

**CHINA'S PERCEPTIONS OF JAPAN: A STUDY OF HISTORICAL  
MEMORIES AS AN AGENCY, 2002-2012**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “China’s Perceptions of Japan: A Study of Historical Memories as an Agency, 2002-2012” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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*DEDICATED TO  
MY DEAREST DADU,  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

ALPHA	Alliance to Preserve the History of WWII in Asia
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APHRIC	Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCTV	China Central Television
CICIR	China Institute of Contemporary International Relations
CMT	Chosenness-Myths-Trauma
CNN	Cable News Network
CNNIC	China Internet Network Information Center
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
IMTFE	International Military Tribunal for the Far East
IR	International Relations
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce
NPC	National People's Congress
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PLA	People's Liberation Army
POW	Prisoner of War
PRC	People's Republic of China
SDF	Self Defence Forces (Japan)
SIIS	Shanghai Institute for International Studies
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
UNSC	United Nations Security Council



UN

United Nations

USA

United States of America

WWII

World War Two

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Since the turn of the new century, China's relations with Japan has been faced by a series of political tensions, ignited mainly by contentions over history text books, repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese prime ministers and territorial disputes over the contested Diaoyu islands. These series of political events suggest that it is only officially that China and Japan have normalised the relations since 1972, as the contemporary relations are still influenced by the legacy of the past. For instance, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of normalisation in 2002, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, in his message to Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro stated: "[W]e will both seize the opportunity of the thirtieth anniversary of the normalisation of relations, in accordance with the spirit of "taking history as a mirror and looking forward the future" (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2002). This logic of "taking history as a mirror" has become the crux of China's relations with Japan.

Why does history play such a significant role in defining China's relations with Japan? The political fallout such as Koizumi's repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine since 2001 to 2006, Japan's bidding for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) permanent membership in 2005 which China opposed on the grounds that Japan could not reflect enough on its wartime past, tensions in the Diaoyu islands in 2010 and 2012 and others. Most importantly, these political events have been compounded by an increasing trend of negative public opinion in China as represented in the anti-Japanese demonstrations that reached the nadir in 2005. What is noteworthy, is that the common link to all these events is the history factor.

This makes the 'history problem' one of most notable point of friction in contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. In this context, what intrigues the mind is-how does one explain China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan in the present times. Here, the Chinese attitude is strongly informed by the past' unlike state-centric rational interests. This makes the relationship a puzzle as the high economic interdependence and the history issue goes hand in hand. As a result, the relationship has been characterised as that of "hot economics, cold politics". What constitutes the "cold politics" is the psychological component of 'historical memories' that acts as an anathema in the China-Japan discourse.

What is apparent is that China's attitude towards Japan is largely driven by the logic of historical memories than that of rational interests. This argument stands valid as the present China-Japan relations exhibit a departure from the two conventional norms: first, that time can heal all wounds; and second, that growing bilateral contacts should mitigate historical grievances. What explains this digression in behaviour is the anti-Japanese political culture in China. Thus, the cognitive component of historical memories of the past seem to defy the neo-liberal arguments, as the strong economic ties have not spilled into the political aspects as evitable in the presence of a strong sentimental rhetoric.

This suggests that unlike conforming to the normative behaviour, China's behaviour towards Japan tends to be shaped by the Chinese emphasis on two philosophical thoughts- firstly, the past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future (*Qianshibuwang, houshizhishi*); and secondly, never forget national humiliation (*Wuwangguochi*). These two constructs point to the role of 'historical memories' in this relationship, not only in terms of the sense of events of the past but also as a powerful symbol. In this, the 'Middle Kingdom Complex' and the 'Century of Humiliation' act as key drivers to China's historical consciousness, which links the past to the present. It signifies as to how history has influenced Chinese people's attitudes and perceptions towards Japan. Therefore, the important reason for China's emotionality is that people of China connect the current events with historical grievances. Thus, any act on part of Japan reactivates the Chinese memory of the wars and invasions that this country has suffered many years ago.

Hence, given this context, it becomes quintessential to understand the relevance and importance of perceptions born out of historical memories in explaining China's political dynamics and international behaviour towards Japan. The deconstruction of the current "hot economics, cold politics" relationship between China and Japan, lies in the understanding of how the perceptions built by the cognitive component of historical memories shapes China's present as well as future relationship with Japan. This situation calls for the need to look beyond the structural driven perspectives and probe into the ideational understanding based on the role of perceptions that underpin

China's contemporary national identity as an erstwhile great power, reclaiming its traditional status and prestige.

What seems to be true is that for China, the brutal war and this part of history in relation to Japan, have left many sensitive historical symbols, which gets reactivated deliberately or unintentionally, creating a discord in China's attitude towards Japan. This fundamental reason helps to explain as to why the bilateral relations have always been fragile and dangerous even after decades of normalisation. This fragility can only be understood in the context of historical issues and interpretations of the past that pose a major barrier for China to reconcile with Japan.

## **1.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The above context reflects how the past bedevils China's relations with Japan in the present times and thereby, makes it important to understand as to why the 'history problem' continues to emerge after decades of normalisation. Given the primacy of the history issue, the impact of the history problem in Sino-Japanese relations has been greatly studied in the recent years. The focus has been laid on particular aspects such as- textbook disputes, the prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, Diaoyu islands dispute and so on. This suggests that the focus so far has been very issue specific and drawn on from structural dimensions. However, the history problem needs to have a larger conceptualisation which can only be given by laying emphasis on the perceptions born out of history. That is 'how the history is remembered' that it triggers these specific issues in the contemporary China-Japan relations.

### **1.1.1 THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS: STANDARD EXPLANATIONS**

The 'history factor' in Sino-Japanese relations have been a deeply explored topic. The history argument suggests that Sino-Japanese relations cannot be understood without due consideration of the history that the two countries have shared and the attitudes and perceptions that have evolved as a result. Based on the rich literature on the understanding of role of history in Sino-Japanese relations, three distinct schools of thought emerge dominant. They are: the primordialist, the instrumentalist and the constructivist.

Firstly, the Primordialist School: This School of thought is based on the understanding that collective memory is formed on the basis of primordial ties of blood, kinship, language and common history. As Gong (2001: 26-27) suggests “[t]ransferring from generation to generation, history and memory issues tell grandparents and grandchildren who they are, give countries national identity, and channel the values and purposes that chart the future in the name of the past.” Therefore, based on the theory of primordialism, scholars suggest that ethnic conflicts from many years ago and the “centuries of accumulated hatreds” are behind much present-day violence, such as the case of China-Japan relationship (Wang 2012: 21).

In case of Sino-Japanese relationship, this school of thought argues that the traumatic experiences resulting from Japan’s invasion on Chinese soil has left a deep scar on the Chinese psyche which remains to this very day. To this, Yang (2002: 20) argues that “for the Chinese side, the problem does not just date from the Eight Year War but from 1895 (large indemnity, loss of Taiwan). As late Arnold Toynbee suggests that of all foreign invasions in China in modern times, Japan’s was the longest and most extensive”. Manifestations of this can be seen in China’s strong reactions—a ‘knee-jerk response’, as Allen S. Whiting once put it – to any perceived ‘revival’ of Japanese imperialist ideology or symbols (Whiting 1989; Whiting and Xin 1990: 115–20).

There is much to support this argument, as there are many in China who remember the cruelty inflicted by the Japanese armies, and it seems quite reasonable that to many Chinese any actions by ‘historical revisionists’ smack of Japan’s failure to face up to its past. Yang (2002) sees the concerns of the Chinese as being rooted in their deep distrust of the Japanese. It is dominated by the historical legacy of Japanese imperialism and occupation. To this Wang (2012) argues that Japan’s significant military capabilities and its alliance with the US keeps the Chinese primordial beliefs of Japan intact, making the past relevant to the contemporary perspectives of what Japan represents today. Therefore, though the primordial argument holds true in the context that though the Chinese are aware of the importance of a stable relationship with Japan to China’s strategy of enhancing its comprehensive national power, but it becomes difficult for China to move beyond the history issue. But this school of thought gives a much generalised picture of Sino-Japanese relations. The gap lies in

probing deeper into the specificities that distinguishes the Sino-Japanese relations in the historical context.

Secondly, the Instrumentalist School: This school is based on the understanding that history and memory can be used instrumentally to promote the individual or collective interests of leaders. In their struggle for power, competing elites often use history as a tool to mobilise popular support. Ethnic categories can also be manipulated to maintain the power of a dominant group and justify discrimination against other groups. The manipulation of the past provides the opportunity to mould the present and the future. The instrumentalist perspective treat ethnicity primarily as an ad hoc element of a political strategy, used as a resource by interest groups for achieving such goals as an increase in wealth, power, or status (Wang 2012: 22). Stuart J. Kaufman (2001) in his book *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* argues that people are taught ethnic hatred, not born into it. In the understanding of China-Japan relationship, the instrumentalist argument has gained grounds in the recent years. This argument essentially claims that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) strategically and rationally uses the history of Japanese imperialist aggression (Downs and Saunders 1998; Shambaugh 1996; Whiting 1995; Zhao 2000). It is argued on two grounds: firstly, history is used to take advantage of Japan's war guilt and draw out political concessions from Tokyo. And secondly, it is utilized by the Chinese government to take a strong stance against Japan, thus, presenting itself as a patriotic force and enhancing its claim to legitimacy (Rozman 2002: 106).

This school views history as a factor for political and economic gains and argues as to how China plays the history card. In the post 1982 textbook controversy, Chalmers Johnson (1986: 424) was the first to express the doubt by stating that “the Chinese government was truly interested in Japanese text book, but there can be no doubt that it found in the text book controversy a convenient lever to bring the Japanese government to heel, in which it was largely successful”. While some experts argue that by exposing the old historical wounds, China intended to extract massive yen loans and other concessions and to moderate Japan's criticism of China. Beijing's loud demands that Tokyo hold a 'correct' view of history and demonstrate sufficient remorse towards the Chinese is therefore, seen as a bargaining tool in both international and (particularly) domestic politics. Scholars have pointed out, for

instance, that Beijing's strong reactions towards Japan in the 1982 textbook controversy were partly a result of its need to bolster its domestic legitimacy after failing to stop the United States selling advanced weaponry to Taiwan (Rose 1998).

Memories of negative history have also been linked to factional politics, where elites utilise memories of imperialist aggression to “coalesce support and weaken opponents” (Deans 2000: 122-4). Zhao (1998: 17) has noted that historical sites of Japanese aggression were utilized by the CCP leaders in their ‘patriotic education campaign’ aimed at strengthening the regime’s claims to power. This argument has become increasingly persuasive in the context of a legitimacy crisis within China, where the CCP was suffering from “three spiritual crises (*sanxinweiji*)” in the late 1970s, namely “a crisis of faith in socialism, a crisis of confidence in the future of the country, and a crisis of trust in the party” (Zhao 2000: 17). This problem was further exacerbated by the collapse of the socialist Eastern bloc and the worldwide retreat of communist ideology. As a result, the CCP is increasingly seen as dependent on its nationalist credentials for maintaining its support.

The historical memories of Japanese imperialism easily arouse Chinese nationalist sentiments, and the more the CCP is seen to be taking a hard stance against any perceived ‘revival’ of ‘Japanese militarism’, the more likely it is to be seen as a patriotic force worthy of the people’s backing. As Yang Daqing (2002: 18) states that “the Chinese government does not simply (or primarily) use history as a card against Japan, but largely as part of patriotic education for domestic consumption. It is common wisdom that patriotism- often in the form of anti-Japanese nationalism – is intrinsically linked to the government’s legitimacy in China”.

Thus, the instrumentalist approach views the Chinese government as manipulating the Japanese government, taking advantage of the ‘unfortunate history’ and Japan’s supposed guilt complex, as a way to get political and or economic gains. In this context, Walter Arnold (1990: 140) argues that “many Japanese feel that China resurrects the spectre of Imperial Japan for political purposes when in need of concessions, funds or aid”, and he further states that the loans given to China by the Japanese government in 1984 and 1988 helped to alleviate the discontent over the textbook and other political issues.

This School of thought has a strong and valid posture based on the realist understanding of Sino-Japanese relations premised on relative political and economic gains and survival of the CCP regime. But on the other end, it fails to take into account the ideational factors that contribute to the instrumentalist decision making in terms of how beliefs and perceptions born out of China's historical memory come to intervene in the present Sino-Japanese relations, which makes reconciliation difficult to achieve. It just focuses on the Political elites and system legitimacy neglecting the rising public anti-Japanese sentiments and how it impacts China's relations with Japan in the present context.

Thirdly, the Constructivist School: A constructivist argument is that identities and interests will lead to "relations of enmity", but that these are subject to change by "new understanding of 'self' and 'other'" (Booth & Wheeler 2008: 94). According to Peter Katzenstein and RudraSil (2004: 9): "Constructivism is based on the fundamental view that ideational structures mediate how actors perceive, construct, and reproduce the institutional and material structures they inhabit as well as their own roles and identities within them." It is argued that identity is manufactured rather than given and that it is socially constructed. In this regard, People choose a history and common ancestry and create, just as much as discover, differences from others. David Lowenthal in his book *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (1985) argues that it is we, the contemporaries, who construct our past selectively and for a variety of reasons. While Maurice Halbwachs (1992: 224) states that "collective memory constructs its various recollections to align itself with contemporary ideas and preoccupations; in other words, the past is reconstructed with regard to the concerns and needs of the present".

In the context of Sino-Japanese relations, constructivists argue that China and Japan perceive their relations in the background of their shared historical experience. As Drifte (2003: 14-15) points out, "[f]rom a constructivists perspective, the discourse of the Japanese on China and that of the Chinese on Japan is clearly shaped by their shared historical experience;" thus, history effects current security relations because many issues are handled against a context of historical experience, and the security



relationship is especially “sensitive to perceptions of intentions and to manipulations of these perceptions”.

China has a profound distrust in Japan for various reasons, but mainly due to the dissatisfaction and distrust over how Japan has handled certain historical issues. As a result, and even though Japan is a weaker military power than the US, Japan seems to be trusted less and more disliked than the US in the eyes of China (Christensen 2003 27-28). According to Benedict Anderson (1991) in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, he argues that print languages laid the foundation for national consciousness by creating unified fields of exchange and communication (Wang 2012: 22). Long-term effects to Sino-Japanese relationships are brought about by historical narration in history, and anti-Japanese sentiment is then created to distract people from domestic problems. Indeed, some have argued that the Chinese government uses education and public media as a means to spread nationalistic rhetoric, as a way to maintain legitimacy (Jia 2005: 17).

Based on these constructivist assumptions it is certain that historical conceptions are an important limitation on the ability of China and Japan to cooperate as exhibited in the repeated outbursts of tension over Japanese visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, the textbook issues, and disputes over the Diaoyu Islands. Though the constructivist approach views the history issue as a constant factor pushing against the Sino-Japanese relations, but it too fails to explain the ebb and flow of Sino-Japanese relations. It lacks the psychological quotient in its understanding of the hatred or distrust in terms of how one identifies ‘self’ against the ‘other’.

### **1.1.2 ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDING TO THE SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS**

Though studies of foreign policy have shown that perceptions and attitudes born of historical antecedents and experience do play a role in the foreign policy making process, but the gap lies in applying this theoretical framework to study the Sino-Japanese relations. It is because the studies have failed to address as to ‘how’ and to what extent the cognitive component of ‘perceptions’ based on historical memories affect the Chinese foreign policy-making processes vis-à-vis bilateral problems with Japan.

In this context, Yuen Foong Khong (1992) in his book *Analogies at War*, argues that leaders use historical analogies not merely to justify policies but also to perform specific cognitive and information-processing tasks essential to political decision making. One way people make sense of new situations is by comparing them to older situations already stored in their memories. The history of a people profoundly influences the perception they have of the world around them as historical memories are important information processors. Thus, historical memory influences an actor's interpretation and understanding of the external world and specific situations, and it often leads actors to endow a group with certain motives and to interpret the world through frames defined in part by those motives.

In applying this psychological framework to the Sino-Japanese context, some scholars have provided us with some starting points. Chih-yu Shih (1995) argues that Japan played an important role as an 'Other' in the psychological foundations of Chinese foreign policy making, which helped consolidate China's reinvention as a sovereign state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He further states that the emergence of Japan as a threatening 'statist Other' was crucial in reinventing China's self-identity as a 'sovereign state'. This particular aspect of China's national identity continues to this very day: in Shih's words, "China did not adjust its image of Japan by recategorising Japan as a *waiguoren* [foreigner] state. Rather it sees itself as an "un-Japanese" state" (Shih 1995: 544).

While Whiting (1989) in studying the influence of Chinese images of Japan on the bilateral relationship notes the ambivalence of Chinese attitudes towards Japan. Whereby, using this understanding to the Text book Issue, Whiting suggests that Chinese decision making was a 'conditioned-reflex' type response to Japan's actions. Thomas Christensen (1999: 52) posits that China's "historically rooted and visceral distrust of Japan", or "Tokyo's refusal to respond satisfactorily to Chinese requests that Tokyo recognize and apologise for its imperial past" are at the heart of the problem and will prevent China and Japan from forming close ties in the near future. He further states that even though Japan is a weaker military power than the U.S., Japan seems to be trusted less and more disliked than the US in the eyes of China (Christensen 2003: 27-28).

Kim Taeho (1998: 361) states that the rivalry and distrust are linked to “deeply ingrained cultural, historical and perceptual factors” rather than shared economic or strategic interests. Paul Midford (2000: 21) points that China’s reaction to the USA-Japan decision to revise the defence guide lines in the mid-1990s revealed the perception, based on “robust cognitive roots”. Rose (2005: 8) notes that the balance of threat theory relies on the idea that “Chinese perceptions and beliefs about the Japan threat, themselves based on the events of history (i.e., a Japanese capacity of militarism), impact upon Chinese behaviour towards Japan”.

Drifte (2003: 15) argues that “many Chinese fear that an unrepentant Japan is bound to repeat its past aggression, echoing the widespread historical deterministic idea of many Chinese that a country that does not acknowledge past misdeeds “correctly” is bound to repeat them’. While Peter Hays Gries (2009: 263) contends that “beliefs about the shared past matter for the perception of threat in the present and future foreign policy preferences’. From his empirical findings he suggests that “security and insecurity in Northeast Asia are not just a question of the balance of economic and military power in the region, but also hinges on the impact that beliefs about the shared past has on the perception of threat”.

Zhao Quansheng (2002: 41-44) locates the impact of the legacy of the war in problems such as Taiwan, territory (Diaoyu islands) and “potential resurgence of Japanese militarism”, as he argues that “sometimes it appears that wartime history has become a leading factor in China’s Japan policy”. To this, Rose (2005: 7) reasons it to be embedded in the “memories which stem from past Japanese aggression.” Thereby, from the psychological standpoint, the problem lies in deep distrust, misunderstanding and dislike which is triggered by the ‘historical memories’ creating cognitive biases in China’s behaviour towards Japan in the present times. The image of Japan as a “modern, friendly neighbour” that was formed in the 1980s quickly gave way to that of a remorseless, vexatious, and stubborn “small man” that is still defined in the early 21st century by its wartime history of aggression against China.

### **1.1.3 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE**

The above literature provides us with a different dimension to the Sino-Japanese relationship based on the 'history factor. It presents a powerful argument that captures an important element of recent anti-Japanese sentiments within China. However, it still suffers from few shortcomings.

Firstly, the problem lies in making the Chinese state's manipulation of history as the main culprit. As to argue that the CCP has promoted some form of patriotism to legitimate itself, it does not necessarily follow that anti-Japanese sentiment per se is deliberately disseminated. This argument stands inadequate in many ways. It is because though the CCP's role in defeating Japan did help strengthen its nationalistic credentials and legitimacy among the populace (Johnson 1962), but the cultivation of an overtly anti-Japanese patriotism/nationalism does not necessarily make 'rational' sense in terms of securing the stability of the CCP regime.

It can be argued on three grounds: firstly, Japan remains one of China's key trading partners and can play a critical role in the latter's economic development. Secondly, the CCP's legitimacy is also linked to raising people's living standards, and a downturn in Sino-Japanese economic relations could hinder this goal and adversely affect the party's grip on power (Downs and Saunders 1998). And thirdly, it lies in the fact that an image of a fanatic anti-Japanese China can also act as a catalyst for Japan to strengthen their military power with a specific view to a 'China threat', thereby contributing to a security dilemma in the region. This is not in the rational interest of China. Furthermore, there is also a danger in terms of the growth in populist anti-Japanese sentiment that could result in the CCP losing its autonomy in foreign policy decision making and becoming a hostage to nationalist demands that could further damage already delicate relations with Japan.

Secondly, the problem lies in viewing the Chinese political elites by their very ability to utilize historical memories strategically, which make the decision makers seem to be 'rational actors who balance the need to maintain domestic legitimacy with the pursuit of longer-term international objectives' (ibid.: 123). This implies that the Chinese leadership is somehow autonomous from historical memories and can manipulate past history to suit its interests, which are implicitly treated as a given. But

the counter to this argument lies in the fact that in reality, historical perceptions do matter (Jervis 1976) and thus, the Chinese leaders are no exception: many have had some experience of dealing with Japanese imperialism, and it is difficult to imagine their being able to remain detached from their own historical memories.

Thirdly, the gap lies in the understanding of why and how Japan can be used so successfully by the Chinese leadership to flare up nationalism and bolster its legitimacy. While rhetorical statements of Japanese imperialism can indeed be used for regime legitimation (and other political ends), it is important to note that this can work only when the rhetoric has ‘resonance’ or a ‘captive audience’. This approach, however, “encourages analysts to gloss over the role of historical and situational effects, which are important in explaining why manipulative leaders succeed in some times and places but not in others” (Kaufman 2001: 6).

The counter to this lies in advocating the cognitive understanding of the larger Chinese population. It is because if the broader spectrum of the population did not share some form of anti-Japanese feelings, nationalist sentiment is hardly going to arise from manipulating memories of Sino-Japanese war history. The limitation thereby, lies in adopting a top-down approach which inadvertently assumes that the Chinese masses are somehow mindless puppets that can easily be manipulated by the elites (Gries 2004a, 2004b). This negligence creates the lacuna as to where this receptivity towards anti-Japanese rhetoric comes from in the first place, but there remain no answers.

Therefore, these limitations in the literature tend to trivialise the ‘history issue’ in Sino-Japanese relations. For instance, the primordialist school is too simplistic in explaining the Sino-Japanese rivalry and therefore, ignores the nuances and intertextual arguments. The instrumentalist school tends to perceive the entire historical animosity just as a tool of convenience for Chinese political elites to foster narrow political and economic gains from Japan. While the constructivist school takes into account the normative factors affecting and aggravating the rivalry, however, it too misses to catch the emotional underpinnings that lies at the root of the discord and continues to tarry the process of normalisation of Sino-Japanese relations in true sense. These gaps call for a deeper understanding of ‘why’ and ‘to what extent’ even

after centuries of interaction both politically and economically, China and Japan still face the stalemate in terms of reconciliation. Though the existing literature has acknowledged the historical enmity as the primary source of conflict but it has not been able to explain the underpinnings that constitutes the enmity. The purpose of this study is to fill the analytical gaps by analysing the history problem from a cognitive perspective. In doing so, this study takes history as a dynamic process to highlight how the political rhetoric fails to reflect on the complexities that is primarily rooted in the Chinese psyche.

## **1.2 DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The proposed study attempts to examine the role of perceptions in shaping China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan. In this pretext, the focus is centered on analysing it from the context of historical memories as an agency. Using this framework of analysis, the research tries to study the linkage between perceptions and foreign policy- how a state's behaviour is psychologically driven by a cognitive mental framework.

In this study, perception is understood "as a concept that describes the construction of reality in which an individual (state) makes foreign-policy decisions" (Richard K. Hermann 1986: 843). While historical memory is viewed as what Maurice Halbwachs defines "the end of the process of memory, when collective memory is hardened and fixed into official memory" (Cook 2015: xx). These two definitions serve as the nodal point for the thesis in understanding of China's Japan policy.

Since the post-Cold War period brought about fundamental shifts in world politics and the twenty-first century witnessed the changes in the Asian power politics with the rise of China and the decline of Japan. These major transformations in the global politics brought about paradigmatic changes in the relations between China and Japan after three decades of normalisation since 1972. In this context, the time frame of the proposed study is the period from 2002 to 2012, which witnessed the surfacing of 'history problem' in China-Japan relations under the fourth generation of Chinese leadership as exemplified in the growing instances of tensions with respect to the Yasukuni Shrine, textbook issues, Taiwan, the case of Diaoyu Islands and others.

The rationale of the study is to examine the linkage between China's perceptions of Japan and how these psychological factors shape China's behaviour towards Japan in the contemporary times. That is to say, how the past is shaping the present discourse in China-Japan relations. It would explore into the historical perspective of the relationship by examining the function of historical memories as an agency in shaping the current political dynamics. The aim of the study is to draw the linkage between perceptions born from the past, their interpretations in the present and thereby, the shaping of foreign policy behaviour. The study also examines as to how China goes about making its Japan policy and what are China's perceptions and assessments of Japan. The rationale also lies in filling the existing gap in the research, by focussing on an alternative understanding of China's foreign policy from a cognitive approach under the rubric of 'perceptions' as an important variable in shaping the interpretations of the international environment and China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan. Thereby, the study is centred on analysing the perceptions, policies and prospects in China-Japan relations.

The scope of the study is limited to the time period that extends from 2002 to 2012. The major contribution of this thesis is that it attempts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the current dynamics in China-Japan relations based on a political and social psychological framework of analysis. The research will look beyond the mainstream approach of international politics, namely the realist and liberalist explanations which regard materialistic capabilities of states and states' interests to be naturally given in the international system. By exploring how perceptions and misperceptions, and identity exists between the two states, as well as how these have emerged and transformed, it is hoped that this thesis will provide an alternative way of understanding Sino-Japanese bilateral relations. The thesis will further supplement to the previous studies on Sino-Japanese relations. It also provides a new approach to analyse the relations by offering a mutually constitutive framework of perceptions, foreign policy and domestic context in China's relations with Japan. The work also offers a systematic analysis of the influence of public opinion in China's foreign policy. The thesis also provides many empirical data to understand the Sino-Japanese relations since 2000.

However, the study also has certain limitations with respect to assessing the Chinese sentimental rhetoric from the primary sources due to the constraint of Chinese

language barrier. This makes it problematic to get a direct access to China's perceptions of Japan as can be evaluated from Weibo or other Chinese language sources and opinion polls in China. Therefore, the assessments would be drawn mainly from extensive use of secondary sources.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The proposed study would examine the following questions:

1. What are perceptions and how does it shape the foreign policy behaviour of a nation state in international politics?
2. What constitutes China's historical memories of Japan?
3. What are China's perceptions of Japan?
4. How do the perceptions impact China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan?
5. How does Chinese national identity influence its perceptions and policy towards Japan?
6. What is the role of public opinion in shaping China's Japan policy?
7. What instigates China's reaction towards Japan in the case of Japanese Prime Minister's Yasukuni Shrine visits?

#### **1.5 HYPOTHESES**

**H1:** China's perceptions born out of historical memories impacted its relations with Japan.

**H2:** Chinese national identity and public opinion have negatively influenced China's perceptions and policies towards Japan.

#### **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The main analysis of this thesis is to understand the linkage between perceptions and foreign policy. In this view, the research questions form a part of a bigger theoretical puzzle in terms of how the international relations are structured. The proposed study would apply a deductive approach to examine the influence of perceptions born out of historical memories in examining China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan from 2002-2012. Here, China's 'historical memories' with respect to its past in



general and Japan in particular would be studied as the agency that shapes China's behaviour towards Japan.

Thereby, for the purpose of deconstructing China's attitude towards Japan, the theoretical structure of this thesis will be mainly drawn from the political and social psychological frameworks of analysis. Wherein, the fundamental structure of understanding will be drawn from Foreign Policy Analysis and Constructivist theoretical approaches; but, some elements of other theoretical schools will also be used to complement the analysis. With an emphasis laid on the cognitive component of perceptions constructed from historical memories, the study will adopt a content and context analysis approach. Content and context analysis will be used to study the trend of Chinese behaviour towards Japan. In addition, the study will take into account specific issues and events as case studies to test the claims made. The independent variable for the study is China's perceptions of Japan while the dependent variable is China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan and the intervening variables are China's national identity and public opinion.

This study will be based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources would include speeches, treaties, joint declarations, government documents, official statements of policymakers and others. While the secondary sources would include books, journals, published articles in academic journals, newspaper reports and internet sources. The study will also draw from assessments based on data collected during field trip to Beijing in March 2017.

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

Apart from the introductory chapter, the thesis is divided into five chapters. Wherein Chapter Two gives a thorough theoretical overview of perceptions in international relations. This chapter demonstrates the bidirectional interaction of politics and psychology by understanding how the relationship between perceptions and foreign policy on one hand, and domestic policy and foreign policy on the other, are mutually constitutive. It explores the way foreign policies are decided based on the way the reality of the situation is contextualised in international politics.

Chapter Three provides an understanding of the concept of historical memory and its relevance in the case of China. It will be particularly studied in the context of China's history problem with Japan. Here, the focus will be emphasised on understanding the role of historical memories towards Japan based on the dominant historical narratives that results into shaping China's perceptions of Japan. The focus will be on understanding the perceptions of Chinese decision-making elites and how it impacts China's Japan policy.

Chapter Four investigates the embedded nature of history in Chinese psyche by applying the variable of historical memories to study Chinese public perceptions of Japan. This chapter will examine the impact of domestic forces on China's Japan policy. In doing so, the chapter draws a linkage between historical memories and Chinese public perceptions through three important factors: popular nationalism, public opinion and national identity.

Chapter Five will specifically examine the Yasukuni Shrine issue and how it has significantly impacted China's Japan policy both domestically as well as internationally.

And finally, Chapter Six would draw the final conclusion based on the findings of the study and test the hypotheses. It would thereby, provide a justification for the tested hypotheses based on the available facts and findings.

## **CHAPTER 2: PERCEPTIONS IN FOREIGN POLICY- A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The present chapter aims to provide a thorough analysis of the study of foreign policy from an ideational International Relations (IR) perspective. In adopting a theoretical framework mainly drawn from a political and social psychological perspective, this chapter aims to examine the linkage between the two core elements of the research, namely- perception and foreign policy. Here, it is suggestive of the fact that there is a dimension of psychology that bears on foreign relations, which is cognitive psychology and deals with perceptions, beliefs, images, memory and other mental processes. Hereby, the study investigates the rationality behind the decision-making process of foreign policy in international politics. In this process, the Chapter studies the way perceptions shape foreign policy.

In this perspective, the present study demonstrates the bidirectional interaction of politics and psychology, by understanding how the relationship between perceptions and foreign policy on one hand, and domestic policy and foreign policy on the other, are mutually constitutive. That is, it is made and not given. In other words, the understanding is that the way foreign policies are decided relies heavily on the way the reality of the situation is contextualised. For which perceptions can act both as a determinant as well as an instrument in foreign policy decision making processes. Therefore, by adopting a political and social psychological perspective, this chapter will provide new insights to the understanding of foreign policy between nation-states in international relations.

The present chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section provides a basic understanding of the concept of perceptions and its involvement in a social context, more specifically in the domain of international politics. Though it must be noted that the focus of the thesis is not centered primarily on perceptions but rather it studies the applicability of this important concept in understanding foreign policy behaviour of states in international relations. Provided this, the background knowledge of perceptions still holds vital importance to the study as it gives a thorough understanding of how perceptions are formed and more specifically, how

they shape foreign policy behaviour based on perceptions of the other. This section on perceptions is drawn from a psychological understanding of how the context is constructed, wherein foreign policy behaviour is defined by a subjective bias than an objective calculation. Here, the central assumption is that perceptions, foreign policy and domestic policy are mutually constitutive.

While the second section deals with the Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) approach, which offers the theoretical understanding of foreign policy making in international relations based on socio-ideational and domestic determinants of foreign policy. It studies foreign policy both from inside and outside, thereby, bridging the gap between external and internal dynamics of state behaviour in international politics.

The third section of the chapter is on the Constructivist Approach which provides the theoretical rationale to link perceptions, foreign policy and domestic politics. It gives a social base that makes them mutually constitutive in international politics.

And lastly, based on the overall analysis conclusions will be drawn based on the given framework of analysis.

## **2.1 PERCEPTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

In international relations, the word perception derived from the latin word “*perceptio*” is understood in terms of how actors understand and interpret their environment, including the behaviour of others and situations they find themselves in. Though there is no universal consensus on studying perceptions in international relations, but there still exists a common understanding. In view of this, Arthur A. Stein (1982: 510) reflects that “even critics concede that perceptions are particularly important when an actor’s choice is contingent upon the actions of others”. Likewise, in understanding the relevance of perceptions in international relations, Richard K. Hermann (1985) posits that perceptions are interpretations of reality, and thus, perceptual errors or misperceptions create distorted reality. Wherein, the misperceptions lead to misunderstanding and thereby, result into intergroup conflict in international relations. This makes the decision-makers perception of the other affect the way in which foreign policies are shaped in the international system.

### **2.1.1 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF PERCEPTIONS**

It is an accepted belief that to understand human behaviour, we need to understand how people think, interpret their environments and reach decisions. In this case, simple stimulus-response models rarely come to use. Similarly, in order to understand international politics, one needs to look beyond the state as a rational actor. What makes this probe important is the fact of an existing gap in the assessment. In explaining this analytical gap, Robert Jervis (2002: 293) states that “theories that stress the importance of the state’s external environment, although extremely useful for some purposes, leave many central questions answered”. Thereby, to fill this assessment gap, Jervis further posits that “[in order] to understand international behaviour, we need to look inside the “black box” of the state, and indeed to study the goals, beliefs, and perceptions of the decision-makers” (ibid.: 294).

This alternative view by Jervis rightly points that in an international relations setting, the attribution of the context or situation does play an important role in channelising the action-reaction mechanism of international politics. This can be said so, as David A. Welch (2005: 20) states that “the behaviour of actors depends heavily upon how they construe the situation they face”. That is to say, the “definition of the situation” (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin 1954, 1962) is where the crux of the matters lie- which is inherently subjective in nature. Therefore, this psychological factor that shapes a state’s behaviour is called ‘perceptions’. This acts as the medium by which human beings perceive and make sense of the world.

In view of this, perceptions in international relations, as Hermann (1986: 843) defines is “a concept that describes the construction of reality in which an individual makes foreign-policy decisions”. That is, it is the perceptions of reality that is representative of the problems they (states) encounter in international politics (Jervis 1976; Larson 1985; Sylvan and Thorson 1992). More significantly, as Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1962: 66) in their seminal study emphasised that “perception, choice, and expectation” are crucial components in the derivation of a “definition of the situation”- which is built around the projected action as well as the reasons for the action. To explain, as Kenneth Boulding (1969: 161) suggests that the people whose decisions determine the policies and actions of nations do not respond to the “objective” facts of the situation, but to the “image” of the situation. That is to say,

the states react to “what [they] think the world is like, not what it is really like” (ibid.). Thus, in this way perceptions determine the behaviour of states in the realm of international relations.

### **2.1.2 THE ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS IN FOREIGN POLICY**

In explaining foreign policy in international relations, there are some key questions that need an in-depth analysis. For instance, what explains the nature and dramatic shifts in the relations between two states? Is it a result of geopolitical factors or there is an influence of perceptual and ideational factors?

What makes these queries vital is the narrow state-centric objective assumption of IR. As the rational of ‘power’ and ‘interests’ significantly fails to understand the subjective rational of the ‘black box’, which determines a state’s behaviour. That is to explain, this subjective factor is instigated by the causal element of ‘uncertainty’, which is a predominant characteristic of international politics. In view of this, Steinbruner (1974: 16) notes that the uncertainty creates an “imperfect correspondence between information and the environment”, which in Renshon and Renshon’s (2008: 514) view is caused by- “opponents’ motives, beliefs, intentions or calculations”. Under this rubric of thought, it thereby, becomes essential to rationalise international politics from a subjective viewpoint.

In international realm of politics, foreign relations exist in an uncertain condition where changes occur from being dramatic to that of turning mundane. The explanation to this lies in the uncertain context in which foreign policy operates. That is, where though situated in an interactive setting, but the decision environment is mainly embodied by “ambiguity of information, uncertainty about opponents’ motivations and intentions, dynamic settings, and high risk” (ibid.: 515). In this regard, since there exists an atmosphere of uncertainty in decision-making environment, Hermann (1986: 841) posits that “assumptions” act as the most important variables in understanding debates over foreign policy. Here, the basic notion that follows is that core perceptions, like images of the opponent affect policy choices (ibid.). In other words, the choices made are mainly an outcome of the intentions and strategies of governments and how definitions of the situation are translated into action (Margaret G. Hermann 2003).

These assumptions have a strong claim as foreign policy of a nation addresses itself not to the external world per se, but to the simplified image of the external world constructed in the minds of those who make policy decisions (Axelrod 1976; Holsti 1976; Jervis 1976; George 1980). That is, understanding of the ‘definition of the situation’, as Snyder et al. (2002: 59) argue, is the key to the explanation of why states behave the way it does. As Snyder et al. states that:

“[t]he situation is defined by the actor (or actors) in terms of the way the actor (or actors) relates himself to other actors, to possible goals, and to possible means, and in terms of the way means and ends are formed into strategies of action subject to relevant factors in the situation. These ways of relating himself to the situation (and thus of defining it) will depend on the nature of the actor- or his orientations” (ibid.: 58).

Similarly, Ole R. Holsti (2004: 70) suggests that “to reconstruct how nations deal with each other, it is necessary to view the situation through the eyes of those who act in the name of the state”. That is, the relations between the nations can be understood in the constructs of their perceived reality. This makes foreign policy a process of social and symbolic interaction based on human behaviour. As Blumer (1986: 139) argues that:

“Human beings interpret or “define” each other’s actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actions. Their “response” is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning they attach to such actions”.

That is, human interaction is mediated by symbolic gestures and giving meanings to other’s actions and intentions based on one’s interpretation. This ‘definition of situation’ is where the role of perceptions lie in the understanding of foreign policy. As Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow et al. (1997: 16) state that “uncertainty and the subjective beliefs of actors are essential features of the choice process, and [...] that uncertainty makes the question of differences in perceptions central”. Based on this logic of perceptions, one can explain the various behavioural aspects of how states act in international politics such as- the tendency to view the opponents as more threatening than they may actually be; the tendency to see the behaviour of others as more planned and coordinated than one’s own; the causality of dislike, mistrust and fear towards the other- which bring out the separation of the perceived self from that of the perceived other.

What makes perceptions important in understanding international politics becomes an important inquiry. Here, an important parallel can be drawn from Solomon E. Asch's (1952) understanding which articulates that perceptions form patterns, which are not simply collections of independent bits but are rather integrated wholes. In concurrence to this social psychological assumption, there are four perceptual constructs that can be used to describe a state/actors construction of reality (Hermann 1984; Hermann and Fischerkeller 1995). They are- (1) Perception of Threat- a psychological construction of reality in which foreign policy decisions are made that is characterised by a challenge to preferred political values. (2) Perception of Opportunity- a psychological construction of reality in which foreign policy decisions are made that is characterised by a chance to foster preferred political values. (3) Perception of Cultural Differences- a psychological recognition of the culture of one's own community as either superior or inferior to another observed community. And, (4) Perception of Capability Differences- a psychological recognition of the capability of one's own community as either superior or inferior to another observed community. These perceptual constructs make the state's/actor's definition of their relationship to other national actors a critical factor in foreign policy decision making.

From these four perceptual constructs, three other central dimensions that describe conceptions of foreign policy relationships can be categorised. They are as Richard Cottam (1977: 60-61) identifies- (1) threat or opportunity, which characterises the subject's conception of the value issues at stake and provides a central definition to the perceived relationship; (2) the subject's estimate of the relative capability of the observed actor; and (3) the relative cultural distance. These cognitive frameworks shape decisions about conflict and cooperation which are assessed by the calculations made by the actor about the other based on three factors: the perceived relative capability of the actor, the perceived threat/opportunity represented by that actor, and the perceived culture of that actor.

In assimilating the four constructs and three dimensions, it has been argued that three perceptual patterns appear to be dominant in the study of foreign policy (Cottam 1977; Hermann 1980). That is, (1) the Defender- this perceptual pattern is defined by a perception of threat from a state that is seen as having a similar capability and a culture of comparable quality; (2) the Expansionist- this pattern is defined by a



perception of opportunity presented by a state that is seen as having a similar capability and a comparable culture; and (3) the Imperialist- this perceptual pattern is defined by a perception of opportunity presented by a state that is seen as having much less capability and as possessing an inferior culture.

From the above distinctive perceptual patterns operating in international politics, it can be strongly assessed that if one perceives a challenge to their preferred values there is a tendency to hate the source of that threat and to see the source in terms that allow them to forgo moral restraints and use all the forces available to defeat the challenge (Hermann 1984: 34). These very patterns such as the perceived threat affects a balanced and consistent picture of a state/actor and thereby, influences the behaviour towards them. Keeping this view, Snyder et. al (1954) argues that foreign policy problems are framed, the options that are selected, the choices that are made, and what gets implemented.

In this view, one can explain that perceptions in foreign policy can thereby, play an important role in changing the strategic culture or national roles of their state by altering public opinion or using public opinion to justify and rationalise their foreign policy actions. Hence, it can be stated that the structural conditions do not frame political actions or reactions rather the way they are acted upon depends on the perception of the actor in play- that is, on the subjective definition or construction of the actual situation. In this perspective, it is important to note that China's perception and conceptualisation of international relations is strongly influenced by its values, culture, and self-image of its role in world politics (Hu et al. 2000: 2). China today is more confident and self-assured as it has taken its place as a nation in a world of nations. To which, Wang Gungwu (2007: 61) argues that "at the heart of this current rise are the experiences of several transformations from an imperial civilisation". Due to these experiences there is a proclivity in Chinese to link history to policy. As Wang argues:

"[Chinese] have always been keen to use historical analogies in their policy analyses, irrespective of how far back in time they elect to go to draw those lessons. This is not necessarily backward-looking. Chinese practice shows that their 'timeless' approach, which sought the most helpful and relevant examples to support their current cause or guide their choice of policy, has been used with care, and often with practiced skill. [...] here is ample evidence that modern

leaders have learnt, sometimes painfully, to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and to use historical analogies more creatively. When they succeed in doing so, it confirms that the practice of closely linking history and policy has served them well” (ibid.: 65).

In this perspective, as Yeophantong (2013: 333) argues ideas embedded within Chinese history “can serve not only as a repertoire of policy ideas for the present-day, but can also constitute important frames of reference”. This therefore, makes it imperative to situate China’s foreign policy within a “historical continuum of thought” (ibid.).

### **2.1.3 ROLE OF BELIEFS, IMAGES AND HISTORICAL ANALOGIES IN SHAPING PERCEPTIONS**

Since the real world is complicated, the international political behaviour of states is shaped by a variety of factors. Whereby, perceptions of the real world are influenced by the way information is processed, framed and the interplay of cognitive biases. In this regard, Jervis (1976: 28) points that “it is often impossible to explain crucial decisions and policies without reference to the decision-makers’ beliefs about the world and their images of the others”. In other words, actor’s do not behave irrationally but that their rationality is limited by psychological factors such as beliefs, images, cognitive consistency and use of analogies that shape the environment of their perceived reality. These act as biases which help to simplify and structure the external environment so as to make sense of the world and the situation at hand. What makes it so, as Jervis (1985) points that the problem of dealing with complex and ambiguous information leads to adopting shortcuts to rationality that simplify perceptions in order to make more manageable the task of making sense out of environments. It is so, as in a complex social environment, monitoring is limited. As on one hand, there is constant bombardment of abundant information that it becomes difficult to absorb and process and, on the other hand, crucial information may be missing or uncertain. In this complex situation, what becomes important is to rely on prior “values and beliefs” (Ozkececi-Taner 2012: 108).

In drawing the linkage between the ideational factors such as beliefs, images and analogies of the past to that of perceptions in international politics, Holsti (1962: 244) suggests: first, there exists a vital relationship between belief systems, image,

perceptions and decision making. According to this, a decision-maker acts upon his image of the situation rather than upon objective reality-and it has been demonstrated that the belief system- its structure as well as its content plays an integral role in the cognitive process. And second, there is an influence of stereotyped national images which act as a significant factor in the dynamics of the international system. Boulding (1959: 130) suggests that- “[t]he national image, however, is the last great stronghold of un-sophistication [...] Nations are divided into ‘good’ and ‘bad’-the enemy is all bad, one’s own nation is of spotless virtue”. In other words, to understand behaviour of actors in international politics, one needs to understand the actor’s interpretation of the world based on their view of identity- of the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ and the ways in which their preferences become aggregated in the decision-making process which shapes what governments and institutions do in the foreign policy arena.

In view of this, an important feature that constructs the perception of a country’s actions is its “strength” (Castano et al. 2003: 450). Wherein, a strong enemy is perceived to be more threatening than a weak enemy. That is, “friendliness/hostility and strength/weakness”- act as the “building blocks of the image of the Other” (ibid.). Likewise, in analysing international systems, an actor’s perception is primarily based on the images “which a nation has of itself and of those other bodies in the system which constitute its international environment” (Stockton 2008: 103). For such images provide “cognitive structures such as schema or “mental models” that decision makers use to interpret the behaviour of international actors” (ibid.). This makes it valid to argue that perceptions in international politics is derived from images held by actors that affect their understanding about the other’s behaviour and thus, act as a guide to interpret the actions of others. To note, one of the characteristic of nation-states is the “sensitivity to threats” (Stone 2006: 27). Due to which an actor tends to perceive the other’s intentions as hostile, even though no such intention exists. This assumption of images leads to a conflict spiral, which results into misperception (ibid.).

With a political-psychological approach, image theory helps to draw a connection between policy makers’ images of other countries and the behaviour that results from such images. These images tend to have multiple dimensions: Capability (superior, equal or inferior), Culture (superior, equal, inferior, or weak-willed), Intentions (good,

benign or harmful), Decision-Making (by many, few groups, small elite, or confused), and Perception (threats or opportunities). The combination of these dimensions shapes seven different images: Ally, Barbarian, Colonial, Degenerate, Enemy, Imperial and Rogues (Cottam et al. 2004). For instance, China's commonly held images of Japan is that of colonial, enemy and imperial. The image thereby acts as the key to interpreting the actions. As a result of this, Castano et al. (2003: 450) points that the same action can be interpreted as harmful to the perceiver's country if the actor is perceived as an "enemy", not very much so if it is perceived as a "colony", and possibly welcome if it is perceived as an "ally". This thereby, enhances the understanding of the role of perceptions in international relations. This can be further understood from the following biases that come into play in shaping perceptions. They are:

First, Beliefs, Belief Systems and Schemas, where the assumption lies in the fact that new information is assimilated based on pre-existing beliefs. As beliefs provide "powerful frames for interpreting and understanding the decision situation" (Renshon and Renshon 2008: 512) and "may block and shape incoming information" (Walker 1983; Walker and Schafer 2004). While belief systems or schemas are the 'mental constructs that represent different clumps of knowledge about various facets of the environment for interpreting information' (Rosati 1995: 53). As Miller et al. (1960: 16) defines that the belief system is composed of "a number of images of the past, present, and future, includes all the accumulated, organized knowledge that the organism has about itself and the world". It may be thought of as the set of lenses through which information concerning the physical and social environment is received (Holsti 1962: 245). For example, national image acts as subparts of a country's belief system. In this way, schemas act as "time and labour-saving tools" that people store for use (Mintz and DeRouen 2010: 102).

It is thereby, assumed that information processing locates available information on a spectrum between belief and disbelief, and thus, the belief system or schema takes on a central role in the processing of information. This can be explained as-

"in order to function, every individual acquires during the course of his development a set of beliefs and personal constructs about the physical and social environment. These beliefs provide him with a relatively coherent way of organizing and making sense of what would otherwise be a confusing and

overwhelming array of signals and cues picked up from the environment by his senses” (Vertzberger 1990: 114).

In linking beliefs to perceptions, Jervis (1985: 18) posits that “[o]ur perceptions are strongly coloured by our beliefs about how the world works and what patterns it is likely to present us with”. There is an influence of pre-existing beliefs due to which the images of individual states, once established, will change only in response to discrepant information that is high in quantity or low in ambiguity. This helps to account for the inertia of many policies and the frequency with which states are taken by surprise (Jervis 2002: 306).

In other words, information that conforms the existing beliefs tend to be accepted and incorporated into one’s knowledge but if the encountered information shows an inconsistency with the set beliefs, then the information is ignored, misperceived and dismissed as an aberration, or interpreted in a way that does not distort the pre-existing beliefs (Jervis 1976, 1985). While in addition to organising perceptions into a meaningful guide for behaviour, beliefs and belief systems also function in establishing of goals and the ordering of preferences (Holsti 1962: 245). This thereby, explains that beliefs, belief systems and schemas shape perceptions which guide foreign policy preferences in international politics. Though there are rarely any changes in the beliefs, but they are also not always rigid as they may change if information deviating from prior beliefs is salient and strong (Levy 2013).

Second, Images, are the “mental representations [used] to frame and organise the complicated world around us” (Voss and Dorsey 1992: 8). Images can be seen as stereotypes born out of mental configuration that categorises and classifies events and people. They are the output of cognitive processes (Hermann et al. 1997), as Cottam (1992, 1994) calls “cold cognitions”, which add to the creation of belief systems (Cashman 1993). In Boulding’s (1956: 423) definition, an image refers to “the total cognitive, affective, and evaluative structure of the behaviour unit, or its internal view of itself and its universe”. That is, as Boulding suggests that:

“The image is always in some sense a product of messages received in the past. It is not, however, a simple inventory or “pile” of such messages but a highly structured piece of information-capital, developed partly by its inputs and outputs of information and partly by internal messages and its own laws of growth and

stability. The images which are important in international systems are those which a nation has of itself and of those other bodies in the system which constitute its international environment” (ibid.: 121).

Given this understanding, what makes images important in international politics is the fact that there is a clear distinction between image of the ‘self’ to that of the ‘other’. For a nation’s image exist in binaries: ‘perceived good or bad’, ‘perceived hostility or friendliness’ and ‘perceived strength or weakness’ of a unit- which forms the image of self and the other. In other words, whether the other is a friend or an enemy influences one’s perception of threat and how to respond to this perceived threat. That is, the image of other international actors can be categorised according to stereotyped views of the motivations of the subject and the behaviours that result from such. This can be said so as “images mediate perception, interpretation, and behaviour; they are used as analogs, allowing extrapolation from past experiences to current and anticipated reality” (Beer et al. 2004: 114).

In this assumption, one of the prominent image that is predominant in international politics is that of ‘the enemy image’. To which, Laura Neack (2008: 54) argues that the “enemy” is “imagined as evil by nature, with unlimited potential for committing evil acts, ... [and also] a strategic thinker and consummate chess master- establishing and carrying out a plan bent on destroying its enemies and their way of life”. In this regard, if the ‘other’ is an enemy then one feels more threatened as opposed to an image of an ally which is perceived to feel safeguarded. In this choice of perceptions, Oskececi-Taner (2012: 110) suggests that:

“If there is a way to order countries along a continuum from absolute ally to absolute enemy, there might be a linear relationship between one’s perception of a foreign country’s position on this continuum and the perceived harmfulness to one’s country of an action taken by that country. The higher a country’s ranking is in the continuum towards enemy, for instance, the more its action is likely to be perceived as threatening”.

In understanding the role of images in foreign policy, Cottam (1977: 78) calls it as “perceptual mapping [that forms] a vital first step in inferring foreign policy motivation”. That is, in foreign policy, when a nation holds a strong enemy image of the other, then images that confirm the inherently evil and cunning nature of the opponent are stored and remembered. Likewise, images that suggest a more complicated nature in the opponent, or that suggest less capability by the opponent are

screened out (Neack 2008: 54). Therefore, in this way, images simplify the complicated world based on the decision maker's mental stereotypes but also contribute to the risk of overgeneralization and bias (Mintz and DeRouen 2010).

One such example of impact of image in foreign policy can be found in Holsti's (1970) seminal study on national images, wherein he examined the image of the enemy to explain the hostility between United States and Soviet Union, by examining the perception of John Foster Dulles (key decision maker of American foreign policy towards Soviet Union). Whereby, the findings suggested that the hostile Other image of the enemy, as held by Dulles (decision maker) at the time, was crucially important in explaining the US's behaviour towards the Soviet Union. Therefore, this study confirmed that images play a vital role in shaping perceptions in international politics as "international conflict frequently is not between states, but rather between distorted images of states" (Hermann and Keller 2004: 561).

And, finally, Historical Analogies or Lessons from the Past, wherein it is stressed that information processing is affected by memories of previous experiences. Analogies thus, act as powerful shortcuts. When leaders experience events that require a decision, there is a tendency to reflect back to the past events that presented similar circumstances, alternatives and potential outcomes. The past events are referred as analogs (Mintz and DeRouen 2010). While according to Houghton (1996), analogies help us to make sense of the environment and new situations. Here, the bias that affects decisions is that leaders are unconsciously selective about the historical cases they employ. These historical cases offer a flawed perception as they are mostly recent, dramatic and mainly experienced by the decision makers. This creates the influence of the unmotivated bias as there is no a priori reason as to why these historical cases act as the best guides to the understanding of the present situation. This understanding helps to get a sense of the goals states pursue, in their foreign policy. To cite an example, Nanjing Massacre acts as a powerful historical narrative that inadvertently affects Chinese perception towards Japan.

In understanding the relevance of the influence of past events on existing perceptions in international politics, Jervis (1976: 217) disagrees with the argument that international experiences do not affect statesman's perceptions and that analogies are

seized upon only to bolster pre-existing beliefs and preferences. Rather Jervis (*ibid.*) on the contrary argues that what one learns from key events in international history is an important factor in determining the images that shape the interpretation of incoming information. In other words, if history merely reinforced established beliefs, people with different outlooks would not draw the same lessons from events, people would not disproportionately use as analogies events they experienced first hand, and historical experiences would not alter decision-makers' views. Thereby, in international politics, learning from history is revealed dramatically when actors/states use a past event as an analogy to reason for a contemporary issue.

Hence, based on the above psychological factors it is clear that behaviour is related to the self-images and identities which are important to people. It is these images and beliefs that allow people to act on the emotions evoked by their understanding of the relationship. In this view, Rose McDermott (2004) states that our attitudes and beliefs are important parts of our identity; they somehow help define who we think we are in the world and in relation to others. Hereby, these motivated stereotypical images then operate as mental models with schemata-like properties, filling in missing pieces of information and shaping the search for new information and the interpretation of what it means. That is, in foreign policy the fundamental task of a decision maker is to figure out the intentions of the 'other side'. And in this process, decision makers attach meaning to actions and policies that are ambiguous by themselves.

What links these factors to foreign policy, is rooted in the psychological and emotional construct of nation or national identity, which forms the fulcrum of foreign policy in international relations. Social psychology attributes that the dynamics of national identity is assumed to be directly linked with perceptions of security. While Anderson (1991) notes that foreign policy too plays a significant role in the social-political imagination of a collective identity. In understanding these interlinked factors, Prizel contends that national identity:

“plays a vital role in forming a society's perception of its environment and is an extremely important, if not driving, force behind the formation of its foreign policy because national identity helps to define the parameters of what a polity considers its national interests at home and abroad” (1998: 14).

In defining it as a “dialectical relationship” between national identity and foreign



policy, Prizel further states that-

“[N]ational identity serves not only as the primary link between the individual and society, but between a society and the world. Foreign policy, with its role as either the protector or the anchor of national identity, provides the political elite with a ready tool for mass mobilisation and political cohesion” (ibid.: 19).

From the above interpretation, it is clear that an inherent connect exists between a state’s national identity and its history. In this case, history is understood as a series of collective memories, in which beliefs and perceptions gets accumulated over time. Since collective memories of a society, much like those of individuals, are inconsistent and selective, the national identity is subject to transformation or manipulation by those in charge of the nation. As Yu (2012: 24) argues that the transformation and manipulation of collective memories will often lead to a fundamental redefinition of national identity and, with it, the parameters of a state’s national interest, and ultimately, its foreign policy directions. In other words, national identity of a state is not fixed or stable: it is continuing exercise in the fabrication of illusion and the elaboration of convenient fables about who “we are” (Ignateiff 1998: 18).

That is, just as it gets evolved under particular historical circumstances, the current transformations may have an impact and thereby, may lead to re-definitions of the identity and thus, foreign policy interests. This makes it important to note that although the factors contributing to national identity are mostly similar for all states but what makes the difference is the state’s national uniqueness. Wherein, the uniqueness is bestowed by the state’s acceptance or rejection of the other (ibid). Therefore, it is this national uniqueness that defines a state’s identity vis-a-vis the other, and thereby, shapes the perceptions and finally forms its policies with others. As linking perceptions, domestic politics and foreign policy to that of national identity, Hill and Wallace adequately argue that-

“effective foreign policy rests upon a shared sense of national identity, of a nation-state’s ‘place in the world’, its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations. These underlying assumptions are embedded in national history and myth, changing slowly over time as political leaders reinterpret them and external and internal developments reshape them” (1996: 8).

For Wallace (1991: 65), the “grand strategy” definition of foreign policy is that “foreign policy is about national identity itself: about the core element of sovereignty

it seeks to defend, the values it stands for and seeks to promote abroad”. Thus, it can be rightly stated that national identities play a vital role in shaping perceptions which determine foreign policy behaviour in international politics. In this perspective, collective memory acts as an important component of national identity formation. Nation’s history can affect how it perceives of its own identity and how this image is subsequently expressed is a part of a recurrent process. A nation’s self- image changes to adapt to a new social or political situation. This also means that states can embrace self-images that mirror their perceptions of threats posed by other nations, thereby, provoking these nations’ distrust of the other.

This exemplifies the importance of history, wherein interpretation of the past is vital in characterising a nation’s identity. For instance, in case of China, the cultural factors, primarily the role of historical legacies impact China’s foreign policy perceptions and thereby, foreign policy preferences. For instance, in China’s relations with Japan, the collective memory aspect helps to explain the tensions in the relations, which acts as the nodal point of the history problem. As a result, China’s Japan policy is closely tied with the victimisation complex, wherein China’s history of the century of humiliation in the hands of Japanese invasion is central to China’s larger narrative of national identity. Japan’s role as an immoral ‘other’ is not invented by the authorities, rather it is deeply rooted in Chinese people’s mind, including those ruling elites.

#### **2.1.4 COGNITIVE THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO PERCEPTIONS: CONSISTENCY, ATTRIBUTION AND SCHEMA**

What explains the influence of beliefs and images on shaping perceptions can be understood in the frameworks of cognitive theoretical approaches. They are:

First, Cognitive Consistency, which suggests that when people act in ways that is contrary to their own beliefs then they tend to experience a state of psychological discomfort as long as there is a disparity between the behaviour and beliefs is perceived. Here, the central assumption is that people do not like to act in ways that violate their own beliefs, dislike holding beliefs that are incompatible with one another and avoid information or situations that cause such incompatibilities to become clear. In terms of decision making, the decision maker acts as a consistency

seeker. That is, individuals have a strong need to maintain a consistent cognitive system that produces stable and simplified cognitive structures.

Vertzberger (1990: 137) posits that consistency operates at three levels- (1) within attitudes between affect and cognition, where “the individual will tend to act so as to balance the maximum number of triads [components of attitudes]” (Cottam et al. 2004: 40), that is, thinking and feeling the same way (2) there is consistency among attitudes, mainly an attempt to avoid cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1954), and (3) on the general level, there is the attempt to prevent the emergence of imbalance in the cognitive entirety, that is, among attitudes, beliefs and values. There is a need for such consistency as Heider (1946, 1958) suggests that “balance” is “a harmonious state, one in which the entities comprising the situation and the feelings about them fit together without stress”. Therefore, there is a constant urge to see the environment as a coherent, consistent picture.

Similarly, in international politics, to seek a cognitive consistency in their perceptions, there is a tendency among states/actors to downplay certain information that is inconsistent with prior images and beliefs or to pay inordinate attention to information consistent with those images and beliefs (Mintz and DeRouen 2010: 98). In other words, there is an inherent tendency to perceive incoming information in light of previously held expectations. That is to say, incoming information is assimilated according to “pre-existing images” (Jervis 1976: 117) and that the perception formed is consistent with what is “expected to be there” (ibid: 143). In international politics, the need to seek consistency is dominant “as many of the structures in the world are balanced, the tendency to perceive balance will [and] often serve people well” (ibid: 125).

Second, Attribution, which refers to how people judge and evaluate others. Theorists such as Heider (1958), Jones and Davis (1965), Kelley (1967), Tetlock and McGuire Jr. (1986) and Weiner (1986) argue that people process information as though they are “naïve scientists” or problem solvers, where they search for cause in the behaviour of others and often tend to make a number of errors in this quest for the cause of others’ behaviour. In this process, individuals use heuristics, which are mental shortcuts in processing information about others (Cottam 2004; Houghton 2009). In view of this,

Fiske and Taylor (1991) famously characterised a social perceiver as “cognitive misers”. In the process of cognition, heuristics act as rules that people use to test the propositions embedded in their schemata which reduce complex judgement tasks to simpler mental operations by emphasizing some properties of the data and ignoring others. Vertzberger (1990: 144) describes it as “informal intuitive procedures that are applied both consciously and thoughtlessly but are not necessarily applied consistently, even by the same person to the same type of problem and circumstances”.

Heuristics are mainly of three types- availability, representativeness and anchoring (Stein and Welch 1997; Cottam 2004; Vertzberger 1990; Houghton 2009). The availability heuristic refers to people’s tendency to interpret ambiguous information in terms of what is most easily available in their cognitive repertoire (Tversky and Kahneman 1973, 1974). Due to use of this heuristic, decision makers tend to focus their “attention, evaluation, and emergency planning” entirely on the elements known from the outset to be fraught with dangers and may totally “overlook the subtle risks” in what they consider the routine steps of the plan (Vertzberger 1990: 152). The heuristic of representativeness refers to people’s proclivity to exaggerate similarities between one event and a prior class of events, typically leading to significant errors in probability judgements or estimates of frequency (Kahneman and Tversky 1972, 1973 and 1982).

In this light, decision makers look for causes that resemble the explained effect when applying it in its primitive form to the search for causal explanation. Representativeness is often correlated with probability and that people tend to overestimate the correlation (Vertzberger 1990: 144-145). And, the heuristic of anchoring refers to people’s tendency to estimate the magnitude or degree of something by comparing it with an “available” initial value as a reference point (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 250-256, 268-275). It is the tendency to ignore information that requires changes in previously held theories and hypotheses: new information and feedbacks are assimilated with existing beliefs and theories (Vertzberger 1990: 155).

