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Overcoming the past
The controversial legacy of
Japanese colonialism in Taiwan
and South Korea

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"The 'comfort women' had become a hot topic of debate because of political games played by the Japanese left [...] if the Japanese had snatched women from a good background in large numbers, people would have protested against this much earlier after the war. As it happens, it is only in recent years that they have come forward"¹

(Jin Meiling, former advisor of Chen Shui-bian, President of Taiwan 2000-2008)

"One example is the issue of the comfort women. These are women who have spent their blossoming years in hardship and suffering, and spent the rest of their life in ruins. [...] And none of these cases have been resolved or addressed; the Japanese have not changed any of their positions with regard to this. If Japan continues to stick to the same historical perceptions and repeat its past comments, then what purpose would a summit serve? Perhaps it would be better not to have one."²

(Park Geung-hye, president of South Korea since 2011)

¹ Zhongyang ribao, 25 February 2001, p.5 in SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The "Comfort Women" issue in Taiwan*, Pacific Affairs, Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p.241

² WILLIAMSON, Lucy, *South Korea President Park: 'No purpose' to Japan talks*, in BBC News, 4th November 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-24768298>, accessed on 22nd May 2014.

Abstract

At the turn of the XX century, in an effort to escape Western domination and build up an alternative to the decaying sinocentric order, Japan directed its forces to colonize various territories around her. Among these territories Taiwan and Korea stood out for the substantial role they played in the colonial system. They became very important for the cultivation of rice and sugarcane that sustained Japanese demographic growth and, later, they turned to be essential source of manpower to employ in the war. When Japan surrendered to the Allies in 1945 was forced to immediately withdraw from its former colonies, leaving them to a completely new political course. Notwithstanding the common colonial experience Taiwan and Korea, developed completely different feelings and attitudes towards Japan. Pro-Japanese and inclined to cooperation the first, embittered with anti-Japanese feelings and prone to confrontation the second. Reasons of the differences between the two countries are lying both in their past colonial experiences and in internal and external political developments of more recent years. While Taiwan government resurrects a colonial-born good relationship with Japan in order to counterbalance China's pressures for reunification, South Korean leaders use ancient anti-Japanese feelings to re-approach people with its corrupt politicians. This paper aims to analyse such a different behaviour in many of its facets, starting from the colonial period to arrive to nowadays disputes over textbooks revision and territorial acquisitions. The final result is a clear picture of how different behaviours in

international politics often hide a mixed origin made of deep-rooted historical sentiments and more recent political interests.

Introduction

Taiwan and South Korea are two countries of East Asia that shares many common features. Both under the influence of the Chinese Empire since time immemorial, they fell pray of Japanese expansionism at the turn of the XX century. Since that moment they became official colonies of Japan's Empire, which was expanding in the area to contrast Western imperialism and establish its supremacy. During this period the colonial government exploited the natural resources of these two countries and racist policies put in peril their ethnic identity and culture. Named *dōka* and *kominka* these policies pointed at transforming Korean and Taiwanese people into perfect Japanese. Notwithstanding the similar experience made under the Japanese administration, people in Korea and Taiwan reacted in very different ways. This fact can be attributed to the different social organization existing in the two countries and to their divergent sense of national belonging.

After the Japanese withdrew from their territories, history still brought Korea and Taiwan along, at least apparently, similar paths. Both countries experienced a period of very strict dictatorship where many basic rights were negated. During this period people did not have much space to express themselves and the issue of Japanese war crimes was hashed up very quickly. When in 1980s both countries went through a period of first democratic reforms, many historical issues came out in the public debate and opinions over the Japanese past started flowing out copiously. Here again, notwithstanding the common political

experience, people in Taiwan and Korea started addressing Japan-related issue in completely different ways. Japan's revisionism over history textbook and refusal to recognise the 'Comfort Women' issue started to inflame public opinion in South Korea, while the same matters did not find the much opposition in Taiwan.

The last decades have been years of sustained growth in both countries, which in the 1990s, together with Hong Kong and Singapore, even earned the denomination of East Asian Tigers. In addition, political reforms have transported them among the ranks of the most developed democracies in the world. In this context Japan could represent for them a strong ally or a terrible threat. The decision about how to relate to the rising sun' country is given both by historical reasons and contemporary political interest, which are the main focus of this work.

The first chapter starts with a brief description of the historical period when the Japanese colonial expansion took place. After having summarized the reasons that led Japan to expand in East Asia, I started focusing on the issues concerning the colonial administration itself. In particular, through the analysis of the situation encountered by the colonial administrators at their arrival, I could go back to the historical reasons that had produced such situations and understand why the two peoples reacted so differently to the Japanese colonial rule. Finally, at the of the chapter I focused also on how Japan's different treatment of the two colonies contributed to increase the gap between the positive view held by the Taiwanese and the strong acrimony of the

Koreans, marking a difference that would last until the present days.

The second chapter is dedicated to analyse the diverse behaviour of the two countries towards Japan from the end of the colonial period until nowadays. In particular I decided to focus on the highest points of disagreement: The 'Comfort Women' issue, the dispute over history textbook and territorial disputes. First of all, I analysed the issue of the 'Comfort Women', girls that were taken from their villages in Korea, China and Taiwan to be employed as prostitutes for the Japanese soldiers during the war. It is interesting to notice how the issue of the refunding/apologies requested to the Japanese government was easily forgotten in Taiwan, while is still very disputed in Korea.

Secondly, I analysed the issue arisen over history textbooks. As the liberal historiography study Group was founded in 1995, revisionist statements began to sneak slowly into history schoolbooks. This fact not only generated different reactions in the two countries, but also produced different effects over those countries textbook, differences that could be noticeable also before 1995. While Korea, the greatest objector of Japanese, promoted textbook that are as revisionist as the Japanese. On the other hand Taiwan defend political correctness in the use of words, preferring for example, preferring the use of the term 'administration' instead of 'occupation' and the term 'annexation' to 'aggression'.

Finally, in the last part of the chapter I focused on the territorial disputes concerning some islands contested by both countries. Dokdo/Takeshima islands disputed between Japan and

Korea are a great point of disagreements between the two countries which both state their right to rule over them. Also Senkaku/Diaoyu/Tiaoyutai islands are disputed between Taiwan, China and Japan, however the Taiwanese conciliatory attitude have enabled the two countries to sign fisheries agreement for the joint exploitation of the resources, something that would be unimaginable with Korea.

In the end, in the third chapter I attempted to delineate what are the reasons, developed in more recent times, lying behind Taiwan and South Korea different behaviour. Starting from Taiwan, I analysed how the emergence of a competing historical wrong in the mind of the Taiwanese, such as the Kuomintang's 'White terror', contributed to progressively fade away much of the bad records regarding the Japanese. Other reasons of this difference are analysed further in the chapter, such as Taiwan's need for the balancing action of Japan in Cross Strait relations, or Korean government's exploitation of anti-Japanese feelings in order to strengthen political consensus. The general aim of this work is to provide, through the prism of South Korea-Taiwan differences, a complete, but not exhaustive, picture of the geopolitical issues surrounding this fascinating area.

FIRST CHAPTER

THE JAPANESE COLONIAL EMPIRE AND THE ORIGINS OF THE DIFFERENT PERCEPTION OF JAPAN IN TAIWAN AND SOUTH KOREA

1. Introduction

The political approach of the Taiwanese and Korean government towards Japanese colonial period has been very different since Japanese settlement until more recent times. While on the one hand Korean people were inflamed by strong hatred towards their colonisers and still claim apologies for Japanese past wrongs nowadays, on the other hand in Taiwan there has never been the same concentration of hostilities. Reasons of such a difference are to be found in many facets of the colonial period: the two people's diverse sense of national identity and the different behaviours of the colonial administration in the two countries.

1.1. Japan's Need To Build An Empire To Contrast Western Expansion

Japan's domain over Taiwan and Korea, is widely conceived among historians as being part of the late nineteenth century "new" imperialism. This phenomenon stretching for the four decades leading to the World War I saw "about one-quarter of the globe's land surface [...] distributed or redistributed as

colonies among half-dozen states”³. Within this period Western powers as France, Great Britain and Germany, allured by prestige, trade and strategic locations, carried out massive imperial campaigns to seize control of virgin territories with the aim “protecting ...markets and sources of raw materials from possible retaliation by foreign competitors”⁴.

In this process, also Japan risked colonial subjugation, and initially managed to avoid this fate because Western countries’ energies were focused into exploiting other Asian opportunities. However, Japanese long isolation was hard to keep untouched. During the 1840s, the Americans who were enhancing the trade with China had soon realized that they needed a foothold port to get in a supply of fuel and food provisions. From that point, Japanese territories started to be taken aim from US naval forces, which began to move dangerously close to the Japanese shores. They finally reached their objective in July 1853 when a flotilla of four American ships docked on Japanese Edo Bay and imposed to the Tokugawa *shogunate* to open some ports and allow the installation of a permanent US consul in Japanese territory. From that point the *bakumatsu* era began, as the end of the *bakufu* rule

³ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, p. 59 in CAPRIO, E. Mark, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea. 1010-1945*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2009, p. 19.

⁴ WOODRUFF, D. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1978, p.13 in CAPRIO, Mark E., *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea. 1010-1945*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2009, p. 20.

over Japan,⁵ and many other unequal treaties were imposed over Japan.

The Japanese empire's determination to get rid of those humiliating treaties functioned as a strong push towards modernization, which in 1868 took the form of the Meiji Restoration. The transformation of Japan from a weak, feudal and agrarian society into a modern industrial power, militarily and economically capable of resisting foreign domination, was due to the recognition of the country vulnerability and the consequent willingness to overcome it.

Modernization however was not enough to prevent the foreign powers to seize control over the archipelago; Japan had to demonstrate its ability to take control of a colony in the same way as the western powers did. At the same time Japan had to demonstrate to Asia that the time had come for China to give up to the ancient idea of a Sino-centric world, because it had fallen prey to the Western countries for its inability to modernise its economical and social structure. Indeed, China had to renounce to his primacy in the region in favour of the modern and industrialized Japan⁶.

1.2. Early Steps Towards The Creation Of An Empire

As a consequence of the strong desire for the creation of an empire, many territories of East Asia were rapidly brought under

⁵ TIPTON, Elise K., *Il Giappone Moderno. Una storia politica e sociale*, "Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi", Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore, 2011 (or. *Modern Japan. A social and political history*, 2007).

⁶ Ibid.

Japanese control. Taiwan was the first colony to be achieved, ceded to Japan in 1895 with the Treaty of Shimonoseki as a spoil of the war after Chinese defeat in the first Sino-Japanese war started in 1894. But, soon, many others territories would be taken over.

After the Russo-Japanese War, with the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905 Japan acquired her next colonial territories: the Liaotung peninsula, which was renamed Kwantung Leased Territory; the southern half of Sakhalin, which took the name of Karafuto; and Korea, which established as a protectorate would become a colony in 1910. In the end, “four years after the annexation of Korea, Japan made its final addition to its formal empire”⁷. Exploiting the involvement of Western powers in the global hostilities broken out in 1914, “Japan joined the Allied powers [...] in order to snap up Germany’s colonial territories [...] on the Shantung peninsula”⁸ and the Micronesia islands, which would be renamed the Nan’yō guntō under Japanese control.

It is interesting to notice that all the territories that became part of the Japanese Empire are territories geographically close to its shores. The reason is that Japan’s late entry onto the modern world stage precluded the possibility of a wide array of territory available for the taking. In addition, Japan lesser economic power, in comparison to the western nations, meant a comparative inability to sustain a long-standing campaign for acquiring colonies far from home. Thus, in order to maximise its strength for

⁷ PEATTIE, Mark R., “Introduction” in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 18.

⁸ Ibid.

the creation of the empire, Japan would have to begin with the domination of neighbouring areas⁹.

Geographical proximity, however, was not the only reason why Japan directed its effort towards these countries. Security concerns also played a role in Japan's choice. Japan's expansion on the continent was also undertaken to protect the nation's strategic frontiers from the western advancement in the area. While Taiwan was annexed for reasons of prestige, all the others Japan's colonies were obtained with a specific strategic geopolitical purpose. Korea, for example, separated from Japan only by the Korean Strait, would have been very dangerous if occupied by the western nations, and so it had to be put under Japanese control¹⁰.

Political reasons were not alone in driving the Japanese effort to colonise East Asia, also economical interests had a part to play. These interests included opportunities for trade and investment, access to food sources and other strategic materials as well as the possibility to enlarge Japanese markets for manufactured goods. By the way, political and strategic interests were predominant in the colonization of Taiwan and Korea and private economic investment were directed more to Japan's "informal empire" in Manchuria and Mainland China, which became the commercial extension of the formal empire¹¹.

The earliest Japanese colonies were not only geographically close to Japan but also culturally close, being populated by peoples sharing cultural, literary and religious

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 3-8.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 11-13.

affinities deriving from the Chinese tradition such as Chinese ideograms, Confucianism and Buddhism. This sense of cultural affinity with people in the colonies made Japan unique among the colonial powers and deeply shaped Japanese attitude towards colonial governance. Hence, even if Japan lacked a missionary spirit comparable to that of Christian evangelist, still it was moved by idealist sense of helping its unfortunate brothers in Asia. Japan's idea was to transform the corrupt and decaying Asian civilization by guiding them into the path of modernity¹².

2. The Seizure Of Taiwan And Korea

Taiwan was never a primary objective of Japan's aims in the Sino-Japanese war hence the conflict had started clearly to gain control over Korea in order to protect Japanese lives and properties during the Tonghak rebellion. The Asian peninsula was a territory of major concern for Japan as the declining power of the Korean Yi Dynasty foreshadowed a possible rush by the major colonial nations to obtain the control of the country.

If a destabilized Korea was very perilous for the Meiji leaders, Korea in the hands of a Western power could be disastrous¹³. Even if Japanese immediate aim of the war against the Qing was to impede the seizure of Korea by a third country, during the war other objectives emerged. As Japanese victories

¹² Ibid., p. 9.

¹³ DUUS, Peter *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*, Berkeley CA, University of California Press, 1995, pp. 33.

were multiplying in 1894, pressures mounted within Japan government to ask for territorial concessions after the end of the war. The choice was directed towards Taiwan because it was believed that it could be taken without risking a western intervention¹⁴.

Taiwan became the first Japanese acquisition without being essential to the Japanese security; somehow it seems like it was earned without being deeply desired. Korea, on the other hand was considered particularly essential to Japanese security and any effort was made to bring it under Japanese control. This fact had important consequences on the different way the Japanese ruled the two territories, which, as we will see later, had important consequences on the different colonial experience made by the two countries.

2.1 The Situation Encountered In Taiwan

The island was invaded in June, as peace negotiations were taking place. Despite the lack of any coordinated effort by Taiwanese population to contrast the Japanese invasion, numerous episodes of violence broke out at the opening stage. Nevertheless, the island was finally brought under the Japanese

¹⁴ ROY, Denny, *Taiwan: A Political History*, Ithaca NY, Cornell UP, 2003, p. 32.

rule with the taking of the southern city of Tainan in October 1895¹⁵.

When the Japanese began exploring the Taiwanese territory, what they encountered proved to be a fortuitous reality. Forests were populated by different tribes, which had never organized themselves into a political unity; while costal territories were inhabited by Chinese settlers that had never been governed by a strong political rule. For the Japanese “the lack of a coherent Taiwanese political identity would ensure no clear focal point of resistance to the imposition of colonial rule”¹⁶ during almost the entire Japanese domination. Things were very different in Korea where one thousand years of unitary government had generated a strong sense of national identity.

Early Chinese settlements in Taiwan had begun in the early 15th century, when Chinese people started locating on its costs in search for fortune. The Chinese who started to settle in the Taiwan were farmers looking for pristine ground to cultivate in spring and summer, or fishermen looking for a temporary accommodation during the fishing season. Since these settlements were only seasonal, no formal Chinese government was established on the island¹⁷.

The arrival of the Dutch East Indies Company in 1624 established some form of control over the island and contributed

¹⁵ LAMLEY, Harry J., “Taiwan Under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945: The vicissitudes of Colonialism” in Murray A. Rubinstein (ed.), *Taiwan: A New History*, Armonck N.Y., M.E. Sharpe, 1999, pp. 207.

