

## CHAPTER 6: HOW JAPAN CAN WIN THE HISTORY WARS INSTIGATED BY CHINA

### 1. Why Japan must not lose the history wars

To conclude this book, I would like to consider what the history wars are really all about, and, from the perspective of a Taiwanese writer, encourage Japan to fight and win the battle for history.

I say this because, should Japan lose the history wars being waged by China and Korea, it will not be a detriment to Japan alone. In Taiwan as well, these history wars are no irrelevant matter. Taiwan is constantly being subjected to the poisonous influence of Chinese civilization, and the defeat of our neighbor Japan will only add to our woes. For Taiwan's sake, I have good reason to want Japan to win.

On behalf of the world of today and of the future, we must reject the totalitarian theory of history euphemistically referred to as a "correct historical perception". Defending positive and negative freedom of history is absolutely essential to protect a society where liberty of values is practiced and diversity is tolerated. Therefore, we absolutely cannot afford to allow any totalitarian-inspired view of history, whether from the communist left or fascist right, to prevail.

As I made clear in the preceding chapters, Japan is a nation with an inherently beautiful history that its people can take pride in before the whole world. For building such an advanced and non-violent culture, Japan has become the moral leader of the world. Thus, if Japan were vanquished in the history wars instigated by China and Korea and decayed into irrelevance, it would have dire consequences for the rest of the planet.

Although Japan was right next door to the civilization of China, which never had any claim to being a moral leader, the Japanese people were protected by the natural barrier of the sea and managed early on to forge a nation not unlike the national civilizations of the West. Between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the white peoples of the West colonized Asia and Africa and extended their dominion across the globe. Only Japan tenaciously held onto its independence, liberated the colonized peoples of Asia, and sought to create a world united by the principle of racial equality.

In spite of the fact that Japanese history was a model for human development, China and Korea now treat Japan with contempt and have senselessly made it the target of their history wars. This is not solely Japan's problem, but rather, is a problem for the entire world.

What does the phrase "history war" mean? A history war is when one nation dwells on the events of another nation's history in order to denounce and demean it, often followed by a demand for "repentance and apology", or sometimes reparations.

It is important to remember that the outcome of a history war cannot alter the past. What can be altered is the future. Even if some facts of the past are worthy of censure, continually opening old wounds in the present day is a different matter. Denouncing historical incidents of the distant past serves no purpose unless one is using it as a means to resolve a problem of the present day. Without a problem of current

interest, dragging up old history is just denunciation for the sake of denunciation, and that does no good to either the countries denouncing or the countries being denounced.

Often, the reason why China chastises Japan is because the Communist Party of China, which today maintains an iron grip on China, wants to dampen the pent-up distrust and dissatisfaction that the Chinese people feel towards their own government. The Communist Party's strategy is to create a hated external enemy out of another country and direct popular anger towards it, which has proven to be very effective in distracting the people from the true source of their resentment.

Because the communists founded their regime at the end of a long, bloody power struggle, it does not bother their consciences to tell lies any more than it did the emperors of China. The notion of "might makes right" is the basis of Chinese civilization, so it is all too natural for the Communist Party to distort or fabricate history as it suits its interests.

In 2015, China pressured UNESCO to include in its Memory of the World Register certain historical documents that were said to be related to the so-called "Nanjing Massacre", an alleged massacre undertaken in 1937 of 300,000 Chinese citizens by Japanese soldiers occupying the city. Nonetheless, China did not even publicly release the documents. Because the "Nanjing Massacre" was a fabrication from the outset and the documents in question surely had nothing to do with it, China could not have disclosed them even after registration. China simply disregarded these obvious problems and had the documents registered by force. In Chinese civilization, "might makes right", and consequently China is actively testing the theory that the strong can do whatever they like. China fills its history books with lies and, in accordance with the nature of Chinese civilization, shows no hint of shame in repeating these lies again and again. China's vision of history is, in the end, pure fiction.

In the case of Korea, there is the matter of the forced recruitment of comfort women. In 1982, a man named Yoshida Seiji falsely claimed to have worked with Japanese authorities on Korea's Cheju Island who were rounding up young Korean women and forcing them into brothels. Yoshida's "testimony" was published in the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*.

This would have been a crime worthy of denunciation, had it been true. In fact, a field survey conducted on Cheju Island by the historian Hata Ikuhiko ten years later in 1992 exposed Yoshida's story as a total fabrication.

And yet, even after the truth was revealed, the fury of the Korean people did not diminish. Private groups installed a statue of a comfort woman in front of the Japanese embassy in South Korea with a plaque insisting that over 200,000 Koreans were sexually enslaved by the Japanese. Not limiting themselves to Korea, they have even been erecting comfort women statues worldwide at sites in Australia and the United States.

It is true that the Japanese military utilized the services of brothels called "comfort stations" where comfort women, including Korean women, worked. However, the wages of the comfort women were very high, and since plenty of people applied willingly, there was no need for the Japanese to kidnap or forcibly recruit anyone. It is also a fact that the Japanese military became involved in the operation of the comfort stations, but it did so in positive ways, such as providing health inspections to the comfort women. Such stations were identical to those that the Korean government itself has established in Korea during and since the Korean War for use by American soldiers.

