economically and technologically, towards world peace and development than other countries. For example, Japan has provided huge free financial assistance to low-incoming countries, including China and North Korea. They argue that these contributions deserve more appreciation.

Second, Japan’s economic depression has had a profound psychological effect on many Japanese. The “Japanese Miracle” - Japan’s rapid, sustained growth with high equity, especially from 1955 to 1973 - once bred a strong sense of pride and honor among the new generation of Japanese. For them, Japan should rightfully be a leader in Asia. However, the economic crisis of 1990s and the subsequent economic depression have not only hurt that confidence, but also stimulated radical
nationalism to compensate. Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni Shrine to pay his respects to the country’s war dead might be regarded as measures to win the votes of some die-hard conservatives, who call for increasing military development to restore Japan’s past glory.

Third, Japanese elites are making significant efforts to bolster Japan’s national pride and identity. Abe’s government issued a new education law to require schools to teach patriotism, since “Japan’s long stretch of economic prosperity has eroded the morals and co-operative spirit of prewar.”\(^5\) It is understandable for a state to want to cultivate national pride and co-operative spirit among its citizens. However, many observers both within Japan and beyond worry that over-propagandizing patriotism might transform popular nationalism into militarism or fascism as it has in the past.

Even more than postwar American pressure, rising Japanese nationalism is exerting a more powerful influence on Japan’s defense policymaking because it resonates so strongly with the Japanese public. It has been gradually eroding the anti-militaristic principles, weakening the criticism of revising Peace Constitution, and accelerating militarization in contemporary Japan. Although ultimately transient, the rise of Abe, who made his case for the premiership by calling for increased patriotism and a more assertive foreign policy, suggests that nationalism is having an increasing role in Japanese political behavior.

**Conclusion**

From the 1950 Korean War to the 2001 9/11 attack, a series of historical events coupled with American pressure have caused Japanese defense policy to undergo a gradual but significant transition: defense forces have developed from total disarmament to a strong and well-equipped military; focus has shifted from simple territorial safety to comprehensive security including military, economic and environmental safety; defense scope has stretched from Japanese territory to neighboring areas. Japan’s military strategy has gradually deviated from the earlier “Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy”\(^6\) one to one less passive in its scope. The threats from China and North Korea combined with the push of swelling Japanese nationalism will further accelerate the transition of Japan’s defense policy.

Current Japanese military strategy is basically defensive, but a more assertive orientation will continue to develop. To pursue a more independent and effective offensive military capability will naturally become the next step in Japan’s national security development. This judgment is based primarily on two observations.

First, after starting to establish a Ballistic Missile Defense in 2003, there seems to be little room for Japanese forces to make progress in the defense domain. To a certain extent, the adage that “the best defense is a good offense” appears to be gaining traction in Japanese military circles. Early in 2003, Shigeru Ishiba proposed that Japan should consider developing an offensive military capability and make pre-emptive strikes on North Korea.\(^7\) Shinzo Abe, as the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary at that time, gave his support for Ishiba’s comments by stating “a more assertive military posture is worth looking at.”\(^8\) Abe also stated then that he would reform Japan’s postwar Constitution and transformed Japan Self-Defense Forces into a
conventional one.\textsuperscript{54}

Second, Japan can no longer rely on the US to extent that it has in the past.

Domestic interest groups and increasing economic interdependence have made it difficult for Washington to adopt tough measures against China. Consequently, American support for Japan will not be as firm as before. Furthermore, ongoing rebuilding and anti-terrorist operations in Iraq and elsewhere have greatly distracted American military energy. Therefore, considering the presence of nuclear states in Japan’s vicinity and uncertain prospects for the Japan-US alliance, former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone proposed in Sept. 2006 that Japan reconsider the consequences of going nuclear.\textsuperscript{55}

However, Japan can at present only hope to rely on more conventional armaments such as intercontinental missiles or bombers. Although, according to former Foreign Minister Taro Aso, “Japan inevitably will go nuclear,”\textsuperscript{56} there is very little possibility that Japan will develop nuclear weapons before it possesses long-range conventional offensive weapons. Domestic and international resistance (from China, South Korea, etc.) to Japan pursuing nuclear power is still too strong to be easily surpassed. For example, the close economic and trade ties between Japan and China would be badly damaged if Japan went nuclear.

The cost of losing China, Japan’s second largest export market,\textsuperscript{57} would be fatal for Japan’s current economic recovery. Both Fukuda and Abe clearly recognize this point, having both undertaken efforts to increase bilateral communication with China.

Furthermore, on October 10\textsuperscript{th}, 2006, the second day after North Korea’s nuclear test, Abe stated that Japan would not consider developing nuclear weapons in response to North Korea’s test, and Fukuda has made no statements to the contrary since assuming power. In fact, Japan is not the only country that needs a stable East Asia to facilitate economic growth; China, undergoing rapid development, has a much stronger incentive to ensure a sound regional situation than it has had in any previous historical period. The US, Russia and South Korea have also proven unwilling to allow East Asia to become embroiled in military confrontation. Finally, based on its current comprehensive capability, North Korea has little chance to win a war with the US or its Asian allies. Nuclear development may instead be looked at as the only card that Kim Jong-il can play to maintain his authoritarian dominance and gain advantages in negotiations with big powers. Therefore, despite the existence of nuclear crisis in East Asia, development is still the inescapable truth and negotiation is still the main solution for conflicts.