¹⁶ ABRAMSON, Gunnar, “Comparative Colonialism: Variations in Japanese Colonial Policy in Taiwan and Korea, 1895-1945”, *Portland State University McNair Scholars Online Journal*, Vol. I, 2004-2005, p. 16.

¹⁷ Ibid.

to accelerate the process of Chinese migration, since it would have given the Chinese a larger spectrum of trading opportunities¹⁸. However, the Dutch rule did not last long. With the Qing Dynasty seizing power in China in 1644, loyalist of the Ming Dynasty Zheng Chenggong, escaped to Taiwan in search of exile and evicted the Dutch in 1661. Zheng converted Taiwan into an outpost from whom he wanted to put back the Ming on power in the mainland, but still avoided creating a political unity

After Ming collapse in 1683 under the pressure of the internal power struggles, The Qing, that in the meanwhile had taken power in the Mainland, opted to rule the island as a district of the Fujian Province, without establishing a strict military control. The island again was prevented from forming a real political unity that would create a semblance of national identity that could somehow constitute a greater barrier to the Japanese installation¹⁹.

The lack of coherent political identity went hand in hand with the lack of a strong sense of national identity. Having been loosely ruled as China's province for long time, Taiwan never made a unity out of its mixture of tribal villages and Chinese settlements. Therefore, when China "sold them out"²⁰ to the Japanese and governor T'ang tried to organize a resistance proclaiming a Republic, the troops "had little motivation to die for

¹⁸ ROY, Denny "Taiwan: A Political History", Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 2003, pp 12-17.

¹⁹ ABRAMSON, Gunnar, "Comparative Colonialism: Variations in Japanese Colonial Policy in Taiwan and Korea, 1895-1945", *Portland State University McNair Scholars Online Journal*, Vol. I, 2004-2005.

²⁰ ROY, Denny "Taiwan: A Political History", Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 2003, p.33.

Taiwan”²¹. Only a few days after the first contingent of Japanese troops took control over Taipei on May 29, the local government fled away. T’ang’s collaborators, during a visit at Tamsui Port pretending to conduct a military inspection, embarked on a German ship and escaped to China.

2.2 The Situation Encountered in Korea

The situation encountered in Korea by the Japanese after annexation in 1910 was very different from that encountered in Taiwan. After having been ruled by a single state entity, under the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392 AD) and Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897 AD) in 1897 the country had even seen the creation of The Great Korean Empire, which brought about a discrete modernization²². It is true that for long time Korea had been a vassal state of the Chinese Empire, however, even if Korea had long been ‘the most cooperative partner in the so-called tribute system’²³ of the *tianxia*, ‘all under Heaven’, at the base of the Chinese world order for centuries, Korean people always kept their strong native traditions and culture. So, as noted by Patricia Tsurumi on her essays about colonial education, by annexing Korea “Japan acquired an entire country with its own proud royal traditions and ancient civilization. Governing from the former royal capital and keeping the Korean royal family in docile captivity, the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Japanese kept alive memories of the days when Koreans ruled Koreans”²⁴. And this was the first reason why Korean reacted so violently to the Japanese annexation.

The second reason lays in the Japanese tightener way of keeping control over the country. While the Chinese established a loose control on the peninsula, requesting the Kingdom only to pay tributes and respect Chinese diplomatic etiquette, the Japanese imposed a direct control through a colonial government. Moreover, although even the Chinese foreign policy-makers of the imperial times always tried to extend their influence as much as they could, they never “really expect to change the lives of ordinary Koreans”²⁵ and “it was up to the local rulers to pass on what they learned of ideal Chinese behaviour”²⁶. On the contrary, when the Japanese arrived in the XX century, they tried to “impose Japanese ways on the whole society”²⁷ postulating that Korean people had to follow their example because they shared with them “common ethnic roots”²⁸.

The third reason of Korean bad reaction to Japanese annexation was that Korean antipathy towards Japan had started well before the colonial period. When Japanese colonial government finally settled in Korea after annexation in 1910, in fact, it was not the first time in history Japan attempted to “use

²⁴ PEATTIE, Mark. R., “Introduction” in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ PRATT, Keith, *Everlasting Flower. A history of Korea*, London, Reaktion Books, 2007.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Korea as the pathway towards [...] continental domination”²⁹. Hence, their first trial dated back in 1592 -1598 when Toyotomi Hideyoshi and his armies “invaded and partially occupied the peninsula”³⁰. If during this first invasion the Japanese caused “widespread destruction of buildings and works of art”³¹, during the second they contributed to “deal a fatal blow to Korea’s cultural individuality”³².

In addition, the type of dominant social class existing at the time of Japanese arrival had different consequence in the two countries. In Taiwan, the dominant class was formed by merchants, who deeply appreciated the Japanese interest in commerce. On the contrary, in Korea the dominant class was aristocracy that in the highly stratified Korean society, occupied privileged positions in the government. When the Japanese came and established a new colonial rule administered by them, they made enemies within the most powerful social class in Korea³³.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ ABRAMSON, Gunnar, “Comparative Colonialism: Variations in Japanese Colonial Policy in Taiwan and Korea, 1895-1945”, *Portland State University McNair Scholars Online Journal*, Vol. I, 2004-2005.

Finally, Japan annexation of Korea came at a time in which the first seeds of a modern nationalist movement had begun to grow. For this reason, when the Japanese imposed their customs and culture in the effort to assimilate Korean people, they generated what the Korea expert Gregory Henderson calls a true “development shock”³⁴. In effect, despite the colonizers’ effort to cultivate the “Japanese spirit” those sprouts of national conscience could not be eradicated³⁵.

3. The Policing System Established In The Colonies

In the two colonies, the Japanese managed to control the law and order through a system based on the pre existing structure of control. In Taiwan for example, they managed to integrate with the local community by collaborating with the Chinese system of self-policing called the *pao-chia*.³⁶ This system was a deep-rooted network that had been present for a long time in the island and found support among the local population. Moreover, this system was tied up with the local militia made of

³⁴ HENDERSON, Gregory, *Japan's Chōsen: Immigrants, Ruthlessness and Development Shock* in Andrew Nahm (ed.) pp. 261-269, in MYERS, Ramon H. and PEATTIE, Mark R. (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 20.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ In the *pao-chia* system, a *chia* was formed by ten households and a *pao* was formed by ten *chia*. Both the *pao* and the *chia* had their leaders, who were elected by the household heads. Under Japanese, these leaders were approved by the colonial administration and push them to collaborate. All the *pao-chia* officers had to report the number of residents, enforce public health programs, combat epidemics, and draft labour for large-scale work. Through this system the colonial rule managed to keep control of the population more in depth.

able-bodied male coming from the *pao-chia* households. Similarly, in Korea the Japanese exploited the system of village elders, tribal chieftains, or neighbourhood heads to assist the police. Although on paper the two systems were roughly the same, the practice was substantially different. According to Governor-general of Korea Terauchi Masatake, in effect, it was “easier to use the gendarmes than the police to control a primitive people”. Governor-general of Taiwan Kodama Gentaro, instead, had a completely different view. He thought that the civil police was more suitable than the military police to maintain peace and order in Taiwan. Therefore in Korea, after 1911 when relative peace was maintained, police continued to keep control of the law and order. With the assistance of Akashi Motojirō, the military police commander and chief of the police, Terauchi and his successors transformed “the entire peninsula into a military camp”³⁷. It was precisely this refusal to turn from a gendarme-dominated policy system to one based on the Taiwan model that failed to stop the anti-Japanese movements in March 1919. The system in Korea was changed only after the internal and international pressures generated by the Independence movement, and a civil police as the one used in Taiwan, was installed as the sole policing force.³⁸ But this move, proved to be not enough for subduing the Korean population, hence something in their relationship had already been broken.

³⁷ ABRAMSON, Gunnar, “Comparative Colonialism: Variations in Japanese Colonial Policy in Taiwan and Korea, 1895-1945”, *Portland State University McNair Scholars Online Journal*, Vol. I, 2004-2005.

³⁸ CHEN Ching-Chih “Police and Community Control System in the Empire” in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 218-227.

3.1. The Political Movements

Also when it came to achieve political rights, the two colonies were not treated the same way. The decade from 1914 to 1924 saw the emergence of powerful currents, which brought a political change in the Japanese politics pulling for a more liberal attitude towards the colonies. This was due to the erosion of the influence of the military, coupled with the rise in power of political parties and the Diet, which were more accommodative to the interests of the colonial people. At the same time the Wilsonian principle of auto determination started to inflame colonies, which were asking for more autonomy for themselves. Notwithstanding the new open approach in the homeland, Japanese colonialists were put increasingly on the defensive, and the two colonies, were received a different treatment again.

In Taiwan, these ideas received the support from homeland movements, which wanted to assimilate the Taiwanese and desired to extend to them certain basic civil rights enjoyed by the Japanese in the home country. Even if these movements were not successful in the end because the colonial government blocked them, they still awoke fewer hostilities from the colonial administration than they did in Korea. In the peninsula, the severity of General Terauchi's battle to make the population conform to Japanese values and institutions generated a violent antagonism, which finally exploded in the March First Movement in 1919. It gathered more than two million Koreans asking for national liberation and demonstrated the intensity of the Korean sentiment. The cruelty of the colonial response, launched against a

harmless population, showed the rigor with which Japan intended maintain the control over the peninsula³⁹.

3.2. The Legal Status Of The Colonized

Regarding the legal status of the colonial population, a special mention must be done. The legal status of the people in Taiwan, was different from that accorded to the people in Korea. In the Treaty of Shimonoseki (Article 5) the Japanese government agreed to permit to those unwilling to be subjected to the Japanese rule to immigrate to China. All the others were then subjected to the Nationality law in 1899, with which the Taiwanese became officially Japanese nationals. In contrast, neither the Treaty of Portsmouth nor the one about the annexation of Korea made reference to the legal status of the Korean population. Nationality Law was never put in force in Korea and its large population was left in a legally ambiguous condition. Albeit during the period of Japanese rule no problem arose from such an ambiguity, in the process of the peace treaty negotiations in the 1960s the South Korean government insisted that the Koreans never had Japanese nationality, but they were only enlisted in the census registry. However, aside from this, “Japanese nationality meant very little for the two peoples in

³⁹ PEATTIE, Mark. R., “Introduction” in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 20-21.

terms of civil liberties and racial equality which nationality was supposed to guarantee".⁴⁰

3.3 The Law Enforcement In The Colonies

Also concerning the law enforcement the two colonies received a different treatment. Except for the initial hesitation after the acquisition of Taiwan, the objective of the Japanese Empire as a colonial power has always been to achieve the legal integration of its colonies. In Taiwan the formation, in 1921, of the League for the Establishment of a Taiwan Congress, compelled the Imperial Diet to face the dilemma of how to extend the Japanese constitution to Taiwan while preserving a separate legal system. This represented a step further for Taiwan integration, which went deeper than the one in Korea. In effect, Koreans, which were far more interested in independence than in home rule, and never asked such a deep level of integration. In addition, the traditional hostility of the governors-generals of Korea towards any intrusion of the Japanese government into the Korean affairs coupled with the permanent nature of their legislative power⁴¹ contributed to prevent the legal integration of the colony within the Empire. Therefore while Taiwan and other colonies were becoming

⁴⁰ CHEN Edward I-te, "The Attempt To Integrate the Empire: Legal Perspectives, in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp.245-246.

⁴¹ Recognised in an imperial rescript of 1910.

increasingly part of metropolitan Japan⁴², Korea remained basically isolated, with the result that fewer Japanese laws were put into force in Korea, and the political participation of the people in Korea was even more distant.

4. The Colonial Economy

Since the beginning of its colonial experience Japan wanted its colonies to provide more than their economic self-sufficiency; the government wanted them to contribute to the well being of the Japanese population. By the time in which the colonies were acquired, it had become clear that Japanese domestic agricultural production could not meet the needs of its growing population and rising per capita income. In addition, Japan was facing severe balance-of-payments difficulties during the early years of its economic development, started with the Meiji Restoration in 1968 and could not import large amounts of products from abroad.

The acquisition of the colonies was, in this sense, a true relief for Japanese hard-pressed economy, whose total export were unable to keep pace with the import demands of the rapid industrialization. By annexing Taiwan, Japan earned its first large area climatically suited for the sugarcane and rice cultivation⁴³. Therefore, soon after acquisition Taiwan and Korea became the

⁴² As much as the governor-general of Taiwan could exercise his legislative power only when any other comparable Japanese law was available.

⁴³ KA, Chih-Ming, *Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan. Land Tenure, Development and Dependency, 1895-1945*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, Inc., A division of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995.

“agricultural appendages” of Japan and as well as the primary markets for Japanese manufacturers.

Soon after Japan took control over Korea and Taiwan, the colonial administration started investing large amounts for enhancing communication and transportation infrastructures because they were indispensable to control the colonies and promote closer economic ties. In a few years Japan government managed to transform fragmented economies into an integrated market system, by financing projects that were too risky and costly for private entrepreneurs, thus increasing their profitability in agriculture, commerce and industry⁴⁴.

The regional configuration of the Japanese empire was determinant in giving Japan a strong economic advantage over the Western powers. The proximity of the territories meant, in fact, lower transportation costs, more rapid communications, and the possibility to two important agricultural commodities, sugar and rice. Western powers could not count on such an opportunity and had to consider its colonies mostly as export-oriented enclaves⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ PEATTIE, Mark. R., “Introduction” in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

4.1 *The Capital Formation*

Even if the two colonies were object of similar infrastructural investment, in their economies the process of capital formation was very different. While in Taiwan the export of agricultural products generated a huge trade surplus in the balance-of-payments that made possible a considerable accumulation of capital, in Korea the lacking interest in developing agriculture caused the economy to grow much more slowly.

As stated by the economists Mizoguchi Toshiyuki and Yamamoto Yūtō in their essay on Capital Formation in Taiwan and Korea “In Taiwan officials selected the economic activities that would rapidly stimulate economic development and produce a quick, high pay off. Their success in doing this produced huge tax revenues in the early years, which enabled officials to pursue other programs”⁴⁶ On the other hand in Korea, having great difficulties in maintaining law and order, the Japanese directed general administration expenditures towards the covering of police costs.

The different agricultural development in the two countries is partly related to the two countries different reactions to the land reforms. In Korea the majority of the farmers suffered tremendously from the land registration policies and especially from the switch from an economy based on barter to one based on

⁴⁶ MIZOGUCHI Toshiyuki, YAMAMOTO Yūzō, “Capital Formation in Taiwan and Korea”, in MYERS, Ramon H., PEATTIE, Mark R. (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.

money. In Taiwan landlords who benefited from the land-tax reform continued to save money and invest them in agricultural enterprises. On the contrary, in Korea, the *Yangban* landlords continued to collect rents, showing lesser entrepreneurial capacities. This had disastrous effects on the economy. So, while Taiwan trade balance surplus exceeded one billion yen by the 1930s; the Korean trade balance remained in deficit throughout the entire period, eventually reaching one billion.

As described by Myers and Peattie, Taiwan underwent a “more balanced and broadly based development” particularly thanks to Japanese promotion of rice cultivation, which was useful both for subsistence and export. However, as claimed by Chih-Ming Ka, it was not all about Japanese investments. Instead it was mostly due to the particular family-farm-based land tenure system present in the island, that the Japanese had contributed to maintain. While the export of the sugarcane was entirely controlled by Japanese sugar conglomerated, the rice production and trade, considered less important, were left under the control of indigenous landlords and miller-merchants. When in 1925 the demand for rice from Japan increased, this relative freedom would be determinant. At that point, in fact, Taiwanese landowners, who were left free to export their rice without mediation, could export large amounts of rice and detain the whole profit to enhance their living condition⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ KA Chih-Ming, *Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan. Land Tenure, Development and Dependency, 1895-1945*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, Inc., A division of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995.

As a result, material conditions in Korea were worse those in Taiwan, where agricultural technology brought prosperity to the rural elite and other portions of the agrarian population not only did Taiwanese labourers received higher wages than the Korean, but also wage differentials between Japanese and indigenes in the same jobs were much larger in Korea than in Taiwan, where also employment rates were two times those of Korea. ⁴⁸ Moreover “the hydroelectric production in Korea was three times larger that in Taiwan, however less than 12 per cent of Korean families had access to electric lighting, against the 36.3 per cent of the Taiwanese”⁴⁹.