This makes heuristics to act as thumb rules when decision makers have to make decisions which are of low importance, or when there is an information overload and

most likely, when decision makers are unsophisticated and untrained. However, despite the errors in judgement based on heuristics, decision makers still use heuristics. Sherman and Corty (1984: 270-276) reason this based on the assumptions that- heuristics in many cases are reasonable rules of thumb that produce accurate judgements and help to overcome cognitive constraints at time of stress and information overload; they help decision makers to maintain confidence in their judgements; unawareness of a better judgement as heuristics provide satisficing solution; and even an incorrect judgement can affect outcomes through a process of self fulfilling prophecy (Vertzberger 1990: 156).

In international politics, individuals engage in attributional activities. Comprehending the causes of others' behaviour is a prerequisite for choosing among alternative interpretations of their behaviour and correctly inferring their intentions. People's awareness of their own causes of behaviour affects the way they think observers should interpret their behaviour and as a result, influences their expectations of how the observers should or might react to it- which in turn affects how they interpret the actual response. Therefore, in this way people's beliefs about the causes of their own and others' behaviour are important factors that influence information processing as they reflect systematic biases thereby, declining the accuracy of information processing.

One of the most dominant errors that decision makers commit in terms of attributing is called the Fundamental Attribution Error, which result into political consequences. It occurs as a result of ambiguity and ignorance about the true causes of an adversary's behaviour or about the nature of the situation to which the adversary responds and by the level of dislike for or empathy with other actors (Vertzberger 1990: 162). Thereby, in explaining their own actions, decision makers often use situational attributions where a level of overestimation to the extent to which the actions are a result of the situation. But on the other hand, they attribute others' actions to an underestimation of the extent to which the situation mattered and, thus overestimate the importance of the opponents' dispositions (Houghton 2009: 119).

And lastly, Schema, which assumes that human beings possess limited cognitive capacities. Rather than assuming that human beings search for cause and effect

patterns or resemble naive scientists, schema theory treats human beings as categorisers or labellers. Thereby, to cope with information overload, individuals engage in mental economics and act as cognitive misers. Psychologists define schema as “a cognitive structure that represents organised knowledge about a given concept or type of stimulus” (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 140). A schema contains both the attributes of the concept and the relationships among the attributes (ibid.). The use of schemata involves an element of cognitive gambling, as it involves selective attention, encoding, representation, and retrieval that result in information loss. Schemata are flexible cognitive structures and come in various forms that reflect the type and organisation of knowledge that the schemata represents.

In foreign policy decision making, as identified by Vertzberger (1990: 157) decision makers possess two types of general knowledge schemata. One represents standard general knowledge, which enables them to make sense of, understand and interpret the behaviour of any other state, simply because it is a sovereign actor operating in the international environment and as such is believed to have standard imperatives and patterns of behaviour. It is based on the assumption that all states have, similar motives and interests and pursue them in a similar manner leads to projective judgements about other states’ intentions and behaviour, based on the policymakers’ introspective views of their own motives and behaviour (Jervis et al. 1985: 23). The second type of structured knowledge is knowledge that enables decision makers to interpret and participate in events of a kind with which they have had direct prior experience, allowing them to understand similar situations with little processing of information. This specific knowledge is a representation of the sequential flow of events, which becomes the referent script (Schank and Abelson 1977: 36-42).

Apart from these schemas, another type of schema is the self-schema. As Markus (1977: 64) defines, “self-schemata are cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organise and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individual’s social experiences”. They are useful in providing guidelines for the quick and effortless judgements and decisions about the best way to deal with a situation. They are highly resistant to information that are counter schematic. And under conditions of stress and information overload, these provide cognitive shortcuts to decisions that take a leap from the systematic analysis

of information. Hence, these three cognitive theoretical models help to explain how perceptions get shaped and influence foreign policy. That is, it helps to understand the way information is processed to make sense of the world by cognitive categorisation that organises and simplifies the complex political world.

This further explains the important role that perceptions play in shaping the foreign policy behaviour of states in international domain. For instance, in linking it to China's negotiating behaviour, it is often argued that the negotiating foundations of China is highly influenced by Chinese cultural tradition. Wherein, the foundations of Chinese diplomatic behaviour are mainly- "Confucianism, *Guanxi* (friendship), and Face Saving" (Bolewski and Reitig 2008: 85). To explain, Confucianism explains the Chinese preference to- delegate authority; careful attitude in taking responsibility for the outcome of a negotiation; emphasis on righteousness and relationships (ibid.: 85-86). For instance, China values stable relationships and in this regard, the principle of "seeking common ground while reserving differences" (*qiu tong cun yi*), a major Confucian theme, remains the principal discourse for China in managing disputes with other nations (Shih and Huang).

While *Guanxi* (friendship) is evitable in the Chinese emphasis on long-term relationships and the orientation towards people and the need to build mutual trust (Bolewski and Reitig 2008: 86). Chinese worldviews are defined by cultural values of harmony, group orientation, and *guanxi* culture. And 'face saving', often referred to as "shame cultures", as in case of China- "honor, reputation, and standing" are extremely important and outward appearances must be maintained at all costs (Bolewski and Reitig 2008: 87). For China, face is equivalent to *mianzi* (where honour or dignity is judged by their social performance relative to those that they are interacting with), which makes China more concerned about its reputation and achievements compared to the others, regardless of the morality of their actions (Zhuang 2010: 8). This ultimately explains the significance of saving face and avoiding humiliation in Chinese nationalism, as well as how the "Century of National Humiliation" has become infused into the Chinese identity (ibid.: 8-9). These three ideational influence China to cope with perceived cognitive consistencies and inconsistencies between China and other actors in the international politics.

Qin Yaqing (2012), in his understanding of Chinese culture and its implication for foreign policy-making, argues that four elements stand out in this framework of analysis: contextuality, correlativity, complementarity and changeability. These “4 Cs” are embedded in the Chinese mentality and hence influence Chinese behaviour as well as foreign-policy making. That is: first, contextuality- it is about the environment, or the overall situation and the relational context wherein decisions are made. This can be related to Snyder et al.’s “Definition of the Situation”. Qin posits that Chinese are more context-oriented than object-oriented. This impacts the shi (mega-trend) assumption in China’s foreign policy which suggests that one should understand the context and the shi of the context, and act in accordance with the shi rather than in opposition to it. Second, correlativity- it is based on the belief that everything is related to everything else, and that nothing is isolated. Chinese correlativity has four major connotations, namely, relationality, processuality, the mianzi (face) complex and the guanxi assumption. This impacts the relation-based governance theory in Chinese foreign policy making attitude.

To cite an example of relational governance is China’s strategic partnership diplomacy, by which China attempts to develop and manage its relations with many nations of the world so as to shape a favorable international environment or context. Third, complementarity- it refers to the dialectics- conflict, complement and harmony. This influences the he (harmony) assumption in Chinese foreign policy as harmony is seen to be the state of nature. Chinese also believe that A and B coexist in a process in which they change toward each other (ibid.). To cite an example, China’s “Five Principle’s of Peaceful Coexistence”<sup>1</sup> policy reflects this assumption. And lastly, changeability- wherein Chinese believe that everything in the world is subject to ongoing and never-ending changes. This impacts the bian (change) assumption which emphasises on change with the mega-trend, change toward the opposite, change in behavior, and also change in identity. For instance, China has evolved from an outsider into an insider in the international community and from a revolutionary state to a status quo and stabilising force. These aspects reflect the influence of cultural bias in China’s foreign policy decision-making towards other countries in international politics.

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<sup>1</sup> The Five Principles are: Mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; nonaggression; noninterference in others’ internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit, and Peaceful coexistence.



## **2.2 FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

The earlier section reflected on how perceptions influence international politics by shaping the relations based on the perceived difference between the 'self' and the 'other'. In this section, the focus lies on understanding of the conduct of relations with the others, which in international studies discourse is termed as 'foreign policy'.

In general understanding, foreign policy is conceived as "an uncontentious, although vital aspect of the world politics" (Yu 2012: 29). As normally it is seen as the "activity of the State with which it fulfils its aims and interests within the international arena" (Petric 2013: 1). But this simple understanding requires in-depth analysis in order to understand and interpret what this means in theory and how different it is in practice. Traditionally, in the discourse of IR, foreign policy has been mainly studied from a systemic and structuralist approach of mainstream IR. For much of the post-Cold War era, the dominant discussions in the discipline of international relations were about "the structure of the international system: why bipolarity had declined, and the nature of its replacement- a unipolar system or a drift towards multipolarity" (Smith et al. 2008: 2).

Systemic theories as explicated by Waltz (1979), mainly assume that decision makers respond more or less directly to the systemic imperatives posed by an anarchic international order. That is, systemic explanations of foreign policy can adequately apply under three conditions- information certainty, goal maximisation and the presence of an essentially unitary actor (Hagan 2001:10). However, in practice, foreign policy decisions are fundamentally more complex than is broadly assumed in systemic theory. But with the increasing activity of non-state actors such as non-governmental organisations and terrorist groups and their influence on the conduct of foreign policies, as Hill (2003: 2) argues, has significantly called for the reconsideration of the study of foreign policy among academics. This thereby, makes it an underlying need to study the behaviour of the actors involved in the decision-making process rather than treating the state as a monolith- a unitary, rational actor.

In this process, there has been a complete dismissal of the decision-making influences on foreign policy whereby foreign policy analysis has been primarily divorced from the context of international politics. Identifying this analytical gap, the cornerstone

was set by Snyder et al. (1954). In articulating the foreign policy decision-making perspective it was suggested that “people matter in international affairs” (Hagan 2001: 5). This makes rationality behind foreign policy as Herbert Simon (1957) calls to be “bounded”. This also explains how decision makers can affect the way that foreign policy problems are framed, the options that are selected, the choices that are made, and what gets implemented (Ozkececi-Taner 2012: 107). Furthermore, can also play an important role in changing the strategic culture or national roles of their state by altering public opinion or using public opinion to justify and rationalise their foreign policy actions (Simon 1956).

Similarly, Breuning (2007) suggests that what drives the study of foreign policy is the quest to understand not just why leaders make the choices they do, but also how and why domestic and international constraints and opportunities affect their choices. In this way, foreign policy is the totality of a country’s policies toward and interactions with the environment beyond its borders. Since international politics in the real world is highly complex, human beings have a tendency to be influenced by biases and errors in decision making because of cognitive limitations and that leaders caught in same international situation act differently (Forman and Selly 2001). Since decision making in terms of foreign policy decisions occur under constraints of information processing limitations. This is because leaders see the world in ways that are subconsciously filtered by previous beliefs and experiences. In this context, understanding of foreign policy decision making can be explained by examining the knowledge structures or cognitive architecture inside the heads of the decision makers (Houghton 2009).

What lies at the heart of the study of foreign policy is the desire to understand countries’ actions and behaviour towards other countries and the international environment generally. In this process of learning about how foreign policy decisions are made, we gain information about the intentions and strategies of governments and how definitions of the situation are translated into action (Hermann 2001: 48). Therefore, to understand how and why decisions are made, one needs to probe deep into the environment of decision making that finally leads to the shaping of the foreign policy behaviour.

### **2.2.1 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF FOREIGN POLICY**

In the contested realm of international relations, there has been various attempts on defining the concept of foreign policy. In its simple understanding, foreign policy is mainly seen as a state-centric systemic activity to pursue goals and objectives in the international arena. As Steve Smith (1987) outlines that foreign policy is mainly seen as an external activity of a political system. Viewing foreign policy as a behaviour of states and not just a study of policy, Charles F. Hermann (1975: 34) defines foreign policy as “the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals ..... [an] observable artifact of a political level decision. It is not the decision, but a product of the decision”.

In contrary to Hermann’s view, Bruce Russett, Harvey Starr, and David Kinsella (2000) take an opposite and broader view. For them, “policy is a program that serves as a guide to behaviour intended to realise the goals an organization has set for itself [...] Foreign policy is thus a guide to actions taken beyond the boundaries of the state to further the goals of the state” (Neack 2008: 9). While combining the perspectives of both definitions, Deborah Gerner (1995: 18) defines it as “the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor- often, but not always, a state- directed toward the external world and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements and actions”. However, it is important to note that despite these definitions of foreign policy, the study of foreign policy in international relations remains contested. The tension as Hill (2003: 1) points, lies in the very definition of the word “foreign” which remains highly debatable.

In a holistic interpretation, summarising the dual nature of foreign policy as a combination of both external and internal factors, Neack (2003) defines foreign policy as:

“neither fish nor fowl in the study of politics, but an empirical subject matter straddling the boundary between the internal and the external spheres of a state. Such policy is conducted in complex internal and international environments; it results from coalitions of active actors and groups situated both inside and outside state boundaries; its substance emanates from issues of both domestic and international politics; and it involves processes of bargaining and compromise affecting the interests of both domestic and international groupings” (ibid.: 8-11).

Further, in identifying the role of actors in foreign policy devoid of the state-centric framework, James N. Rosenau (1968: 222), a pioneer in the field of international relations and foreign policy, defines foreign policy:

“As systematic decision-making by constitutionally authorised officials of individual States. Their intention is to maintain or change the state of affairs in the international system in line with an objective or objectives they or their superiors have chosen”.

In adding to the actor-specific approach, a classical definition of foreign policy is given by Walter Carlsnaes (2002: 335), according to which foreign policy entails-

“those actions which, expressed in the form of explicitly stated goals, commitments and/or directives, and pursued by governmental representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are directed towards objectives, conditions and actors- both governmental and non-governmental- which they want to affect and which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy”.

In providing a broader definition, Hill (2003: 3) defines foreign policy as “the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations”. And defining the process behind the foreign policy-making, Hill further contends it as “a complex process of interaction between many actors, differentially embedded in a wide range of different structures. Their interaction is a dynamic process leading to the constant evolution of both actors and structures” (ibid.: 28).

Hence, from the above definitions, one can construe the basic essence of the concept of foreign policy. That is, it is mainly an activity of the state, practically carried by the state functionaries who define the policies in order to achieve the interests of the state vis-a-vis the other states. It is a continuous process of achieving one’s goals and interests. It exists in a dual context where- the international context comprising of interests of other states, the existing international order and the characteristics of the given international environment, and the domestic circumstances characterised by the state’s own geopolitical position, power, interests, stability, public opinion and others-together shape the foreign policy demands.

### **2.2.2 FPA APPROACH IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Since international politics experiences dramatic changes where states are faced with challenges both internally and externally- this makes analysis of foreign policy an important requisite. In this scenario, a comprehensive approach to international politics is a prime necessity given the fact that foreign policy as a field of study remains highly neglected in international relations. To say so, as most IR theories are primarily concerned with state behaviour, with a narrow focus on foreign policy. Besides, theories of domestic politics give primary attention to internal factors mainly explaining the functioning of the state or political system and the domestic policies but rarely takes into account the effects of internal politics on a state's foreign policies. Thereby, identifying this disconnect between international and domestic policies, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as a distinct area of inquiry connects the study of international relations (the way states relate to each other in international politics) with the study of domestic politics (the functioning of governments and the relationships among individuals, groups, and governments) (Beasley et al. 2013: 2). Thereby, FPA as an approach provides deeper insights in understanding international relations as it serves as a bridge by analysing the impact of both external and internal politics on states' relations with each other.

The FPA framework is based on explaining foreign policy behaviour of states in international relations. It does not view foreign policy to be static or a 'black box' rather explains it based on the constant redefinitions of the actions of the states in relation to the others. Understanding the disjuncture between FPA and Neo-realist assumptions, Brian Ripley (1993) suggests that the core differences are: for Neo-realists, states act as primary actors, while in FPA it is the political elites or decision makers; for neo-realists, foreign policy is a rational calculation of self-interests, while FPA views that decision makers act on the basis of their 'definition of situation'; for the realists foreign policy is oriented towards security maximisation in an anarchical world and for FPA it is an act of problem-solving; for realist it is power that is seen as the currency while in FPA the emphasis is laid on information; in neo-realist understanding, the international structure determines the behaviour of states but in FPA, system acts as an arena for action; and policy prescriptions in neo-realism revolve around rational adaptation to structures while in FPA the aim is to compensate for misperception and organizational pathologies.

From the above differences, it is clear that FPA provides a framework to study the interplay of actions and reactions between the state actors and the international system- that is, the dynamics of both domestic and the external environment. FPA gives a balanced approach giving equal credence to both internal and external factors that shape foreign policy. In emphasising on the need to understand this dual aspect, Hill (2003: xix) stresses that:

“the domestic and the external sources of behaviour is central to any modern understanding of what foreign policy does, just as the interplay between the interior and exterior worlds is the way in to understanding an individual’s behaviour”.

The significant factor that characterises Foreign Policy Analysis’ theoretical framework is its two-fold approach (Valerie Hudson 2005: 2): First, FPA seeks to explain the process and resultants of human decision making with reference to or having known consequences for foreign entities- this forms the “explanandum” of FPA (Hudson 2007: 4). And second, FPA seeks to identify factors that influence the decision-making process and more critically, the foreign policy decision makers, collectively termed as “explanans” of FPA (ibid: 5). Therefore, having a diverse and non-parochial approach, Hudson defines FPA as “the most radically integrative [emphasis in the original] theoretical enterprise” (ibid: 6).

What makes FPA a valid framework to study international relations is its alternative vision to study international relations, as it strongly challenges the key assumptions of the dogmatic state-system paradigm. As it attempts- first, to open the ‘black box’ of the state, focusing attention on the role of, and relationships among, the different domestic actors shaping foreign policy. Rather than assuming that the state is a homogenous unit, foreign policy analysis disaggregates it into its constituent parts to provide insight about the way in which foreign policy is formulated and implemented. Second, it contests the notion of the state as a rational actor. Extensive research effort in foreign policy analysis has focused on explaining seemingly irrational foreign policy decisions and behaviour (Jervis 1976). Third, it challenges the view that ‘national interest’ is a homogeneous concept. By examining the interests, goals and relationships among the different players in the foreign policy decision-making process the multiple agendas at play are exposed and their implications for the

definition of a coherent, single national interest considered (Sylvan and Chan 1984; Hudson and Vore 1995: 93).

With these assumptions, foreign policy analysis is motivated by the desire to understand the interactions of countries. Its central aspect is premised on the fact that individual decision makers, alone or in groups, make foreign policy decisions and that foreign policies are usually determined by the complex interplay of multiple factors.

### **2.2.3 LINKING DOMESTICS POLITICS TO FOREIGN POLICY**

Here the central assumption lies in looking inside the ‘black box’ in analysing a state’s foreign policy behaviour. Historically, the domestic factor has remained an exception than a rule, as the conventional thinking holds that foreign policies aim at enhancing a state’s ability to achieve specific policies towards foreign entities. This thereby, neglects the domestic environment that equally contributes to the foreign policy behaviour. Defining the domestic environment, Otubanjo notes:

“[it] refer[s] essentially to features, factors and forces...peculiar to the state, [...] foreign policy is being made. The domestic environment includes geographical location of the state, its peculiarity, natural and human resources, the nature of the political system, quality of leadership, the nature of the interaction among groups in the society etc” (Ambe-Uva and Adegboyega 2007: 47).

Based on the influential domestic environment and dismissing the gap between external and internal environment, FPA views foreign policy on two broad considerations: domestic politics/environment and the external environment. That is domestic political factors have an impact on how governments cope with the constraints and opportunities of the international system. As Hill (2003: 220) argues that to understand domestic influences it is important to distinguish between the different ways in which the “domestic environment impinges on foreign policy as domestic sources imply both inputs and constraints for foreign policy”. Domestic factors influencing foreign policy represent a complex calculus as Snyder (1962: 5) notes, “the number and complexity of factors that influence national action in the international arena are not only enormous, but the task of identifying the crucial variables is also unfinished”. In identifying the importance of domestic politics in foreign policy, Valerie Hudson (2007: 125) states that-

“If war is the continuation of politics by other means, pace Clausewitz, then it is

certainly also the case that many times foreign policy is simply that continuation of domestic politics by other means”.

While understanding the role of domestic structures in a country's relations with other nations, Hagan (1993: 4) states that ‘the link between domestic politics and foreign policy stems primarily from the domestic political imperative of retaining political power’. But providing a broader approach, the domestic-foreign paradigm of FPA makes four key assumptions (Yu 2012: 40). They are- First, the domestic influence on foreign policy is multidimensional. There is no single influential factor but an array of domestic influences, such as- bureaucratic and organisational structures (Allison and Zelikow 1999); role of media and public opinion in foreign policy (Holsti 1992, 2004; Knecht and Weatherford 2006; Neack 2008; Soroka 2003) and culture and identity in foreign policy (Hudson 1996, 1999; Katzenstein 1996; Ross 1997). Taking this multidimensional domestic influence, Hill (2003: 221) contends that “the internal affairs of most transnational actors are too robust to be dominated by one pressure group, or set of stake-holders”.

In understanding proximity of domestic factors to decision making positions, Hudson (2007: 129-130) notes that more domestically fragmented the regime, greater challenges it faces in foreign policy. That is, the size of the domestic actor in question and the degree of difference in viewpoint between the domestic actor and the regime's foreign policy act as essential factors for determining the relative influence of a domestic actor on foreign policy (ibid; Milner 1997). For instance, public opinion as a critical domestic factor can play a vital role in foreign policy if it is strong, unified and cohesive unlike being diverse and fragmented even if it is distant from the decision-making unit. Similarly, Douglas C. Foyle (1999: x, xi) suggests that the impact of public opinion on foreign policy outcomes is “determined by the interaction between a decision maker's beliefs about the proper role of public opinion in foreign policy formulation and the decision context in which a foreign policy choice must be made”.

Secondly, from a decision making perspective, FPA assumes that policymakers are faced with two sets of concerns and that the two sets continually interact. According to Robert Putnam (1988), foreign policy is a ‘two-level game’- which consists of



international negotiation (level I), in which the leader tries to reach an agreement with other leaders; and a domestic negotiation (Level II), wherein the leader tries to get the agreement accepted by the legislature and his domestic constituencies. In other words, the government balances its perceived national interest with its assessment of domestic political constraints. Yu (2012) suggests that simultaneously playing at two levels, foreign policy thereby, becomes a continuous stream of domestic inputs, no less than international. Applying this theory to Sino-Japanese relations, Wilson (2010: 7) notes that the domestic policy frames used by China and Japan are often based upon narratives that are incompatible with each other at Level I, and are created with the aim of securing domestic support. This negotiating frame does not allow for successful agreement on many major issues and that it only allows to create domestic prestige through perceived ideological or territorial victory over the other power (ibid.).

Thirdly, the component that contributes to the domestic influence in foreign policy is the ideational factors, such as culture, values and identity, which further shape the perception of the policymaker and thereby, impacts foreign policy. Vertzberger (1990) defines culture as: “a unified set of ideas that are shared by the members of a society and that establish a set of shared premises, values, expectations, and action predispositions among the members of the nation that as a whole constitute the national style” (ibid.: 267). Applying this cultural aspect to international politics, Vertzberger argues that in foreign policy, the concept of culture could be characterised as:

“broad and general beliefs and attitudes about one’s own nation, about other nations, and about the relationships that actually obtain or that they should obtain between the self and other actors in the international arena” (ibid.: 268).

With these ideational forces at play, a country’s national identity and national role conception becomes a vital domestic factor that shapes foreign policy. For instance, these influences make national identity closely linked to different conceptions of sovereignty and statehood. Prizel (1998: 2) notes that perceptions of identity are of importance as a psychological frame of reference in international relations. What makes these factors weigh strong in building foreign relations is that the cultural norms and values could be interpreted as a national “ideology” or belief system in foreign policy, in the sense that ideas about who “we” are serves as a guide to political

action and basic world views (Jonsson 1984: 42-3; Little and Smith 1988; Aggestam 1999). In this light, Bloom (1990: 81) contends that a country's foreign policy "[is] dictated by internal domestic realities as much as by the actual nature of its international relations". This points to the fact that the importance of national identity in relation to public opinion cannot be understated as the way it impacts the foreign policy given the state's taking into account of the public interest.

And lastly, the assumption is that no foreign policy can be implemented without a domestic grounding. That is, domestic does not always guarantee support for foreign policy. It can at the most result into change in the domestic political landscape.

In applying this to the case of China's Japan policy, it is found that domestic sources such as public opinion does matter for Chinese foreign policy. China's foreign policy towards Japan is faced by a dilemma, as Rose (2005: 127) argues that there is a "complex interplay of the processes of domestic politics on the one hand, and the need to find an accommodation with an important neighbour [Japan], on the other, [that] influences the history-related problems". Gries et al. (2016b: 162) argue that "nationalist opinion is a powerful bottom-up driver" of China's Japan policy. As Gries suggests that:

"While political elites may sometimes seek to strategically manipulate domestic politics for foreign policy bargaining purposes, the weight of the empirical evidence suggests that the opposite is more often true: party elites, concerned above all about maintaining CCP legitimacy and rule, are increasingly responsive to the demands of domestic nationalists" (ibid.).

Thus, from the above assumptions it is clear that domestic and international factors are interconnected and are mutually constitutive in foreign policy making in international politics. That is, there is an interplay that exists between the two factors in shaping foreign policy.

### **2.3 CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

With a concise understanding of the principal elements of the research, this section explores and builds on the core theoretical framework of this thesis. This section will primarily emphasise on a Constructivist approach to Foreign Policy Analysis, which forms the theoretical base of the research. By adopting a Constructivist approach, the

study seeks to bring out a linkage between the primary variables of the study, namely- perceptions and foreign policy.

### **2.3.1 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF CONSTRUCTIVISM**

With the end of the Cold War, nearly past two decades, international relations discourse is said to have taken a 'social turn' as a result of introduction of Social Constructivism as a 'paradigm' in the mainstream discipline of IR alongside the traditional theoretical schools of Realism, Liberalism and Marxism (Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner 1998). Constructivism emerged as an alternative school of thought contrary to the central tenets of the dominant and dogmatic agent/structure frameworks of IR- arguing that interpretations produce social reality (Ashley 1984; Kratochwil 1989; Onuf 1989; Wendt 1987; Wendt and Duvall 1989). Unlike the traditional IR approaches, which emphasised the distribution of power and the state's pursuit of power and wealth, and ignored the power of ideas, constructivism countered by highlighting how ideas define and transform the organization of world politics, shape the identity and interests of states, and determines what counts as political action.

Anthony Giddens puts it, "Society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do" (Giddens and Pierson 1998: 77). With this view, Constructivism provides a social theory that makes claims about the nature of social life and social change without making particular claims about the content of social structures or the nature of agents at work in social life (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001: 393). Constructivism refers to a social "World of our Making" (Onuf 1989). That is, there exists an assumption that reality is socially constructed in the form of social rules and inter-subjective meanings, and that it affects our knowledge of it: how we see the world as well as ourselves, and how we define our interests and proper ways of behaviour (Carlsnaes 2012: 121). In his influential volume, *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999), Alexander Wendt defines Constructivism as follows:

"Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the state system are intersubjective, rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given

exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics” (Wendt 1999: 193).

The Constructivists mainly focus on the role of ideas, norms, knowledge, culture, and argument in politics, stressing in particular the role of collectively held or “intersubjective” ideas and understandings on social life. With a specific view, Finnmore and Sikkink (2001: 392-393) posit that Constructivism is an approach to social analysis that asserts the following- (a) human interaction is shaped primarily by ideational factors, not simply material ones; (b) the most important ideational factors are widely shared or “intersubjective” beliefs, which are not reducible to individuals; and (c) these shared beliefs construct the interests and identities of purposive actors (Adler 1997; Price & Reus-Smit 1998; Ruggie 1998; Wendt 1999).

While in a broad framework, Zehfuss (2002: 12-22) classifies constructivism under three distinct theoretical approach drawn from the works of Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt and Fredrick Kratochwil, which are:

First, Onuf ‘s Constructivism- which argues that agents act within an institutional context- comprised of stable patterns of rules and practices, and at the same time they act on the context. And it is the rules, institutions and unintended consequences that form stable patterns called structures. Thereby, it is the rules that turn human beings into agents who make the material world a social reality.

Second, Wendt’s Constructivism- which attributes that the way international politics is conducted is made and not given- because identities and interests are constructed and supported by intersubjective practice. There is an emphasis of identity over interest. It is the notions of self and the environment that shape interactions and are shaped by interactions. Thus, the social reality is constructed or created by means of interactions and, thereby, the international system can be reshaped.

And third, Kratochwil’s Constructivism- focuses on the narrow approach to politics and human behaviour in international relations. Here, the assumption is centered on the idea that by seeing rationality as instrumental results into exclusion of how ends are met. That is, an action or belief may be called ‘rational’ when it ‘makes sense’ to act that way. So, political action needs to be understood in terms of meaningful action

rather than instrumental action. Thereby, here, the emphasis is on the role of rules and norms which provide the basis for intersubjectivity - crucial to the understanding of political action.

Therefore, the central tenet of Constructivism is that the world is “socially constructed” (Skonieczny 2008: 103). Here, the social construction of reality concerns not only how we see the world but also how we see ourselves, define our interests, and determine what constitutes acceptable action. The concept of structuration captures how the underlying normative structures shapes the identities and interests of actors. That is, shared meanings intersubjectively give rise to the structures in our world thereby limiting what might otherwise be boundless possible human action (Ruggie 1998; Wendt 1987, 1999).

### **2.3.2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM- BRIDGE BETWEEN FPA /IR DIVIDE**

There exists a clear disjuncture between FPA and IR based on separating the realm of foreign policy from international relations as occurred in 1950s. The distinction lied in their point of analysis- for IR, structure- the anarchic nature of international system acts as the key point of reference, while for FPA, the agent- decision-making bodies- in international politics is the key reference point, thereby, negating the importance of structure. Identifying this disjuncture, Kubalkova (2001) argues that the FPA/IR split provides an important point of departure for the Constructivists. As she points that,

“The FPA/IP split literally begs to be explored through the concepts of agent and structure, [...] Constructivists applaud the tendency of FPA to look for the agent- the foreign policy decision maker-wherever he/she might be found. The active mode of foreign policy expressed even in the term ‘making’ also resonates with the constructivists’ stress on processes of social construction” (ibid.: 19).

The above argument stands valid as providing a social turn to the understanding of IR, Constructivism bridged the existing gap of the FPA/IR divide (Onuf 1989). With their disapprovement to the FPA/IR divide, Constructivists strongly argue that agent and structure “should never be torn apart nor should one be given priority over the other” (Kubalkova 2001: 19). In other words, rather than prioritising any one over the other (agent or structure), Constructivists stress on giving importance to the process of social construction. With this perspective, Constructivism challenges the objectivity of IR, where unlike Realism that is centered on material forces which Brown (2001)

calls ‘brutal facts’, that are ‘naturally given and do not depend upon our ideational beliefs about them’ (Houghton 2007: 28). While Constructivists focus on ‘social facts’ which they call “institutional facts”- which are “socially constructed” and “depend for their existence on what we believe about them, and indeed whether we believe in them or not” (ibid).

Here, interpreting the meaning and grasping the influence of changing practice, rather than empirically validating explanations of independent mechanisms, become central. In other words, what is important is the manner in which facts are interpreted rather than the facts themselves. Viewing the social construction of reality, Adler posits that ‘the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world’ (Zehfuss 2002:7). Adding the ‘social’ element to bridge the gap between the agent and structure in the FPA/IR debate, Constructivists contend that the interactive relationship between what people do and how societies shape their actions, comprise the ‘mutual constitution’ of structures and agents. That is, there exists a direct link between the two constituent elements as-

“People live within and interact through overlapping social (ethnic, national, ideological, gendered, cultural, religious, and other) groupings, including states. Such collectivities, including leaders within them, act in ways that create, perpetuate, and alter the environments in which they live. If people did not reinforce dominant meanings, sometimes expressed as historical “facts” or unavoidable “reality,” structures would not exist” (Klotz and Lynch 2007: 7).

Identifying the ‘agent-structure’ complex in international politics, Wendt (1987: 337-33) states that the problem lies in the two truisms about social life: (1) human beings and their organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which they live; and (2) society is made up of social relationships which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors. Here, Wendt suggests that taking together of these truisms imply that human agents and social structures are, in one way or another, theoretically interdependent or mutually implicating entities.

In defying the traditional rationalist approach of IR, Constructivists do not accept the naturally given nature of actors’ interests and identities, such as “sovereignty, power

and material capability” unless validated by “an interpretation and perception” (Yu 2012: 53). In other words, material forces by themselves is seen to have no intrinsic meanings as it is believed that their meanings are socially created by human beings and their ideas. It is said so as in the social context, human beings are the key actors who have the capacity to change meanings by altering interpretations. Unlike the dominant IR belief that states (agents) exist and develop within the international system (structure) that progresses through actions and interactions between states (ibid: 54). Constructivism’s core assumption is that agents and structures are mutually constitutive. As Constructivists attribute that- “human beings or agents do not exist in isolation from the structures they create” (Onuf 1989) and are “part of the reality that [they] try to describe and explain, not external to it” and that “they construct (constitute) both identities and interests” (Houghton 2007: 28-29). That is, the social world is constructed, which Wendt (1992) explains to be “what states make of it”.

The other central assumption of Constructivism reflects on the way interpretation occurs in international politics. As Constructivists say ‘ideas matter’, that is, “the most important ideational factors are closely shared or ‘intersubjective’ beliefs, which are not reducible to individuals” (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001: 393). It is the ideas and ideational factors that contribute to the mutual constitution process of the agent and the structure- which occurs by the ‘construction of both identities and interests’ (Houghton 2007: 29). In this aspect, from a Constructivist viewpoint, ideas or ideational factors can be any determinant that is influential in shaping and framing the perceptions and belief systems. That is, in international politics the goals and actions of the nation-states need to be interpreted through ideas rather treated as objectively given. It is argued that to understand state interest, it requires an account of “intersubjectively constituted structure of identities and interests” of states (Wendt 1992: 401). To put it simply, Wendt (1987, 1992) argues that the self interested, security-oriented conceptions of state interest are not unproblematically produced by or deducible from the systemic condition of anarchy, for ‘anarchy is what states make of it’ (1992: 395). Similarly, taking national interest as a social construction of interpreted ideas, Jutta Weldes posits that-

“The content of national interest is produced in or emerges out of a process of representation through which state officials [leaders/decision makers] make sense of both their domestic and international context. The national interest, that is, is constructed, is created as a meaningful object, out of shared

meanings through which the world, particularly the international system and the place of the state in it, is understood. The categories of common sense for foreign policy, the inter-subjective and culturally established meanings on the basis of which state officials make decisions and act, are provided by the security imaginaries of states” (1999: 4-10).

This construction of ideas is done by “identifying objects (including the self and others), posit relations between these objects, and hence shape national interest and identities by defining the world surrounding them (decision makers/policymakers)”(Houghton 2007: 37). Based on these key assumptions, it can be clearly stated that Constructivists base their arguments on ontological and epistemological concerns and emphasise on how the state identities, as intersubjective structures, and world politics are interconnected (Checkel 2001; Kratochwil 2006; Telhami and Barnett 2002; Wendt 1987). Constructivists, in not denying the existence of material reality, believe that it cannot be known outside human subjective knowledge (Zehfuss 2002: 25). In this view, Ted Hopf (1998) notes that:

“Determining the outcome will require knowing more about the situation than about the distribution of material power or the structure of authority. One will need to know about the culture, norms, institutions, procedures, rules, and social practices that constitute the actors and the structures alike” (ibid.: 173).

Therefore, what Constructivists suggest is that in international politics material forces are not naturally given rather they are socially constructed based on ideas and identities. As Finnemore (1996) notes that much of foreign policy is about defining rather than defending national interest. This is an outcome of the interactive relationship between what people do and how societies shape their actions, thereby, resulting into the mutual constitution of agents and structures.

### **2.3.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM, IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS**

The domain of the study of foreign policy has traditionally remained isolated in from any theoretical base of international politics based on the parallels of ‘agent-structure’. Addressing the theoretical neglect of foreign policy Analysis in International Relations, Houghton (2007: 25) calls FPA as “a theory without a home”. According to Houghton, FPA is homeless because it is “a body of microtheories



logically unanchored in any extant theory of IR”. He suggests that if FPA “is to be reinvigorated and taken more seriously” outside the subfield itself, it should engage “some of the critical substantive or ontological debates going on in IR theory today” (ibid.: 26).

In this line, Houghton claims that foreign policy can be theoretically rooted in the frame of social constructivism- it is “an umbrella of perspectives that share much in common with FPA [and] provides a logical base from which to mount such a renewed engagement” (ibid.). Here, the commonality lies in FPA’s emphasis on the ontological reality of intersubjective knowledge and ideational factors (ibid.)- as FPA opens up the state as a black box and looks into those personal, ideational, and cultural factors affecting foreign policy decision-making that Realist and Liberal theories alike tend to overlook (Yu 2012: 57). The link lies in Social Constructivism’s focus on “human consciousness and its role in international life” (Ruggie 1998: 856).

What makes Constructivism a logical anchor for FPA is the ideational factors in IR, such as, the constructs of agent-structure debate, identity and culture in foreign policy. As Snyder, Bruck and Sapin note:

“it is difficult to see how we can account for specific actions and for continuities of policies without trying to discover how their operating environments are perceived by those responsible for choices, how particular situations are structured, what values and norms are applied to certain kinds of problems, what matters are selected for attention, and how their past experience conditions present responses” (1962: 5).

What becomes apparent is the fact that the relationship between identity and foreign policy acts as the principal element to link social constructivism to FPA. As Lene Hansen (2006: 1) states that “foreign policies rely upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced”. In this note, Howell (1997: 26) argues that foreign policy, most broadly defined, is central to people’s sense of national identity, and to an understanding of their nation’s purpose, role and values. A nation, and an administration, without a realistic and well articulated foreign policy, which explains the bewildering present and illuminates the uncertain future, is rudderless. Emphasising on the importance of national identity in foreign policy, Prizel (1998) advocates that it reflects a nation’s characteristics against the other, so it follows that national identity is a product of

comparison between the self and the other. Hence, “the conduct of foreign policy – namely, the relations a state has with foreign states – has a strong dialectical relationship with national identity” (ibid.: 8).

For constructivists, state identity fundamentally shapes state preferences and actions and that state identities are constructed within the social environment of international and domestic politics (Wendt 1992, 1994; Katzenstein 1996). Here, identity is mainly seen as a domestic attribute arising from national ideologies of collective distinctiveness and purpose that in turn shaped states’ perceptions of interest and thus state policy (Barnett 1996; Berger 1996; Reiss-Kappen 1996). Wang (2012) argues that Chinese state has used historical memories as a raw material to construct China’s contemporary national identity- a key factor that shapes China’s foreign policy behaviour. This makes identity, a critical factor in the understanding of contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. As “hate, shame, revenge, humiliation and negative perceptions” are often invoked to account for the level of mistrust and hostilities between China and Japan (Viskopic 2013: 14).

While Wendt (1999) argues that identities are rooted in an actor’s self-understandings (and are thus subjective) but also depend on whether that identity is recognized by other actors, which gives them an intersubjective quality. That is, identities are constituted by the interaction of these internal and external ideas. Based on this conception, Wendt suggests two kinds of identities that operate in international affairs- type identities (regime/forms of states- democratic or capitalist) and role identities (relation between two states- friends or rivals). In this case, knowing a state’s perception of its identity helps to understand how a state will act (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). In other words, foreign policy actions rely on identities of the self and the other, and often involve in ‘us/them’ dynamic (Campbell 1992; Neumann 1999). Emphasising on the identity factor, Hopf (2002) in his seminal study notes:

“Society is assumed to consist of a social cognitive structure within which operate many discursive formations. Identities constitute these formations. Individuals have many identities; they participate in a variety of discursive formations, and their daily social practices constitute both themselves and Others, and the identities and discursive formations that constitute the cognitive structure in which they live” (ibid.: 3-4).

It is clear that what brings FPA closer to constructivism is their common focus on

subjectivity, as unlike the Realists or Neoliberals, both focus on opening the 'black box'. That is, assessing foreign policy not as an objectively given concept but rather delving deep into the process by questioning the perceptions and intentions of the actors involved in the foreign policy making process. In a precise note, as Yu (2012: 57) suggests that the focus primarily is intended on 'how actors interpret, decide, pronounce, and implement foreign policy and the determinants along the way'. To this view, Houghton (2007) states that the manner in which decision makers define situations becomes another way of saying how the state oriented to action and why. Here, the task is to reconstruct the constructions of foreign policy elites, showing how of all the phenomenon which might have been relevant, the actors (decision makers) finally endow only some with significance.

Keeping this perspective, Steve Smith (2001: 38) in paraphrasing Alexander Wendt's "anarchy is what states make of it", rightly articulates that "foreign policy is what states make of it". What makes social constructivism relevant to FPA is social construction's assumption that 'actors make their worlds'. For Smith, foreign policy 'is an act of construction; it is what the actors decide it will be'. Drawing the connecting link between constructivism and FPA, Jeffrey T. Chechel (2008: 74) states that "if traditional foreign policy is understood to exogenise interests- to take them as given- then the constructivist FPA would endogenise them: exploring how interests are constructed through a process of social construction".

Thereby, it can be strongly stated that it is the intersubjective link that connects Social Constructivism to Foreign Policy Analysis premised on the constructed understanding of meanings in the social realm. This linkage as Doty (1993: 301) notes makes foreign policy "a practice that produces a social order as well as one through which individual and collective subjects themselves are produced and reproduced". Hence, there remains no doubt that Constructivism theoretically bridges the gap between foreign policy and international relations- integrating the missing link between the agent (foreign policy actor) and the structure (international system). Thus, Constructivism offers a significant link to connect the policy-oriented actions to that of ideational factors. More specifically, it provides the bridge to connect perceptions of identity with foreign policy behaviour in the realm of international relations.

Accordingly, in case of China, the 'Century of Humiliation' is deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of Chinese society that shapes China's victimhood identity, which continuously informs Chinese foreign policy. This victimhood frames the way Chinese interact with the other countries in international domain. What contributes most to this victimhood perspective, as Suzuki (2007) suggests is the idea of Japan as the "other" that bolsters China's victim self-image. In this perspective, it is also argued that China's victim mentality has played motivating a role in shaping the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" in its foreign policy agenda (Ma 2014: 67).

In this framework of analysis, the construct of social identity acts as an important psychological framework for the understanding of China-Japan relations. Wherein, it acts as a psychological precursor to China's anti-Japanese sentiment that is embedded in Chinese psyche. Especially in the context of China's victimhood under Japan's imperialist occupation. As a result, a long period of military conflict from the end of the nineteenth century is often used as a point of reference for the emergence and subsequent persistence of China's Japan image. Constructivists argue that China's perception of Japan's identity is historically formed. Wherein China has a "perceptual persistence" and this can be understood only by assessing "how perception is formed, sustained and changed. That is to note, perception cannot be understood without knowing China's "cultural behavior patterns" (Uemura 2013: 106).

## **2.4 TESTING THE THEORY**

As explained in the introduction, this study seeks to understand how perceptions shape foreign policy. It looks into the interplay of perceptions, foreign policy and domestic forces that influences the rational decision-making and policy choices. With this goal in mind, this study will apply the political and social psychological framework drawn from FPA and Constructivist theoretical approaches to analyse the pattern in China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan. It makes a distinct analytical step in testing the theoretical framework on Chinese perceptions of Japan as shaped by historical memories. Based on the theoretical analysis, the preceding chapters will assess the independent variable by documenting the cognitive factors in

terms of historical memories that influenced Chinese perceptions of Japan. Identifying the psychological impact in the Chinese mindset, the study will specifically, test it on understanding China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan. China's Japan policy is informed by a perceptual bias as evident in the contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. By testing the psychological theoretical model, it would help to provide an alternate understanding to the tensions in China's relations with Japan, thus going beyond the realist rational of balance of power.

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

In an overall analysis, it can be summed that the international political space is a highly active and dynamic sphere where interaction between the actors (states) occur in a similar way as that of human interaction. There is no constant in the international system as it is always in a state of flux based on the actions and reactions of the states. In this light, to view the state as a static entity becomes problematic. Rather similar to human behaviour, a state too exhibits a behaviour that is intersubjective in nature than that being attributed to be objective (Realists and Liberals). It is this intersubjective element that compels to look at a state beyond its material characteristics.

That is, observing the behaviour of states from their minds: 'how they see the world around'. In other words, what are the "perceptions" of a state vis-a-vis the external and internal system where it operates. This psychological construct greatly contributes to understand the state behaviour providing deeper insights. This behaviour in international politics is called 'foreign policy', whereby one state interacts with the other. It is noteworthy, that foreign policy is not just about the external relations rather it is influenced by the domestic politics too- that is, the state is not a 'black box' rather the international and domestic is mutually constitutive.

What makes perceptions important is that it shapes foreign policy behaviour based on the influence of psychological factors such as beliefs, images, analogies and others. This further helps in construction of the 'identity', that is, the 'national identity' of a state. National identity defines the foreign policy behaviour. It is driven by historical consciousness, cultural values and norms, which provides a unique character to the state, distinguishing the 'self' from the 'other'. It is this idea of 'national identity' that connects the external to the internal forces which define foreign policy.

With these assessments it is clear that the traditional domain of IR fails to understand the behavioural dynamics of a state's foreign policy due to its structural bias which separates it from the Foreign Policy Analysis approach that looks at the human element (agent) of foreign policy making. This agent-structure divide isolates foreign policy from international relations discourse. Hence, the bridge to this gap is provided by the Constructivist approach which sees the agent and the structure to be mutually constitutive.

Therefore, it can be rightly argued that 'perceptions', 'foreign policy' and 'domestic politics' are interconnected, which mutually shape the behaviour of states in international politics. Mostly defined to be political, a state is also a social entity as its behaviour is regulated by the construction of its perceptions. Its identity is vital to its survival and thus, safeguarding the identity is the prime goal that defines the interests and objectives of its foreign policy choices.

## CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL MEMORIES IN CHINA'S PERCEPTION AND POLICY TOWARDS JAPAN

*Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future.*

-Premier Zhou Enlai, 1972.

*Take history as the mirror and look toward the future.*

-President Jiang Zemin, 2002.

*To treat history appropriately is the only way to translate historical burden into power of moving ahead.*

- President Hu Jintao, 2004.

*The past, if not forgotten, can serve as a guide for the future. By emphasizing the need to always remember the past, we do not mean to continue the hatred. Instead, we want to draw lessons from history and be forward-looking. Only by remembering the past and drawing lessons from it can one avoid the repetition of historical tragedies.*

-President Hu Jintao, 2005

### INTRODUCTION

Over seventy years since the end of the Second World War, but historical memories still loom heavily in China. It affects Chinese domestic forces as well as foreign policy, most importantly, towards its neighbour Japan. To say so, as since the end of the Cold War and most importantly, with the dawn of the twenty-first century, historical controversies as witnessed in tensions over Yasukuni Shrine visit, history textbooks, Diaoyu Islands dispute and other issues, have become a dominant characteristic of Sino-Japanese relations. This political discord suggests that the liberal logic of economic interdependence between the two countries has failed to mitigate the grievances of the past. What is interesting to note is that the 'history problem' has surfaced as the most important factor in the relationship, which has significantly damaged the reconciliation process. As Hu (2014: 143) claims that:

“when looking at past 40-plus years of Sino-Japanese relations, we see that the historical issue has been the longest standing and most damaging factor affecting the relations between the two sides”.

In this perspective, the contemporary relationship between China and Japan cannot be understood unless one takes into account the 'history problem'. In this case, China's longstanding history issue with Japan is connected to the dynamics of historical memories, which help explain the dilemma in reconciliation. In this Chapter, the historical memories will be studied as the causal factor in playing a significant role in shaping historical narratives, perceptions and policies of China towards Japan. In doing so, the particular attempt is to investigate how historical memory is constructed and how these ideas have affected China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan, mainly from a state-centric perspective.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section provides an understanding of the concept of historical memory and its relevance in the case of China. The relevance of historical memories will be particularly understood in the context of China's history problem with Japan. Here, the focus will be on understanding the role of historical memories towards Japan based on the dominant historical narratives that results into shaping China's perceptions of Japan. The second section deals with understanding the perceptions in shaping China's foreign policy towards Japan. Here, the focus will be on investigating the role of historical memories in shaping the perceptions of Chinese decision-making elites and how it impacts China's Japan policy. It will focus on how historical memories serve as an important factor in China's foreign policy behaviour and how it shapes the patterns of interaction with Japan in the current context. It will reflect on China's political attitude towards Japan from a domestic perspective of state behaviour in international politics.

And lastly, based on the overall analysis conclusions will be drawn based on the given framework of analysis.



### 3.1 CHINA AND HISTORICAL MEMORIES: THE NARRATIVE OF CENTURY OF HUMILIATION

Many Scholars on Chinese affairs have emphasised on the significance of Chinese history and memory. For instance, Peter Hays Gries posits that, “It is certainly undeniable that in China the past lives in the present to a degree unmatched in most other countries [...] Chinese often, however, seem to be slaves to their history” (Wang 2012: 8). What makes one live in the past is that of ‘remembrance’ of the past, which is mainly done in the form of memories.

In psychology, memory refers to the “individual’s cognitive capacity to store, retain, manipulate and recall information” (Henry 2013: 363-363). In sociology, collective memory, or public, social, national and cultural memory, refers to the social construction of memories, as distinct form “personal memory” (non-social or everyday memory) and “collected memory” (the aggregation of individual recollections) (ibid.: 363). Understanding it from the social context, here, ‘memory’ is understood as that of ‘historical memory’ which according to Halbwachs is “an experience mediated by representations, and hence it is represented memory” (Cui 2012: 202). The process of creating these collective memories and narratives of the past is known as “collective remembrance” or “public recollection” (Reilly 2011: 465). Unlike individual memories that rarely have political and social implications, collective memories have the potential to secure political effects (ibid.: 466).

Given this understanding, in this study, historical memory is understood as symbolic representations in the form of narratives and images, which have political implications. More specifically, Halbwachs defines historical memory as: “a marker of the moment and condition in which memory is loosed from its social moorings and becomes anchored instead in the abstract frameworks of chronology and factual detail, [...] it is the representation of a *lost* past, and its only representation” (Crane 1997: 1377). What makes historical memory distinct from that of collective memory, as Halbwachs notes is:

“Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time. The totality of the past events can be put together in a single record only by separating them from the memory of the groups who preserved them and by severing the bonds that held them close to the psychological life of the

social milieus where they occurred, while retaining only the group's chronological and spatial outline of them" (Crane 1997: 1376).

What makes 'historical memory' an important variable in studying modern China? The importance lies in the complexities of the events that marked Chinese history and led to the formation of China's national narrative that further defined Chinese collective memory. The fundamental interpretation of the Chinese history is influenced by the belief of putting an end to the national humiliation. To say so, it then becomes important to understand the construct of 'humiliation'. The notion of 'humiliation', as Dr. Evelin G. Lindner, one of the leading experts on humiliation studies, defines is the:

"enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away their pride, honour or dignity. To be humiliated is to be placed, against your will and often in a deeply hurtful way, in a situation that is greatly inferior to what you feel you should expect. Humiliation entails demeaning treatment that transgresses established expectations. It often involves acts of force, including violent force. At its heart is the idea of pinning down, putting down or holding to the ground. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of humiliation as a process is that the victim is forced into passivity, acted upon, made helpless" (Lindner 2000: 6).

Given this definition, what makes humiliation both relevant and important can be understood from the fact that it is an emotional state of experience. That is, it is one of the most potent emotions, which is capable of transcending generations: it is an intolerable injustice of which both victims and their descendants conserve a memory and aspire to avenge (Varin 2009). Another important aspect is that of quantification of humiliation, which is seen to be related to the status and self-perception of the victim prior to the humiliation (ibid.).

Applying this theory of humiliation to China, it is found that the construct of 'national humiliation' exists in the rubric of a huge psychological gap between its central status as a glorious Empire of East Asia during its 5,000-year civilisation and a peripheral nation-state that was invaded by foreign imperialists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. That is, for China, the pride from its 5,000-year civilisation and the stigma in China's 100-year humiliation by the West and Japan together construct the narrative of its past. Given this extreme gap of being a civilisation to that of being

invaded, creates what the Chinese define as “humiliation” (Li 2014: 12). In understanding this existing gap in the Chinese psyche, Gries (2005: 108) states that in China, “the “5,000 years” of imperial glory take on a timeless, ahistorical character”.

As he quotes Lu Benlong, who wrote:

“In East Asia, a distinctive empire system emerged and centered on China. This single territory constituted the so-called Chinese-barbarian order and tribute system, which formed the concentric and hierarchic world system of East Asia. Even today, this great-power psychology characterized with ‘China at the center and barbarians in the four directions’ still remains in the subconscious of many Chinese” (Gries: *ibid.*).

This understanding exemplifies China’s Sinocentric vision of the world, wherein China existed in an East Asian hierarchical order centered around the Confucian tradition of *tianxia* (all under heaven) and *chaogong tixi* (tribute system). The notion of *tianxia* constitutes the core of the Chinese traditional concept of political order. As John King Fairbank (1960) in his edited volume entitled *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations* points that:

“Zhongguo, the Middle Kingdom, China, implies an awareness of the country as both a political and geographical unit of the Chinese Empire. Tianxia, all under heaven, which was ruled over by Tianzi, the son of Heaven [...] the Emperor of China [...] was used to embrace the whole world. These “sinocentric” ideas originated from the fact that China’s superior size, power, history and resources all made her the natural centre of the East Asian world. This made China’s relations with non-Chinese peoples to be coloured by the concept of “Sinocentrism and an assumption of Chinese superiority”” (Fairbank and Liu 1980: 143).

Based on this sinocentric perception of the world, China’s foreign relations were hierarchical and non-egalitarian in nature. The Chinese Empire operated two types of foreign relations: first, called *fanshu*, which was a relation of suzerainty, wherein the states paid a tribute and recognised Chinese superiority. And second, among Chinese and barbarians was called *diguo*, which was a relationship of subordination and rivalry (Dian 2017: 138). It is therefore, the recognition of the Chinese centrality and superiority that reinforced the Chinese perception of the “immutability of the Sinocentric system” (*ibid.*).

On the contrary to this element of ‘pride’ of past glory, Gries (2005: 108) further points that it is also important to address “a second story about another past that is

evolving in China: the “Century of Humiliation””. “*Bai nian guo chi*” (百年国耻) which literally means “100 years of national humiliation”, refers to the century between the First Opium War (1839-1842) and the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949, where China was “attacked, bullied, and torn asunder by imperialists” (Wang 2008: 784). What makes this part of history significant in the Chinese national narrative is the fact that the Century of Humiliation totally altered the perception of China’s sinocentric world view and its own status. Most importantly, as Dian (2017: 138) argues that the “humiliation and colonisation had undermined the legitimacy of the Confucian tradition as main political narrative of the Chinese Empire”.

To put it vividly, the Century of Humiliation of the Chinese Nation starts with China’s defeat in the First Opium War and the British acquisition of Hong Kong in 1842. This period was marked by major wars between China and both Western powers and Japan, mainly: the two Opium Wars of 1840-1842 and 1856-1860, the Sino-Japanese “*jiawu*” War of 1894-1895, the Boxer rebellion of 1900, and the “War of Resistance against Japan” of 1931/1937-1945.<sup>2</sup> As Wang Zheng (2012: 7-8) notes that the “modern historical consciousness in China” is powerfully influenced by the “century of humiliation” from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. That is, the “Century of Humiliation” acts as the key element of modern China’s founding narrative.

This can be explained as the repeated defeats in the hands of both Western powers and Japan forced China to accept unequal treaties that significantly undermined China’s sovereignty. The first of such unequal treaties was the ‘Treaty of Nanjing’, that was forced on China after the Qing Dynasty was defeated by the British army in the First Opium War. With this treaty, the Qing court had to open its markets to British opium, had to cede five coast cities (Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo and Shanghai) to the British as free ports and give Hong Kong to the British government. This defeat symbolised the beginning of the national humiliation. While the Second Opium War (1856-1860) as launched jointly by Britain and France led to the opening of more port cities for trade and most symbolic loss for China was the occupation and loot of the royal *Yuan Ming Yuan* Garden. The ruins of the royal garden have left a

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<sup>2</sup> Here, 1931/1937-1945 is understood in two ways. First, the Japanese invaded and colonised Manchuria following the Mukden Incident of 1931. However, the invasion of the rest of China did not begin until after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 1937. Chinese from the northeast invariably cite 1931 as the onset of the war, while other mainly cite the war from 1937-1945.

profound psychological trauma in the Chinese mind as evitable from generation to generation. Likewise, it is argued that the ruin of *Yuan Ming Yuan* is “the first and most important modern ruin in China”, which serves as remains that reactivates the memories of China’s humiliation of losing its glory (Li 2014: 13).

Apart from Western imperialists, Japan is another causal factor behind Chinese humiliation. With Japan’s Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan emerged to a status of one of the powers in the world. Having defeated China in the First Sino Japanese War in 1895, Japan imposed an unequal treaty called the ‘Treaty of Shimonoseki’ on China. This treaty required Qing to cede the Penghu group, Taiwan and the eastern part of Liaodong Peninsula in perpetuity. This treaty too confirmed opening of seven ports (Beijing, Shanxi, Chongqing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Xiangtan, Wuzhou) to Japanese trade.

In comparison to the western powers, what makes China’s grievances towards Japan much strong is the very fact of transformation of Japan from being a vassal country in China’s Empire system to that of becoming a ‘coloniser’ of the Empire, thereby, creating the antagonistic history between China and Japan. That is, Japan’s invasion was one of the central factors that threatened China’s identity of superiority of 5,000 years. In addition to the loss of face and status, these unilateral concessions forced on the Chinese in the form of indemnities, extraterritoriality, and foreign settlements in the treaty ports- incurred humiliating losses of sovereignty. In view of this, these unequal treaties represented an important encapsulation of China’s humiliation, as “history as a mirror” in the eyes of many Chinese, “the discourse of the Unequal Treaties became integrated as a perpetual element in the common inheritance of Chinese-ness” (Scott 2008: 29). In this background, the query lies in understanding of this emotive ideational sense of ‘humiliation’ in China’s political discourse. That is, how did this narrative come into existence.

In the aftermath of the First Opium War, Wei Yuan, was one the first Chinese intellectuals who referred to the Chinese humiliation in response to the Chinese defeat. Wei was the first to confront the new reality of China’s decline and thereby, in his book *Record of Conquest* called on his countrymen to “react to the humiliation deriving from that conflict and the imposition of an unequal treaty, and promote a

process of reform and strengthening”<sup>3</sup> (Dian 2017: 129). In this regard, China’s “Self Strengthening Movement” of 1860 to 1895 is seen as the response to the need to save China from “National Humiliation” (ibid.: 40). Such reforms, however, failed to solve the deep seated institutional problems, as was made clear by China’s humiliation in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. In this regard, Chinese influential scholars and reformists such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, further expounded on the idea of National Humiliation.

Here, it is important to recognise that the national humiliation discourse itself first emerged to explain China’s shocking defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. To say so, as Kang Youwei, China’s famous reformer during the “1898 Hundred Days of Reform”<sup>4</sup>, described the Sino-Japanese War as China’s “greatest humiliation in more than two hundred years since the advent of the Qing dynasty” (Paine 2005: 269). Why this defeat was perceived as the “greatest humiliation” can be understood from the fact that this loss changed the power equation between China and Japan. That is, this defeat comprehensively demolished the ritual façade of the tribute system, as the Chinese empire found itself vanquished by a country that it had always viewed as a cultural tributary (Lovell 2008: 763). Besides, as Callahan (2012: 162) notes, before the war, Chinese saw Japan as a student of Chinese civilisation, but the war altered this perception.

These fall of humiliating events led to the emergence of modern Chinese nationalism. To say so, as the reforming elites began to see China no longer as the centre of the civilised world but as one nation among many engaged on a Darwinian struggle for survival in a new modern system invented and dominated by the West. For instance, Kang Youwei spoke of “the Humiliation of our society”, referring to the “devastation of the Yuanmingyuan Gardens” (destroyed during the Second Opium War and during the suppression of the Boxer Uprising) but more specifically it pointed at the “state of

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<sup>3</sup> After being defeated in Opium Wars, the Self-Strengthening Movement was initiated in the early 1860s by Feng Guifen and supported by Zeng Guofan, Zuo Zongtang, Li Hongzhang, and Prince Gong. This movement attempted to adapt Western institutions and military innovations to Chinese needs.

<sup>4</sup> The Hundred Days of Reform was a failed 103-day political reform movement in China, started by Qing Emperor Guangxu and his supporters, mainly Kang Youwei, from June 11 to September 21, 1898, to force rapid modernisation on Chinese government and society. This reform movement came in the aftermath of the failure of the Self-Strengthening Movement and China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95.

submission that China has fallen between the Opium Wars and 1900” (Dian 2017: 140). While Liang Qichao in his articulation of the idea of National Humiliation wrote about “a sense of shame” (ibid.). Liang was the first person to call China as “*dongfang binfu*”- “Sickman of Asia” (Wang (2012: 151). To which, Wang further notes that Liang frequently used the phrase to emphasise the importance of improving people’s physique and called for a national “body reform movement” as part of his package of political reform (ibid.). In suggesting nationalism as a way to China’s survival and recovery to its ancient greatness, Liang wrote:

“the world has progressed since the sixteenth century for no reason other than the enormous power of nationalism ... in today’s situation, if we [China] want to counteract the national imperialism of all those world powers so as to save the country from total catastrophe, we must develop a nationalism of our own” (Lovell 2008: 763).

However, it is also interesting to note that although Japan shook China’s self-esteem the most as compared to the Western powers, but both Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao looked at Japan as an example of reform. Both the reformers assumed that China could become “one of the most powerful nations in the world if it could follow Japan’s path of modernisation and self-strengthening” (Dian 2017: 140). These perspectives thereby, explain the genesis of Chinese nationalism as a response to National Humiliation. Wherein, encounters with Japan and the Western powers acted as the critical factor in shaping the narrative given China’s loss of face against its sinocentric pride.