\textbf{ENDNOTES}

1 Richard Halloran points out that in American English, most people would not see much difference between ”agency” and ”ministry,” and in Japanese, the new name requires changing only one ideograph, from cho to sho. In Romanized Japanese, it is but one letter. However, this change seems small on the surface but is substantial in its reality. Please read his commentary ”Japan’s Defense Agency changes name and reality,” The Taipei Times, Monday, (Jan 08, 2007), 9.


4 Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, ”Japan’s National Security: Structures, Norms, and Policies,” International Security, Vol. 17, No. 4, (Spring,
Japan's "Defense" Policy

(1993), 84-118.


8. According to Allied supreme commander Douglas MacArthur, this provision was suggested by Prime Minister Kijuro Shidehara; nonetheless, some historians attribute the inclusion of Article 9 to Charles Kades, one of Douglas MacArthur’s closest associates. MacArthur ordered his staff to draft a new constitution for Japan, which they did in less than a week, and then translated it into Japanese.


10. A National Police Reserve was established in July 1950 by Japanese government to maintain social order and deal with natural disasters. It originally consisted of 75,000 men equipped with light infantry weapons and in mid-1952 the National Police Reserve was expanded to 110,000 men and named the National Safety Forces.


15. In fact, Japan’s PKO deployment was made much more extensively. Besides Iraq, Japanese troops can also be seen in Golan Heights, Cambodia, East Timor, etc.


21. In 2005, Japan had a total population of 127.76 million. Japan’s population in 2005 was the tenth largest in the world, equivalent to 2.0 percent of the global total. Its population density measured 343 persons per square kilometer, ranking it fourth among countries with a population of 10 million or more. Detailed information can be gotten at <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/c02cont.htm>.

22. "Constitution Survey Committee" was established on Jan. 8, 1992. With Yomiuri Shimubun , it caused a heat discussion about the revising Constitution. It is a very influential organization that holds reversing the Constitution.


30. The flying geese paradigm originated in the 1930s with what Kaname Akamatsu (1896-1974) called the ganko keita (a flock of flying geese) phenomenon of industrial development in catching-up economies. It depicts the East Asian catching-up process through a regional hierarchy consisting of Japan, the first-tier newly industrializing economies (NIEs) (the Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China, Singapore and Indonesia), the second-tier NIEs (Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia), China, and other countries in the region.


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52. Eugene A. Matthews, "Japan’s New Nationalism," Foreign Affairs, vol.82, Iss. 6 (Nov/Dec 2003), 74.


57. Eugene A. Matthews, "Japan’s New Nationalism," Foreign Affairs, vol.82, Iss. 6 (Nov/Dec 2003), 74.

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외일장간
The mettle of the human rights discourse is judged on its ability to confront the worst situations the world has to offer. Unfortunately, there is a litany of complex challenges keeping human rights scholars and activists busy, one of which is how to confront strong, centralized governments who regularly flout human rights norms. While there has been much innovative thinking in the human rights discourse on other topics such as minority rights or the rights of internally displaced persons, for example, there is still a severe dearth of effective options available to confront repressive and unresponsive governments.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), led by Kim Jong-Il, is generally identified as one such government and has been labeled everything from “evil” to an “outpost of tyranny” to “the hermit kingdom.” One noted scholar remarked acidly that the general consensus in the American political discourse is that the DPRK is a “rogue-terrorist-communist-Stalinist-totalitarian-Oriental-nightmare.” This thinking does nothing to advance understanding about the problems in or of North Korea, but it makes the point clear: almost nowhere is the DPRK viewed as a human rights-respecting state, yet there is very little that can be pragmatically done. Watchdog and advocacy nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as Amnesty International, Freedom House, and Human Rights Watch regularly rate the DPRK as amongst the worst human rights violators in the world, while governmental reports, such as the annual United States Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices are equally harsh. Yet we seem to hit a conceptual brick wall in the human rights discourse in cases like this. Offering an immediate solution in this paper would certainly be premature, as there is a deficiency in of analysis as to why the human rights language has failed in the case of the DPRK. In an attempt to fill that gap, I will argue that human rights language has failed with regard to North Korea for three main reasons: lack of information about abuses, historical forces, and the de-prioritization of the issue by other states. Through this analysis, I hope to diagnose some shortcomings of the human rights discourse such that further research
may lead to innovations in rights-based approaches to authoritarian governments.

The Foundations of Human Rights Claims: Access to Information

A common problem of deploying the human rights discourse to pry open closed societies is the relative lack of information. Although this may seem an obvious and innocuous point, it should not be taken lightly given the questionable information on which the United States and United Kingdom, among others, invaded Iraq in 2003. Few doubt that severe human rights violations occur in North Korea, but without access to the country or its people, there is no way to know for sure the condition of human rights in the DPRK. In short, credible human rights claims, aside from general calls for openness, cannot be made effectively without detailed and corroborated information, a luxury that the DPRK is not eager to disseminate. In the void of information, policy makers and the media are easily able to map stereotypes and sound bites onto the imaginative geography of North Korea.