The outrage in Korea began before it was known that Yoshida Seiji's tale of having hunted down and abducted Korean women was a lie. In that case, why did this anger not cool after the facts were discovered?

This reaction is indicative of the Korean people's perspective on their history, or what I call, "fantasy history". Korea is located some distance from the Yellow River, the focal point of Chinese civilization, and borders on continental Asia along only one of the peninsula's four sides. Korea was not endlessly attacked from all quarters the way that the territories surrounding the heart of China were, and, to that extent, invasions of Korea were relatively few. Still, Korea did suffer tragedies as a result of its connection to continental Asia where political control was hotly contested. Korea had no means of defending itself against any enemy forces descending from the continent. It also meant that Korea became addicted to having Chinese troops put down internal upheaval. Korea's unification by the state of Silla in the seventh century was facilitated by the armed forces of Tang China. The foundation of the Choson dynasty in the fourteenth century was likewise backed by military aid from Ming China. In the nineteenth century, the Choson dynasty easily crushed a budding, Korean-led reform movement, not with its own army, but with the army of a foreign power, Qing China.

It is not surprising, in consideration of their past history, that the Korean people feel a deep-seated bitterness. The Koreans may not have experienced as much sheer brutality as China did throughout its history, but, time and time again, the great things their people ought to have been destined for never materialized. From this was born Korea's "culture of resentment" (*han* in Korean).

Korea never managed to sit at the center of Chinese civilization and call the shots, as the Mongols and Manchus did. Instead, Korea was continually ordered to submit to each successive dynasty that rose to power in mainland China. The bitterness felt by the Korean people manifested itself as the culture of resentment, which in turn produced "fantasy history". The fantasizing of the Korean people, that is to say their vain expectations of how things ought to be, morphed into their view of their own nation's history.

In this context, the comfort women statues are a form of "Japan bashing" intended to affirm Korea's moral superiority. The Korean people endured a long succession of unfulfilled dreams while their country languished in servitude to China. Because of these many centuries of pent-up resentment, Korea lashes out at Japan whenever Japan shows signs of weakness.

As I noted earlier, denunciation of the "Nanjing Massacre" is carried out in China primarily to bolster the Communist Party's grip on power. By contrast, the political system in South Korea is more or less democratic, and it is not necessarily the case that the South Korean government has been proactively denouncing Japan for its own profit. The Korean people bash Japan through the mass media as an outlet for their own frustrated desires. Though the government often rides the anti-Japan wave in the hopes of currying favor with the mob, it is the people who take the initiative.

To what extent has this harmed South Korea's own interests? How much damage is being done to tourism alone? In addition to North Korea, the authoritarian regime in China represents a growing threat to South Korea, and I should not need to elaborate on how critical it is for South Korea to cooperate with Japan on these matters.

The South Korean government ought to always be serving the function of tempering the passions of its people. In spite of Korea's culture of resentment, or rather because of it, the government should be providing its citizens with enough benevolent guidance to prevent this resentment from being directed abroad. When Korea's political leaders exploit popular emotion to court popularity, they are doing damage to their own country and are thus committing truly unpatriotic deeds. From the outset,

denunciation of the imaginary "forced recruitment" of comfort women and the subsequent false description of the comfort women as "sex slaves" has debased the Korean people. When the government also joins in, the people are debased even further. For this reason, Korea's leaders are themselves guilty of anti-Korean acts in the true sense of the term.

## 2, Acquire the ability to develop a broad historical perspective

When I consider how history should be scrutinized and discussed, I have long argued against various "theories of history".

A theory of history is a means to interpret historical events. What I have come to acutely understand is how often such historical theories fail to look at history from a broad perspective, which in turn is the main cause of dogmatic and biased interpretations of events. Theories of history tend to miss the big picture because they are constructed from preconceived ideas before the truth has been seriously examined.

For example, the Chinese Foreign Ministry brazenly insists that China is the only nation to have never invaded a foreign country.

If we limit ourselves to examining the events immediately prior to the modern era, the world was in the process of being swallowed up by aggressively expansionist imperialist powers. Russia continued its advance eastward from around the time of the Age of Discovery, crossing the Bering Strait and reaching Alaska. Later, Russia plunged southwards from Siberia, threatening first China and then Japan. Upon gaining independence from Great Britain, the United States also expanded its territory, advancing westward from the Atlantic coast, crossing the Pacific Ocean, and finally seizing the Philippines from Spain. After the Iberian nations of Spain and Portugal took to the seas, the Netherlands followed them. The next imperial powers to step forward, Great Britain and France, established colonies on all five continents and along all seven seas. Even the Manchurian people founded the Great Qing Empire, which spent two hundred years over the course of six imperial reigns conquering a realm three times the size of Ming China. After subduing China, the Manchus annihilated the Dzungar Khanate and even annexed Tibet and the Western Regions. Judging from these facts alone, how can one say that China has never invaded another country?

The old motto of Qing China's Eight Banner Army was, "With 10,000 men, no foe can stand against us!" Regardless, there were essential geopolitical and ecological reasons, and certainly contemporary factors such as the international power dynamics of that period, that rendered China incapable of launching further invasions. The rise of the world powers in the wake of the West's Age of Discovery was one historical trend that thwarted China's attempts at expansion.