In linking these ‘humiliation’ conceptions to the present Chinese context, it is found that the “Century of Humiliation” is active in the Chinese historical consciousness and is central to China’s present day national identity. To say so, as the humiliation fundamentally challenged China’s views of the world and its place in the world. Likewise, Li (2014: 12) states that the “Century of National Humiliation” emerged to show “a sense of loss, which came from the gap between a “world empire” and “a chunk of meat on the chopping block”. Understanding the relevance of the past in the present, Callahan (2004: 206) argues that the “Century of National humiliation” is the

official view of modern Chinese history in PRC, wherein humiliation is a key part of modern Chinese subjectivity, and is therefore, treated as “natural”.<sup>5</sup>

Drawing from the narrative of Century of Humiliation, it can be stated that the ‘past’ exists strongly China’s present perceptions and behaviour in international politics. For it is argued that this narrative has become a key “legitimiser” for CCP rule, because the CCP is portrayed as the “only modern Chinese political party that was able to successfully stand up to foreign aggression” (Kaufman 2011: 4). This narrative further allows both Chinese government as well as the people to interpret contemporary successes through the lens of earlier failures (ibid.). The Chinese no longer are ready to accept a submissive position in the international system. For instance, in Chinese view, the return of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macao in 1999 as well as the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 are seen as conclusions of the Century of Humiliation. However, Taiwan’s independence still plagues China’s self perception in the international arena.

From this, it is evitable that China’s behaviour is a reflection of the victimhood narrative of Chinese suffering during the “Century of Humiliation”, which continues to be invoked in China to explain its present foreign relations. To explain this linkage, Gries (2001) draws evidence from China’s nationalist response in the aftermath of the 1999 US bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. As People’s Daily article entitled “This is Not 1899 China” declared:

“The wheel of history will not go backward. This is 1999, not 1899. This is not [...] the age when people can barge about the world in gunboats [...] It is not the age when the Western powers plundered the Imperial Palace at will, destroyed the Old Summer palace, and seized Hong Kong and Macao [...] China is a China that has stood up; it is a China that defeated the Japanese fascists; it is a China that had a trial of strength and won victory over the United States on the Korean battleground. The Chinese people are not to be bullied, and China’s sovereignty and dignity are not to be violated [...] US-led NATO had better remember this” (Gries 2001: 32).

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, on 27 February 2014, China’s legislature passed a resolution creating two new national observances- Victory Day on September 3 to commemorate Japan’s surrender in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and December 13 as National Memorial Day to commemorate the Nanjing Massacre.



In a similar tone and more specifically hinted at Japan, Chu Shulong strongly asserts:

“[I]n today's China, Asia and the world is not the same as Asia and the world in 1931 and 1937. The time when Japan invaded and enslaved China and Asia has gone forever. If Japan adopts the aggressive and invasive actions of the past 70 years, China and the other Asian countries have the ability to let Japan suffer catastrophically as it once did in the summer of 1945” (Chu 2014: 24).

While in reflecting on the changed world from that of World War II as well as a different China, Lin Limin articulates that:

“At that time, Japan was the only industrialized country in Asia; [...] But today, Japan has no such advantages. China's economic volume, manufacturing output and trade volume have all passed those of Japan, let alone the comprehensive strength of all Asian-Pacific countries. Today, Japan is not strong enough to challenge China [...], but it [Japan] is also judged as immoral because it has not taken responsibility for its war crimes” (Lin 2014: 65).

The above statements exemplify the shift in Chinese perceptions, wherein there is a clear understanding that China today is stronger and will not seek any form of hegemony and injustice. Most importantly, Japan figures largely as the comparative other for China. This reflects the psychological impact on Chinese mindset of the trauma suffered during the Century of Humiliation that decentered China's perception of the world and most importantly, its own place in it. Due to which, as Gries (1999: 14) points that the “loss of national face” continues to haunt contemporary China who seek to restore China's dignity in the international community. It is the legacy of the “100 years of national humiliation” that makes Chinese sensitive to perceived slights to China's dignity- seems that Chinese are “slaves to their “past humiliation”” (ibid.).

The trauma of humiliation continues to act as a filter that shapes Chinese perception of themselves and the world. That is, as Kaufman (2011:5) argues that the Century of Humiliation exposed Chinese intellectuals to a “different way of thinking about international relations”. To cite an example, in 2009 then Chinese Ambassador to Great Britain, Fu Ying on the question of “why would China be an exception as compared to other powers”, during a public speech at Oxford University, pointed:

“[H]egemony was neither part of China’s culture and tradition, nor its immediate and long-term interest. China has never been a country that enjoyed war. The essence of Chinese culture opposes aggression and hegemony, advocating that “do not do onto others what you will not do onto yourself.” The Chinese people were victims of aggression and bullying, and will never agree to make their own country one of hegemony” (Embassy of the PRC in UK and Northern Ireland 2009).

This statement further reflects China’s sensitivity towards the past and how the perceptions drawn from the past shapes China’s present policy preferences.<sup>6</sup> Thereby, what China desires is to establish its rightful place in the international community as a respected world power. From a Chinese perspective: national consciousness has triggered China’s behaviour wherein “to achieve an international status commensurate[s] with the country’s vast capacities and the Chinese people’s conception of their country’s rightful place in the world” (Zhao 2013: 539).

### **3.1.1 THE CONTEXT OF HISTORICAL MEMORIES IN CHINA’S RELATIONS WITH JAPAN**

According to Xu Guoqi (2002: 42), the importance of historical memory in China can be understood from “*Sima Qian’s*” quote “*qianshi buwang, houshi zhishi*”, which means “those who do not forget the past will be masters of the future”. This mindset is clearly evitable in China’s equation with Japan, where the impact of historical memory or forgetfulness is at work. To say so, as since the normalisation of relations in 1972, the Chinese side has all along stated that: “The past if not forgotten, can serve as a guide for the future” (MFA 2002). Therefore, the prerequisite for long-term bilateral cooperation is to “face and recognise the history” (ibid.). As the quote suggests, history plays a significant role in shaping the Sino-Japanese relations. Wherein, a combination of a “‘good’ period of history and a ‘bad’ period of history” looms large in their contemporary perceptions of each other (Rose 1998: 5). In the

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, PRC’s commemoration of September 3 as “Victory Day” and December 13 as “National Memorial Day” in memory of the Nanjing massacre not just renews the traumatic memories of Japan’s past aggression but also serves the additional purpose of portraying China as the rightful regional leader with a high moral standing the international community as compared to Japan. These National Days are motivated by China’s national consciousness of the past and its present rightful status. This is evident in Xi Jinping’s speech delivered on 3 September 2015. See, *Xinhuanet* (2015).

two thousand-year long history of interaction, as Rose notes that the period from the fifth to the tenth centuries was the “apogee of China’s influence on the development of Japanese cultural, social, political and economic spheres”, and it is this period which created what the Japanese and Chinese see as “Japan’s cultural debt to China” (ibid.: 6).

In this view, China’s contributions to Japan are mainly attributed to the social stability, economic prosperity and developments brought by the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties in all aspects- military, political, economic, social and cultural. China’s growth and development provided a “model for Japan” in developing itself from “a slave to a feudal society” (ibid.). This gave an impetus to greater engagement between China and Japan, as a result this period is commonly referred to as a “high tide” in Sino-Japanese relations (ibid). Wherein, China’s most significant and lasting influences on Japan, as Rose identifies were: the introduction of the Chinese writing system, Confucian and Buddhist thought, and Chinese arts and crafts (ibid.). Therefore, in addition to these influences, certain economic and political adaptations from China is seen to help transform Japan into a ‘civilised’ nation.

Further, under the Song dynasty, trade played an increasingly important role in the relationship, however, the formal relations between the two came to a cease under the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). While during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), given China’s Sinocentric view of the world order, Japan entered into a tributary relationship with China from beginning of the fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century, in which Japan ranked low in China’s hierarchical world order. Since then, the Sino-Japanese relations witnessed a relative decline resulting into decline in trade relationship. It was the nineteenth century that marked the turning point in the power equation between China and Japan. Japan’s attitude towards China underwent change given China’s military weakness and internal disorder as a result of foreign invasion. This attitudinal change was also prompted by Japan’s own growing self-sufficiency and cultural confidence, as Rose explains that “the Japanese became fully aware of themselves as a national entity” (ibid.: 8). As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, China not only succumbed to foreign pressure by becoming victim of the western powers in their scramble for concessions, but most importantly, suffered at the hands of “a newly-transformed expansionist Japan” (ibid: 10).

Given these episodes of China's interaction with Japan, Wu Xinbo (2002: 65) points that there are mainly two kinds of histories that dominates Chinese memory of Japan: one being Japan benefitting from Chinese civilisation in ancient times, and the other being its aggression against China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Chinese formed an impression, as Akira Iriye points that "Japan's cultural indebtedness to China did not prevent its military assertiveness on the continent" (Rose 1998: 9). Given this impression, in the two-thousand-year long history of interactions, it is the clashes between 1894 and 1945, that captures the dominant narrative in defining the Sino-Japanese relationship. Likewise, Zhou Enlai incisively summarised the relationship as "two thousand years of friendship and five decades of woe" (Tang 2012: 3). Zhou categorically points that:

"The good neighbourliness and friendly ties between China and Japan have grown continuously for some two thousand years with the only exception of the first half of the last century when Japan committed aggression against China and exercised colonialist rule over parts of China" (Zhou 2006: 115-116).

Rose describes this anomaly as "fifty years that overshadow two thousand", which saw Japan's territorial expansion and acquisition of rights through a "series of wars, rebellions and 'incidents'" (1998:9). That is to say, irrespective of the two millennia of relatively peaceful relations, the recent war history, as Le (2011:10) points has established the "emotional tone" to the contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. This makes it imperative to understand the 'history problem' in the current relationship between China and Japan by paying attention to this particular 'fifty-year war period' of history, wherein emphasising on the events that took place is the key. That is to suggest it is important to understand the context that defines the 'history problem' in the Sino-Japanese relations. This makes the 'history problem' to be understood as a set of issues relating to the legacy of history and the very different interpretations in China and Japan of the events of the past.

In this regard, the history problem has been assigned various scholarly understanding and different meanings. However, in this study, the history problem is studied from a specific definition, mainly referring to the way China or rather Chinese actors interpret and accounts of their nation's war history with Japan, from the perspective of

both First Sino-Japanese War from 1894-1895 and the Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937-1945. Thus, it is to argue that what makes the history factor a dominant narrative in explaining the conflict between China and Japan lies not in the history of wars, but in the way in which both countries have memorised and passed on the history through generations- making it a collective historical memory. It is to suggest that the processes of reconstruction and representation of historical memory have played a major role in shaping China's identity and nationalism and thereby, acts as a crucial factor in shaping China's approach to Japan.

This makes 'historical memories' an important context for understanding China's foreign policy based on the new nationalism, which Wang (2015: 227) notes is "not religiously, ethnically, or ideologically based" rather is tied to China's national experiences and historical consciousness. As Wang further argues that understanding the politics of historical memory is therefore essential for comprehending the linkage between the top-down state nationalism and popular social nationalism, the conditions and circumstances that ignite nationalist movements, and the controversies between globalism and nationalism in today's China. In addition, this also opens a window on the legacy left from the period of the cold war on how perceptions of history are significant for ongoing IR (ibid.). In this regard, what aggravates Chinese historical wounds is mainly attributed to the Japanese attitude toward the issue of history- which Chinese perceive to be unrepentant given the constant efforts by the rightists to defend Japan's militarist past, and failure to address issues left over by Japanese wartime atrocities in the 1930s and 1940s (Wu 2002: 66).

### **3.1.2 CHINA'S VICTIMHOOD COMPLEX: ISSUES OF CONTENTION**

The history issue remains at the forefront of Chinese thinking over China's relationship to Japan. As already noted, in juxtaposing the two thousand-year of peaceful relationship on one hand, and a fifty-year relationship of acrimony on the other, it is found that although the long and illustrious history of Sino-Japanese friendship cannot be dismissed as plain rhetoric but what appears more dominant and alive in China is the memories of Japanese atrocities. From this perspective, it can be rightly pointed that the history issue holds significant relevance in understanding China's present relations with Japan. To have a deeper understanding, it deems

necessary to first explore China's historical narratives of the war history and then draw from it China's perceptions of Japan- which Anthony Giddens calls "ontological security" (Gries 2004b: 3).

Why is understanding of history important? It is because history serves an important function of informing the next generation of citizens about their nations' past and instructing them about how to live and behave in relation to other countries (Tan 2009: 32). History makes up public memory that shapes citizens' understanding of the past and ideas about future society. Public memory of a nation's past is not a simple replication of objective facts, but a collective narrative retrieved from many retold stories (ibid.). In case of China-Japan relations, as Dirlik argues that:

"The history of World War II is the most visible aspect of the controversy, but by extension this has invoked recollections of a more distant past and, perhaps more importantly, speculation over the future that may have something to tell us about the disruptive elements that lie barely beneath the surface of an otherwise amicable relationship" (Dirlik 1991: 30).

This implies that the emphasis on the past should not be taken as that the past is to be divorced from contemporary issues, rather it is arguable that the concern with history takes the present (and the future) as its point of departure (ibid.).

In this regard, the concept of national narratives can help us to overcome the disconnect between the past and the present as it links the role of the past in the nationalist politics of today. Narratives are stories that we tell about our pasts and these stories further infuse our identities with unity, meaning, and purpose (Gries 2004b: 5). In case of China, narratives about the "Century of Humiliation" forms the framework of the very idea of being 'Chinese'. That is, Chinese today are painfully aware of the trauma that China underwent in the hands of foreign aggression. That is, Chinese visions of the 'Century' have shaped their sense of self, and their changing self-concepts have altered their views of the Century". To this, Gries (2004b: 5) argues that past and present exist in a dialectical relationship in which stories about the past both constrain and enable their national identities in the present.

In this light, the history of China's encounter with imperialism has witnessed the emergence of new narratives about the "Century of Humiliation". Callahan (2004:

199) calls it “the unique feature of Communist Chinese historiography and identity”, which is focused on “deliberate celebration of a national insecurity,” as exemplified in textbooks, novels, museums, songs and parks- devoted to commemorating national humiliation of China. In defying the understanding of humiliation to be just a simple calculation of links between defeat, humiliation and revenge, Callahan (ibid.: 201) posits that in case of China, humiliation is “reframed from an irrational emotion that needs to be cured, through (social) psychology, to a social practice that needs to be understood in terms of political and historical narratives”.

What is interesting to note is that the Maoist ‘victor narrative’ has been slowly joined by a new ‘victim narrative’ that blames the West and Japan, for China’s suffering. This present victim narrative is drawn from the dominant theme of victimhood that existed in the pre-1949 era. In this narrative, it is important to note that although the Century of National Humiliation started in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but national humiliation day did not emerge in China until 1915, when Japanese imperialist imposed the unequal treaty of “Twenty-One Demands”<sup>7</sup> on Chinese government (Li 2014: 14). Given this perspective, what lies at the core of China’s humiliation and victimhood narrative is Japan’s imperialist aggression.

However, in addition to the “Twenty-One Demands”, two other aspects that loom large in China’s victimhood narrative against Japan are: First, the Manchurian Incident (September 18) of 1931, when Japan captured the Chinese territory of Manchuria and created Manchukuo, a state controlled by the Japanese through a puppet government of the last Qing Emperor Puyi. This occupation of Northern China was the first step in Japan’s expansionist strategy towards China. And second and most important, is 7 July 1937, when Japanese army invaded eastern China, which triggered the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), which was an integral part of Japanese military’s strategy of building the “East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” (ibid.) This period is very sensitive to China’s humiliation discourse. China remembers this as the China’s ‘War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression’. In view of these incidents, China’s sense of victimhood can be traced from the concrete and specific

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<sup>7</sup> This was a list of concessions that Japan demanded from China, including expansion of Japanese control over areas of Shandong province, various mineral and railway rights, and an attempt to bar China from granting further rights to any other power than Japan.

issues related to Japan's war crimes against Chinese people. Of which, the most noted are: the Nanjing Massacre, Comfort Women, Forced Labour and the activities of Japan's Unit 731.

First, on the Nanjing Massacre issue, as the Chinese official data says, over 300,000 civilians and prisoners of war (POWs) were killed by the Japanese army and about 20,000-80,000 women were systematically raped, and other numerous cases of looting and destruction took place over a time span of about six weeks from 9 December 1937- 31 January 1938 (Le 2011: 11; Li 2014: 14). The figure of 300,000 victims is the official Chinese estimate and the number that Chinese students have been taught in their history textbooks (Wang 2012: 208). Also to note, this is the figure currently displayed at the Nanjing Massacre Museum in Nanjing.

What makes this issue so sensitive is, as Gries (2004b: 5) posits that the "Nanjing Massacre" is seen in the perspective of China as a "raped woman". Here, it is noteworthy that this theme faded under the post-1949 phase, as under Mao the emphasis was on heroic victories. But in the post-1989 phase, rape is back in the victimisation narrative. What exemplifies this shift back to China's victimhood narrative is Iris Chang's 1997 book *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, which is argued to be representative of the Chinese perception on the happenings at Nanking. As Gries (ibid.) argues that Chang's perspective transformed the very essence of the Nanjing atrocities from "massacre" into a "rape". Iris Chang (1997: 4) in her book states: "experts at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE) estimated that more than 260,000 noncombatants died at the hands of Japanese soldiers at Nanking in late 1937 and early 1938". In supporting her argument, Chang has cited primary evidence from the Red Swastika Society, and has also used photo evidence, to illustrate the barbaric atrocities that the Japanese had inflicted upon the Chinese. However, the 'figure' suggested has become a source of contention between China and Japan.

Calling it as "Rape of Nanking", Chang further points:

"[W]hether we use the most conservative number- 260,000 – or the highest – 350,000 – it is shocking to contemplate that the deaths of Nanking far exceeded the deaths from the American raids on Tokyo (an estimated 80,000-120,000 deaths) and even the combined death toll of the two atomic blasts at



Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the end of 1945 (estimated at 140,000 and 70,000 respectively).” But she notes that “The Rape of Nanking should be remembered not only for the number of people slaughtered but for the cruel manner in which many met their deaths. [As] Chinese men were used for bayonet practice and in decapitation contests. An estimated 20,000-80,000 Chinese women were raped. [...] So sickening was the spectacle that even the Nazis in the city were horrified, one proclaiming the massacre to be the work of “bestial machinery” (Chang 1997: 6).

Similarly, Journalist Edgar Snow has provided the following eyewitness account on the massacre, where he notes:

“Thousands of men were led out of the [Nanjing International Safety] Zone, ostensibly for labour battalions, and lined up and machine-gunned. Sometimes groups were used for bayonet exercises. When the victors grew bored with such mild sport they tied their victims, poured kerosene over their heads, and cremated them alive. Others were taken out to empty trenches, and told to simulate Chinese soldiers. Japanese officers then led their men in assaults to capture these ‘enemy positions’ and bayoneted the unarmed defenders” (Chen World War II Database).

In exemplifying the horrors of the Nanjing Massacre, in an eyewitness account of a journalist named F. Tillman Durdin of the New York Times, wrote on 18 December 1937 in an article titled “All Captives Slain”. As Durdin (1937) reported:

“The capture of Nanking was the most overwhelming defeat suffered by the Chinese and one of the most tragic military debacles in the history of modern warfare. In attempting to defend Nanking the Chinese allowed themselves to be surrounded and then systematically slaughtered. [...] Thousands of prisoners were executed by the Japanese. Most of the Chinese who had been interned in the safety zone were shot in masses. The city was bombed in a systematic house-to-house search for men having knapsack marks on their shoulders or other signs of having been soldiers. They were herded together and executed. [...]. Since the beginning of the Japanese assault on Nanking the city presented a frightful appearance. [...]”.

The above accounts give a reflection of the intensity of the atrocities that Chinese people suffered under Japan’s military aggression. This anecdote provides a background that contextualises as to why interpretations of the historical events weigh heavily in the Chinese minds. This explains how interpretation of critical events significantly placates the political relations between China and Japan.

However, in contrast to Chinese view of the ‘massacre’ as “Rape of Nanking”, Japanese call it as the “Incident of Nanking (Man 2012: 1). To say so, as Shudo Higashinakano’s 2005 book *The Nanking Massacre: Fact Versus Fiction: A Historian’s Quest for the Truth* contends that Japanese, as a whole, acted honourably and that the few instances of rape, murder, and looting were outliers (ibid.: 4). Furthermore, Shudo places the death toll of Nanking at a considerably lower number than the one cited by Chang. As in refuting Chang’s argument, Shudo points:

“20 days before and immediately prior to the fall of Nanking, the city’s population was 200,000, according to Europeans and Americans who were there at the time. Eight days after the fall and on Christmas Eve, it was still 200,000. No one indicated a vast decrease in population due to mass slaughter. Confronted by these facts, how can anyone claim that 300,000 noncombatants were murdered in Nanking?” (Shudo 2005: ii).

What further complicates the issue is the Indian Justice Radhabinod Pal’s judgment at the IMTFE or “Tokyo War Crimes Trial” in April 1946. Wherein, Pal issued a Dissenting Opinion entitled *Dissentient Judgment of Justice Pal*, a 1,235-page judgment in which he dismissed the legitimacy of the IMTFE as victor’s justice. In asserting that all Japanese Class A defendants at the Trial were innocent of crimes, Pal pronounced:

“I would hold that each and every one of the accused must be found not guilty of each and every one of the charges in the indictment and should be acquitted on all those charges” (Kei 2007: 218).

Here, it is important to note that regarding the Nanjing Massacre, although Pal premised that wartime propaganda from hostile sources was blended in with the evidence submitted to the Tribunal, and therefore, it may not have been safe to accept the entire story, and thereby, he concluded that the fact that atrocities were executed by the Imperial Army was unshakable (Nakajima 2011: 4). Pal stated:

“Keeping in view everything that can be said against the evidence adduced in this case in this respect and making every possible allowance for propaganda and exaggeration, the evidence is still overwhelming that atrocities were perpetrated by the members of the Japanese armed forces against the civilian population of some of the territories occupied by them as also against the prisoners of war” (ibid.).

Given these differences in perceptions and opinion, 'Nanking massacre' remains not only a heated topic of debate between China and Japan but also an obstacle to the reconciliation between the two countries.

Second, the 'Comfort Women' issue, in which thousands of Asian women, particularly Chinese and Korean, were taken captive to be used as sex slaves (Moore 2010: 289-290). Soh (2000: 61) describes, "comfort women" (*ianfu*), as an "official coinage of imperial Japan", that was used to refer "categorically to young females of various ethnic and national backgrounds and social circumstances who became sexual labourers for the Japanese troops before and during the Second World War". While in contrast, the Japanese soldiers referred to these women as "*pi*", a Chinese term meaning goods or articles, which as a slang term, stood for female genitals (ibid.). Although figures vary as to the number of comfort women, but it is estimated that upto 200,000 women were incarcerated or held in military brothels throughout the duration of the War (Henry 2013: 366).

Here, it is important to note that at the IMTFE, rape was not enumerated as a "crime against humanity" or a "war crime" in the Tokyo Charter and no rape victims were called to testify (ibid.: 367). This is clear from the words of Mei Ru'ao, the Chinese judge who attended the IMTFE. As Mei stated:

"I'm not a revanchist, and I have no desire to write down the bloodshed debts the Japanese imperialists owed us under the name of Japanese people. But forgetting the past bitterness might bring about catastrophe" (Zhang and Liu 2016).

As Henry (2013: 367) notes that it was only in the Tokyo Indictment that rape was explicitly included and charges brought against defendants for war crimes committed during the Nanjing invasion under the 1907 Hague Convention IV and 1929 Geneva Convention. As a result, the "Rape of Nanjing" was made known to the world through the Tokyo proceedings as witnesses gave evidence of the horrific atrocities perpetrated against women and girls during the six-week invasion of the city (ibid.). The 'comfort women' issue further adds to the Nanjing massacre controversy between China and Japan. In this regard to seek justice, since 1995, former Chinese comfort women have filed 4 lawsuits with the Tokyo District Court, demanding an official

apology from the Japanese government and compensation for having been taken by the Japanese army and used as sex slaves between 1942 and 1944 (Qiu et al. 2013: 174). The 4 lawsuits filed overtime are: 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2001. However, on 30 August 2006, the Tokyo High Court denied the victims' claims and maintain that an individual Chinese person have no right to sue the Japanese state (ibid.: 176). Further in 2010, Japan's Supreme Court further rejected the appeals arguing that the plaintiffs lost the right to claim individual compensation when China signed the Sino-Japanese Joint Communiqué (ibid.: 176-177).

Third, the issue of 'Forced Labour', under which the Japanese army forced Chinese POWs and civilians to do hard labour in Japan during World War II (Wan 2015: 122). As per the Chinese, based on a Cabinet decision in 1942, about 40,000 workers were sent to 35 companies in 135 sites such as mines and construction sites and 6,830 died under severe conditions (Togo 2008: 67). In this regard, since 1995, PRC citizens have filed 16 forced labour lawsuits against the Japanese companies and the Japanese state in the Japanese courts. To note, most of these lawsuits are by PRC citizens in Japan. The 16 Chinese forced labour cases as filed over time are: 1995 (1 case), 1996 (1), 1997 (2), 1998 (2), 1999 (2), 2000 (1), 2002 (2), 2003 (2), 2004 (2), and 2005 (1) (Wan 2015: 123). As per Wan's estimates the Chinese labour law suits involve 236 plaintiffs who demand about ¥ 4.9 billion, wherein each plaintiff claims for ¥ 20 million (ibid: 123-124).

In an August 2002 ruling, Tokyo District Court acknowledged that Japan used biological weapons before and during World War II. But the court rejected the Chinese plaintiffs' demands, saying "foreign citizens cannot seek compensation directly from the Japanese government under international law" (China Daily 2005d). The most decisive turn came on 27 April 2007, when the Supreme Court of Japan dismissed the claims of five Chinese plaintiffs in the Nishimatsu case and two other forced labour cases. As the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center noted, the Court ruled saying:

"The 1972 Joint Communiqué of Japan and China is interpreted as providing for the renouncement of all the claims that had been established in the course of the war, including the right of individuals to claim reparations for damages. Thus they had lost entitlements to claim reparations through legal proceedings" (APHRIC 2007).

With this landmark ruling, Japan's Supreme Court denied the right to the Chinese plaintiffs to claim individual compensation. In citing the Supreme Court ruling, on 29 August 2007, the Maebashi District Court ruled against the Chinese plaintiffs. Further, the Supreme Court rejected more cases on 12 June 2007, 4 June and 8 July 2008 (Wan 2015: 124). To note, although most court rulings have recognised wrongdoings by the Japanese state and the companies but have largely ruled against the Chinese plaintiffs. An exception to this was made on 25 April 2002, when Fukuoka District Court ordered Mitsui Mining Company to pay \$1.4 million to fifteen Chinese World War II forced labourers (Haberstroh 2003: 258). However, the Fukuoka case remains an anomaly, and most claims have failed or remain unresolved in the Japanese courts (ibid.: 259).

And fourth, the Unit 731 issue, wherein, Japanese scientists used Chinese POWs to conduct lethal human experimentation throughout the war. Members of Unit 731 initially dehumanised human subjects by calling them "*maruta*" or "logs"- as objects of biological and medical experiments (Go 2009: 26, Togo 2008: 68). Initially, in 1933, a small military unit was established in Manchuria within the Kawatung Army to study biological warfare. Later, in 1939, it developed into a powerful unit called "Unit 731" in Ping fang, near Harbin under the direction of General Shiro Ishii of the Kawatung Army to carryout human biological warfare experiments (Togo 2008: 68; Zou 2002: 215).

The experiments were done - "to study the Bubonic Plague, to vivisections, to the study of the freezing of human flesh" and for the Japanese use of actual biological weapons, such as "releasing plague-bearing fleas and poisonous gas on Chinese civilians" (Moore 2010: 289). Unit 731 used chemical and biological weapons during the war despite being banned by The Hague Conventions (1899 and 1907), Versailles Peace Treaty and the League of Nations (Go 2009: 26). It is estimated that ranging from 3,000 to 10,000 Chinese lost their lives on the camp of Japanese Unit 731 and some 30,000 Chinese died of plague in 1947 (Moore 2010: 289; Le 2011: 11; Li 2014: 15). These experiments were not just limited to northeast of china, but were also carried out in the north, south, and central China and in Shandong province. In accordance, the Chinese government notes that the Japanese discarded chemical

weapons have so far been found in more than 30 places of over 10 cities and provinces in China (MFA 2002b).

Besides, the Khabarovsk War Crimes Trial, conducted by the former Soviet Union in Siberia in 1949, recorded some of the crimes committed in Japanese laboratories against Chinese people between 1931 and 1945. To cite an example, as one witness testified:

“In January 1945 I saw experiments in inducing gas gangrene conducted under the direction of the Chief of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, Colonel Ikari, and researcher Futaki. Ten prisoners were tied facing stakes, five to ten meters apart. The prisoners’ heads were covered with metal helmets, and their bodies with screens, only their naked buttocks being exposed. At about 100 meters away a fragmentation bomb was exploded by electricity. All ten men were wounded and sent back to prison. I later asked Ikari and researcher Futaki what the results have been. They told me that all men had died of gas gangrene” (Zou 2002: 215).

Given this unresolved issue of Unit 731, in 1997, a group of more than one hundred Chinese survivors and family members of victims of alleged Japanese biological warfare activities filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government (Roy 2006: 79). In August 2002, the Tokyo District Court acknowledged that Japan used biological weapons before and during World War II in violation of international conventions. But the court rejected Chinese plaintiffs’ demands for compensation, saying that under international law foreign citizens cannot seek redress directly from the Japanese Government (China Daily 2005d). The Court also ruled that Japan had already settled compensation issues under the 1972 Joint Communique between Tokyo and Beijing (Roy 2006: 79). Likewise, in July 2005, on similar grounds, the Tokyo High Court rejected the compensation appeals by 180 Chinese for damage caused by Japan’s World War II germ warfare programme (China Daily 2005).

From the above issues, it is clear that the Century of humiliation has significantly affected the Chinese mentality. To argue so, as the above issues suggest two kinds of mentalities that operate in Chinese mindset: one, is the victim mentality and the other is the compensation mentality. In doing so, these existing contentious issues from Japan’s wartime past reinforces the pathological frames that shape China’s historical memory. It exemplifies the Chinese rational of the victimhood complex- making the

matter of history a relevant fact of the present. In this perspective, thereby, what makes the history textbook issue a reference point of potent friction between China and Japan is the way the historiography of Japan's atrocities is remembered and written, wherein the point of friction is the language used by Japan to justify its actions during the World War II. Here, the conflict lies over the content in the Japan's history textbooks which is mainly argued to be the reinterpretation of World War II, to which the Chinese government as well as public accuse Japan of whitewashing Japan's colonial history, most importantly, Japan's military aggression in China during 1931- 1945. It is the divergence in interpretation of history that makes textbooks such an element of friction that seeks to influence the present and future of China-Japan relations.

In view of this, the existing 'history problem' in Sino-Japanese relations tends to contradict two prevailing beliefs: first, that time can heal, or allow us to forget, all wounds and second, that increasing bilateral interaction should alleviate, especially wartime grievances (Le 2011: 12). This contradiction further validates the argument that the construct of "Century of National Humiliation" lies at the heart of China's 'historical memories', which Pei Minxin defines as "the back-ward-looking and particularistic perspectives of ethnonationalism" (Wang 2012: 25). That is, the humiliation narrative acts as a "determinist" notion of primordial national history that naturally defines eternal enemies, and in this case, Japan for China (Callahan 2004: 203). It can therefore, be stated that Century of National Humiliation is not just a time frame in Chinese history rather as Kilpatrick (2011) calls is a "mental space", whose boundaries are continually shifted with new narratives.

### **3.1.3 HISTORICAL MEMORIES IN SHAPING CHINESE PERCEPTIONS**

In understanding the causal impact of historical memory on perceptions, He Yanan (2008: 174) provides an analytical framework based on the assumption of social memory study that sees memory as an image of the past collectively constructed by a social group in the present. It is understood that different social groups form different memories of the past, ruling elites tend to create self-glorifying, self-whitewashing and other-maligning national myths for instrumental purposes. Which once institutionalised as the hegemonic national memory through school textbooks and

other propaganda tools, national myths would cause divergent historical interpretations between former enemy countries regarding not just what happened in past traumatic conflict, but also the nature and scope of responsibility for the conflict (ibid.).

In this perspective, He (ibid.) posits that two causal mechanisms link divergent memories to foreign policy, that is: “emotion” and “intention”. With respect to role of emotions in the victim country against the perpetrator<sup>8</sup>, He explains that:

“in embracing myths of victimisation and self-righteousness, [the country] will feel deep grievances about its enormous sufferings in the past, which can translate into a strong sense of entitlement vis-à-vis the perpetrator.” He further notes that, “other maligning myths held by the victim stimulate the emotion of contempt for the perpetrator country, especially if that country denies its historical responsibility, which may be condemned as morally despicable” (ibid.).

Based on this “emotion” rationale, it makes the Chinese (victim country) to believe that they have a moral high ground on the history issue, and most importantly, is perceived to be linked to Chinese nation’s dignity. What makes Chinese “emotion” so strong towards Japan, as Yang (2007a: 273) suggests: first, in China’s “Century of Humiliation” none of the Asian powers were Asian except Japan. That it was the Japanese, “their fellow Asians”, who committed so many atrocities in China causing painful memories for the Chinese. Second, the Chinese believe that China was more powerful than Japan for the larger part of their 2000-year relationship and that Japan overtook China as an international power only less than two hundred years ago. This perception thereby, makes it difficult for the Chinese to accept Japan, “a historically junior state” to not to face up to its past (ibid.).

While besides emotion, the second causal factor that results into clash over historical interpretation is the mutual perception of “intention”. Under this frame, He (2008: 175) explains that the victim country unlike the perpetrator<sup>9</sup>:

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<sup>8</sup> While for the perpetrator country, as He (2008: 174-175) explains, its self-glorifying and self-whitewashing myths will lead to a lack of sympathy for the victim and a failure to understand its animosity and bitterness. Dismissing the victim’s emotions as unreasonable and self-indulgent, the people of the perpetrator country will develop emotions of disgust and frustration because they are constantly reminded of the disgraceful past that they wish to forget, and they blame the national shame (not guilt) not on their past crimes but the victim’s obsession with the past.

<sup>9</sup> While the perpetrator country finds the sense of entitlement of the victim state unjustified and only used to disguise for its hostile intentions.



“tends to link the unrepentant attitude of the perpetrator to its evil intention, and thus worry about any remaining or reviving aggressive ambitions from the perpetrator.” As He further notes that “[a] victim country’s quest for national greatness in the name of redeeming itself from past suffering and humiliation will especially stimulate fear of revanchist menace on the perpetrator side”.

This is visible in Chinese attitude towards Japan which perceives Japan as unrepentant and holds suspicion over Japan’s revival of militarism. As Wang Jisi (2000: 32) argues that:

“the history of Japan’s annexation of Taiwan after the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War, as well as the war crimes committed by the Japanese army during World War II, makes Chinese, leaders and citizens alike, deeply distrustful of Japanese intentions and sensitive to any signs of growing Japanese military power”.

This suggests that both emotion and intention act as strong intangible factors that influence Chinese perceptions of Japan. What explains Chinese perceptions of Japan is the ‘historical complex’, which Wu (2002: 72) argues can be attributed to three main factors: First, the painful individual and collective memory of the unfortunate history itself. That is, given the Japanese aggression of the past, the “Chinese people may be able to forgive the past (as they have been trying to do) but it will be hard for them to forget” (ibid.). This is because that part of history has been deeply rooted in the Chinese people’s “memory” and will be “remembered” for a very long time (ibid.). Second, is the aversion to the way the Japanese treat the issue of history.

This explains as to why whenever the Japanese rightists attempt to whitewash Japan’s aggressive past, the Chinese, as victims of Japanese militarism, feel keenly hurt and offended (ibid.). And, third, is a genuine concern that if Japan fails to draw due lessons from its aggressive past, it may follow the same disastrous road in the future (ibid.).

Nationalism acts as a strong fundamental force in shaping China’s perceptions born from historical memories. Zhu Tianbiao (2001: 3-4) argues that the origin and development of Chinese nationalism is largely associated with the formation and development of the modern Chinese state. As Zhu quotes John Fitzgerald’s argument

that “the Chinese nation has been created and recreated in the struggle of state power, and it has ultimately been defined by the state as a reward of victory”. In this perspective, the key factors that gave rise to Chinese nationalism were the repeated aggression against China by the western powers, and their control over different parts of China since the Opium War of the 1840s. As a result, Japan occupies a central place in China’s nationalist sentiments.

China’s humiliating defeat in the War of 1894-95 by Japan, a tiny country that the Chinese dismissively called 倭人 “dwafts” or 小日本 “little Japan”, acted as the fundamental force to the rise of the first generation of Chinese nationalists (Zhao 2013: 550). To cite an example, a scholar indicated:

“China was already accustomed to rapacious Western powers squabbling over the riches but has remained self-confident in the knowledge of these powers’ irrelevance. However, the assault from Japan, a speck of dust in its own backyard, shattered this self-assurance and was experienced as a shocking and intolerable humiliation” (ibid.).

In contrast to the “dwarf” and “little” image, China’s other image of Japan was that of a student of Chinese civilisation. As Callahan (ibid.) argues that today Chinese people see “Japan as a barbaric “country of ingratitude” because it has turned on its teacher while still refusing to face up to its horrible crimes from the twentieth century”. These contrasting images of Japan as “dwarfs” to that of a “student” shapes China’s present perception of an insincere Japan.

### **3.2 PERCEPTIONS IN CHINA’S FOREIGN POLICY**

It is a well acknowledged fact that the negative legacy of war history has impacted China’s foreign relations. It is argued that China uses real or perceived humiliation to justify its foreign relations. That is to say, the experience of humiliation has shaped the perceptions in China’s foreign policy. In this process, the way in which the emotion/intention factor impact a country’s (victim) foreign relations towards the other (perpetrator) can be understood in terms of: setting a foreign policy agenda,

limiting the policy options and constraining policy implementation and so on (He 2008: 175).

How perceptions impact China’s foreign policy can be understood from the way China perceives the international order and its own status in that order. In this regard, Wang (2012: 126) observes that in common foreign policy statements Chinese leaders often reiterate that China and the Third World have a better mutual understanding and share good relationships due to the fact that they went through similar experiences throughout history and were similarly subjected to colonial aggression and Western oppression. This impression of the Chinese can be assessed by paying close attention to the different wording and tone used by the Chinese leaders since 1949 in their foreign policy agenda.

As noted from the political reports of the National Congress of the Communist Party of China 1956-2012, it is evitable that there is a clear distinction of China’s view of the international order. Wherein, China sees the international order as divided under three categories: “developed countries”, “developing countries” and “Third World countries”. In its policy options, China’s perception is further divided into five main categories: “developed countries”, “developing countries”, “neighbouring countries”, “Third World countries”, and “major countries”. This categorisation provides the pattern by which China’s perception of the international order is drawn based on its own experiences from the past. Also to note, in the international order, China perceives itself as a “developing country”.

**Table 3.1: China’s Perceptions of the International Order (1949-2012)**

<b>Chinese Leadership</b>	<b>Year of Report</b>	<b>Political Report (presented by)</b>	<b>China’s Foreign Policy Agenda</b>	<b>Remarks on Japan</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	September 1956	Liu Shaoqi	Emphasis on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence To establish good neighbourly relations with all neighbouring countries. To establish normal diplomatic relations with all of those countries which have not yet established diplomatic relations with our country.	The report makes no mention of Japan.

9 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	April 1969	Lin Biao	To develop relations with socialist countries on the principle of proletarian internationalism. Emphasis on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence To oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war	The report stated: “We firmly support the revolutionary struggles of the people of Japan and the West European and Oceanian countries”. (This reference was made against the backdrop of U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism)
10 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	August 1973	Zhou Enlai	Uphold proletarian internationalism Strengthen unity with the proletariat and the oppressed people and nations of the whole world and with all countries subjected to imperialist aggression Form the broadest united front against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and in particular, against the hegemonism of the two superpowers - the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.	U.S.-Soviet contention for hegemony is the cause of world intransquillity. This has caused resentment on the part of Japan and West European countries.  Raised question on how Soviet Union should return the four northern islands to Japan?
11 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	August 1977	Hua Guofeng	China is a developing socialist country belonging to the third world. Stand firmly with the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and other regions	With reference to Japan, the report stated: We support the second world countries, such as the European countries and Japan, in their struggle against control, intimidation and bullying by the superpowers.
12 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	September 1982	Hu Yaobang	China is still a developing country but we have always done our best to help other third world countries, with whom we share a common destiny. Our friendship with other third world countries is sincere. As our economy grows, we will steadily expand our friendly co-operation with other countries and peoples of the third world.	For the first time the history issue surfaced in China's political discourse. Japan is China's neighbour. “During 100 years of modern history, the Japanese militarists unleashed one war of aggression after another against China, inflicting colossal calamities on the Chinese people and grievous damage on the Japanese people themselves.” “Now some forces in Japan are whitewashing the past Japanese aggressions against

				China and other East Asian countries and are carrying out activities for the revival of Japanese militarism.
13 <sup>th</sup> National Congress		Zhao Ziyang	Not Available	Not Available
14 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	October 1992	Jiang Zemin	China is a developing country. Strengthen our solidarity and co-operation with other third world countries. Emphasis on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to develop relations.	No mention of Japan
15 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	September 1997	Jiang Zemin	Strengthen solidarity and cooperation with the Third World countries. China will, as always, join the vast number of developing countries in mutual support and close cooperation in all areas to safeguard our lawful rights and interests. Emphasis on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to improve and develop relations with developed countries.	No mention of Japan
16 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	November 2002	Jiang Zemin	Emphasis on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to improve and develop relations with developed countries.  Cement friendly ties with neighbours and build a good-neighbourly relationship and partnership with them.  Enhance solidarity and cooperation with other third world countries	No mention of Japan
17 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	October 2007	Hu Jintao	Emphasis on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to develop relations. With developed countries, continue to strengthen strategic dialogue, enhance mutual trust, deepen cooperation and properly manage differences With neighbours strengthen good-neighbourly relations Solidarity and cooperation with developing countries	No mention of Japan

18 <sup>th</sup> National Congress	November 2012	Hu Jintao	<p>Emphasis on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.</p> <p>Improve and grow relations with developed countries by expanding areas of cooperation and properly addressing differences with them;</p> <p>Establish a new type of relations of long-term stability and sound growth with other major countries.</p> <p>Promote friendship and partnership with our neighbors increase unity and cooperation with other developing countries</p> <p>China will remain a reliable friend and sincere partner of other developing countries.</p>	No mention of Japan
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**Note:** Reports of the 8<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress of the Communist Party of China.

From Table 3.1, it can be stated that Beijing's foreign policy behaviour is based on its perceptions of the international order. China's foreign policy perceptions have transformed over the years given its leadership's assessment of the international environment. Its policy agenda has been consistent on three main aspects: relationship with developed /developing countries, support for the third world countries and following the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

What causes the Chinese governing elites to adopt such an attitude, as Pei (2001) argues is "China's national experience and collective memory [that] constitute a powerful force in foreign-policy decision-making". As discussed earlier, the Chinese psyche is dominated by a psychological gap of two sets of memories- the country's long and splendid civilisation on the one hand and its century of humiliation at the hands of western powers and Japan on the other. Most importantly, it is the narrative of the "Century of Humiliation" that takes precedence in determining the way Chinese deal with the Western powers and most importantly, its immediate neighbour- Japan.

Given the influence of the humiliation narrative, Wang (2012: 126) suggests, for China the countries of the world can be divided into two groups: those who have bullied China in the past- all of them are the developed countries- and those who have the similar experiences with China- the other Third World countries. This distinction is driven from the historical memory that has profoundly influenced the Chinese

people's perception and understanding of the external world, as the cognitive content of historical memory provides a source of frames, lenses, and analogies to interpret the outside world. China's perceptions are drawn from a deep historical sense of victimisation by outside powers which combined with the powerful governmental education campaigns on historical humiliation, has constructed a special Chinese "culture of insecurity" and long-held suspicions about foreign conspiracies against China (ibid.: 186). Here, this "culture of insecurity" as Wang argues has become the frame by which the Chinese interpret present-day events and influences their reactions and demands to rectify perceived humiliation.

Using this frame as the analytical tool, the historical consciousness has defined the normative framework of China's present-day foreign relations- in using the "references and comparisons to other countries, especially China's old foes and the way Chinese leaders and people interpret and understand the world" (ibid.). In drawing a correlation between beliefs about the past and its relation to perceptions of threat in the present and future foreign policy preferences, Gries et.al (2009: 263) in an empirical study found that security and insecurity in Northeast Asia are not just a question of the balance of economic and military power in the region, but also hinges on the impact that beliefs about the shared past has on the perception of threat. The study revealed that for Chinese, there is an extremely strong positive correlation between negative beliefs about the past and outgroup threat perception in the present. This empirical evidence supports Gerrit W. Gong's assertion that:

"The Cold War's thaw brought not the end of history but its resurgence. Conflicts about the past now shape the future. In East Asia [...] At stake is not so much a clash of civilizations as a clash of histories. The battleground will be issues of "remembering and forgetting" (Gong 2002: 26).

Given these perspectives, it can be argued that the victim/victor complex is deeply embedded in Chinese foreign policy attitude towards Japan. As China's frequent demand for Japan's apology of its wartime atrocities illustrates China's victim mentality (Tan 2009: 37). This victim mentality regulates China's diplomatic behaviour towards Japan by reinforcing the Chinese belief that it has a "moral responsibility to educate Japan into acknowledging and remedying its past

wrongdoings” (ibid.). Wu (2002: 72) contends that in Chinese wisdom, “history provides a useful tool in reflecting on the past to affect the present”, and as Japan seeks to exercise more influence in global affairs, “a healthy remembrance of the past will result in good for its people”.

Given this history, Zhu (2001: 4) views that the generations of the Chinese elite came to the belief that “only by building a strong China, could they fight against foreign aggression and become independent of foreign control.” In linking nationalism to China’s foreign policy, Wang Gungwu argues that having “[many faces] the most common face of [Chinese nationalism] concerns questions of polity and stresses the recovery of sovereignty, the unification of divided territory, and national self-respect”- which Zhu calls “the ultimate goal of Chinese nationalism” (ibid.). Therefore, in order to serve the goal of nationalism, the means of nationalism need to be incorporated into practical policies.

In this view, foreign policy should aim at building friendly relations with other countries, especially those with the developed countries, in order to obtain resources and technology for domestic economic development. Besides, through interaction with other countries, foreign policy can also promote a good image of China. But, foreign relations, especially those with the developed countries can also bring inconsistency to the relationship between the means and the goal of nationalism (ibid.: 5) It is found that there is an existing contradiction in China’s nationalism and foreign policy goals towards developed nations given the logic of the historical consciousness. Similarly, Callahan (2004: 202) argues that to understand China’s nationalism and national security, it becomes necessary to understand China’s national insecurities. This can be explained by understanding the construct of China’s nationalism, which is not just about celebrating the glories of Chinese civilisation, rather more importantly, about commemoration of China’s weakness, which is an output of China’s century of National Humiliation.

In this view, China’s national humiliation narrative is very important in understanding how historical memory informs both China’s domestic and international politics. Callahan (2004: 202) states that the national humiliation narrative helps explain how China’s insecurities are not just material, a matter of catching up to the West



militarily and economically, but symbolic. This is justified as Callahan (ibid.: 205) points that one of the goals of Chinese foreign policy has been to “cleanse national humiliation” and in doing so, the primary objective of the Chinese government is to “overcome imperialism by uniting these lost territories under Beijing’s leadership.”

In understanding the Japanese viewpoint, He (2009: 259) notes, that according to Japanese elites, China’s development of a “dangerous nationalist trend” is a way to “shake off national humiliation through the resurrection of a “greater Chinese empire”.” Having this ‘dream of an empire’, China adopted an assertive behaviour as it took for granted that it should dominate the region that was traditionally its sphere of influence; and also, China tended to defy the international criticism because memory of past national trauma made it highly sensitive to “foreign meddling” in its internal affairs. In this regard, He cites Japanese scholar Watanabe Akio, who in his 2004 article suggested that “by emphasising the ‘hundred year humiliation’ history and eulogising the ‘glorious resurrection of the Chinese nation’,” China’s thesis of a peaceful rise actually betrayed its deep seated resentment and sense of inferiority, and it raised the suspicion that China was attempting to rebuild the old dream of the “China order”” (ibid.).

In drawing a correlation between beliefs about the past and its relation to perceptions of threat in the present and future foreign policy preferences, Gries et.al (2009: 263) in an empirical study found that security and insecurity in Northeast Asia are not just a question of the balance of economic and military power in the region, but also hinges on the impact that beliefs about the shared past has on the perception of threat. The study revealed that for Chinese, there is an extremely strong positive correlation between negative beliefs about the past and outgroup threat perception in the present. Wang (2012: 199) suggests that the beliefs of history and memory also act as focal points that constitute difficulties in settlement of tensions.

This correlation is applicable in China’s foreign policy decision-making as Kaufman (2010: 12) posits that Chinese elites today draw on the “Century of Humiliation” as a starting point for their views on how China should interact with other nations. As Kaufman argues that there are three views among Chinese elites of the international system and China’s role in it, which are: first, the world is composed of strong and

weak nation-states that vie for dominance on the global stage and international system still revolves around western interests that seek to subjugate and humiliate weaker nations. It is suggested that China's leaders should tread cautiously in their interactions with the "strong nations".

Second, it suggests that the current system is acceptable now that China can play a prominent role in it. And third, it suggests that China is in a unique position to fundamentally remake the international system precisely because its experiences of "shame and subjugation" have given the Chinese people an alternative vision of how international relations can and should be conducted (ibid.). Given these viewpoints, Kaufman (ibid: 28) suggests that as China's international influence grows, its elites will continue to draw on both the theories of the past and the realities of the present in order to determine what behaviour befits a great power.

In drawing a link between China's perceptions from the past and its impact on the foreign policy, it can be stated that China's history problem rooted in the historical memories act as road maps. Wherein the memory factor acts as a strong force in influencing the leaders' interpretation and foreign policy choices towards other countries. Wang (2012) states that memories of past injustice act as filters that limit the choices and exclude other factors. Because of these memories, Chinese leaders were restricted in policy options. The Chinese have no choice but demand an apology because it symbolised not only an admittance of wrong doing but also a boost in the status of China. Additionally, memories also provided motivation and mobilisation for conflict actions. Without the emphasis on historical memories, the Chinese people would not have been so easily spurred into taking action.

In the Chinese viewpoint, as Yuan (2014: 2) argues that what China defends today is precisely the "grand post-war order that reflects the achievements of the victory of the global anti-Fascist war, international justice". This is evitable in China's attitude as it:

"embraces, among other things, the UN Charter-focused and UN/Security Council-centered collective security mechanism. In particular, it embodies a set of post-war system designs that punish the war crimes of the defeated nations and deprive them legally and institutionally of their war potential and war-waging rights formed through two historic trials held separately in Nuremburg and Tokyo"(ibid.).

Another aspect in which perceptions drawn from historical memories is linked to China's foreign policy is in China's ambition of being "a responsible big country" (Choi 2010: 44). That is, as Choi suggests that for China the perception is that it should spontaneously acquire its authority by taking greater lead in international affairs, without resorting to physical domination of the former western powers. This can be confirmed by China's internal discussions over the future orientation of its foreign policy, and it is certain that China in the 21st century will pursue an image of being "a responsible big country" (ibid.). That is, China wants to play the role of a major power in the region, at least in East Asia, although it now reluctantly admits United States' leading role on the global stage. Therefore, to achieve this goal, it is essential for China to ensure long-term moral superiority in relations with Japan.

In this case, China's notion of "a responsible big country" as Choi notes has double meaning in its relations with Japan. First, it shows that China, based on its own sense of being a big country, will live up to its commitment to act magnanimously, overlooking relatively trivial issues (or considered to be trivial, such as history textbook distortion, the Yasukuni Shrine<sup>10</sup> tribute, etc.). And second, at the same time, it will build up excuses for its possible strong reaction against future contingencies. However, it is important to note that in acting responsible, China's attitude towards Japan has rather become more assertive in terms of historical controversies. Therefore, in China's Japan policy there remains no scope of 'overlooking' the history problem.

In this regard, the role of historical memory in shaping China's foreign policy can be understood in two perspectives: first, national humiliation is embedded in China's collective historical memory of trauma and second, it acts as the causal variable that continues to influence China's foreign policy behaviour towards other based on perceptions born from historical consciousness.

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<sup>10</sup> The Yasukuni Shrine is a Shintoist Shrine in Tokyo, dedicated to the spirits of those who died fighting on behalf of the Emperor of Japan. The Shrine honours the souls of 14 convicted Class A war criminals, including Prime Minister general Hideki Tojo who was executed for war crimes in 1948. To this, China considers it as a symbolic representation of Japan's imperialist aggression. Japanese prime ministerial and ministerial visits to the shrine on important anniversaries such as 15 August (the date of Japan's defeat in the Second World War) have become a regular bone of contention between the Chinese and the Japanese governments.

### **3.2.1 THE ‘HISTORY PROBLEM’ IN CHINA’S JAPAN POLICY**

The history issue acts as a stumbling block in Sino-Japanese relations. Although significant parallels are drawn between China and Japan to that of France and Germany but it is to note that the Sino-Japanese case is an exception. That is, although France and Germany had a peaceful reconciliation after the Second World War, but between China and Japan even after so many years, the history issue remains unsettled and that sometimes even put their bilateral relations to the deadlocks.

The exception lies in the difficulty to reach a reconciliation between China and Japan. Do Thi Thuy (2014) argues that reconciliation as the way France and Germany did requires three conditions: (i) the aggressor accepts its responsibilities and is willing to reintegrate into region; (ii) the victims prepare to let go and build new relations; and (iii) the international/regional environment provides conditions conducive for reconciliation. However, in case of China and Japan, these conditions have not been met in order to reach reconciliation. Most importantly, the divide lies in the perception of the way Japanese deal with history as compared to that of what the Germans have done in this regard. That is, as Wu (2002: 69) argues that from the Chinese perspective, Germany is perceived as the nation that has genuinely repented for Nazi atrocities during the World War II and has made relentless efforts to settle the account of that part of history.

One of the factor that refurbishes this Chinese perception is the “genuine and heartfelt remorse” image of Germany as drawn from German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s “kneeling at the monument to victims of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising”, during his visit to Poland in 1969 (Lupton 2012: 19). In Chinese view, as Wu notes this was a “gesture of genuine repentance” on the part of Germans, which brought about sincere reconciliation between Germany and its neighbours. In addition, the Chinese also acknowledge the German government’s tough stance against the right-wing activities and their legislative measures to forbid any form of defence against the activities of Nazi Germany (ibid.). In this regard, Joseph Yu-shek Cheng (2015: 9) posits that the adjustment process has been made all the more difficult by the lack of a satisfactory settlement of the Sino-Japanese historical legacy. This is so, as the Chinese nation considers that the Japanese authorities have yet to make a formal apology to China concerning Japan’s aggression against China in the Second World War. Here, a

“vicious cycle” of “offer and rejection” is at play given Japan’s incomplete or insincere apologies and China’s refusal to accept it (Lupton 2012: 19).

What is more evident is that the ‘history problem’ has become a characteristic feature of contemporary China-Japan relations. Because Japan’s military expansionism (1894-1945) has left a deep scar in the memories of the Chinese population, the issue of history as Rose (1998: 11) suggests remains at the “core” of Sino-Japanese diplomacy. As she argues that the “unfortunate period” of fifty years that overshadowed the two thousand years of cultural exchange represents a strain on the Sino-Japanese relations. Similarly, Yang Daqing (2002: 11) points that the history problem between China and Japan has developed into a “vicious cycle” of emotional outbursts over the history of Japanese aggression against China during the half century before and during World War II, making it a sensitive factor in China’s attitude and behaviour towards Japan.

In addressing the prevalence of the ‘history issue’ in Sino-Japanese relations, Rose (2005: 2) notes that since the 1980’s many of the issues have been related to “what the Chinese call ‘problems remaining from the war’ (*zhangzhng yiliu wenti*)”. In this view, Rose points that the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website refers specifically to three categories of outstanding problems: (1) the history problem; (2) war reparations, and (3) disposal of abandoned chemical weapons (*ibid.*). Of the three, references to “the history problem” (*lishi wenti*) has been the dominant narrative in Chinese official statements and documents, in media, and in academic accounts of the state of the relationship in 1980s and 1990s and most regularly with the onset of twenty-first century. Given the centrality of the history factor in Sino-Japanese relations, the official Chinese view of the history problem, according to China’s Foreign Ministry states:

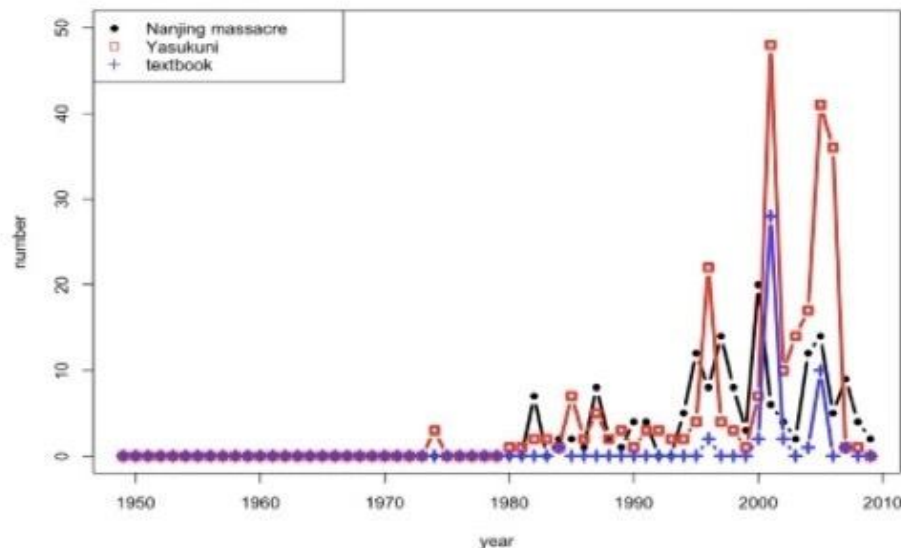
“The correct understanding of history is a sensitive political issue in the bilateral relations. How to acknowledge and recognize the history of Japanese militaristic invasion against China was a focal point at the negotiation table in the process of the normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations early in 1972. The explicit explanation has been made in the Joint Statement and the Treaty of Peace and friendship, which served as the political basis for bilateral relations. The Chinese side has all along stated that ‘The past, if not forgotten, can serve as a guide for the future’. On the basis of respecting the history, the Chinese side wishes to look to the future and develop friendly relations

between the two peoples from generation to generation. Nevertheless, the prerequisite for long-term bilateral cooperation is to face and recognize the history” (Rose 2005: 4; Yang 2002: 11).

However, from the above statement, it is noteworthy that China’s Foreign Ministry treats the history problem separate from ‘war reparations’ and chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China, rather sees it as an issue of “attitude” (Yang 2002: 11). While in defining the ‘history problem’, some scholars argue it to be “Japan’s remorse, or lack thereof, regarding its activities in China during World War II and earlier” (Smith 2009: 232). While Ryu (2015: 2) suggests that it is:

“a non-material issue concerning the understanding or interpretation of Japan’s past colonialism in Asia” [which] “encompasses a number of sub-issues such as Yasukuni Shrine, the revision of Japan’s history textbook[s], the co-called “comfort women” issue and Nanjing massacre among others, each touching on different aspects of Japan’s self-understanding of its past atrocities”.

**Figure 3.1: The Number of articles on Nanjing Massacre, Yasukuni Shrine and History Textbooks published in People’s Daily, 1950-2010.**



Source: Ryu (2015: 2).

From the frequency of articles on the three issues as demonstrated in Figure 3.1, it can be clearly stated that Nanjing massacre, Yasukuni shrine and history text books are

the key elements that constitutes the ‘history problem’ in China. However, beginning the 1980s, the three issues arose in saliency, which intensified throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

The frequency of these issues reflects the intensity of the history debate. The problem, as Fan (2008: 376) states “has to do with Japan’s interpretation of its aggression against China during the war, including such issues as the Japanese history textbook revisions and official visits to the graves [sic] of war criminals at the Yasukuni Shrine”. In giving an alternative understanding, Gustafsson (2016) argues that while the specific sub-issues viewed as being part of the problem are indeed important, however, currently the “most fundamental and overlooked aspect of the history problem in Sino-Japanese relations is the lack of agreement on what exactly the problem is”. In this respect, the ‘history problem’ in China’s relations with Japan can therefore, be understood as a discursive problem. Wherein, the understanding of the problem involves the way in which the China’s historical consciousness is constructed, appropriated and deployed, which in the larger perspective defines the Chinese nation and its relationship with Japan. In this process, it is the narrative of the Century of Humiliation that constructs the history problem and thereby, informs China’s Japan policy.

In understanding the impact of history in Chinese political relationship with Japan, Dirlik (1991: 32) notes that “from the beginning the past has entered into the official relationship between the two countries as the basis for “normalization””. On 27 September 1972, during the negotiation process on normalising diplomatic relations, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai’s toast to Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei ended with a poignant reminder, as Zhou stated:

“Japanese militarists invaded China, bringing great disaster to the Chinese people, as well as deep suffering to Japanese people. The past if not forgotten, is a guide to the future: this experience and lesson we should resolutely remember” (Reilly 2011: 464).

Since then, Zhou’s this aphorism has emerged as the Chinese rhetoric on the wartime past. Chinese leaders have repeatedly emphasised on this dictum in handling relations with Japan. The history issue plays a significant role in China’s diplomatic equation with Japan. For instance, the Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the PRC (Zhou-Tanaka Communiqué) of 29 September 1972, which

laid the foundation of Sino-Japanese normalisation, serves as a frame of reference for Chinese discussions, which clearly posits that:

“Japan and China are neighbouring countries separated only by a strip of water, and there was a long history of traditional friendship between them. The two peoples ardently wish to end the abnormal state of affairs that has hitherto existed between the two countries. The realization of the aspiration of the two peoples for the termination of the state of war and the normalization of relations between Japan and China will add a new page to the annals of relations between the two countries” (MOFA 1972).