5. The Colonial Education

The Japanese education policy in the colonies aimed at reproducing the same educational system that worked so well in Japan. Being implemented during the early Meiji era, this system had brought many positive effects, such as psychological unity, loyalty to a modern state, and new patterns of life based on modern habits and disciplines. As, according to the *dōka*, people from Taiwan and Korea were culturally and ethnically akin to the Japanese, the empire administration started to wonder why this system should not work in colonies. Taiwanese and Koreans were not islanders of the South Sea, but East Asians, so they were not

⁴⁸ PEATTIE, Mark. R., “Introduction” in Myers Ramon H. and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 37.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

quite Japanese but perhaps capable of becoming Japanese. For this reason, from the early years they started implementing in the colonies the same progressive strategy that had been so successful in Japan⁵⁰.

Education policies brought about by the colonial governments had great success in both countries. The institution with major impact was the elementary school, which was publicly financed and attended by a large spectrum of Korean and Taiwanese young children. Enrolment in Korea increased sharply, rising from 20.000 in 1910 to 90.000 in 1920 and 901.000 in 1937, corresponding approximately to a 17 per cent of the total school age children; but the increase in Taiwan was even more impressive, rising to about one-third of the school age children in 1930 to a 71 per cent in 1943⁵¹.

In the two colonies Japanese educational aims, approaches and structures were similar. Both peoples were to be gradually transformed into loyal Japanese subjects, according to the *dōka* and *kominka* policies, educated for a modern but humble life and work. In both colonies the Japanese tried to concentrate on slow but steady expansion of the basic elementary education and in both the education system ended up to be the inferior reproduction of the one established in Japan. Both in Korean and Taiwan, traditional Chinese-style private schools were accepted at an early stage, and Confucian scholars were welcomed, because they shared the same cultural roots of the Japanese. Educational affairs had similar status in both countries and the staff carried on

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

the same tasks. The subjects of study in the common school in Taiwan were almost identical to the one of ordinary schools in Korea and also public secondary and higher education were analogous⁵².

In Korea, as in Taiwan, the education system was renovate under the *dōka* policy in 1922 aiming at further integrate and assimilate the colonized people. Notwithstanding the similar policies it soon became clear that the educational policies would have different outcomes in the two colonies and the education in Korea was not going to be alike the education of Taiwan. One was the reason above all: the situation that existed in Korea before the annexation was far more complex that of Taiwan⁵³.

In addition to the Chinese school, which existed in Taiwan before 1895, Korea had a variety of other educational institutions. There were provincial schools run by local administrators, private schools for the aristocrat class and also schools run by Western missionaries. In addition to these traditional schools, in the 1890s the Yi government had introduced a reform intended to lay the groundwork of a modern education system. In this framework a new impulse was given for the opening of western-style elementary schools, middle schools, foreign-language schools, vocational schools, a normal school and a medical school⁵⁴.

Since this myriad of modern-style schools was present in Korea before the annexation, unlike in Taiwan Japanese

⁵² ONO, "Chōsen kyōiku mondai kanken", in MYERS Ramon H. and PEATTIE Mark R. (eds.), *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

administrators were not free to build up from the start. In addition, what disturbed the Japanese the most was the formation in 1905 of a countrywide patriotic movement called “education for the nation”, which gave momentum to the opening of night schools, labourers’ schools, and short term training centres⁵⁵.

The only solution for the Japanese was to declare outlaw the schools that promoted nationalist ideas and closed all the private schools that could represent centres of actual or potential anti-Japanese sentiments. The words of the colony’s first governor-general Terauchi Masatake, well express the attitude of the Japanese towards this issue.

Among the private schools, there are schools that teach songs and use other materials, which encourage independence and incite rebellion against the Japanese empire. This is forbidden, and utmost care must be exercised to ensure that the prohibition of these activities is enforced. Koreans themselves should deeply reflect upon the consequences of fostering this type of thought. For instance, the cry for independence will eventually lead Koreans to rebel against Japan. Will this promote the happiness of Koreans? Japan will just suppress such rebellion with force. This will not hurt Japan; only Koreans will suffer.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The Japanese were determinate to suppress every nationalist conscience in Korea with violence if necessary; and they did it. In March 1919, when a peaceful procession for the Korean's king funeral turned into a militant demonstration joined by Koreans in every part of the country, the Japanese did not hesitate to use massive violence against the militants.

The Japanese brutally wiped out the rebellion, but they could not avoid noticing that private school students took a very active part in it. They soon come to realise that acceptance of the Japanese education, that this students demonstrated by attending Japanese schools, did not necessarily meant acceptance of the Japanese culture and values and even less, the acceptance of Japanese rule⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

SECOND CHAPTER

THE THREE MAJOR POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN JAPAN AND ITS FORMER COLONIES SINCE THE END OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME

In the first chapter I analysed the historical causes that are likely to lay behind Korea and Taiwan's different relations with Japan. Before starting the analysis of what are the present reasons of their different relationship, we need to make a step back and in what occasions and for which issue concerning Japan we can notice a different approach of Korea and Taiwan. This chapter is especially dedicated to delineate what are the major points of disagreement between Korea and Japan that have been often easily left behind by Taiwan.

1. The 'Comfort Women' issue

The most contested issue within the debate over war responsibility has been that of the euphemistically named military comfort women (*jūgun ianfu*). These women, renamed more accurately military sexual slaves by survivors and by United Nations, were systematically recruited, usually by force, during the period from 1937 to 1945 and coerced under slave-like conditions

to serve the sexual “needs” of the Japanese military during the World War II.⁵⁸

1.1. The creation of ‘Comfort Stations’

The military designed two ways of gathering comfort women. The first way was by appointing a private operator from the military field in China and send him to Japan, Korea and Taiwan to round up comfort women; the second method was carried out by sending request to army units in those countries to choose an agent to round them up and transport them to the military field. In both of these cases, military police and local police forces do not appear in any records concerning rounding up activities. However, it is proved that the military in many cases cooperated with these agents, especially because they were those in charge to issue the permits or travel identity paper that would allow them to undertake these travels⁵⁹.

In order to easily reach their objectives, garrisons commanders usually asked the cooperation of local notables, which for the safety of the village agreed to offer their women. As a consequence many of the women rounded up were not prostitutes but women forced into sexual-slavery without their consent. Women were forced into humiliating examinations for sexually transmitted disease and then forced into labour. After

⁵⁸ CHIZUKO Ueno, *Nationalism and Gender*, Melbourne, Trans Pacific Press, 2004, p. ix.

⁵⁹ YOSHIMI Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, 1995, 2000, NY, Columbia University Press, pp. 64-65.

being recruited “Comfort Women” had to “ensure moments of recreation”⁶⁰ to the soldiers, usually ten per day, although on the eve of a battle or the following day they could have been asked to “comfort” thirty or forty of them⁶¹.

The fact that women were coerced by their local rulers or by the head of organizations for maintaining order and not directly by the Japanese soldiers, allowed Japan to deny any responsibility in the future.

Very illustrative are the accounts by Yoshimi Yoshiaki when analysing the diary of a military physician in charge of carrying out medical tests on women in a village near Dongshi:

“Medical examination of twenty-two women between the ages of fifteen and thirty-six concluded that four women were in good health, thirteen were in acceptable health, and five failed. Taking their appearances and attitudes into consideration as well, fifteen women were retained. Ten of those were assigned for soldiers’ use, five would be used in the officers’ club, and one was reserved for the exclusive use of the battalion commander”.⁶²

⁶⁰ YOSHIMI Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II*, NY, Columbia University Press, 2000, p. 44.

⁶¹ CAROLI, Rosa, “Comfort Women. Una lettura di genere”, *DEP*, n. X, 2009, p. 133

⁶² MIZOBE Kazuto, ed., *Dokusan’ni: mō hitotsu no sensō*, Yamaguchi: privately published, 1983, p.58, in YOSHIMI Yoshiaki *Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, 1995, 2000 Columbia University Press, pp. 121.

While many of the women were “sacrificed for the good of the village”⁶³, and were aware of the reason of their recruitment, many others were deceived with the promise of “transporting food for the [military] cafeterias and bars, doing menial tasks, or working as waitress and barmaids only, not selling your body” and for these reasons women willingly took this “opportunities”.

1.2. The political and health motivations in support of the ‘Comfort Stations’

According to the army records, the reasons behind the establishment of the comfort stations were principally two. The first was to prevent soldiers to commit rapes in the occupied territories, thing that could put the Japanese soldiers in a bad light and provoke the resentment of the local population. The second reason was to protect Japanese soldiers from contracting sexually transmitter disease, by having not protected sex, which could put in danger the integrity of the army. As narrated by Yoshimi Yoshiaki on his account of the First Lieutenant Hayao Torao report about “Phenomenal Particular to the Battlefield and Policies Towards Them”, however, this system hardly prevent many rapes to take place:

⁶³ Taihokushi fujo kyūen shakaifukuri kikin kai, eds., *Taiwan chifu ianfu hōmon chōsa kobetsu bunseki hōkokusho*, p.6 in YOSHIMI Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, 1995, Colombia University Press, pp. 116.

“The essentially purposes of these stations are to pacify the soldiers though satisfying their sexual desires and to prevent rapes that damage the honour of the Imperial Army... Still there are considerable numbers of rapes in the countryside, and we also see many behind the front lines...when they see young Chinese women, they are drawn to them as if possessed⁶⁴

Nowadays, there are few comfort women still alive, but the debate is still animated, especially in Korea. The conflict over the comfort women issue is both a battle for obtaining apologies and compensations from the Japanese government and a struggle on how the past is represented, especially in history textbooks. Survivors of the comfort women system and their supporters have challenged the Japanese to see themselves and their fathers as the perpetrators of violence imputable of war crimes. Therefore, anti-apology activists portray this challenge as an offence against those who died to ensure Japan's current prosperity. These activists sustain the idea that comfort women were not unaware victims of Japanese brutality but former prostitutes in search of easy earnings. Accordingly, they identify as the true victims of this representation of history elderly Japanese men who fought in the war and today's Japanese children. This point of view is illustrated vividly by the manga

⁶⁴ YOSHIMI, *Shiryōshū*, 102-103 in Yoshimi Yoshiaki *Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, 1995, 2000 Colombia University Press, pp. 66-67.

artist Kobayashi Yoshinori in his representation of the two contrasting images of Japanese soldiers fighting and dying in the war and Japan's current wealth. As strong underlined by the accompanying text: "We, living tranquil lives today in an era of peace, have absolutely no right to condemn and make criminals of our grandfathers, who fought and died thinking that they were fighting the sake of 'country and family'"⁶⁵

1.3. The first coming out by a former 'Comfort Woman on Japan's war crimes

At the moment of the publication of the first book on the 'Comfort Women' in 1976, "*Tenno no Guntai to Chosenjin lanfu*" [The emperor's forces and Korean comfort women] by Kim Il Myon, the issue was almost completely unknown and no trials had been held to punish the perpetrators of war crimes against women. The only trials against sexual slavery held in 1948 "involved only a small number of Dutch Women in Indonesia [...] and those trials ignored the same ordeals suffered by Indonesian women"⁶⁶. Furthermore, more than forty years after the end of the Pacific War, "none of the affected nations in Asia officially

⁶⁵ Kobayashi and Takeuchi, *Kyōkasho ga oshiekanenai jigyouku*, p. 184, in YOSHIMI Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, 1995, 2000
Columbia University Press, pp. 15-16

⁶⁶ CHUNGHEE Sarah Soh, "The Korean 'Comfort Women' Movement for Redress", in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12, December 1996, p. 1231.

raised issues concerning the wartime sexual abuse of their women by Japanese military”⁶⁷.

The reason behind silence over comfort women was mainly to be attributed to the inability of the former comfort women to find the means to protest. As noted by Chunghee Sarah Soh, professor of Anthropology at San Francisco University, “The majority of Korean ‘military comfort women’ seemed to have come from poor families in rural farming areas and had little formal education; even if they had wanted to redress the injustice done to them, they had little means to right the wrong they suffered”⁶⁸. Moreover as she continues “the way the South Korean government handled the demands of women activists on the issue of ‘military comfort women’ can be understood by considering not only the patriarchal culture of androcentric sexism but also by traditional elitist attitudes in dealing with social injustice inflicted upon the poor and the powerless in Korean society”⁶⁹. The lack of documentary evidence caused by Japanese government destruction of the majority of the documents, was only one part of the problem.

In the traditional Korean patriarchy the sexual culture encouraged sexual freedom of men, condoning also infidelity if they were married, while controlled women’s sexuality by standards of virginity and chastity. So “unmarried women had to maintain their virginity until marriage and widows were expected

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 1232.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 1230.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

to be chaste”⁷⁰. Without any consideration for individual circumstances, women who did not respect the principle of chastity were considered sullied and could be ostracized even by their own families. In a cultural context like this, “many women committed suicide after being raped or in order to avoid being raped”⁷¹ and their deaths were considered as “honourable deeds of virtuous women (*yölyö*)”⁷². Also in recent years criminals “have taken advantage of this traditional view and by raping women in front of members of their families in order to ensure that the robbery would not be reported to the police”⁷³. Taking all this into consideration it is easy to understand how survivors of the military sexual slavery were not willing to narrate their stories and the government was not interested to uncover past events.

1.4. Raising Public Consciousness On The ‘Comfort Women’ Issue

Only the activities started in Korea by groups of feminist and Christian women in the 1980s managed to raise the public consciousness over the issue. In particular, it was the account made in 1991 by the former ‘comfort women’ Kim Hak-sun regarding her experience as a sexual slave under the Japanese, to bring the issue at the core of the public debate. The same thing happened in Taiwan during those years where the “comfort

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

women” issue went public in February 1992, when the Japanese Diet Member Itô Hideko discovered some telegrams containing the incontrovertible evidence of the recruitment.

In those years the issue exploded in both countries however, it was in Korea that the feminist activists decided to gather together in order to achieve a stronger political power. During the state visit of President Tae Woo to Japan in May 1990 Korean feminist activist found the political occasion to raise the issues of the “comfort women” and Korean sufferings during the colonial rule. On that occasion, the activists issued a list of demands addressed to the Japanese government, included the request to investigate the issue and apologize for its involvement in the ‘comfort women’ issue. The move actually achieved the desired result and during a state banquet for President Roh, the Emperor Akihito formally expressed his apologies for the sufferings caused by Japanese colonial rule to Korean people⁷⁴.

By the way, later, when the request to investigate on the “comfort women” issue came directly from the Japanese parliament with an interrogation made by Councillor Motooka of the upper house of the Japanese Diet on June 6, 1990, the government refused, insisting that the actions were carried out by private enterprises and denying any direct involvement of the Japanese government⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 1232.

⁷⁵ NISHINO Rumiko, “Jugun Ianfu” [Military comfort women], Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1992, in CHUNGHEE Sarah Soh, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’ Movement for Redress”, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12, December 1996, p. 1232.

At that point, Korean women's organizations sent an official letter to Prime Minister Kaifu demanding again the admission of the crimes, joint with an apology and "compensation by the government for the sexual slavery of Korean women"⁷⁶. In addition, they joined together to form the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (*Chöngdaehyöpp*) to earn more political strength. The former 'comfort women' started to gain trust and between 1991 and 1993 several "comfort women" filed lawsuits against the government of Japan for the damages inflicted during the War. They demanded official apologies, compensations, construction of monuments, and the correction of Japanese history textbooks to teach the truth about "comfort women"⁷⁷.

1.5. How The "Comfort Women" Became An International Human Rights Issue

As the Japanese government was not responding positively to the petition of the activists to defend the "comfort women" rights, the KCWS submitted the issue to the U.N. Human Rights Commission. On March 4, 1992 the co-chair of KCWS Lee Hyochae sent a petition to the Commission requesting to investigate Japanese brutalities against Korean women during World War II. The aim was to receive help in "pressure the Japanese government to pay reparations to individual women who [had]

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 1233.

filed the suits”⁷⁸. The Issue was discussed by the UNHCR in Geneva on August 1992, where many delegates from the *Chōngdaehyōp*⁷⁹ and one former “comfort women” gave their testimony. As a result, the UNHCR’s Subcommission for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities defined the “military comfort women” system as “a crime against humanity that violated the human rights of Asian women and the international agreement prohibiting forced labor that Japan signed in 1932”⁸⁰.