How shall we define the word "invasion"? The notion that China was invaded by the great powers, including Japan and Great Britain, is well established in the so-called "correct historical perception" espoused by China. However, my interpretation is the exact opposite. According to the Chinese division of the world into the ruler and his realm (*tianzi* and *tianxia*), the sixty years of wars that took place between the Opium War, the First Sino-Japanese War, and the Boxer Rebellion were not invasions of China by the great powers, but rather were failed "punitive expeditions" initiated by the Qing emperors against the "western barbarians" and "eastern barbarians". The Qianlong Emperor, who ruled China for sixty years in the eighteenth century, proudly called himself the "Old Man of the Great Ten" for having achieved victory in wars launched against external foes of ten different regions. However, just one year after he passed the throne to the Jiaqing Emperor and became a retired emperor, the White Lotus

Rebellion broke out and ushered in a full 180 years of civil war and turmoil that did not cease until the end of the Cultural Revolution in the twentieth century. During this period, one fifth of the Chinese population lost their lives in the Taiping Rebellion and armed bands of Han Chinese slaughtered ninety percent of China's Muslims in a genocide known as the "Muslim purge" (*xihui*). China sunk even further into civil war during the Republican period. Amidst the prevailing chaos, the great powers struggled to abandon the killing fields of China as a lost cause.

History does not look the same from every angle. Because history is a series of incidents linked through a chain of cause and effect, what is necessary is to grasp the big picture. Japan's postwar politicians make the mistake of missing the big picture every time that they refer to Japan's decisions leading to World War II as "a certain period in the not too distant past". Unless we view history by expanding the scale of space and extending the span of time, we will end up missing the forest for the trees. If we lose sight of the bigger picture, we cannot understand history in an accurate way.

As I already described, the Silla and Koryo dynasties that ruled the Korean Peninsula were riven by bloody infighting, and only about half of their kings died natural deaths. The situation deteriorated further during the subsequent Choson dynasty when this infighting extended outside the imperial palace to political factions, known as *pungtang* in Korean, whose endless feuds divided the whole country.

Conversely, the most stable and peaceful era of Korean history was the so-called "Thirty Years of Japanese Imperial Rule" following the annexation of Korea by Japan. If we include the time immediately prior to the annexation, when Korea was under the guidance of the Japanese Resident General, we could call it the "Forty Years of Japanese Imperial Rule". During these decades, Korean society achieved an unprecedented degree of stability. After the annexation, Korea also shared in the benefits of the wave of modernization, including Westernization and industrialism, that had occurred in Japan thanks to Japan's "ultrastable" imperial line, unbroken since the Age of the Gods.

Nonetheless, the struggle between the political factions of the Korean Peninsula spilled over into China, Manchuria, and Siberia where they continued fighting. After the end of World War II, the bloodshed in Korea carried on where it had left off, and, since the Korean War, South Korea has held presidential elections every five years to facilitate transfers of power similar to the Chinese principle of "dynastic revolution".

By stepping back and looking at the big picture, we can conclude that the most important historical factor facilitating Korea's transformation from a withering "hermit kingdom" to a modern nation was the era of "ultrastability" Korea enjoyed under Japan's "imperial rule".

We can see the same phenomenon in Chinese history as well. As I explained above, civil wars and disturbances have dragged on ceaselessly across most of China's modern history from the White Lotus Rebellion of the late-eighteenth century to the Cultural Revolution. I have proposed that the Second Sino-Japanese War, or "Eight Years' War of Resistance" as it is called in China, was a moral and humanitarian intervention by Japan in China's longstanding civil war. This argument derives from my perception of Chinese history viewed in broad, historical perspective, in other words from the time China's era of internal conflict began in the late-eighteenth century. During this 180-year period of strife, the Taiping Rebellion alone, which is said to have been the largest civil war in human history, took the lives of one out of every five people in China. The Central Plains War alone, which was a dispute between factions of the Chinese Nationalist Party, resulted in the mobilization of 1.5 million men by the Beijing and Nanjing Governments. In the Nationalist Chinese Army alone, eight million soldiers were killed fighting the communists before the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Accordingly, when we study modern history in broad perspective, the Japanese government's "repentance and

apology" for the events of "a certain period in the not too distant past" appears as little more than a performance for the cameras, and in this show the masochist plays opposite the sadist. However, because I believe that we must appreciate the big picture of history from a broad perspective, I have consistently urged others to seek the counterintuitive truth that is the opposite of what people see, read, and hear about the "correct historical perception" promoted by Korea and China.

There is absolutely no reason why Japan should either repent or apologize. From a different perspective, it is China and Korea that should repent for the internecine bloodletting that was perpetrated among their own people, and it is they also who should apologize to the Japanese, who desired only to put an end to the fighting. This is the reality I see when I examine history in broad perspective.

### **3. Efforts to win the history wars begin at home**

The outbreak of the history wars exposed certain problems that were festering within the heart of Japanese society.