What little credible information that does exist often has as its main thrust a plea for openness, followed by a specific list of abuses. One of the most recent United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolutions concerning the DPRK was primarily about access for the Special Rapporteur for North Korea and other UN bodies and monitors. Human Rights Watch, for example, acknowledges that it has no direct access to the country but bases its claims of human rights abuses on interviews with escapees. Amnesty International notes that the government repeatedly denies entry to UN officials and human rights monitors.

Furthermore, there are several potential problems with human rights-related information that finally does escape the country. First, there is a lack of systematic understanding of any human rights abuses that may occur in the DPRK due to the refusal of United Nations or NGO monitors. This means that the majority of information comes in the form of anecdotes, one-time observations, or interviews with escapees, rendering it difficult to construct knowledge of systemic patterns. Second, the subjective and often uncorroborated nature of such information lends itself more easily to fraudulent, false, or exaggerated information. Beal documents a handful of high-profile cases that have been exposed as false for political or personal reasons. Third, some information from outside observers is severely outdated. Fourth, the relative openness of the Republic of Korea (ROK) juxtaposed against the inaccessibility of the DPRK has meant that attention has been drawn away from the poor human rights record of the North, rendering information that does manage to escape less prone to the international spotlight. Fifth, much information on the DPRK comes from sources unequivocal in their opposition to the North Korean government, debasing the credibility of such reports. Finally, the information that comes from the DPRK government itself is certainly of questionable credibility given its unwillingness to allow observers and near unanimous agreement amongst watchdog NGOs that the North’s human rights record is appalling.

None of these considerations are meant to justify what abuses do occur in the DPRK, but rather to highlight the problematic aspects of
The Role of History: Former Abusers & the Moral High Ground

Arguing against the idea that there is one overarching history of humanity, Popper favored the contrasting viewpoint that there is an “indefinite number of histories of all kinds of aspects of human life.” In this spirit, the following analysis will not be a comprehensive overview of the history of the DPRK, but rather a historical argument: I aim to analyze particularly relevant aspects of history and argue that they help render human rights language impotent when coming from particular sources. The most significant of these is the historical construction of enemy relationships with regard to the DPRK, the United States, South Korea, and Japan. Japanese colonialism and the backlash against it, the legacy of the 1950-53 war, and post-war political developments have all played key roles in debasing the legitimacy of human rights pressure on the DPRK. These historical trends have created a climate in which the importance of human rights takes a back seat to suspicion and scorn. In short, the source of human rights condemnation matters as much as the claim itself – criticism of human rights is not apt to be taken well when coming from an “enemy.”

Any attempt to understand the DPRK must begin with Japanese colonialism. Japan occupied the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945 and subjected it to vicious colonial rule, dealing especially harshly with perceived communists and armed opposition groups, such as Kim-Il Sung’s Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army in Manchuria, and those who allegedly or genuinely supported them. Upon assuming leadership of the newly formed North Korean nation in 1945, Kim chose many of his anti-Japanese guerilla comrades to help run the DPRK and by the mid-1950s had ousted rivals for power, solidifying Japan as an enemy of the nation. The institutionalization of such bellicose anti-colonialism can be seen in reports that the DPRK has divided its population into 3 classes: the core class - loyal supporters of the regime, the wavering class, and the hostile class - people who openly oppose the government or who possess credentials which might brand them as enemies,
such as a family history of collaboration with Japanese colonialism. The DPRK’s recent history of test-firing missiles into the Sea of Japan and over the Japanese archipelago itself do nothing to mitigate the perception that North Korea does not view Japan kindly.

The implications of this contentious history are manifold, but clear in the case of human rights: in the eyes of Korea, Japan has almost no credibility to exert human rights pressure on the peninsula. This means that an economically powerful and democratic Japan is tied down by its own brutal history, rendering requests for the DPRK to respect human rights or even to honestly and faithfully engage in the six-party nuclear talks ineffective. Although a 2002 summit between Kim Jong-Il and former Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi saw a thawing of hostilities and a surprising admission by Kim that the DPRK had abducted roughly two dozen Japanese for espionage training in the 1970s, relations have since cooled as talk of economic sanctions resurfaced. Furthermore, a resurgence of Japanese nationalism with regard to its wartime past, epitomized by Koizumi’s repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine honoring Japan’s war dead, adds another complex layer to the relationship.

Secondly, the 1950-53 Korean War and the tenuous peace that followed still exert influence on negotiations with North Korea. In 1950, the DPRK invaded South Korea and quickly fought the ROK army to the extreme south of the peninsula. The United Nations coalition, led by the US, joined the war and pushed DPRK forces back to near the Yalu River, which today divides North Korea and China. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) joined the war and by July 1951 the fighting had reached a stalemate near the 38th parallel, the sight of today’s De-Militarized Zone (DMZ). After two years of continued skirmishes and negotiations, the parties signed an armistice on 27 July 1953. The fighting itself was extremely brutal, with napalm widely used by American forces against North Korean civilians and serious consideration by the American administration of a nuclear option. American air bombing destroyed almost the entire urban infrastructure of the North and a significant portion of the population was homeless by the end of the war. The war and ensuing armistice achieved little progress towards peace or reunification, but rather only made armed invasion a more difficult, if not impossible, route to reunification.