The move of appealing to the UNHCR brought some feeble results, as Tokyo at the time admitted state’s involvement in the issue. However, Japan still argued “any coercion was exercised by the state in the recruitment of Korean ‘comfort women’ and denied any possibility of material compensation to the survivors by Japan”⁸¹. After seeing, Japanese government unwillingness to refund the comfort women in December 1992 Korean activists began a nationwide fund raising to refund former ‘comfort women’ and by June 1993 they were able to collect 200 million wōn (about US\$250,000). Also Buddhist monks started raising money in 1992 and in 1995, through which they managed to build a House of Sharing in Seoul where seven former “comfort women” could live.

⁷⁸ CHUNGHEE Sarah Soh, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’ Movement for Redress”, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12, December 1996, p. 1235.

⁷⁹ The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery.

⁸⁰ CHAI, Y. Alice, “Asian-Pacific Feminist Coalition Politics: The *Chōngsindae/Jugunianfu* (‘Comfort Women’) Movement”, *Korean Studies*, no. 17, 1993, pp.67-91.

⁸¹ *Han’guk Ilbo*, July 7, 1992, August 4, 1992 in CHUNGHEE Sarah Soh, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’ Movement for Redress”, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12, December 1996, p. 1235.

1.6. The 'Kôno Statement': Japanese Government First Official Apologies

In March 1993 the new President Kim Young Sam announced that the government would seek no material compensation from Japan for the “comfort women” and would only push Japanese government to investigate the matter and make a comprehensive formal apology. The idea of Kim was to take a position of moral superiority in order to “forging a new relationship with Japan in the future”⁸². Moreover, in order to definitely bring the issue to an end, Korean government in August 1993 distributed a sum of five million wŏn (about US\$6,250) to each survivor and also announced it would give additional monthly support of 250,000 wŏn in 1995.

Tokyo reacted very positively to President Kim’s policies and “regarded his position as a friendly gesture”⁸³. The result was that Japan finally recognised that it had coercively recruited the ‘comfort women’ and materially organised their transportation to the ‘comfort stations’. On 4th August 1993 the first official acknowledgement of the “comfort women” issue was made by the then Chief Cabinet Minister Kôno Yôhei with the following statement: “comfort Stations (*ianjo*) were established on a long-term basis over a wide area” and many women “were brought together [to serve as ‘comfort women’] against their will”⁸⁴. In

⁸² Ibid., p. 1236.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 1236.

⁸⁴ Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, MOFA, “Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the result of the study on the issue of ‘comfort women’”, 4th

addition, he noted, “the recruitment of the comfort women was conducted mainly by private recruiters who acted in response to the request of the military” which was “directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women.”⁸⁵

In the end, when in November 1994 Japan agreed to pay an amount of US\$40,000 to each survivor as recommended by Court of Justice, this seemed to be an historical moment for building up peaceful relations between Korea and Japan. However, Korea-Japan relations were just about to deteriorate. The problems surged when it became clear that Tokyo’s intention was to “deal with the compensation issue at a non-governmental level”⁸⁶. Understandably, the *Chōngdaehyōp* refused to accept this proposal and demanded that was “the government of Japan, as the real perpetrator of the crime, [to] pay the compensation”⁸⁷. From that moment, the Korean government started making numerous claims for the Japanese government to recognise state responsibilities over the recruitment of the “comfort women”, but the Japanese government demonstrates deafness. They claim, “Its legal liability for the wrongdoing was cleared by a bilateral claims treaty signed in 1965 between the two countries”⁸⁸ and there is no need for a new one.

August 1993, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html>, accessed on 4th June, 2014.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ CHUNGHEE Sarah Soh, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’ Movement for Redress”, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12, December 1996, p. 1237.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the result of the study on the issue of ‘comfort

Nothing more than tensions was achieved through South Korean claims, until nowadays when the dispute over the comfort women' is worsened by Abe recently revealed new policy. On June 20, 2014, as reported by the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs "the Japanese disclosed to the public the result of the so-called review on details to the drafting of the *Kôno Statement*⁸⁹ of 1993, the first document in which the Japanese government acknowledge the coercive nature of its wartime sexual slavery"⁹⁰. To this move, Korea reacted with decision. "The Korean government has clearly [...] warned that reviewing the *Kôno Statement* while pledging to uphold it is in and of itself a contradictory meaningless act"⁹¹. While the Japanese government "has alleged that the reviewing exercise will strengthen the legitimacy [...] of the Statement, thereby helping to resolve the wartime sexual slavery issue"⁹², Korean government does not share this opinion. Furthermore they claim that "the review of the *Kôno Statement* clearly demonstrated to the international community that the Abe government has no intention to genuinely remorse, much less recognise the responsibility, for its past wrongdoings"⁹³.

women" <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html> (accessed on 4th June, 2014).

⁸⁹ Here and further on this page, when reported using the italic font, is the author's choice.

⁹⁰Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, "Korea's Position on Japan's Review of the Details Leading to the Drifting of the Kono Statement", 2014, www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/policy/military_prostitution_issue/government_position/res/Kono_FINAL.pdf, accessed on July 12, 2014.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

1.7. Raise Awareness: The Activity Of Korean Artists

With Abe threatening a review of the Kôno statement, the protests against Japanese wartime wrongdoings in Korea increased substantially. Activists and artists are active since the period of democratization in Korea and spread their voices all around the world to raise awareness among people and convince them to sustain the cause. One example of creativity in this sense is the huge poster erected in New York's Time Square on 3 October 2012 by the Korean pop singer Kim Jang Hoon and PR expert Suh Kyung Duk.



Poster in defence of 'comfort women' in Time Square, New York

In an attempt to raise awareness on Japan's atrocities in World War 2, the poster "shows former German chancellor Willy Brandt making his 'silent apology' at a Jewish ghetto monument in Warsaw in 1971"⁹⁴ and plead Japan to do the same. The association between post-war Germany and now-a-days Japan want to suggest that German's apologising attitude helped reconciliation in Europe and brought later to the creation of the European Union as we know it today. In the same way, also Japan should apologise to the victims of its wartime wrongdoings in order to build up a stronger cooperation for a more effective regionalism.

Another interesting example of 'comfort women' awareness campaigns is the work of the Korean-born artist Chang-Jin Lee "Comfort Women Wanted". In this campaign she employs billboard, bus kiosk posters, prints and multi-channel video installation in the United States and Korea. The title is "a reference to the actual text of advertisements that appeared in Asian newspapers during the war"⁹⁵. When Japan realised that the advertising had failed, "young women from Korea, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Netherlands were kidnapped or deceived and forced into sexual slavery"⁹⁶

⁹⁴ ANNA, Watanabe, *Giant 'comfort women' poster erected in Time Square*, "The Asian Correspondent", 2012, www.asiancorrespondent.com/90403/giant-comfort-women-poster-erected-in-time-square/ accessed on 9 July 2014.

⁹⁵ LEE, Chang-Jin, *Comfort Women Wanted*, "Spaces gallery", 2012m www.spacesgallery.org/project/comfort-women-wanted, accessed on 9 July 2014

⁹⁶ Ibid.



The Incheon Women Artists Biennale, Korea (2009) Ad-like billboard

1.8. How Japan's International 'Face' Was Compromised

The reasons why Tokyo is not willing to admit state responsibilities in recruiting the women, and is, on the contrary, trying to re-negotiate statements that contradicts it, is that such a fact would compromise its “face” in front of the entire world.

Sexual exploitation of women has been frequent in history especially in concomitance to the military activities of many nations. But what is unprecedented about the system of “comfort women” for the Japanese troops during the Pacific War is that it was “a systematic, long-term institutionalisation of female sexual slavery [...] coercively drafted by a state power.”⁹⁷ And this is very much different from random rape incident perpetrated by

⁹⁷ CHUNGHEE Sarah Soh, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’ Movement for Redress”, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12, December 1996, p. 1238.

individual soldiers. Therefore, it was state power that made the difference in the Japanese institution of the 'comfort women' exploitation system and helped keep the long silence over the issue both in Japan and Korea.

What did Korea by insisting on Japan recognition of state responsibility for the recruitment of the "comfort women", turned out to be "an unexpected political embarrassment [for Japan], damaging its national 'face' in front of the international community"⁹⁸. 'Face' as Scollon describes it is "the public image mutually negotiated and attributed from every participant of a communicative event to the other participants"⁹⁹. It is an important aspect in oriental cultures where the loss of 'face' caused by an interlocutor, even if, as in this case, it is a neighbouring nation, can cause serious problems in the mutual relationship. Tokyo actually tried many times to exert pressure against the UN investigations and prevent the general assembly meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in April 1996 from adopting a resolution but it did achieved the desired result. The loss of 'face' occurred also at an international level and this situation will be very difficult to mend.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 1238.

⁹⁹ SCOLLON, Ronald, "Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach", Cambridge, Blackwell 1995, p. 35 in BALBONI, Paolo E. "La comunicazione Interculturale", Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 2007, p. 48.

1.9. The 'Comfort Women' Issue In Taiwan

As we saw in the previous paragraphs, the 'Comfort Women' issue had a strong resonance in Korea. Even if it was hard for campaigners to attract Korean government's attention, the level of involvement achieved in the end was so high to threaten to undermine the relationship with Japan. On the other hand, in Taiwan the government immediately picked up the issue but after the victims had been refunded by the government itself, 'comfort women' have soon been forgotten. In the following paragraphs we will analyse the course of the event and the reasons of the Taiwanese 'amnesia'.

The existence of the Taiwanese 'Comfort Women', first emerged in February 1992, "when Japanese Diet Member Itô Hideko discovered three telegrams sent by the Japanese military requesting the dispatch of Taiwanese 'Comfort women' to Borneo"¹⁰⁰. Following these declarations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of the Republic of China (ROC) immediately established a hotline directed to those victims willing to come forward. Moreover, a special task force was put in place, collaborating with the NGO Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation (TWRFF) to identify former "comfort women". As a consequence, forty-eight 'Comfort Women' were identified, all being recruited between 1938 and 1945. Only three of them travelled from Taiwan knowing that they would serve as sex workers for the

¹⁰⁰ SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The "Comfort Women" Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs*: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p. 226.

Japanese military, all the others were “duped into believing that they would be working as kitchen assistants, nurses, waitresses, or performing domestic tasks”¹⁰¹.

The attention of civil society in Taiwan remained directed towards the ‘Comfort Women’ issue throughout the 1990s. During those years, both government and civil society pressed hard for the Japanese to apologise to the ‘comfort women’ and a statement was issued by the MOFA on 4 August 1993 arguing that “the Japanese government should take humanitarian responsibility ...[and] diligently deal with the issue of the Taiwanese comfort women ...and take concrete measures to compensate [them] as swiftly as possible”.¹⁰² The government of Taipei also joined the civil society in denouncing the Asian Women Fund’s financial compensation as “a measure that would allow [the Japanese government] to shirk *state responsibilities*” for harming the women”¹⁰³.

Having realised that Japan was not going to go any step further in this negotiation, the Legislative Yuan (the Taiwanese parliament) took the decision of providing NT\$500,000 for each woman who ad refused money from the AWF¹⁰⁴. From that moment, the issue started to lose its resonance among the Taiwanese people and also campaigners for ‘Comfort Women’ ’s

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² FUNÜ Jiuyuan Jijinhui, ed., “Taiwan Weianfu Baogao”, 202 in SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The “Comfort Women” Issue in Taiwan*, in Pacific Affairs: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, pp. 226-227.

¹⁰³ SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The “Comfort Women” Issue in Taiwan*, in Pacific Affairs: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p. 226.

¹⁰⁴ This amount was matched with private donation, so that the comfort women received NT\$1 million each.

rights noticed a progressive decrease in societal and governmental attention.

1.10. The 'Comfort women' issue's short life in Taiwan

In contrast with Korea, Taiwanese government's interest in the "comfort women" issue became evident from the beginning, just after historical evidences came to light, as the government took a strong position in asking for refund. However, after the issue of refunding was finally put to a close thanks to Taiwanese government intervention, the issue soon lost its political appeal, and anti-Japanese feelings quickly blew over.

As stated by an activist of the Taipei Women Rescue Foundation (TWRP) interviewed by the Asian expert and researcher Shogo Suzuki in 7 September 2009 "at the height of our campaign, the Japanese representatives at Taipei used to come out to see us when we demonstrated outside their building, saying that they would pass on our message to Tokyo. But now they don't come out to see us at all, because they know that Taiwanese society isn't interested in this issue any more, they know that they're not under broader societal pressure in Taiwan".¹⁰⁵

If the government was very quick to direct its attention away after the financial compensation was handled, also civil

¹⁰⁵ SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The "Comfort Women" Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs*: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, pp. 227.

society did not persist in the fight. Activists, interviewed by Shogo Suzuki claim their campaigns “don’t get widespread support. In our demonstrations in front of the Japanese embassy on 15 August [...] we only got about 100 people”¹⁰⁶.

Another strong difference with Korea is the presence of the “comfort women” issue in the newspapers. Using “comfort women” as a keyword on Taiwanese newspapers between 1992 and 2006, as did by Shogo Suzuki for his essay on “comfort women” issue in Taiwan, give some interesting results.

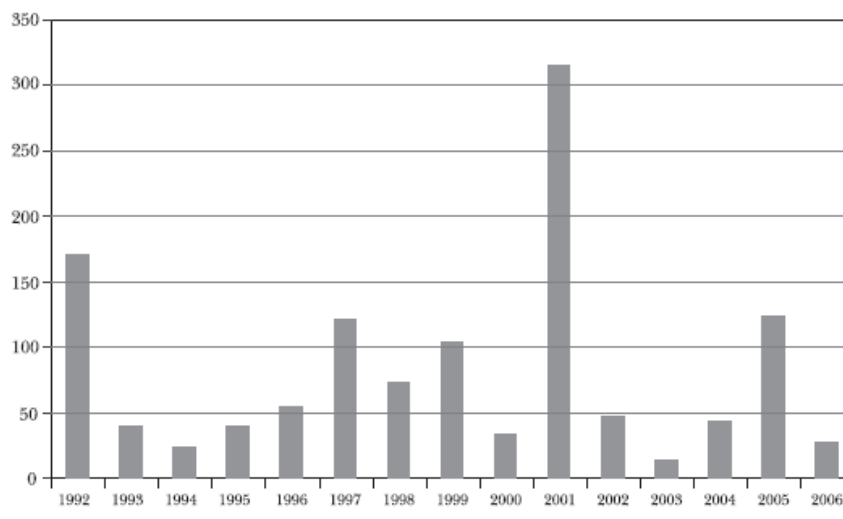


Figure 1. “Annual Number of Articles Mentioning “Comfort Women” 1992-2006”¹⁰⁷

As we can see from the figure, when the issue of the “comfort women” came out, there was a high level of interest among Taiwanese media. During the following year the attention

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 228

declined just to rise in 1997 “when the AWF was distributing financial compensations for the victims”¹⁰⁸ and a debate burst over whether the “comfort women” should accept the money or not. However, once the compensation had been given, we see the number of articles related to the issue declining sharply. There are only two exceptions to this trend: one is the rise of articles written in 2005, when Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine, and one is in 2001 when “the Japanese Ministry of Education approved the controversial history textbook written by the Society for History Textbook Reform¹⁰⁹ (*Atarashii kyôkasho o Tsukuru kai*)”¹¹⁰. As stated by Shogo the rise of the number of articles written on these two occasions indicates, “the high level of attention does not necessarily reflect social interest in the plight of the “comfort women” per se¹¹¹. As we can see in the next figure the interest in “comfort women” issue does not only emerge in conjunction with external events instead of coming from the Taiwanese civil society, but also it decrease very quickly reaching almost the zero.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Among the members of this society there were some revisionist historians who viewed the inclusion of the “comfort women” issue in Japanese history textbooks as a masochist practice, counterproductive to fostering a sense of national pride among young Japanese students.