However, although China’s negative attitude towards Japan is long-standing and deep-rooted, but it is necessary to note that for the first decade after the normalisation of ties, historical feuds did not constitute a major problem for either side. To this, Wu (2001: 67) argues that the normalisation of Sino-Japanese ties marked the beginning for China “to forgive, if not to forget, the past”. To elucidate, as with normalisation with Japan in 1972, and the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of peace and Friendship in 1978, Beijing sought to settle the past with Tokyo quickly as reflected in China’s decision to renounce its demand for war reparations from Japan. It is noteworthy that this Chinese renouncement came in the background of Japan’s declaration that it “is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself” (MOFA 1972). To which, the Chinese side recognised that, “The Government of the People’s Republic of China declares that in the interest of the friendship between the Chinese and the Japanese people, it renounces its demand for war reparation from Japan (ibid.).

However, it is important to note that in the negotiation process for the normalisation of diplomatic relations in 1972, the original theme for negotiation had been the “responsibility of war,” but it was replaced by the “Taiwan problem” that was connected to the issues of whether and how to recognise the “One China” principle (Fang and Xin 2016: 53). In this process, on one end, Japanese negotiators did their best to dissimulate and evade the issue of “responsibility of war”, while on the other end, the Chinese did not assert or insist that the Japanese should apologise and compensate for their war crimes, and nor did the Chinese insist that Japanese should



clearly recognise the Chinese claim of sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands and others (ibid.).

It is important to note that during the normalisation process and also as noted in the Joint Communiqué, Mao Zedong attempted to push China past its troubled history with Japan. It is reasoned that Mao's such a decision was guided by the interest to establish healthy trade relations with Japan (Go 2009: 32). To this, Zhang (2014: 59) points that after the formation of PRC in 1949, the first generation leaders such as Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, believed that "developing Sino-Japanese relations was key". This is evitable from Zhou's own words, as he told visiting Japanese Diet members in 1954:

"The history of the past sixty years of Sino-Japanese relations was not good. However, it is a thing of the past, and we must turn it into a thing of the past. This is because friendship exists between the peoples of China and Japan. Compared to the history of a few thousand years, the history of sixty years is not worth bringing up. Our times have been unfortunate, because we have only been living in these sixty years. However, our ancestors weren't like this. Moreover, we cannot let such history influence our children and grandchildren" (Reilly 2011: 469).

This suggests that the first generation Chinese leadership sidelined the past in order to build the future relations with Japan and as a result, they were more interested to "engage Japan as part of Mao's strategy to balance the Soviet Union, even welcoming a Japanese military buildup" (ibid.). It is clear that for the Chinese leaders it was an "ultimate aim" to establish "normal diplomatic ties and friendly relations" between the two countries (Zhang 2014: 59). However, it was the signing of "peace agreement" between Japan and Taiwan that placed serious obstacle in establishing diplomatic ties (ibid.). These factors reflect the dichotomy vis-à-vis current Sino-Japanese relations, where history factor heavily weighs down the relationship.

In this view, many Chinese scholars refer to the 1970s and early 80s as the 'honeymoon period in the bilateral relationship'.<sup>11</sup> As a result, during this phase,

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<sup>11</sup> The catalyst of the honeymoon could be either the strategic reshuffle of China after splitting with the Soviet Union on the 1960s, or the demands of the domestic economic reform. For in this phase, China was a pragmatic actor, dedicated to get rid of the class-based ideology and focus on domestic economic development. Given this interest, it required the Chinese government to develop the Sino-

China considered any discussion on Japanese wartime atrocities as harmful for the Sino-Japanese friendship, which was further reinforced by Mao's emphasis on victor narrative. In 1984, Beijing and Tokyo announced the formation of the Commission for Sino-Japanese Friendship in the Twenty-first Century. Hu Yaobang, general secretary of the CCP and Nakasone Yasuhiro, prime minister of Japan, lent their prestige to this commission and their personal interactions were symbolic of its goals. Given this bonhomie in the interaction, Allen Whiting (1989) states that the positive prognosis can be traced from the assessment of Lee Chae-jin, one of the foremost specialists on the relationship. As Lee then forecasted:

“As long as the Chinese can sustain a stable domestic political basis for their four modernizations policy and can improve their bureaucratic and managerial performance, the normalization of economic and diplomatic relations between China and Japan suggests that both will be able to learn from their past achievements and mistakes and to work out a mature and viable system of mutually beneficial economic cooperation in the years to come. It is also conceivable that the experiences of both countries will move them closer together in terms of their economic and political policies in Asia and elsewhere” (Whiting 1989: 1).

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Japanese relations from a more practical perspective. In this phase, Japan was neither a real friend nor an enemy, but an important cooperative partner as well as a study model for China in its process of economic development. In order to maintain good relations with Japan, Chinese government kept a low profile responding to some sensitive history issues, for example, the controversy about the Japanese textbook in 1982 and three Japanese prime ministers worship at the Yasukuni Shrine during this time. Because of Chinese government's moderate attitudes toward "history issues" and its pragmatic approach to Japan, the 1980s saw a peak of Sino-Japanese relationship. In addition, the Chinese people's views on Japan also reached its peak. This can be assessed from a public survey report conducted by a Shanghai Journal in 1978, which showed that among 2,500 Chinese people in forty cities, Japan enjoyed the title as the most welcomed country with 31.4 percent of the respondents' supports, which was double the figure of the no.2- Western Europe. In contrast, the US and the Soviet Union were the most unpopular countries in China. A similar conclusion was drawn from a joint survey conducted by *Ribenwentiziliao* and *Yomiuri shimbun* in May, 1989 before the Tiananmen Incident. In this survey report, over half of the respondent on both sides held a positive view on Sino-Japanese relations, and only 9.2 percent of Chinese and 11.6 percent of Japanese respondents considered that the relations were bad. While on bilateral relations, 88.5 percent of Chinese respondents held an optimistic view and believed that the China and Japan should be closer in next decennium. While over 5 respondents got a feel of affinity with Japan, while in adverse figure of Japan, it was over 70 percent. The most impressive result of this joint survey was the part about "history issue". When asked the question like "Do you think Japan had reproached itself for its past aggression", 56.7 percent of Chinese people chose to answer "yes", which was higher than Japanese side's 54.6 percent. According to this survey, at least, till the end of 1980s, it was concluded that the majority of Chinese people had forgiven Japan for what it did during the wartime, and most Japanese people still felt guilty to China. thereby, given the positive attitude of the Chinese government and the public towards Japan, the "bad history" seemed to be no longer an obstacle of the future development of Sino-Japanese relation (Li 2014: 42-43).

This positive prognosis compounded with high-level political support for Sino-Japanese “friendship”, as Whiting (*ibid.*) suggests challenged the dominant Chinese “image of its smaller neighbour” (Japan) that had been derived from fifty years of Japanese military aggression and territorial annexation. From this assessment, as Zhang (2007: 17) notes that there was rarely any anticipation that the bitter past between the two countries would become one of the most serious obstacles in the bilateral relationship three decades later.

Here, it is noteworthy that, in contrast to the positive prognosis of the relationship in the twenty-first century, the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1978 has failed to suppress the cyclic disruptions in the relationship as caused by Japanese misconducts on a series of historical issues. This is exemplified in the fact that since the beginning of the twenty-first century, series of episodes occurred, of which most importantly: at the foremost, it was the Junichiro Koizumi cabinet that visited and paid homage to the Yasukuni Shrine six times from 2001-2006. And then it was the Yoshihiko Noda Cabinet that declared the decision to nationalise the Diaoyu Islands in 2012, which provoked severe confrontation between China and Japan over the sovereignty of the islands and others (Fang and Xin 2016: 53). These activities of Japan have reinvigorated China’s suspicion of Japan’s intentions in the current phase, bringing the ‘war memories’ back in the Chinese perception of Japan.

Given this context, what makes the ‘history problem’ a valid reference point in the current times is the fact that in the post-normalisation phase, China’s relations with Japan have been fraught with contradictions. Of which, the sharpest confrontations since the conclusion of the Second World War between China and Japan have arisen over Japan’s wartime history and the differing ways in which both countries perceive it. In understanding the ‘history issue’ it is important to note that in 1972 on the occasion of the Zhou-Tanaka Communique, that laid the foundation of normalisation between China and Japan, Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai set the way forward by making a statement that “Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future” (MFA 2002b). In this view, the history factor forms the “political foundation” of China’s relations with Japan (*ibid.*). This can be said so, as since 1972, this very statement by Zhou has become the official metaphor of defining the trajectory of China’s relations with Japan. And with the resurfacing of the history factor in the twenty-first century, Zhou’s dictum has become a catchphrase in Sino-Japanese

relations as the historical undertone has become a common factor in China's foreign relations with Japan.

For instance, Uemura (2013:117) notes that former Chinese Ambassador to Japan, Chen Jian, argued that "Japan did not thoroughly, profoundly and comprehensively reconsider[ed] its aggression against China". On a similar tone of that of Chen, former Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan commented that "Japan has never completely abandoned its militarist past in the same way as Germany has with the Nazis. If it were to do so, China and other Asian nations would not have to keep reminding Japan of history so often". Following the similar line of thought, Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing asked "why Japan cannot do what Europeans have done over history issues" (ibid.).

These statements reflect the Chinese elite perception which assumes that Japan cannot live up to its expectation as a responsible counterpart in their morally reciprocal relationship. In October 2002, on the Occasion of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit Meeting in Los Cabos-Mexico, Chinese President Jiang Zemin in meeting Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reflected on that Japan should "take history as the mirror and look forward the future" (MFA 2002a). Similarly, President Hu Jintao in meeting Prime Minister Koizumi in November 2004 stated that "To treat history appropriately is the only way to translate historical burden into power of moving ahead"(MFA 2004). While in April 2005, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing in his talks with his Japanese counterpart Nobuka Machimura, specifically reinstated on:

““taking history as a mirror and looking into the future” to seek peaceful coexistence, friendship from generation to generation, mutually-beneficial cooperation and common development” [...] He further pointed out that “to improve and develop China-Japan relations the first step is to get a correct understanding of history. And expressed hope that “Japan could fulfill its commitment to facing and reflecting on its history of aggression with tangible actions, refrain from doing anything else hurting the feeling of the Chinese people and properly address related issues” (MFA 2005).

Similarly, in September 2005 Chinese President, Hu Jintao in his speech at a meeting marking the “60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory of the People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War” stated:

“The past, if not forgotten, can serve as a guide for the future. By emphasizing the need to always remember the past, we do not mean to continue the hatred. Instead, we want to draw lessons from history and be forward-looking. Only by remembering the past and drawing lessons from it can one avoid the repetition of historical tragedies. We hope that the Japanese Government and its leaders will, with a highly responsible attitude toward history, the people and the future, and proceeding from the overall interest of the Sino-Japanese friendship, regional stability and development of Asia, handle historical issues in a serious and prudent manner and translate the apologies and remorse they have expressed for that war of aggression into concrete actions” (Xinhuanet Online 2005).

In April 2007, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in his speech at the Japanese Diet stated that:

“To consolidate our friendship and cooperation, we need to draw lessons from the unfortunate days of the past. As we all know, the over 2,000 years of friendly contacts between the Chinese and Japanese peoples were once interrupted by a traumatic and unfortunate period of over 50 years in modern times” (MFA 2007).

In December 2011, Chinese President Hu Jintao in meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, emphasised that both countries “in the spirit of using history as a mirror and facing the future, should improve political mutual trust and expand exchanges and cooperation” (Xinhuanet 2011).

From the above statements by Chinese political elites, it is noteworthy that in China’s political agenda towards Japan, there is a strong emphasis laid on “the past” and “correct handling of history”. This implies a significant shift in Chinese leadership’s agenda, as Chan (2005) argues that Chinese officials “no longer pretend to be building socialism or communism” but instead “hail” the regime in Beijing for ending the “humiliation” of China following the Opium War of 1840 and reviving the imperial glories of the “Middle Kingdom””. Here, the query lies in understanding why ‘the past’ appears so strong and significant in China’s diplomatic equation with Japan. What makes the past so relevant in the present?

In explaining the rhetoric of ‘the past in the present’ is, as He (2013: 7) notes that one of the most outstanding paradoxes of the past 40 years (since 1972) is “time, [which] rather than healing wounds of past wars, has since the mid-1980s yielded only a more vivid and bitter recollection of history that has bedeviled both official and popular relations”. While Michael Hazel and Nick Knight (2007: 11) suggest that the foreign

policy dimensions of the Sino-Japanese relationship must be perceived in the context of the history of the interaction between the two nations, and the way in which this interaction has been constructed on both sides in nationalist or other ideological forms, as they assume that the “future relationship between China and Japan will be organically linked to the relationship’s past”.

In this regard, as it appears that the historical issues act as a significant hurdle to the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations. China perceives that improvement and healthy development in the relations can be fostered only by correct understanding of the historical issues. That is, the main concern that causes the problem as Liu Jinagyong (2005) notes is “the way the two governments, particularly the Japanese government, look at and handle Japan’s aggression against China and its other Asian neighbours, and other related issues from the War, such as the chemical weapons abandoned by Japanese troops in China.” While the Japan-China Joint Declaration on Building a Friendly and Cooperative Partnership Dedicated to Peace and Development, of 26 November 1998, specifically points that:

“[S]quarely facing the past and correctly understanding history are the important foundation for further developing relations between Japan and China. [...] The Chinese side hopes that the Japanese side will learn lessons from the history and adhere to the path of peace and development” (MOFA 1998).

Towards Japan, China perceives that only a ‘correct handling’ of the historical issues can prevent tensions. To which, Liu admits that Japan’s failure to come to a correct understanding of the historical issues and to take concrete actions may turn those issues into a real problem, thereby, affecting the peaceful development of Sino-Japanese relations (Permanent Mission of PRC to UN 2005a). For China, the unresolved history issue ranks high in the political agenda as Japan lacks a correct understanding of history and are unwilling to face up to the truth of history. For instance, PRC officials have criticised Japanese history textbooks which they say appear to minimise or even to deny Japan’s wartime atrocities. Moreover, China also has declared that the periodic statements of Japanese senior leaders apologising for Japan’s wartime aggression are insufficient; as Beijing points to the Yasukuni Shrine visits and history textbooks as examples of actions that seem incompatible with those conciliatory statements (Chanlett-Avery et al. 2008: 7). Given this logic, China’s

desire to build long-term friendly and cooperative relations with Japan is in line with the principle of “taking history as a mirror and looking forward to the future”. Hence for China, it is not about an apology from Japan but more about the way Japan handles the issues related to history. In this regard, the issues that affect China’s attitude towards Japan are:

“the relentless attempts by right-wingers in Japan to smoothover the country’s past atrocities, particularly in its history textbooks; the lack of responsible measures on the part of the Japanese government to reimburse Chinese “comfort women” and forced laborers who suffered badly at the hands of Japanese militarists; and inadequate action by Japan to address the issue of chemical weapons abandoned by its military in China at the end of World War II” (Wu 2005: 132).

As a result, Japan’s incorrect handling of these issues further strengthens the Chinese belief that Japan is fundamentally “incapable of behaving as a responsible power” and in achieving “genuine reconciliation” with its neighbours (ibid.).

Yang Jian (2007a) states that China’s policy towards Japan is characterised by the contradiction of distrust on one hand and important interests on the other, wherein the “Chinese distrust” lies in their “perceptions of Japan” (ibid. 2007b: 127). As Yang (2007a: 258) argues that although in general, China’s policy towards Japan is guided by realism, similar to its policy towards some other powers, such as the United States, but it stands unique to a considerable extent. Wherein, the reason for the stability of the Sino-American relations has been Beijing’s readiness to compromise in pursuit of important national interests, China’s policy towards Japan has proved different. In contrast, realism fails to explain this exception. The fact that China fears a powerful Japan means that the international balance of power alone is insufficient to forecast which nation poses a greater threat to China. That is, China’s fears are premised on the perceptions from historical legacies due to which China’s visceral distrust of Japan exacerbates the security dilemma in their relations (Uemura 2013: 105). In this view, Wang (2012: 200) states that it is the historical memory variable that helps explains why China treated the United States differently from other countries when dealing with conflicts.

While it is true that identity and beliefs have the effect of bringing a group closer, emphasising on cooperation and cohesion, it is also true that this sense of identity and

history can equally cause conflict and disorder- as seen in case of China's relations with Japan. Gries (2005a: 847) notes that in contrast to China's overall diplomacy that has "become more proactive and less reactive", China's Japan policy appears to be "the exception that proves the rule", which Medeiros and Fravel (2003: 23) in defining China's New Diplomacy argue to be a "self-confident and mature pursuit of China's national interest." In agreement to this view, He (2008: 162) states that the Sino-Japanese relations form a "notable exception to this rosy picture of China's friendly relationships with its Asian neighbours". Instead of a stable relationship between the two largest economic and political powerhouses in East Asia, that is crucial for regional stability and prosperity, the relationship is overshadowed with serious bilateral political frictions.

In this light, what makes Japan an exception in China's foreign policy can be understood from the way China perceives Japan. As Yang (2007a: 258) argues that the exception is driven by China's perceptions of Japan which is strongly dominated by distrust and emotions. To which, Christensen (1996: 40) views as "Chinese attitudes toward Japan mix elements of realpolitik with less antiseptic emotions." Likewise, Callahan (2004: 214) posits that the notion of "the rightful place of China on the world stage" as driven from China's national humiliation narrative, continually informs Chinese foreign policy in both elite and popular discussions.

Given this perspective, it appears that the politics of victim/victor complex is deeply embedded in Chinese foreign policy vis-à-vis Japan. Miller (2013) understands this complex through the colonisation aspect, as she argues that it is the "collective trauma" which transforms the society as a result of "oppression, humiliation, and violence," leaving behind a "collective memory" to be carried into subsequent generations by certain voices, not just limited to the direct victims, as in case of China, the Nanjing Massacre. Miller refers to this as "post-imperial ideology or PII", according to which, the most important goal of the colonised countries (China) is to be acknowledged as a victim and the "others" (Japan) as the victimiser. While the frequent demand for Japan's apology of its wartime atrocities illustrates China's victim mentality, the victim complex of China dictates the general diplomatic approach towards Japan, as well as the belief that China has moral responsibility to educate Japan into acknowledging and remedying its past wrongdoings (Tan 2009:



37).

In this light, China's diplomatic policy towards Japan has been increasingly embarked on 'apology diplomacy' or the use of historical context to infuse in political decision-making and to pressurise Japan into political conciliation and economic concession. According to Lupton (2012: 21), the Chinese government's perspective on Japan's apologies is two-sided: On one hand, Beijing is justified in wanting a full, unconditional heartfelt apology that covers all Japan's wrongdoings, and on the other, the apology needs to stand uncontested and sincerely repeated through successive Japanese administrations. Given these conditions, as Japan's apology behaviour do not seem to comply to any of the above, thereby, China responds by a fault finding and rejecting attitude to any apology that Japan makes. This explains China's dissatisfied attitude in accepting Japan's apologies.

In contrast, Japanese believe that their leaders have apologised enough over Japan's military past and that China's real intention behind playing the history card is to gain leverage over Japan (Li 2007). Moreover, the Japanese view their Official Development Aid (ODA)<sup>12</sup> as an important instrument of atonement, which most Chinese view to be a series of mutually beneficial arrangements, not as gifts, and some forms of ODA are loans that are to be repaid. While some ODA arrangements are seen by the Japanese as an important part of their penance for World War II. On the contrary, Chinese understanding of ODA's link to the renunciation of reparations diminished with time as China began to view it "as something China was 'owed' for its generosity after having suffered so much from Japan's encroachment before 1945" (Drifte 2008: 3). Drifte further argues:

"Apart from the implicit link to reparations, the Chinese perceived the Japanese aid as benefiting Japan, and notably the yen loans have to be repaid, albeit at an internationally agreed-upon low interest level which qualifies them as 'development aid'. Moreover, Japan's ODA loans have been used mostly to build up China's economic infrastructure, which has often been linked to Japanese trade interests (for example, ports and roads)" (ibid.).

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<sup>12</sup> Japan has provided China with ODA since 1979, 75 percent of this aid has been given as yen loans. However, in 2008 Japan stopped its ODA yen loan programme to China.

However, apart from ODA, Japan has also expressed remorse over its wartime past. For instance, the Table 3.1 reflects the apologies that Japan’s leadership expressed on various occasions.

**Table 3.2: Apology Statements issued by Japanese Emperor/Prime Ministers (1972-2012)**

Year	Emperor/Prime Minister	Apologies for World War II
1972	Tanaka Kakuei	<p>“It is regrettable that for several decades in the past, the relations between Japan and China had unfortunate experiences. During that time our country gave great troubles to the Chinese people, for which I once again make profound self-examination” – Speech in Beijing, September 25, 1972.</p> <p>“The Japanese side is keenly aware of Japan’s responsibility by causing enormous damages in the past to the Chinese people through war and deeply reproaches itself”- Joint Communique, September 29, 1972.</p>
1992	Emperor Akihito	<p>“In the long history of relationships between our two countries, there was an unfortunate period in which my country inflicted great suffering on the people of China. About this I feel deep sadness”- at a banquet in the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, October 23, 1992.</p>
1995	Murayama Tomiichi	<p>In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology”- Statement marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan’s surrender, August 15, 1995.</p>
2003	Koizumi Junichiro	<p>“During the war, Japan caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. On behalf of the people of Japan, I hereby renew my feelings of profound remorse as I express my sincere mourning to the victims” – Statement at the 58<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan’s surrender, August 15, 2003.</p>
2005	Koizumi Junichiro	<p>“Our country has caused tremendous damage and pain to the peoples of many countries, especially Asian countries, through colonial rule and invasion. Humbly acknowledging such facts of history, I once again reflect most deeply and offer apologies from my heart”- Statement marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan’s surrender, August 15, 2005.</p>

**Source:** Official statements of Japanese Emperors and Prime Ministers drawn from Government documents and newspaper reports.

As noted in the Table 3.2, Japan's leadership has expressed remorse over wartime past, but the fact remains that the Chinese side is unconvinced that Japan has really dealt with its history with sincerity. This is because the Japanese government has not formally made such apologies directly to Chinese leaders and the Chinese people (Moore 2010: 291). As noted in the Table, only statements by Prime Minister Tanaka in Beijing in 1972, in the Joint Communiqué of 1972 and Emperor Akihito were specifically apology statements to China and Chinese people. The two key accusations of Chinese against the Japanese government are, as Lupton (2012: 20-21) argues are: first, there have been sincere apologies but "never an all inclusive apology that is not only deeply sincere, using the right language, but also inclusive of all the areas of perceived injury". That is, the apology should encompass all issues such as Japan's militarism, invasion, colonialism, comfort women, POWs, Nanjing massacre and others. And second accusation is that "after apologies are made, they are often questioned, qualified and even retracted" by the same party or subsequent administrations (ibid.). For instance, the history textbook controversies and the continued visits of Japan's top leaders to the Yasukuni Shrine exemplifies this accusation.

However, Japanese link Chinese dissatisfaction over the apology issue to that of China's intentional motive to use the history card either to scapegoat Japan for domestic political reasons or to seize the high moral ground and relegate Japan to a subordinate position in the overall bilateral relationship (He 2009: 260). This can be explained, as a Japanese expert on international affairs said:

"Although Japanese people usually have deeply understood the nation's negative legacy vis-à-vis China, the way China raises the issue of "historical consciousness" often tries to make a generalization out of exceptional cases, which sometimes makes people feel that China tries to interfere with Japan's internal affairs. Moreover, one begins to suspect that China is using the issue of "historical consciousness" as a diplomatic means to impose a morally upper-and-lower pattern on Sino-Japanese relations and get Japanese public acceptance that Japan should be submissive to China" (ibid.).

In this view, Japanese elites such as Kitaoka argue that China's instrumental usage of history is reflected in its policy behaviour as China has used the history card in denying Japan a greater role in the world order, by thwarting the Japanese bid for UNSC permanent membership, and by blowing the whistle on Japanese militarism

whenever Japan's Self Defence Forces (SDF) went overseas to make an "international contribution" (ibid.). Besides, Japanese elites also perceive that China still thinks of East Asia in the framework of the "tributary international order", and therefore, its harsh attitude towards Japan on the history issue is a "link in building this order" (ibid.).

Given the role of victim/victor narrative in China's foreign policy, it is interesting to note that China's victim narrative in foreign policy is a post-Mao phenomenon. From Mao's perspective, China is a "victor" rather than a "victim" and that Chinese people's "Century of National Humiliation" had been cleansed by the achievements of defeating the Japanese invaders in 1945 and founding of its own nation in 1949 and that CCP's acted as an architect of Japan's surrender. While from 1970s to late-1980s neither 'victor narrative' nor 'victim narrative' were used by the Chinese government, in this sense, Japan was neither a friend nor a foe. Rather this period is seen as a transitional period from Mao's "victor narrative" to the revival of the "victim narrative" since the late 1980s and early 1990s. What led to the emergence of the victim narrative is the "ideology vacuum" which was created after the 1989 Tiananmen incident.

In order to fill the vacuum, 'Patriotic Education Campaign' was launched by the CCP, wherein, the "Century of National Humiliation" discourse was put up again by the government to legitimise its rule and overcome the regime crisis. Of which, the 'anti-Japanese war of resistance' became the dominant discourse, both in academic circles as well as popular culture, which Coble (2007) calls as China's "new remembering" of war, which provided the legacy of the war an active memory in today's China. As Coble (ibid.: 403) argues that the most important factor in the "new remembering" of the war was an increasing emphasis on nationalism in China. That is, with the waning appeal of the communist ideology in the reform movement, Beijing sought new ways to create support for its rule in China. In this light, patriotism became a significant tool of rescue of CCP's legitimacy. In understanding CCP's tilt towards patriotism in constructing China's nationalism, Paul Cohen posits that:

"in the aftermath of 1989, there was a felt, if unstated, need on the part of the Chinese government to come up with a new legitimacy ideology to burnish the rapidly dimming luster of the original Marxist-Leninist-Maoist vision. The

logical candidate,” notes Cohen, was “nationalism, to be inculcated via a multifaceted program of patriotic education” (Cohen 2003: 167).

In this light, the dominant theme in China’s nationalist discourse was its victimisation, particularly embedded on Japanese atrocities in China. Rana Mitter (2003: 120) observes that the idea of China as a victim state, persecuted by the global community, emerged at the same time with the rhetoric of China as a great power, ready to take its rightful place on the world stage. In this view, for PRC, the rising nationalism demands a strengthening of the country’s international status and influence as well as the removal of the humiliation and shame in the one century or more following the Opium War. In this perspective, Japan’s lack of sincere reflection and a formal apology plus the fact that China’s share and suffering were most acute in its relations with Japan, naturally makes Japan the prime target of China’s nationalism (Cheng 2015: 16-17).

While Zhao (2004) points that a sense of victimhood acts as the key in Beijing’s construction of nationalist rhetoric. This can be explained as Zhao (ibid: 232-233) notes that “[t]he Communist state created a sense of being besieged in order to exalt the voice of patriotism” and therefore, the government emphasized on the need “to bear in mind that weakness, disunity, and disorder at home would invite foreign aggression and result in loss of Chinese identity, as China’s century-long humiliation and suffering before 1949 demonstrated.” Therefore, the resurfacing of China’s historical consciousness in post-Mao China is seen as an instrumental construction by the Chinese government in order to safeguard its legitimacy.

In drawing from the primordial and instrumental logic to the role of history in Sino-Japanese relations, two conventional explanations can be put forward, as Shogo Suzuki (2007: 25-26) suggests: First, the traumatic experiences resulting from Japan’s invasion on Chinese soil has left a deep scar on the Chinese psyche which remains to this very day. Manifestations of this can be seen in China’s strong reactions, which Allen S. Whiting (1989) called a “knee-jerk response” to “any perceived revival of Japanese imperialist ideology or symbols”. This argument is broadly supported given the memories of the cruelty inflicted by the Japanese on China, thereby, any revisionist action by Japan is perceived as Japan’s failure to face up to its past. This victim narrative has an ethical dimension, which initially stems from the ‘perceived

injustice of “little brother” Japan’s humiliating defeat of “big brother” (Gries 2005c: 113).

Second, it is argued that the CCP strategically and rationally uses the history of Japanese imperialist aggression. This is argued as: first, history is used by the CCP to take advantage of Japan’s war guilt and draw out political concessions from Tokyo. Secondly, as Rozman (2002: 106) argues, it is utilised by the Chinese government to take a strong stance against Japan, thus, presenting itself as a patriotic force and enhancing its legitimacy. However, both these arguments hold true and operate together given the logic of China’s historical memory of Japan. Drifte (2003: 15) posits that China’s distrust towards Japan is a logical reflection of the trauma inflicted upon China, but for China it is often also a convenient tool in the battle of national interests and sustaining power of the Communist regime.

In understanding the historical memory variable in China’s foreign relations, Wang (2012: 200) argues that the Chinese people’s collective historical consciousness about China’s traumatic national experiences and the state’s political use of the past constitute a powerful force in the way the Chinese “conceptualize, manage, and resolve” external conflict, especially when conflict is perceived by the Chinese “as an assault on fundamental identity, face, and authority”, historical memory serves as a major motivating factor.

Whether China’s policy towards Japan is increasingly shaped by anti-Japanese nationalism, Zhang (2007: 27) contends that “Japan has remained a puzzle in China’s recent foreign relations”. This can be said so, as China’s diplomacy with regional neighbours has become more flexible and pragmatic. To cite examples as in 2003 China normalised its relationship with India, thereby, bringing an end to the long-held tension; in November 2001, China proposed the establishment of a China-ASEAN free trade area by 2010, and in October 2003, China signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia- becoming the first non-ASEAN country to do so. Further, China also became one of the driving forces of the East Asia Summit, wherein the initial meeting was held in 2005 (ibid.).

Given this trajectory of China’s diplomatic engagement, it was widely accepted that China’s relationship with neighbouring countries, except Japan witnessed significant

improvement. Adding to this thought, Shambaugh (2004: 66) observes that “China’s relations with the major powers (the United States, Russia and the European Union) have rarely been so strong. Taken together with China’s improved position in Asia, China’s reputation in the world has never been better”. Here, it is interesting to note that there remains a significant contrast between China’s improved relations with other countries and that of China’s troubled relationship with Japan. What explains China’s such an attitude in dealing with its foreign relations?

To explain, it is mostly argued that China’s Japan policy is driven by a rising anti-Japanese sentiment. Acknowledging the history factor, a widely held view is that because the Chinese government so desperately relies on nationalism to keep its grip on power, it will be unwilling and more importantly unable to resist popular nationalistic pressures in its handling of international affairs (Zhang 2007: 27). To which, Jin (2006) argues that China’s long-standing conviction as expressed in popular anti-Japanese nationalism points that Japan’s aggressive behaviour in the past is a reliable guide to its future inclinations. This means that historical memory and the politics of history is the key factor that causes the tensions between China and Japan.

However, in contrast to the dominant argument that China’s Japan policy is dictated by anti-Japanese sentiment, many academic debates reflect on another perspective which views pragmatism in China’s policy towards Japan. This pragmatism is mainly viewed as Beijing’s pragmatism towards Japan in the efforts of the Chinese government, wherein despite worsening political relations, Sino-Japan economic ties have become increasingly close (Ibid.)- often referred to as ‘hot economics, cold politics’ (zhengleng jingre). This can be explained in the political tensions that grew with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine since 2001.

The deadlock over the issue, combined with the large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations in major Chinese cities in the spring of 2005 led to cut off much of the senior-level contacts between Tokyo and Beijing. Of which, the primary was the political suspension of relations as Chinese President Hu Jintao in March 2006 reiterated that China’s bottom line on its policy toward Japan is that: “There would be no summit between the two countries as long as Japan’s prime minister visited Yasukuni Shrine” (Jiang 2007: 17). But in contrast to this political impasse, the trade

between the two countries progressed significantly and bilateral economic relations have developed along a separate track.

**Table 3.3: China's Trade with Japan (2000-2012)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Trade (US\$ bn)</b>	<b>Exports (US\$ bn)</b>	<b>Imports (US\$ bn)</b>
1994	4790553	2157862	2632691
1995	5746745	2846269	2900476
1996	6006706	3088633	2918084
1997	6081280	3181982	2899298
1998	5793518	2966011	2827507
1999	6617398	3241060	3376338
2000	8316399	4165431	4150968
2001	8775448	4495757	4279691
2002	10189984	4843384	5346600
2003	13355683	5940870	7414813
2004	16783577	7350904	9432673
2005	18439396	8398628	10040768
2006	20729525	9162267	11567258
2007	23595096	10200859	13394237
2008	26673250	11613245	15060004
2009	22878256	9786766	13091490
2010	29777959	12104349	17673610
2011	34283401	14827049	19456352
2012	32945578	15162183	17783395

**Source:** Database prepared from the China Statistical Yearbooks 2001-2013, National Bureau of Statistics of China.

From Table 3.3, it is clear that China-Japan trade relations have significantly increased over the years, despite the undercurrents of political tensions. To note,



bilateral trade increased from US\$ 83.17 billion in 2000 and reached a record high of US\$167.8 billion in 2004, an increase of US\$34.2 billion over 2003, which Cheng (2015: 10) notes was “164 times that of 1972” when China and Japan restored formal diplomatic relations. While in 2005 it reached US\$ 184.44 billion and during the Koizumi administration it exceeded US\$ 200 billion in 2006. In 2004, China became Japan’s largest trading partner, as imports from China exceeded those from the United States in 2002, and Japan, with \$66.6 billion in equity in China by 2004, has become the second biggest investor in China, only after the United States (Jin 2006: 26). Japan’s foreign direct investment (FDI) in China increased from US\$ 4.35 billion in 2001 to US\$ 6.53 billion in 2005. And at the end of November 2006, cumulative actual investment of Japan in China reached US\$ 57.45 billion, just behind Hong Kong and the United States (Cheng: *ibid.*).

Another important aspect of the economic interdependence between China and Japan is the ‘complementary’ factor. For instance, many of the high-tech products assembled in and exported from China, often on behalf of American and European firms, use advanced Japanese-made parts. China’s export-driven economic miracle depends on imports. Around 60-70 percent of the goods China imports from Japan are the machinery and parts needed to make China’s own products. For years, Japan has been China’s single largest source of imports. A 2012 International Monetary Fund report calculated that for every one percent of growth in China’s global exports, its imports from Japan rise by 1.2 percent. Take away those imports, and China’s exports collapse (Katz 2013). In this view, the stability in China-Japan relations is an essential need as the two economies are deeply complementary, with different levels of industrial and technological capability that generate business and investment on a scale not matched in any of China’s other economic relationships, even that with the United States. For example, in making a shift to clean industrial technologies, Japan is a natural partner in developing the new model of Chinese growth (Drysdale 2015). These dynamics reflect the enormity in the geo-economic potential of the economic relationship between China and Japan.

Given these economic complementarities, liberal theory would suggest that economic interactions of such should bring peace to a bilateral relationship through “harmony of interests” (Hiroki Takeuchi 2014: 8). However, in case of China and Japan, this large

scale economic interdependence which otherwise would ideally indicate a stability in the relationship, but in contrast, these massive figures have failed to overshadow the political antagonisms. These statistics rather reflect the dichotomy of 'hot economics, cold politics' compounded by a duality in China's positive perception of Japan as an economically promising country- contradictory to the dominant Chinese negative view of Japan as an aggressor. In explaining this duality, Zhang (2014: 60) argues that there is "no conflict between taking history as a mirror and pursuing friendly relations" between China and Japan as they can be adopted in parallel. He further suggests that "while developing better Sino-Japanese ties, China must continue to demand that Japan accept the responsibility of its past aggression" (ibid.).

Besides the economic engagement, Jiang (2006) notes that China and Japan have continued to hold bilateral strategic consultations and negotiations aimed at resolving disputes over territories and exclusive economic zones in the East China Sea. To cite an example, as after much speculation and negotiation, in May 2006, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso, met on the sidelines of an Asia economic conference in Doha, Qatar. This was the first foreign-minister level meeting of the two countries in a year and the first time for Aso in his capacity as the foreign minister to meet his Chinese counterpart. Although the meeting failed to resolve the row over Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (China Daily 2006) but the two ministers adopted a forward-looking posture in trying to work out the differences. As Li said, "We will benefit from good relations. But if we fight, we will both be worse off. The world also wants Japan-China relations to improve." To which Aso responded: "We should have more dialogue. We should do that especially when we have difficulties, and Japan is open to this" (Jiang 2006). Both sides also agreed that they "should accelerate the negotiations [...] on the possibility of joint exploitation" of disputed gas fields in the East China Sea" (Georgi 2006).

Further reflecting China's positive attitude and sincerity towards the development of Sino-Japanese relations, on 27 May 2006, China's Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai met with Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Toshihiro Nikai while attending the Sino-Japan Forum on Energy Saving and Environmental Protection in Kyoto and agreed to pursue further collaboration in the areas of energy efficiency and

environmental protection. Bo especially pointed that: “the cold political relationship affected the development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.” And that, “[a] friendly Sino-Japanese cooperation relations is beneficial to the interests of the peoples of both countries, and to the peace, stability and development of Asia, even the whole world” (MOFCOM 2006).

From these efforts made by the Chinese government to create a constructive environment in favour of forging a warmer relationship with Japan, therefore, runs in contrast to the instrumental logic that the Chinese government uses the history card against Japan to seek leverages and gain legitimacy. Rather it reflects Chinese government’s positive attitude towards Japan even during the political impasse caused by Prime Minister Koizumi’s repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, thus, providing a different picture even when distrust continues to dominate China’s mainstream perceptions of Japan. Yang (2008: 14) argues that China’s handling of historical issues portrays its “long-range, macroscopic view of history”. Wherein, without losing sight of the unfortunate page of Japanese aggression in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Beijing treasures even more an enduring friendship and common cultural heritage (ibid.). That is, Beijing’s Japan policy is centered on “aiming at the future while facing up to the past” (ibid.).

China’s such a positive attitude towards Japan is also reflected in the growing people-to-people interactions between the two countries despite the tension of the history problem. To substantiate, Jin (2006: 26-27) points that while in 1972 less than 10,000 people travelled between the two countries, that number increased to over 2 million in 2002 and a record high of 4.35 million in 2004. More than 250 Japanese cities have established formal ties of friendship with counterparts in China. Japan has also become one of the most popular choices of the Chinese students who study abroad. As the statistics show, in 2002, over 45,000 Chinese students resided in Japan, accounting 56 per cent of the total number of foreign students in Japan. While 13,000 Japanese students studied in China, about one-third of the total number of the foreign students in China.

Similarly, Lam Peng Er (2013: 412) also notes that there has been a significant and positive progress in the people-to-people exchanges between China and Japan despite the burden of history. To cite few examples, Japanese NGOs have become more

active in China, especially in issues related to environmental protection. The students, residents and tourists between China and Japan has also increased at a substantial rate over the past decade. According to the Japan National Tourism Organisation, 1.4 million Chinese tourists visited Japan in 2010 and in 2011, 3,658,300 Japanese tourists visited China. While the Japan Foundation notes that in 2009, there were 827, 171 Japanese students in China and 79,082 Chinese students in Japan. In addition, in 2009, 680, 518 Chinese citizens lived in Japan. And 127, 282 Japanese resided in mainland China (second only to United States with 384,411 Japanese residents). These estimates reflect that historical controversies have not disrupted the substantial people-to-people exchanges in the areas of education, tourism, work and migration.

However, the fact remains that China's perceptions of Japan still remain cold even after these impressive numbers of people across borders and the rising trade figures. It is noteworthy that the growing economic interdependence between China and Japan has failed to promote peace, given the liberals logic. According to interdependence theories, economic interdependence and other transnational relations between countries lead to shared interests that will prevent military conflicts between two states (Keohane and Nye 2001). As Drysdale (2015) argues that despite the enormous potential of the economic relationship between China and Japan, the relationship is neither captured by its established scale nor by its geo-economic potential. Rather, political tensions and security rivalry dominate the headlines and frame a conception of the relationship that bedevils "constructive, realist thinking" about its future.

In juxtaposing the parallel dynamics of China's 'hot economics, cold politics' with Japan, Avery Goldstein views China's approach to a partnership with Japan as "ambivalent, swinging between the poles of historical legacy and present economic ties (Beukel 2011: 5). Given this complexity, Beukel (ibid.) suggests that for China's leaders in framing the Japan policy, it needs to take into account the domestic context of nationalism, which manifests as popular indignation against Japan, and the pursuance of a pragmatic Japan policy, which makes the decision-making process "highly difficult, sensitive, and dangerous cocktail".

It therefore, stands clear that the current state of China-Japan relations is characterised by seemingly contradictory developments adjacent to each other. As Jin (2006: 27) observes that: while official, economic and cultural relations between the two

countries have experienced an unprecedented and continuous improvement in the past few decades, but Chinese public perceptions of Japan have been deteriorating, thus, creating a discrepancy. This discrepancy can be understood in the dilemma, which Zhao (2001) views to be:

“While Taiwan and economic cooperation remain central aspects of Sino-Japanese relations, Chinese pressure on Japan to address the historical legacy of its wartime behaviour and its potential for a return to militarism has also been strengthened. [Thereby] it appears that wartime history has become a leading factor in China’s Japan policy.” He further notes that “Tokyo must continue to learn lessons from its past wartime behaviour since there will always be a small circle in Japan that ignores or denies its historical experience” (ibid.: 675).

In the Post-Cold War period, with economic and societal exchanges, China did attempt to strengthen its relationship with Japan in response to its feelings of insecurity, however, the engagement was limited by the continued presence of the history problem. For Chinese, the concerns ran deeper vis-à-vis Japanese nationalist elements, the history issue, and their belief that the Japanese were about to engage in a new round of cultural imperialism. In Chinese perspective, the attitude towards Japan was based on the views such as: “learning lessons from history,” “deep thought about the aggressive past,” and support for moving towards peaceful development” (Cohen 2005: 22).

In understanding China’s insecurity, Cohen (2005: 23) points that although some Chinese analysts recognised that that many Japanese had come to terms with their historical aggression but they expressed grave concerns about renewed Japanese nationalism and attempts to export its culture. On these lines, Yang Yunzhong warned of a “new nationalism” that was emerging in Japan causing “an increased sense of Japanese superiority” along with “an increased possession and pursuit of military arms” (ibid.). While Li Genan in assessing that Japan might attempt to become military great power argued that “After Japan became an economic great power, its nationalism and great power-ism ideology revived” (ibid.). While scholars like Yang Yunzhong feared threat from Japan based on “cultural imperialism” as Yang argued that Japan in near future will “attempt to forcefully give its value judgements to other countries and establish a so-called ‘Japanese culture sphere’” (ibid.). Thus, these perceptions have constantly limited China’s greater engagement with Japan as the

perceptions grew from continuous suspicions about Japanese nationalism and Japan's ambivalent attitude towards its responsibility on the historical aggression.

To say, that Chinese elites use nationalism as 'a tool of convenience' against Japan just to bolster their legitimacy seems limited in approach as this instrumental understanding fails to dismiss the emotional quotient in nationalist politics. Often in case of China, as Gries (2004a: 87) points that "elites use nationalism" is conveniently translated to mean "party propaganda." It is said that the CCP is dependent on its nationalist credentials for maintaining its support. Wherein, it is argued that the historical memories of Japanese imperialism easily arouse nationalist sentiments, and the more the party is seen to be taking a hard stance against any perceived revival of Japanese militarism, the more likely it is to be seen as a patriotic force worthy of the people's backing. That is, memories of a negative history are linked to factional politics, where elites utilise memories of imperialist aggression to "coalesce support and weaken opponents" (Suzuki 2007: 26).

In this perspective, this "party propaganda" viewpoint therefore, fails to take into account the role that people and the passions play. That is, since both the party elite and popular nationalists participate in nationalist politics, therefore, as Gries argues both "emotional and instrumental" concerns drive their behaviour. Wan (2006: 166) notes that emotions can be partially explained in rational terms. The fact that the Chinese are able to use the history issue for diplomatic advantage from Japan is because they have a "genuine emotional base." Moreover, the assertion of the instrumentalist logic of Chinese government playing the history card in its relations with Japan is criticised as it tends to simplify the Chinese collective memory and present the PRC leadership as "puppet masters controlling anti-Japanese sentiments as it pleases" (Gustafsson 2014: 413). What makes this critique important, as Gustafsson argues, that it tends to:

"reify the Chinese collective memory by presenting it as a natural and objective representation of historical events rather than social constructions. The approach developed here recognises the constructed nature of collective memory while allowing for the possibility that collective memory can be used for political purposes" (ibid.).

What makes the anti-Japanese sentiment born from historical consciousness so strong in China's Japan policy is the fact that regime legitimacy and the very meaning of being Chinese are at stake. According to Gustafsson (ibid.: 414), this can be explained through the idea of discursive power- one that "constrains" and the other that "enables" actors. For example, in case of Japan, the foreign policy is restrained by the past- one that 'constrains', while the belief that the Chinese government plays the history card is a variant of one that 'enables'. Here, both are dependent on the actors subscribing to a discourse about the past as part of their identity, wherein collective identity is a matter of identification on the part of the participating individuals. It does not exist "in itself" but only to the extent that specific individuals subscribe to it. Thereby, it becomes as strong or as weak given the way it is active in the thoughts and actions of the group members (here Chinese elites), and able to motivate their thoughts and actions" (ibid.). This implies the impact of the discursive power, as Steele suggests given an agent's self-identity, the agent does or does not do certain things, other actors could attempt to influence the agent's behaviour by appealing to its identity (ibid.).

In this regard, to say that the CCP has promoted some form of patriotism to legitimate itself seeks to understand the utilisation of historical memories by China's political elites assuming them to be rational actors who balance the need to maintain domestic legitimacy with the pursuit of longer-term international objectives. Therefore, this argument stands problematic as it treats the Chinese elites as autonomous of historical memories and can manipulate past history to suit the interests, which are implicitly treated as given. However, in reality as Robert Jervis (1976) claims that "perceptions do matter". And in this regard, the Chinese foreign policy decision-making elite are not an exception as their psyche like other Chinese masses is dominated by a historical consciousness, which invariably makes it difficult for them to detach the emotional element of their own historical memories in dealing with Japan. Besides, it is also important to note that if there was no consensus on anti-Japanese feelings among the larger Chinese populace, nationalist sentiment is hardly going to arise from manipulating the historical memories of Sino-Japanese war history (Suzuki 2007: 28).

While in contrast, to accept that anti-Japanese sentiment is just a populist view in China also stands problematic as it reflects that CCP has no autonomy in foreign

policy decision making and is hostage to nationalist demands. Rather what holds true is that the CCP's patriotic campaign has been successful precisely because it resonated with Chinese people's perception of Japan (Uemura 2013: 118). Therefore, from this rational it is clear that in China, historical memory is not just a political tool card against Japan used by the Chinese elites for their narrow political gains or just limited to a perception of the Chinese masses rather they are more deeply entrenched in Chinese society, and cannot be reduced to be just a tool for the political elites or the masses. This necessitates to understand that the history factor is embedded in the Chinese psyche. Underlying this psychological gap, Allen Whiting and Xin Jianfei (1990/1991: 107) argued that:

“the heritage of embittered feelings has prompted Chinese leaders, media, and student demonstrators to react voiceferously to perceived provocations ranging from increases in Tokyo's defense budget to the rewriting of Japanese textbooks so as to sanitize Japan's role in China in the 1930s and 1940s”.

In this view, the divide between elites and masses need to be dissolved in understanding the Chinese psyche towards Japan, wherein reason towards Japan is driven by emotion. As Whiting (1989) in *China Eyes Japan* suggests that “reason is powerless before the passions” as “negative images of Japan thwarted China's interest in closer relations with its Asian neighbour” (Gries 2004a: 88). In this regard, to say that Beijing's demands to Tokyo of “correct handling of history” and “taking history as a mirror” and demonstrate remorse for the Chinese are not just limited bargaining tools in international and domestic politics, rather memories impact political decision-making.

Therefore, in understanding the role of perceptions in shaping China's Japan policy, it stands confirmed that historical memory of trauma acts as the important causal factor that continues to influence China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan based on perceptions born from historical consciousness.

### **3.2.2 CHINA'S SECURITY PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS JAPAN**

It can thus, be stated that the ‘history problem’ in China's Japan policy is psychological. That is, history constitutes in all strands of Chinese strategic thinking,



which acts as a key obstacle in China-Japan confidence-building. As Wang Jianwei (2000) posits that it is “not just in political domain, but also in security and military domain”. The historical rationale in China’s perceptions greatly impacts China’s security policy towards Japan- invoking an alarmist view of Japan.

From the Chinese perspective, Japan’s threat to its military security is arguably the most serious one posed by any state in modern China. What makes Japan such a potent security challenge is the fact that while China had been subjected to treaties of extraterritoriality by Western powers such as Britain but Japan has so far been the only power that actually invaded China proper in modern era. Therefore, Japanese foreign policies from the 1868 Meiji restoration to Second World War have resulted in a very important legacy in China (Ong 2007: 65). Thus, given this historical consciousness in mind, it is only natural that Chinese leaders continue to worry about Japan recovering to its position as a great power in Asia. In this pursuit, China’s continuous insistence on Japan’s past acts as a policy to check a possible reversion to militarism by Tokyo. To cite few examples, China’s constant highlighting of key incidents such as the revision of Japanese history books on Tokyo’s wartime atrocities in Asia and the anniversary commemorations of Japanese wartime aggression such as national humiliation Day and others, serves as way for China to exert pressure on Japan to denounce its past (ibid.: 66).

Wu (2000: 297) suggests that China is uncomfortable with the security aspects of their bilateral relationship, wherein China’s insecurity vis-a-vis Japan is influenced by Japanese efforts to deny the history of Japanese aggression and therefore, one of China’s key security concern towards Japan, out of three<sup>13</sup> as mentioned by Wu is- “the possibility that Japan might become a major military power.” In identifying China’s concerns, Wu (ibid: 303) notes that Taiwan issue stands as the most important problem because of Japan’s colonisation of Taiwan from 1895-1945, thereby, making China very sensitive to Japan’s interactions with Taiwan. Yang (2007b: 139) too in concurrence with Wu (2000) observes that Taiwan acts as Beijing’s key security concern. This can be said so as the Taiwan issue acts as a remnant from the tragic past of Japan’s colonisation of Taiwan from 1895-1945. What creates the discord is

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<sup>13</sup> While China’s other two security concerns vis-à-vis Japan are: 1.) The hidden agenda of U.S.-Japan security alliance, i.e., to constrain and, when necessary contain, a rising China and 2.) the possibility that Taiwan might be incorporated within the scope of Japan-U.S. defence guidelines.

Japan's ambiguous position on Taiwan, which significantly affects China's reunification policy towards Taiwan. This can be explained, as in realist calculative framework, China's concerns are based on the ambiguity in the "Guidelines of the U.S.-Japan Defence Cooperation" regarding the scope of the treaty to obscure the US and Japanese intent to cooperate on the Taiwan issue (Feng 2007: 84).

In the post-Cold War period, there were significant changes in the Chinese understanding of national security. Of which, one of the fundamental changes was witnessed in China's national security interest, which added the concept of 'comprehensive national power' (zonghe guoli), wherein it was suggested that without a strong economy, the military dimension of national security is not sustainable (Yang 2007b: 128). However, what is evident in case of Beijing's Japan policy is that although economic security has become a well-established element in China's security strategy towards Japan, but China's security perceptions of Japan are deeply informed by an element of 'distrust'. That is, Japan is perceived as an important potential threat.

This is because China suspects a possible militarist revival of Japan which is greatly enforced by China's perception of an unrepentant Japan as attributed to Japan's reluctant attitude to reconciliation as perceived in the lack of an appropriate apology for wartime atrocities. This creates a pattern by which Chinese elites link Japan's past behaviour to its future intentions. One can trace this pattern, as He (2009: 255) cites, in a typical example from August 1995, when the Beijing Review carried a lengthy article called "Unforgettable Aggression," to commemorate the war, which with a goal to send a warning message to Japan stated "Japan remain the only country in Asia capable of threatening its neighbours. The country's history, combined with its performance after the war, necessitates its neighbouring nations to remain keenly vigilant".

What explains this Chinese attitude towards Japan? Reinhard Drifte (2003: 15) points that Japan's inability to properly acknowledge the historical facts (rekishi ninshiki) and apologise to China in a way recognised by China as convincing is casting a shadow in the overall relationship, and particularly affects the security relationship, which is "singularly sensitive to perceptions of intentions and manipulations of these perceptions." What makes China so sensitive is the fact that Japan fails to face up to

the past, which in the Chinese point of view, as Wu (2002: 70) argues is driven by “Japan’s failure to completely eliminate militarist and right-wing influence in the wake of World War II”. While the other reason that constraints Japan, as Wu (ibid.) points is Japan’s “national character”.

To say so, as Chinese believe that Japan is a nation that only bows to its superiors and never takes its inferiors seriously, which Wu (ibid.: 70) argues is linked to the Japanese traditional culture of the so-called “spirit of the knight” (*bushido*) which shapes the Japanese mindset to “preserve their fame and “face” “and as a result of which they “would not admit any wrongdoings or take corresponding responsibilities”. In addition, Wu (ibid.) also suggests that Japan’s pursuit of major political power status also affects its attitude towards handling of the history issue. Wherein, Japan’ economic success in the post-Cold War era has prompted the aspiration for political status. This has influenced Japan’s attitude towards reinterpreting and rewriting its aggressive history that is aimed at absolving itself from past misdeeds and washing away responsibility.

This tendency to perceive Japan through a historical lens, has been greatly reinforced after a short relaxation of tensions, with the escalation of bilateral history disputes since 2001. Of which two significant issues are: First, the continued visits by Japanese elite, most importantly, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on numerous occasions, to the Yasukuni Shrine. Top-level diplomacy was virtually paralysed due to Beijing’s protest at Koizumi’s annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, a Shinto temple in Tokyo commemorating Japanese war dead, including Class-A war criminals from World War II. Second, the ‘history text book issue’ which demonstrated Japanese whitewashing of the atrocities committed in the war. The problem first appeared in 1982, wherein reports reflected Japanese governments approval of the changing of language in history textbooks to vaguer and less incriminating forms, such as changing “Japan invaded China” to “Japan advanced into China.” The Japanese government have been accused of similar attempts in 1986, 2000 and 2005- thereby, reflecting what China perceives to be Japan’s ‘unrepentant attitude’ and thus, contributed to China’s suspicion of Japan’s present intentions. The fallout from these visits and history textbook issues have been exacerbated by a plethora of political disputes in recent years. These contentious issues reflect China’s acute sensitivity

towards Japan's any effort that is believed as attempts to deny, cover or beautify historical facts (Yang 2001).

These issues of contention have resulted into a resurgence in Chinese suspicion of Japan, which has further reinvigorated the historical consciousness, and therefore, has heightened China's security concerns towards Japan, that is, the concern over Japan's military revival. This latent concern of China towards Japan, as He (2009: 256-257) points, can be sensed from the July 2003 editorial of *People's Daily* which directly questioned: "Is Japan's seeking the status of a big military power a normal pursuit?" In answering the question, the editorial stated:

"First, in the past Japan has launched many wars of aggression, causing extremely big disasters and harm. Up to now, it has refused to admit and show remorse for its crimes in the war of aggression against China [...] Second, Japan's military strength has exceeded its defense needs. Japan's foreign security policy has gradually exceeded the boundary of "for defense only".[...] How can it be possible that people are not worried about a Japan which has refused to show remorse for its war of aggression, which is wantonly developing its military power, which has abandoned the policy of "for defense only," and which is planning to revise its constitution of peace?" (He 2009: 257).

The above statement reflects China's security perception towards Japan which is heavily drawn from the past. It is clear that the war period looms large in China's insecure attitude towards Japan as there is a constant fear of revival of Japan's militarism.

Zhao (2001: 668) contends that the momentum of China's rise has made Chinese foreign policy more assertive as well as more sensitive to the increasing nationalistic sentiment among the Chinese people. This can be explained as the rising nationalism in China's populace places more pressure on the current Beijing leadership to address sovereignty issues such as Taiwan and attempt to redress negative historical legacies such as the Japanese wartime invasion. It is also important to understand that the anti-Japanese nationalism has been effective in generating support for the Chinese government because resentment against Japan was easy to be tapped given the historical consciousness. This anti-Japanese nationalism is related to China's security concerns, wherein as Yang (2001, 2003) puts forth that "the past might not be so important if Japan were not so powerful."

Whiting and Xin (1990/1991: 107) suggests that Beijing's relations with Japan have remained vulnerable to a political backlash resulting from the historical legacy of more than 60 years of expansionism at China's expense by "its much smaller- but far more powerful- neighbour." In this case, one can ask, as Barry Buzan pointed: "how much of this sensitivity is actually to do with the war and how much of it simply uses symbolism of the war to reflect more contemporary worries" (Yang 2007b: 143). In this regard, what worries China is that Japan is an economic superpower and its military, as Chinese observers believe, is much stronger than it appears. This reflects China's perception of a militarily powerful Japan, as Chinese analysts emphasise that Japan's Self-Defence Force (SDF) is the best-equipped military force in Asia and that Japan's defence spending is more than US\$50 billion, the second highest in the world after the United States. Besides, China also assumes that the high proportion of officers in Japan's otherwise small force is involved in giving Japan the ability to expand rapidly in wartime. This view of China can be traced from a Chinese military observer's claims in People's Daily, which posited that:

"while people are often astonished at US advanced weapons, they do not know that the weapons of Japan's SDF are by no means inferior to those of the United States and European powers. People have no way to know this because Japan's weapons have never been tested through actual combat or sold overseas. What Japan's military really has "is more than its fame" (Yang 2001).

In this respect, the other way to look at this symbolism is that China's Japan policy is conditional, wherein good relations can evolve only by fulfilment of certain conditions. That is, as Roy (2003) suggests that from a Chinese perspective, "the ideal Japan would be neutral and militarily weaker than it now is". This understanding is conditioned by the history factor where Chinese believe that Japan has a social and cultural inclination towards militarism, as exemplified not only by Japan's behaviour in China during the 1930s and 1940s, but also by Japan's subsequent unwillingness to face up to its Pacific War record, such as denial of atrocities during the "Nanjing Massacre" by prominent Japanese and the whitewashing of history taught to Japanese school children.

China's present concerns towards Japan are built on threat perceptions derived from China's historical consciousness of Japan's aggression. This perception results into the present fears of Japan, such as one that: favours separating Taiwan from China,

desire to dominate Southeast Asia, and is not committed to a peaceful relationship with China. China suspects a resurgent Japanese militarism as noted in its progression with time, such as: beginning with acceptance of the principle of rearmament for the purpose of self-defense, through provision of logistical support for U.S. forces, to the threshold of participation in U.S.-led combat operations (Roy 2003: 4). This therefore, reflects the Chinese perception of a distrustful Japan due to which it fails to accept that that postwar Japan has become a peace-loving country that can be trusted with its intentions. China further finds its dissatisfaction to be justified given the sharp contrast between Japan's attitude towards the past as that of Germany (Yang 2001).

In this view, the realist logic of security dilemma that offers a compelling explanation for why China continues to regard Japan as a threat in spite of its own rising status can be explained alternatively by taking a historical perspective. According to which, as Tomonori (2010: 567) argues that the memory of Japanese aggression has had a substantial impact on China's threat perception of Japan, as China observes Japan's military through a historical lens, and makes it highly sensitive to any small changes in Japan's defence policy. For example, Japan's tendency to revise its security guidelines, as China perceives, are indicative of Japan's military ambition. Given this, Yang (2003: 307) suggests that Chinese concerns over Japan, as Chinese analysts observe are twofold: historical legacy and Japan's military capacity. To this view, Tomonori (ibid.) suggests that even if the gap between Japan and China narrows in terms of military power, the Chinese perception of Japanese threat will continue, as it is hard for the Chinese to forget Japan's history of aggression- causing a psychological gap between past and the present. Therefore, in this regard, this 'history memory problem' helps explain why China still regards Japan a threat despite its rising-power status.

Given this puzzle of sensitivity and symbolism, it becomes imperative to understand how China perceives Japan in international politics. It is found that China views of Japan as potential threat creates China's suspicion towards Japan. As Thomas J. Christensen (1999: 243) stated that "Chinese elites and the Chinese public view Japanese power as more threatening than any other nation's power." In this regard, what concerns China is Japan's seeking of a greater political role both regionally and globally. What worries China, as Yang (2003: 308) argues is that, to play a greater

political role, Japan will have to rely on not only economic strength but also its military power. In this view, it is believed that there are powerful domestic forces in Japan that seek to reassertion of Japan's military role.

Adding to this suspicion, is the revision of the guidelines for U.S.-Japan defence co-operation, which is perceived as an indication of Japan's determination to be involved in international affairs through military activities (ibid.). To this, some Chinese conclude that Japan's desire for external political influence is linked to the dark designs of Japanese militarists. To which, Roy (2003: 4) suggests that Chinese strategists seem to widely accept "slippery slope" reasoning with regard to Japan: if allowed to move from disarmed country to normal country, Japan will inevitably make the next leap from normal country to aggressive militarist power. Thus, China perceives that Japan's policies of "homeland defence" and "not to be a military power" no longer exists (Yang 2001).

This tendency can be understood in China's reluctant attitude to support Japan's quest for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Beijing's such a policy towards Japan is seen as an indicator of China's fears against Japan's greater global role. In contrast to its earlier lukewarm stand, Beijing in 2005 made public its opposition to Japan's bid as millions of Chinese signed a petition against Japan's bid. As Yang (2007b: 130) notes that for the Chinese, the key reason is that "they do not believe Japan is qualified for a seat as it has not acknowledged its responsibility for its aggression and atrocities committed in China in the first half of the twentieth century".

In addition, Chinese justify their dissatisfaction by reflecting on the sharp contrast between Japan's attitude towards the past and that of Germany. The Chinese, according to Wan (2006: 166) see Japan as lagging far behind Germany in atoning for the past, which triggers indignation. In case of Germany, as Miller (2013: 111-112) notes China is not only explicitly supportive of its candidacy but even holds it up as an example for Japan. China points out that Germany has sincerely apologised to its victims and made adequate gestures of contrition for its past, and it thus, deserves a seat on the UNSC. In defence of its reservation against Japan over Germany in the 2005 UNSC bid, China declared that Japan's support for the Iraq War showed that it

still retained the militaristic spirit of the past while Germany, another aggressor during World War II, had explicitly expressed its concern about the war.