The implications of the nasty war and tenuous armistice in the context of Cold War ideological polarization can still be seen on the Korean peninsula. The fact that the armistice line, or DMZ, has come to be commonly understood as the “border” between two distinct nation-states as opposed to a military demarcation line is itself indicative of the influence that the war still exerts. The existence of the DPRK as we know it is a product of years of warfare, and in a very real way, the DPRK still views both the US and South Korea as enemies. This perspective has translated its way into political developments on both sides of the DMZ since 1945, as the constant promise and threat of war has influenced “political thinking and state policy at almost every turn.” In this context, it is not surprising that one clearly articulated goal of the DPRK over the past 10 years has been a complete security assurance that the US
will not attack. Lest we dismiss this request as the simple self-interest or political expedience of a repressive government, something it very well may be, we ought to remember the “pre-emptive” attack of Iraq in 2003 led by the US and the United Kingdom. The present US administration has thus far been unwilling to provide such a guarantee, and in fact has deployed the saber-rattling language of “evil” against North Korea, rendering a human rights dialogue between the two countries nearly impossible, despite the US Congress’ stance that such a dialogue should be a “key element in future negotiations” between relevant parties. We must wonder, however, how a US special envoy for human rights in North Korea, as is established in the 2004 act, will be received given the modern history of hostility between the two nations.

Finally, the post-war era until Kim Jong-il’s ascendancy in 1994 is important because it saw a pattern of mistrust and covert hostilities develop between the two Koreas. The North aggressively militarized over this period, launched an attack on the ROK presidential compound and landed guerilla fighters on the South’s eastern coast in 1968, and killed 17 ROK diplomats in a 1983 bombing in Rangoon, Burma. The South, for its part, trained and deployed 10,000 spies to the North. The intense anti-Communist politics of the ROK during this period criminalized support or praise of the DPRK, put hundreds of political activists in prison, and caused a massacre of demonstrators in 1980 in the southern city of Kwangju. Human rights were not on the agenda above or below the 38th Parallel.

Despite the relative and rather tenuous warming of relations between North and South in recent years, important remnants of hostility still remain, such as debates surrounding the ROK National Security Law of 1949, which grants wide police and government powers, or the North’s prickly negotiating tactics in the ongoing six-party talks. Lee argues that the extreme anticommunist discourses of South Korea and the actions of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) during the decades following the war helped mold an “orientalist” discourse with regard to the DPRK. On this view, anticommunism helped create the self-identity of the South Korean state, which was constructed, compared, bolstered, and sustained against the North. The legitimacy and “sovereignty of the South Korean state were contingent upon the existence of North Korea as the Other,” culminating in the ROK definition of the DPRK as “an anti-state organization, which illegally occupies a part of the territory of the Republic of Korea.” Former ROK prime minister Kim Dae-Jung’s Sunshine Policy of openness towards the North is a step away from such thinking, but the South is still in an awkward post-colonial, post-civil war stage with regard to the DPRK. Although the domestic human rights situation in the South has improved dramatically over the past 50 years, an honest human rights discourse between the two Koreas has not yet emerged due to the historical weight placed upon the relationship.

The response to these historical forces, along with the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, from the North has been the elaboration of Juche, the central political ideal of the DPRK. The North has sought to be nationalistic, self-reliant and independent, almost to the point of complete autarky, and certainly to the detriment of its people. This response
to complex historical forces has left little room for a human rights dialogue either domestically or at the inter-governmental level. Tiny cracks, such as the June 2000 inter-Korean summit, however, have emerged: the DPRK has paradoxically made increasing requests to Japan, the US, the UN, and NGOs for aid following famines and economic collapse in the mid-1990s, but has been skittish about allowing the organizations to commence their work unimpeded. Unfortunately, the rarity of such potential breakthroughs only serve to reinforce the rule: the DPRK government still views the US, Japan, and the ROK with suspicion and is thus not ready to heed broad calls for openness or human rights. The phase of the six-party talks following the North’s October 2006 nuclear test, for example, seemed like a promising breakthrough, only to return to normality with the controversy surrounding release of DPRK funds from a Macau bank account in the Spring of 2007. The lack of trust on all sides reinforced by such developments only contributes to the difficulties of the human rights discourse.

Human Rights: a perpetual back seat?

Wrestling with the implications of Nazi atrocities, Jaspers argued that the crimes of some sovereigns are so heinous that “the halo round the heads of states has vanished.” Even if the goodness of the state-centric system is no longer assumed, it is still the predominant method of international organization, meaning that state sovereignty remains an important conceptual and practical obstacle to exerting pressure on strong, centralized governments. The case of North Korea could hardly make this argument clearer: one authoritarian government, the DPRK, refuses to respect human rights claims while the outside states most able exert pressure on it – notably China, the US, and South Korea – prioritize other issues in their negotiations with the state in question.

