

*Toward A History Beyond Borders:
Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations*

edited by Daqing Yang, Jie Liu, Hiroshi Mitani, and Andrew Gordon
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Pui-Tak Lee
University of Hong Kong

In the past few years much attention has been paid to Sino-Japanese relation, particularly after nationwide anti-Japan demonstrations broke out in China and the Japanese government declared sovereignty over Diaoyu islands (called the Senkaku islands by the Japanese) by purchasing them from the unknown Kurihara family. At one point, the two countries were on the brink of war. In this context, *Toward a History Beyond Borders: Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations* is a timely publication addressing the controversial history of Sino-Japanese relations.

The thirteen papers, which have been included in this book, dealt

* In order to gain a wider readership, the Chinese and Japanese version of this book, respectively entitled *Zhaoyue guojing de lishi rengshi: Laizhi Ribenji haiwai Zhongguo xuezhe de shijiao* 超越國境的歷史認識：來自日本及海外中國學者的視角 and *Kokkyō o koeru rekishi ninshiki: Nicchū taiwa no kokonomi* 國境を越える歴史認識：日中對話の試み, were published in Beijing and Tokyo, respectively, both in 2006. The readership has now expanded to those of the English language. It is rare for an academic publication to have version of three different languages. This review will not attempt to compare the three versions, therefore, the discussion here is based on the English version.

with general issues such as the Twenty-one Demands, the Tanaka Memorial, the Nanjing Massacre, and war responsibility. At first glance, this book does not seem to offer any groundbreaking interpretations regarding Sino-Japanese relations. What is new about the book is its methodological approach and its emphasis on moving Sino-Japanese relations from a 'rivaling' to a 'reconciliatory' stage.

The first half of the book deals with issues from before and during the war period: "Modes of Narrating the History of Sino-Japanese Relations: The Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century," by Toshio Motegi (20-52); "A Prototype of Close Relations and Antagonism: From the First Sino-Japanese War to the Twenty-One Demands," by Shin Kawashima (53-80); "Sino-Japanese Diplomacy during Cycles of Mutual Antagonism: On the Eve of the Manchurian Incident," by Jie Liu (81-120); "Controversies over the Tanaka Memorial," by Ryuji Hattori (121-147); "Issues in the History of Manzhouguo: Contemporary and Succeeding Perspectives," by Hidemi Higuchi (148-177); "The Nanjing Atrocity: Is Constructive Dialogue Possible?" by Daqing Yang (178-204); and "Wang Jingwei and the 'Nanjing Nationalist Government': Between Collaboration and Resistance," by Jie Liu (205-239). The second half of the book covers issues from the postwar period: "Japan's History Textbook System and its Controversies," by Hiroshi Mitani (240-266); "Sino-Japanese Mutual Understanding as Seen in History Textbooks," by Satoshi Ibaraki (267-298); "Historical Perceptions of Taiwan's Japan Era," by Toyomi Asano (299-339); "Politics and Commemoration in Postwar Japan," by Ryota Murai (340-371); "From War Reparation to Postwar Reparation," by Zhihui Yang (372-410); and "Historical Dialogue and Documentary Research," by Shin Kawashima (411-432).

The book represents three distinct features. The first is the high quality of the papers, all of which are based on extensive archival research and are aimed at overcoming historiographical discrepancies between the scholarship in China and Japan. In presenting evidence, each

chapter (except the chapter on history textbooks) includes the key documents that are coherent with the argument pursued in the chapter. Readers thus can easily trace the formation and development of the controversy regarding a chapter's subject. As such, the book offers an opportunity for dialogue between scholars from the two countries. It also reminds both sides of the divergences in their historical perspectives. This book represents a new endeavor of scholarship on the history of Sino-Japanese relations.

The second distinct feature is that most of the contributors were born in the 1960s and have been educated or professionally trained in either Japan or China, or both. For such contributors, language proficiency in both Chinese and Japanese is a merit rather than an obstacle. More importantly, they are able to work as a team, as suggested in the book's title "Beyond Borders." It would have been even better had the team recruited more members from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese communities overseas, such as in Singapore. The language proficiency and transnational endeavor differentiates the contributors from historians of the older generation, including those who published in English, such as Marius B. Jansen, Peter Duus, Akira Iriye, and Joshua Fogel. One of the significant shifts is the switch in the Romanization system and the use of terminology. Wade-Giles has been replaced by Pinyin, thus "Manchukuo" is now spelled as "Manzhouguo." And "Nanjing Massacre" is now referred to as "Nanjing Atrocity," indicating that the contributors are at liberty to choose according to their own "historical perception."