¹¹⁰ SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The “Comfort Women” Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs*: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p. 228.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

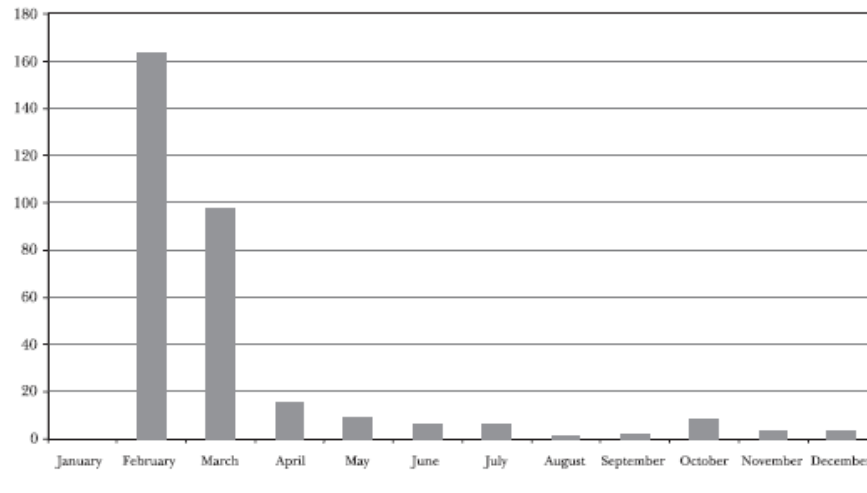


Figure 2. “Monthly number of Articles on “Comfort Women” 2001

Again, both these countries experienced the recruitment of women to serve as sexual slave for Japanese soldiers and both government of the two countries used state-sponsored nationalism based on narratives of victimization by Japan. However, even if it would be normal to expect the same epitomizing attitude from the two countries, the reality in Taiwan is very different. This can be noticed also in the activity carried out by various campaigner in sustain of the former ‘Comfort Women’ cause.

1.11. The Reasons Why ‘Comfort Women’ Were Forgotten In Taiwan

There is a clear explanation about why the comfort women issue was quickly put aside in Taiwan. First of all, as argued by

Shogo Suzuki it could be a product of patriarchal view of history, through which women's rights are seen to be of marginal importance with respect to other issues. As argued by Shogo, it is interesting to notice that even in Korea, where the "comfort women" issue still perform an important role on public debate, women's experiences are subsumed under the category of "collective victimisation [for the events occurred under Japan rule], thus homogenising the nation into a single unified entity".¹¹² While the "comfort women" issue per se represent the national humiliation suffered under Japanese colonialism, the violation of women's right represents "patriarchal weakness and paternal failure"¹¹³ and therefore an internal weakness that the nation is not willing to remember. Missing this component of "collective victimization" against the Japanese in Taiwan, the "comfort women" issue after the victims were refund rapidly lost its appeal.

Secondly, the reason why the comfort women issue has been easily dropped out in Taiwan is that that is not only a domestic issue, or at least not as domestic as the 288 Incident. "Comfort women" issue's international dimension adds, in fact, more complexity, forcing the ROC "to balance its diplomatic goals with domestic ones, and compromises the degree to which the government can satisfy the demands of the former "comfort

¹¹² VARGA, National Bodies, p.293-294 in SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The "Comfort Women" Issue in Taiwan*, in Pacific Affairs: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p.233.

¹¹³ KIM, "History and Memory", p. 94 in SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The "Comfort Women" Issue in Taiwan*, in Pacific Affairs: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p. 233.

women” and activists”¹¹⁴. Japan –together with the US- is actually the most important political supporter of the ROC nowadays, with an important pro-Taiwan lobby among its politicians. This lobby frequently happens to support revisionist interpretations of Japanese imperial past, which the ROC is not in the position to refuse. With the Chinese Mainland gaining an increasing number of diplomatic partners, thus depriving Taiwan of political support, Taipei cannot afford to distance Tokyo “by frequently bringing up ‘history problems’”¹¹⁵.

Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, as noted by Shogo Suzuki “a large proportion of remembering historical wrongs in Taiwan has focused around the crimes committed by the KMT”¹¹⁶. This is due to the fact that native Taiwanese after democratization started gaining increasing importance in the constituency, and corresponds today to around 14.5 million of the population against the 9.4 million of the Mainlanders. This new and strong group of voters clamour for justice against the atrocities committed by the KMT thus placing other issues on top of the political agenda.

¹¹⁴ SUZUKI Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The “Comfort Women” Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs*: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p. 233.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

2. The Textbook Dispute

2.1. The End Of The Cold War And The Rise Of Nationalism

The 1990s were years of massive change in the world geopolitics. The end of the Cold War with the subsequent collapse of the East-West divide opened up new possibilities for regional alliances. Many countries that belonged to the Western block and had had to comply with the communist-containment dictates of the United States, could then behave more independently. One among all was Korea that, freed from the necessity of a pretended friendship with Japan, could then freely raise claims against Japan's wartime wrongdoings. Forgotten issues as the Comfort Women or territorial claims over Dokdo Islands came out with an unpredictable strength. In this context was founded in 1995 the Liberal Historiography Study Group (*Jiyūshugi shikan kenkyūkai*) in Japan with the aim of re-writing Japan's wartime history in a positive and deeply nationalistic way. This group negated the atrocities committed by the Japanese military during World War Two and proposed an alternative story "cleansed of all moral problematic elements"¹¹⁷.

Such kind of revisionist actions caused intense protests in Korea and China, which endure until nowadays. Their massive presence in the Korean political discourse reveal that Japan's war crimes still represent an open wound. On the contrary, the ways

¹¹⁷ CLIFFORD, Rebecca, "Cleansing History, Cleansing Japan: Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Analects of War* and Japan's Revisionist Revival", Nissan occasional paper series no.35, 2004, p. 1.

these issues are addressed in Taiwan disclose a minor interest in Japanese wartime wrong doings¹¹⁸. To investigate the different way the two countries reacted to Japanese revisionism and the reasons lying behind this difference is the main objective of this chapter.

2.2. Japan's Official Excuses

It was in 1993, when the first non-Liberal Democratic government had gone to power, and through Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro's speech, the first admission of Japan's aggressive behaviour during the war became possible. On August 11, 1993 he said on the Pacific War: "I personally recognize it as a *shinryaku sensō* (war of aggression), an *ayamatta sensō* (wrong war)"¹¹⁹. Moreover, as noted by Yoshiko Nozaki, "on a subsequent speech, he made reference to the colonization of Korea using the term 'colonial rule' instead of using the conventional euphemism of 'annexation'"¹²⁰.

It was the first time that a Japanese prime minister publicly hazarded such a statement since the time of the Occupation. The end of LDP's long hegemony in the Diet had opened up many new possibilities to discuss about how the war was publicly

¹¹⁸ YOSHIKO Nozaki, "Japanese politics and the history textbook controversy, 1982-2001", *International Journal of Educational Research* 37, 2002, p. 603-622.

¹¹⁹ Hosokawa shusho kishakaiken no yoshi. (1993, August 11). [An outline of a press conference of Prime Minister Hosokawa]. *Asahi Shinbun*, p. 3 in YOSHIKO Nozaki, "Japanese politics and the history textbook controversy, 1982-2001", *International Journal of Educational Research* 37 (2002) 603-622, p. 614.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

represented in Japan. Also Hosokawa's successor, socialist Murayama Tomiichi, offered a public apology to the people who suffered the actions of the Japanese military during the war¹²¹. It seemed that soon after the emergence of the international claims, the issue was about to be concluded.

However, this was only an illusion. The government inclination to apologise for its past wrongdoings triggered the foundation of various right-wing movements with deep nationalist ideas and the desire to revise the way history had been narrated until that moment.

2.3. The Emergence Of Japanese Revisionist Movements

Against the emergence of national consensus in favour of an apology, the Liberal Historiography Study Group emerged as an oppositional force that refuses apologies¹²². It was founded in 1995 by Tokyo University professor Fujioka Nobukatsu with the aim of revising the way Japanese history was narrated because it was "masochistic and lacking pride in the history of our nation"¹²³.

¹²¹ CLIFFORD, Rebecca, "Cleansing History, Cleansing Japan: Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Analects of War* and Japan's Revisionist Revival", Nissan occasional paper series no. 35, 2004, p. 4-5.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 4-5.

¹²³ McCORMACK, Gavan, "The Japanese movement to "correct" history" in HEIN, Laura, & SELDEN Mark, (Eds.), *Censoring history: Citizenship and memory in Japan, Germany and the United States* (pp. 53-73) Armonk: M.E. Sharp in YOSHIKO Nozaki, "Japanese politics and the history textbook controversy, 1982-2001", *International Journal of Educational Research* 37, 2002, 603-622, p. 615.

One of its most important members, the comic book author Kobayashi Yoshinori, identifies the decline of Japanese patriotism as provoked by the policies of the Allied Occupation government during the post-war period (1945-1952) and by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. He argues, "The occupation government [...] launched a concerted program of censorship to convince the Japanese that they had been slaves to militarism"¹²⁴. However, according to him, it was now time to oppose to the US vision of the world and follow Japanese specific interests.

The group that today counts among its members various literary, media and academic personalities, claims that nation do not have necessarily to share their vision of history. For example, they argue, non-Japanese readings of Japanese action during the war are often negative and confrontational. However, it is ironic to notice, as Clifford does on her essay about Japan revisionist revival, "that the widespread publication of the organization's views has led to [even] increased foreign demands for a role in the articulation of Japan's national history"¹²⁵ thus increasing international pressure against Japan's revisionism.

While the impetus for the creation of this group came from the events of the 1990s, revisionist historians were not new to Japan. For example, novelist Hayashi Fusao had written in 1962 his "Affirmation Thesis on the Greater East Asian War" a view that is still used by traditional right in Japan. In order to take distance from this revisionist historians and avoid a complete

¹²⁴ CLIFFORD Rebecca, "Cleansing History, Cleansing Japan: Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Analects of War* and Japan's Revisionist Revival", Nissan occasional paper series no.35, 2004, p. 3.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.5.

identification with right-wing revisionism, the term “liberal” was chosen to define the group. This provision would encourage participation of a wider range of people and ensure wide consensus also among government institutions, especially the Ministry of Education with its tacit support in the textbook issue¹²⁶.

Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu and other members of the Liberal History Study Group founded together in 1996 the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform. The society’s aim was to publish “a new history textbook to be used in junior high schools in 2002”¹²⁷. When after a few correction imposed to the authors, the Ministry of Education and Science approved the text in spring 2001, many protests arose. The South Korean and Chinese governments requested further revisions but the MOES decided not to meet their demands¹²⁸.

From that moment, “concerned citizens and groups, exchanging information though the internet”¹²⁹ started organizing study meetings and local petitions. In Korea opposing groups even managed to collect 400,000 signatures for the petition that requested the MOES to revise the textbook.

Notwithstanding the widespread opposition both at internal and international levels, nothing was done to make the

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.6.

¹²⁷ YOSHIKO Nozaki, “Japanese politics and the history textbook controversy, 1982-2001”, *International Journal of Educational Research* 37 (2002) 603-622, p. 615

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 618.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

text more equilibrate and the Shimotsuga District started first to adopt it as the official book in its schools of Tochigi Prefecture.¹³⁰

2.4. Japanese Government's Support To Revisionism

The main problem was not the adoption of a nationalist revisionist group by some schools in Japan, but the silent backing of the Japanese government. Since textbooks require the government's approval, as stated by Norimitsu Onishi on the New York Times "they are taken as a reflection of the views of the current leaders"¹³¹ and therefore perceived by other governments as more threatening than if it was only the initiative of a small nationalist group. Applying to Japan this was further highlighted by Shinzō Abe declaration in 2005 that "It's natural that the textbooks follow the government line [...] there would be a problem if the textbooks state something that the government does not assert, or if they go beyond the bounds of what the government asserts"¹³².

The support that these ideas found among the hawks of the LDP party, in fact, made its fortune in the years that followed. Their attempts to delete certain facts from history textbook or to minimise their importance through some linguistic choices, had

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 619.

¹³¹ ONISHI, Norimitsu, *In Japan's New Text, lessons in Rising Nationalism*, in "The New York Times", 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/17/weekinreview/17onishi.html?pagewanted=print&r=0>, accessed on July 18, 2014.

¹³² Ibid.

success thanks to the influence that these politicians had and is still having on the Ministry of Education (MOE).

2.5 Examples of Japanese Revisionism

During the war, Tokyo dealt with a severe labor shortage by forcing hundreds of thousands of Asians to work in Japan. In 1997, the textbook published by Tokyo Shoseki and now used by 52 percent of all junior high schools stated that "700,000 people were forcibly taken to Japan between 1939 and 1945"¹³³ as laborers. The 2002 edition omits any number, and says, "In order to make up for a labor shortage, Japan and Germany forcibly brought in foreign people and made them work in mines and factories."¹³⁴ The newest edition cuts out "forcibly" and says only, "There were Koreans and Chinese who were brought to Japan and made to work against their will"¹³⁵.

2.6. The Textbook Controversy In South Korea

Korea has always been very critic towards Japan for the MOE's revisionist style and in general the textbook controversy affects their relations periodically. For example in 2001 the protests reached such a high level that "South Korea temporarily

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

withdrew its ambassador in protest”¹³⁶ and cancelled military exchange to be held in June”¹³⁷. One year later the two countries managed to make a step forward by establishing a ‘Korea-Japan Joint History Research Group’ a joint forum composed by experts coming from both the countries with the aim of studying the historical issues object of controversy¹³⁸.

It might be right to defend Korea from Japanese revisionism, however Japanese textbook are not the less balanced in the region. Left a part the Chinese’ omission of the Great Leap Forward, when “some 30 millions Chinese died because of Mao Zedong’s misguided agrarian policies”¹³⁹, also Korean textbooks are not conspicuous for their impartiality, especially when it comes to describe the colonial period. In fact, even with the overall improvement brought about by the democratization, certain taboos remain still present. For example, it is rare for a Korean textbook to make “any mention of Koreans who collaborated with Japanese colonisers”¹⁴⁰. As stated by New York Time Journalist Norimitsu Onishi “descriptions of the colonial period used to focus only on Japanese exploitation and Korean resistance, ignoring the role of the Japanese colonialism in Korea’s

¹³⁶ HOOK, Glen D., GILSON Julie, HUGHES Chris W., DOBSON Hugo, “Japan’s International Relations. Politics, Economics and Security”, London, Routledge, 2012, p. 192.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 240.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 192.

¹³⁹ ONISHI, Norimitsu, *In Japan’s New Text, lessons in Rising Nationalism*, in “The New York Times”, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/17/weekinreview/17onishi.html?pagewanted=print&r=0>, accessed on July 18, 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

modernization”¹⁴¹ "In all three countries, there is a tendency to propagandize history," said Jee Soo Gol, a professor of history education at Kongju National University in South Korea.

2.7. The Textbook Controversy In Taiwan

The same claims raised by Korea over Japanese revisionism, were put forward by Taiwan since after the war. Strong anti-Japanese feelings were instilled in the population by agents of the Kuomintang, aiming at gathering support of the Taiwanese population for the recovery of China. However, changes in international politics during the 70s convinced politicians in Taiwan to diminish pressure over Japan, as Taiwan was losing its status in favour of Mainland China. After the US open to China, following the Sino-Soviet Split, in 1971 the communist country substituted Taiwan as the “recognised China” in the United Nation. From that point, the excluded Taiwan became very cautious in criticizing Japan, which was the sole country to counterbalance with China in the region

Years after, when democratization stepped in, the presence of anti-annexationists in the Taiwanese parliament reduced even more the number of voices criticizing Japan, as the Country of the rising sun was the only one to be secretly partial towards Taiwan. Therefore while in Korea the textbook controversy is still burning nowadays, in Taiwan we can find evidence of a contrary trend.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

One, for example, is to be found on an article published by the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, noting that that to refer to the colonial period “Taiwan has required neutral terminology such as the ‘period of Japanese administration’ and ‘Japanese colonial administration’ [to describe the Japanese colonial period 1895-1945] in its screening criteria for textbook content”¹⁴². As refers the article, in fact, in Taiwanese textbooks the word *rizhi* (Japanese administration) “has become the authoritative term [...] to describe Japanese colonial rule in Taiwan”¹⁴³. For this reason, when the private publisher Shiji Wenhua Shiye used the term *riju* (Japanese occupation), in one of the textbooks published in 2013, it was widely criticised. The controversy about Taiwanese identity had been largely debated in the past and government rules had been established in order to prevent the political use of history that would support annexationist ideas.