In contrast, China's opposition to Japan's UNSC bid is premised on Beijing's conditional thinking as reflected in People's Daily articles, which clearly posited that "Japan's facing up to its history was a necessary precondition of Chinese support for Japanese permanent membership" and that "while Germany had repented for its crimes, [but] Japan had taken the opposite route" (Miller 2013: 112). Besides, in addressing the question of 'China's position on Germany's bid to UNSC', Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang at the Press Conference on April 14, 2005, remarked saying "China supports a greater role for Germany in the United Nations and other multi-lateral organizations." Thereby, China's strong position in opposing Japan's UNSC bid against Germany can be argued to be deeply informed by China's perception of Japan as a potential threat. What makes China threatened by Japan is that China sees itself as having been victimised by Japan and has in reality undergone the ordeal of a conquered victim is ipso facto an acknowledgement that Japan has been a threat in the past (ibid.). This creates a subconscious threat perception in Chinese psyche.

Thereby, what appears to be dominant is the historical consciousness that shapes China's perceptions of Japan. This makes the Chinese remain acutely sensitive to any effort of Japan that seems to "deny, mask or embellish historical facts" (Yang 2007b: 130). This is evident in China's reaction to the issues of- the textbook controversies, official visits to Yasukuni Shrine, Diaoyu islands dispute and others. Therefore, demand for apology has become a common policy in China's attitude towards Japan. In this regard, as Wang (2012: 176) notes the biggest hurdle to improving Sino-Japanese relations has been the Japanese reluctance to offer a formal apology to China for its World War II atrocities. What causes the impediment is China's perception of Japan which is informed by its strong belief that Japan lacks remorse for its past aggression and has not adequately acknowledged China's suffering, and therefore, does not deserve to be rewarded. As Chinese academic Jin Xide in positing the position of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that "China would understand Japan's desire to play a greater role in international affairs [only] if Japan undertook the correct attitude toward its "history problem" (Miller 2013: 109). This attitude of



China towards Japan strongly influences China's Japan policy as reflected in China's opposition to Japan's UNSC bid.

It is clear that what dominates China's psyche is a perception of a distrustful Japan that creates China's suspicion of Japan and therefore, informs China's policy towards Japan. This link makes historical memory an important variable in China's Japan policy. As Drifte (2003: 15) states that "without knowing about China's perception of the past, it is difficult to understand its contemporary suspicion of Japan." As Drifte suggests that "the past makes it difficult for many Chinese to recognize the fundamental changes which have taken place in post-1945 Japan and to trust Japan's intentions." This perception of a distrustful Japan has further constructed China's perception of a reluctant Japan in clearing its dark history. Wang Jianwei (2000: 73) notes that this Japanese reluctant attitude provides a psychological justification for the Chinese to suspect the future orientation of Japanese foreign policy. This is reflected in Jiang Zemin's viewpoint, who in his 1998 visit to Japan asserted that China keeps reminding the Japanese of history not because China wants revenge, but rather because China believes that Sino-Japanese relations can move forward only after Japan squarely faces its history. As he said:

"[S]ome people in Japan had never stopped to create incidents over the issue of history and deny, distort or whitewash their invasion history in the 26 years after the establishment of the diplomatic ties between the two countries. All this had greatly hurt the national feelings of the Chinese people and disrupted the normal development of the bilateral relations. He expressed his hope that the Japanese Government would learn the lesson from this seriously, do something solid to stop these elements from denying or twisting the history, and educate the younger generation in Japan on the correct assessment of history" (MFA 2000).

In accordance to the Chinese perspective, as Wang (ibid.) contends that there is a perception that, a Japan that is unable to satisfy its neighbours' concerns about history will also not be qualified to play a larger role in maintaining peace and stability in the region. In this view, Drifte (2003: 15) points at the Chinese fear which is based on the belief that "an unrepentant Japan is bound to repeat its past aggression," echoing the widespread historical deterministic idea of many Chinese that a country that does not acknowledge past misdeeds 'correctly' is bound to repeat them. Similarly, Jian Yang (2007: 142) posits that psychologically, it is hard for the Chinese to accept the

perceived Japanese unwillingness to face up to the past. This grows from the Chinese belief that perceived “Japan being junior to China for larger part of their 2000 year relationship”, as exemplified in a popular Chinese expression of Japan as “xiao Riben”, meaning “Little Japan”. This implies not just a geographically smaller Japan given its land size but also indicative of China’s superiority. There is a tendency among Chinese elites to link Japan’s past behaviour to its future intentions.

Thereby, it is clear that the historical enmity runs deep in the Chinese society where there is no distinction between elite and public perceptions and therefore, the history problem cannot be settled until both sides reach a satisfactory reconciliation. Calling it as “guanxi of enmity”, Uemura (2013:115) suggests that the perception of an evil Japan unheeded of its past aggression had not changed, even though Beijing knew that there was much to gain through cooperation with Tokyo. Rather Japan has been continuously perceived as a potential menace that could compromise China’s national interests. As according to Alexander Wendt “whether or not states really are existential threat too each other is in one sense not relevant, since once a logic of enmity gets started states will behave in ways that make them existential threats” (ibid.) In this view, China’s criticism of Japan stems from Japan’s insincere apologies, mistreatment of Chinese people, lack of reconciliation, and whitewashing of history (Taylor 2008: 8).

To China, the Japanese apologies appear insincere because they only came after much Chinese diplomatic pressure. While Chinese also complain that Japan has shirked responsibility for the war and failed to compensate individual Chinese citizens who suffered directly at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Army, including comfort women, forced labourers, and mistreated prisoners of wars. On contrary to China,, Japan belies to have apologised to China. What forms the undertone of these criticisms is that Japan needs to “admit [its] mistakes and get back on the right path toward a healthy relationship” (Uemura 2013: 115). In China’s perceptions, Japan’s perceived lack of reconciliation instigates the fear of a revisionist Japan. That is, in the eyes of China, Japan needs to do more to show its repentance and guilt before China considers to forgive Japan for its wartime atrocities.

Therefore, in Beijing's Japan policy, history factor looms large in the political agenda. What can be stated that Beijing's emphasis on the history issue as the political foundation of the Sino-Japanese bilateral relationship, therefore, seems to be psychologically driven based on the historical consciousness. This therefore, makes the historical memory a strong causal factor in determining and shaping China's relations with Japan, thereby, making the history issue more genuine than rhetoric in China's Japan policy.

### **3.3 SUMMARY**

What constrains China's relationship with Japan is not much to do with the realist notions of material forces but rather the traumas of a tragic past that overshadows the rational interests in the current dynamics. The history problem is a characteristic feature that defines China's present relations with Japan, wherein China's historical memories of Japan significantly constrains the possibility of forgetting the past and the emergence of an alternative view on Japan and Sino-Japanese relations.

In this case, the narrative of "Century of National Humiliation" and as sense of victimhood shapes China's thinking process. Wherein the traumatic history of colonisation and victimisation during the Opium and Sino-Japanese Wars have played a decisive role in shaping the identity of present day China, and most importantly, its relations with Japan. As unlike other foreign invaders such as Britain and United States with which China has cordial diplomatic relations without any historical baggage, Japan still exists as an exception.

Japan's exceptionalism lies in China's historical memories, which act as the most important lens in viewing present Japan. This historical lens shapes the perceptions of Japan and thus conditions China's behaviour and attitude towards Japan. Most dominantly, China perceives Japan as 'distrustful' and 'irresponsive'- which inherently contributes to China's suspicion of Japanese intentions, as reflected in case of China's opposition to Japan's UNSC bid in the current context. This confirms the claim that China's perceptions born out of historical memories have impacted China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan.

This further reflects on the fact that China's perceptions of Japan have resulted into an

insecurity due to which China inadvertently perceives Japan as a potential threat. This threat perception is mainly driven from China's suspicions over Japan's militarist revival. Thus, in case of China's relations with Japan, the past is more dominant in the present in the form of active historical memories. That is, historical memories have strongly impacted China's present relations with Japan.

## CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND CHINA'S JAPAN POLICY

*More than 100 police officers stood by to maintain order. In each group, protesters who brought their own banners were ushered to the front of the pack. Chinese flags were passed out to those who came empty-handed. Each time a group of 100 amassed, a plain clothed man with a megaphone would announce the 'demonstration rules'. 'We all know that everyone is very angry, [...] Remember to sing the national anthem. Everyone must take part in chanting slogans. Facial expressions are to be kept serious [...].*

----- Quoted from Reilly (2014: 210).

*The internet has raised the bar for us. We must be timely in responding to sudden incidents, reacting with more speed and agility in order to grasp the initiative with public opinion [...] with QQ, BBS, Weibo and the rise and universal usage of online technologies, the speed with which the government should publish information has increased from 24 hours to four hours.*

----- Zou Jianhua, Former Press Counsellor to the Chinese Foreign Ministry  
(Weiss 2014: 160).

### INTRODUCTION

As already discussed in Chapter 3, in understanding the role of historical memories in China's relations with Japan, two central arguments emerge strong. First, that the traumatic experiences resulting from Japan's invasion has left a deep scar in the Chinese psyche. And second, CCP strategically and rationally uses the history card against Japan to draw political concessions and enhance its claim to legitimacy.

While the first argument is based on a primordial logic that applies to the entire Chinese society, the second argument applies to an instrumentalist logic which takes a top-down approach on the role of historical memories in impacting China's behaviour towards Japan. Although this argument stands strong mainly given the logic of CCP's legitimacy crisis, however, this top-down approach suffers from few shortcomings. Of which, the most important element is that it is theoretically limited and exclusive in

approach given its failure to take into account the Chinese masses. To which, Gries argues that this top-down framework “inadvertently assumes that the Chinese masses are somehow mindless puppets that can be easily manipulated by the elites” (Suzuki 2007: 28).

In this perspective, another factor that dismisses this top-down approach can be understood from the two contradictory developments that characterise the current state of China-Japan relations. That is, as Qiu (2006: 27) points: while official, economic and cultural relations between the two countries have experienced an unprecedented and continuous improvement in the past few decades, Chinese and Japanese public perceptions of each other have been deteriorating. This exhibits a discrepancy between the positive economic and political developments and the growing negative popular perceptions of China towards Japan.

Since the end of the Cold War, this discrepancy defined the trajectory of Sino-Japanese relations, as Gui and Huang (2014: 75) argues that the relations “fluctuated between friendship and friction and between cooling down and rewarning”. That is, on one hand, mutual distrust and differences in political and security aspects has deepened with the passage of time, even giving rise to a trend of confrontation. On the other hand, economic and trade interaction as well as personal exchanges have kept increasing between the two countries, and non-governmental interchange has also grown even closer (*ibid.*). However, the bilateral relations between the two countries has turned “increasingly worse” over the past two decade or more (*ibid.*) And more specifically, since 2000 the trend of deterioration has gone through some significant turning points as a result of Koizumi’s Yasukuni shrine visits, Diaoyu islands dispute, textbook issue and others.

Of which, the most definitive aspect of the deterioration was witnessed in the rise of strong anti-Japanese sentiment among Chinese public. As the historical issue gained greater public attention in China, the impact of public opinion on Sino-Japanese relations turned salient. Given this significant shift in Chinese domestic politics, it becomes imperative to understand what encompasses the nature of Chinese public attitude towards Japan.

To cite an example, an article from an internet newspaper, Global News, in explaining “why many Chinese have disaffection for the Japanese” stated:

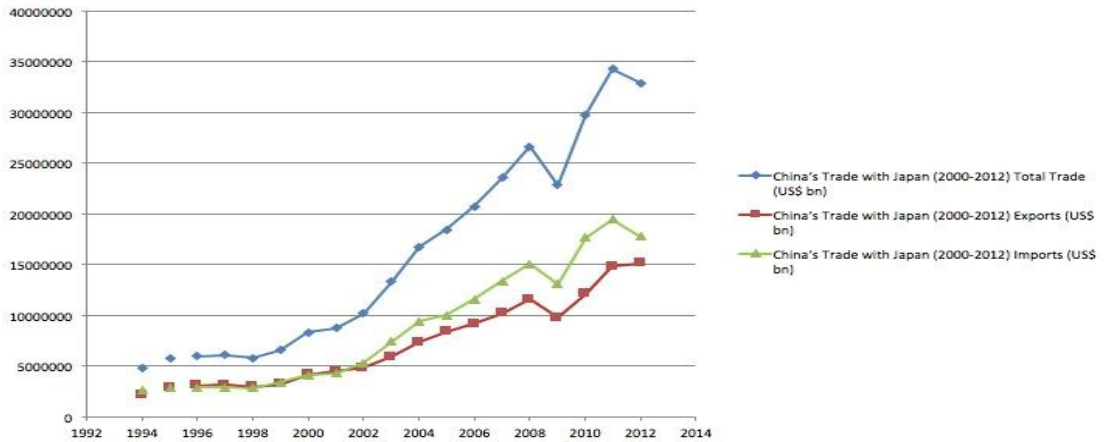
“Fundamentally speaking, Chinese opinion of the Japanese is based on that war, especially on Japan’s view of that war and their attitude toward Sino-Japanese relations [...] The right wing in Japan has denied their war of aggression against China, making great efforts to reverse the case, and even glamorizing that savage war as a war of liberation. In addition to repeated official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and constant revision of history textbooks, which deny the Nanjing Massacre, the rightists and high officials of the government speak nonsense from time to time, making irresponsible remarks and advocating the idea of a “China threat.” They also maintain a dubious relationship with those in Taiwan who are seeking “Taiwan independence.”

We have to say that all these actions attempting to reverse the case of history have greatly harmed and negatively aroused the feelings of the Chinese. Not only has this enraged the older generations who experienced the war, but it has also infuriated the young people in China” (Qiu 2006: 31-32).

As noted from the statement above, the anti-Japan perception among Chinese is primarily driven from the historical context of wartime memories. This perception bias further exemplifies the notion of “history problem” in the current Sino-Japanese relations. This biased perspective also confirms China’s departure from the conventional liberal wisdom which suggests that economic interdependence between states can mitigate grievances and enhance peaceful relations.

In case of China’s relations with Japan, the correlation stands problematic given the paradoxical nature of ‘hot economics and cold politics’ in the relationship. What defines the hot economics is the increasing trend in the trade volume, as outlined in Figure 4.1 which presents the trend of percentage of trade between China and Japan from 1994 onwards up until 2012. The trend analysis as projected in Figure 4.1 shows a clear exponential increase in total trade between China and Japan since 2000.

**Figure 4.1: Trend of Sino-Japanese Trade (2000-2012)**



**Note:** Elaborated from the data of Sino-Japanese Trade as outlined in Table 3.3.

Given the increasing trend, China-Japan trade accounted for more than a fifth of global output and came to be ranked as the third largest bilateral trade in the world, with US\$329.4 billion trade in 2012. Japan became China’s second largest trading partner after United States, and the largest investor in China, with a stock of direct investment accounting a rise of 16.3 percent to \$7.28 billion in 2012 (Li and Zhang 2014). To note, Japan’s direct investments in China began in 1979, but by the end of 2008, the cumulative number of Japan’s investment programs in China had already reached 41,162 with an actual capital amount of US\$65.38 billion (Zhang 2014: 12).

While since 2007, China has taken the place of United States as Japan’s largest trade partner in terms of import, export and total trade value and their bilateral trade reached US\$266.73 billion in 2008. In 2009, China also became Japan’s biggest exporting market, despite the 24 percent decline in bilateral trade due to the impact of international financial crisis (ibid.: 11-12). In addition, the two countries also hold the world’s biggest piles of foreign exchange reserves- \$3.2 trillion in China and \$1.3 trillion in Japan (Reuters 2012). This suggests that since 2000, although political tensions erupted, China and Japan shared a strong economic equation.



This economic equation brings forth the irony in the relationship. For unlike the economics, the political aspects in the relationship have not taken an upward turn in the twenty-first century. This makes it further interesting to note that the high economic interdependence has failed to mitigate the political tensions that has significantly weighed down the relationship. This clarifies that political priorities and economic interests exist in parallel dynamics in Sino-Japanese relations. In the backdrop of 'hot' economics, what makes the equation complicated is the cold politics, as Jin Baisong, an expert at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Cooperation argued that given the huge pressure of public opinion, bilateral economic ties are "unlikely to proceed smoothly while the big picture is so negative". Jin further posited, "[i]t is impossible for two major powers to forge a relationship that solely consists of economic contacts. (Problems) in the political arena definitely will trigger a spillover effect in the economic domain" (ibid.).

Jin's argument further brings into perspective the role of "public opinion" in China's foreign policy, as argued by Gui and Huang (2014). To cite an example, on 18 September 2012, a Tianya post explaining the rationale behind the violent attitude of many Chinese netizens and protestors posited:

"Smash hard! Don't let the so-called rational Japanese dogs and Han traitors (Rigou Hanjian) dare to purchase Japanese goods. Drive those Japanese goods out of China [...] To drive a Japanese car is to dig your own grave (zijue fenmu) [...] By smashing a Japanese car we can prevent 100 people from buying one. This is how we should calculate the costs and benefits. It is not simply Chinese smashing their own cars. In the short run we destroy our own wealth, but in the long run we cut off the enemy's road to wealth (diren de cai lu) and begin our own path to development" (Gries et al. 2016b: 170).

This statement reflects the willing attitude among the Chinese to put the flourishing economic relations at stake. This perception is indicative of the fact that in China, politics rather derails its economic attitude towards Japan as evident in the above stated willingness to suffer for the sake of revenge. What makes Chinese public opinion to have such willingness is the fact that the most contested and impending issues are rooted in the historical memories. As Liu Jiangyong (2007: 1) argues:

"The phenomenon of "cold politics, hot economy" [...] in the China-Japan relations is an inner structural contradiction [...] as well as a main feature of

the relations at present, [However] In recent years, the main contradiction between China and Japan is the conflict on historical view in which the key of problem is whether Japanese leaders can recognize the history correctly or not”.

In this way, the existing dichotomy further enhances the argument that history and its role in Sino-Japanese relations, as Suzuki (2007: 28) points:

“should not be presented as something that ‘matters’ only when used by members of the elite for their narrow political gains.” Therefore, “[h]istorical memories are deeply entrenched in Chinese society, and cannot be reduced to a tool used by the political elite”.

As discussed in Chapter 3, it is found that China’s elite perception of Japan is dominated by the image of a distrustful Japan that creates China’s suspicion of Japan and therefore, informs China’s policy towards Japan. This link makes historical memory an important factor in determining China’s Japan policy. Similarly, since 2000 there has been an emergence of strong anti-Japanese sentiments among Chinese public as demonstrated in the strong reactions to Japanese activities. In understanding this phenomenon, a Chinese scholar<sup>14</sup> at Peking University, points that public opinion in China has become ‘more explicit’ and due to which the Chinese government is ‘more attentive to it in making China’s Japan policy’. As Chinese public opinion mostly implies that the government is ‘not tough enough on Japan’- this Chinese public viewpoint greatly influences the China’s foreign policy.

On a similar view, another Chinese scholar<sup>15</sup> states that in Chinese people’s perspective, the Japanese government is doing bad on the history issue. This public perception of Japan makes the Chinese government to pay more attention and thereby act tough towards Japan in such situation as or else the government will face criticism from the Chinese people. That is, in terms of foreign policy, “Chinese public opinion is nationalistic. These public reactions illustrate a profound public bias toward the Japanese because of historical grudges. As Gries rightly argues that: “in China the past lives in the present” (Wang 2012: 8).

In this context, the significant questions that need attention are: Why have Chinese views of Japan deteriorated to such low? What explains China’s ‘anti-Japanese’ attitude despite the positive economic developments? The answer to these queries lie

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<sup>14</sup>Personal interaction with Chinese scholar (anonymous) at Peking University, Beijing, 13 March 2017.

<sup>15</sup>Personal interaction with Chinese scholar (anonymous) at CICIR, Beijing, 16 March 2017.

in understanding of the deep-seated nature of China's historical consciousness of Japan. This requires an enquiry into the wounds of the past that come into play in the present relations. To say so, as Chinese people's negative perception widely rests on strong resentments that Japan has not apologised as well as not done enough to compensate for its war legacy.

Given this perspective, to find answers to the above questions, the present chapter investigates the embedded nature of history in Chinese psyche by applying the variable of historical memories to study Chinese public perceptions of Japan. The Chapter examines the domestic context in China's foreign policy policy. In doing so, the Chapter addresses the query of whether popular opinion influences China's Japan policy. In answering the central aspect of the thesis, the chapter draws a linkage between historical memories and Chinese public perceptions through three important factors: popular nationalism, public opinion and national identity. Keeping a broad framework, the present chapter enquires into two key questions: first, how do we explain the role of historical memories in Chinese public perceptions of Japan? And second, does Chinese public opinion impact China's Japan policy?

#### **4.1 CHINESE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DIPLOMACY**

A series of events affected Sino-Japanese relations with the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, wherein, the most significant factor that widely drew attention was the rise of anti-Japanese sentiments among Chinese public. Starting with the textbook disputes in late 2000 and early 2001, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's insistence on annual worship at Yasukuni Shrine from 2001 consistently broke the bilateral relations. In addition, provoked by the bawdy show of four Japanese who taught and studied at the Northwest University in China, massive numbers of Chinese university students demonstrated in the streets in Xi'an in 2003. Following in 2004 were ongoing disputes over economic rights in the East China Sea, riots in Beijing after Japan beat China in the Asia Cup football finals. In 2005, moreover, upon Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, a collection of 44 million signatures for a Chinese petition was alleged in early 2005, followed by large-scale demonstrations. Successively, in 2010 and 2012, China's public anti-Japanese sentiment was bolstered over Diaoyu islands dispute, resulting into protests (Wu

2012: 27-28). What is common to all these events is the Chinese people and their anti-Japanese sentiment.

**Table 4.1: Anti-Japanese public protests in China (2001-2012)**

Year	Cause	Date of Protest	Form of Protests
2001	Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine	15 August 2001	Protest rallies in Shenzhen, Beijing, Nanjing, Shenyang, Yiwu city and Zhejiang Province  Students from Tsinghua University protested in front of Japanese Embassy in Beijing
2002	Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine	22 April	Few 100 residents protested at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall in Nanjing.
2003	Qiqihair Incident  One of the victims died	15 August	Chinese activists began an online petition campaign demanding Japan's apology and compensation to the victims
		21 August	Online protest movement to boycott Japanese goods
		18 September	Website organisers delivered one million signatures to the Japanese Embassy
2004	China's baodiao activists land on the Diaoyu islands and get arrested by Japanese Coast Guard	March	Baodiao activists began a protest outside the Japanese embassy in Beijing, demanding the activists' immediate release and burning Japanese flags.
	Asia Cup Soccer Tournament	31 July	Anti-Japanese demonstrations during the match Chinese football fans raised slogans against the Japanese national team Burned Japanese Flag Damaged the Japanese Ambassador's car
2005	Japan's UNSC bid	20 February	Online Petition launched against Japan's UNSC bid
		2 April	Anti-Japanese protests in Chengdu
	Japan approves new History Textbook  Diaoyu Island Tension	3 April	Anti-Japanese protests in Shenzhen
		9 April	Protests in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing Vandalism reported Called for boycott of Japanese goods

		10 April	Protests in Guangzhou
		16 – 17 April	Protests in Shanghai, Tianjin, Hangzhou, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Dongguan, Hong Kong
2006	-	-	-
2007	-	-	-
2008	-	-	-
2009	-	-	-
2010	Collision between Chinese fishing trawler and a Japanese naval ship near Diaoyu islands	8 September 8	Chinese Baodiao activists demonstrated in front of the Japanese Embassy against the Japanese government. Anti-Japanese demonstrations in Shanghai, Shenyang, Tianjin, Chongqing, Shenzhen, Xi'an, Changsha and Wuhan Vandalism of Japanese products and cars
	79 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Japanese invasion in 1931 Diaoyu Islands dispute	18 September	Anti-Japanese demonstrations in Beijing and Shanghai Public demonstrations in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing
	Smoke bomb attack at the Chinese Consulate in Nagasaki, Japan  Diaoyu Island dispute	October	16 October- protest in multicities- university students protested in Xi'an; demonstrations in Chengdu' protests in Wuhan Vandalism reported- Japanese-made cars damaged 24 October- public protests in Lanzhou 26 October-protests in Chongqing
2011	The Chinese Media published an article about the Nanking Massacre	December 14, 2011	Demonstrations in several cities Chongqing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhengzhou, Shenyang, Ningbo, Harbin, Chengdu, Luoyang, Qingdao, Chansha, Hefei, Beijing, Wuhan, Fuzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai Demonstartors attacked Japanese tourists; damaged Japan-made cars; damaged Japanese supermarkets and restaurants.
2012	7 July, Japanese government announced its intent to purchase 3 of the Diaoyu islands from their private owner  11 September,	15 August	Protest demonstratons in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing.
		27 August	Ambassador Niwa's car was attacked in Beijing and the Japanese flag was torn from it
		9 September	60 demonstrations in Chinese cities

	Japan nationalised the three islands		
	81 <sup>st</sup> anniversary of Japanese invasion in 1931.	15 September	Biggest anti-Japanese protests held since the normalisation in 1972 Protests in more than 50 cities Panasonic factory in Qingdao set on fire
		16-18 September	Demonstrations staged in almost 85 cities on 16 September) Public protest in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing Vandalism reported, Burnt Japanese flags Demonstrations in Chengdu and Shenzhen, Nanjing, Xian, Qingdao, Changsha and near the Japanese Consulates General in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenyang Anti-Japanese demonstrations in over 180 cities on 18 September. Total 320 anti-Japanese demonstrations took place in September

**Source:** Chinese and English Newspaper reports.

Table 4.1 suggests the wave of popular nationalism in China in the twenty-first century. Since 2001, there was an incremental rise in public animosity towards Japan as represented in the explicit sporadic public activism, with intensity noted in 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2012. Here, it is important to note that often these anti-Japanese protests are linked to be rooted in the May Fourth Movement of 1919. However, the difference lies in the fact that the 1919 protests were motivated by hostility to imperialism, oppression and social inequality but the current anti-Japanese protests are guided by Chinese nationalist sentiments.

It is noteworthy that despite the boom in the economic exchanges between China and Japan, nationwide anti-Japanese protests in 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2012, for example, became very visible. Of which, the demonstrated anti-Japanese public sentiments reflected not just an overwhelming negative public opinion but also a consistent monolithic negative attitude towards Japan. As inferred from the public opinion polls, Chinese perceptions of Japan have been consistently negative. Thereby, triggered by unresolved disputes and incidental events, the frequent street demonstrations and online petitions against Japan by Chinese public became a dominant phenomenon in China.

Given China's authoritarian political system, in this study 'public' as defined by Wang Cungang (2013: 132) refers to "those individuals who are non-policymakers and do not work for any foreign affairs department of the government, and excludes social organizations. While "participation" broadly refers to the behaviour of the public as participants who are willing and are able to be involved in the public decision-making process that may affect their lives; while for public agencies, the participation means they are willing to listen to and take into consideration the public's opinions, suggestions, stances and attitudes in their decision-making process. The core lies in the interaction between the public and public agencies. In this view, 'public participation' in diplomacy is a type of public participation, and a kind of political behaviour (ibid.: 133).

Taking this element of 'public participation' in China's diplomacy, and most importantly towards China's Japan policy, the starting point of analysis that this Chapter explores is the "New Thinking Debate"- a significant case in point that witnessed public participation in China's diplomacy towards Japan and significantly influenced China's foreign policy decision-making towards Japan.

#### **4.1.1 CASE STUDY OF CHINA'S "NEW THINKING" DEBATE**

China's public participation in diplomacy towards Japan largely appeared to surface with the twenty-first century. The context to this phenomenon of public participation in China's diplomacy needs to be understood in the backdrop provided by the political shifts in Sino-Japanese diplomacy. That is, on one hand, in 2001, the newly elected Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, readjusted Japanese policy towards China and visited the Yasukuni Shrine against China's strong opposition, resulting into a problematic and unstable relations between China and Japan. While on the other hand, in spring 2002, China witnessed its political transition with the incoming "fourth generation" of Chinese leadership represented by Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao and Zeng Qinghong, who were widely viewed by Japan analysts as less consumed by the issues of the past. The new leadership utilised the commemorative activities of the year 2002 celebrated as China's "Japan Year" to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the normalisation of ties- to signal their interest closer ties with Japan.

The front page of *People's Daily* on 19 September 2002 captured the spirit, proclaiming in large print, "Happy Birthday to China-Japan Friendship". Besides, on the much debated Japan policy, the final 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress Resolution declared that China's foreign policy would emphasise friendly relations with developed countries, developing countries and with neighbours, under the slogan: "Treat neighbours as friends; treat neighbours as partners" (*yilin weishan; yilin weiban*) (Reilly 2008b: 78). This policy of "building a friendly relationship and partnership with neighbours" signalled the new leadership's intent to strengthen ties with Japan (Wang 2013: 134). However, this moderate approach shifted to a more hard-line approach to Japan with Koizumi's incremental visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Thereby, against this backdrop, the case in point is China's "New Thinking" debate on Japan which saw the domestic influence in Chinese foreign policy coming into play. It is noteworthy that although the debate came immediately after the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress given the new leadership's moderate approach, but it significantly failed to have the intended effect, moreover, in the following years Sino-Japanese relations further deteriorated. In this deterioration, one of the strongest factors that came into play was China's public participation in diplomacy or public diplomacy.

To note, the term "public diplomacy" (*minjian waijiao*, 民間) according to James Reilly (2009a) was first used in China-Japan relations to describe the "informal interactions between government officials before China and Japan normalized relations in 1972". The term resurfaced in China to capture the wave of popular activism toward Japan from 2002 onwards. This wave of popular diplomacy demonstrates how even in an authoritarian state, non-state actors can affect the international environment and influence foreign policy decisions. In this perspective, the starting point to investigating the descent of public diplomacy in China's relations with Japan is provided by China's 2002-2003 famous "New Thinking Debate". Wherein, the publication of Ma Licheng's provocative article "New Thinking on Japan" (*DuiRi guanxi xin siwei*) in the final 2002 issue of the influential journal Strategy and Management (*Zhanlue yu guanli*)- provided the impetus for China's debate on Japan policy.



In an attempt to bring a revolution in China's diplomacy, Ma, a liberal intellectual at People's Daily criticised the anti-Japanese popular nationalism that had characterised attitudes towards Japan and argued that China should ease to dwell so much on past injuries and instead, concentrate on its future partnership with Japan (Gries 2005; Cui 2012; Zakowski 2012). In this process, Ma proposed that Chinese citizens should abandon anti-Japanese sentiments, acknowledge Japan's economic assistance, and should be relaxed about Japanese participation in overseas peacekeeping mechanisms. As Ma posited:

“China and Japan are the heart of Asia. Both of our peoples must check their nationalistic impulses, abandon their narrow-minded prejudices, and march forward toward regional unification, the emerging goal toward which the hearts of Asians and the tide of the times are now turning” (Mochizuki 2005: 142).

In agreement with the new outlook on Japan, Shi Yinhong, an advocate of realpolitik at People's University, came to Ma's defence, arguing in an early 2003 Strategy and Management article that rapprochement with Japan was indeed in China's interest. Ma and Shi's articles sparked a major debate. *Kangri zhanzheng yanjiu* (Journal on the War of Resistance against Japan, hereafter War of Resistance) featured a major collection of views on the “history question” in a summer 2003 issue, and *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and International Politics) and *Shijie zhishi* (World Affairs) covered the “new thinking” – further intensifying the debate (Gries 2005a: 832). Somewhat adding to Ma and Shi's positive outlook, there are some other Chinese scholars who hold a relatively benign attitude towards Japan. Such as, Jiang Lifeng, a Japan expert of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) argued in 1998 that:

“The distrust between China and Japan on security matters will not disappear in the near future. But for a fairly long period, Japan is unlikely to be a security threat to China [...] the possibility of Japan becoming militaristic as it was before the (Second World) War no longer exists” (Yang 2007b: 132).

In 2003, Lu Zhongwei, former president of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and one of China's leading experts on Japan provided a positive assessment of China-Japan relations, stating:

“We are justified to say the two sides [China and Japan] are in the best of their relations for the past three decades [sic] ... Beijing believes that Tokyo has

embarked on the path of peaceful development and that the Japanese people love peace, thus negating her earlier assessment of Japan's possible remilitarization. This signifies that over the past decade China's diplomatic action has already revolutionized her relations with Japan. In other words, China's diplomacy and Japan policy have ushered in a new stage in her relations with the close neighbor. This has been a "quiet revolution." [...] Today the two sides no longer talk about "friendship" alone. They lay stress on "interests" by turning the courteous slogan of friendship into interests-oriented [sic] practices that give consideration to common interests and strive for a win-win situation" (Mochizuki 2005: 142).

In refraining to view China-Japan relationship as "hostile", Lu clarified that the relationship is not that of "enemy, me and friend" (di wo you) but that of normal "you, me and him" (ni wo ta) (Yang 2007b: 132). However, Lu noted that "distrust" continues to dominate China's mainstream perceptions of Japan, wherein the basic assessment is that "Japan regards China as a rival" (ibid.). Similarly, Wu Jianmin, former Chinese diplomat and Professor at China's Foreign Affairs University (CFAU) made a series of speeches urging Chinese "netizens" in the aftermath of 2005 protests to view relations with Japan from a long-term perspective (Reilly 2009: 6). Professor Yu Xintian, former director of the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS), having a foresight of a promising future for Sino-Japan ties pointed that:

"China and Japan are neighbors. [...] the interdependence between China and Japan has become closer. [...] There remains much space for communication and dialogue. Strategy- and policy-making will play important roles in our bilateral relationship in the foreseeable future; more political mechanisms should be encouraged" (Chen 2007).

From these perspectives, it would be misleading to assume that the above positive views of Ma, Jiang, Lu, Wu and Yu is a reflection of the Chinese leadership. However, since they belong to China's political elite circle, thereby, their positive outlook in someway does indicate a shift in China's Japan policy. In this background of the need for re-stabilisation of China-Japan relations, "New Thinking" debate came as a revolutionary step forward in China's diplomacy toward Japan. In Ma's own words:

"From the perspective of history, it is impossible to let a war-defeated country to always be in an abnormal state status. To deal with the coming situation

when Japan becomes a great political and military power, we Chinese need to prepare for it. We have to make a distinction between Japan's call for restoring its national military power and the idea that Japan wants to go back to its previous militarism. This is the new thinking that can keep pace with the times" (Wang 2013: 78).

In line with Ma's suggestion to the Chinese elite, Shi Yinhong pointed at the mutual antipathy and enmity among civilians in both countries and suggested a five-point framework in improving Sino-Japanese relations for protecting China's core national interests. They are: (a) setting historical dispute aside, (b) helping Japan increase its exports to and investment in China with Chinese leaders openly expressing appreciation for Japanese financial assistance, (c) China should have tolerance of and a sense of generosity toward Japan's limited military expansion, (d) China should invite Japan (with the status of a great power) to cooperate on issues of security, politics, and economy in East Asia, and (e) China should support Japan's goal of becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (*ibid.*). In general, both Ma and Shi held similar views, except for the minor difference in the perceptions on the 'history issue'. Ma believed that the history question between China and Japan had been resolved and thus, should be put to rest, while Shi thought that the history question had not been totally resolved but should be shelved and that China and Japan should put their friendliness first (*ibid.*: 136).

Overall, giving fresh perspectives, the main crux of Ma-Shi proposition as Jiang (2005) notes, contained: First, China should stop putting so much weight on "historical issues", and drop its insistence that Japan should come clean with an apology for its aggressive wars against China. Also pointed that Japanese politicians should stop provocations such as white-washing past war crimes or visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. Thus, argued that leaders of Japan have apologised enough and that the "burden of history" has consumed too much of energy, therefore, China should adopt a "let-go-of-the-past" approach and focus on a future-oriented partnership. Secondly, the "new thinking" challenged the Chinese public to examine their own ultra-nationalistic bias against Japan as expressed in terms of using degrading anti-Japanese language in internet chat groups, soccer riots against Japanese team as witnessed during the 2004 Asia Cup, or projections of an inevitable war with Japan-rather discredit China's emerging power status. Thirdly, the "new thinking" insists on preference of accommodation over confrontation with Japan, which is in China's own

national interest. For hostility will cost China's modernisation programme, given the large size of Sino-Japanese bilateral trade. In contrast, hostility will only push Japan closer to the United States. The intelligence lies in treating Japan as a "normal state"- accept its growing military and international profile, to pull Tokyo closer to Beijing than Washington.

These bold views about China's Japan policy which mainly emphasised on moving beyond the history and seeking active cooperation with Japan was met with positive media attention in Japan but were roundly attacked in China by both academics and public. Ma-Shi's controversial position that the 'history question' should be put to rest generated intense debates among Chinese scholars and experts- suggesting that there is a plurality of views among the Chinese elites towards Japan. However, the reactionary criticism came from an explicitly populist perspective mainly dominated by Chinese netizens who praised "moral righteousness over political pragmatism" (Reilly 2010: 60). The plurality was witnessed in the difference of opinions.

What sparked the tensions was the question of playing down the history problem in China's relations with Japan. To which, a Chinese historian, as Yang (2007a: 265) notes, argued that:

"if China does not care about Japan distorting history or white- washing its past, "Where is our nation's dignity? How can we face those who died in fighting against Japanese invasion? How can we comfort the millions of compatriots who were killed by the invading Japanese military?"

While Lin Zhibo, of People's Daily, ridiculed and opposed the proposition of Sino-Japanese rapprochement: first on the question of balancing the United States, Lin argued that: "US-Japan relations are like those between a master and a servant [zhucong guanxi]," therefore, "there is no way that Japan will improve Japan-China relations to counterbalance the US." Secondly, on the 'history question', Lin indignantly asserted that "people have memories, and a nation's memory cannot be erased" and that "[i]nstead of asking the Japanese government to restrain its ugly behaviours," why ask "the Chinese government to be tolerant and magnanimous" (Gries 2005a: 840-841). In the concluding remarks of his article Lin stated:

"The so-called "new ideas of the Sino-Japanese relations" cannot be accepted,

because they not only ignore history, but also overlook reality; not only do they give up principles, they also confuse right and wrong; not only do they lack substantial evidence, they are also illogical. These unethical “new ideas” appear to be sensible, but are actually based in confusion. They look like justified views, but are actually biased. They think themselves superior, but are actually inferior. In essence, [these ideas] ask China to give up its principles and its stands to tolerate and even make concession to the ideas of the Japanese right wing and new militarism.... The so-called “new ideas” are actually a new form of appeasement. This kind of attitude will not bring any benefits to a healthy development of the Sino-Japanese relations; neither will it help establish a real friendship between China and Japan” (Jin 2006: 46).

Similarly, Zhang Ruizhang, a Chinese scholar, vehemently criticised the “new thinking” for reasons of national feelings and emotions to be considered less relevant to realist calculations. In calling the “new thinking” as an attempt to appease Japan by suppressing China’s national feelings and interests, Zhang sarcastically commented:

“The current popular view is that when we talk about public affairs, especially foreign affairs, all feelings and emotional factors have to be suppressed and eliminated. What is important to retain is the calculation of interest; it is the only rational behavior worthy of advocating. Under the constraints of the “new thinking,” “no temper” as become an acknowledged “virtue,” and part of the code of conduct in current Chinese society” (Wang 2013: 79).

Zhang further argued that emotions and feelings are expressions of justice rooted in rationality. In this view, the proposed positive ideas of the new thinking advocates can only weaken China that attracts more humiliation and attacks (Ibid.). On the contrary, against the negative comments, Xue Li, an expert on international relations at Tsinghua University argued that the “history question” should be shelved, and that China should pursue its national interest in reconciling with Japan. As he said,

“Chinese should swallow a bitter fruit and, for the sake of the national interest, seek to overcome the history question [...] I believe we should moderate our reactions to the history question, and that the government should cultivate a national consciousness that is friendly toward Japan, educating the people about the [limited] role of the Japanese right, and explain to them the great contributions that Japan has made to Chinese economic construction” (Reilly 2008b: 183).

And against Lin and others who opposed China’s any kind of conciliatory attitude towards Japan, Xue argued:

“Not only will China’s generosity not harm China’s national dignity, but it will greatly promote economic, political and regional co-operation between the two countries, and will not be without benefits for resolving the Taiwan question. [Conversely,] a ‘rigid’ Chinese attitude will be likely to lead Japan to rely even more on the US to balance against China” (Gries 2005a: 841).

While Zhang Yunling, Director of Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at CASS, in expressing agreement to looking beyond history in Sino-Japanese relations, contended that: “To go beyond history does not mean to forget history. It means that the history issue should not be an obstacle to the development of Sino-Japanese relations forever” (Yang 2007a: 266). Similarly, Feng Zhaokui, one of China’s most prominent Japan experts, pointed out inconsistency in China’s approach to Japan, as he argued: “It would have been impossible to improve our relations with Western countries if we had always stressed history” (Reilly 2008b: 183).

In addition to these for and against arguments, Pang Zhongying took an ambiguous position, as one end, he argued that China should avoid confrontations with Japan to prevent US from receiving any form of benefit out of it, while on the other end, Pang argued it to be a “wishful thinking” that Japan would help China to balance the United States. While on the history question, he reflected that: “The historical question between China and Japan is a question of morality and justice, about right and wrong, and emotions [...] Without history, how can Sino-Japanese relations have a future?” (Wang 2013: 80). Thereby, providing conflicting viewpoints on the debate.

These contrasting viewpoints reflect the pluralist nature of the Chinese elite perceptions towards a conciliatory policy towards Japan. This pluralism defined one aspect of the outcomes of the “new thinking debate”, but what is even more noteworthy is that unlike the plurality in China’s elite views, China’s public opinion towards Japan, in contrast was “monolithically negative” (Hiroki 2013: 46). This was evident as Ma and Shi were cursed as a “Japan lover” (*qinRi*) and “Traitors” (*hanqian and maiguozei*) in internet chatrooms for being soft on Japan (Gries 2005a: 838). Such as in a post entitled “Ma Licheng, we say no to you!” on the Xinhuanet Forum, where an anonymous netizen argued that “Devils are devils! ... How can you be ‘friends’ with them?” and concludes with the line: “Ma Licheng, it doesn’t matter how much you kiss Japanese ass, we have only one thing to say to you: the devils will

be back!” (Ibid.).

He (2007b: 61) explains this extreme anti-Japanese popular nationalism in the context of China’s growing internet phenomenon of “feiqing (indignant young people) culture”, where “feiqing use cyberspace to make unbridled insults against the Japanese people, culture and government, accusing those Chinese who have connections with Japan of being hanjian (Chinese traitors)”, as witnessed in the case of Ma Licheng. In a similar view, Peter Gries (2005a) argues that to understand this reactionary public outrage to the new thinking debate, one needs to go back to the 2001 incidents of - “Zhao Wei wears the Imperial Japanese flag” and “Jiang Wen goes to Yasukuni”- which preceded the “new thinking” public outrage against Japan. Here, it is imperative to note that Chinese public participation in diplomacy is practiced through voicing opinions, stances and from the attitude that they express. For instance, the overall trend of Chinese public opinion towards Japan deteriorated and as He (2007a: 22-23) notes:

“it is not surprising that Ma and Shi were quickly showered by bitter attacks from not only the intellectual circle but also from cyber space, where Chinese netizens called them ‘traitors’. Even if Chinese people can be persuaded by immediate interests to be conciliatory and restrained, they would neither forget nor forgive Japanese aggression; in the long run their grievances against Japan would only explode with greater scale and intensity”.

Therefore, the proposition of having a rational policy towards Japan greatly failed because of the ingrained memories of the past, which is what this paper has tried to argue that China’s historical memories of Japan are embedded in the Chinese psyche, wherein the cognitive consistency constrains any kind of positive change in China’s perceptions of Japan. Additionally, China’s such negative public response as opposed to the elite’s pluralist views also reflect that everything against Japan is not all stage-managed by the Chinese Government. Such a monolithic response by the Chinese public was spontaneous. This instant reactionary attitude of Chinese people to the government’s intended soft approach itself disqualifies the instrumental argument that China plays the history card against Japan.

On the contrary, it is noteworthy that the strong negative reactions towards acceptance of any form of conciliatory actions in China’s policy towards Japan entered the political debate with the newly elected Chinese leadership, who wanted to improve

relations with Japan. That is, for the new leadership the “new thinking” rather acted as the testing ground of its moderate approach towards Japan. Instead the suggestions from the “new thinking” rather provoked a strong nationalist backlash and likewise, China’s hard liners got the upper hand in exercising rather than downplaying the shadow of history over China’s Japan policy and popular attitudes towards Japan. In response, the overwhelming negative public behaviour affected Chinese policymaker’s decisions as both mainstream scholars and popular nationalists opposed any form of pragmatic approach that overruled history issue. Thus, from the outputs of this debate, it became evident that “popular anti-Japanese nationalism combined with janus-like positions”, would continue to shape China’s Japan policy (Beukel 2011: 19).

To say so, as the kind of reactionary public opposition that the debate attracted, it evidently pushed the latent Chinese public sentiments into Beijing’s political domain. Anti-Japanese sentiments were a new century phenomenon. To say so, as the earlier scholarly debates such as *China Can Say No* (Zhongguo Keyi Shuobu), which was published in 1996, symbolised the surge of nationalism in China’s society. This was quickly followed by nationalist writings such as *China Can Say No Again*, *China Can Still Say No*, *Why China Says No*, and others. For example, in *China Can Still Say No*, Song Qiang and his colleague write, which Gries (2004a: 92) quotes:

“Sun Yat-sen said that ‘China and Japan are brothers: China is the older brother, and Japan is the younger brother.’ Unfortunately, this ‘younger brother’ [...] does not treat his older brother like a human”.

This perspective is reflective of the Chinese impression of Japan, wherein Japanese aggression against China is the most unthinkable act, given Chinese understanding of itself as superior to Japan.” This makes the Chinese to view that Japan needs to squarely face up to the past. As Gries (Ibid.) suggests that:

“Violations of this kind [Japan as junior insulting China the superior] can only be corrected by the inferior’s profound and repetitive public prostrations before the superior. And the kowtowing can only stop when the superior is satisfied that status has been restored”.

However, in contrary to the anti-Japanese rhetoric, in the second half of the 1990s, the emphasis was on anti-Western, especially, anti-US sentiments. For example, the massive anti-US demonstrations in 1999 because of the bombing of Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, and then the theme of the post-2000 era Chinese nationalism is



abomination towards the Japanese (Li 2014: 55). This argument is well noted in the “New Thinking” debate, where China’s popular nationalism took a lead in the policy debate and thereafter, strongly influenced China’s hard lined Japan policy. Further, the anti-Japanese sentiment in the new century is also augmented by the protests and demonstrations against Japan in China which appeared much more frequently since the 21<sup>st</sup> century (ibid.). The Chinese political elite who wanted to exercise a moderate approach towards Japan changed their course of action, as instead of embracing the “new thinking” which was in line with their soft approach, they rather distanced themselves from it and primarily shifted to adopting a much stronger hard lined policy towards Japan.

In this aspect, for a leadership in an authoritarian state like China to change its policy approach under popular influence appears surprising. Then, how do you explain such a phenomenon in case of the “new thinking” debate. To making a sense of this assessment, Jin Xide, one of China’s top Japan experts, as quoted by Reilly (2008: 186, 2010: 61) argued that “the new thinking “presume[d] that Japanese is very important” and that “the Chinese government can simply forcefully suppress China’s public opinion.” By this, what Jin meant was that “in reality, “China’s “harsh” stance on history is due to public sentiments in China, which no one leader or one level of government can simply ignore.” The Ma-Shi event followed by the incidents thereafter, proves that ‘public diplomacy’ is thus, not just an exception to democracies.

The Ma-Shi propositions largely failed because it encountered the domestic constraints of Chinese policymaking. Public participation and popular nationalism became more apparent and complex a phenomenon. In acknowledging the enforcement of popular nationalism in China’s Japan policy, Gries (2004a: 20) argues that:

“Although the antiforeign impulses of popular nationalism in China often mirror party-line nationalism, popular nationalism’s independent existence undermines the Communist Party’s hegemony. [As] the Chinese people are demanding a say in nationalist politics: the fate of the nation is no longer the Party’s exclusive domain. For “the Party’s legitimacy now depends upon accommodating popular nationalist demands”.

In an assessment of the crushing defeat of the 2003 “new thinking” debate, Gries (2005a: 850) suggests that:

“The emergence of a deep-rooted and popular anti-Japanese enmity in China today does not bode well for 21st-century Sino-Japanese relations. As nationalist sentiments become fiercer, the expert community is largely reduced to pleading for moderation, while the political leadership is increasingly held hostage to nationalist opinion in the making of China’s Japan policy”.

Drawing parallels between this act of public diplomacy towards Japan in 21<sup>st</sup> century China to that of Maoist China, it is found that unlike this time, during Maoist era Chinese leaders enjoyed a wide latitude in making foreign policy. The exemplar lies in the fact that they pursued diplomatic relations with Japan while maintaining a drumbeat propaganda on Japanese wartime atrocities and Communist-led resistance. It is the 1978 reform era that began to transform the state-society relations, wherein a vibrant market-economy created an opening for China’s “history activism” to emerge. This led to the building of China’s nationalist rhetoric toward the wartime past by engaging in keeping accounts of Japan’s wartime atrocities, compensating for Chinese victims, and adopting a strong defensive posture on China’s sovereignty over disputed territories. These led to an imbalance with pragmatic approach towards Japan on one end and a pervasive anti-Japanese sentiment on the other end (Reilly 2009). In view of this, the 2002 public animosity brought to surface the contestation between China’s policy and public sentiments towards Japan.

With such dynamics into play, Beijing’s leaderships’ Japan policies, as Gries, pointed became “increasingly reactive to nationalist public opinion, rather than proactive to China’s national interest” (Willy Wo-Lap Lam 2006: 216). The responses to the new thinking exemplifies the role played by domestic politics and counters the widely held perception that public opinion does not influence the foreign policy of authoritarian states, such as China. Hence, in assessing China’s “New Thinking” and “public diplomacy”, few significant observations can be made. That is: first, China’s elite views towards Japan are significantly plural. Second, China’s public opinion of Japan is monolithically negative. Third, China’s history problem with Japan is deep-rooted in Chinese psyche than just being state created. And lastly, China’s public opinion on Japan does influence China’s foreign policy towards Japan.

In considering the asymmetry between the perceptions of Chinese decision-making elite and the Chinese people it is found that despite the open endorsement of a new thinking on Japan based on a moderate approach, the new Chinese leadership under 'Hu-Wen' failed to actualise it. It was a pragmatic shift in China's Japan policy as Hu-Wen unlike their predecessors did experiment with some of its ideas in its Japan policy. But this calculative measure in China's foreign policy met with domestic constraints, with Chinese negative public opinion of Japan having an overbearing influence on China's policy towards Japan, bringing it back to the same point. It is speculated that the Ma Licheng article espousing a "new thinking" towards Japan was promulgated by Hu Jintao's think-tank to get a feel for the receptiveness of the Chinese public to forgive Japan for past atrocities and approach the relationship as equals. However, the negative public reaction and death threats thrust onto Ma Licheng showed that timing in 2003 was not right for such an approach and thus, the leadership since then Hu remained cautious since that trial balloon failed (Taylor, 2008: 8).

Therefore, this new thinking debate brings out the limitations imposed by public participation in China's foreign policy, wherein a diplomatic step forward or a conciliatory approach by China towards Japan remains highly questionable.

#### **4.2 CHINA'S ANTI-JAPANESE POPULAR NATIONALISM: ROLE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Robert Jervis, in his famous book *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* introduced the cognitive variable 'perception' to explain the state behaviour by saying, "It is often impossible to explain crucial decisions and policies without reference to the decision makers' beliefs about the world and their images of others. That is to say, these cognitions are part of the proximate cause of the relevant behaviour" (Jervis 1970: 28). Although Jervis just focuses on the perceptions mainly held by foreign-policy makers, it is equally important to understand that the public perceptions of foreign countries also matter in understanding policy choices and international relations.

While mainstream public opinion might not necessarily be shared or accepted by decision makers but it sets up the atmosphere for policymaking, delivers messages to foreign countries, and can be used by both domestic and foreign politicians to justify choices, and that the people's understanding of international relations is based more on the perceived world rather than the real one (Fan 2010). This clearly implies that stereotypes, prejudice and perceptions of the "other" do not simply play a role in the act of world politics, but take the centre stage. This is particularly the case with China, where perception is considered 'the result of psychological cognition of the observer rather than an objective reflection of the object that is being observed' (ibid.: 269).

In the aftermath of the "New Thinking" on Japan policy in China, marked the culmination of China's public outrage at Japan in the recent years. In 2005, the nearly three weeks of large-scale public demonstrations in April, stood as the largest ever anti-Japanese protest in China. While in summer 2003, more than one million Chinese people responded to an online petition demanding that Japan apologise and compensate for Chinese injuries due to the leaking of Japanese chemical weapons left behind after the war. In October 2003, nearly 1,000 Chinese students marched in the streets of Xi'an protesting an obscene skit performed by several Japanese students during a university cultural festival. Seeing the skit as a deliberate Japanese insult against China, the demonstrators shouted slogans such as "Down with Japanese imperialism!", "Japanese bastard out!", and "Boycott Japanese goods!" (He 2007a: 2). These incidents thereby, clarify that the memories of the past remains vivid in Chinese people's mind.

Keeping this context, given the outcome of China's "new thinking" debate on Japan followed by large-scale public demonstrations as well as growing resentments among ordinary Chinese toward Japan on issues such as: Yasukuni Shrine visits by Japanese officials, compensation of war victims, history textbooks, Tokyo's failure in cleaning up between 700,000 (Japanese estimate) and two million (Chinese estimate) chemical weapons left behind by the Japanese army at the end World War II, comfort women issue, Diaoyu islands sovereignty issue, Taiwan and others- China's public perceptions of Japan continue to cause casualties in Sino-Japanese relations. With the emotional reactionary behaviour of Chinese public towards any issue that concerns Japan it is found that the 'anti-Japanese popular nationalism' dominates Chinese

public perception of Japan. This thereby, acts as a critical factor that shapes China's present relations with Japan, as witnessed in the "new thinking debate".

In this context, the important query lies in probing into Chinese public's monolithic negative view of Japan, that is, the rise of anti-Japanese popular nationalism. To say so, if people of China showcase positive attitude towards Japan as witnessed in the growing sociocultural exchanges with Japan in areas of education, tourism, work and migration, then what explains this undesirable and difficult attitude of Chinese people towards Japan in letting of the historical sentiments. Why do Chinese public still feel restricted in their thinking towards Japan? What explains the 'anti-Japanese sentiment' among Chinese public? What explains the nationwide public protests against Japan in China in the first decade of the twenty-first century despite increased economic and social exchanges between China and Japan?

According to Wan (2006: 78), it is the Chinese public's negative view of Japan that has "overwhelmed pockets of good sentiment toward Japanese". However, existing literature looks at the issue from various aspects. As Zhou Min (2012) puts forward two dominant perspectives, which explain the causal factors behind Chinese public's anti-Japanese sentiments. That is, on one hand, political scientists attribute the prevalent anti-Japanese sentiment in China to a multitude of a factors. First, in relation to Japan, it is attributed to Japan's ambivalence towards its war responsibilities, insincere apologies or conservative domestic politics. And secondly, in relation to China, it is emphasised on China's anti-Japanese patriotic education' surging nationalism, or the Chinese governments manipulation of historical issues for instrumental purposes. Wherein, the popular instrumental argument views Chinese state's manipulation of anti-Japanese sentiment for- domestic legitimacy and diplomatic strategy. Chinese government uses patriotic education campaigns, especially historical memories of Sino-Japanese wars, to enhance domestic legitimacy of the Communist Party and to obtain diplomatic leverage in dealing with Japan. This state manipulation results in radical nationalistic sentiment and widespread antipathy against Japan among the Chinese people (ibid.: 62).

Given this standard view, scholars attribute dissemination of nationalism in China to have an official top-down origin. Chinese nationalism is seen as CCP's attempt to fill

the ideological vacuum in the era of reform- “a surrogate for now defunct communism” (Gries (1999: 9). In expressing this dominant view, Christensen (1996: 37) succinctly posited: “Since the Chinese Communist Party is no longer communist, it must be even more Chinese.” Susan Shirk (2007) finds that the growth of patriotic expression as a replacement for Communist ideology helped to soothe popular discontent, while occasionally directing popular outrage at external targets, particularly Japan. In opposing the standard instrumentalist view, Gries (1999: 9) argues that such a perspective fails to “give equal weight to the mass activism, emotional content and primordial element” of Chinese nationalism. It is more than just an oversimplification of a complex reality that “dangerously trivializes popular feelings” (ibid.).

In dismissing the ‘state-manipulated’ theorem, Zhou (2012: 62) argues that such an assessment has two major limitations: first, suggests that calling the anti-Japanese sentiment as state manipulated has limitations: first, it depicts that Chinese society is easily susceptible to state manipulation and in a way sees the anti-Japanese sentiment as a recent phenomenon. And second, it tends to neglect the independent nature of emotion within the bilateral relationship. In this process, they either play down or gloss over the emotion (mostly grievance) regarding Japan that has long been visible in the Chinese society. While on the other hand, the international relations scholars view the friction between China and Japan since the 1980s as a result of the shifting international geopolitics. That is, with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990, new security concerns surfaced between China and Japan regarding each other’s intentions and behaviour. To explain, in their prior interactions, Japan was the dominant economic power while China had more political advantage. Each country’s role used to be clearly defined so it was relatively easy for them to behave in a highly predictable fashion. But with 1980s the scenario changed as Japan gradually had become more active in international affairs and sought to become a “normal” country with political influence to match its economic power.

Similarly, China with its reform and opening up in 1978, transformed into a new global economic power and become much less dependent on trade or aid from any particular country. Thereby, this new transformation led to conflicting roles as competitors which caused old disputes to resurface and new frictions to emerge,

thereby fostering resentment against Japan in China (Zhou 2012: 62.). Although these perspectives provide some justifications to China's anti-Japanese sentiment, but they still fail to justify the existing gaps in terms of why the anti-Japanese sentiments play such an active role in China. Exploration to this key question brings forth the analysis of the distinctive nature of Chinese nationalism, which can play a major role in motivating the anti-Japanese sentiment.

It remains undeniable that Chinese nationalism has its roots in social movements of the early 1990s, especially in reference to the May Fourth Movement of 1919, the revolution of 1911, and even the late-Qing era Self-Strengthening Movement (Fewsmith and Rosen 2001: 158). It is argued that the May Fourth Movement against the government's weak response to the Treaty of Versailles and the humiliation it suffered as the major powers decided on the fate of China's Shandong Province by granting Japan special rights and privileges that marked the upsurge of Chinese nationalism and sowed the seeds for the Communist Revolution. As Sinologist Liu King observes that "the current Chinese communist government is more a product of nationalism than a product of ideology..." (Pilger 2011: 11).

Chinese nationalism's roots in the past is also evident in the commemoration of 'National Humiliation Days' on the anniversaries of unequal treaties, territorial leases and foreign incursions. For instance, in the Republican period, May 9<sup>th</sup> came to be observed as "National Humiliation Day" in commemoration of the day when the Chinese government succumbed to Japan's twenty-one demands in 1915, which seriously compromised China's national sovereignty (Callahan 75-77). Likewise, in 2001, PRC revived the tradition and instituted the third Saturday of September as National Defence Education Day, which Callahan (ibid.) says is informally also referred as National Humiliation Day.<sup>16</sup> While unofficially CCP commemorated September 18 as National Humiliation Day in China in memory of the day in 1931 (Mukden incident) against Japanese aggression and atrocities.<sup>17</sup> This suggests that

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<sup>16</sup> It is important to note that before 2001, there was no single nationwide humiliation holiday so people marked national humiliation on a host of different commemoration days. The dates are similar to that of the Nationalist Party's Calendar of twenty-six official national humiliation holidays. The difference is that unlike a twelve-month annual calendar, PRC's commemoration activities follow a ten-year calendar, with key National Humiliation Days are celebrated according to their 50<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, 70<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup> and 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries (Callahan 77-78).

<sup>17</sup> On 24 March 2004, the NPC and Chinese People's Consultative Committee (CPCC) mentioned for an official national day of mourning on 18 September, but the motion failed. However, it is interesting to note that in February 2014, China's legislature approved the celebration of September 3as "Victory

nationalism shaped the identity and nation building in China during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In view of this, Yuan (2008: 215) argues that:

“Whether it was Sun Yat-sen’s search for a modern nation-state, or Chiang Kai-shek’s attempt to unify China under “one party, one leader, one state” in order to rid itself of all the unequal treaties imposed on imperial China by western powers, or Mao Zedong’s mass-based movement to overthrow the so-called “three mountains” of imperialism, feudalism-colonialism, and bureaucratic capitalism, the goals have been the same: the dream of a strong China, with its identity, its sovereign integrity, and its respect in the international community recognized, preserved, and strengthened”.

However, to suggest that the current Chinese nationalism is a continuation from the past remains problematic. It was only when China engaged in international relations that the feeling of nationalism emerged. But the truism lies in the fact that the Century of Humiliation narrative continues to inform and shape modern Chinese nationalism. Wu Guoguang categorises the first episode of Chinese nationalism as the post-imperial May Fourth nationalism, “rooted in a framework to examine nationalism’s connections with material interests, political power and cultural orientation” (Vencalek 2015: 11).

What defines China’s present anti-Japanese nationalistic sentiments can be broadly concluded under two frameworks: first, that Chinese anti-Japanese sentiments (if there are any) are deliberately disseminated by the Chinese government for or through promoting nationalism (Wu 2010: 2). This is mainly understood as state-led nationalism. And second, that anti-Japanese sentiments (if there are any) in China are deeply embedded within historical trauma and current disputes rather than being a product of state manipulation (ibid.). Whiting (1995) calls this as “assertive nationalism”- which “identifies a specific foreign enemy as a serious threat that requires action to defend vital interests” (Yuan 2008: 220-221). Such type of nationalism originates from the sentiment of historical indignation and victimisation by western countries and Japan (Vencalek 2015: 12).

Taking these perspectives into account, Chinese nationalism can be classified as either state-led by CCP (top-down nationalism) or historical (bottom-up nationalism). Scholars who support the ‘historical’ perspective argue that there are deep historical

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Day” and December 13 as “National Memorial Day”. The Memorial Day was observed for the first time on 13 December 2014 and Victory day on 3 September 2015.



reasons for Chinese people to be nationalistic, which motivates the protests. While scholars who support the 'state-led' approach suggest that the CCP uses nationalism and anti-Japanese sentiment to legitimise the CCP in the face of social and economic change (ibid.). Based on these two approaches to Chinese nationalism, it is the 'state-led' approach that is widely accepted as the standard viewpoint wherein China's anti-Japanese sentiments is argued to be manipulated by the Chinese government, which Zhao (2005) calls as "pragmatic nationalism". In this framework, scholars tend to pay attention to the CCP's nationwide patriotic education campaign in the early 1990s. To cite an example, the CCP Central Committee issued a Central Document, "The Outline for Conducting Patriotic Education", in September 1994 with the objective "to boost the nation's spirit, enhance its cohesion, foster its self-esteem and sense of pride, consolidate and develop a patriotic united front to the broadest extent, and direct and rally the masses' patriotic passions to the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Zhao 1998: 293).