The third feature is that the book encompasses the most up-to-date research in political and diplomatic history on modern China and Japan. It also reflects the strengths of the editors and the contributors. However, what of economic, cultural, social, and even religious aspects? Does it mean that once political issues are resolved, it will be easier to tackle other economic and cultural issues? As there is no definite answer, the debate regarding which topics are the most important cannot be

undertaken, but an even balance would more easily persuade readers.

The joint efforts of this new generation of Japanese and Chinese scholars to promote research on modern Chinese, Japanese, and East Asian history are impressive. It is worth mentioning that in addition to this book, other “joint” projects have produced a number of publications which are complementary to each other and also to this book.¹ More importantly, some of these publications have involved the participation of South Korean scholars. It seems that there is a considerable amount of Japanese-language scholarship to read.

¹ Okuda Yasuhiro and Kawashima Shin, eds., *Chūgoku sengō hoshō: Kyōdō kenkyū – Rekishi, hō, saiban* [中国戦後補償: 共同研究: 歴史・法・裁判; Reparations to China in the Postwar Period: A Joint Research Project in History, Legal Aspects and Jurisdiction] (Tokyo: Meiseki shoten, 2000); Nitani Sadao, *21 seiki no rekishi ninshiki to kokusai rikai: Kankoku, Chūgoku, Nihon kara no teigen* [21世紀の歴史認識と国際理解: 韓国・中国・日本からの提言; Historical Perceptions and International Understanding in the Twenty-first Century: Suggestions from South Korea, China, and Japan] (Tokyo: Meiseki shoten, 2004); Mitani Hiroshi and Kimu Teechan [Kim Taechang], eds., *Higashi Ajia rekishi taiwa: Kokkyō to sedai o koete* [東アジア歴史対話: 国境と世代を越えて; Dialogues on History in East Asia: Going Beyond National Boundaries and Generations] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2007); Kondō Takahiro, *Higashi Ajia no rekishi seisaku: Nit-Chū-Kan taiwa to rekishi ninshiki* [東アジアの歴史政策: 日中韓対話と歴史認識; Policies on History in East Asia: Dialogue and Historical Perceptions among Japan, China, and South Korea] (Tokyo: Meiseki shoten, 2008); Ryū Ketsu [Liu Jie] and Kawashima Shin, eds., *1945-nen no rekishi ninshiki: ‘Shūsen’ o meguru Nit-Chū taiwa no kokoromi* [1945年の歴史認識: 「終戦」をめぐる日中対話の試み; Historical Perceptions of the Year 1945: Attempts at Historical Dialogue between Japan and China on the Issue of the ‘End of the War’] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2009); Kasahara Tokushi, *Sensō o shiranai kokumin no tame no Nit-Chū rekishi ninshiki: “Nit-Chū rekishi kyōdō kenkyū” ‘Kin-gendaishi’ o yomu* [戦争を知らない国民のための日中歴史認識: 『日中歴史共同研究「近現代史」』を読む; Historical Perceptions of Japan and China for Japanese and Chinese Nationals Who Do Not Know about the War: Reading ‘Modern and Contemporary History’ in *The Joint Japanese-Chinese Historical Research Project*] (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2010); Hattori Ryūji, *Nit-Chū rekishi ninshiki: ‘Tanaka jōsōbun’ o meguru sōkoku 1927-2010* [日中歴史認識: 「田中上奏文」をめぐる相剋 1927-2010; Understanding Japan-China History: Conflict over the Tanaka Memorial, 1927-2010] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2010); Uketsu Atsushi, *Ryōdo mondai to rekishi ninshiki: Naze Nit-Chū-Kan wa te o tsunagenai no ka* [領土問題と歴史認識: なぜ、日中韓は手をつなげないのか; Territorial Disputes and Historical Perceptions: Why Cannot Japan, China, and South Korea Join Hands?] (Tokyo: Seionsha, 2012); Ryū Ketsu [Liu Jie] and Kawashima Shin, eds., *Tairitsu to kyōzon no rekishi ninshiki: Nit-Chū kankei 150nen* [対立と共存の歴史認識: 日中間係150年; Between a Historical Understanding of Conflict and Co-existence: Sino-Japanese Relations over 150 Years] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2013).