A part from the different approach in addressing the textbook reform, the two countries have showed different reaction also to other after the controversial publications, for example to the manga of the Japanese cartoonist Kobayashi Yoshinori’s on the colonial period.

¹⁴² UKAI, Satoshi, *Controversy swirls in Taiwan on labelling Japanese colonial rule* in “The Asahi Shimbun”, 2013.
<http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/china/AJ201309140012>, accessed on 16th July 2014.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

2.8. Revisionism on other medias: Kobayashi Yoshinori's "pop nationalism"

In the wake of the new movement related to the Liberal Historiography Study Group, in 1998 Kobayashi Yoshinori published what soon became a surprising best seller. *Analects of War* (*Sensō ron*), as described by Rebecca Clifford, doctoral student in Modern History at Oxford University, is "an ultra-nationalist retelling of the nation's participation in World War Two, in comic book form"¹⁴⁴. The text, four hundred pages written by the right-wing cartoonist received "remarkable level of consumer attention"¹⁴⁵ and started raising questions about "how Japan's wartime record is represented in the media"¹⁴⁶. As stated by Rebecca Clifford on her analysis of the book, "focusing on themes of purity, guilt, and Japanese national identity, Kobayashi takes this reactionary narrative and offers it up in an easily digestible form, one that is well suited to tales of nationalist heroics"¹⁴⁷. The comic book was such an immediate success (it sold one million copies) that some universities decided to organise seminars on wartime history to contrast the historical distortions it contains¹⁴⁸.

Sensō ron, which had very different impact in Korea and Taiwan, is both a defence of Japan's participation in World War

¹⁴⁴ CLIFFORD, Rebecca, "Cleansing History, Cleansing Japan: Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Analects of War* and Japan's Revisionist Revival", *Nissan occasional paper series*, no.35, 2004, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Two, and a critic of contemporary Japanese society. Kobayashi argues that Japan participated in the war for justifiable reasons, such as “to protect the national security, to liberate Asia from Western imperialism and to alter a world order that they perceived to be racist”¹⁴⁹. He suggests that, while Japanese citizens of the war era genuinely believed in those goals, “modern Japanese citizens have lost their sense of duty to the nation”¹⁵⁰. However, as he concludes, people of Japan can rebuild their society only if they decide to devote themselves to the nation and “respect [their] grandfathers and what they wanted to protect in the war”¹⁵¹

While in Korea the book meet very strong opposition, in Taiwan, we do not find evidences of strong protests following the publication of *Sensō Ron*. However, Taiwanese society was not immune to Japanese historical revisionism. Another among Kobayashi’s books actually managed to inflame Taiwanese hearts. Nevertheless, the differences with Korea are still visible. The discussions arisen by the publication of *Taiwan Ron* did not focus only on the content of the book, but regarded also freedom of speech that the author had the right to exercise.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Kobayashi Yoshinori, “*Sensō ron*” Tokyo: Gentosha, 1998, p. 284 in CLIFFORD Rebecca, “Cleansing History, Cleansing Japan: Kobayashi Yoshinori’s *Analects of War* and Japan’s Revisionist Revival”, *Nissan occasional paper series*, No.35, 2004, p. 2.

2.9. Kobayashi Yoshinori's 'Taiwan Ron' And The Reactions In Taiwan

Written in 2000, Kobayashi's *Taiwan Ron* (On Taiwan) narrates Taiwanese history and politics, "in a lively and somewhat exaggerated manga style"¹⁵² where "the author himself appears in the manga as a reporter"¹⁵³ who visits the island interviewing many people. Part of the collection *New Arrogantist Manifesto*, it reached Taiwan in 2001 and, contrarily to other Japanese nationalist book published in the same period "immediately aroused strong reactions, inspiring serious debate about the topic of Japan and identity-related conflict in Taiwanese society"¹⁵⁴.

The Taiwanese were particularly concerned by the idea expressed in the book that the Taiwanese identity is based on typical Japanese characteristics. This was well represented in the cover used for the Chinese edition of the book. The front shows the image of a peanut, symbol of the Taiwanese spirit, ridden by a Japanese samurai. While on the back part, the peanut has been cut in half and filled with rice and a red plum in the centre, evoking the Japanese flag. As Tetsushi Marukawa commented, the political message hidden in the cover is that "when you crack open Taiwan, there is 'Japan' inside"¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵² HWANG Yih-jye, "Japan as 'Self' or 'the Other' in Yoshinori Kobayashi's *On Taiwan*" *China Information* 24, I, 2010, p. 77.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ TETSUSHI Marukawa, "Situating Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Taiwan ron* ('The Taiwan Question') in East Asia", *Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy* 6, no. 2 (2003): 239-44 in YIH-JYE Hwang, "Japan as 'Self' or 'the Other' in Yoshinori Kobayashi's *On Taiwan*" *China Information* 24, I, 2010, p. 77.

If this description arose many criticism, it did not produce the same affects of *Sensō Ron* in Korea, mainly because the image describing Taiwanese people was extremely positive, the islanders were the models that every Japanese citizen should follow.

2.10. The *Definition Of The Taiwanese Identity in 'Taiwan Ron'*

As Kobayashi reports, in Taiwan the notion of “Japanese Spirit” is generally associated with ideas of “cleanliness, justice, honesty, diligence, politeness, trustworthiness, responsibility, [and] lawfulness”¹⁵⁶. According to Kobayashi, “such Japanese virtues, which had been lost in post-war Japan”¹⁵⁷ together with the concept of *Messhihoko*¹⁵⁸, “are preserved in Taiwan, particularly among the Japanese-educated generation”¹⁵⁹. He acclaim former president Lee, who grew up during Japanese occupation and speaks a perfect Japanese, for “demonstrating the perfect spirit of ‘self-sacrifice for the country”¹⁶⁰ and for being “the best inheritor of the Japanese spirit, an authentic samurai”¹⁶¹. The declared aim of his publication is to teach the Japanese young generations what the “authentic” Japanese spirit was. The

¹⁵⁶ MEILING Jin, YINGMING Zhou, “*Riben-a! Taiwan-a!* (Japan! Taiwan!) (Taipei: Qianwei, 2001), 152-3 in YIH-JYE Hwang, “Japan as ‘Self’ or ‘the Other’ in Yoshinori Kobayashi’s *On Taiwan*” *China Information* 24 (I) p. 78.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ The annihilation of self and commitment to the public good

¹⁵⁹ HWANG Yih-Jye, “Japan as ‘Self’ or ‘the Other’ in Yoshinori Kobayashi’s *On Taiwan*” *China Information* 24, I, 2010, p. 78.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

Taiwanese people in Kobayashi narration are thankful to Japan for having colonised them, because, as Kobayashi writes quoting the pro-independence tycoon Xu Wenlong, during the colonial period the Taiwanese, experienced the “taste of happiness”¹⁶².

As Tetsui Marukawa noted, “[Kobayashi] selectively uses so-called pro-Japanese opinion in Taiwan to legitimise past Japanese colonial rule”¹⁶³. So according to Kobayashi “Taiwan under Japanese colonization had reformed ‘pre-modern/backward’ Chinese culture, transforming it into a ‘modernized’ Taiwanese culture. The people of Taiwan accordingly evolved from ‘uncivilized Chinese’ to ‘civilized Taiwanese’”¹⁶⁴. Moreover, what helped to form Taiwanese shared identity were the majestic modernization project carried out by the Japanese in the island. The wide transportation network, the teaching of the Japanese as a common language and the enhancements of the systems of communication, were a very important contribution for the creation of a Taiwanese identity.

Of course, Kobayashi’s affirmations were over exaggerated. As noted by Yih-Jye Hwang “Taiwan under [Kobayashi’s] pen is more or less like ‘Jurassic Park’. The dinosaur (Japanese Spirit) that is considered to be extinct in now ‘rediscovered’ living on the island (Taiwan). The major problem with his attempt is that its

¹⁶² KOBAYASHI, *Taiwanlun*, 34 in YIH-JYE Hwang, “Japan as ‘Self’ or ‘the Other’ in Yoshinori Kobayashi’s *On Taiwan*” *China Information* 24 (I) p. 79.

¹⁶³ MURAKAWA, “On Kobayashi Yoshinori’s *On Taiwan*”, 93 in YIH-JYE Hwang, “Japan as ‘Self’ or ‘the Other’ in Yoshinori Kobayashi’s *On Taiwan*” *China Information* 24 (I) p. 80.

¹⁶⁴ HWANG Yih-Jye, “Japan as ‘Self’ or ‘the Other’ in Yoshinori Kobayashi’s *On Taiwan*” *China Information* 24, I, 2010, p. 80.

image of Taiwan is [...] partial, if not distorted”¹⁶⁵. However, Kobayashi’s description of Taiwanese gratefulness towards the Japanese it is not completely untrue. In fact, part of Taiwanese population, namely the “so-called Japanese-language generation”¹⁶⁶, partly shares Kobayashi’s view on Japanese colonial rule. This people are those who contributed to mild Taiwanese general reaction to such a paternalistic interpretation of Taiwanese identity. This share of Taiwanese populace is a small group of Minnan people, mainly aristocratic men “who were once Japanese”¹⁶⁷ but that still is a considerable part of the public opinion. And moreover, they are not the only one defending Japanese colonisation. Much part of the pro-independence faction of parliament defends Japanese colonial period and its benefit for Taiwanese society.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

3. The Territorial Disputes

3.1. Dokdo/Takeshima Islands



Territorial disputes over Dokdo/Takeshima islands in the Sea of Japan are further reasons of disagreement between the two countries, especially for Korea. On one hand “Japan claims that it acquired Dokdo/Takeshima as a *terra nullius* in 1905”¹⁶⁸, while on the other, Korea rejects Japan’s claims stating that Dokdo was part

¹⁶⁸ HONG Nack Kim, “The U.S. and the Territorial Dispute on Dokdo/Takeshima between Japan and Korea, 1945-1954” *International Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 2009, p. 97.

of Korea, not a *terra nullius*, and Japan invade it in 1905. The problems arose when during the US Occupation, established after Japanese defeat in the Second World War, the SCAP declared Takeshima islands “outside the operational limits for Japanese fishermen”¹⁶⁹. However, a margin of uncertainty remained, because the SCAP marked explicitly “this order did not constitute a final ruling on the sovereignty of the islands”¹⁷⁰.

The issue was not clarified in the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, when no mention was made to the islands. However, South Korea decided to declare its sovereignty on the islands according to the SCAP order of 1946, including the 200 nautical miles surrounding the Korean Peninsula. Japanese protests only served to trigger a greater reaction in South Korea, which culminated with Korean occupation of Takeshima Islands in 1953. At that point, the Japanese government “proposed to bring the territorial dispute to the International Court of Justice”. Korean refusal, however, caused a stalemate which endured until nowadays.

A high point of contrast was reached again in 2005 when the Shimane prefecture decided to sponsor the celebrations for the hundred years of Japan claimed sovereignty of the islands. And they were further fostered by the MEXT’s approval, in April 2006, of a textbook describing Takeshima islands as “illegally occupied by Korea”¹⁷¹ instead of marking that still it was a

¹⁶⁹ HOOK, Glenn D., GILSON, Julie, HUGHES, Chris, W., DOBSON, Hugo, (eds.) “Japan’s International Relations. Politics, economics and security”, London, Routledge, 2012, p. 186.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 193.

disputed region. The reaction of South Korea to these affronts was of preparing proposals for the International Hydrographic Organization conference that would be held in Germany in June 2006. Their proposals consisted of “registering Korean names instead of existing Japanese names for topographical seabed features around the islets”¹⁷² in order to strengthen its claims of sovereignty. In response Japan prepared a seabed survey that “would have given Japan access to the latest topographical information”¹⁷³ and therefore strengthen its counterclaim during the conference. Korea then “reacted by deploying its own patrol vessels” in order to prevent the Japanese Guard Coast (JCG) from entering the area and Japan responded “by ordering the JCG to sit at anchor close to the area”¹⁷⁴. In order to de-escalate the tensions, Japan “agreed to halt the survey and stand off in return for South Korea agreeing not to put forward the renaming proposals and resume talks on EEZ boundaries that had been suspended since 2000”¹⁷⁵.

Continues visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Koizumi in the same period, made mutual understanding even harder. What was meant to be the biannual “shuttle diplomacy” on a year (2005) called “Japan-South Korea Friendship Year”, turned out to be a great delusion for both parties. “No further bilateral summits were held before the end of Koizumi’s term in office”¹⁷⁶. The come to power of Shinzō Abe in 2006 did even less to

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 194

improve the situation. His remarks in March 2007 that there were no evidence to claim the coercion of “comfort women” to work as prostitutes during the Pacific War, further inflamed Koreans hearts.

When finally in 2008, the election of Fukuda brought some fresh air in Japan-South Korea bilateral relations, it was again the Takeshima dispute that threatened to unbalance the equilibrium. Fukuda with his unwillingness to reopen historical issues demonstrated a pragmatic attitude and set the right tone for strengthening bilateral ties. However, historical issues re-emerged against his will. On mid-July reports disclosed that the MEXT was “planning to insert into guidelines for schoolteachers a new stress upon the Takeshima islets” as Japan’s ‘inalienable’ territory”¹⁷⁷. The protests triggered by this event, convinced Fukuda to restrain the MEXT in order to avoid endangering bilateral ties.

Fukuda successor did not ensure the continuation of bilateral good ties, not only for his family connection to Korean forced labour in Japanese mines or for his past as fervent nationalist. In 2009 he also passed a “history textbook justifying the colonial rule in the Korean peninsula”¹⁷⁸ and the Japan Defence White Paper referring again to Takeshima “as ‘inalienable’ (*koyū*) Japanese territory”¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ministry of Defence (2009: 3) in HOOK, Glenn D., GILSON, Julie, HUGHES, Chris, W., DOBSON, Hugo, (eds.) “Japan’s International Relations. Politics, economics and security”, London, Routledge, 2012, p. 185.

Again in 2010, after the step forward done by Foreign Minister Okada suggesting the possibility to write a joint history textbook with Korea, the situation precipitated again with the publication of a new textbook. In April 2010 the MEXT approved a book “which referred to South Korea’s ‘illegal occupation’ of Takeshima”¹⁸⁰. In the same period, missed approval of a bill providing suffrage for Korean permanent resident in the National Diet generated further discussions about Japan commitment to tackle history. The opposition’s contrasting argument was that Korean voters “might try to use their influence [...] to adjust the Japanese government’s position on the sovereignty of Takeshima”¹⁸¹.

However, relations never achieved such low point as to stop cooperation when was absolutely needed. When the South Korean Navy’s *Cheonan* corvette was sunk by North Korea in March 2010, Japan gave its full support. The same thing happened when North Korea bombarded Yeonpyeong Island on 23 November¹⁸².

¹⁸⁰ HOOK, Glenn D., GILSON, Julie, HUGHES, Chris, W., DOBSON, Hugo, (eds.) “Japan’s International Relations. Politics, economics and security”, London, Routledge, 2012, p. 185.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 196.

¹⁸² Ibid.

3.2. An Analysis Of Korean and Japanese Ministry Of Foreign Affairs' Websites

On a compared analysis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' websites of Japan, Korea and Taiwan, it is possible to notice some differences in dealing with territorial disputes concerning the two countries.

In the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website the described as follows

Takeshima is indisputably an inherent part of the territory of Japan, in light of historical facts and based on international law. The Republic of Korea has been occupying Takeshima with no basis in international law. Any measures the Republic of Korea takes regarding Takeshima based on such an illegal occupation have no legal justification. Japan will continue to seek the settlement of the dispute of the territorial sovereignty over Takeshima on the basis of international law in a calm and peaceful manner. The Republic of Korea has never demonstrated any clear basis for its claims that it had effective control over Takeshima prior to Japan's effective control over Takeshima and reaffirmation of its territorial sovereignty in 1905¹⁸³.

[Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs]

¹⁸³ MOFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan Consistent Position on the Territorial Sovereignty over Takeshima", 2014, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/takeshima/index.html>, accessed on August 1, 2014.