The Document outlined specific "guidelines" to be followed by all levels of schools in teaching "correct patriotism", wherein the curriculum should entail: (1) Chinese history (especially modern history and the rise of CCP) and tradition; (2) China's characteristics and realities and their incompatibility to Western values; (3) CCP legendary and heroic stories of revolutionary martyrs; (4) CCP's fundamental principles and policies; (5) the great achievements of the Party rule in China's modernisation process; (6) socialist democracy and rule of law in contrast to the Western conception of the rule of law; (7) national security and defence issues in the context of preventing a peaceful evolution and fighting against external forces; (8) the peaceful reunification of the nation and the theory of "one country and two systems" (ibid.). After two years, the Chinese Ministry of Education ordered that all middle and primary school students should watch and read at least 100 patriotic films and 100 patriotic books before graduation (Seo 2005: 10). Furthermore, at the time of the return of Hong Kong to China, the Chinese government tried to reinforce the traditional image of "Western imperialism" by encouraging cultural productions of the history of humiliations in TV series, films, and even computer games (ibid.: 11). Given these state policies, most of the scholars argue that the rise in Chinese nationalism was "a natural outcome of state efforts to imbue the population with a replacement ideology" (ibid.).

It is noteworthy that this instrumentalist perspective is also the standard viewpoint among the Japanese who perceive China's history education as the root cause of the rising grassroots nationalism in China. To cite few examples, in his assessment of the 2005 large-scale anti-Japanese protests, Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura connected China's anti-Japanese sentiments to China's history-based education. He said China should "modify" its education on history. This viewpoint is also widely accepted among Japanese common populace who too argue that the history-based patriotic education in China has been an important contributing factor for the Chinese peoples' consistently negative perceptions of Japan (Wu 2012: 3). In a public opinion poll survey released by Japan's Asahi Shimbun in April 2005 indicated that more than 80 percent of Japanese respondents believed that "China's education system encouraged Chinese anti-Japanese protests" (ibid.). Similarly, in the aftermath of the 2010 boat collision incident between China and Japan, Yomiuri Shinbun's editorial entitled "China Shouldn't stir up anti-Japanese sentiments" stated that such anti-Japanese feelings have been instilled in the Chinese public through the CCP's "anti-Japanese patriotism" education. (ibid.) In adhering to the instrumental logic of CCP's manipulation of history and national mythmaking, He (2009) argues that in case of China, the patriotic education campaign, which was promoted by CCP to legitimise their regime since 1989, has contributed to the volatility in the Sino-Japanese relations at both official and popular levels.

From the above perspectives, it is clear that there exists an assumption that Chinese nationalism is rooted in China's wartime past and that the Chinese leadership is capable of strategically utilising historical memory to suit its interests (Suzuki 2007). In this respect, it becomes imperative to question whether the patriotic education campaign is the only strong elemental force that triggers anti-Japanese sentiments among Chinese. To say that 'patriotic education campaign' is the primary causal factor behind China's current popular anti-Japanese nationalism stands to be narrow in its understanding. As this approach fails to explain the gap between the motivations of the state/government and the emotions of the Chinese people. In recognising the genuine emotional aspect of the nationalist sentiment, some scholars have suggested an alternate view to the instrumentalist logic. In doing so, scholars see nationalism in China as "a spontaneous public reaction to a series of international events, not government propaganda" (Seo 2005: 12).

Taking a departure from the patriotic education logic and acknowledging the genuine nationalist sentiment factor, Gries (2004a) supports bottom-up nationalism and argues that nationalism in China is in fact a mass movement and not controlled by CCP. It is the history of national humiliation that contributes greatly to nationalism in China. It is the nationalist spirit which are affected by emotion, are important for understanding nationalism in China. Similarly, a Chinese expert at Peking University<sup>18</sup>, notes that the Patriotic education campaign ‘was not anti-Japanese’ and during that time China-Japan relations were generally ‘good enough’. But as a consequence of the patriotic education, where the focus is on modern history, primarily ‘the hundred year humiliation- where the war with Japan played a central role’, took the turn in the perceptions. As the scholar argued that it ‘does not matter who heads the government’ as the patriotic campaign, not in purpose but as a consequence led to the anti-Japanese sentiment. It is about people’s psychology. This generation has more concern about Japan. Similarly, another Chinese scholar at Tsinghua University<sup>19</sup> noted that history issue has a very strong influence on the Chinese public. This is evitable from the fact that in China is that even though the current generation has no direct linkage but the generational influence in the Chinese psyche does play an important role.

Zhou (2012: 62) argues that the anti-Japanese sentiment is “not a recent phenomenon” as the emotion existed long before the start of patriotic education or change in international geopolitics. The truism lies in the fact that this anti-Japanese emotion has not been dealt with for long in China’s Japan policy. The long-term neglect and suppression by the Chinese state has thereby, instigated the emotions to resurface in a dramatic way and has thus become susceptible to controversy, political manipulations and mythmaking (ibid.). In countering the emotion rational, He (2007a: 12) from an instrumentalist viewpoint suggests that Chinese popular sentiment should not be counted as “independent” and “valid” public opinion because it was either premeditated or simply played into the hands of the government who needed such leverage to bargain with Japan. Such explanations suggest that there is an existing high-handedness in the existing literature that views the Chinese sentiments as state

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<sup>18</sup> Personal interaction with Chinese Scholar (anonymous) at Peking University, Beijing on 13 March 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Personal interaction with Chinese Scholar (anonymous) at Tsinghua University, Beijing, 14 March 2017.

constructed, which significantly treats the Chinese society and the Chinese people as mindless and vulnerable to state manipulation. This myopic attitude thereby, fails to take into account the emotional factor, as in general practice, the emotions are either played down or glossed over.

The instrumental logic is further countered by the fact that China's popular nationalism has become a "double-edged sword" for Beijing (He 2007a; Wang 2008). As witnessed in case of "New Thinking" debate on Japan policy in China, wherein, on one hand, the rising anti-Japanese popular nationalism can help authorities to consolidate its power by facilitating social mobilisation and promoting political solidarity by focusing on animosity by opponents (Japan) over domestic issues, but on the other hand, such popular sentiments affect Beijing's diplomatic choices. In view of this, Kenneth Pyle as quoted in Wang (2008: 800) notes that issues such as the Japanese textbook and Yasukuni Shrine controversies have all evoked such popular anti-Japanese nationalism, where the state has struggled to retain control over the nationalist discourse. To this, Pyle contends that "[t]he government struggles to maintain its version of the master narrative, but the effort to both promote and contain nationalism is fraught with danger" (ibid.). This assessment further questions the rationality of the instrumentalist logic.

In acknowledging the importance of 'emotions', Zhou (2012: 62) posits that although the manifestation of this emotion may be made more observable due to shifting geopolitics in international relations or the state's political manipulation, but its roots should not be reduced to such factors. For the emotions existed even before the patriotic education campaigns or changes in international geopolitics (ibid.). While Suzuki (2007: 27) suggests that although there is some truth to the fact that the CCP has promoted some form of patriotism to legitimise itself, but this cannot be concluded as deliberate attempts to disseminate anti-Japanese sentiments. The caveats lie in the assessment, as Suzuki (ibid.) contends that: (1) the cultivation of an overtly anti-Japanese patriotism/nationalism does not necessarily make "rational" sense in terms of securing the stability of the CCP regime. For Japan remains one of China's key trading partners and can play a critical role in China's economic development. (2) The ability to utilise historical memories for political pursuits by Chinese leadership implies that Chinese leadership is autonomous of historical memories and manipulate

history to suit political interest. However, in reality historical perceptions do matter and thus, it is unlikely for Chinese leadership to be an exception. (3) anti-Japanese nationalism can be used for regime legitimacy only when the rhetoric has a “resonance” or a “captive audience” in the Chinese populace (ibid.). These aspects clarify that anti-Japanese sentiments in China are deeply embedded within historical trauma and current disputes rather than just being understood as a product of state manipulation. In furthering this argument, Wang (2008: 800) contends:

“The national humiliation discourse certainly is propaganda in today’s China, however, it has a large and sympathetic audience. For many Chinese people, the foreign invasions, the military defeats, the unequal treaties and all the details of invaders’ atrocities during the “100 years of national humiliation” are not merely a recounting of national history. People learn these sad stories not only from history textbooks or patriotic education activities, but also from their parents and grandparents. Without comprehension of the primordialist background of Chinese nationalism, we would not be able to fully understand why the Chinese elite-led top-down propaganda campaign could have realized its objectives of enhancing the regime’s political legitimacy and improving social solidarity”.

Wang’s understanding resonates Gries (1999: 9) argument that an “equal weight” is needed to be given to “emotional content” and “primordial element” that constructs China’s nationalism. Lu (2008: 8) articulates that “strong nationalist emotions are a reality in Chinese society, whether originally fostered by the government or not”. The relevance to this understanding can be traced in the personal stories of Chinese people. For instance, in December 2003, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao touched on his war memories at a reception dinner given by US Secretary of State Colin Powell. Wen reflected on the memories of Japanese aggression by saying:

“It is very difficult to understand someone’s thinking and to know this person without knowing his growth experience. I was born during China’s Anti-Japanese War. I can never forget the scene when I huddled against my mother stood in front of the bayonets of Japanese soldiers. My hometown was all burned up, including the primary school that my grandpa ran. If my American friends would ask me about my political beliefs, I can tell you clearly and definitely, I myself and my people will use our own hands to build my country well” (Wang 2012: 139).

This personal anecdote of a Chinese leader, further confirms the belief that memories of the past play a vital role in shaping the Chinese view of Japan in the present

context. In this light to understand Chinese public perceptions of Japan, Wang (2008: 801) suggests that the institutionalised historical discourse about the country's traumatic national experiences has profoundly influenced the people's attitudes and perceptions toward the outside world, which is most visible in case of Japan. While Zhou (2012) suggests that since the anti- Japanese emotion has not been dealt properly in China's Japan policy, this has led to the Chinese psyche being deeply embedded by narratives of the past.

These longstanding gaps have failed to bridge the past memories and present perceptions and thus, the emotions resurface in a manner that is seen to be susceptible to controversy, political manipulation and mythmaking. This makes historical memories and their present interpretations an obstacle to wards a real reconciliation, wherein to the extent that the "memories of the past conflicts have come to shape international relations in East Asia" (Wang 2008: 801). This further confirms that historical memories are not only relevant in understanding China's relations with Japan, but also play a significant role in China's attitude towards Japan. That is, the history factor strongly informs China's popular nationalism towards Japan, which creates deep apprehensions and mistrusts over Japan's intentions, thus, resulting into a strong negative perception of Japan among Chinese public.

In order to understand how popular nationalism impacts Chinese perceptions, it becomes essential to take into account the factor of 'identity' into question. Most importantly, how Chinese self-identity is shaped. For this, it is important to assess the historical narratives that exist in China. As already discussed in Chapter 2, Japan occupies a crucial place in China's historical narrative due to Japanese imperialism and war time atrocities. Given this understanding, what links the historical narratives to the present Chinese identity discourse is the fact that China's national identity comes from the interaction process between China and the outside world. Due to which China's self-centeredness and self-perception of superiority came to suffer badly with the onset of the Western and Japanese imperial powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The variant of Chinese national identity as a 'victim' has its origins in what the Chinese call "a Century of Humiliation". This is so, as the Chinese self-understanding of supremacy was suddenly ended not by any of the new Western barbarians, but by a nation they called 倭, dwarfs or people of servitude (Zaprianov 2014: 21). The

“Century of Humiliation” is deeply imprinted on Chinese memory, as the Century deeply rooted a strong sense of “injustice” in the national psyche of China (ibid.: 22).

In case of China, the memories of the past have constructed the collective Chinese national identity. According to Norwegian Scholar, Johan Galtung, as quoted by Wang (2015: 228) points that “collective memories over key historical events are critical in defining a group’s identity and determining how that group behaves in conflict situations”. Wherein, categorically, Galtung (1996: 9) argues that the collective subconscious is driven by “Chosenness-Myths-Trauma” (CMT) syndrome. Wherein, Chosenness (the idea of being chosen by transpersonal forces such as history), myths related to beliefs about a glamorous future, often seen as reenactment of glamorous past; and trauma is based on the horrors of the past, with shadows into the future trauma-combine to form a country’s CMT complex. This CMT complex acts as a useful tool in understanding the function of historical memory in China.

In linking the CMT complex to China’s case, Wang (2015: 228) states that- as “proud citizens of the “Central Kingdom,” the Chinese feel a strong sense of chosenness, as reflected in their pride to call themselves as the “descendants of the dragon”. This exemplifies the China’s selective pride in their ancient civilisation and other achievements-which constitutes the myth factor. While the humiliating experience in the face of Western and Japanese incursions is what Chinese people refer to as “national trauma”. Thereby, this CMT complex drives China’s group mentality in reviving their country’s past glory and strength- defining China’s nationalist spirit. Gries (1999) sees it as China’s “face nationalism” wherein Chinese feel a compulsion to save the face of the nation in front of other countries- thus, making the Chinese sensitive to any behaviour that seems to challenge their perceived dignity. That is, PRC is a newer political entity but Chinese people and Chinese territory have ancient histories. In this view, China cannot be understood apart from its history, which forms a significant portion of Chinese nationalism, wherein “Century of Humiliation” is argued as the single most important historical period that influenced modern Chinese nationalism (Pilger 2011: 10). Thereby, it is imperative to understand how history and a subsequent Chinese victimisation identity impacts Chinese nationalism.

In drawing the relation, the nationalist spirit of China can be directly linked to the construct of national identity. According to Elie Kedourie, as quoted in Gries (2004a: 9), “nationalism is very much a matter of one’s self-view, of one’s estimation of oneself and one’s place in the world”. In view of this definition, China’s national identity is “tied to their nation, together with the value and emotional significance they attach to membership in the national community” (ibid.). For Chinese, identity of the ‘Self’ is directly related to China’s encounters with the western and later Japanese ‘Others’. What is in process is the use of “othering” of an out-group to glorify an in-group (He 2007b: 55). This is a tactic employed frequently in the development of nationalist myths wrapped in patriotic rhetoric, claiming that pride in one’s own nation and hostility to others are in the national interest. and can create strong feelings of solidarity among in-group members (ibid.). These myths are credible to a “captive audience” in China because the private memories of the war of Japanese aggression and the genuine resentment towards Japan was long masked under the class struggle until shifting to that of defending China from hostile forces. This began with the Communists’ successful defence against the Japanese in the Second Sino-Japanese War, and continues through the present day.

To explain, for Chinese, Japan acts as an “ultimate enemy”, and to combat anything related to Japan is automatically an act of “quintessential patriotism” (ibid.: 59). Japan therefore, acts as the “victimising Other” whose past aggression remains central in Chinese historical memory (Atanassova-Cornelis 2012: 97). Therefore, for China, the historical memory of a ‘victim’ has constructed the identity of a ‘victimised state’ - which plays a crucial role in determining Chinese psyche in foreign policy. In this process of China’s identity formation, what makes Japan more significant over other foreign invaders is that, China did not adjust its image of Japan by recategorising Japan as a waiguoren (foreigner) state, rather it perceived itself as an “un-Japanese” state” (Shih 1995: 544). That is, China’s historical consciousness of Japan’s aggression during 1931-1945 serves as the common link of collective post war identity among Chinese, that distinguishes them from the Japanese ‘Other’. Xu describes it as “Chineseness”, which is illustrated by:

“the uniqueness of Chinese as a people, as a culture, as a society, and as a political entity. At the heart of it, the “victor vs. victim” complex, ancestor-respect and Chinese-style pragmatism, and writing as a way for formal



communication distinguish it from other cultures and peoples” (ibid.: 280).

This implies that ‘othering’ of Japan plays a strong role as it gives a positive thrust to China’s identity against Japan. This clash of identities is the prime factor that constrains the present relations. This argument stands valid as China’s economic relations with Japan has failed to heal the wounds of its past, rather with time China has become more assertive in claiming the wounds suffered in the past. Here, the clash lies in China’s identity of self as the “victim” against the construction of Japan as the “victimising Other” (Suzuki 2007: 33-37). Therefore, this Chinese “self” versus Japanese “other” has become a crucial building block of new China’s self-perception and thus, has a strong impact on the way Chinese perceive Japan.

#### **4.3 PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENTS: DEMONSTRATIONS AND ONLINE PROTESTS**

Sino-Japanese political relations underwent a serious deterioration with the turn of the twenty-first century, markedly strained by a succession of sensitive issues. Of which, the most noted phenomenon was the rise of China’s anti-Japanese popular nationalism, which is defined here as “a psychological tendency to hold negative views of Japan and of Japanese society in general” (Kang 2013: 162). For instance, even a very trivial event could trigger such strong anti-Japanese response. To cite an example, Chinese soccer fans in Beijing rioted over Japan’s 3-1 win against China in August 2004 Asia Cup final. Expressing indignation, Chinese fans held anti-Japanese banners and flag, Japan’s national anthem was drowned out by jeers, Japanese flags were burnt, shouted obscenities and, sang patriotic songs (BBC News 2004). Therefore, for Chinese fans, this match seemed to mean more than just football, as fans reportedly used the occasion to vent out their anger at Japan amid worsening political relations in recent years (Yu 2012: 143). While in 2005, the 101-story Mori building being built in Shanghai’s Pudong Financial District ran into anti-Japanese protests when the mayor of Shanghai objected to a design feature that looked like a “rising sun” over Shanghai (Taylor 2012: 12). What explains such behaviour of Chinese public?

The animosity and negative attitude towards Japan has been largely reflected in the

Chinese people's frustrations that became an outburst in the form of anti-Japanese protests. To say so, the accumulated enmity towards Japanese transgression has led to visible and increasingly frequent anti-Japanese protests. To cite few examples, in 2003, the anti-Japanese protests in China are as follows: First, on 4 August 2003, in Qiqihar, people protested against the inadvertent discovery of a cache of World War II Japanese chemical weapons that led to one death and 43 injuries; second, on 30 September 2003, in Zhuhai, people protested against an orgy of Japanese tourists with Chinese prostitutes on 18 September (anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge incident); third, on 9 October 2003, from Zhejiang, 13 protestors attempted to land on Diaoyu Island; And lastly, on 3 November 2003, in Xi'an, people protested against a lewd skit by Japanese University students (Taylor 2008: 11). These series of protests reflect the Chinese public animosity embedded in the narratives of the tragic past.

Apart from the street demonstrations of anti-Japanese public sentiments, another factor significantly reflects on the anti-Japanese popular nationalism is the internet phenomenon of "fenqing (indignant young people) culture" (He 2007b: 61), which exemplifies the extreme reflection of China's anti-Japanese cyber nationalism. To cite an example, in 2001, an incident famously called "Military Flag Dress Scandal" (*jun qi zhuang shi jian*), where a famous Chinese actress, Zhao Wei was attacked on the internet for wearing a dress, which had a Japanese World War II Imperial Navy's flag imprinted on it for a fashion magazine photo. This sparked strong nationalist reactions from China's online users. As some of the examples of the online comments are:

"801345": "This is not merely an issue of how to educate or actress, but an issue of how to educate our society. If we don't respect the history ourselves, we will never win respect from others. I can't imagine a Jewish person saying, "OK, the holocaust is a past event, and we should look forward." He would be condemned by his own people" (Xu 2007: 62).

"*Rou gang*": "What Miss Zhao did, regardless of her intention, was actually glorifying Japan's militarism. This is truly outrageous and intolerable. Thirty million Chinese people died in the hands of Japanese invaders, and our super star began to sell her dignity and our nation's dignity for personal gain. What a shame! Don't go too far! Unless she publicly apologizes to our people, we should boycott all her products" (ibid.).

"*Xiao yu*": "Can "ignorance" be an excuse? On those minor things, you can be ignorant. On those issues about your nation's tragedy and humiliation, you can never use ignorance as an excuse. And your audience can not tolerate your ignorance, if you still consider yourself a Chinese" (ibid.).

Internet has become an effective channel for expressing and mobilising Chinese nationalism, especially the anti-Japanese attitudes fostered by the popular collective memory of Sino-Japanese war history. With time the nationalist websites, chat rooms and blogs have proliferated, and a majority of these websites mainly have explicit anti-Japanese focus. For instance, the Coalition of Patriots Web (aigouzhe tongmwn wang) is one of China's most influential nationalist, anti-Japanese website. It was created in 2002, and by 2006, the website had garnered 101, 978 registered members for its online forum (Zhang Jian, 2007: 20). The website acts as an effective forum, as in August 2003, a Japanese ammunitions cache from the Second Sino-Japanese War was discovered in Heilongjiang Province in northeastern China and when the cache was searched a mine exploded killing one person and injuring 43 others. As a result of this, the Coalition of Patriots Web joined six other popular anti-Japanese websites to organise an online petition demanding reparations from the Japanese government for the victims of the explosion and the removal of all chemical weapons that were also left in China after WW II (Le 2011: 60).

Such reactions from Chinese public reflect the unquestionable negativity towards Japan that is ingrained in the Chinese psyche. The reiteration of the history factor in each of the comments exemplifies the rationality of memories in China's reactive mode of action towards Japan. Such indignation was also witnessed during Ma-Shi's "New Thinking Debate, as discussed earlier in the Chapter. Besides, Chinese online nationalism is also reflected in the responses to the sensitive news reports on Japan. Such as, in 2003, within five days after the Zhuhai prostitution incident was reported, over twenty-four thousand comments were posted on Sina.com. While in a Soho.com online poll on the incident, 90 percent of the Chinese respondents agreed that the Japanese involved intended to humiliate China by picking September 18 as the date (Reilly 2010: 50). While in an April 2005 online poll on Japan's history textbooks, eight million "votes" were registered on Sina.com within days (ibid.).

In propagating the anti-Japanese sentiment, China's cyber-forums are acting as platforms for mobilising and organising mass campaigns and/or demonstrations (Hong 2009: 218). Online activism has become one of the prominent areas of public involvement in China. Identifying the internet as one of the most important arena of

public debate and political activism in China, the “2010 Society Blue Paper” published by the CASS on 22 December 2009, contained a paper titled “2009 China Internet Public Opinion Analysis Report”. The Report stated:

“In the “2008 China Internet Public Opinion Analysis Report” we have created the concept of “new opinion class”, to use it to describe those netizens who are concerned with news and current affairs and express their opinions online. In recent years, they have leveraged the “all communicate to all” strength of the Internet, and expressed their views on all kinds of problems in China’s social development. They can gather consensus, transform emotions, induce action, and influence society within a very short period of time. In 2009, a scale of the “new opinion class” has been expanded further. According to the survey of CNNIC, on June 30, 2009, the population of Chinese netizens reached 338 million. The online population has increased 40 million within 6 months. Internet users are more than 25 percent of the total population, above the world. [...] Netizens’ willingness to express themselves and to participate [in public affairs] is increasing and their voices are dynamic. On a series of sudden events, “New Opinion Class” demonstrated their enormous energy to include public opinion” (China Digital Times 2010).

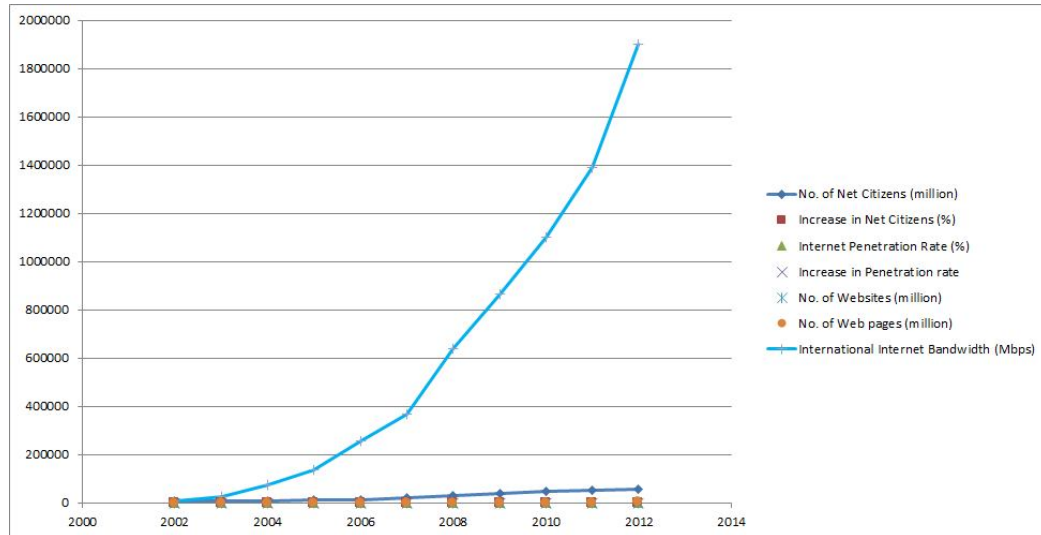
From the above statement, it is clear that Chinese netizens have emerged as one of the potent source of public opinion in China. The increasing trend in the netizens in China is evitable from the following Table.

**Table 4.2: Overall Net Citizen Scale in China (2002-2012)**

Year	No. of Net Citizens (million)	Increase in Net Citizens (%)	Internet Penetration Rate (%)	Increase in Penetration rate (%)	No. of Websites (million)	No. of Web pages (million)	International Internet Bandwidth (Mbps)
2002	5910	-	4.6	-	0.37	-	9380
2003	7950	34.5	6.2	34.7	0.59	-	27216
2004	9400	18.2	7.2	16.1	0.66	-	74429
2005	11100	18.0	8.5	18.0	0.69	-	136106
2006	13700	23.4	10.5	23.5	84	45	256696
2007	21000	53.2	16.0	52.3	150	85	368927
2008	29800	41.9	22.6	41.2	288	161	640287
2009	38400	28.8	28.9	27.8	323	336	866367
2010	45730	19.0	34.3	18.6	191	600	1098957
2011	51310	12.2	38.3	10.4	230	866	1389529
2012	56400	9.9	42.1	9.9	268	1227	1899792

**Source:** Statistical Report on Internet Development in China (2002-2012), Ministry of Information Industry, PRC.

**Figure 4.2: Trend of increase in Chinese Netizens**



**Source:** Elaborated from data in Table 4.2.

Figure 4.2 zooms in the increasing trend of netizens in China since 2002 showcasing an incremental growth. It reflects an increasing trend of the number of Chinese internet users. The parameters based on “number of websites”, “number of webpages” and the international internet bandwidth quantify the increasing internet access in China.

This rise in netizens can be directly correlated to the rise in Chinese social media activity since 2002. This pattern exemplifies the rise of popular activism in China, wherein the exponential growths were noted in 2005, 2010 and 2012. This rapid growth in the number of netizens can be understood in the events of anti-Japanese public demonstrations in these three years. Furthermore, the public opinion polls showed that Chinese impression of Japan reached a historical low during this period, as “unfavourable” impression accounted for 64.1 percent (2005), 55.9 percent (2010) and 64.5 percent (2012) (Genron NPO 2013). Zhu (2014: 55) argues that China’s national interest has become increasingly dependent on cyberspace, and China has become an important Internet stakeholder.

To understand the influence of China’s “new opinion class” (*xin yijian ceng*), the 2003 online petition case is a very successful example of online mobilisation. In July 2003, 66 years after the Marco Polo Bridge incident that led to Japan’s invasion of China, a group of Chinese nationalists called the “Alliance of Patriots” (*Aiguo*

*tongmeng wang*) (Reilly 2008a: 192) organised an online petition to “prevent Japan from winning a \$12 billion Chinese government contract for the construction of a high-speed Beijing-Shanghai rail link” (Gries 2005b: 251). Reflecting the anti-Japanese sentiment, the campaign logo read: “Heaven and Earth will not tolerate traitors. We don’t want the Japanese bullet train. We refuse the use of Japanese products for the Beijing-Shanghai Line” (ibid.). Within ten days, the petition collected 82, 752 online signatures from Chinese netizens, and was then publicly submitted to the Ministry of Railways in Beijing on 29 July.

The Chinese media reported saying, “memories of past Japanese military invasions and occupation still linger, and more than 80,000 Chinese people have signed an online petition opposing the use of Japanese Shinkansen technology” (China.org.cn 2003b). At this time, nationalism ran high during the debates, with online posts calling the officials from the Ministry of Railways as “traitors” (Tai 2006: 273). Following the strong public opposition to the railway project, the rail contract decision was cancelled and later suddenly deferred. To this outcome, petition organizer and “nationalist hero” Feng Jinhua declared that the Internet petition had a “clear impact” (Gries 2005b: 251). Such an outcome demonstrates that online public opinions have the possibility of influencing the government’s foreign relations.

Chinese public autonomous activism towards Japan is also visible in the *baodiao* campaign (保钓运动) or Protect the Diaoyu Islands, which is a grassroots campaign initiated in the early 70s, aimed at defending China’s formal claims to the islands through direct action and advocacy. For the first time, the Chinese advocates collectively sailed to the disputed islands in 2003 (Tseng 2012). In September 2010, public outrage flared up over Japan’s extended detention of Chinese captain after a Chinese trawler collided with two Japanese Coast Guard patrol ships in the waters of the Diaoyu islands on 7 September. Chinese people vented their anger online by calling for a boycott of Japanese goods and asking the Chinese government to take stronger measures. Some of the online messages are:

“fenghuang802” at “bbs.ifend.com”: “They entered our territorial waters, destroyed our property (the fishing boat), and seized our citizens. What do you call that?” (Xinhuanet 2010).

“Li Wihua” at “t.sina.com.cn”: “What the Japanese seized was not Zhan

Qixiong, the trawler's captain, but the dignity of the Chinese nation” (ibid.).

“zzwghwgh” at “tianya.cn.”: “We must firmly boycott Japanese goods. They are making so much money from us Chinese while hurting us so deeply. If you're a good Chinese person, you won't buy Japanese goods” (ibid.).

Similarly, in 2012, Chinese public's negative attitude towards Japan was witnessed in the online medium, as Chinese netizens expressed anger over Japanese cabinet's decision to “purchase” part of Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. In expressing strong condemnation, nearly 13 million netizens followed or commented on related posts via *Sina Weibo*, Chinese Twitter-like microblogging service (Xinhuonet 2012a). To cite an example, Chinese actor Wen Zhang's statement that “Diaoyu islands belong to China”, at a television awarding ceremony, became the most popular post on *Sina Weibo* (ibid.).

In understanding the Chinese public perception of Japan, it is very important to take note of the language, symbols, gestures, and the posters that are used to depict the emotions. That is, the indignation is clearly reflected in the expressions used by the Chinese people. As already seen in the case of fenqing, who have a tendency to use abusive language towards Japan. Similarly, even in the mass demonstrations, the slogans used by the Chinese public depict their embedded animosity. For instance, on the event of the 2004 Asian Cup Finals, Chinese fans yelled: “*Sha, Sha, Sha*” (Kill, Kill, Kill,) Or, echoing a patriotic song from another era, they shouted: “*Dadao Xiang Guizhimm de Toushang Kanqu*” (May a big sword chop off the Japanese heads) (Yardley 2004). Similarly, in the anti-Japanese demonstrations on 16 April 2005 in Shanghai, a long banner held aloft by a dozen marching demonstrators read: “The Chinese people are very angry; there will be serious consequences!” As read Another banner revealed the object of their anger: “Oppose Japanese imperialism!” Other banners displayed a variety of specific grievances: “Oppose Japan entering the Security Council!” “Boycott Japanese goods, revitalize China!” “Oppose Japan's history textbooks!” “Protect our Diaoyu Islands!” The most persistent messages focused on a proposed may 2005 boycott: “Boycott Japanese goods for a month, and Japan will suffer for a whole year!” “Boycotting Japanese goods will castrate Japan!” Images of butcher knives, swords, and arrows were painted piercing the rising sun of

Japan's national flag. But what was more pressing an issue was the image of Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi that faced the greatest wrath as some one gave him a mustache to make him look like Adolf Hitler. While someone painted a pig's snout and ears onto his face and declared "Death to Koizumi the pig!" and the most ominous images evoked a dead Koizumi, with tombstones bearing his name, and a photo of a funeral with Koizumi's picture at the centre (Gries 2005b: 253-254; Gries 2005c: 105-106). Similarly, during the 2012 mass protest, banners displayed slogans such as: "Never forget the national humiliation," and "Protect China's inseparable territory", and in a much harsh tone read statements like, "Let's kill all Japanese," and "Nuclear extermination for wild Japanese dogs" (Roberts 2012).

With such anti-Japanese outbursts, China experienced a dramatic rise of activism and protests; a surge of negative sensationalist coverage; and an increase in public anger towards Japan-which Reilly (2012: 181) calls as the "wave of public mobilization". As a result of such indignation and anti-Japanese sentiments, China's Japan policy was in serious crisis. Most importantly, these sentiments expressed through protests, online mediums are a result of Japan's denial and ambiguity towards its role in China during 1940s, hundreds of cyber forums specializing in Sino-Japanese relations and almost all displaying strong anti-Japanese sentiment have emerged in the last few years. In response, the Chinese government too has toughened its stance on Japan (Hong 2009: 218).

These vehement anti-Japanese reactions by Chinese public clearly reflect the indignation that many Chinese today feel towards Japan, which as evident has its roots in evolving Chinese narratives about their past. Gries (2005c) points that the stories that people tell about their pasts are constitutive of who they are in the present, which can be explained as:

"Anthony Giddens argues that narratives provide the individual with "ontological security." "The reflexive project of the self ... consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continually revised, biographical narratives." While Margaret Somers contrasts it with "representational narratives" (selective descriptions of events) with more foundational "ontological narratives:" "the stories that social actors use to make sense of - indeed, to act in - their lives. [They] define who we are." The storied nature of social life, in short, infuses our identities with meaning. For better or for worse, Japan has become central to evolving Chinese citizens' understandings of their own past and who they are at the dawn" (ibid.: 107).



Given this perspective, the query lies in understanding of what explains this anti-Japanese anger. That is, after a quarter-century of unprecedented economic growth, most Chinese no longer fear Japan, and a long suppressed anger at Japan has resurfaced.

The trigger to such public sentiment as gauged from the anti-Japanese demonstrations is enforced by the “collective memory” of the Chinese, which predominantly perceives Japan as an aggressor who invaded China during the so-called “Century of Humiliation” and has not apologised to China for its atrocities. To cite an example, March of the Volunteers, the national anthem of China composed during Japan’s occupation of northeastern China in the 1930s, is a composition of anti-Japanese sentiments (Kruarattikan 2015: 151). These reflections confirm that historical memories matter and play an active role in defining the present day Sino-Japanese relations. This further confirms that perceptions are an important factor in understanding Chinese attitude towards Japan, which are predominantly shaped by the narratives of historical memories. In view of this, Gries (2005b: 254) rightly contends that:

“To most Chinese, the Japanese are “devils”- not just because of the brutality of the Japanese invasion of China and the sheer numbers of Chinese killed by Japanese troops, but also because of an ethical anger with earlier origins. The perceived injustice of “little brother” Japan’s impertinent behaviour toward “big brother” China, starting in the late nineteenth century and running through World War II atrocities like the “Rape of Nanking,” helps to sustain deep anti-Japanese sentiment, settling them apart from other, more fleeting anti-foreign feelings.”

This Chinese perception of ‘injustice’ as a result of the defeat, according to Gries (2004a: 70):

“turned the world of China’s elite upsides down [...] Earlier losses in wars with “Western barbarians” (*yang guizi*) were one thing, but losing to an inferior within the realm of Sinocentric civilization fundamentally destabilized Chinese worldviews. Many Chinese today see the 1895 loss to Japan and the ensuing Treaty of Shimonoseki as the darkest hour in the “Century of Humiliation”.

These perceptions have bolstered the “anti-Japanese popular nationalism” among Chinese public which strongly refutes the instrumental logic that Chinese elite play the ‘Japan card’ to safeguard the regime and sustain the CCP’s legitimacy. It is to note

that Chinese nationalism, as Zhao (2014: 19) states is driven by two forces from two opposite directions: the incumbent state elites from the top down (state nationalism) and the popular societal forces from the bottom up (popular nationalism). Thereby, to say that Chinese public's anti-Japanese sentiments are state-constructed via the "Patriotic Education Campaign, appears to be a narrow justification as the state-led nationalism in China was just an instrument of the communist state to bolster the faith of the Chinese people in a political system in trouble and hold the country together during the period of rapid and turbulent transformation. In contrast, the public sentiment against Japan as reflected in the mass protests and cyber forums are not initiated and organised by the Communist Party, rather it is driven by the popular nationalists' hatred of Japan. It is argued that Chinese nationalism is also driven from the bottom up by societal forces. That is:

"After a century slowly fomenting among Chinese intellectuals, national sentiment has captured and redefined the consciousness of the Chinese people during the last two decades of China's economic boom. This mass national consciousness launched the Chinese colossus into global competition to achieve an international status commensurate with the country's vast capacities and the Chinese people's conception of their rightful place in the world (Zhao 2014: 21).

In this perspective, to say that anti-Japanese sentiments in Chinese people are instrumented remains highly contested. In practical understanding, these popular nationalist sentiments are "outweighed" by the Chinese elites's "number one goal: regime survival", as for the elites, their continued rule depends in large part on continued economic development- which requires stable relations with China (Gries 2005b: 254). This rational rather makes Chinese state's national interest to run in contrast to Chinese public interests. To say so, as it tends to dismiss the anger displayed by Chinese nationalists as "mere emotion" (Gries 2005c: 107). If it were so, where Chinese nationalism could be reduced to an issue of elite instrumentality then it would be amenable to rational compromise. Rather the truth is that Chinese nationalism implicates popular passions that are less readily negotiable. To note, since 2002, the anti-Japanese sentiments among Chinese public did prompt the constant deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations.

It is found that the Chinese government tends to intervene to minimise the harm that may be inflicted as a result of the uncontrolled upheaval of unrest and the outpouring

of nationalism. This is so because for Beijing, the concerns rest on the “double-edged nature” of Chinese popular nationalism. Yuan (2008: 227) explains that: on one end, there is a threat that public demonstrations against foreign countries can turn against the Chinese government itself. And on the other end, there is a danger of over-promise that heightens popular expectations and subsequently reveals the government’s inability and/or unwillingness to deliver.

Adding to this dilemma, Yuan (ibid.) argues that the Chinese government has concerns with regard to: potential backlash on China’s image, wherein overselling the victim mentality indirectly belittles the role of the communist party; representation of Chinese nationalism as “Han Chauvinism” which impacts its ethnic issues and lastly, such nationalist actions raise the spectre of the “China threat”. Therefore, these issues raise concerns for the Chinese leadership, where the challenge is to maintain a delicate balance between appealing to the nationalist sentiments and heading to the national interests.

In view of this, the Chinese government is caught in the pincer of hypocrisy, where: on one end, the anti-Japanese sentiment that the government wilfully ignored or outwardly endorsed prevents Beijing from fully implementing its desired policies. And on the other end, at the same time, the government cannot let go off the economic and diplomatic ties with Japan that has been built overtime (Hamzawi 2013: 7). In view of how public sentiments factor in China’s Japan policy, Reilly (2012: 56) states that:

“The contradictions between these two approaches—a willingness to deemphasize the wartime past for strategic and economic reasons and the temptation to use history for diplomatic leverage and domestic legitimacy—have repeatedly provided an opening for public pressure to emerge and influence China’s relations with Japan.”

These assessments call for further investigation into the understanding of how public opinion has an impact on foreign policy of nondemocratic governments such as China. Most importantly, how have these public sentiments impacted China’s Japan policy. But before we probe into it, it is essential to have an understanding of what

constitutes Chinese public opinion and attitude towards Japan. That is, how does China views Japan? What is the image of Japan in the Chinese minds?

#### **4.3.1 CHINESE PUBLIC OPINION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS JAPAN AND THE “HISTORY ISSUE”**

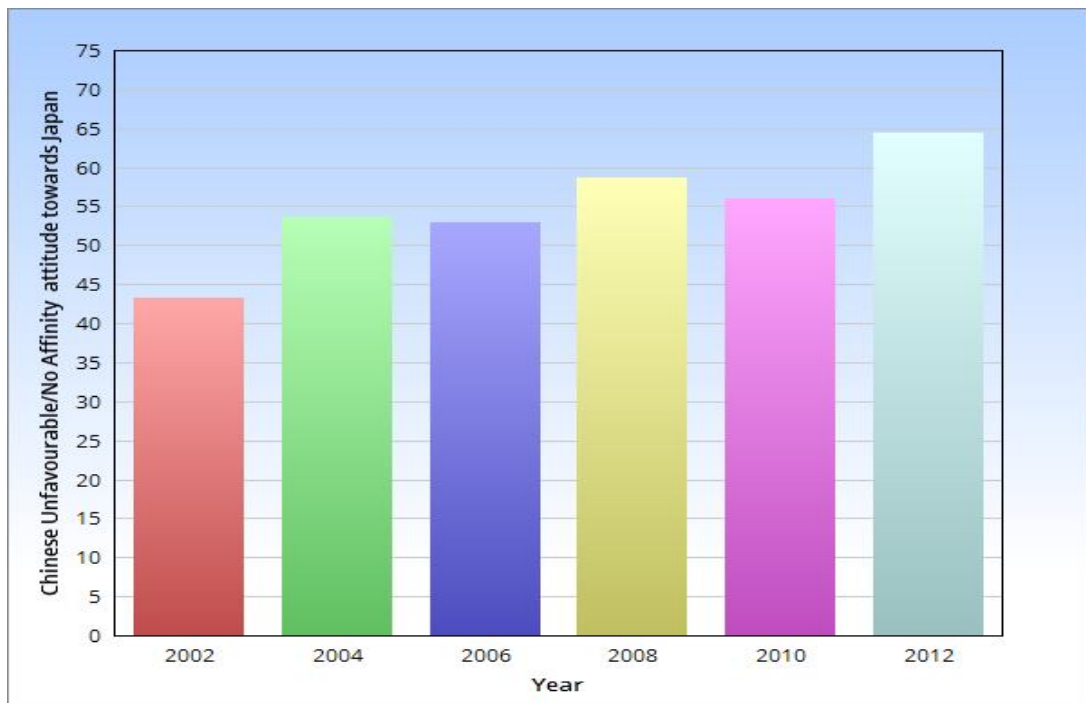
From the above explanation, it is clear that China’s ‘anti-Japanese popular nationalism’ is far more than just a rhetoric. It clearly reflects that Chinese anti-Japanese nationalism is not just a state-led top-down approach but has a strong bottom up influence as noted through cyber forums, opinion pieces, and public protests. It can be said that the anti-Japanese sentiment is highly dominant and deeply embedded in the Chinese society. This argument can be validated by drawing assessments from public opinion polls.

What makes public opinion polls significant is that the polls provide a window into understanding of popular attitudes and sentiments. Given the subjectivity involved in public sentiments, opinion polls translate it into a quantifiable data, which helps to trace the impact of perceptions in international politics. That is, providing an empirical understanding to the emotions.

For instance, Joseph Fewsmith (2001) in his compilation of survey data from the China Youth Daily, came across some interesting facts. As from the survey conducted at the end of 1996, it was found:

“the word “Japan” “most easily” made 83.9 percent of the youth surveyed think of the Nanjing Massacre and made 81.3 percent think of “Japanese denial” and the “war of resistance against Japanese aggression.” When asked which Japanese in the twentieth century is most representative of Japan, first place (28.7 percent) went to Tojo Hideki, one of World War II fame. When asked to place a label on the Japanese, 56.1 percent chose “cruel” – the most frequently chosen personality trait. (ibid.: 261).

**Figure 4.3: Chinese Unfavourable/No Affinity Attitude towards Japan (2002-2012)**

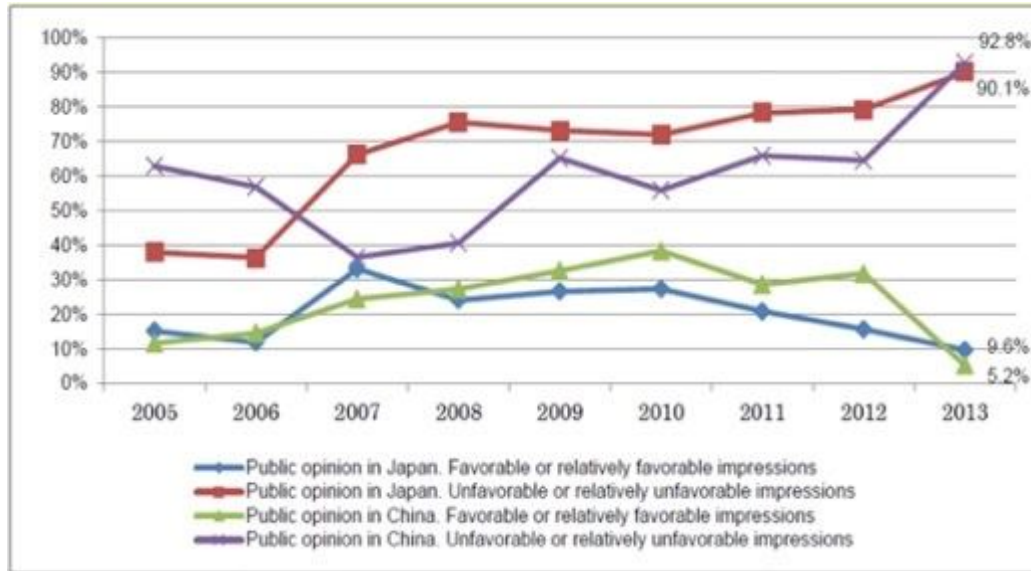


**Source:** Elaborated from public opinion poll data by CASS, Genron NPO, Pew Research (2002-2012).

The above data clearly and empirically reflects that most Chinese people's attitude towards Japan is extremely negative. Most opinion polls show that a significant proportion of the people have perceptions of Japan that are usually very negative in one way or the other. As the public opinion polls significantly reveal that there is a strong emphasis on history issues, a tendency to associate negative images to Japan and less of room for any goodwill. With history factor being dominant, anti-Japanese sentiments mainly focuses on World War II, with the Nanjing Massacre being remembered as the defining moment of Japanese identity in the conflict. Furthermore, the controversial history books used in Japanese high schools are seen as, at best, not treating the war in sufficient depth, and at worse, as neglecting or glossing over it completely. It is the "unwillingness of the Japanese to apologize" which largely justifies as to why Chinese still hold on to the history issues, even after 70 years after the war ended and 40 years after "normalizing" relations (Buss 2015: 12-13). National opinion polls about the Chinese people's attitude towards Japan started from the

early-2000s provide us a useful evidence to see what kind of role “history issue” plays to Chinese in Sino-Japanese relations at present.

**Figure 4.4: Chinese and Japanese Impressions of each other**



Source: The Genron NPO (2013).

For instance, in the 2013 survey of the 9<sup>th</sup> Japan-China opinion poll conducted by the Genron NPO in cooperation with the China Daily, in August 2013, confirms that the impressions of Chinese people towards Japan have significantly worsened over the years.

It is clear from the above data in Figure 1, which is verbatim based on Genron NPO 2013 report, suggests that among the Chinese polled, 92.8 percent replied they have “unfavourable” impressions about Japan. The finding ranks as the worst result in the past nine surveys. Among the Chinese polled, the largest percentage, 77.6 percent, mentioned that “Japan has caused a territorial dispute over the Diaoyu Islands, taking a hard stance toward China.” Meanwhile, 63.8 percent of the Chinese polled cited what they see as Japan’s lack of a proper apology and remorse about its invasion of China and also mentioned that Japan needs to “respect the established historical theory” regarding Japan’s invasion of China This figure surpassed 2012’s finding of 39.9 percent.

This negative impression of Japan among Chinese public have been a stable trend since 2001. On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic normalisation between China and Japan in 2002, the Institute of Japan Studies of CASS restarted national polls about Japanese image and Sino-Japanese relations in China. Since 2002, the survey has been conducted in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 separately, to observe the change of Chinese people's attitude towards Japan. It was found that less than 1 percent of Chinese respondents felt "very close" to Japan, while only 5.5 percent felt "close." Over half of all respondents felt "not close" or "not very close" (hen bu qing). Wherein, the negative images of Japan such as "invading Japanese army," right-wing groups, and the Yasukuni Shrine outweighed the positive images such as the peace constitution and yen loans to China (Reilly 2012: 121).

For instance, in the first 2002 survey, when Chinese respondents were asked: "This year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the normalisation of relations between China and Japan. Do you feel affinity with Japan?". To this, only 5.9 percent of the Chinese respondents chose the option "feel affinity" or "feel very affinity" (Li 2014: 53-54). Here, it is important to note that there were 53.6 percent of Chinese respondents who selected these two opinions in the 1989's survey (Ibid.). While in contrast to this, in 2002 survey, people who did not feel affinity towards Japan counted for 43.3 percent of the whole respondents. This figure kept increasing constantly in the following three surveys with 53.6 percent in 2004. 52.9 percent in 2006 and 58.6 percent in 2008.

A Korean Dong-A Ilbo opinion poll on Chinese attitudes towards Japan, jointly conducted with Asahi Shimbun of Japan and the Institute of Sociology, CASS, in March 2005, found that China's overall opinion of Japan was negative with 64.1 percent. This view is fairly consistent among all age groups (especially those 60 years or older - 73.8 percent), gender (although with a lower percentage among the Chinese women - 59 percent), and educational levels (college or higher education had the most negative opinions - 67 percent). In contrast, unfavourable Chinese opinion of the United States was 39.8 percent. On issues specific to the history question, overall 62.8 percent cited the unresolved historical issues, overall 58.7 percent cited Yasukuni Shrine as symbol of Japanese militarism, overall 48.2 percent cited Japan's apology acceptable to the Chinese as the most important element to solve the disputes over history. While according to the poll conducted by BBC World Service by the

international polling firm GlobeScan together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland, completed between October 2005 and January 2006, which found that 71 percent of the Chinese said that Japan is having a negative influence.

Chinese Public Opinion of Japan can be traced from the surveys conducted by Pew Research Centre overtime. Such as, a Pew Research Survey in July 2013, found that China is very negative towards Japan. The report suggests that anti-Japan sentiment is quite strong in China, where 90 percent of the public has an unfavourable opinion of Japan. While on the question of “Japan’s apology”, 78 percent of Chinese respondents believed that Japan has not sufficiently apologized for its military actions during the 1930s and 1940s. According to the report of the 2008 Pew Global Attitudes Survey in China, the longstanding historical animosity between China and Japan is clearly reflected in this survey. Only 21 percent of Chinese have a favourable view of Japan, while 69 percent have an unfavourable opinion. Nearly four-in-ten (38 percent) Chinese consider Japan an “enemy”, while just 11 percent think it is a “partner”, and 37 percent say it is neither. Men (42 percent) are somewhat more likely than women (35 percent) to identify Japan as an “enemy”. The extent to which these views are tied to the past is illuminated by the fact that 76 percent of Chinese do not think Japan has apologized sufficiently for its military actions during the 1930s and 1940s.

While the Pew Research Survey in September 2006, found that roughly seven-in-ten Japanese express “unfavourable” view of Japan, as the statistics figured 71 percent as “unfavourable” over 28 percent “favourable”. The report mentioned that in China, much of the antipathy toward Japan is rooted in history – overwhelmingly, the Chinese believe Japan has yet to atone for its militaristic past. Eight-in-ten Chinese (81 percent) believe Japan has not apologized sufficiently for its military actions during the 1930s and 1940s. Also, as per the findings issues such as, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, a controversial Shinto shrine that memorializes Japan’s war dead, including Class A World War II war criminals, are viewed very negatively in China. While a 2011 survey report suggested that Chinese people’s enmity toward Japan which peaked in 2005, 2009 and 2011, were mainly linked to Koizumi’s Yasukuni Shrine visits and the territorial disputes on Diaoyu islands (Li and Zheng 2011).



A joint survey managed by the Japan Research Centre, a member of the Gallup Group, and CASS provides a comparison between the attitudes in 2002 and 2005 as well as between October 2004 and June 2005. In 2002, 66.5 percent felt no or little “affinity” to Japan. Three years later, in 2005, 71.1 percent held this view. When asked in October 2004 if they “liked” Japan, 38.8 percent responded “no”, while in June 2005, the negative view increased to 46.0 percent (Kotler et. al 2007: 101). These opinion polls reflect the gradient of anti-Japanese sentiments as they evolved with time under various circumstances.

From the above analytics, it is clear that after 2000, Chinese attitudes toward Japan became even more polarised and Chinese feelings towards Japan appeared more negative than positive. As already discussed above, the CASS surveys found that the percentage of respondents who felt “very not close” to Japan rose 8 percent from 2002 through 2006, while those who felt ambivalent declined 12 percent (Reilly 2012: 122). As the four polls conducted by the Institute of Japanese Studies(IJS), CASS, in 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 reveal that a majority of Chinese respondents did not feel close to Japan. The percentage of respondents feeling “close” or “very close” to Japan remained very low and constant. Less than 1 per cent of the respondents felt very close to Japan, and those feeling “close” totalled less than 10 per cent in each of the three years. By contrast, around half of all the respondents felt “not close” or “not at all close” to Japan (Kang 2013: 166-167).

While when it comes to the reason why they feel like this, around 80 percent of them attributed it to the “history issue”. To be more specific, over 60 percent of respondents pointed out that Japan has “not reproached itself for the past aggression”, and nearly 20 percent ascribed it to the “war” (Li 2014: 54). For example, in the 2006 survey, when asked the reasons for the non-friendly feelings, overwhelming majority pointed at history issues, wherein 27.3 percent responded to “Japan had invaded and occupied China” while 63.3 percent said “Japan has yet to face the history squarely” (Yu 2012: 134-135).

Similarly, in another series polls, 1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Japan-China Poll, conducted by Genron NPO and China Daily in eight consecutive years from 2005 to 2012, as noted in figure 1, further confirm that Chinese attitude towards Japan have increasingly been negative and that they have a strong connection with the historical memories. The survey

shows that the Chinese negative views have constantly increased as the “unfavourable” impression of Japan ranges from: 55.9 percent in 2010, 65.9 percent in 2011, 64.5 percent in 2012 to have reached the worst result in 2013 with over 92.8 percent. While when asked why they hold negative views of Japan, majority of the respondents stated “Japanese have invaded China” and “Japanese do not properly reflect their aggression in wartime”. As the data shows, history issue looms large as cited by 69.9 percent in 2010, 74.2 percent in 2011, 78.6 percent in 2012. While on the question of “what pop up in your mind first when you think of Japan”, Chinese responded to “Nanjing Massacre”.

Comparing these figures to that of the 1989 survey, it is found that only 27.5 percent of Chinese respondents thought that Japan had not deeply reflected on its past aggression, the “history issue” therefore, seems to have gradually become a main concern in the Chinese side. For example, when asked about “what images pop into your mind first when it comes to Japan?”, the option “Japanese aggression troops” were always the first or second choice of the respondents (Li 2014: 54). Moreover, the 2006 survey shows that more than one third of the respondents thought the current relations with Japan as not being good (34.3 percent), and the other one third believed bilateral relations as being “neither good nor bad” (35.3 percent). In addition, the results also show that most respondents thought the Chinese media coverage on Japan as being fair and objective (62 percent), whereas, the Japanese media coverage on China as being too negative (50 percent) (Yu 2012: 134-135).

While the Beijing Area Study also recorded a drop in the mean level of “warmness” toward Japan from 1998 to 2004, with a particularly steep decline in 2004 (ibid.). While Horizon polls also noted that the percentage of respondents who reported that they liked Japan declined from 29.2 in 1999 to 19.8 percent by 2005. Those who saw the relationship as “good” or “very good” dropped nearly 40 percent over the six years, while those who saw it as “bad” or “very bad” rose to 75 percent by 2005 (ibid.). and that history issues rose steadily as a reason for the public not to feel close to Japan, reaching 90.3 percent by 2006 in CASS surveys (ibid.: 126).

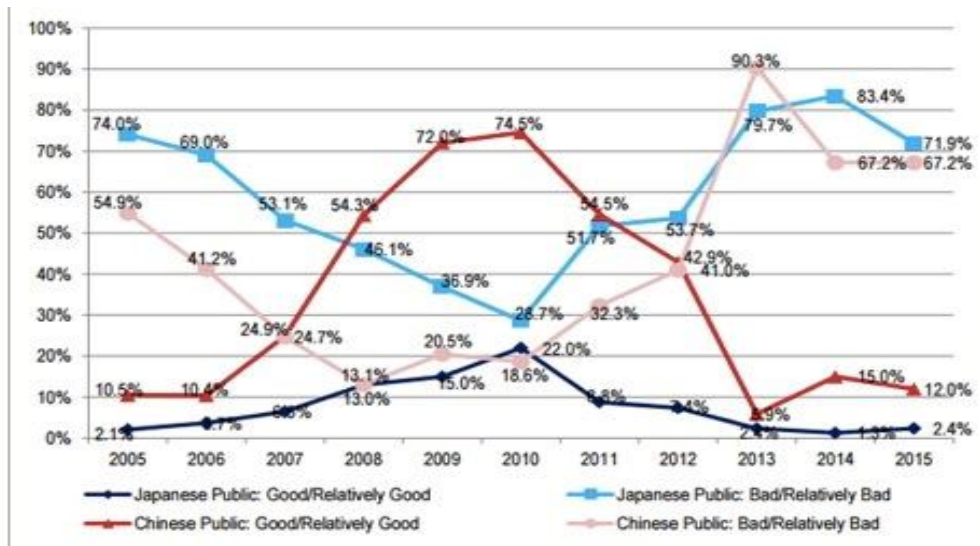
These Chinese opinion and attitude reflect a very negative view of the Sino-Japanese relations. According to the Genron NPO 2013 Survey, 90 percent of the Chinese polled believe that Japan-China relations are “bad”. From the graph it is clear that

since 2005, Chinese public view of Sino-Japanese relations have seen a fall in the negative view from around 55 percent in 2005 to that of a little above 10 percent in 2008, then again rising to 20 percent (2009) to that of rising to 40 percent (2012) and finally shooting up to 90.3 percent (2013). These variations reflect the change in Chinese people's attitude on the future Sino-Japanese relations. However, in a 2015 Pew Research Center study on "How Asia-Pacific Publics See Each Other" by Bruce Stokes (2015), it is found that while Japan is overall the most respected country in the region, favourability toward Japan is similarly diverse. Japan's median favourability is 71 percent in the region, compared to just 57 percent in China. Besides, the Pew data shows that while the Philippines and Vietnam view Japan with 82 and 81 percent favourability, China holds exceptionally low favourability of Japan at 12 percent. While 53 percent of Chinese say they have a very unfavourable assessment of Japan and believe that Japan has not apologised sufficiently for its military actions in the 1930s and '40s, as stated in the 2013 Pew Research Center survey.

In the 2015 survey of the 11<sup>th</sup> Japan-China opinion poll conducted by the Genron NPO in cooperation with the China Daily, it is found that, of the Chinese respondents, 78.3 percent expressed an "unfavourable" impression of Japan, falling below the 80 percent mark, down from the 10<sup>th</sup> Japan-China Poll (2014) of 86.8 percent. In comparison to 2013 when the "unfavourable" impression toward Japan marked its highest level (2013: 92.8 percent) since the beginning of the survey, in 2005, the 11<sup>th</sup> poll figure shows 14-percentage-point improvement. However, although some improvement was noted in China's favourability towards Japan from 2013, the percentage of those who believe that "China-Japan relations will not develop unless the historical issues are resolved" grew significantly to 47.0 percent from 31.4 percent in 2014. While 56.2 percent of respondents noted that Japan should respect the established theory about its history of invasion in the wartime years, a sharp increase from 42.0 percent in 2014. Further, 54.3 percent of the Chinese called for Japan's remorse and a serious apology over the history of invasion, as against 54.8 percent in the 2014 survey. Thus, issues related to Japan's wartime acts were frequently cited by Chinese respondents. From these figures, it is not hard to draw the conclusion that Chinese public holds a relatively negative perception on Japan and Japanese politics. In an overall analysis of the public opinion data, China's low favourability of Japan is

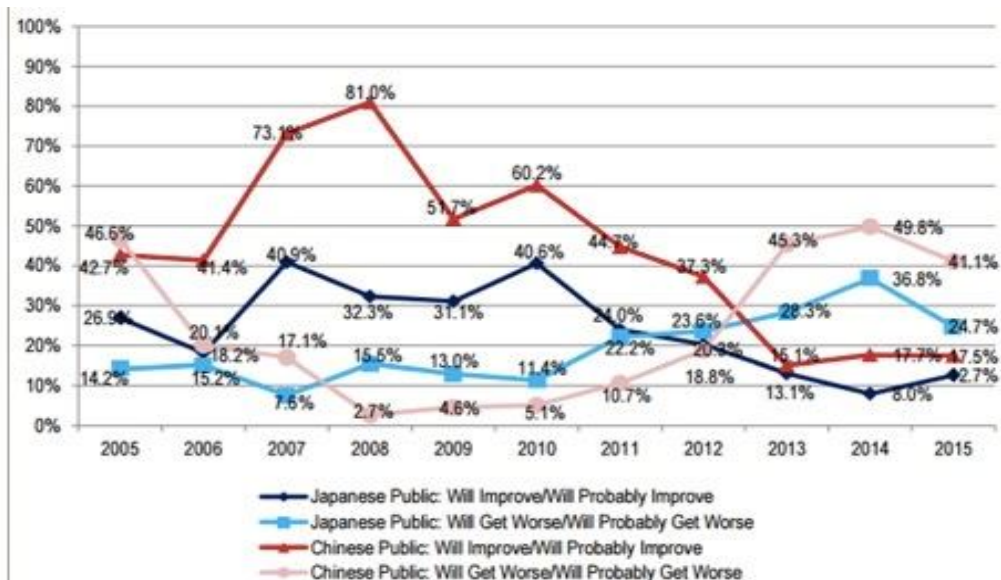
mainly the result of the memories associated with the actions of Imperial Japan during the Pacific War.

**Figure 4.5: Public Opinion on the current state of Sino-Japanese relations**



Source: 11<sup>th</sup> Japan-China Poll, Genron NPO (2015).

**Figure 4.6: Public Opinion on the future state of Sino-Japanese relations**



Source: 11<sup>th</sup> Japan-China Poll, Genron NPO, 2015.