My analysis thus far has attempted to show that both the lack of credible information and the tangled history of interrelationships between the DPRK and its perceived enemies have devalued the effectiveness of the human rights discourse. It may not, however, be utterly bankrupt. One analyst of the North argues that the DPRK government may be more responsive to international pressure than often assumed. This logic would entail diplomatic, economic, and political pressure from relevant states and the UN, while simultaneously linking aid and economic assistance to more openness and respect for human rights. China, the US, and South Korea, however are taking different approaches which place human rights lower on the list of priorities.

The six-party nuclear talks illustrate this approach well. Human rights are not featured in these high-level talks designed explicitly to dismantle the North’s potential to acquire or use nuclear weapons. The fear is that holding the DPRK accountable for human rights abuses would “antagonize the North Korean government and jeopardize chances for a nuclear agreement.” Christopher Hill, the former US ambassador to South Korea and the current US envoy to the talks, addressed the US House International Relations Committee on 6 October 2005 about progress, goals, and difficulties of the talks and mentioned human rights a total of two times, making it clear both times that denuclearization of the DPRK was
the overarching goal.\textsuperscript{36}

Such testimony illustrates clearly the US position: human rights in the DPRK are important, as noted in the 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act (NKHRA), but not nearly as important as denuclearizing the peninsula. It would be gratifying, Waldron notes, if the intense focus on North Korea over the past decade came due to human rights pressure, but nuclear politics have instead dominated the American political discourse surrounding the DPRK.\textsuperscript{37} Former president Clinton’s staff presented the Bush administration transition team with a blueprint for negotiation and engagement with the DPRK in 2000, which was promptly rejected in favor of demanding complete and irreversible denuclearization before discussion of other issues could proceed.\textsuperscript{38} The US, despite the admirable passage of the NKHRA, continues to de-prioritize human rights on the Korean Peninsula – a pattern that has entrenched itself over the past six decades of engagement.

China, despite a lack of complete agreement within the party, does not envisage human rights as integral to its relations with the DPRK. Different motivations drive China to keep the Kim regime under control, from avoiding the difficult diplomatic situation that a nuclear DPRK would present to, perhaps most of all, maintaining DPRK stability in order to avoid massive refugee flows into northeastern China, however human rights are nowhere on the agenda.\textsuperscript{39} The US has petitioned the PRC to respect the rights of those North Koreans fleeing into Chinese territory, even offering to provide money to ease the economic cost of the refugee presence in northeastern China.\textsuperscript{40} The top Chinese priority still seems to be, however, the maintenance of stability so as to both control the North’s nuclear ambitions and stem the tide of migrants into China.

The South Korean position with regard to the DPRK is certainly the most complex because it has by far the most to gain or lose from North Korean stability or collapse. Taking a hard-line stance on human rights abuses in negotiations with the North is not viewed as the most fruitful way to progress with the South’s current strategy of gradual engagement with measures of trust-building. Human rights are not mentioned in the ROK Ministry of Unification list of eight goals – humanitarian assistance comes closest. The Ministry rather leans toward dialogue and trust building, as can be seen with the joint DPRK-ROK Gaeseong Industrial project just north of the DMZ. This industrial enclave of South Korean-owned companies currently employs over 15,000 North Korean workers at roughly USD$68 per month. ROK companies and the government hope to extend this arrangement to 350,000 North Korean workers, thus providing extraordinarily cheap labor to South Korean companies while simultaneously nudging the DPRK toward openness.\textsuperscript{41} The South argues that this allows for greater leverage over the North, while US Ambassador Vershbow holds that to go forward with the project without progress on nuclear talks undermines peace and stability in the region. Again, there is little mention in the public discourse about the human rights or labor implications of the project. The symbolic May 17, 2007 test run of two passenger trains across the DMZ was greeted with much fanfare and international news coverage, although the North extracted a considerable aid package in exchange
for allowing the project to go forward. The test run featured no spotlight on the North’s human rights situation, but rather served merely as a symbolic and trust-building measure. Although not entirely satisfactory, such gradual measures may very well be the most pragmatic policy given the knotted modern history on the peninsula and the potential difficulties reconciling a stated ROK policy goal of complete reunification with an apparent “orientalization” of the North. From this perspective, the human rights discourse may not have a prominent role to play within this strategy to pry open the DPRK.

**Conclusion**

Exploring the difficulties of the human rights discourse with regard to authoritarian governments leads to daunting and often frustrating conceptual and practical difficulties. How do we get around the idea that it is simple political expediency for such regimes to disregard human rights? Can such governments be convinced that it is in the interest of their state to join the human rights discourse? I have purposely left questions of this nature aside and instead have examined facets of current and past history surrounding the DPRK to explore the limitations of the human rights discourse in this case. It is certainly not my intention to undermine the values inherent in the discourse with this analysis – quite the contrary – it is my goal to analyze and expose limitations such that future research may more fruitfully devise solutions.

Practical concerns, historical relationships, and political priorities have all conspired to create a climate in which the human rights discourse has not thrived. A lack of credible, verifiable information about an authoritarian and secretive regime makes it difficult for NGOs, the United Nations, or diplomatic negotiators to make requests for improvement. A tangled web of modern history has entrenched a tragic suspicion in negotiations with the North. Finally, the political priorities of China, the US, and South Korea do not feature human rights as prominently as other concerns. Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of the Kim regime to treat its people with dignity, using the help that the UN, NGOs, and South Korea are all offering. Until this occurs, however, the ineffectiveness of the human rights discourse with regard to potentially the most abusive government in the world will continue.