It was in 1982 that Yoshida Seiji fabricated his tale of having hunted down and sexually enslaved Korean women during World War II. If this story had instead emerged in the immediate aftermath of the war, everyone probably would have seen right through the ruse, as the conditions of the time would have still been fresh in their minds. However, by the 1980s, memories of Japanese rule over Korea had faded, and few could clearly remember how things were back then. This, in combination with the masochistic postwar education system, made the fiction plausible. If such a story were true, it would pang the hearts of the Japanese people.

Granted, there were some Japanese people who did not seem to have ever bought into the lie, but their objections were drowned out by the attacks of the mass media and their message was not allowed to circulate very far. However, the historian Hata Ikuhiko proved beyond any doubt in 1992 that Yoshida's "testimony" was a hoax.

The real disaster was the response of the Japanese government. Even though Japan's honor was being besmirched by baseless aspersions from other countries, it did not release any denial of the false claims or do anything else to defend Japan's good name. The sacred duty of Japan's government, one might think, is to call out such lies for what they are in order to protect Japan's honor. Needless to say, the government agency that ought to have been fulfilling this duty was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When the officials at the Foreign Ministry realized, thanks to the work of Hata Ikuhiko, that Yoshida's account was fictitious, why did they not immediately issue a statement to transmit the truth to the world?

And yet, the Foreign Ministry was not entirely silent on the issue. Next year, in 1993, it released the so-called "Kono Statement" on the comfort women problem. Though the statement contained no direct acknowledgement that the Japanese military had recruited comfort women by force, the then Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei made comments at the same time that effectively admitted to forced recruitment.

Moreover, in 1996 when the United Nations published the Coomaraswamy Report, which was clearly based on Yoshida Seiji's story, the Foreign Ministry submitted a written rebuttal to the report, only to withdraw it soon after.

Why does the Japanese government not defend Japan's honor? From the perspective of any foreign nation, including Taiwan, such a thing is virtually unbelievable. The Japanese government is the author of its own anti-Japanese policy.

What is even more mysterious, from the perspective of a Taiwanese person like myself, is the reaction of Japanese citizens at that time. Why did they not criticize the negligence of the Foreign Ministry on the floor of the Diet? Those Japanese who had awakened to their country's problems lamented that Japan was still not free from the yoke of the War Guilt Information Program imposed by the postwar occupation seventy years ago. Why, then, did they themselves not strive to break free? The occupation forces had certainly been ingenious in their methods, but that argument rings hollow now that a full seventy years have elapsed. The Japanese people themselves have simply not risen to the challenge.

The Foreign Ministry is infected with masochism over Japan's history, and its refusal to defend Japan's honor influences the mass media and the formation of public opinion. Under the effect of this influence, the media and public also remain masochistic. Why do the Japanese people not criticize the Foreign Ministry for its masochistic predilections? This is a question of whether the chicken or the egg came first. Still, shouldn't the people be furious when officials at the Foreign Ministry are so blatantly unwilling even to defend the honor of their own country? Though I have been repeating myself, it does seem that there are a fair number of people who are extremely upset with the comfort women disputes pushed by Korea. Why do they get angry at Korea, but not direct the brunt of their criticism towards their own abysmally negligent Foreign Ministry?

In addition, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party has paid no attention to the actions of the Foreign Ministry. Why has the Liberal Democratic Party been standing idly by while the Foreign Ministry fails to carry out one of its essential functions? This is yet another big problem.

Furthermore, the comfort women issue is not a problem between Japan and Korea alone. It is having negative repercussions around the world. Depending on one's point of view, Korea can also be considered a victim. If Japan had acted faster to disseminate accurate information and the Foreign Ministry had officially notified Korea early on that Yoshida Seiji's story was a fabrication, it is possible that even the Korean people may have withheld some of their outrage.

Concerning the Kono Statement, thanks to the heroic efforts of Diet member Yamada Hiroshi, the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary at the time of the release of the Kono Statement, Ishihara Nobuo, was summoned to the Diet in 2014. According to Ishihara's testimony, the Kono Statement was drafted at Korea's request without corroborating evidence, and no documents proving forced recruitment were ever discovered in Japan. Though all these facts were already known by then, his testimony in the Diet constituted official acknowledgement that no forced recruitment of comfort women had occurred.

In that case, why are the Korean people unable to let go of the comfort women problem? Japanese people fail to understand this because they are ill-informed of the true nature of Korea's culture and history. From the very beginning, when Tangun, Korea's legendary founder, was born of a bear-woman, Korea has been a den of sexual slavery. It is important to know the fact that, even today, Koreans struggle with their national commitment to prostitution. Korea is a nation of sexual slavery, prostitution, famine, and refugees, and the ethos and behavior of those born in the Korean cultural climate resemble nothing else in this world. Far from understanding it, it would probably be difficult for Japanese people to even imagine it.

Not long after former Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara testified, the *Asahi Shimbun*, the newspaper that had printed Yoshida Seiji's account, retracted the articles it had published relating to the

comfort women. It appears that Ishihara's words made their mark. It took the *Asahi Shimbun* thirty-two years to get to that retraction.

Taiwanese people like myself found it strange that the *Asahi Shimbun* did not retract its coverage on the comfort women much earlier, as its fraudulent nature had been obvious for quite some time. In the thirty-two years that elapsed before the retraction, the *Asahi Shimbun's* reporting had already caused a diplomatic crisis and done incalculable harm to both Japan and Korea. All that can be said is that the *Asahi Shimbun* is a shoddy excuse of a newspaper that betrayed the people of Japan.