On his behalf, Korea has build a website completely dedicate to the Dokdo islets, where Korean sovereignty is stated as follows:

Dokdo is an integral part of Korean territory, historically, geographically and under international law. No territorial disputes exist regarding Dokdo, and therefore Dokdo is not a matter to be dealt through diplomatic negotiations or judicial settlement. The government of the Republic of Korea exercises Korea's irrefutable territorial sovereignty over Dokdo. The government will deal firmly and resolutely with any provocation and will continue to defend Korea's territorial integrity over Dokdo¹⁸⁴.

[Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs]

As we can see, Korea asserts very firmly its sovereignty over the islands and promise to protect its territory resolutely.

Finally, another example concerning the contested islands between Japan and Korea Takeshima/Dokdo, are the advertising published on the New York Times and Washington Post arguing the Dokdo islands are part of Korean territory and Japanese government is "marking [it] as its territory without much sense or evidence and is gradually increasing its degree of assertiveness"¹⁸⁵ The advertising continues with a poignant statement "Japan may be stronger but we still believe that power cannot defeat the truth"¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁴ MOFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, *Dokdo*, "Basic Position of the Government", 2014, http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/policy/focus/dokdo/basic/index.jsp?menu=m_20_10_10, accessed on August 1, 2014.

¹⁸⁵ For the Next Generation, *Dokdo and East Sea*, in "For the Next Generation", 2005, <http://www.forthenextgeneration.com/dokdo/>, accessed on 9 July 2014

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

STOP DISTORTING HISTORY

Someone is taking our land
Someone is twisting history
Someone is plotting
Someone is abusing power
Someone is ignoring the truth
Someone is lobbying
Someone is lying
Someone is making noise
Someone is eyeing this island

Is that 'someone' Japan?
Hope not



This island is called 'Dokdo', located in the East Sea between Korea and Japan.

Dokdo is Korean territory

Koreans have been inhabiting this island. Numerous old documents and historical maps also confirm that Dokdo is Korean territory. Yet the Japanese Government is marking Dokdo as its territory without much sense or evidence and is gradually increasing its degree of assertiveness. Japan may be stronger but we still believe that power cannot defeat the truth. Visit www.ForTheNextGeneration.com. You can read the truth about Dokdo.

This advertisement is supported by the donations of 94,966 web users made on the Korean web portal Daum.

“Someone is taking our land, someone is twisting history, someone is plotting, someone is abusing power, someone is ignoring the truth, someone is lobbying, someone is lying, someone is making noise, someone is eyeing this island, is that ‘someone’ Japan? Hope not”.

A part from the government also journalists play their parts into creating a bad image of the Japanese and prevent cooperation. Lee Tae-hoon and Chung Min-uck for example, on *The Korea Times*, one of the most famous English language newspapers, hypothesize a terrible scenario of the Dokdo islands invaded by Samurai warriors. The two journalists note that the Japanese tradition of “Kamikaze” suicide pilots during the World War II should alert even more the Korean population, which must prepare for the worst scenarios. As reported by Lee Tae-hoon and Chung Min-uck, according to experts one of the worst but plausible scenarios is the illegal entry in Dokdo of Japanese extremist activists or politicians “disguised as tourists”¹⁸⁷. In fact, foreign visitors, Japanese included, can easily take a tour in Dokdo “by simply taking a ferry from Ulleung Island”¹⁸⁸ which is only 90 Kilometres far from there. Ulleung County is charge of making controls and prevent people from right-wing groups from traveling to Dokdo but “the screening process is not rigid”¹⁸⁹ they say.

However, navy officials tend to reassure the populace this scenario is unlikely to occur because, as “they want to make [Dokdo] a disputed territory”¹⁹⁰ they would rather “stage rallies in

¹⁸⁷ LEE, Tae-hoon, CHUNG, Min-uck, ‘*Samurai warriors’ coming to Dokdo!*, in “Korea Times”, 2012, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/09/116_119066.html, accessed on 1 September 2014.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Japan [...] to draw media attention before announcing a planned visit to the East Sea Islets”¹⁹¹.

Another plausible scenario, according to the two Journalists, is Japanese “attempt to land on Dokdo using a helicopter”¹⁹². The helipad located at the top of the rocks could easily house a helicopter of large-size. Even if to Marine officials minimise the issue saying that “any large obstacle on the helipad can deter any illegal landing”¹⁹³, Head of think tank Korea Defence Network (KDN) is much more catastrophist, “if Japan sends one of its AH-64 Apache helicopters, the entire coast guard unit will be annihilated”¹⁹⁴. Therefore the plan of the ministry of defence is to buy 36 Apache from Boeing in order to deploy them in 2015.

The last scenario envisioned by experts is that of an armed attack caused by right-wing groups intentionally crossing the maritime border. In this case, Japanese civilian vessel could be easily damaged or sunk by Korean Coast Guard 3,000 tons petrol vessel trying to block it. This would be interpreted by Japan as an armed clash and would consequently trigger a bigger conflict. If a naval war exploded, politicians would “find little room to make compromise over territorial issues”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

3.3. The Senkaku/Diaoyu/Tiaoyutai Islands

Dokdo/Takeshima is not the only territory disputed by Japan; the Senkaku/ Diaoyu/ Tiaoyutai islands which Japan contends with the PRC and the ROC is another. In this dispute, Japan asserts that the Senkaku islands are part of Japanese territory therefore there are no reasons to negotiate this issue. In order to avoid that this position jeopardized its relationship with China, Japan states that the islands were not ceded under the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 but incorporated some time before as *terra nullius*. China, on its side, claims to have historic title over the islands. However, in the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, “the islands were incontestably included into ‘Nansei Shoto’ together with the Ryukyu Islands and placed under the trusteeship system”¹⁹⁶ of the US. Until the islands were returned to Japan in 1972, together with the Ryukyu, China did not raise any objection and it was only in recent years that China begun to impose itself on this issue.

Bipolar structural barriers during the Cold War prevented many countries to make strong territorial claims. For example “Japan and China continued to assert quietly their legal claims to the Senkaku islands during the first Cold War period”¹⁹⁷, however, US’s control of the island as part of Okinawa “meant that this territorial dispute did not become a major Sino-Japanese security

¹⁹⁶ WEI SU, Steven, “The Territorial Dispute over Tiaoyu/Senkaku Islands: An update”, *Ocean Development & International Law*, 36:45-61, 2005, Taylor & Francis Inc., p. 49.

¹⁹⁷ HOOK, Glenn D., GILSON, Julie, HUGHES, Chris, W., DOBSON, Hugo, (eds.) “Japan’s International Relations. Politics, economics and security”, London, Routledge, 2012, p. 236.

issue”¹⁹⁸. However, “the gradual winding-down of the Cold War tensions in East Asia in the late 1980s”¹⁹⁹ removed barriers to interactions among the states of the region and “reactivated a series of bilateral and multilateral disputes”²⁰⁰.

3.4. How Taiwan And Japan Addressed The Issue

While China and Japan are still at odds with each other for determine the respective territorial boundaries concerning the islands, the situation with Taiwan has early found a solution. Already in 1971, during a meeting in Tokyo, Japan former Foreign Minister Kiichi Aichi asked Taiwan to be “quiet about the Senkaku Islands, [in order not to] provoke people in Japan”²⁰¹ in turn for Japan backing of “Taipei’s effort to maintain its seat at the United Nations”²⁰². The Taiwanese ambassador to Washington, in need for Japan support to counteract the threat of PRC, thanked Japan for the cooperation and said Taipei “would like to make efforts to ‘cool down’ [the] (Senkaku) issue”²⁰³. The agreement, set along with the US, aimed at countering the international influence of the communists in Beijing. However, the rapprochement of US and

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 238.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ KYODO, *Japan sought Taiwan’s silence on Senkakus when U.N. seat row flared in ’71*, “The Japan Times”, 2014, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/07/24/national/tokyo-sought-taipeis-silence-on-senkakus-in-return-for-u-n-seat/#.U9C_eBaInj0, accessed on July 24, 2014.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

China following the Sino-Soviet Split in 1962 “led the U.N. General Assembly in October 1971 to adopt a resolution granting a seat to Beijing”²⁰⁴ which resulted in the withdraw of Taiwan from the organization. Notwithstanding Taiwanese disappointment for its exclusion, the pacific island continued to keep a less confrontational approach towards the issue then China did. The reward for Taiwan patience was the agreement closed with Japan for the exploitation of the fishing grounds.

3.5. Ministry Of Foreign Affairs’ Website Analysis

An analysis of the Taiwanese approach towards the Senkaku issue might be interesting to see once again how Korean and Taiwanese approach in dealing disputes with Japan may differ. The Japanese MOFA describes the dispute over the Senkaku islands as follows

The Chinese government did not contest Japan’s sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands for approximately 75 years, following the incorporation of the Senkaku Islands in 1895. This changed in the 1970s, when significant attention was drawn to the islands due to the potential existence of the oil reserves in the East China Sea²⁰⁵.

[Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs]

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ MOFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Situation of the Senkaku Islands”, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/senkaku/page1we_000010.html, accessed on August 1, 2014.

Very differently from Korea's assertions over Takeshima/Dokdo, Taiwan demonstrates to be very open minded in its declarations:

"It has been the Republic of China's consistent position that the Tiaoyutai were returned to the Republic of China along with Taiwan based on the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation, the Instrument of Surrender of Japan, the Treaty of San Francisco and the Treaty of Peace between the Republic of China and Japan. The Republic of China, however, understands that all parties concerned hold conflicting standpoints, and that this is the cause of the long-standing disputes and the recent rise of tensions in the region. The Republic of China therefore solemnly calls on all parties concerned to resolve disputes peacefully based on the UN Charter and relevant provisions in international law. [...] The government of the Republic of China proposes the East China Sea Peace Initiative and calls on all parties concerned to:

- 1.Refrain from taking any antagonistic actions.
- 2.Shelve controversies and not abandon dialogue.
- 3.Observe international law and resolve disputes through peaceful means.
- 4.Seek consensus on a code of conduct in the East China Sea.
- 5.Establish a mechanism for cooperation on exploring and developing resources in the East China Sea"²⁰⁶.

[Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs]

²⁰⁶ MOFA Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China (Taiwan), "*East China Sea Peace Initiative*", 2012, <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/theme.aspx?s=780E70E6D142B833&sms=BCDE19B435833080>, accessed on August 1, 2014.

3.5. Taiwan-Japan Fisheries Agreements

As reported by the Taipei Times, on 11 April 2013 Japan and Taiwan concluded a fisheries agreement over usage of fishing zones around Sakishima Islands. The agreement assures to Taiwanese vessels “an intervention-free fishing zone in waters between 27° north latitude and the Sakashima Islands” in addition the Japanese conceded an “additional fishing zone of 1,400 square nautical miles (4,800 km²) outside Taiwan’s temporary enforcement line”²⁰⁷. Under this deal, in larger areas within the designated zones the fishing vessels can operate freely avoiding jurisdiction of the other country, while in small areas they will establish a joint management of the resources. The agreement also includes an “escape clause” which allows both countries to “set aside disputes over their competing sovereignty claims”²⁰⁸ namely the Senkaku/Tiaoyutai Islands.

While it is still not possible to achieve an agreement over the Senkaku Islands, the cooperation described above is still an important step forward. The agreement over Sakashima Islands fishing rights represents both a sign of the good will of both parties for enhancing cooperation and the result of a non aggressive policy towards each other, something that Korean assertiveness is unlikely to achieve.

²⁰⁷HSIU-CHUAN, Shih, *Taiwan, japan ink fisheries agreement*, in “Taipei Times”, 2013, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2013/04/11/2003559323>, accessed on September 1, 2014.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

THIRD CHAPTER

THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL REASONS BEHIND THE DIFFERENT ATTITUDE

Different attitudes towards Japan-related issues in Taiwan and Korea should be clear at this point. However, the historical and political reasons lying behind their different behaviours still need to be examined in depth. The following paragraphs are dedicated to an analysis of how the two countries' divergent geopolitical interests and internal politics had led to their different attitudes towards Japan.

1. Taiwan

According to the East Asia experts Michal Thim and Misato Matsuoka, "it would not be far-fetched to call Taiwan the most Japan-friendly state in Asia"²⁰⁹ because the two countries have a relationship with no equals in the region. Hence there are at least three reasons why Taiwan "does not join its neighbours in their collective dislike of Tokyo"²¹⁰. First of all, the disastrous experience made under Kuomintang's rule after the colonial period completely swept away the negative image of Japan among

²⁰⁹ THIM, Michal, MATSUOKA, Misato, *The Odd Couple: Japan & Taiwan's Unlikely Friendship*, in "The Diplomat, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/the-odd-couple-japan-taiwans-unlikely-friendship/?allpages=yes&print=yes>, accessed on 1 September 2014.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

the Taiwanese. Secondly, the emergence of a strong Taiwanese identity, especially during the years of democratization, has pushed towards a reduced identification with China that benefited the relations with Japan. Thirdly, the role of Japan as a balancing force against the Chinese superpower has brought Taiwanese anti-unification political forces particularly close to Japan.

1.1 Emerging Of A Competing Historical Wrong

The primary reason of the lack of strong anti-Japanese feelings in Taiwan is to be found in the emergence of a new competing historical wrong immediately after the Japanese withdrawal. The military dictatorship established by Japan in the previous fifty years gave way to a period of suppression that was even tighter than colonialism. It was a period known as 'the White Terror' when the atrocities committed by the Chinese Mainlanders of the Kuomintang (KMT) quickly contributed to put the Japanese colonial subjugation under a different light.

After the Japanese defeat in the World War II, the Kuomintang that was ruling in the Mainland China at that time, took the occasion to bring back under its rule "all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores"²¹¹. Therefore in October 1945, on a decision blessed by both the UK and the US, the KMT troops arrived in

²¹¹ NDL, National Diet Library, "Cairo Communiqué, December 1, 1943", http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/01/002_46shoshi.html, accessed on 1 September 2014.

Taiwan, and took control of the island. Even if “Taiwan had never been part of the republic of China”²¹², as stressed by China expert Denny Roy, the majority of the Taiwanese welcomed positively the return of the Chinese rule and only a small minority preferred independence. However, with the arrival of the ROC soldiers in October 1945 the population remained soon disillusioned. The KMT rule quickly “squandered the considerable good will with which Taiwanese contemplated an incoming Chinese administration”²¹³ and consequently revealed all the positive aspects of the Japanese past administration. Hereinafter a series of examples of what generated Taiwanese disappointment.

First of all, those who they welcomed as their Chinese compatriots did not regard them as akin. When the Mainlander returned to Taiwan after years of Japanese subjugation, Taiwanese people expected them to at least recognize their “relatively high degree of political development”²¹⁴. On the contrary, suspecting their Japanese indoctrination, they treated “them as a defeated enemy”²¹⁵ and put them at an inferior level. This was quite in opposition with Japanese attitude of the colonial period, who always defined them as racially equal, even if this definition worked only on paper. During a public speech, general Keh King-en defined Taiwan as a “degraded territory”²¹⁶ with “degraded people”²¹⁷. This generated a deep sense of bitterness in

²¹² ROY, Denny, *Taiwan, a Political History*, NY, Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 242, p. 58.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 242

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Taiwanese people who started to perceive Mainlanders as mainly interested in exploiting Taiwanese resources for their personal gain.

Secondly, because the Taiwanese were used to the Japanese modern methods and education, they soon realised how the Mainlanders were backward with respect to the Japanese. Soon after their arrival, Taiwanese came to notice that the Chinese troops were “generally ill-disciplined, poorly educated and unkempt”²¹⁸. There were plenty of comic anecdotes about the ‘hicks’ Chinese troops, which soon became laughing stock of the majority of the Taiwanese population. Here again, the Japanese stood out for the modernity of their army and policing system.

Thirdly, the Mainlanders soon demonstrated to be unable to resolve “Taiwan’s postwar economic problems”²¹⁹ and their corrupted government soon proved to be only “chiefly interested in draining the island’s wealth and resources”²²⁰. In opposition to KMT’s unprepared politicians, the Japanese started to appear in the eyes of the Taiwanese as those who had brought Taiwan into modernity through modern technologies and methods of education.

Taiwan’s people disappointment was not only due to the Chinese backwardness and inability to rule, but also by the long period of oppression of freedom they experienced during the Mainlander’s rule. Both this facts contributed to produce in the mind of the Taiwanese a new terrible enemy culpable of a

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

disastrous historical wrong that would quickly replace the Japanese wrongdoings of the colonial past.