**ENDNOTES**

1. I will use the phrases “human rights discourse,” “human rights language,” and “human rights” interchangeably throughout this paper to refer to the corpus of international agreements and treaties, as well as the mere invocation of human rights values – the usage here is intentionally broad and multi-disciplinary.
10. The US Department of State reports may be included in this group.
Difficulties of the Human Rights Discourse

12 Cumings, North Korea: Another Country, 108.
13 After World War II, the Korean peninsula was divided into Soviet and American spheres of influence.
15 Roy, 254-255.
17 These talks are aimed at arming the DPRK’s military nuclear program. The “six parties” are the DPRK, China, the US, Russia, South Korea, and Japan.
21 Cumings, Korea’s Place in the Sun, 297-298.
22 Ibid., 471.
29 Ibid., 44-47.
30 Former South Korean president and Nobel Laureate Kim Dae-Jung’s “Sunshine Policy,” articulated in a 9 March 2000 speech in Berlin, followed by the first-ever summit between leaders of the North and South on 13 June 2000, have paved the way for such diplomatic warming, although real progress aside from confined joint economic or transportation projects, has been slow.
31 Roughly translated, Juche means self-reliance.
32 French, 106-111.
34 Beal, 140.
38 Cumings, North Korea: Another Country, 85-86.
40 North Korea Human Rights Act, sec. 304.

ALEX DUKALSKIS
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South East Asia
Hundreds of villagers gathered at the village-center where a makeshift stage had been created out of plywood. In front of the stage, a group of musicians played their instruments, which consisted of everything from a traditional one-string zither to the modern electric guitar. A mobile generator provided electricity for the lights and speakers while the actors waited “backstage” or the open area behind the “curtain,” which consisted of a painted sheet depicting the setting of the scene. The gripping lyrical monologue of the female protagonist pierced the air, as she bewailed having to leave her mother in the countryside to find work in the city. The scene, so familiar to the villagers, moved them to tears. Suddenly, without warning, armed policemen from the French colonial government surrounded the audience and the stage, and ordered the audience to disperse. The troupe was expelled immediately from the village.

While much of the research on Vietnamese performing arts has been depoliticized from its historical context, cai luong musical theater serves as an arena for political and social debate for ordinary people and is in need of further academic exploration. While performing arts have always played a crucial role not only in the “representation of, but also the resistance to imperialism,” little scholarship has been produced that examines the significance of theater as propaganda for swaying public sentiment and mobilizing the masses, especially in societies with large illiterate populations. This paper reconceptualizes the history of cai luong of the early twentieth century as central to understanding anti-colonial mobilization. For most of the French colonial period, cai luong was the dominant form of popular culture that transcended class and socioeconomic differences. It was also especially influential among the youth. This article examines how cai luong supplanted written forms of resistance in challenging French colonialism. With its specific historical role, cai luong serves as a valid resource for studying the history of Viet Nam in the early 20th Century.

**History and Structure**

Cai luong is a form of popular musical theater that developed in the early 1900s on the outskirts of Sai Gon, Viet Nam. It synergizes traditional
Vietnamese song, Chinese operatic styles, and French popular music. Musical accompaniments guide the emotional and climatic turns of the plot. Most cai luong plays tell of dramatic love triangles with complex subplots and melodramatic conclusions. The stories are often about characters grappling with the difficult task of balancing tradition and modernity. Performances have been held in cities as well as in the countryside, and have won a wide audience throughout the country.

There are three theories on the origins of cai luong. The hat boi school claims cai luong descended directly from hat boi, a traditional Vietnamese court theater adopted from Chinese opera. When the Nguyen emperor Minh Mang attempted to “Sinicize” the Vietnamese people and spread Confucianism, he hired actors from the Canton Opera Troupe to teach hat boi performers the symbolisms in the make-up, gestures, and costumes of Chinese opera. Hat boi thus became a tool for passing on Confucian social and ethical lessons to the Vietnamese people during the Nguyen Dynasty in the early 19th Century in order to buffer the threat of Western Christian influences. If cai luong has its roots in Emperor Minh Mang’s national Sinicization project, then cai luong can be understood as a form of cultural resistance that opposed French foreign influences.

Another school of thought traces cai luong to the chamber music of the Hue court. This school argues that the first large-scale cai luong performance took place in 1917 when the play Bui Kiem Nguyet Nga was performed to the chamber music of the Hue court rather than to hat boi accompaniment. This hybridization of musical genres came to be known as ca ra bo, and later, “cai luong.”

A third school of musicologists traces cai luong’s heritage to tai tu music. Tai tu music was in the mid-19th Century a form of entertainment for communal ceremonies. It was later performed with lyrics and actors. Many elements of cai luong’s music originated from tai tu music. Tai tu and cai luong share the same titles (long ban), and song genres (boi). They both abandoned the tradition of using percussion instruments, using only a small knocking instrument for the foot called song loan to keep time. The close connection of cai luong and tai tu traditions suggests that cai luong has always been rooted in popular culture.