Why did Japanese citizens choose to ignore what the *Asahi Shimbun* was doing? The *Asahi Shimbun* is a private newspaper that exists only because its readers buy it. Consequently, why haven't people just stopped purchasing such a dysfunctional paper? Naturally, the *Asahi Shimbun* did lose subscribers due to the damage that the recent retraction did to its credibility. This was to be expected of such a disreputable "newspaper", but I suspect that anyone who still reads the *Asahi Shimbun* must surely be of low intellectual caliber.

The bigger problem lies with the Foreign Ministry. When Japan's good name is being tarnished with invidious lies, the Foreign Ministry, an institution paid for with the tax dollars of Japanese citizens, opts to do nothing at all. Can the Japanese people be expected to forgive this? This is a flagrant act of betrayal against the citizens of Japan.

I've said it before and I'll say it again. Why would the Japanese government, which is run with the tax dollars of Japanese citizens, not respond to information slanderous to Japan's honor by presenting South Korea with the real facts of the case? Why did the Japanese people not descend on the Diet, the democratic chamber representing the citizenry of the nation, to excoriate this negligence? Finally, why did so many Japanese people who were angered by Korea's exploitation of the comfort women problem to smear Japan not also vent this anger towards their own government and the Diet? The Japanese people themselves are also unmistakably guilty of negligence.

As I have repeatedly emphasized, if Japan is defeated in the history wars, it will not be a loss for the Japanese people alone. Rather, the whole world will suffer.

There is one final point on this subject that I must convey to the people of Japan. The man who first championed and aggravated the comfort women problem was himself Japanese. It was a Japanese person who popularized the term "sexual slavery" and persuaded the United Nations to denounce Japan. In the view of an outsider, the motivations of such a person seem inconceivable. Only a truly morally bankrupt man would so gleefully traumatize and inflict harm upon his own country. Why, then, do Japanese people ignore the subversion of their self-loathing compatriots? Shouldn't they be brought before the public and exposed to criticism? They are the ones who are to blame for Korea losing its own senses and injuring its own best interests.

Of course, Japan's interests are also being harmed, but it is not a matter of just Japan or even just two countries. In the end, it is the well-being of people throughout the world that is at stake.

The history wars against Japan were started by the United States and the Soviet Union in the wake of World War II, and it was only later that Korea and China joined. Nonetheless, the history wars that we say were waged by foreign countries on Japan actually appear more similar to a civil war that the Japanese people have fought among themselves for the past seventy years. This reality is best symbolized by the Diet's war apology resolution, which was passed by devious means in 1995 on the fiftieth anniversary of World War II, as well as the subsequent Murayama Statement.

#### **4. Utilize the UN and other international organizations**

I have a suggestion on how we can resolve the politically charged problems of the "Nanjing Massacre" and the "comfort women". No matter what others might think, I firmly believe that we should use the United Nations. Though the United Nations may have a bad reputation, Japan still pays ten percent of its operating budget, the largest share of any country apart from the United States. As long as Japan is contributing so much money, it would be a waste to not make the most of the UN in diplomatic disputes involving Japan.

Furthermore, there is no need to treat the "Nanjing Massacre" and the "comfort women" as diplomatic problems with China and Korea alone. Because Japan is being denounced internationally for events that never happened, Japan ought to explain the truth of the matter at the United Nations. The platform to do this is the General Assembly. Making the announcement at the General Assembly, before the eyes and ears of the world, will be very useful in getting the truth out to other countries. If Japan also explains in detail the real history of Chinese civilization before the General Assembly and how modern China is connected to Chinese civilization, it will serve as an effective defense in the history wars and will help to enlighten the rest of the world.

Apart from the UN, I also advocate that we utilize many other international groups, including meetings of the G7 and G20.

If Japan still gets no results, it should gather leading historians to discuss the historical facts on the floor of the UN in an academic manner with verifiable evidence. If the discussion cannot be held in the UN, the Japanese government should instead host an international academic conference.

Finally, the United Nations should propose an international treaty for the twenty-first century forbidding any country from using its public education system to instill hatred against another country.

Such an international treaty to ban anti-foreign education was already recommended in 2014 by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, the most well-known organization of the textbook reform movement. In any case, hateful, anti-foreign education is quite inimical to building a peaceful international community.

I believe that the aforementioned proposals are both meaningful and realistic. Moreover, even in the case of past incidents that are grounded in actual facts, it is still problematic to keep harping on about them in the twenty-first century. Even for real events, whether or not they are still worth condemning in the present day after so much time has passed is another matter. As a general rule, I advise that we urge others to stop denouncing past events once a certain amount of time has gone by.

#### **5. Resolve territorial disputes at the UN**

Because they are somewhat connected to the history wars, I would now like to touch upon Japan's territorial disputes.

Japan is currently party to several territorial disputes. For example, China's unilateral claim to the Senkaku Islands is a de-facto territorial dispute. Asserting that the Senkakus are an inherent part of Japan, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs argues that no territorial dispute with China exists.