Given the assessment of Chinese people's views of Japan, it is also important to note, what is the Chinese attitude towards the future China-Japan relations given the negative perception of Japan. In accordance to the above data in Figure 2, which is verbatim based on Genron NPO 2013 report points that the percentage of Chinese people who perceive the relationship with Japan as "bad" has declined, but the trend toward further improvement has come to a halt. That is, the prospects for the future relations between China and Japan, those who foresee a worsening of the situation have decreased on both sides, but Chinese are less confident than Japanese about whether the bilateral relationship will improve steadily from now on.

Therefore, these polls are quite useful in giving indications of the extent to which anti-Japan sentiments are embed in the Chinese society, and also reflect the causes that stimulates such an attitude. The empirical data thereby, confirms that perceptions play an indelible role in China's foreign relations with Japan. And most importantly, the overall data further confirms that historical memories play a central role in shaping of Chinese public perceptions of Japan. These public opinion poll provides a window into understanding of Chinese popular attitudes and anti-Japanese sentiments, as opinion polls translate popular sentiments into quantifiable data. And most importantly suggest how a dynamic and engaged society can exist in an authoritarian state like China. This, therefore, makes it possible to trace the lasting impact of perceptions drawn from memories in Chinese politics.

#### **4.4. PUBLIC OPINION AND CHINA'S JAPAN POLICY**

It is well noted that since the turn of the twenty-first century, China witnessed a strong wave of popular mobilisation characterised by a rise of anti-Japanese sentiment. As the public opinion polls suggest there has been a notable decline in positive opinion towards Japan since 2001. With record low of 92.8 percent of respondents having "unfavourable" attitude towards Japan in 2013, the analytics mentioned earlier does give the impression that there is a high-degree of anti-Japanese sentiment prevalent in contemporary China. It is interesting to note that there appears a 'consensus' in Chinese public opinion of Japan, where the key area lies on wartime memories. In view of this, the pertinent query lies in understanding the implications of such public

opinion on China's elite decision-making. Therefore, the central questions are: Does public opinion and anti-Japanese sentiment influence and shape China's Japan policy? or Does the Chinese government influence and shape the form of public opinion on foreign policy issues with Japan?

Conventional wisdom holds that dictators can make foreign policy freely, insulated from the public pressures that buffet elected politicians. Unlike democrats, autocrats could conduct state affairs without foreign observers "overhearing" domestic debates (Weiss 2013: 4). It is believed that an authoritarian regime has an advantage in influencing – or even manipulating – public opinion compared with a democratic regime. Given this rationale, it is widely assumed that public opinion in authoritarian countries does not generally affect foreign policymaking. In view of this, in an undemocratic country like China, where policymaking processes are not generally open to public participation, how does one explain the role of "public opinion". However, this assumption does not mean to suggest that the government can easily ignore nationalistic feelings in conducting foreign relations as a clear public sentiment against certain countries can impose constraints on government foreign-policy initiatives. Similarly, Hiroki Takeuchi (2013: 43) in contrary to the conventional wisdom suggests that unlike in democracies, authoritarian regime is rather at a disadvantage in influencing public opinion. As he explains:

"In an authoritarian regime, leaders can guide the public to a single official view but cannot allow the public to be exposed to the plural views that might exist among policy-making elites. When observing the lack of plurality in public opinion on foreign policy in an authoritarian regime, the foreign public might perceive it as a consequence of the government's manipulation and of the leadership's strong preference for unified public opinion. This perception is not problematic if the authoritarian regime really has a strong preference for the officially announced view with which the public jumps on the bandwagon. However, this misperception will be problematic if the authoritarian regime wants to have plurality in public opinion on foreign policy. [Thereby], monolithic public opinion would occur even if the authoritarian regime prefers having plurality in public opinion" (Ibid.: 44).

In the current context of China, public opinion has become an elemental force in China's foreign policy. As Yun Sun (2011) notes, that in recent years "public opinion" in China has been accredited more and more as a force driving China's

foreign policy. To cite example, analysts inside and outside China have attributed Beijing's rising assertiveness in international relations in part to the "need of the government to cater to rising nationalism at home" (ibid.). Wherein, the logic mostly cited is that expressions of Chinese nationalism are becoming increasingly vocal and frequent, and that Beijing has to "stand up" against "hostile foreign forces" or it will lose its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens (ibid.). Here, a query lies in understanding of what makes 'public opinion' such an influential factor in post-Mao China.

Does this suggest that under Mao there was no public opinion in China? This can be explained, as before the 1980s China's Japan policy is argued to be "highly centralised" and dictated by Mao's view that "brook no challenge" (Zhou 2012: 67). For instance, when Mao decided not to demand war reparations to Japan during the normalisation process, there was "no dissent in the Chinese Foreign Ministry"- the 1972 Joint Communique further validates this argument. This insular decision-making signals to the fact that there was no window for the public to influence or challenge Mao's decision. And especially in relation to Japan, as scholars have noted that the "subject of Japan and especially its invasion of China, was largely a taboo" (Brooks 2013: 2). That is, after 1949 Chinese people were shielded from the true nature of the 1931-45 Japanese occupation. To which, Whiting (1989: 5) argues that "younger generations [lacked] first-hand knowledge of war, except for what was transmitted by the family". Thereby, as noted by He (2007a: 2) the transition came only during the 1980s when "domestic political needs highlighted Japanese war atrocities and Chinese victimhood"- as understood under CCP's state-led nationalism to safeguard its legacy.

Here, an important intervention can be made suggesting that if the public were involved in the process under Mao, the ordering of priorities in China's Japan policy would have been completely different (ibid.: 68). As a result, the public concerns regarding the historical issues would have figured on the agenda instead of being overlooked for political expediency. However, the shift came in the late 1970s and the 1980s as a result of Deng Xiaoping's "Reform and Opening Up" policy that eased the political constraints on society and facilitated a much broader discussion on Sino-Japanese relations. In the follow up, the post-Mao Chinese leadership as scholars argue "decreased the degree of politicization of society and provided greater space for

intellectual debate, cultural creativity professional expertise, and economic entrepreneurship”- China’s foreign policy-making became more “pluralised” (ibid.: 69).

One of the outcome of this pluralism is felt in the rise of public opinion in China, who have become more involved in issues related to Sino-Japanese relations and as scholars note has been increasingly influencing China’s foreign policies (ibid.). For instance, it was in 1982 since the normalisation, that China displayed for the first time a highly visible hardening sentiment towards Japan. It was the first ever history textbook crisis that catalysed the effect. The Japanese Ministry of Education’s plan to release new history textbooks, which crucially changed Japan’s wartime “invasion” (qinlüe) of northern China to an “advance” (jinxing) resulted into the crisis (Brooks 2013: 46). This incident sowed the seeds of the rise of anti-Japanese popular sentiment in China. This is exemplified by the events that followed in the form of public opinion and mass reactions against Japan. In this perspective, it can be stated that the anti-Japanese sentiment in China is more than just a state-led rhetoric. It is to be argued, a reflection of a genuine reflection of Chinese popular sentiments.

In the current context, what curates the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment, as Wu (2007) suggests is the internet, that plays a significant role in the formation and diffusion of public opinion and activism in China. In this perspective, what therefore, explains China’s outburst of anti-Japanese sentiments especially on the historical issue is the fact that the combined effect of “suppression of war memories and the neglect of public concerns in the past” (under Mao), has led to the rise of a sense of “indignity” and therefore, have made Chinese public sensitive to the unresolved historical issues with Japan (Zhou 2012: 67.).

Chinese public opinion has therefore constrained China’s foreign policy decision-making as the Chinese state has lost its monopoly on Japan policy. Gries (2005b: 255) argues that nationalist sentiment has become detrimental to rational diplomacy, “constraining the ability of China’s elite to coolly pursue China’s national interest”. For example, in case of China’s Japan policy, the public reaction to former Japanese prime minister Koizumi Junichiro’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in 2001 invoked freeze in Sino-Japanese relations for a number of years, even though at times Chinese leaders wanted to seek improvements in the bilateral relationship (Reilly 2008b). This



is suggestive of the fact that China's Japan policy is significantly influenced by the domestic public sentiments towards Japan, which can alter the opportunity costs of certain policy choices toward Japan. To which, Reilly (2008a: 190) explains that when public opinion is highly mobilised around a given issue, it becomes more costly for Chinese leaders to take policy steps in contradiction with articulated public sentiment. As according to Iain Johnston, Chinese leaders are deeply concerned with publicly articulated, anti-Japan sentiments, even though such mobilised protesters are only a small segment of the overall population. To say so, as:

“There is considerable evidence that the regime focuses on more extremist attitudes (as found on the internet bulletin boards, for instance), presumably because these views are a barometer of the kinds of emotions that would get protesters into the streets” (ibid.).

While in their study on the domestic context of Chinese foreign policy as Kang (2013: 162) notes, Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen initially suggested three dimensions that seem important in allowing public opinion to enter into the policy-making process and, thus, “affect Chinese foreign policy positively or negatively”. These three dimensions are elite cohesion, foreign relations, and popular mobilisation. Wherein, Fewsmith and Rosen argue that a high level of elite cohesion, relaxed bilateral relations, or a low level of public mobilisation sharply limits the impact of public opinion, whereas a low level of elite cohesion, a high degree of tension in bilateral relations or of popular mobilisation is more likely to render public opinion salient.

In understanding the role played by public opinion in China's Japan policy, Reilly (2012) in his book *Strong Society, Smart State* argues that the Chinese government has become an “adaptive authoritarian” regime, responding adeptly to public discontent, rationally managing popular nationalists and then quickly returning to pragmatic Japan policies. To cite an example, in the event of the 2003 Qiqihair incident, in response to public pressure, Chinese official rhetoric grew more critical and assertive. Chinese rhetoric announcing the final agreement also indicated the officials' sensitivity to the Chinese public's demand for compensation from Japan. After an agreement was reached, the Chinese government quickly resumed its pragmatic policy towards Japan with a positive undertone (Reilly 2009).

This reflects the Chinese government's enhanced sensitivity to public opinion which is extremely troubling in its relation- to nationalism rooted in the "one hundred years of humiliation", a sense of victimhood, the preservation of territorial sovereignty at all costs, strong anti-Japanese feelings and, others. The conventional wisdom among China-watchers is that, in an era where the Communist party can no longer rely on ideology as a source of legitimacy, and the new source of legitimacy- economic growth- can be difficult to sustain, the regime may be therefore, tempted to wave the flag of xenophobic nationalism in order to ensure its survival. In view of this thinking, thereby, an increased government responsiveness to aggressive nationalism could limit China's ability to take a conciliatory approach toward Japan. This is because the government fears that if it does not satisfy nationalist demands, nationalist anger would be redirected at the government (Douglass 2009: 7-8). In this line, it leads to the argument that if leadership can use nationalism to mobilise the public against Japan, then there is also a reason to worry that popular nationalism will force the leadership to act aggressively, even when it has no desire to do so (ibid: 8-9).

However, it is noteworthy that the widely held argument that domestic public sentiments constrain China's Japan policy has been refuted by some scholars. As Jessica Weiss (2013: 26) in *Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China* refutes the viewpoint of scholars such as Iain Johnston, Danie Stockmann, Peter Gries, Mike Oksenberg, Dan Lynch, Wu Xinbo, Zhao Suisheng, Thomas Christensen, Robert Ross and Wu Xu, who argue that the costs of defying popular sentiment and the risks to stability create a dilemma for the government between tolerance and repression. Weiss defies the argument of popular nationalism as an "unhelpful contrait", as she notes: first, these scholars stress on nationalist protests' negative impact on long-term cooperation and smooth diplomatic relations, as she emphasises that short-term, tactical escalation may also be desirable when a government seeks to demonstrate that it will not be pushed around. And secondly, these analyses suggest that nationalism imposes a constraint exogenous to the government's own actions, but it is to note that the costs of defying popular nationalism are even greater when the government allows protesters to mobilise (ibid.: 26-27).

These arguments by Weiss are seen as to flip to the causal arrow, claiming that it is international strategy that drives elite decisions about domestic politics. As (Gries 2016a: 267; Gries et.al 2016b: 165) argue that Weiss applies IR bargaining theory to China, claiming that Chinese leaders strategically manipulate popular nationalists to signal either resolve or a willingness to cooperate. In doing so, when a major event occurs which mobilises Chinese nationalists and creates the necessary conditions for mass protest, the CCP chooses to either “nip protests in the bud” by giving a “red light” to domestic nationalists, thus reducing domestic audience costs, or allow protests to develop, giving a “green light” to domestic nationalists, tying their own hands and communicating resolve to their diplomatic foes. Weiss builds on this line of bargaining scholarship, arguing that nationalist politics within China are driven by leadership decisions about what messages to signal to the external world. Gries et. al (2016: 5) counters Weiss’ viewpoint, as to argue that elites are primarily driven by international bargaining considerations when making the ‘red light, green light’ decision vis-à-vis domestic nationalists, however, assumes a degree of elite unity and skill that, like Reilly’s argument, may be overly optimistic about CCP control of popular nationalism.

In concurrence to Weiss’ argument, Kang (2013: 168) contends that irrespective of the negative feelings and attitudes of Chinese people towards Japan, the articulation of anti-Japanese public opinion and its mobilisation into protest or other forms of collective action are limited by the stance of the government in China. That is, it is rather the Chinese government that plays an important role in shaping the opportunity structure for popular protest in the country by creating openings for and obstacles to public mobilisation. Therefore, depending on its foreign policy and domestic political considerations, Kang (2013: 170) argues that the Chinese government’s response to nationalist popular actions will differ under three perspectives: tolerance or leniency, tight control or suppression and, a two-pronged strategy.

Given these varied assessments on the likelihood of influence of public opinion on China’s Japan policy, it becomes essential to examine the Chinese government’s response to the public expressions of anti-Japanese sentiments. In doing so, the case in point is the 2005 anti-Japanese protest in China which will help analyse whether mobilised public opinion affects Chinese elite’s decision-making on Japan policy.

#### **4.4.1 CASE STUDY OF THE “2005 ANTI-JAPANESE PROTEST”**

The most significant impact of anti-Japanese sentiment on China’s Japan policy was witnessed in the 2005 anti-Japanese protest. The year 2005 was a sensitive year for the Sino-Japanese relations as it marked the 60th anniversary of the Chinese people’s victory over Japan in the Second World War. The anti-Japanese protests in China in the second week of April of 2005 were a result of a coincidence. The first was the Japanese Ministry of Education’s approval on 5 April of eight history textbooks to be used in secondary schools. The second was Japan’s bid to become one of the permanent members of the UNSC.

On 9 April 2005, an estimated 20,000 Chinese protestors surrounded the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, attacking it with rocks and shouting anti-Japanese slogans. In Adding to the social unrest, angry nationalist protesters smashed Japanese restaurants, damaged business establishments, including office of All Nippon Airlines and Tokyo-Mitsubishi Bank, and overturned Japanese cars. Interestingly, as well as singing patriotic songs, and shouting derogatory remarks against the Japanese, such as “Kill the Japanese Devils”, “Death to Koizumi the pig”, protesters were also keen to make their action legitimate by chanting “Patriotism is innocent!” (爱国无罪) and “Never forget national humiliation” (勿忘国耻) (Yu 2012: 151).

This large-scale demonstration was mainly triggered by public discontent over Japan’s whitewashing of its wartime atrocities in history textbooks, which coincided with the online public petition to protest against Japan’s UNSC bid as the Chinese people saw an unrepentant nation like Japan to be ineligible for the permanent seat on the council whose mission is to maintain world peace, thereby, resulting into a full-scale spontaneous anti-Japanese protests in several cities in China. The demonstration as noted by The New York Times was the “largest to be held in the capital since a massive outpouring an anti-American sentiment in 1999, after the United States bombed China’s embassy in Belgrade during the war against Serbia” (Kahn 2005).

Weiss (2014: 131) notes that the anti-Japanese protests occurred over a period of three weeks, clustered mainly on the weekends: April 2-3 in the cities of Chengdu and Shenzhen, April 9-10 in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and others, and April 16-17 in Shanghai, Shenyang, Shenzhen, and other cities across China. Weiss

further suggests that at least 38 cities held anti-Japanese demonstrations, including protest marches and street signature campaigns. Others have estimated that 280 organizations and units, 107 universities, 41 technical schools, and 28,230,000 internet users signed petitions against Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC (ibid.). It is suggested that this popular action against Japan began with online petitions opposing Japan's bid for permanent membership on the UNSC and criticising Japan's continuing denial of its atrocities in Asia during World War II. Wherein, on 2 March 2005, the official website of the People's Daily reported about a global Internet petition against Japan's bid for the UNSC permanent membership which was launched by a small multi-ethnic group striving for Japan's apology and reparation for its WWII crimes, the Alliance to Preserve the History of WWII in Asia (ALPHA) in Los Angeles in late February (Yu 2012: 145; Xu 2005: 242). In just one week, more than 19 million people are reported to have signed the internet petitions, which were carried on the three main Chinese internet portals- sina.com, 163.com and sohu.com - with the permission of Chinese authorities (Kang 2013: 172). For example, on Sina site alone, the number of signatories reached a staggering 20 million when the petition ended in September 2005 (Yu 2012: 146).

It is important to note that initially, the Chinese government did not take a clear position on the possibility of Japan becoming a permanent Security Council member. In view of this, Masuda (2006: 105) notes that in an address at the UN General Assembly on 27 September 2004, Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing expressed support for necessary and rational UN reforms and indicated his approval of an expanded Security Council membership. However, he suggested China's opposition to Japan's admission to UNSC by saying that such reforms should aim at making the Security Council a better reflection of the aspirations and needs of developing countries. Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said that "we understand Japan's expectation to play a greater role in international affairs," suggesting that the Chinese government did not explicitly oppose outright Japan's permanent membership (ibid.). Therefore, officially China did not oppose Japan's UNSC bid because it did not want to risk the lucrative trade and investments by Japan. Likewise, China wanted other governments like South Korea to take the lead in protesting Japan's actions.

Chinese governments had a reluctant attitude as the authority did not take active role in the online petition, nor did it attempt to close the petition on commercial websites. However, the Chinese government's support to the mass online petition was observed with Xinhua Net, the official website of the Xinhua News Agency, joining the petition to "resolutely oppose to Japan's bid for a permanent UNSC seat" as well as Chinese officials supportive comments despite explicit endorsement of the petition. For example, Liu Jianchao, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, stated that the "effort reflects growing alarm about Japan's treatment of history". As he said, "Japan has to take a responsible attitude toward history to build trust among the people of Asia, including China" (The New York Times 2005). However, Beijing's tacit consent to the online petition is argued to be a calculated policy as the possible reward to achieve the objective of undermining Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC, which not only outweighed the potential risks in terms of public order but also helped to "mitigate the international reputation costs to the Chinese government of making an eventual veto threat" (Weiss 2008: 88).

But given the implicit attitude of the Chinese government over its Japan policy, the anti-Japanese protest was also bolstered by the discontentment among the Chinese public against the government's failure to take a harder stance against Japan's bid on UNSC. To cite an example of such popular resentment, a petition organiser Tong Zeng told the New York Times on 1 April:

"China must vote no and not just abstain. The government may not want to take the lead, but the Chinese people have taken the lead...There has never been a petition campaign of this magnitude in China. It will be much harder for the government to suppress in the future" (Chan 2005).

Similar sentiments were felt in cyber forums. As Weiss (2008: 102) notes, an angry netizen wrote directly to the public BBS of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying that "the Chinese Government should clearly take a stance opposing Japan's bid to become a permanent member on the UNSC." Similarly, another netizen, posting to the Patriots Alliance Network, Stated that:

"To this day, the government has not taken a clear stance opposing Japan's permanent membership. If the Chinese government doesn't veto Japan's entry into the UNSC, this government will be no different than the Qing government. If the government doesn't veto Japan's permanent membership, we will know in our hearts that the government is weak and useless. How can the government continue to rule and hold its head up, losing face for the

Chinese people! What ability can it have to reunify with Taiwan?” (ibid.: 102-103).

Such sentiments among Chinese public make the Japan issue and nationalism, a double-edged sword for the Chinese government. This made the CCP leadership well aware of the fact that the public resentment can turn against the government if it fails to uphold Chinese national interests and pride. The protest created a dilemma for the Chinese leadership. Kruarattikan (2015: 152) suggests that, on one hand, China’s economic interests with Japan were non-negligible. By the end of 2004, trade volume between the two countries had reached 167 billion US dollars and Japan had replaced the US as China’s biggest trading partner. Also, more than 70,000 Chinese students were studying in Japan. While on the other hand, failing to take the issue of history seriously could be detrimental to the CCP’s legitimacy. In this scenario, following “New Thinking” was not an option for the Chinese leadership, as it could easily arouse anti-CCP sentiments (ibid.).

In this perspective, the 2005 case reflects the divide between the Chinese political elite and the Chinese public in their policy outlook towards Japan. And as the anti-Japanese mobilisation in 2005 was a mass phenomenon and not an elite one, it therefore, became imperative for the Chinese leaders to calculate every action and statement in their response. That is, finally in concurrence to the public sentiments, the Chinese government too responded by adopting a strong and hawkish stand towards Japan. This was reflected in Chinese spokesperson’s two regular press conferences on 12 and 14 April. Wherein, on both occasions, it is found that when questions on the protests were asked, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Liu Jianzhao, responded with a hard-lined approach. As he said:

“These protests and demonstration are spontaneous public response to Japan’s wrong attitude and actions towards its past history...we do not support isolated irrational behaviour [...] however, Japan is fully aware of the cause for the current status in Sino- Japanese relations. Japan should carefully rethink (认真反省) [its attitude and actions]” (Yu 2012: 156).

This official response blamed the cause for the anti-Japanese protests and riots squarely on Japan, as the Chinese government attributed the April 2005 protests to “Japan’s wrong attitudes and actions towards its past history”, as cited above. Therefore, it asserted that only Japan could reduce nationalistic sentiment in China by

reconsidering the issues on the UNSC reform and the history textbook approval. For instance, as Reilly (2012: 152) quotes, when Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura rushed to Beijing to express his concern about protestors' violence, Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing declared pointedly: "The Chinese government has never done anything for which it has to apologize to the Japanese people".

Facing the mounting domestic pressure, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on 12 April for the first time clarified China's formal stance on Japan's bid for the UNSC. In a blunt statement, he publicly opposed Japan's candidacy, in an interview to reporters in New Delhi, during his visit to India. As China Daily reported, Wen Jiabao asked Japan to "face up to history," as he said:

"The strong responses from the Asian people should make the Japanese Government have deep and profound reflections [...] Only a country that respects history, takes responsibility for the past, and wins over the trust of the people of Asia and the world at large can take greater responsibilities in the international community" (Zhao and Hu 2005).

These responses by the Chinese government reflects its fear of running against nationalist sentiment given the "double-edged sword" logic of nationalism. Due to this the Chinese government was afraid of appearing to side with China's historical enemy and was likewise slow to respond. It was popular nationalism that played a significant role in elite decision-making on this Japan policy issue. As Gries (2005c: 111) states that while China's elite did not wish to see Japan become a permanent member of the UNSC, they also did not wish to jeopardise China's lucrative trade and investment relations with Japan. Therefore, until 13 April, they had chosen to take a backseat on the issue, allowing other governments, like South Korea, to take the lead in publicly opposing Japan's UNSC bid.

In counterview of the above argument, some scholars argue that the Chinese government encouraged the anti-Japanese protests for both domestic and international purposes. Kang (2013: 168) states that the articulation of anti-Japanese public opinion and its mobilisation into protest or other forms of collective action are limited by the stance of the government in China. The government plays an important role in shaping the opportunity structure for popular protest in the country by creating openings for and obstacles to public mobilisation. Given this understanding, Gries (2005b: 254) argues that domestically, the CCP is seen as using Japan as a scapegoat



to preempt popular criticisms of the Chinese government itself. As Tokyo Mayor Ishihara Shintaro declared that the Chinese “government is initiating a dangerous kind of nationalism in order to divert public frustration.”

While internationally, CCP is seen using the anti-Japanese protests to achieve specific foreign policy goals, such as denying Japan a permanent seat on the UNSC. In concurrence to this, Kang (2013: 172-173) argues that one needs to take into account the new leadership transition, which was an important factor that drove Chinese government’s lenient response to public expressions of anti-Japanese sentiment. It is the relative leniency from the authorities which facilitated the upsurge in anti-Japanese protests. However, it is important to understand that given the double-edged sword of nationalism, in this case, Chinese government rather remained weary of its diplomatic choices in sync with the public interest. As Lam (2006: 217) contends that the Hu-Wen leadership’s clumsy handling of the ferocious anti-Japanese demonstrations illustrate the socialist regime’s difficulty in wielding the double-edged sword of nationalism. On the question of whether the anti-Japanese demonstrations were spontaneous or stage-managed? To this scepticism, Tam (2007: 2976-297) concludes that:

“The anti-Japanese protests in 2005 are admirably voluntary, stimulating, and intrepid actions of the young people in defense of truth and justice in history that China seldom experiences in the last few decades. The protesters simply see their actions as straightforward reaction to the Japanese leaders’ attitudes toward wartime history as reflected in the Yasukuni Shrine, history textbooks and other unresolved issues control measure, relating to Imperial Japan’s war crimes and atrocities during World War II”.

This assessment proves that the 2005 anti-Japanese protests were not orchestrated by the Chinese government and it also further nullifies the scepticism that the protests were tolerated by the Chinese government to justify its opposition to Japan’s UNSC bid. While the shift in Chinese governments Japan policy is observed in its change of attitude towards Japan concomitant with the anti-Japanese public protest. As Reilly (2012: 152) notes, before the protests, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Japanese Foreign Minister Machimura had agreed that “they would take the overall situation into account, appropriately handle the sensitive issues and further strengthen friendship and cooperation between the two sides.” But this policy on Japan underwent a change. As after the protests, on 17 April, Li dismissed Machimura’s

reference to Premier Wen Jiabao's 14 March proposal on "Three Principles and Three Suggestions" to to promote exchanges between the two countries. Emphasising on the negative state of public opinion, Li said: "when it comes to the recent state of bilateral relationship, my view is that if it is left unattended, the public sentiment could landslide from worse to worst" (ibid.).

Chinese government's policy shift is more prominently visible in the contrast between Wen Jiabao's 14 March proposal and the "five-point proposal" issued by Hu Jintao during his talks with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the Asian-African Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia on 23 April 2005 (MFA 2005b). To note the difference, Wen Jiabao on 14 March 2005, at a press conference held by the Third Session of the Tenth NPC, stated that the relationship with Japan is one of the "most important" bilateral relationships. In improving China-Japan relations, Wen suggested "Three Principles and Three Suggestions". The three principles: First, take history as a mirror and look toward the future. Second, Japan should stick to the "one China" principle. And third, strengthen cooperation for common development. The three suggestions: First, conditions should be created in order to promote high-level exchange of visits. Second, the foreign ministries of the two countries should work together to launch strategic studies on ways and means to promote friendship. Third, the historical legacy should be appropriately handled. While Hu Jintao in his proposed five points to Koizumi on improving the Sino-Japanese relations dropped Wen's characterisation of the relationship as "most important". Instead Hu in his five-point proposal greatly emphasised that:

"the issue of history should be taken seriously by adhering to the principle of "taking history as a mirror and looking forward to the future." Japan should back up its remorse on wartime aggression with action and deal with historical issues in a serious and prudent manner" (China Daily 2005c).

While when Koizumi issued Japan's public apology in a decade by expressing "deep remorse" for its wartime atrocities, Hu curtly responded that saying "rhetoric alone" was insufficient: "I would like you to recognize history correctly, and I would like you to translate your remorse into actual action" (Reilly 2012: 153). Further, Hu Jintao strongly called on Tokyo to face up to its war-time aggressions against China and other Asian countries. As Hu said:

“This year marks the 60th anniversary of China’s victory over Japanese invasion during World War II. But Japan’s recent moves on its history and the Taiwan issue have seriously hurt the feelings of the Chinese people and Asian countries. The strong reaction of the Chinese people and the concerns of people from other Asian countries are something that the Japanese side should seriously reflect on” (CCTV.com, 2005).

Most importantly, Wen and Hu’s statements varied sharply in how they approached the wartime past. While Wen Jiabao downplayed the tensions over history, Hu strongly emphasised on the history question as noted in the above statements.

Given this prominent shift in China’s official outlook on Japan, Beijing’s policy towards Japan’s UNSC bid also witnessed a significant shift. As initially, the Chinese government acted by giving a tacit response to the online public petition to oppose Japan’s UNSC bid. Beijing played safe to achieve the foreign policy objective of undermining Japan’s UNSC bid through mass online petition. Consequently, when the online petition transformed into large-scale public protests, Beijing adopted a cautionary position in order to avert the repercussions of the double-edged nature of Chinese nationalism.

In doing so, domestically, the government tried to balance the nationalist sentiment and social unrest by adopting various valve control tactics such as tacit consent, strict crowd control, media blackout, and “massage of the senses” (Yu 2014: 161). And finally, on the international level, coping with the domestic public demands, Beijing maintained a firm stand in opposing Japan’s bid for permanent seat on UNSC. As after the protests on 1 May 2005, China’s UN representative publicly declared for the first time that China would veto a proposal by the “Group of Five” (which included Japan) to increase the number of permanent UNSC members. Further, enhancing its stand on the issue, on 7 June 2005, China issued a position paper on the UN Reforms, where on the UNSC reform, it stated:

“Adhering to the principle of achieving consensus through consultation is in accordance with the spirit of the UN Charter. Its purpose is to accommodate the interests of all parties, especially the small and medium-sized countries. Only decisions thus made can win the broadest trust and support. China opposes the approach to set a time limit for the Council reform or force a vote on a consensus-lacking proposal” (Permanent Mission of PRC to UN 2005b).

This indirectly reflects Beijing's denial to support Japan's UNSC bid. Reilly (2012: 153) states that once Beijing revealed its determination to oppose the Japanese, Chinese diplomats began lobbying African states and other allies in the UN to also vote against the reform proposals.

From this perspective, it is clear that China's popular nationalist opinion influenced Beijing domestic and foreign decision-making. To say so, the anti-Japanese protests did shift Beijing's Japan policy as it compelled the government to reverse its diplomatic outreach to Japan. This kind of policy shift, as Jin (2006: 48) argues makes the resolution of the historical problems more difficult on the one hand, but more crucial on the other. The inference that can be drawn is that public opinion and sentiment will play an increasingly important role in China's Japan policy, and has the "potential to strengthen or sabotage an amiable relation" (ibid.).

This case therefore, reflects that in an authoritarian state like China, public opinion not only influences the foreign policies pursued by the government but also sometimes takes the lead in policy decisions, especially, when nationalism is its peak. As clearly reflected in China's opposition to Japan's UNSC bid against anti-Japanese protests. With the extreme rise of public anti-Japanese sentiment in opposition Japan's UNSC bid, the Chinese government was invariably forced to adopt a more rigid position to show its clear stance on the issue. As already discussed, initially the Chinese government did not officially reject Japan's bid given its bilateral considerations, but as the domestic pressure of public opposition mounted, the Chinese government backtracked and announced its official rejection of Japan's candidacy. Therefore, this shift in China's Japan policy does reflect that public opinion does impact China's foreign policy decision making. And that, China's bottom up nationalism outweighed the top-down state-led nationalism in this case. Most importantly, it proves that historical memories of the past conflicts shape China's present foreign relations with Japan. As He (2003: 1) points out that:

““history quarrel” [between China and Japan] not only poisoned popular feelings towards each country, but it also exacerbated a mutual perception of intention and provoked domestic opposition to accommodative foreign policies”.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

In an overall perspective, it is found that domestic forces do matter in China's foreign policy. Wherein China's negative public opinion of Japan does play an active role in constraining Chinese government's Japan policy. That is, Chinese public opinion and national identity does impact China's foreign policy decision-making.

As found, it was the popular anti-Japanese sentiment that acted as a major constraint in China's "new thinking" policy towards Japan. Wherein, the Chinese people's perspectives were drawn primarily from the historical consciousness of Japanese wartime memories. This makes the history problem a characteristic feature that defines China's present relations with Japan, wherein China's historical memories of Japan significantly constrains the possibility of forgetting the past and the emergence of an alternative view on Japan and Sino-Japanese relations. In this case, the narrative of "Century of National Humiliation" and as sense of victimhood shapes Chinese popular thinking process. The traumatic history of colonisation and victimisation during the by Japan have played a decisive role in shaping the identity of present day Chinese, where Japan acts as the significant "other". This creates the identity divide between China and Japan. It is the historical lens that predominantly shapes Chinese public perceptions of Japan and thus, conditions Chinese public opinion and attitude towards Japan.

In this light, to say that Chinese anti-Japanese popular nationalism is a top-down approach by the Chinese state to safeguard the regime legitimacy proves to be a narrow understanding. As the reality lies in the fact that China's popular nationalist sentiment goes beyond the Chinese government's immediate control, despite the Chinese state being a monolithic power. Rather Chinese leadership's political legitimacy hinges upon their opposition to Japan based on the historical issues. This factor explains that the instrumental logic fails to take into account the Chinese people's emotions that are heavily embedded in the historical memories. The various anti-Japanese public protests, online petitions and others reflect the Chinese public's negative attitude towards Japan. This public sentiment thereby, runs against the Chinese government's policy towards Japan wherein, the rational interest calls for greater partnership based on the economic engagement. On the contrary, irrespective of the rationality, Chinese government have been required to take on a hard line

towards Japan, so as to satisfy the Chinese nationalist sentiment. As failure to do so, would make the Chinese government seem to be weak by the Chinese public and thus, provoke anger towards the Chinese government.

From the assessment of the 2005 anti-Japanese protest, it is hence proved that Chinese public sentiment acts as a constraint in China's conciliatory approach towards Japan. The case also reflected that public memories of history not only affects Sino-Japanese relations but also the relationship between the government and the people. There is a perceptual divide between the Chinese people and the government on the approach towards Japan and this, therefore acts as an elemental force in deteriorating the Sino-Japanese relations. Moreover, it further explains that public antagonism based on unresolved historical problems remain one of the major barriers to the Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations despite their strong economic engagement, thus, leaving little room negotiate.

Therefore, public opinion does play a significant role in an undemocratic state like China where popular nationalism acts as a double-edged sword for the government. It is also clear from the case studies on the "New thinking Debate" and "2005 anti-Japanese protests" that the Chinese government is highly responsive rather than reactive towards the public sentiment and that public opinion have impacted China's foreign policy decision-making on Japan. This also clarifies This aspect further dismisses the instrumental logic.

In an overall assessment it can be rightly stated that perceptions play an important role in foreign policy. In this case, Chinese public perceptions of Japan acts as an important factor in shaping Chinese governments Japan policy. Chinese government's hard line approach towards Japan is mainly driven by the public sentiments that is greatly influenced by anti-Japanese popular nationalism. China's perceptions of Japan result into an insecurity due to which China perceives Thus, in case of China's relations with Japan, the past is more dominant in the present in the form of active historical memories. That is, historical memories have strongly impacted China's present relations with Japan. And that, the public perceptions drawn from historical memories act as a significant constraint in China's Japan policy.

## **CHAPTER 5: POLITICS OF HISTORICAL MEMORIES: THE YASUKUNI SHRINE ISSUE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

China's attitude towards Japan is driven by the sentiments that are firmly embedded in the form of historical memories. As already noted in Chapter 3 and 4, the negative perception of Japan is shaped by the historical consciousness of the past military history which impacts the current relations between the two countries. It remains undisputed that the 'history problem' occupies a prominent position and most importantly, is a causal factor of friction in the relationship. As China's primary accusation against Japan is that of not being contrite and failing to reconcile with the past, which is marked with aggression, colonialism, and atrocities on civilian populations.

This impression is validated by the fact that despite increasingly interwoven economic interests, Beijing has not been able to move forward in its relations with Tokyo. The relationship remains to be plagued by the divergent interpretations of wartime history. Specifically, perceptions born from historical memories have heightened the Chinese people's distrust of Japan and thereby, making it difficult to reach a reconciliation. The current issues of debate between the two countries are mainly rooted in the early and mid-twentieth century history. The tragic past of Japan's militarism on China is frequently recapped by Beijing in the the current Sino-Japanese discourse. To this, Uemura (2013: 117) argues that Beijing has not been able to completely pull itself out of "guanxi's negative inertia", that confines its Japan policy. This suggests to the fact that history issue has become an important aspect in China's Japan policy.

This is evident from the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Website (2002), wherein the history problem tops the priority list of "sensitive issues" in the Sino-Japanese bilateral ties (MFA 2002b). The history factor takes a lead above other issues such as Taiwan, Diaoyu islands, Japanese-American security cooperation, war reparations, Japanese chemical weapons discarded in China, and Guanhualiao (Kokaryo) (ibid.). The Chinese Foreign Ministry points that

“the correct understanding of the history issue is a sensitive political issue in the bilateral relations” and thereby, “the prerequisite for long-term bilateral cooperation is to face and recognise the history” (ibid). This clearly reflects the Chinese government’s firm position on the history issue and the importance that is attached to it in China’s Japan policy. However, variations only exist in Beijing’s responses in dealing with the issue.

Owing to this attitude of Beijing, Uemura (2013: 117) argues that China’s emphasis on the history issue is “genuine rather than rhetorical”. As Wan (2006: 110) contends that Beijing’s refusal to conduct mutual visits by leaders after Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni since 2002, was a clear reflection that the Chinese government “means it”. Wan further notes that, although the Chinese government has toned down its criticism of Japan over history from time to time, especially after Jiang Zemin’s 1998 visit to Japan, but what needs to be pointed is that Beijing has remained firm in its “unwillingness to adjust” the stance of treating history as the political foundation for the relationship (ibid.). That is, the Chinese government has remained committed to the history issue, even at instances that has hit the relations to new low, such as the 2005 anti-Japanese protests (ibid.: 111). This thereby, suggests Beijing’s unambiguous attitude on the history issue in its diplomatic relations with Japan.

Given this perspective, it can be argued that China’s Japan policy is determined by two exceptions. First, Japan is the only country wherein China prioritises the history issue. This is evident from the fact that the Chinese government does not discuss historical issues with any other countries, such as Tawang with India, Koguryo with South Korea, South China Sea with the other claimants in the dispute such as Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam. Second, Beijing does not exhibit a departure from the history issue in its diplomatic exchanges to deal with Japan. To say so, as Wan (2006) notes, South Korea, the only other country still pressing Japan over the history issue, made an effort in 1998 to move beyond the history issue. Furthermore, although the history issue re-emerged in Seoul-Tokyo relations in early 2005 but unlike Beijing, Seoul carried out mutual visits by



leaders with Tokyo (ibid.). However, in Beijing's case there has been no such instances. Thereby, what makes Japan an exception in China's foreign policy is that the exceptionalism is an output of Chinese victimhood mindset, as premised in the Century of Humiliation.

It is evitable that the history issue occupies a dominant place in China's foreign policy discourse towards Japan. As He (2007a: 23) points that the problem lies in emphasising on one's "own virtues and victimhood while whitewashing its wrongdoings done to others and also ignoring others' suffering, wherein an "inward-looking, nationalised history naturally provokes 'history quarrels' with countries and fuel mutual distrust". It is this national mythmaking that causes a deep seated perceived distrust towards Japan. Wherein, China strongly perceives, as Uemura (2013: 117) points that Japan cannot live up to its expectation as a "responsible counterpart" in their morally reciprocal relationship. This argument is validated, as in his interview to Beijing Review on "Sino-Japanese ties" in 2000, former Chinese Ambassador to Japan, Chen Jian, stated:

"From China's point of view, after World War II, Japan did not thoroughly, profoundly and comprehensively reconsider its aggression against China and other Asian countries, which was unanimously acknowledged by its whole nation during the period of World War II. As a result, there often appear adverse currents of denying its invasion of China by right-wing forces; a clear example of this is the denial of the Nanjing Massacre. These actions have aroused the Chinese people's concerns as to whether or not Japan will again go the militaristic road and constitute a threat to the Chinese and Asian peoples" (ibid.).

This explains China's apprehensive attitude towards Post-war Japan, where Tokyo's intentions for Beijing still remains contextualised in its wartime militarism. Similarly, former Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, commented that "Japan has never completely abandoned its militarist past in the same way as Germany has with the Nazis. If it were to do so, China and other Asian nations would not have to keep reminding Japan of history so often" (Chong 1998). To note, Tang's statement, which draws a parallel between the terror of Nazi violence and the Japanese violence, effectively evokes the degree of resentment that Chinese feel. Given this consciousness

of the historical grievance, it becomes tough for China to forget about history when Japan has not been confronted head on.

What does China want from Japan? What prevents the Chinese from being unable to overcome bitter feelings toward Japan over the issue of history? To these queries, Wu (2002: 71) argues that it has not much to do with the history itself, but more to do with “the way the Japanese treat the issue”- which has created “strong distrust” of Japan among the Chinese and thereby, constitutes a “major obstacle” to Sino-Japanese ties. That is to say, given its deep seated grievance, for China, the prime concern lies in Japan’s correct handling of the history issue. What China expects is that the Japanese government should acknowledge and recognise the history of Japanese militaristic invasion against China and educate its people with correct perception of history. This is validated by China’s reiterated position on Japan that: “The past, if not forgotten, can serve as a guide for the future”.

In view of this, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing at the 10th NPC and CPPCC on 6 March 2004 stated: “Whatever the case, if China and Japan are to develop their friendship from generation to generation, it is necessary to take history as a mirror and look into the future” (Xinhua News Agency 2004b). This Chinese insistence is also fostered by the societal pressure of the Chinese public, which is a genuine emotional outburst than being instrumentally orchestrated by the Chinese government.

With China’s heavy dependence on history in dealing with Japan, it is found that the incidents that denied or beautified the history of Japanese aggression, automatically acted as catalysts in deteriorating the Sino-Japanese relations. In this regard, since 2001, the repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese leaders became an irritant in the Sino-Japanese relations. These episodes re-surfaced the historical consciousness of China, thus, further clarifying that historical memories strongly affect China’s equation with Japan. Given this perspective, the present chapter investigates the embedded nature of historical memories in Chinese psyche and how it has affected

China's Japan policy. In doing so, the Chapter will specifically study the Yasukuni Shrine issue that has significantly impacted China's Japan policy.

### **5.1. YASUKUNI SHRINE DISPUTE IN SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS**

It is evident that the most conspicuous source of political tension between the two countries is primarily rooted in Japan's past military aggression. Wherein the historical memories catalyse the wounds of the past in the national psyche, which is exacerbated by China's nationalist anti-Japan sentiment. Given this context, one of the crucial issues related to history that has become a bone of contention in the present relations is the Japanese Prime Ministers' official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine - one of the most controversial issues of the 2000s. This has become a focal point of China's anti-Japanese sentiment, wherein the main controversy has been sparked by the annual visits of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine. These visits have led to protests from the Chinese government and public, wherein both the political elites as well as the public have taken an aggressive stance towards Japan. Of which, one of the most serious responses were the anti-Japanese demonstrations in major Chinese cities in April 2005 as already discussed in Chapter 4.

In this perspective, the questions that need to be answered in this section are as follows: first, what makes Yasukuni Shrine a contentious issue between China and Japan? Why did the Japanese official visits to the Shrine sparked a tension in the relations? Third, what were the responses of the Chinese government as well as the Chinese public on the Japanese Prime Ministers visits to the Shrine from 2002 to 2012? And lastly, what was the impact on China's Japan policy?

#### **5.1.1 WHY THE YASUKUNI SHRINE IS A FRICTION POINT?**

In order to investigate into Beijing's reactive response to the Yasukuni Shrine issue, it becomes imperative to understand what makes the Yasukuni Shrine such a symbolic battlefield of historical disputes between China and Japan.

What makes Yasukuni Shrine such a critical factor in China's current relations with Japan can be understood from the significance of the shrine's symbolic representation. Wherein, the primary understanding of the historical background, the political, religious and symbolic connotations that the Shrine entails are essential to understand the logic behind the Yasukuni Shrine problem in China-Japan relations. Accordingly, it is necessary to explore why China has protested against Japanese leaders making a visit to Yasukuni. At the foremost, this requires an understanding of how Yasukuni has been historically treated within Japan and how China and Japan have evolved their views on the shrine. Given these points of reference, this section analyses the historical evolution of Yasukuni shrine and the development of both Chinese and Japanese perspectives on the shrine overtime.

The Yasukuni-*jinja* is a Shinto establishment, located in Tokyo's Kudan district, near the vicinity of the Imperial Palace, where the souls of over 2.5 million war dead are enshrined. This originated from the wishes of the new Meiji leaders to perform rituals for those who had died to create the new nation. Originally called the "Shokonsha" (the place to which divine spirits are invited), the shrine was built in June 1886 by Emperor Meiji to commemorate the soldiers of the Boshin War of 1868-1869. In 1879, the shrine was elevated to "Imperial Shrine of Special Status" and was renamed as "Yasukuni Shrine," which means "Shrine to Pacify the Country." With this, the Shrine became the "central custodian of national memory and mourning commemorating Japan's war dead" (Harootunian 1999: 144). Identifying the symbolic significance, the shrine became a part of Japan's national programme to create a new state ideology with Shinto at its core, and most importantly, became the primary national shrine for commemorating the war dead of Japan (Rose 2005: 110; Yang, 2013: 152). As Rose (ibid.) draws from Totman's explanation that Yasukuni Shrine's role was reinforced as the shrine at which those who had sacrificed their lives for the Meiji triumph received worship and imperial gratitude. With Japan's imperial expansion, as more lives were sacrificed for the nation, it became customary for the Emperors Meiji, Taisho, and Showa to visit the shrine to honour the war dead and their "heroic spirits" (ibid).

Given its historical inception, what makes Yasukuni a diplomatic contention for Japan in East Asia is the Shrine's widely acknowledged prewar function as a vital instrument of the Imperial Japanese state to foster nationalism for nation-building, and symbolic driving force behind the national mobilisation for the propagation of its much maligned, military "adventurism" and "empire-building in Asia" (Lai 2008: 181). In this perspective, what constitutes the point of departure to the current controversial state of Yasukuni Shrine between China and Japan is that after 1879, the shrine became a symbol of the enshrinement of the war dead.

To understand the context of the present contention, it is imperative to understand how the symbolism of the Yasukuni Shrine changed with time. To say so, as under the Allied Occupation of Japan after World War II, with the 1947 Constitution of Japan, one of the key reforms was the separation of church and state. As a result, Yasukuni Shrine being a "symbol of Japanese militarism", "a war shrine" was turned into a private religious entity independent from the Japanese government under the stipulation of the Constitution (Takahashi 2008: 110). Clarifying the freedom of religion, Article 20 of the Constitution of Japan (1947) posits:

"Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity".

Under this law, the embodiment of the Yasukuni Shrine was separated from the Japanese state. This separation has remained intact despite attempts in the 1960s and 1970s by interest groups and politicians to introduce legislation which would place the shrine under state protection (Rose 2007: 111). While China's policy on religion, as Article 36 of the Constitution of the PRC stipulates:

"Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religion. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens because they do, or do not believe in religion. The state protects normal

religious activities. [And that] No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the State. [In addition] Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination” (White Paper 1997).

From both Chinese and Japanese constitution, parallels can be drawn as both emphasise on freedom of religion and thereby, segregate religion from the state. In this context, what complicates the Yasukuni shrine is its evolved status in Japan’s political discourse. That is, as already noted, since 1879, Yasukuni Shrine is dedicated to the souls of those who gave their lives for their country, the majority of them members of the armed forces. In view of this, ‘enshrinement’ at Yasukuni certifies that these people gave their lives for their country and thus, aims to “dignify” their deaths with meaning and nobility (Yoshinobu 2013). Following the traditional practice, in 1959, the Yasukuni Shrine enshrined the Class B and C war criminals, who were prosecuted by IMTFE held under the joint auspices of the Allied powers between 1946 and 1948. However, Justice Radhabinod Pal declared all Japanese Class A defendants “not guilty” of the charges in the indictment (Kei 2007: 218), as discussed in Chapter 3.

In understanding Japan’s enshrinement of the war criminals in the post World War II context, Takenaka (2007: 1) argues that the Yasukuni Shrine formerly being a national sanctuary that enshrined as deities the military dead from 1853 to 1945, was “reborn” as a religious institution in accord with the 1947 constitution’s separation of religion and state. However, what triggered the controversy with regard to the enshrinement of war criminals in the Yasukuni Shrine was the enshrinement of the Class A war criminals, which took place between Yasukuni Shrine and the War Victims’ Relief Bureau (Hikiage Engo-kyoku) of Japan’s then Health and Welfare Ministry in 1978.

In contrast to the enshrinement of Class B and C war criminals, the enshrinement of Class A war criminals by Japan was seen offensive. What made the glorification of Class A war criminals problematic is the very fact of the nature of the crime committed, which mainly pertained to the planning or

initiation of wars of aggression, wherein the accused are inevitably those involved in decision-making at the highest level - cabinet officials, senior army and navy officers, and other top government and military brass. What makes it problematic is Japan's own reference of the "Class A war criminals" which views it to be the 28 Japanese leaders tried for crimes against peace in the Tokyo Trials (Yoshinobu 2013).

It was only on 19 April 1979, that it was publicly reported that during the enshrinement ritual preceding the 1978 fall festival, Yasukuni Shrine had quietly enshrined 14 Class-A criminals<sup>20</sup>, including the seven that were executed, five that died while serving their sentences, and two that died before the final trial. Wherein, in all enshrined in the Yasukuni, about 5,700 Japanese were charged in Classes B and C before the international war crimes tribunal in Tokyo. Of which, almost 1,000 were executed and others were tried and executed by the Communist Chinese and by the Soviet Union (Woolf, 2013). Therefore, it is the presence of these war criminals at Yasukuni shrine that is seen to be offensive. However, the trigger point of the controversy remains to be the enshrinement of the 14 Class A criminals.

In this context, what makes Yasukuni Shrine controversial in diplomatic discourse is the very fact that here reverence is paid to those who committed some of history's most egregious crimes. As already noted above, the shrine was not an issue until it secretly enshrined the Class-A war criminals in 1978. In contrast, on the Japanese side, as Yang (2013: 153) notes the enshrinement of the Class A war criminals was welcomed by the Yasukuni supporters as they considered the Tokyo Military Tribunal to be an unfair trial because most of the sentenced prisoners, including those criminals given a lifetime

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<sup>20</sup> These 14 Class A criminals include those sentenced to death and executed: General Hideki Tojo (東条英機), General Seishiro Itagaki (板垣征四郎), General Kenji Dohihara (土原賢二), General Iwane Matsui (松井石根), General Heitaro Kimura (木村太郎), Lieutenant General Akira Muto (武蔵), and Prime Minister Koki Hirota (广田弘毅) were sentenced to death. The other seven passed away during trial and imprisonment: Yosuke Matsuoka (松岡洋右) and Admiral Osami Nagano (永野修身) were sentenced to life imprisonment, but died during the trials. General Yoshijiro Umezumi (梅津美治郎), Ambassador Toshio Shiratori (白根武夫), General Kuniaki Koiso (小磯昭吉) and Prime Minister Kiichiro Hiranuma (平沼騏一郎) died during imprisonment. Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo (東郷英徳) was sentenced to imprisonment for 20 years and died during that period.

sentence, were released in 1958. For these supporters, the enshrinement of Class A war criminals and the visits of Japanese politicians to Yasukuni Shrine symbolises a rejection of the result of the Tokyo Trials and consider it to be a rehabilitation for those prisoners who were sentenced. Therefore, ever since the state's involvement in Yasukuni affairs, particularly visits by prime ministers on or around August 15th, the date of Japan's surrender, has come under domestic and international scrutiny- making Yasukuni a controversial issue.

From the 1950s to the early 1980s, the Japanese prime minister customarily visited Yasukuni Shrine. Emperor Hirohito regularly visited Yasukuni Shrine until 1975 refused to visit the shrine from 1978 to his death in 1989. On 20 July 2006, a memorandum about Emperor Hirohito's view on the Yasukuni issue written by the Grand Steward of the Imperial Household Agency, Tomita Tomohiko, was published by Nihon Keizai Shimbun. The memorandum indicated that the Showa Emperor did not visit Yasukuni after 1978 due to the enshrinement of Class A war criminals (Cheung 2017: 82). Since his 1978 decision, no Japanese emperor has visited the Yasukuni Shrine. It is clear that the Yasukuni Shrine developed into a disputed issue only after the enshrinement of Class A war criminals. However, despite the contention, several visits were made by Japanese prime ministers from 1979 to 2006, as outlined in Table 3.1.

In this regard, the lingering question is what explains China's contention with the Yasukuni Shrine? For China, the Yasukuni Shrine is a symbol of Japanese aggression on China during World War II. There is a strong consciousness given the historical memories, which makes the Yasukuni shrine loom large in the diplomatic discourse. To say so, as the shrine contains the remains not only of Japanese soldiers, but also of a number of war criminals, including General Hideki Tojo, the commander-in-chief of the Japanese army in China during the war and Itagaki Seishiro, responsible for planning Japanese Aggression into China that led to the 1931 Mukden Incident.



The shrine acts as a constant reminder that triggers the Chinese historical consciousness of the wartime memories, and hence, shapes China's perception of a militarist Japan. For instance, as Woolf (2013) notes, during the "Rape of Nanking" in 1937, two Japanese officers had a contest to see who could kill the most Chinese with their swords. Japanese newspapers covered it as though it was a sporting event, talking about the contest going into an "extra innings" when they both reached 100 at about the same time. These historical anecdotes act as constant reminder for the Chinese, which makes it tough for them to overlook the history issue in the current context. In this case, thereby, historical memories play a significant role in shaping China's understanding of the symbolism of Yasukuni Shrine.

What makes matter worse is the fact that in other war zones, Japan used the prisoners of war for bayonet practice, to toughen up new recruits in the Imperial Japanese Army and others; but in case of China, Japan went beyond these practices. To say so, as the Chinese civilians were staked out at scientific intervals to test the effectiveness of chemical and biological weapons; Chinese cities were deliberately infected with biological agents and countless young women were forced into sex-slavery to "entertain" the troops (ibid.). In this regard, China's first friction point with Japan over the Yasukuni Shrine is the enshrinement of the Class A war criminals, which has become arguably the centerpiece of the Yasukuni Shrine problem, since its revelation in 1979.

It is well noted that China's understanding of the war is predominantly focused on the view of Japan being the aggressor and China its victim. However, an intervention can be made as to what are Chinese perceptions in cases when China is the aggressor such as in the 1962 War with India. What exacerbates this perception is the Yusukan Museum associated with the shrine, which is perceived to portray an affirmative perspective on the war. For the museum views Japan's World War II in a perspective more or less as the wartime commander of that war did: as a "noble effort to liberate the coloured people's of Asia from domination by the white western power" (Garver 2016: 457). Wherein, as Kingston (2013) notes Japan is portrayed as

“the champion of Asia on a noble mission” to liberate the region from Western colonialism.

Most importantly, what is striking to note is that in this vindicating and valorising narrative on display at the Yushukan Museum, there is no mention of Japanese committed crimes or its victims, such as the Nanjing massacre or comfort women, rather it expresses a revisionist narrative of the war history. For instance, the following statement inside the museum summarises Yasukuni’s historical memory of the war as: “The Yasukuni Shrine does not regard the conduct of Japan during World War II as an act of aggression but rather a matter of self defense and a heroic effort to repel European Imperialism” (Shibata 2015: 78). In addition, on Yushukan’s website, as Yu (2012: 138-139) notes claims: “The truth of modern Japanese history is now restored”. Interestingly, it refers to Japanese invasion of China as the “China Incident” and the Pacific front of the Second World War as “the Great East Asia War”, in which, it argues, Japan was forced to fight self-defensively (ibid.).

Another significant aspect, which adds to China’s perception of Japan’s revisionist attitude is the main film show at the Yushukan Museum. As Kingston (2007) notes, the movie puts a spin on Japan’s advance into Asia with a female narrator emotionally insisting: “None of the officers and soldiers went to the battlefields for the purpose of cruelly invading and looting. They fought purely for the sake of their families and the state they loved” (ibid.: 303). The museum further beautifies Japan’s image as it stages a “silhouette of Justice Radhabinod Pal” who sat on the Tokyo Tribunal, and issued a dissenting opinion in which he found the Japanese defendants “innocent” of war crimes (ibid.). For China, the statue of Pal is emblematic to the fact that Japan too considers its Class A war criminals as “not guilty” given Pal’s judgment. With such historical sensitivities attached, the Yushukan, as Kingston argues has reinforced Yasukuni Shrine’s image as a “talismatic symbol of Japan’s lack of contrition” regarding its actions during the “fifteen year war” (ibid.: 302).

What upsets China is that Yasukuni stands as a symbolic representation of Japan's failure to come to terms with its war history and the futility of attempting to assert a one-sided, exculpatory narrative (ibid.). In Chinese perspective, this Japanese approach towards Yasukuni tends to exhibit that that all Japanese wars in the modern period to be wars to protect Japanese independence and, partly, as wars of Asian liberation (Kingston 2013). It is this very perspective of the war which clashes with China, as it induces Chinese memories of past humiliations and suffering, which consequently triggers a clash of identities (Lai 2014: 118). As Kingston (2007: 302) argues that the Yasukuni's spin on history is deeply flawed as it depicts Chinese resisting Japan's invasion as "terrorists" - this therefore, becomes insulting to the Chinese people and all those who gave their lives to defend their homeland against Japanese imperialism. Therefore, Japan's whitewashing of history as expressed in the Yushukan museum makes it the second friction point for China over the Yasukuni Shrine issue.

The Chinese view of the war criminals enshrined and Japan's revisionist narrative of the history makes the Yasukuni Shrine a critical diplomatic concern. In view of this, Japanese prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine represent the third friction point for China over the Shrine. The visits are seen counterproductive precisely because the Yasukuni Shrine is "talismanic ground zero for an unrepentant view" regarding Japan's 1931-45 rampage through Asia (ibid.). With the image of an 'unrepentant Japan', any Japanese prime ministers visit to the Yasukuni Shrine triggers the Chinese perception that Japan is trying to justify its role in the war. That is, for China, the issue of prime minister's visits to the shrine is not so much about whether or not these contradict the constitutional separation of the state and religion but more to do with the revisionist message these visits send.

To say so, as Wang Jinsi, a popular Chinese activist argues that "Japanese ministers, and lawmakers frequently visit Yasukuni Shrine and attempt to call back the spirit of war criminals" (Yang 2013: 196). He further points that: "It is not simply the problem of the freedom of belief, but it hurts the feeling of Chinese people, especially when the visits were made by important people in

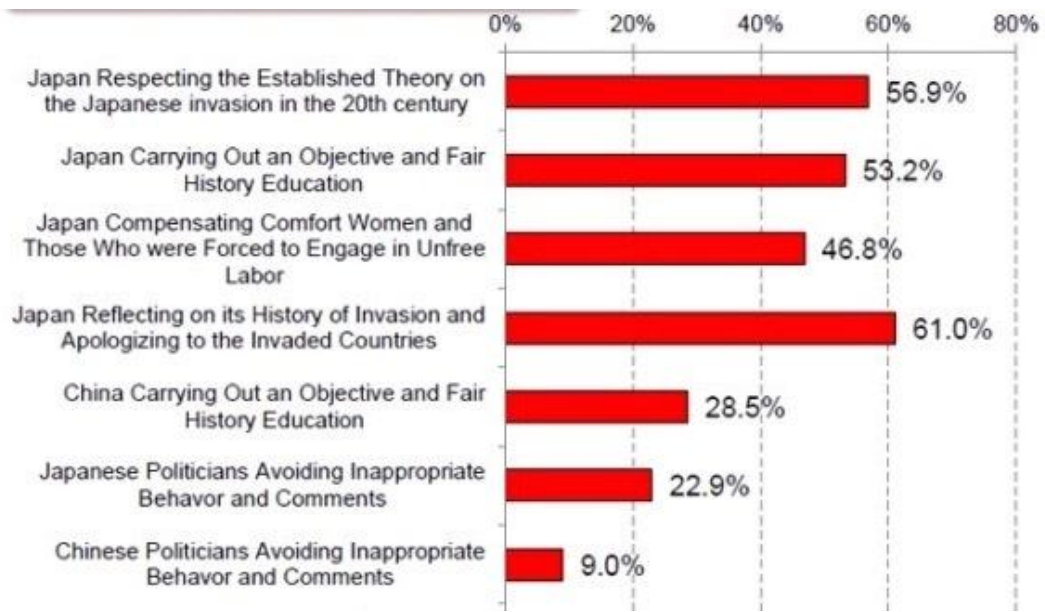
Japanese government” (ibid.). From Chinese perspective, this act by Japan’s head of the state is translated as that of Japan’s lack of remorse and outright denial of its responsibility for the war of aggression. Unlike Japan, for China, the Yasukuni Shrine represents Japanese militarism’s greatest excesses. This refurbishes China’s narrative of national humiliation as the shrine occupies a close cognitive space with the Nanjing Massacre and other Japanese wartime wrongdoings.

Wilson (2010: 79) argues that Japanese leaders visit to the shrine results into opening of the old wounds once again, injuries for which China feels Japan has never properly apologised. By ‘proper apology’ it means one that “is not only deeply sincere, using the right language, but also inclusive of all the areas of perceived injury”, such as: Japan’s militarism, invasion, colonialism, comfort women, POWs, Nanjing massacre and others (Lupton 2012: 20-21). This bolsters the Chinese assessment of the visits as a resurgence of traumatic war history and provocative stirring of the embers of Japanese imperialism and Asian victimhood. That is, by paying obeisance and patronising the Yasukuni Shrine, the Japanese prime ministers appear in Chinese eyes as officially sanctioning the shrine’s public position that Japan was not at fault (Shibata 2015: 78). This causes the discrepancy as Tokyo’s such a behaviour is perceived to reflect Japan’s unapologetic attitude to face squarely to its wartime crimes.

This therefore, makes it psychologically hard for the Chinese to accept the perceived Japanese unwillingness to face up to the past. In addition, this understanding of Japan is further bolstered by China’s image of Japan as a ‘junior’ to China for the larger part of their 2000-year relationship. This is validated from the fact that a popular expression among ordinary Chinese regarding Japan is “*xiao Riben*”, meaning “Little Japan”. It implies not just Japan’s much smaller land size, but also implies China’s superiority. This kind of inferior mentality has been further strengthened by China’s rise (Yang 2007b: 142).