These three schools of thought demonstrate how cai luong surfaced as a distinctive indigenous art. The hybridization of cai luong enabled the art form to transcend both class and regional boundaries. With its roots in both popular culture and court chamber music, cai luong incorporated musical styles and themes that appealed to both rural and urban people. Cai luong offered a “rallying point” that transcended regional and class differences, and the lyrical emphasis provided a site for socio-political dialogue. It rose to the height of popularity in the midst of debates about national liberation during Vietnam’s anti-colonial movement.

**Political Power**

At the onset, the storylines of many cai luong plays had political undertones. In 1917, Thay Than, director of the troupe in Sa Dec province, invited playwright Truong Duy Toan to a private performance of Luc Van Tien, which some scholars consider to be the first cai luong play. This inspired Truong to create plays for large-scale
performances in Sai Gon, including *Kim Van Kieu*, the iconic national epic poem about a young woman’s decision to prostitute herself to save her father from debtor’s prison.\(^7\) The content of these classics dealt predominantly with the desecration of moral norms. The political content of these plays became more obvious and contentious with each decade.

Due to waves of insurgency throughout the Southern countryside in the early 1920s, censorship by the colonial government became more strict. Political debates about modernity and the French presence in Viet Nam needed a new forum. This political urgency interestingly paralleled the shift from fantastical tales of traditional narratives in *cai luong* to narratives about the cultural roots of Vietnamese society in plays called *xa hoi*.\(^8\) These later plays became known as *tuong tau*. They often dealt with socially controversial issues such as educational rights for women and uprisings against corrupt governments.\(^9\)

*Ca\\i luong* became a popular art during the 1920s throughout Viet Nam, with itinerant troupes forming in the North and South. By the end of the decade, influenced by amateur student groups touring the north, the first *cai luong* troupe began performing in the port city Hai Phong, headed by Ha Quang Dinh with the legendary Ai Lien in his cast.\(^10\) *Cai luong*’s plays had become a national art that united the Vietnamese people across regional, class, and age differences.

The next decade marked a shift in the content and presentation of the plays as they acquired Western elements. The 1930s introduced *tuong tay*, or Western style *cai luong*, in which the characters dressed in the latest Western fashion and the sets were elaborately decorated, imitating European design. Conflicts were set in furnished rooms, such as offices, workplaces, or urban homes, rather than rural farms. Stories such as *La Dame Aux Camelias*, *Tristen and Iseurt*, and *Hamlet* were rewritten for the stage in colloquial language.\(^11\) The traditional vocal technique called *vong co* was also often sung to rhumba, tango, and swing music. Mong Van emerged as a prolific producer of Westernized plays, creating in the period between 1930 and 1945 over seventy scripts and thirty songs, including the famous *Suong Chieu*.\(^12\) The numerous troupes performing his plays during this period solidified the dominance of *cai luong* as the national pastime.

*Tuong tay* became an arena for overt anti-colonial mobilization, encouraging unity among the ordinary people against French occupation. Until the early 1940s, such themes were subvert. By the mid-1940s, however, *cai luong* had become a forum where anti-French sentiments were openly expressed. Viet Minh-influenced performers also promoted nationalistic and patriotic propaganda in their renditions of the classics.

The political power of *cai luong* during this period instigated an aggressive response from the colonial government. Governor-General Petain allowed the colonial police force, the Surete, to interrupt musicals and disperse audiences.\(^13\) The Governor-General also co-opted the art to maintain hegemonic influence. For example, the established Quoc Gia Kich Doan, at the time the National Theatre Group, performed only government-selected scenes from *tuong tay* musicals.\(^14\) The French regime’s concerted efforts to repress *cai luong* troupes during the height of the anti-colonial
resistance offers some indication of the influence the performances had on popular opinion.

By the 1950s, most of the political sentiments were channeled into the genre of “chien tranh,” or war musicals. These plays had dramatic, poignant settings, with intense battle scenes. The stories were patriotic and encouraged ordinary people to resist the French regime.

Unfortunately, the proliferation of this genre also marked the beginning of the decline of cai luong. Due to the arrival of the Vietnamese film industry, funding for the troupes diminished. In the 1960s and 1970s, cai luong supported opposition against the traditional social establishment and the French occupation’s political structure. But unlike the plays of the 1950s, xa hoi operettas usually offered no solutions and were considered melodramatic. Since the early 1970s, cai luong suffered a severe depletion of resources in terms of funding and patronage. Many of its musicians and performers have migrated abroad or into other entertainment industries.\(^1\)

Although cai luong ceases to be a testimony of popular opinion, each decade in Vietnamese history in the early 20th Century can be analyzed through cai luong narratives. By reading history through this form of cultural production, we have a more thorough and accurate picture of the political shifts experienced by the Vietnamese. Given the important role of the masses during this period, it is important to consider the role of popular culture seriously, and it is perhaps fruitful to reexamine the cai luong art form as a political tool in the anti-colonial war to win “hearts and minds.”

For much of its history, Viet Nam has fought for her independence from foreign occupation, politically and culturally. One strategy of resistance has been to appropriate various aspects of foreign cultures in the project of creating an organic national identity. During the French colonial period, France assumed the role of a “mother” nurturing her “children,” until her colonies proved themselves worthy of independence. Once her colonies and colonial subjects were molded into the mirror images of France, only then were they considered “civilized.”