However, as long as the islands remain uninhabited, one can understand the basis of China's claim to a certain extent. Even though the Senkakus are controlled by Japan, the Japanese government does not allow any weather observation stations, fisheries infrastructure, or defensive installations to be constructed on them for fear of provoking China. What is the sense in a policy of not provoking China over a territorial dispute that does not exist? Japan insists that there is no territorial dispute with China, while also adopting a timid policy that effectively provides grounds to China's stated position. There have been repeated intrusions by Chinese state vessels into Japan's territorial waters around the Senkakus. By piling up such violations as faits accomplis, China is making good progress in its plans to seize the Senkaku Islands.

The Senkaku Islands dispute also has grave implications for Taiwan, which is very worried that it might lead to armed clashes near its territory. Indeed, the whole world fears that Japan's surrender of the Senkaku Islands under Chinese pressure will set a precedent that will embolden China to engage in further aggression. Therefore, the Senkaku Islands dispute is not just a problem between China and Japan. Japan must hold firm and stave off Chinese pressure for the sake of the rest of the world as well.

To deal with this problem, Japan can work through international organizations such as the United Nations. For the benefit of the rest of the world, Japan will explain to the United Nations that it has no intention of provoking any territorial dispute with China, and then will announce its plan to construct defensive installations on its territory of the Senkaku Islands. After winning the world's sympathy, I think that Japan should go ahead and build the installations. There is no reason to consult with China on this decision. Even if Japan does consult with China, I do not expect anything could come of it. Under its stated international responsibility to not provoke a territorial dispute, Japan has to affirm its peaceful intentions as it assembles the defensive installations. Next, Japan should, if necessary, set up weather observation stations, fisheries infrastructure, and facilities to improve navigational safety. By following these steps, Japan will allay its territorial dispute with China and do a service to the world.

Now let's consider Japan's dispute with Korea over ownership of the Takeshima Islands. In January 1952, South Korean President Syngman Rhee took advantage of Japan's powerlessness under the postwar military occupation to illegally and unilaterally capture the Takeshima Islands, which remain under Korean administration today. Political bungling at the end of the occupation prevented a resolution of the dispute at that time, but Japan still should have rectified the issue when the Japan-Korea Treaty on Basic Relations was signed in 1965. This was a treaty aiming to establish normal relations between Japan and South Korea, so there was no reason to not settle the Takeshima Islands dispute on that occasion. From the standpoint of fostering friendship and goodwill between Japan and Korea, it did no good to either side to simply leave a major territorial dispute outstanding. Thus, the Japanese government committed a grievous error in failing to have the Takeshima Islands returned to Japan in 1965. I suspect that this dispute will never be solved through only interminable dialogue with Korea, so Japan should instead use the United Nations. This is a task for the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Although Japan is sadly cursed to have a Foreign Ministry that is unable to act decisively at critical moments, that just means that we will have to chide it into action.

What about the dispute over the Northern Territories, or Kuril Islands as they are known in Russia? The Russian-controlled islands of Shikotan, Etorofu, Kunashiri, and Habomai are obviously inherent territories of Japan, as was confirmed by both sides in the 1855 Russo-Japanese Treaty of Amity. At the end of World War II, the Soviet Union illegally occupied the Northern Territories, which were subsequently inherited by Russia. Russia continues to illegally hold these Japanese islands to this day.

The very act of the Soviet Union having invaded Japan at the end of World War II was a serious crime under international law. On April 13, 1941, the two sides had signed the Japanese-Soviet Non-

Aggression Pact. Germany went to war with the Soviet Union not long after, on June 22. Because Japan had concluded the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in 1940, there was a very real possibility that Japan would join with its ally Germany and invade the Soviet Union. And yet, Japan stayed true to the non-aggression pact and ordered no attack on Soviet soil. As a result, the Soviet Union was able to redeploy its forces in the east, which had been bracing for combat with the Japanese, and used them to narrowly defeat the German onslaught. Admittedly, the Soviets did also benefit from a massive infusion of American military aid, but, even taking this into account, if the Japanese military had invaded Siberia, it is virtually beyond doubt that the Soviet Union would have lost the war with Germany.

The Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact came to an abrupt end on August 9, 1945, when the Soviet Union launched a surprise offensive against Japan. Even though Japan's faithful adherence to this agreement had saved the Soviet Union from total destruction, the Soviets showed no scruples in flagrantly breaking it. This attack may have been the most insidious betrayal ever perpetrated by one nation against another in the course of the twentieth century. It is true that US President Franklin Roosevelt had asked Joseph Stalin at the Yalta Conference held in February of that year to have the Soviet Union attack Japan, and a secret deal to this effect was concluded. However, this deal was acknowledged by the United States as having no legal validity. Even if the United States had made it binding, the secret deal at Yalta would still have had no validity as far as the Soviet Union's relations with Japan were concerned.

The Soviet Union surely owed some moral obligation to Japan for having honored the non-aggression pact. Even if the Soviet Union did have to declare war on Japan, it could have at least offered Japan a temporary truce, and invaded only if Japan had refused to accept it. In the end, the Soviet Union could not be bothered to make even a minimal show of honor.