1.2. The 'White Terror' Under The Kuomintang Rule

The native Taiwanese's anger for the new occupation exploded very soon and took the form of the sadly famous February 28 riots (the 228 Incident) in 1947, which were suppressed brutally by the KMT. During these protests a number of Taiwanese estimated between 10.000 and 25.000 were killed²²¹. This was just the beginning of a long period of suppression that would last until the first democratic reforms of the 1980s.

When it was clear that the civil war against the Communists in the Mainland was about to fail, the entire ROC regime decided to take refuge in the island of Taiwan in order to prevent being overwhelmed by the Communist troops. Their aim was to reconstitute the army and prepare the attack to reconquer the Mainland in a short time. During this period, even if the Kuomintang intended to establish a peaceful living with the Taiwanese and raise their standards of living, the "exigencies of the Communist threat stiffened and prolonged the KMT's accustomed authoritarianism"²²².

²²¹ FLEISCHAUER, Stefan, "The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement's Construction of a Taiwanese Identity", *China Information* 21, no. 3, 2007, p. 374.

²²² ROY, Denny, *Taiwan, a Political History*, NY, Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 242, p. 77.

In order to keep tight control over the population, a status of Martial law was declared in 1949, the political parties were banned and the freedom of expression strictly limited. Power was maintained, “by locking the Taiwanese out of the [...] parliamentary institutions”²²³ and by “using its powerful security apparatus to neutralise dissent”²²⁴. Martial Law had to be maintained, “Until the Communist threat [had] passed”²²⁵. People who dared to criticise the Chiang Family or the KMT’s policies, together with Communists and advocates of violent uprising, were put under arrest and subject to trial in military courts. As reported by a critic on *Nuanliu Zazhi*, “the KMT prohibited any kind of behaviour [...] it forbade the registration of any newspaper; it forbade strikes, demonstrations, and criticism of national policy”²²⁶.

Moreover, in order to instil Chinese nationalism among the Taiwanese populace, the KMT decided to encourage the cult of Chiang Kai-shek. There was a need, as stressed in an article published already in 1946, of “re-educating the Taiwanese, who had been poisoned intellectually [by the Japanese] and were forced to accept twisted notions”²²⁷. In this effort, education, “functioned as ‘a massive engine of conquest’ whose objective was

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 89.

²²⁶ Chen Yanghao, “Jin! Jin! Jin!” *Nuanliu Zazhi in ROY, Denny, Taiwan, a political history*, NY, Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 90.

²²⁷ Ibid. 90.

to transform Taiwan's population into uncritical Chinese patriots"²²⁸.

As we could see, if the Japanese invaders had demonstrated to be "authoritative and heavy-handed"²²⁹, the return under Chinese administrator proved to be even worse. The terror spread during the KMT rule well competed with the Japanese colonial period as an historical wrong in the memory of the Taiwanese. The lifting of the martial law in 1987 and the subsequent introduction of free parliamentary elections in 1992 and presidential elections in 1997 made possible for Taiwanese people to raise their voices against the KMT rule of terror. In this way, KMT's atrocities were substituted to the Japanese' in the collective memory of the Taiwanese that could at that point re-establish the good image of the Japanese that the KMT leaders had tried to disrupt.

1.3 *The Pan-Green Coalition And The Creation Of A Taiwanese Identity*

The second reason of Taiwan friendliness towards Japan is the emergence of a sense of Taiwanese identity among the population, which provokes a progressive distancing from China. This strong sentiment developing among the population was both

²²⁸ VICKERS, Edward, "Frontiers of Memory: Conflict, Imperialism, and Official Histories in the Formation of Post-Cold War Taiwan Identity", in *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory and the Post-Cold War in Asia*, eds. Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Rana Mitter, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 212.

²²⁹ ROY, Denny, *Taiwan, a Political History*, NY, Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 242, p. 54.

interpreted and encouraged by anti-unification parties formed after the democratic reforms, as was the case of the pan-green coalition. Formed in the aftermath of the ROC presidential elections in 2000, this coalition sustained the first president external to the KMT, i.e. Chen Shui-bian leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). This party supports ideas of lesser identification with China and the creation of a Taiwanese identity, for an independent Taiwan. It opposes to the pan-blue coalition formed by KMT and other parties that still foresee an eventual unification with Chinese Mainland on the pattern of 'one country, two systems'. The pan-green coalition²³⁰ calls for a formal separation of Taiwan from China through changes to the 1946 constitution and international law. One of the means to achieve this objective was essentially the cultivation of a Taiwanese identity separate from that of China.

The image of Japan had much to gain from pan-green effort to take the distance from China, because they prompted the restoring of a good image of the Japanese, who was responsible for bringing Taiwan into modernity, in contrast with the Chinese who was culpable for having oppressed Taiwanese people for forty years.

²³⁰ The pan-green coalition is an informal political alliance and consists of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU), the Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP) and the Taiwan Constitution Association (TCA). The name of this coalition comes from the colours of the DPP, which had adopted the green for its association with the environmental movement.

1.4. How The Taiwanese Identity Was Created

According to the pan-greens the first step to create a Taiwanese identity was the repudiation of the Sinocentric nationalism that for long time had generated a sense of belonging to the Chinese Nation. This Sinocentric nationalism should have been substituted by a Taiwan-centric nationalism. As various theories of identity formation have observed, the method to construct the identity of a group passes necessarily through the identification of an external “Other”. For what concerns the Taiwanese people, this “Other” had necessarily to be China.²³¹

The “Othering” of China was carried out by multiple means. First of all, great attention was paid to the existence of the Malayo-Polynesians aboriginals, as this served to support the claim that Taiwan ethnic identity is different from the Han Chinese Mainland’s.²³² Secondly, the proponents of a Taiwanese identity tended to promote the Taiwanese language (or *Minnan*), thus marking the difference with the Mandarin language spoken in the Mainland and imposed by KMT regime during their oppressive rule. This project of recovery of the past is called *bentuhua*, or nativization and has increased remarkably since Taiwan

²³¹ SUZUKI, Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The “Comfort Women” Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs*: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p. 236

²³² LYNCH, Daniel C., “Taiwan’s self-Conscious Nation-Building Project”, in *Asian Survey* 44, no.4 (2004), pp. 513-533

democratization, which brought an empowerment of the native Taiwanese in the political scene of the island²³³.

Also cultural monuments were moulded to serve the purposes of a loosen identification with China, thus indirectly prompting good relations with Japan. During Chen Shui-bian's mandate as mayor of Taipei, the DPP took the occasion of incensing the Japanese work in the island. On a panel of the 228 Museum dedicate to Japan's rule over Taiwan are reported the following lines:

*"Believe that it was in its interests to improve the island infrastructure, and thus [Japanese administrators] surveyed natural land resources, learned about customs, developed roads and railways, provided a modern education, improved public sanitation, and set disease control measures. The Japanese also established a legal system and improved public security, raising the general quality of life"*²³⁴.

Comparing a relatively benign, progressive and civilised Japanese rule with an oppressive, regressive and uncivilised Chinese rule was useful for highlighting the misgovernment of the Mainlanders and therefore de-legitimising them. Though this action proponents of the anti-unification policy

²³³ SUZUKI, Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The "Comfort Women" Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs: Volume 84, No. 2*, June 2011, p. 237.

²³⁴ Exhibition panel in 228 Museum, Taipei, reported in SUZUKI, S., *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The "Comfort Women" Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs: Volume 84, No. 2*, June 2011, p. 239.

drew strong boundaries between Taiwan and China, thus staving off the political goal of reunification.

The newly discovered Taiwanese identity well coexist with a feeling of proximity with Japan especially for what concerns young people and their product consumption. A survey handled by the Interchange Association Japan (Japanese *de facto* embassy in Taipei) discovered that “65 percent of Taiwanese feel either ‘close’ or ‘very close’ to Japan”²³⁵. Moreover, when the interviewed were asked what were they favourite country in Asia the “43 percent said Japan”²³⁶ while the rest was shared among U.S., Singapore and China; quite a good result for a country that once colonized them. The support for Japan is even stronger among young Taiwanese between 20 and 29 years old, with a “54 percent of respondents [...] listing Japan as their favourite country”²³⁷ and “only 2 percent of respondents [...] said China was their favourite foreign country”²³⁸. This great popularity translates into high rate of Japanese products entering the Taiwanese market. As reported by Michal Thim and Misato Matsuoka, young people in Taiwan often prefer to use the Japanese *Line* instead of the American *WhatsApp* or the Chinese *WeChat* to send instant messages. The widespread circulation of products like Hello Kitty and any sort of Manga are further examples of this trend.

²³⁵ THIM, Michal, MATSUOKA, Misato, *The Odd Couple: Japan & Taiwan’s Unlikely Friendship*, in “The Diplomat, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/the-odd-couple-japan-taiwans-unlikely-friendship/?allpages=yes&print=yes>, accessed on 1 September 2014.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

The friendliness between these two countries is further demonstrated by the “amount of (mostly private) donations Taiwanese made to Japan in the aftermath of the 3/11 earthquake and tsunami”²³⁹.

1.5. Taiwan's Need For The Balancing Action Of Japan In Cross Strait Relations

Progressive distancing from China after the KMT rule of oppression and the subsequent creation of a Taiwanese identity, which is separated from the Chinese, bring us to the third reason why the Taiwanese keep good relations with the Japanese. “There is a mutual understanding that Taiwan needs Japan’s support should relations between Taiwan and China deteriorate”²⁴⁰. Considering latest Chinese assertiveness over the Tiaoyutai/Senkaku Islands, politicians in Japan understand that if Taiwan fell under Chinese control, Japanese security would be seriously put in peril. Current Prime Minister Shinzō Abe was aware of the threat and gave great emphasis to this issue since the beginning of his premiership. The Ministry of Defence also described a PRC attack on Taiwan as “one of the scenarios that could prompt a Japanese conflict with China”²⁴¹.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ SUZUKI, Shogo, *The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs: The “Comfort Women” Issue in Taiwan*, in *Pacific Affairs*: Volume 84, No. 2, June 2011, p. 239.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

The necessity to protect Taiwan from China's aggressions is a strong objective of both the political coalitions, the pan-blue with its acceptance of a re-unification under certain level of autonomy and the pan-green with its strong opposition to any kind of annexation.

The former president Lee Teng-hui (1988-2000) from the KMT, who "represents a generation of Taiwanese who received their education from Japan during the colonial period (1895-1945) and who speak Japanese fluently"²⁴² did not seek to distance himself from Japan looking for a deeper identification with China. On the contrary, he kept good relations with Japan for the entire duration of his mandate. Lee's successor from the DPP Party, Chen Shui-bian, also had a positive view of Japan and pushed for building closer ties with Tokyo, always balancing Taiwan the relations with China in order to avoid attracting its anger. When in 2008 the KMT came back to power, frustrated for having lost the elections for two terms, many expected the government to take distance from Japan, both because the KMT is notably closer to China and because current politicians, unlike their predecessors who studied in schools run by Japanese, never experienced the rule of Japan. However, this did not happen. If Ma Ying-jeou took a policy that embraced more China than its predecessors, the relationship with Japan did not deteriorate. On the contrary, in April 2013 Taipei and Tokyo were able to sign an agreement over the joint exploitation of the fishing ground surrounding Sakishima Islands. As we will see in the next

²⁴² Ibid.

paragraphs, to sign similar agreement with Korea would be impossible, at least for the moment.

Also Washington is aware of China's possible threat and pushes for stronger ties between its two important allies. Indeed, the U.S. would not be pleased at all if "Taiwan President ran on an anti-Japanese agenda"²⁴³ and until Taiwan will need the U.S to provide their defence, it is unlikely to do something that would trigger their disapproval. This mechanism was supposed to work also in Korea, however, notwithstanding all U.S efforts to decrease the level of antipathy towards Japan, any attempts to cooperation failed miserably.

2. South Korea

2.1. The Reasons Under South Korean Confrontational Attitude

First of all, as we saw in the first chapter, Koreans have been deeply anti-Japanese since the colonial period, and before, and we just failed to notice it until democratization stepped in twenty-five years ago. Since that moment, newspapers started to be less manipulated by the government and expression of public opinion became easier, thus giving the opportunity to anti-Japanese feeling to come out with a larger resonance. In fact, as noted by East Asia experts Robert E. Kelly on *The Diplomat*, "under dictatorships, there are strong incentives to keep your true

²⁴³ Ibid.

feeling to yourself”²⁴⁴ and of course “Korea was such a dictatorship until the late 80”²⁴⁵. Mass protests burst during Japan-Korea normalization talks in 1965, but if Korea were already a democracy at the time the treaty would probably have collapsed, exactly like happened few years ago during a intelligence sharing pact.

Secondly, as noted by Robert E. Kelly, the rise of anti-Japanese feelings coincided in the late 1980s with the death of the first South Korea’s political elite, which had collaborated with the Japanese during the occupation. These people were particularly hated not only because they collaborated with the Japanese but also because they exploited “political connections, wealth, skills and so on to enter the postwar elite”²⁴⁶. Their passing gave the second generation of unstained post-colonial politicians the chance to explore the past as their former colleagues never did. So aggressiveness against the Japanese sometimes reflects the “embarrassment at Korean collaboration [...] during the occupation”²⁴⁷.

Finally, the newly democratized South Korea is in need of some legitimising story that was unnecessary under the dictatorship. Seoul’s government, with its “corrupted institutions, deep state elitism at the top, and a debilitating legitimacy competition with the DPRK”²⁴⁸ is struggling to earn legitimacy

²⁴⁴ KELLY, Robert E., *Three Hypotheses on Korea’s Intense Resentment of Japan*, in “The Diplomat”, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/three-hypotheses-on-koreas-intense-resentment-of-japan/>, accessed on 1 September 2014.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

among its citizens. In order to strengthen the sense of belonging to the South Korean state, they cannot exploit the hatred towards North Korea because “not enough South Koreans share a strict ‘enemy image’ of North Korea”²⁴⁹ therefore often opt to exploit the anti-Japanese feelings.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

CONCLUSIONS

In this work I provided the analysis of the reasons why two countries that during their history faced the common experience of colonial subjugation developed completely different feelings towards their former coloniser. Among all the territories colonised by Japan, I chose to analyse particularly Taiwan and South Korea for the astonishing difference that characterizes their bilateral relations with a country that once kept control over them. This difference was easily identifiable during the colonial period, as we saw in the first chapter, especially when Korean popular resentment culminated in a series of multiple attacks against colonial governor-generals, facts that had no equivalent in Taiwan. However, after Japanese withdrawal, the two countries experienced a period of strict dictatorship during which every expression of thought was silenced. When in the 1980s a new democratic course began, South Korean and Taiwanese citizens could then dig in their past and elaborate what happened during the Japanese colonial administration. It was the period when issues like the 'comfort women' come out and the Japanese government found itself trapped in tangle of countries asking for apologies and millionaire compensations. One might thought that after excavating in the past both countries would come out with negative feelings towards its former exploiter. However, this was not the case of Taiwan. On the contrary, Taiwan seemed to become progressively the most Japan friendly state of Asia.

Through this analysis it was possible to understand that the causes of their different attitude were to be found in three

different aspects. First of all: history. When the Japanese settled in these territories, they did not encounter a desert ground without historical roots but a territory inhabited by people with different degree of national identity. In Korea the sense of nationalism shared among the population was stronger than it was in Taiwan, and this had direct consequences in people's reaction to the foreign invasion.

Secondly: the defence of the borders. The Japanese diverse level of interest towards the two territories made the colonial experience different for the two countries. In fact, worried of the consequences of a Korea occupied by the Western nations, Japan's way of ruling in the peninsula was much more heavy handed than it was in the underestimated Taiwan.

And finally: geopolitical interests. After democratization, when Japanese war crimes started to be addressed openly by the population, geopolitical interests started having a significant impact over people perception of Japan. Taiwanese people, interested in defending their country from the pressures of China, started looking toward Japan in search for an ally. On the other hand, Korean corrupted politicians, in need for a scapegoat that would enlarge their political consensus started looking towards its biggest regional competitor, in the hope that putting it under pressure Japan would earn them also some territorial concessions.

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