The process by which the countries would achieve this goal and maintain their national essence was fiercely debated. Constitutionalists asserted that total assimilation of the new generation into French culture was vital to free the country from underdevelopment and economic stagnation. The new generation of Francophile youth would form a mature, refined society that was capable and deserving of full autonomy from its “mother country.”\(^1\) Neo-traditionalists felt it was necessary for future generations to maintain their Confucian virtues such as chastity, filial piety, and loyalty in order to keep an authentic Vietnamese identity.\(^1\) Meanwhile, the decrepitating condition of the country’s institutions encouraged the increased participation of youths in secret societies and political organizations, such as the well-known Thanh Nien led by Ho Chi Minh in Canton.\(^1\)

The energetic young elites were torn between revering authority in accordance with their Confucian upbringing and fighting against existing political institutions, which they believed their parents had shamefully submitted to. Hungry for new strategies to obtain independence and self-
determination, they sought new ways to express themselves. Regardless of political orientation, national liberation leaders knew that the essence of Viet Nam’s anti-colonial struggle for autonomy and independence lay with the vibrant, dynamic, and underestimated youth population. For many across the country, the site of public mobilization efforts occurred on the cai luong stage.

Apart from the few journals, magazines, and newspapers written in French that subtly criticized the corruption of French authorities in Indochina by Francophiles, the exploitation of the colonies was virtually undocumented. Since the censorship laws carried out by the Surete forbade any publications in the Vietnamese language to discuss politics, criticisms against the government and political solutions for the nation’s problems had to be masked in new discourse—the language of drama.

The main dilemma had been the individual conundrum of whether to abandon Confucian family morals in favor of urban, cosmopolitan lifestyles. Stories often solidified into stock characters and narratives that audiences came to expect. The common motif underlying them dealt with the struggle between “good” and “evil”. Characters embodied this Manichean perspective. Vietnamese young adults assumed protagonist roles as either a rural farmer or a poor urban laborer, who become enticed by the materialism of “modern” city life. The antagonist, usually another Vietnamese young adult, would succumb to a Westernized, materialistic lifestyle as a middle-class cosmopolitan. He was “chic” in dress and appearance while aggressive in language and mannerisms. He presented the tension in the story as he tempted the protagonist to disavow traditional Vietnamese values for unethical acts. During the anti-colonial period, the climax was often the moment of internal conflict for the protagonist. Nevertheless, the resolution often involved an apology from the antagonist and eventual reconciliation through forgiveness. These characteristics of the cai luong play attracted a young audience because of the metaphoric analogies through which internal conflicts and moral values resulting from French colonial rule were discussed. Not only did these plays critique French “modernity,” they advocated national unity through the reconciliation of vying political factions.

The musicals offered a “hidden transcript” in public arenas, safely protesting colonialism beneath the eyes of their French colonial oppressors. The “hidden transcript” takes effect in the “offstage” space “where subordinates may gather outside the intimidating gaze of power [and where] a sharply dissonant political culture is possible,” and where power and oppression can be critiqued without fear of retribution. Cai luong’s undeniable effect during the French colonial period eventually manifested in the Surete’s disruption of performances and co-optation of troupes. Cai luong thus compels scholars to look beyond the obvious and public demonstrations of rebellion and the rare periods of open confrontation in revolution.

Conclusion

While print media undoubtedly helped the anti-colonial movement in Viet Nam, a historical analysis of cai luong reveals the significant role it played in mobilizing the population. Its emergence in rural regions of southern Viet Nam demonstrated
its power as a medium for political debate for populations that had no access to media during a period when the French colonial government censored Vietnamese political written materials. The itinerant nature of the traveling troupes served as a thread weaving together a national identity and socio-political trajectory, thus realizing an “imagined community” in the spaces of these public events. Although this paper only offers preliminary conclusions, it validates the need for more research on the role of cultural productions such as cai luong during the anti-colonial struggle.

Cai luong has not been adequately studied for its impact on the changes in public opinion on questions of French colonialism, modernity, and nationalism. Moreover, popular culture in general has often been cited only to buttress the master narratives of history. This particular genre of theater addresses the significance of mass movement in the process of resistance and anti-colonial struggle in Viet Nam that analytically complicates dominant historiographies. Reading Vietnamese history through cai luong suggests that the politics during this period were publicly driven by the ordinary people of Vietnam, rather than the educated elite class. It is in these creases of cultural production that we might excavate a history “against the grain” of a meta-narrative.

ENDNOTES

3 Nguyen Phan Quang, Lecture to School of International Training Study Abroad Program. Sai Gon, Viet Nam, May 25, 1999.
5 Bui Trong Hien, interview, Viet Nam, May 15, 1999.
8 Ha Quang Van, interview, April 21, 1999. Le Xuan Hieu, 1999.
9 Ibid, 47.
10 Ha Quang Dinh, Interview, May 27, 1999.
11 Ha Quang Van, Interview, April 21, 1999.
15 Hauch, 52.
17 Ibid, 39-44.
18 Ibid, 53-56.

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