Given that the Soviet Union's sudden violation of the Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and invasion of Japan was obviously a breach of international law, the Soviet Union must be held accountable for it no matter what deal it secretly arranged with the USA at Yalta.

Therefore, the Soviet Union attacked Japan and occupied the Northern Territories at the end of the war pursuant only to an informal promise he made to President Roosevelt. The Soviet Union was completely unjustified in perpetrating the most blatantly immoral treaty violation in twentieth century history. If Japan filed regular complaints about this wicked deed at the United Nations and persistently demanded the return of the islands, wouldn't Russia eventually get overwhelmed and agree to give them back? In fact, Turkey also faces criticism over its history, but is more than willing to defend its country's honor on the floor of the UN.

In summary, what Japan ought to do is bring up the illegitimacy of Russia's occupation of the Northern Territories in the UN at every possible opportunity. Japan's leaders could meet with President Putin a hundred times, but still get no closer to a settlement. Shelving the dispute and maintaining the status quo are only stopgap measures.

The United Nations, being one and the same as the Allied Powers of World War II, even now preserves in its charter the so-called "enemy clauses", which label Japan and Germany as enemies of the UN. Moreover, the permanent seats on the UN Security Council are held by just five nations, the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and China, who wield unrestricted veto power over all decisions. Any proposal can be shot down due to the opposition of just one of those countries. The UN has to be able to adapt in response to changing global conditions, but every reform proposal is vetoed by one of the permanent members of the Security Council. This means that the UN, a vital international organization, can never reform itself even though its institutions no longer function in a healthy manner.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no solution. For example, the United States and the other leading countries that realize the need for change could withdraw from the UN and form a new UN based on their reform plans. There are many countries that should desert the current UN and join the new organization. Such a move might be supported by America's new president, Donald Trump.

The United Nations has reached the stage where thoroughgoing reform has to be seriously examined.

## 6. Appeal for an end to history wars

How should humans approach history? Let me sum up my observations.

"History", as the term is normally used, does not refer to objective facts about the past, but rather to the facts of the past as we perceive them. Because of this, history does usually contain bias and distortion, as I explained in more detail in Chapter 1. Everything has its own history and, inevitably, its own biases and distortions. We must be aware that these biases and distortions will be present.

To mature into happier and healthier people, humans need to develop their own historical self-perception, and we have to tolerate divergences between facts and perceptions.

Each individual person ought to be free to develop his or her own view of history. A person's historical self-perception belongs to no one else and must never be imposed by another. Naturally, there are many cases where an individual's historical perception is incomplete and benefits from hearing the thoughts of others with far better-considered ideas. In such instances, one's own historical perception will be enriched and improved. However, this is not to say that any coercion is involved. Historical self-perception must ultimately be left solely to the individual's own discretion. No other people can ever compel an individual to accept their historical perception. For this reason, it is intrinsically wrong to aggressively push one's own historical perception and shrilly demean that of others. This is even truer in the case of fake history created with a political agenda stemming from resentment and bitterness. In other words, freedom of historical perception is the right of every person.

Considering this question at the level of nations, it is fundamentally distasteful to denounce another country's history. Accordingly, the very worst thing one country can do to another is manufacture lies about the past to smear its reputation.

The interpersonal and international relationships of today are, of course, all generally built upon past events. Consequently, there will certainly be many occasions when we must bring up and discuss old history.

An example of this is the aforementioned territorial disputes. In the case of the dispute with Russia, we cannot bypass the process of investigating the historical context surrounding the Northern Territories. Therefore, a debate over historical perception is also inevitable. When it comes to the root causes of the Takeshima Islands dispute and the historical details of its unilateral seizure by Korea, a discussion of the facts of the past is likewise unavoidable. The same holds true of the Senkaku Islands dispute with China where the historical facts of the case and the discussion of historical perception is essential.

Nonetheless, it is not at all constructive in these disputes to simply dredge up matters of history for the purpose of aspersion and moralizing. It's one thing to praise something in the past that might deserve praise. However, it can be quite a different thing to expressly single out for denunciation certain

incidents from another country's past, even if the incidents do deserve to be criticized. It seems that denunciation of another country's history begins with an attempt to prove the superiority of one's own history, but this is not the proper way that a sensible individual or a sensible nation should approach history. In its pure form, historical perception helps individuals and nations to grow in a healthy and fulfilling manner. Thus, it need not and ought not bring in the history of other countries and people for the sake of denunciation. To do so would be an unacceptable infringement on the freedom of historical perception that is the basic right of each individual.

Some may be of the opinion that denouncing the history of others to prove one's own superiority is inescapable. It is, they may say, a natural human impulse that comes as an intrinsic facet of the production of history. And yet, another impulse that is natural to humanity is our moral aspiration to coexist harmoniously with one another. With reason, we can suppress our tribalistic instinct to achieve dominance over others by attacking their history, and then do away with the history wars.

China denounces Japan for the alleged massacre of 300,000 civilians by Japanese soldiers in the city of Nanjing in 1937, and Korea does the same for the alleged abduction and sexual enslavement by the Japanese military of 200,000 women.

The history wars instigated by both countries attest to the fact that history as a natural impulse is, because of this impulse, a tool to assert one's own superiority by putting down others. However, China and Korea need to learn for themselves that they cannot prove their own virtue through doing evil to others. They ought to handle history rationally, and, if they do, there will be no more history wars.

The accusations made by China and Korea include much fake and fabricated history designed to stoke greater animosity against the Japanese people. Regardless, even if we closed our eyes to the truth and recognized all these accusations as historical fact, it would still be hard to see what is constructive about incessantly digging up the facts of the distant past as fodder for denouncing other countries today. That is not how history should be.

During ongoing political controversies, there will be situations in which we will inevitably have to discuss the history of other countries, but, by contrast, the waging of a history war is inexcusable. Briefly put, history wars between two countries are wholly negative and should never occur under any circumstances. I strongly reaffirm the points that I made in Chapter 1 concerning defining history in historiographical terms.

## **7. Beyond history wars**

On May 27, 2016, an event took place that made us reflect seriously on the history wars. It was US President Barack Obama's visit to Hiroshima seventy-one years after the atomic bomb was dropped there.

The targeting of an unarmed civilian population with a nuclear weapon was an unforgiveable act. To pay his respects, Obama visited Hiroshima on the occasion of the G7 summit in Japan and laid a wreath in front of the memorial cenotaph, though he did not issue an apology. He also spoke with Japanese survivors of the blast.

The A-bomb survivors graciously welcomed Obama's visit without demanding any apology. While understanding that circumstances in the United States made an apology from the president unfeasible,

they nonetheless showed their appreciation for America's gesture and gave Obama permission to place his wreath at the cenotaph.

I am not advocating that we gloss over the past. "Historical truth" ought to always be clarified as far as it can be. However, we must also admit that history will contain subjective elements, and thus "historical truth" may differ between Japan and the United States. What is significant is that the USA and Japan did not quibble over the differences or denounce one another, but rather respected their reciprocal differences while setting their eyes firmly towards the future and committing themselves to work hand-in-hand to forge a better tomorrow.

From Japan's perspective, the United States committed an unforgiveable act worthy of the most severe condemnation, but no good could possibly have come from publicly denouncing it seventy years after the fact. This was true for both Japan and the United States. Instead, both the victims and the perpetrators decided to accept the errors of the past for what they were and mutually reconcile for the sake of the future.

President Obama left a paper crane that he folded himself at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. This tradition began with Sasaki Sadako, a schoolgirl who was hospitalized for radiation sickness, but continued to fold paper cranes until her death in 1955 at the age of twelve. The Children's Peace Monument, a statue in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park that holds a paper crane aloft in its arms, was modelled on Sadako.

Her older brother Sasaki Masahiro is currently in the United States running a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the cause of peace and deepening historical understanding between Japan and the USA. He founded the organization with Clifton Truman Daniel, the grandson of Harry Truman, the president who ordered the atomic bombing of Japan.

The dropping of the atomic bombs has been truly difficult to forgive. And yet, neither side would gain anything of value from Japan's leaders bitterly denouncing it until the end of time. No matter how terrible it may have been, once the event has long past, we have no choice but to eventually forgive so that there may be peace. Both sides should vow to do everything in their power to never allow such a tragedy to happen again. Once enough time has transpired, this is precisely what both the citizens of the country that perpetrated the bombing and the citizens of the country that endured the bombing must do.

President Obama's state visit to Hiroshima did us a great service by showing us just how senseless history wars are.

It has already been over seventy years since Japan was defeated by the United States in a war that raged across the Pacific Ocean. The history wars over Japan have been characterized as wars against external foes, but, in some ways, it may be more accurate to call them, "The Seventy-Year History Civil War in Japan". China and South Korea launched the war, but they could not have sustained it without the fuel constantly being provided by anti-Japanese forces inside Japan. It is the Japanese people themselves who are to blame for allowing these anti-Japanese elements to run rampant. For their own sake and for the sake of all the people of the world, the time has come for the Japanese to stop turning a blind eye to this problem.

Finally, I would like to mention two additional unseen topics in the history wars that I have often tried to call attention to in the last several decades.

The first topic has to do with Yasukuni Shrine. Under normal circumstances, the act of paying respect to Yasukuni Shrine, just like the formation of one's historical perception, ought to be an entirely private matter of the heart and soul. At some point in time, somehow or other, it morphed into a political issue, and then a diplomatic problem. This is completely unacceptable. On top of that, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' inability to fulfil its function as a foreign ministry made the bad situation even worse.

The second topic relates to Japan's culture and civilization, which was long characterized by its focus on the present and the future, rather than the past. Japan's forward-looking attitude was symbolized by its traditional purification rites intended to free the soul of the burden of the past. However, the Japanese have ended up transforming unwittingly from a forward-looking people into a "backward-facing" people with an obsessive fixation on old history. This is yet more proof of the Japanese people's inadequate self-awareness and lack of effort towards healthy self-development. Does this not all stem from the complacency and weakness of the people?

These two topics are linked to an unseen "spiritual defeat". The Japanese people suffered a spiritual or cultural defeat at the end of World War II, and I fear that it may ultimately lead to Japan's suicide as a nation. It seems to me that this "spiritual defeat" is what the Japanese people must truly repent for.