The core issue in all the history related problems, as argued by many Chinese, is that of Japan’s attitude, reflection, and understanding regarding its own actions during the World War II. For China, it is evident that its perception of Japan continues to be clouded by the historical memories of war and occupation (Hao 2015). Therefore, for Chinese, it becomes psychologically difficult to see Japan, a junior state which China once perceived as “Little Japan” to not face up to its past.

**Figure 5.1 Chinese Impressions of Japan on the History Issue**

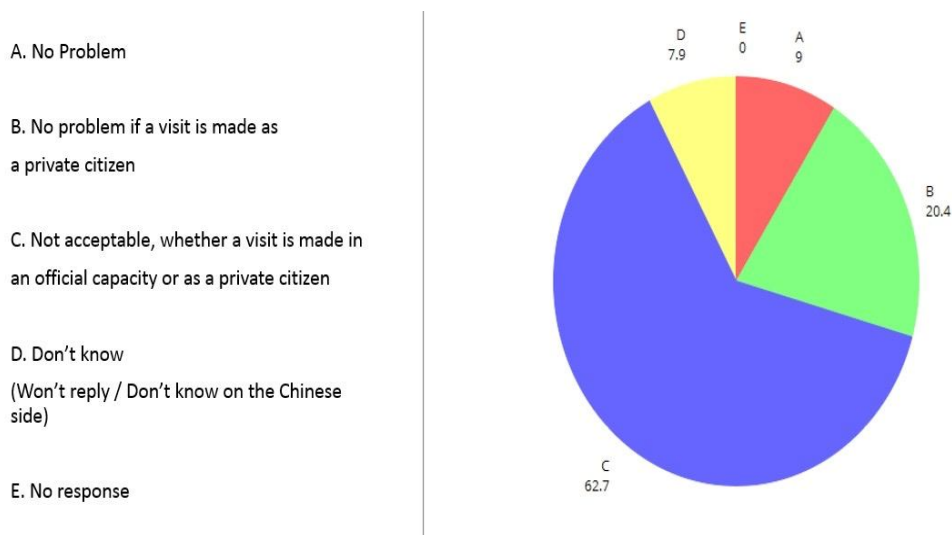


**Source:** The Genron NPO (2013).

Figure 5.1 as drawn from the 2013 survey of the 9th Japan-China opinion poll conducted by the Genron NPO in cooperation with the China Daily, it confirms that the impressions of Chinese people towards Japan have significantly worsened over the years, as already discussed in Chapter 4. As the survey suggests, one of the major reasons for the Chinese negative perception of Japan was Japan’s lack of a proper apology and remorse over the history of invasion of China. Specifically, as listed above, on the perception of “what must be resolved in the historical issues”, the responses pertained to “what needs to happen in order to resolve historical issues between China and Japan?”.

From the above data in Figure 5.1, which is verbatim based on Genron NPO 2013 report, suggests that among the Chinese polled, the most frequently cited as 61.0 percent pointed that Japan needs to express a proper apology and remorse over its invasion of China. The second most popular perception of the Chinese polled, 56.9 percent cited that Japan Japan needs to respect the established historical theory regarding Japan's invasion of China. In addition, a certain ratio of respondents cited other problems, as issues that must be solved, but the numbers of these respondents decreased. These popular perspectives further validates the fact that China’s perception of Japan is embedded in historical memories. However, on the history issue, one of the prominent point of friction as the Genron NPO report suggests was the Japanese prime ministers visits to the Yasukuni Shrine.

**Figure 5.2 Chinese Public Opinion on the Japanese PM’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine**



**Source:** Elaborated from data in Genron NPO (2013)

To say so, as over the Yasukuni issue, as assessed from the above data in Figure 5.2, which is verbatim based, indicates that although the Chinese

public's views are not uniform, but the opinion polls reflect that a majority of the Chinese people believe a Japanese prime minister should not visit the shrine no matter under what circumstances. The percentage of Chinese who believe this have increased sharply over the years. As from 2012's 8th Genron NPO survey report, which suggests 43.1 percent, the 2013 report cites 62.7 percent of Chinese public, as mentioned in the above data. Besides, the ratio of Chinese who replied that there is no problem if a visit is made as a private citizen fell substantially from 36.2 percent in 2012 to that of 20.4 percent. These citations are indicative of the Chinese people's negative attitude towards a Japanese prime minister's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. What makes it unacceptable for the Chinese public is the fact that the shrine's very existence acts as a testament to Japan's ongoing militarism. This makes a Japanese's leader's visit to the shrine is a "wholly unacceptable gesture" as it exhibits deep disrespect for the injury caused to China by Japan (Wilson 2010: 86).

From the increasing Chinese resentment towards Japan as noted above, the controversy over the Yasukuni Shrine visits in China can only be understood in the context of the bitter history of conflict between China and Japan. Phil Deans (2007: 285) specifically points at the time from the late nineteenth century, especially the "15-Year War" of 1931-1945, which has profoundly shaped the elite and popular perceptions. While Shih (1995) argues that the tragic past of Japanese aggression and imperialism have become central to the ongoing discourse of Chinese identity and Chinese nationalism, and thus, strongly enforces China's anti-Japanese sentiment. For the Chinese people, as the aforementioned vicious circle constitutes Yasukuni as a physical embodiment of the painful memories of WWII, bringing forth another dimension to the clash of identities. According to Teo (2007: 110), these memories have become so ingrained in Chinese national identity that "its elites tend to utilize it as a deterrent to reconcile nationalistic expectations and protect the nation's sovereignty, pride and dignity." Japanese Imperial forces have become 'horrors' in China's past. This perceived "horror" has become embedded at the core of Chinese identity, which consequently provides a moral judgment on the Japanese (ibid.:113), and perhaps even a sense of moral superiority.

This historical consciousness bolsters the Chinese perception of an ‘unrepentant Japan’ which denies the invasion and distorts the history. In this regard, the Yasukuni Shrine tends to play a role in downplaying the substance of Japan’s invasion history. This makes China’s popular anti-Japanese sentiment vis-à-vis Yasukuni to be rooted in perceptual gap driven from the historical memories of Japan’s aggression. That is, China’s popular perception views that Japan has misunderstood the generous forgiveness of Chinese leaders and stepped back from the previous position of sincere apology as well as ignored and whitewashed the history of invasion. This is so, as the Chinese argument posits that even though Chinese leaders often mentioned to “let bygones be bygones”, and even if Japanese leaders already “apologised” several times for the invasion, but as long as Japan holds a wrong attitude toward history, the Chinese people should “correct and protest” against it (Yang 2013: 196). Given the intensity attached, as Yang (Ibid.: 197) refers to Wang Jinsi, who argued that even the removal of Class-A war criminals from Yasukuni Shrine cannot solve the problems because Yasukuni Shrine itself was the symbol of militarism.

Therefore, from China’s perspective, the Yasukuni Shrine together with its affiliated Yushukan Museum symbolises Japanese militarism, which inflicted enormous pain and suffering to the Chinese people some seventy years ago. This makes the Yasukuni Shrine to be predominantly perceived as a place that glorifies Japanese militarism, beautifies Japanese aggressions, and distorts the history of World War II. In view of this, the Yasukuni Shrine acts a crucial friction point of historical symbolism that significantly affects political and diplomatic issues in China’s relations with Japan. This suggests that the contemporary worries are more linked to the symbolism of the war more than the war itself. The Yasukuni issue further confirms that the history problem is not simply a diplomatic card for China as it does reflect China’s genuine indignation at Japanese atrocities and concerns over Japan’s apparent distortion of the history.



### **5.1.2 CHINA'S RESPONSE TO JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER'S YASUKUNI SHRINE VISITS**

The Yasukuni Shrine has become a political discord between China and Japan. For China, the most problematic issue relating to the commemoration of the war is that of Japanese prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Why the prime ministers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine makes a difference to China? The conflict is understood in terms of the uncompromising differences in the constitutive principles of what a prime minister's shrine visit means.

From a Japanese perspective, as Akihiko Tanaka (2008: 129) identifies there are four potential meanings for a prime minister's shrine visit: "mourning of dead soldiers," "state intervention in religion," "justification of aggression," and "rejection of Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal". It is found in their explanatory narratives, for Japanese Prime ministers the meaning of their visit to the "mourning of dead soldiers," which foreign observers interpret it as "justification of aggression" and "rejection of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal" (Pollmann 2016: 125-126). While from a Chinese perspective, Kingston (2011: 187) argues that commemorating at Yasukuni means that one embraces an affirmative war memory of Japan's actions during the World War II. In this regard, the profile of the person who visits Yasukuni, in this case, the Japanese Prime Minister, is of far greater importance in terms of enforcing the Chinese- Japanese diplomatic stand off.

It is found that the Yasukuni issue remained essentially Japan's domestic problem until the mid-1980. As the visits by Japanese prime ministers did not provoke any significant international criticism. Particularly, in case of Sino-Japanese relations, the Chinese authorities had never taken offence with prime ministerial visits, prior to 1985 (Deans 2007: 274-275). However, there were some form of veiled protests from Beijing's side between 1982-1984, however, none escalated into diplomatic standoffs (Shibuichi 2005: 207). However, to understand the intensity of the issue, please refer to Table 1. below that gives a reflection of how the visits factored in Beijing's Japan

policy, and most importantly, how China responded to each of the Japanese prime ministerial visits.

**Table 5.1: Japanese Emperors/Prime Ministers to the Yasukuni Shrine and Beijing’s Response (1948- 2012)**

Japanese Emperor/ Prime Minister	Term	No. of Visits	Dates of visit to the Yasukuni Shrine	Beijing’s Response
The Emperor Showa		7	16 October 1952; 19 October 1954; 23 April 1957; 23 April 1959; 19 October 1965; 20 October 1969; 21 November 1975	Not available
Yoshida Shigeru	1948-1954	5	18 October 1951; 17 October 1952; 23 April 1953; 24 October 1953; 24 April 1954	Not available
Hatoyama Ichiro	1954-1956	0	-	-
Ishibashi Tanzan	1956-1957	0	-	-
Kishi Nobusuke	1957-1964	2	24 April 1957; 21 October 1958	Not available
Ikeda Hayato	1960-1964	5	10 October 1960; 18 June 1961; 15 November 1961; 4 November 1962; 22 September 1963	Not available
Sato Eisaku	1964-1972	11	21 April 1965; 21 April 1966; 22 April 1967; 23 April 1968; 22 April 1969; 18 October 1969; 22 April 1970; 17 October 1970; 22 April 1971; 19 October 1971; 22 April 1972	Not available
Tanaka Kakuei	1972-1974	5	8 July 1972; 23 April 1973; 18 October 1973; 23 April 1974; 19 October 1974	Not available
Miki Takeo	1974-1976	3	22 April 1975; 15 August 1975; 18 October 1976	People’s Daily editorial on “Commemorating 30th Anniversary of Victory of Resistance Against Japan” on 3 September 1975 made a reference stating: “Though there are still a

				handful of people in Japan who cherish the dream of reviving militarism, we [China]believe the Japanese people will never allow a retrogression in the future history of Japan and Asia”
Fukuda Takeo	1976-1978	4	21 April 1977; 21 April 1978; 15 August 1978; 18 October 1978	Not available
Ohira Masayoshi	1978-1980	3	21 April 1979; 18 October 1979; 21 April 1980	Not available
Suzuki Zenko	1980-1982	9	15 August 1980; 18 October 1980; 21 November 1980; 21 April 1981; 15 August 1981; 17 October 1981; 21 April 1982; 15 August 1982; 18 October 1982	Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily) released a comment entitled “Whom Do They Mourn For?”
Nakasone Yasuhiro	1982-1987	10	21 April 1983; 15 August 1983; 18 October 1983; 5 January 1984; 15 August 1984; 18 October 1984; 21 January 1985; 22 April 1985; 15 August 1985	Renmin Ribao, 15 August 1985, stated: “official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine hurt the feelings of the Japanese people and those Asian neighbours who suffered at the hands of Japanese militarism during the war of aggression.” MOFA expressed displeasure. Chinese students anti-Japanese demonstrations on 18 August 1985.
Takeshita Noboru	1987-1989	0	-	-
Uno Sosuke	1989-1989	0	-	-
Kaifu Toshiki	1989-1991	0	-	-
Miyazawa Kiichi	1991-1993	0	-	-
Hosokawa Morihiro	1993-1994	0	-	-
Hata Tsutomu	1994-1994	0	-	-
Murayama Tomiichi	1994-1996	0	-	-
Hashimoto Ryutaro	1996-1998	1	29 July 1996	Chinese MOFA expressed resentment. Chinese Vice Prime Minister and Foreign

				Minister Qian Qichen told the new Frontier Party delegation visiting China that “The unacceptable act and speech related to History textbook issue and Yasukuni issue will damage Sino-Japanese relations.
Obuchi Keizo	1998-2000	0		
Mori Yoshiro	2000-2001	0		
Koizumi Junichiro	2001-2006	6	13 August 2001	China protested Yasukuni visit; refused bilateral summit with Koizumi; Jiang Zemin planned to avoid Koizumi in Shanghai’s APEC Summit
			21 April 2002	China lodged protest over Koizumi’s Yasukuni visit; mutual visits remained suspended; cancelled defence exchanges and PLA navy visit; however, senior CCP leader Zeng Qinghong visited Japan; Jiang Zemin criticised koizumi during the meeting at the APEC summit, Mexico
			14 January 2003	China lodged protest over Koizumi’s Yasukuni visit; mutual visits remained suspended. Hu Jintao met Koizumi in St. Petersburg, Russia. Koizumi met Wen Jiabao at the ASEAN Plus Three summit, Bali-Indonesia.
			1 January 2004	China protested over Yasukuni visit; mutual visit remained suspended; postponed mutual navy visit again; however, Japan-China vice-ministerial defence dialogue resumed after long hiatus Koizumi met Hu Jintao at APEC summit, Chile. Koizumi met Wen

				Jiabao at ASEAN Plus Three summit, Laos
			17 October 2005	Beijing protested Koizumi's Yasukuni visit; mutual visits remained suspended; cancelled FM meeting; Chinese anger over timing of visit coincided with China's successful second manned space mission Vice Premier Wu Yi cancelled her meeting with Koizumi China postponed 4th round of ECS consultations in reaction to Koizumi's Yasukuni visit.
			15 August 2006	China lodged protests over Koizumi's Yasukuni visit on August 15; mutual visits remained suspended until Koizumi in power (till september).
Abe Shinzo	2006-2007	0	-	High-level visits resume Abe Shinzo visits China in October 2006 Wen Jiabao visits Japan in April 2007 Fukuda Yasuo visits China in December 2007 Hu Jintao visits Japan in 2008 Joint Statement on "Mutually Beneficial Relationship based on Common Strategic Interests" signed.
Fukuda Yasuo	2007-2008	0	-	
Aso Taro	2008-2009	0	-	
Hatoyama Yukio	2009-2010	0	-	
Kan Naoto	2010-2011	0	-	
Noda Yoshihiko	2011-2012	0	-	
Abe Shinzo	2012	0	-	
	<b>Total Visits = 64</b>	<b>August Visits = 10</b>	<b>Spring/Autumn Festival Visits= 43</b>	<b>Non festival/ Non August Visits= 11</b>

**Source:** Chinese official documents, Chinese and English newspaper reports.

Given the above data, it is important to note that Miki Takeo was the first Japanese prime minister to visit the Yasukuni in honour of those Japanese who died in service during the Pacific War, paying his visit on 15 August 1975. In this case, it is to note that Beijing ignored this visit, except for a Renmin Ribao editorial that very passively expressed China's resentment. The

'Yasukuni' problem first emerged in the Sino-Japanese diplomatic discourse in the 1980s, when China protested for the first time after Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko's 15 August visit to the shrine in 1982. To which, Beijing did respond, however, but minimally. Wan (2006: 237) notes that Beijing did not reprimand Suzuki for his visit despite it being coinciding with the history textbook row. Besides, the People's Daily, ran a lengthy report on Yasukuni, wherein it did not officially condemn Suzuki's visit but rather, it questioned whether Japan had learned anything from World War II (Lewentowicz 2013: 59). However, as reported by Xinhua, Suzuki had made the visit in an official capacity by signing the visitor's book as "prime minister" (ibid.). But Beijing seemed to overlook this visit.

Two key points to note, Suzuki's visit took place on the controversial date of 15th August and he made the visit under an official capacity- two critical factors to trigger Beijing's response. However, what is found that Beijing did not pose any official objection to the visit, except for some media highlights to the event. Besides, with Suzuki's October visit in 1982, the Xinhua news agency reported that 139 Dietmen visited Yasukuni and that the Suzuki administration had deemed such visits might be in violation of Japan's Constitution. Although there was no clear objection to Suzuki, however, it is exemplary of China's growing awareness to the Yasukuni issue in China-Japan relations (ibid.: 60). Besides, it is noteworthy that China's occasional response to the prime ministers visits until 1985 were mainly engineered through the official Renmin Ribao and the Xinhua News Agency, without any strong condemnation from the ruling Chinese elite or public protests. However, with Nakasone's 1985 Yasukuni visit, there was a change in Beijing's attitude.

Given China's mild attitude, Yasukuni became a point of political friction between China and Japan only in 1985. On 15 August 1985, Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro paid a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine "in his official capacity, signing the visitor's book as Prime Minister" (Buruma 1994: 221). This was a turning point in China's so far mild attitude towards Japan's prime ministers visits to the shrine. As until Nakasone's August 1985 visit,

overall, 10 Japanese prime ministers made 57 visits (including Nakasone's 10 visits), but the point of departure is the 'nature of the visits. As all the visits so far were made as private individuals.

Also to note, until 1975, the Japanese Emperor himself visited the Shrine 7 times since 1952, but even these visits were explained in the Diet as private visits (Fukuoka 2014: 107). This official badge gave a turn to Beijing's soft posture as China this time responded in a "harsh" manner than ever before (Rose 1998: 185). However, it was not until Koizumi Junichiro's visit between 2001 and 2006, that the issue developed into a diplomatic problem. Chinese attitude towards the Yasukuni Shrine, especially with respect to prime ministerial visits, can be understood at two levels: first, at the political elite level and secondly, at the popular level. In view of this, Deans (2007: 285) points that the elite level the CCP leadership has used the issue of Prime Ministerial visits to Yasukuni instrumentally, but nonetheless regards visits as a "litmus test" of the Japanese government's attitude towards history and towards improving and sustaining political relations with China.

Furthermore, attitudes towards Japan are often caught up in "intra-elite and factional conflict", so that those in the elite who favour better relations with Japan find their position damaged by Japanese actions. While at the popular level, Yasukuni has become a focus for anti- Japanese sentiment among nationalist groups, although it should be regarded as one issue among many which can provoke anti-Japanese reactions in China. However, as Deans (2005; 2007) suggests that this anti-Japanese popular sentiment is not simply a tool of the Chinese leadership. To argue so, as although Chinese state attempts at promoting nationalism and patriotism to secure its legitimacy have been significant but China's popular national self-assertion over relations with Japan has far exceeded what the leadership regards as "acceptable" and has become a "serious problem" in maintaining a stable relationship with Japan (Deans 2005: 55). This argument further validates that anti-Japanese nationalism in China is a double-edged sword.

As outlined in Table 5.1, it is important to note that out of the 64 visits made by Japanese Prime Ministers from 1948 to 2012, 43 took place at the time of either the spring or autumn festivals, important dates in the Shinto calendar. More controversial are the visits that took place on August 15, the date taken in Japan to mark the end of the war. There have been nine visits on this date (three each by Suzuki Zenko and Nakasone Yasuhiro, and one each by Fukuda Takeo, Miki Takeo and Koizumi Junichiro), and one visit on August 13 (by Koizumi). In this perspective, an important aspect of visits to the Shrine by Japanese PM is the time of year the visits take place as this often carries with it powerful political symbolism. To say so, as out of the 64 visits, Beijing responded only 11 times while ignoring the majority 53 visits.

What is noteworthy, is that out of the 11 reactive responses of Beijing, five were mainly catalysed by the visits made during the sensitive month of August, which was a clear majority against the other months of the year (two in October, two in January, and one in April and July). What is prominent that Beijing's reaction was mainly bolstered by time of the visits, wherein the majority of the time it did so is in response to August visits. The primary question that needs to be answered is that why Beijing reacts to Yasukuni issue?

As already discussed, Chinese response to the Yasukuni shrine is mainly explained from three perspectives- first, the inclusion of Class A war criminals, second, revisionist narrative of history and third, the official capacity of the Japanese Prime minister's visits to the shrine. Here, it is noteworthy that although the enshrinement of Class A war criminals became the focal point of the Chinese protest, but the Chinese government did not clearly object to Japanese prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine until 1985. To this, Lewentowicz (2013: 67) contends that Beijing reversed its policy from ignoring Yasukuni Shrine visits from 1948 to 1984 to actively protesting prime minister visits in 1985. This change in Beijing's attitude is mainly interpreted in relation to the enshrinement of Class A war criminals and the symbol such visits represented towards honouring Japan's imperialistic past. However, to point, there was no immediate response by



Beijing after the enshrinement of the Class A was made public in 1979. It was only on 17 August 1980, that the People's Daily first reported on the enshrinement of Class A war criminals. Although the Chinese media paid more attention and became increasingly critical of the Yasukuni issue, but the Chinese government did not protest against such visits until 1985 despite yearly visits made on 15 August.

In explaining Beijing's ignorant attitude, Lewentowicz (2013: 68) argues that it was mainly because the visits then did not present a serious agitation to Chinese historical memory by honouring those convicted of the war crimes. To say so, as it is found that neither Chinese political elites nor popular levels of Chinese society raised any objection when Class B and C war criminals were enshrined in 1959. To this, one might conclude that it was the deification of 14 Class A war criminals that acted as the trigger point, which helps explain Beijing's reactive response in 1985. What explains the gap in Beijing's response? That is, after the media revelation of the interment of the Class A war criminals in 1979, there were twenty-one prime ministers visits to the Yasukuni shrine till 1985, which went relatively unnoticed by Beijing. Also to note, until 1985, China had occasionally used the official Xinhua News Agency and Renmin Ribao newspapers to express criticism of prime minister's visits, but their protests had never proceeded further. According to Asahi Shimbun, People's Daily hinted mildly at Chinese displeasure in 1982 and 1983 and Xinhua followed suit in 1983 and 1984. However, there was no response from China to visits in 1979, 1980, or 1981 (Shibuichi 2005: 207). This asymmetry in China's response is well noted in Table 1.

What is striking to identify is that in contrast to its erstwhile ignorant policy, China vehemently responded more harshly for the first time to Nakasone's 15 August visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. In 1985, Beijing's vehement response to Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro's visit was not just because of the enshrinement of the Class A war criminals, but because Nakasone declared his visit in August 1985 to be official. Unlike his predecessors, Nakasone's visit to the shrine was the first by a prime minister under an official capacity as the other prime ministers visits were only on non-official capacity. This

automatically prompted the Chinese government's condemnation of the visits and since then the Yasukuni shrine has become a taboo in the relationship. Although Chinese government did issue a warning, as on 14 August 1985, PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs cautioned Tokyo, as Chinese spokesperson said:

“If Prime Minister Nakasone and other cabinet members of Japan visit Yasukuni Shrine, they will hurt the people of the world and Asian people including Japanese and Chinese people who suffered a great deal from the militarism” (Yang 2013: 156).

However, Beijing's warning went unheeded as Nakasone visited the Shrine on 15th August on the occasion of 40th anniversary of the end of World War II. Chinese media China's official media made serious criticism of the visit. For instance, People's Daily reported vocal expressions of outrage and protested Nakasone's visit and treated it as a “sign of revival of Japanese militarism” (Ma 2013: 111). While articles in the Beijing Review, as Liao (2006) notes, posited that: “peoples in Asian countries had not forgotten their sufferings brought about by the Japanese militarists in the past, and they were very cautious of any signs of militarist revival” (ibid.: 162). While a Xinhua Agency commentary on 21 August stated that:

“Like many other Asian countries, China hopes that the Japanese government will bow to the historical facts and take an unequivocal stand on where the guilt and responsibility for its appalling war of aggression must lie. This is the best guarantee against the renewal of militarism and the recurrence of any such crime. In making its decision, the Japanese government has pandered to and actually emboldened those in Japan who have always wanted to deny the aggressive nature of the war and reverse history's condemnation of Japanese militarism. This has given rise to much concern among the peoples in Asia, and put them on their guard once again” (Liao 2006: 162).

What is surprising to note that the Chinese government adopted a constrained posture in response to Nakasone's visit. This low profile attitude of Beijing is argued to be influenced by the continuing trade imbalance with Japan, which reached US\$2 billion in 1984 and increased to US\$2.3 billion in the first half of 1985. Liao draws this connection as just before Nakasone's visit, Chinese State Councillor, Gu Mu, raised concerns against the trade imbalance in Tokyo on 30-31 July, at the Fourth Sino-Japanese government-member

conference. Besides, post-Nakasone's visit, on 27 August 1985, in answering the question posed by Japanese press on: "How does the CCP view Nakasone's official visit to the Shrine?", Secretary of the CCP Secretariat, Yao Yilin, provided a "less critical response" as compared to that of Chinese media. As Yao responded saying:

"The aggressive war launched by the Japanese militarists 40 years ago caused serious damage to peoples in Asian countries, including those in China and Japan. The official homage by the Japanese government officials to the Yasukuni Shrine, which formally enshrined some Class-A war criminals, was hurtful to the feelings of people in those countries who suffered from the war of aggression, and the action has unavoidably triggered concerns for the Chinese people" (ibid.).

The Chinese government's soft approach is further noted in Chairman of the Chinese NPC, Peng Zhen's speech on 3 September at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second World War in Beijing. To note, Peng in his speech reviewed the whole process of the Sino-Japanese War during World War II, however, just mentioned history issue in a brief note, saying:

"[...] the hostile history between the two countries caused by the Japanese militarist aggression had ended, and this history will not be allowed to occur again. There are still some people in Japan trying to revive the militarism, but their behaviour is against the wills of the people in both China and Japan, and it will also be harmful to Sino-Japanese friendship and the peace in the world" (ibid.: 163).

What defined China's official position on the Yasukuni issue can be summarised in Hu Yaobang's statement as Hu emphasised that "past conflicts should be precisely evaluated, that the Chinese people should distinguish "a small handful of Japanese war criminals and that the Japanese people in general and the people in China had equally been victims of Japanese militarism" (Ma 2013: 113). However, interesting to note is that, unlike the composed posture of the Chinese government, the most vehement condemnation to the visit came from the Chinese public besides the media. As on 18 September 1985, on the 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Manchurian event", about 1,000 students from Peking University and Tsinghua University marched to the Tiananmen Square, as they shouted slogans such as "Down with Japanese militarism", "Down with Nakasone", "Objection to textbook revision", and "Objection to Japan's economic aggression" (Liao 2006: 163).

Anti-Japanese protests by University students were also held in cities such as Xian, Wuhan and Chengdu (ibid.).

To these anti-Japanese demonstration, Whiting (1989: 67) suggests that though the 18th September demonstrations marked the 1931 Mukden Incident but the larger context of Chinese reaction to Nakasone's Yasukuni Shrine visit was provided by the fortieth anniversary of the war's end. For instance, slogans such as "down with Japanese militarism", "down with Nakasone" and "down with the second invasion." were raised- a symbolic reminder of China's tragic history at the hands of the Japanese militarism. One poster of a 1930s- era Japanese soldier declared, "Forty years ago I chopped off fifty Chinese heads with my sword; now my firm sells you hundreds of thousands of colour televisions" (Reilly 2014: 202). Here, China's public antagonism against Japan, as Whiting (1989: 67) argues was instigated by the fortieth anniversary that furbished the nationalist referent that allowed the demonstrators to attack Japan's role in China's economic modernisation as "a second invasion".

In responding to these anti-Japanese demonstrations, the Chinese government as Whiting points reacted "ambivalently but prudently, mixing minimum force with maximum persuasion" (ibid.). However, unlike its initial stand on the issue, under public pressure, the Chinese government took a tougher position on Nakasone's visit. As following the anti-Japanese protests, on 19 September 1985, Chinese spokesman of the Foreign ministry declared for the first time that the visit has "seriously harmed the feelings of the Chinese people, and that China hoped that Japanese leaders would strictly keep their promise, and strengthen the Sino-Japanese friendship (Liao 2006: 163). Similarly, when Japanese Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe visited Beijing on 10 October 1985, the top Chinese leadership pressed on the issue that Japan should consider the feelings of the Chinese people. In his talks with Abe, Deng Xiaoping stated that "Yasukuni Shrine" has become "a big problem for us" (Weiss 2008: 58). In a harsh tone, Deng stated:

"The people of China and of Asia- including East Asia and Southeast Asia-have feelings. In order to continue developing friendly Sino-

Japanese relations, I suggest that the Japanese leadership pay attention to this problem. If these difficult problems arise again, the situation will change. This is the truth. [on one hand] if there are no further problems, no harm will have been done, and our economic and political relationship can continue developing peacefully and stably. This is where a true understanding should be reached” (ibid.).

Here, to note, Deng’s specific mention to “people of China and Asia – including East Asia and Southeast Asia” can be attributed to the responses by other countries to Nakasone’s visit. To say so, as within Japan, there was criticism to the visit as witnessed in the demonstrations by political parties as well as Japanese public people in protest against the visit. Besides, Japanese media such as Tokyo Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun and Komei Shimbun and others, published editorials that criticised the visit. For instance, Tokyo Shimbun posited that the visit indicated “the danger in trying to whitewash the crimes of that war of aggression” (Liao 2006: 161). While Mainichi Shimbun pointed that: We should remember the souls enshrined in the Yasukuni Shrine, but should also think about these dead in other countries, especially in Asian countries who suffered from the Japanese invasion” (ibid.). While some Southeast Asian countries too criticised the visit. As in Singapore, *Lianhe zaobao* (United Morning Post) asserted that the homage to the Shrine revealed the intention of Japanese militarism to deny responsibility for its aggressive history, and it was necessary to past attention to the political trend in Japan (ibid.). While the New Central Plains Newspaper in Thailand claimed that what was behind the official homage to the Yasukuni Shrine was the “remaining soul of the Japanese militarists, which was similar to the case of the 1982 textbook event” (ibid.: 161-162).

What can be stated is that the Chinese government had an ambivalent response to Nakasone’s Yasukuni visit. To say so, as one hand, the government forged a prior warning before the visit. But China’s vehement criticism only came after the public and media protests. Following the student demonstrations, the Chinese foreign ministry revealed that it had stressed concern in advance, asking Tokyo to “handle the matter with prudence. Regrettably, however, the Japanese side, ignoring our friendly exhortations, went ahead with the official visit to the shrine, thus hurting seriously the

feelings of the Chinese people” (Whiting 1989: 54). To this, Whiting (ibid.) suggests that concern over possible public reaction constrained the foreign ministry’s immediate response to Nakasone’s visit as no formal protest was issued.

Overall, at the government level, China took a rather positive view and its Japan policy remained in line with the 1972 normalisation policy of friendship. For China, despite the tensions, Japan’s economic and technological cooperation ranked high on PRC’s agenda. As Whiting (1989: 4) argues that China’s primary interest was in having “Japanese capital through investment and loans” and “Japanese technology through trade and investment”. This can be explained as since 1979, China was seeking Japanese ODA (in the form of aid, grant assistance and technical assistance), wherein primarily the yen loans given by Japan was significantly contributing to China’s economic growth as the loans supported China’s development of its industrial infrastructure. In addition, as Whiting (ibid.) notes, although “[l]ess tangible and explicit, but no less important, is China’s strategic interest in Japan’s contribution to the military balance in East Asia to offset the rapid and continuing growth of Soviet power throughout the region” (ibid.). This explains as to why the Chinese government held a constrained approach towards Japan. This Chinese attitude is further validated by the fact that Premier Zhao Ziyang on meeting Nakasone on 23 October 1985, “reaffirmed the necessity of a stable bilateral relationship and did not mention Yasukuni” (Ma 2013: 115).

What is to be pointed is that out of Nakasone’s 10 visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, it was the 15 August 1985 that made Yasukuni a taboo in China-Japan relations. However, in 1983, Nakasone made his visit on 15 August, which drew Beijing’s first time condemnation of the Japanese prime ministers visit to the Yasukuni shrine. Beijing ignored Nakasone’s following seen visits from October 1983 to April 1985. The first visit was in April 1983, which occurred against a backdrop of improved Sino- Japanese relations. In an interview with the People’s Daily, Nakasone stated, “Japan wants to establish firm scientific and cultural exchanges with China on the basis of mutual economic

cooperation.” Nakasone’s visit in August, however, proved that Yasukuni would be a source of friction between the two states. Beijing’s response mainly came in 1985 to Nakasone’s visit on 15 August. China’s heavy criticism led to Nakasone cancelling his upcoming visit to the Yasukuni during the autumn festival.

In case of Chinese response, it suggests that although there are genuine concerns about Japanese militarist revival among some Chinese elites, but domestic political concerns have acted as a crucial factor that helps explain the Chinese government’s hard stance towards Japan over historical issues such as Yasukuni. The elite discourses in China on the Yasukuni Shrine do not exist in a vacuum, and are increasingly influenced by changing popular attitudes towards Japan as noted in Nakasone’s 1985 visit. To note, with his 1985 visit, Nakasone broke the taboo on official visits to Yasukuni shrine, and thus, faced with China’s criticism, resulted into an 11-year hiatus in prime minister visits. Also to point, Nakasone’s statement of making Yasukuni the place where the state could officially express its respects to those who gave their lives for their country, along with his efforts to strengthen Japanese military capacity, had made the Yasukuni shrine a symbol of “Japanese attempts to revive militarist nationalism in some Chinese elites’ eyes” (Wan 2014: 8). From then on, Beijing showed increasing and consistent objections to prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni. The Chinese government maintains the position that Japanese prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni is tantamount to a defence of Japan’s war with China and a glorification of war criminals. Since then, with the exception of Prime Minister Hashimoto’s secret visit in 1996, no sitting Prime Minister had ever visited the Yasukuni Shrine. However, on 13 August 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi made a high-profile visit to the Shrine and again started a heated controversy domestically and internationally, thus, recasting the shadow of the past on China-Japan relations.

Therefore, high-level political visits to the Yasukuni Shrine have become an important issue in China’s relations with Japan. To which, Deans (2007: 289), argues that reactions at Chinese elite and mass levels are not simply an

instrumental response to a wider diplomatic agenda, but rather the anger and distress are real, as for the Chinese, the issue is “a matter of the heart.” In view of this, for the Chinese government, the Yasukuni issue is a key test of a politician’s attitude towards the relationship and the seriousness with which any Prime Minister regards the history of Japan’s aggression and imperialism. While it can be a diplomatic tool, it is much more than that (ibid.). Yasukuni Shrine controversy represents one of the sharp clash between Chinese and Japanese over interpretations of their war history. This further helps to explain the significant role of historical memory in understanding contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. This further explains as to why Sino-Japanese relations exhibit a departure from the two conventional norms that: time can heal all wounds, and that, growing bilateral contacts should mitigate historical differences. As in case of China and Japan, either of the norms have failed to succeed.

## **5.2 BEIJING’S RESPONSE TO KOIZUMI’S YASUKUNI SHRINE VISITS (2001-2006)**

After Hashimoto’s Yasukuni visit in 1996, the prime ministerial visit to the Yasukuni Shrine had become a de facto taboo in the Japanese political arena. However, Koizumi Junichiro was the first prime minister to visit the Yasukuni shrine since 1996. He visited annually between 2001 and 2006, which brought a halt to the Sino-Japanese relations. Koizumi’s uncompromising attitude on the matter and regular visits, drew the strongest criticism from the Chinese government and people, resulting into deterioration in China-Japan relations. Unlike Nakasone’s 1985 visit, under Koizumi the Yasukuni issue became a persistent source of friction.

Despite China’s strong objection, Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine six times during his term as the Prime Minister from April 2001 to September 2006. What is important to note is that unlike its erstwhile ambivalent attitude, Beijing responded to each visit with official objections. As the Chinese leaders refused to hold summit meetings with Koizumi, and Chinese mass protests against Japan repeatedly erupted, first through Internet petitions



and later culminating in large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations in 2005. During the Koizumi years, bilateral relations reached their “lowest point since diplomatic normalisation in 1972” (He 2007b: 44). To note, China’s official position on the Yasukuni Shrine issue, as specified by Foreign Ministry Spokesman Kong Quan is:

“We [Chinese government] oppose Japanese leaders paying homage to the Yasukuni Shrine where WWII Class-A criminals are worshiped. It is not in accordance with the commitment the Japanese leaders have made many times after war that Japan would stick to road to development through peace and express deep remorse for history. And it violates the consensus between the two sides when diplomatic relations were resumed, that is, to take history as a mirror and to face towards the future. We hope that Japanese leaders can make earnest efforts to change the erroneous practice” (Embassy of PRC in USA 2006).

### **5.2.1 KOIZUMI’S 2001 VISIT**

On 12 April 2001, Koizumi Junichiro during Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) presidential campaign called Nakai Sumiko, President of Izokukai or the Japanese Association for the Bereaved Families of War Dead, and said that he would absolutely pay homage at the Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August if elected as LDP President (Horiuchi 2009: 106). On 18 April, Koizumi clearly announced at the Japan National Press Club that if elected as LDP President and therefore as Prime Minister, he would visit the Shrine on 15 August despite any possible criticism (ibid.) This raised the Chinese suspicions that Japan was undergoing something of a revival of militarism (Rose 2005).

To this announcement of Koizumi, Beijing responded by posing an opposition to the announcement and calling for the cancellation of the visit. Given China’s consolidated image of Yasukuni as a symbol of Japanese militarism, Koizumi’s announcement to visit the shrine instigated a negative emotion in China. Bearing in mind that a prolonged controversy over history textbooks already existed, Yasukuni was another sensitive factor. As a response, even before Koizumi made his visit, Beijing tried to exert pressure on Tokyo at various occasions to convey its political concerns and stop the anticipated visit. To cite an example, at that time, China’s new ambassador to Japan, Wu

Dawei, told Koizumi: “The interest of the Chinese government and the people is focused on the Yasukuni issue. A proper understanding of history is vital for the Japan-China relations” (Daily Report NAPSNet 2001).

It is found that earlier to this, Beijing’s response to the Japanese prime minister’s Yasukuni visits were mainly high on rhetoric but low on action. Given this fixation, Beijing likely thought that by levying pressure in the same manner that it did during the tenure of Hashimoto and Nakasone, it could coerce Koizumi to refrain from future visits. Likewise, the Chinese initial response to Koizumi’s anticipated visit came primarily from diplomatic channels. Such as, on 11 May 2001, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vice-Chief of Information Department Sun Yuxi exposed that Koizumi revealed his plan to visit Yasukuni on 15 August in the National Diet of Japan. Sun stated that: “The substance of this issue is about how Japanese government and leader face history of aggression” (Yang 2013: 164). In expounding “China’s solemn position on Yasukuni Shrine”, on 17 May 2001, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi summoned the Japanese Ambassador to China Anami Koreshige and pointed out:

“Yasukuni Shrine, which still houses the memorial tablets of top war criminals, is a symbol of expansion and aggression in Japan's modern history. How Japan approaches the issue of paying homage to the Yasukuni Shrine is by no means just an internal matter of Japan, but a touchstone of the government attitude of Japan toward its history of aggression. It also has a direct bearing on the feelings of the peoples of those countries victimized by the war including China. Wang stressed that as the largest victim nation of the war of aggression launched by Japanese militarism, China naturally opposes visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in whatever form by government leaders of Japan” (MFA 2001).

While Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan met with his Japanese counterpart Makiko Tanaka in the third Asia-Europe Meeting in Beijing on May 24, and said that “Japan needs to consider victims’ national sentiments and face history. We hope Japan can keep its commitment” (Yang 2013: 164). On 28 May 2001, President Jiang Zemin met with a South Korean Ruling Party delegation and indicated that the —Prime Minister’s visit equals mourning militarist’s spirit (ibid.: 165). While on 10 July 2001, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan in a meeting with the three secretary-general of the

ruling coalition (LDP, New Komeito and the New Conservative Party) stated “We cannot accept having the leader of Japan visit the Yasukuni Shrine, where a number of Class A war criminals are enshrined” (Rose 2005: 114). While Jiang Zemin further warned the three politicians that the “issue could ignite serious trouble” (ibid.).

On 24 July 2001, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan told his Japanese counterpart Makiko Tanaka in an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three meeting in Hanoi that if Koizumi visited Yasukuni, - “the Chinese public would have a strong reaction and that, from China’s perspective, Koizumi’s shrine visit looked like bowing to the Class-A war criminals” (Yang 2013: 165). On 2 August 2001, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan met with Hiromu Nonaka in Beijing, a former secretary-general of the LDP, and said that- “If Koizumi visits Yasukuni, it will hurt the trust relations” (ibid.). While on 9 August, People’s Daily in a warning tone published a commentary article titled “Japanese PM Should Think Thrice Before Acting”, which stated:

“[the] visit, if carried out, will imply that the Japanese government once again breaks faith with the Chinese people on the question of history and will definitely fundamentally shake the political base for China-Japan relations, thereby bringing about negative influence on the future development of China-Japanese relations” (People’s Daily Online 2001a).

While on 10 August in another commentary article titled “Koizumi, Rethink Before Going to Yasukuni Shrine” People’s Daily posited:

“[Yasukuni Shrine is] a touchstone of the Japanese government's attitude towards the history of aggression. It is a fundamental issue of importance showing Japan's attitude toward the Asian victims of its past aggressions. [...] His purpose in doing this is nothing but to woo votes from the Japanese rightists as well as to beautify Japan's past aggressions” (People’s Daily Online 2001b).

From the above meetings between Chinese diplomats with their Japanese counterparts exemplifies Beijing’s strong determination in deterring Koizumi’s intended Yasukuni visit. Given the critical juncture of uncertainty over Koizumi’s visit, in August, Beijing successively escalated its pressure on Japan through diplomatic channels. To say so, as when Nonaka Hiromu, a

former secretary-general of the LDP visited Beijing on 1 August, he was able to meet almost all senior high-ranking officials and top leaders in China, of which, specifically- the head of the International Department of the CCP, Dai Bingguo (1 August), Chinese foreign minister, Tang Jiaxuan (2 August), head of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the CCP, Zeng Qinghong (4 August), and the vice president of China, Hu Jintao (5 August) (Cheung 2017: 69). Wherein, in each of these interactions as Cheung (*ibid.*) notes, it was mentioned that the Yasukuni issue should be “carefully handled” and that current Sino-Japanese relations would further “deteriorate if Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August”. In addition, on 2 August, Chinese ambassador to Japan, Wu Dawei, met Koizumi and expressed China’s demand on the Yasukuni issue (*ibid.*).

From these actions by China, it is clear that unlike its earlier behaviour which was just limited to rhetorical comments, Beijing acted proactively in exerting strong diplomatic pressure in order to avoid the Yasukuni problem from getting resurfaced and de-stabilising the Sino-Japanese relations. However, what followed thereafter, as Rose (2005: 114) notes is that in the run-up to August, Chinese officials tried to urge the prime minister not to visit the shrine, and as the visit was confirmed then the Chinese asked if the visit could be taken on a day other than 15 August. This suggests a shift in Beijing’s calculations from that of completely deterring Koizumi’s shrine visit to that of becoming accommodative to the visit with a clause attached. The outcome, therefore, as yielding to Beijing’s diplomatic pressure Koizumi did compromise on his stand by visiting the shrine on 13 August rather than on the controversial date of 15 August.

It can be interpreted that Beijing’s response to Koizumi’s visit was influenced by two factors- a strong historical consciousness as reflected in the bias towards 15 August visit to the shrine and a pragmatic policy towards Japan as visible in Beijing’s accommodative approach given its economic interests. While the key understanding lies in the fact that ‘the date of visit’ to Yasukuni by a Japanese prime minister under an ‘official’ capacity was the central causal factor of China’s discontentment. This further confirms as to

why Yasukuni makes a causal political friction between China and Japan in the post Cold War period.

While in explaining his decision to change the date of the visit, on 13 August 2001, Koizumi issued a statement saying:

“As the anniversary of the end of the war came closer, vocal debates have started at home and abroad as to whether I should visit Yasukuni Shrine. In the course of these debates, opinions requesting the cancellation of my visit to Yasukuni Shrine were voiced not only within Japan but also from other countries. It would be totally contrary to my wish, under these circumstances, if my visit to Yasukuni Shrine on August 15 could, against my intention, lead people of neighboring countries to cast doubts on the fundamental policy of Japan of denying war and desiring peace. Taking seriously such situations both in and outside of Japan, I have made my own decision not to visit Yasukuni Shrine on that day, and I would like to choose another day for a visit” (MOFA 2001).

From the above statement, it is clear that China’s diplomatic consultation and persuasion did succeed in changing the date of the visit involved, however, it is also true that Beijing did not succeed in refraining Koizumi from making the shrine visit. Nonetheless, despite the change in the date of the visit as per Beijing’s clause, Koizumi’s visit still provoked a critical response as the Chinese government immediately denounced the visit by expressing “strong indignation” (BBC News 2001). The People’s Daily website quoted the head of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, Zhu Chengshan as saying since the Yasukuni Shrine glorified Japanese imperialists, Koizumi’s action “was another major political act to distort history” (CNN.com 2001).

In its act of denouncement, the Chinese foreign ministry immediately summoned Japan’s ambassador Koreshige Anami to present a formal note of protest and later issued a statement saying: “The essence of the Yasukuni Shrine question is whether the Japanese side can sincerely repent that aggressive period of history” (Symonds 2001). On 13 August 2001, Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Yi urgently summoned Ambassador Koreshige Anami and made solemn representations over Koizumi’s Yasukuni visit. Wherein, Wang Yi strictly pointed: First, the “Chinese government and people expressed strong indignation”. Second, “the treatment of the issue of the Yasukuni Shrine has since become a touchstone for examining the attitude

the Japanese government holds towards that period of history of aggression.” Third, “China was the biggest victim of the Japanese militarism invasion war”. However, Japanese side has “admitted its history of aggression against China, reiterated its attitude on introspecting and apologized to the Chinese people”. Nonetheless, “the Prime Minister’s visit to the Shrine violates the above mentioned basic stance of the Japanese government, and again discredits Japan among the people in Asia and the world, including Chinese people, on the issue of history.” Fourth, China takes note that, “Koizumi gave up his original plan to visit the Shrine on the sensitive day of August 15 and made remarks on historic issues, in which he admitted Japanese expression and expressed introspection.” However, “his actual practice contradicts and runs against what he said.” Fifth, the visit “has damaged the political basis of Sino-Japanese relations and hurt the feelings of the Chinese people and people in other victimised Asian countries, and will inevitably affect the healthy development of future bilateral ties between China and Japan.” Sixth, the negative moves of the Japanese sides towards the issue of history in recent years, including the latest visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, have further isolated Japan from its Asian neighbors and the international community” (Embassy of PRC in Papua New Guinea 2001).

These categorical representations of China’s expressed indignation by Wang Yi brings forth the sentimental rhetoric that China attaches towards any action by Japan that tends to revisit and glorify the mistakes of the past. Apart from these, China’s official censures also included that from the CPPCC Foreign Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee of China’s NPC- who on 14 August 2001, condemned Koizumi’s visit to the shrine (Tan and Zhen 2009). While further adding to the rhetorical criticism, in expressing resentment to Koizumi’s visit, President Jiang Zemin refused to meet Koizumi in an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Shanghai. This diplomatic act signaled Beijing’s resentment towards Koizumi’s actions, however, China did not suspend its relations. To say so, as on Koizumi’s expressed desire to visit China for China-Japan Summit, MOFA Spokesperson Sun Yuxi said that “China takes summit and mutual visits seriously; however, in order to realize it, Japan needs to create necessary atmosphere and circumstance.” On 31

August 2001, Foreign Minister Tang said, “We hope Japan can take actual action to restore bilateral relations to the right track as soon as possible and - it is important for Japan to create favorable conditions for restoring relations” (Yang 2013: 168). On 13 September 2001, President Jiang told a delegation of the Japan-China Friendship Parliamentarian Union that he could not understand why Koizumi visited Yasukuni and repeated a Chinese idiom, “Whoever started the trouble should end it” (ibid.)- expressing that Japan should take action to amend Sino-Japanese relations.

In an overall analysis of China’s response to Koizumi’s Yasukuni visit, it can thus, be argued that Beijing’s response was high on rhetoric but low on any form of actions to express discontentment. What is important to note is that although Beijing raised concerns and expressed strong opposition on one end, on the other end, China did play pragmatically and did not sever its diplomatic ties with Japan. Furthermore, as Wan (2006: 245) notes that China showed signs of tolerance as reflected in the change of the date of the visit. That is, Beijing was accommodative to Koizumi’s preponement of visit from 15 to that of 13 August- given the sentiments attached with 15 August. To point, China’s response to Koizumi’s first such visit was mainly vitriolic at the rhetoric level as compared to taking strong diplomatic actions. This ambivalence makes Beijing’s response to Koizumi’s visit limited in its scope. This point stands validated as although China expressed its indignation, but it also recognized the act of changing the date of the visit from Koizumi’s original pledge, as clearly noted in Wang Yi’s solemn representations.

To elaborate further, Beijing’s soft approach towards Tokyo was also visible in keeping the communication channels open rather than suspended. Beijing’s strong emphasis on Japan to amend the ties in the post-Koizumi visit is indicative of China’s urge to maintain the diplomatic relations and making room for conciliation. The outcome of this was on 8 October 2001, in the background of sever criticism, Koizumi visited China to which Beijing expressed a positive response. Wherein, Koizumi made a symbolic trip to the Museum of the War of Chinese Resistance against Japanese Aggression and also to the Marco Polo Bridge (*Luguo Qiao*) the historic site of the 7 July

Incident that marked the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 and expressed “heartfelt apology” (People’s Daily Online 2001c). Here, it is important to point, that although Koizumi stirred the historical sentiments of China but he became the first head of Japanese government to present a wreath at the memorial and the first Prime Minister of the Japanese LDP to visit the memorial (ibid.).

Beijing’s gesture to allow Koizumi in the backdrop of his Yasukuni visit can be interpreted as China’s accommodative approach towards Koizumi and in bringing stability to the relations. As in a press conference on 11 October 2001, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Sun Yuxi, in acknowledging Koizumi’s “expressed apology” and “remorse for Japan’s history of aggression against China” stated that China “welcome[s] his [Koizumi’s] move and statements” and further reiterated that the “Japanese side should have a correct attitude” (MFA 2001).

Therefore, Koizumi’s symbolic China visit provided some kind of traction to the Sino-Japanese relations in the background of the Yasukuni tensions. The Chinese had a positive response to the visit, as reflected in the above statement of MFA. In addition, the Chinese media as Wan (2006: 245) notes highlighted Koizumi’s statement of apology at the museum. While a Xinhua News Agency article pointed out that “no empirical evidence indicated that Japan’s leader was faking a friendly gesture toward Beijing” (ibid.). This thus, reflects the Chinese perception that Koizumi will not visit the Yasukuni Shrine again.

However, what made Beijing to perceive so can be the parallels drawn in Beijing’s calculation. That is, as Koizumi’s predecessors such as Nakasone and Hasimoto succumbed to the pressure and neither revisited the shrine during their respective tenure. Similarly, as Koizumi went a step ahead with his ‘symbolic’ China visit and ‘apology’, it made a stronger case for him to not revisiting the shrine in the future. It is probable that China took the Japanese prime minister’s conciliatory posture as a sign that Koizumi would confine himself to only one visit to Yasukuni, just as Nakasone and



Hashimoto had done. However, as known, Beijing's reiteration on the sensitivity of the Yasukuni issue did not succeed as Koizumi continued his Yasukuni visits thus, causing a perceptual gap in China's Japan policy.

### **5.2.2 KOIZUMI's 2002 VISIT**

Given China's expressed hopes for a peaceful August in 2002 that would have no negative impact on September's 30th anniversary of the normalisation of Sino-Japanese relations, Beijing was skeptical about Koizumi repeating his 2001 August's visit to the Shrine. However, Beijing still held a positive outlook, as on 12 April 2002, Koizumi in his speech at the Boao Forum on Hainan Island, "Asia in a New Century- Challenge and Opportunity" stated that "China's leaders and the Chinese people together are "advancing the cause of reform and openness," and Japan, "as a friend of China, has been supporting such efforts." Koizumi further declared that while "some see the economic development of China as a threat. I do not. I believe that its dynamic economic development presents challenges as well as opportunity for Japan." Thus, he saw the "advancement of Japan-China economic relations, not as a hollowing out of Japanese industry, but as an opportunity to nurture new industries in Japan and to develop their activities in the Chinese market." These positive statements by Koizumi left less room for Beijing to anticipate any repeat of mistakes from Koizumi's end.

However, in this positive backdrop, the tension was triggered by Koizumi's unannounced visit to the shrine on 21 April 2002. This action went contrary to Koizumi's Boao speech that pleased the Chinese leaders. In defending his decision, Koizumi argued that paying respects to the war dead was only "natural" (MOFA 2002). Koizumi announced that he did not want to resurrect last year's debate over the propriety of a visit to Yasukuni either shortly before or after the 15 August commemoration of the end of the war.

In view of this, Koizumi believed that the Spring Festival presented the best opportunity for him to visit the shrine tranquilly as an expression of his true inner feelings. Japan's present prosperity, he noted, was "founded on the priceless sacrifices made by many people who lost their lives in war" and

therefore, it is important to “firmly adhere to the resolution to embrace peace and renounce war to ensure that we never resort to tragic war” (ibid.). However, in Koizumi’s statement there was a defined asymmetry. As half a year ago, during his China tour Koizumi admitted Japan was responsible for the aggression, and offered a sincere apology to the Chinese people who suffered.

Taken by surprise without any prior anticipation over Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, Beijing expressed its strong indignation. Unlike the 2001 visit by Koizumi that Beijing did not rule out, but 2002 visit came as a shock and brought into question the foundation of the Sino-Japanese relations based on previous commitments made by Japan. Beijing’s taken aback attitude was well hinted at in People’s Daily verdict which declared that with “Koizumi’s vow of self-reflection still echoing in our ears he had taken a wrong action again which is not acceptable in both Oriental ethics and international morality” (Griffith 2012: 15). However, the rhetorical response was similar to that of the previous episode of 2001. Similarly, Beijing’s official response was ritualistic, with the Vice Foreign Minister summoning the Japanese ambassador, followed by MOFA’s issue of an official statement denouncing the visit.

Following the norm, on 21 April 2002, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing urgently summoned Japanese Ambassador to China Koreshige and made some representations over Koizumi’s visit. Although most of the remarks were similar to the statement of Wang Yi in 2001, Li expressed China’s strong objection by calling it “an erroneous action which hurt the feelings of the Chinese people and was detrimental to Sino-Japanese relations” (People’s Daily Online 2002b). Li Zhaoxing in expressing discontent, made very categorical points that reflected on the asymmetry in Japan’s attitude. First, Li contrasted Prime Minister Koizumi’s speech at the Museum of the Anti- Japanese War in October 2001, in which he admitted aggression, regretted the war, and extended condolences and an apology. However, on the contrary to the expressed apology “the Japanese side once again took an erroneous action and went back on its promise”- which is

“unacceptable to common sense, oriental reasoning and morality, and international obligations.” Second, Li pointed at Japan’s militarist tendencies, wherein he stated- “Japanese leaders should know that the Japanese people who suffered from wars will not allow their country to ever go down the militarist road again.” Third, Li highlighted on the sufferings caused by Japanese militarism in the past, as he emphasised that “[t]he Chinese people and all Asian people will never forget the massacres made by the Japanese militarists in China's Nanjing, as well as in various places of Asia, nor will people forget the Japanese militarists' brutalities in the Pacific islands- that “true history will not be forgotten, neglected or betrayed.”

Fourth, Li pointed that Japan should hold a correct attitude to shake off the shadow of history and play an international role. In doing so, Li stressed that the leader of Japan needed to hold “a correct attitude towards the past war of aggression and the past war criminals” and “how can he [Koizumi] win the trust of the people all over the world.” Fifth, Li pointed at the dichotomy between China’s earnest interest in developing friendly ties with Japan with that of Japan’s reluctance attitude. As he clarified, Japan causes repeated troubles on issues that concern the political foundation of China-Japan relations, hurt the feelings of the Chinese people, and obstructs and endangers the bilateral ties. And finally, Li suggested that Japan should “adopt a proper approach to its own mistakes and take responsibility for them” and most importantly, Li reiterated that Japan should “[use] history as a mirror and look forward to the future” (ibid.). Here, a corollary can be drawn to the 1972 Joint Communique, wherein Japan expressed to introspect the war in history. Japan’s failure to do so is seen to run in contrast to the Communique that expressed the determination of the two countries not to allow the historical tragedy to recur and that it characterised the basic principle of China-Japan friendship. In response, the Ministry issued a statement expressing regrets and appealed a sincere response from Prime Minister Koizumi and the Japanese government.

While Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan, in a press conference on 23 April 2002, remarked that the visit “is sure to sour” the Sino-Japanese bilateral relations. As he stated-

“The shrine visit has badly hurt Chinese people’s feelings as well as damaged bilateral political relations. The attitude of the Chinese government is very clear on this issue. We think this is a bad move because it hurts Chinese people’s feelings and also hurts Sino-Japanese relations. We think this move will not win the trust of Asia and the world” (People’s Daily Online 2002d).

This clearly points at the Chinese government’s strong condemnation of Koizumi’s action and that there is a strong element of trust deficit that has cropped in China’s relations with Japan. Further, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue also noted that “China strongly opposes the paying of homage at Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese leaders in any form and at any time” (People’s Daily Online 2002b). This indicates the shift in Beijing’s flexible attitude as that of 2001 in terms of the ‘date’ and ‘capacity’ of the visit.

Meanwhile, in Tokyo, China’s ambassador to Japan, Wu Dawei, called on Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Takeuchi Yukio. Wu told the vice minister that the visit had “deeply wounded the feelings of the Chinese people”. China was “resolutely opposed” to Japan’s political leaders visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. From these statements it is clear that China’s rhetorical response was very similar to that of 2001 at a superficial level, however, the most visible changes in Beijing’s response was felt in terms of the effect on the Chinese government’s attitude towards Japan. As Koizumi’s second visit to the shrine raised the Chinese leadership’s concerns over Koizumi’s trustworthiness. To say so, as this visit took place just a few months after Koizumi’s symbolic trip to China in October 2001 where he issued an apology along the lines of the 1995 Murayama statement, visited the historic Marco Polo Bridge and the Museum of the War of Chinese People’s Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.

These symbolic gestures were significant in providing a reassurance to the Chinese leadership to believe that Koizumi could be “trusted ‘not’ to make a

return visit” to the Yasukuni Shrine (Rose and Sykora 2016: 16). This can be explained as Shirk (2007: 169) suggests that President Jiang Zemin “appeared to feel betrayed” against Koizumi’s promise “not to go to the shrine again”. Similarly, Griffith (2012: 16) notes that “Jiang believed that there was a *junzi xieding*, or a gentlemen’s agreement, between the two leaders that the shrine visit would not be repeated, thereby, indicating that Jiang did not expect a second visit and nor did those that advised on the Japan policy making. This further supports the view that Beijing was completely taken aback by Koizumi, most importantly, his breach of the promise. Given this sentiment attached, the Chinese clearly saw Koizumi’s actions as a betrayal, and were particularly surprised by his visit because they were in stark contrast to his behaviour and actions in the preceding month when he had praised China’s economic development at the Boao forum, and had even hinted at the possibility of a non-religious memorial in place of Yasukuni (Rose and Sykora 2016: 16).

China’s resentment can be further assessed from the following statements made by Jiang at various occasions. On 29 April 2002, President Jiang Zemin told Takenori Kanzaki, a Komeito Party leader that Koizumi’s behavior is “unforgivable” (*bu neng yuanliang*), which is a very strong remark in Chinese diplomacy (Zakowski 2012: 53). Jiang also categorically remarked that “I cannot tolerate his [Koizumi’s] visit to the shrine at all” (Hasegawa and Togo 2008: 136). What these statements meant is that Jiang and other Chinese leaders would not allow Koizumi to change the constitutive rule governing the Yasukuni issue; a visit by the Japanese prime minister on whatever occasion and for whatever reasons always signifies the “justification of aggression” and, hence, hurts the Chinese and the people of Asia (*ibid.*). Further, on 26 June 2002, Jiang told a delegation of the Democratic Party, “I thought Prime Minister Koizumi already reflected and will not visit Yasukuni again, but he visited again” (*ibid.*: 171).

While during a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi on 8 September, Foreign Minister Tang commented on the Yasukuni issue: “I hope Japan can implement the attitude and common acknowledgement

including Yasukuni and allow Sino-Japanese relations to surmount an obstacle” (ibid.). While as People’s Daily Online (2002e) reported Jiang Zemin saying that “leaders, political parties and politicians in China and Japan should educate people with correct concepts of history for long-lasting friendship between the two countries”. Wherein, Jiang mentioned that “History and reality instruct us that ‘taking history as a mirror and looking forward to the future’ is the most precious experience in the past 30 years” and that “it was regrettable that the Japanese leader recently again visited Yasukuni Shrine at the important moment of the 30th anniversary of ties”. From these verbal oppositions raised by Chinese leaders, it is clear that as compared to Beijing’s response to Koizumi’s 2001 Yasukuni visit, the 2002 response from China was informed by strong official protests at various diplomatic exchanges and through rhetorical commentaries.

In addition to the official protests, Koizumi’s 2002 visit also witnessed a strong reaction from the Chinese public. As on 22 April, a group of survivors of the Nanjing Massacre, relatives of victims of the massacre and experts gathered at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall in Nanjing City, to protest against Koizumi’s visit (People’s Daily Online 2002f). On the same day, more than 60 Chinese history experts and scholars lodged a protest against Koizumi at the Memorial Hall of the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression in Beijing stressing that the Japanese government should “use history as a mirror and look far into the future”. Also further emphasised that the Japanese government should “attach great importance to the solemn and just stand of Chinese government and introspect the war of aggression so as to win the trust of the Asian people” (People’s Daily Online 2002c). Reflecting on the Chinese public’s resentment, People’s Daily Online (ibid.) quoted He Li, director of the China Society for the Study of the Anti-Japanese War, saying: the shrine “is not just a site in honour of the deceased, it has become an important front for the Japanese right-wing force”. While Li Liangzhi, a professor with the People’s University of China reflected in Koizumi’s expressed apology during his visit to China in October 2001 and that “[s]ix months later, while his words were still reverberating in Chinese people’s ears, Koizumi visited the shrine again” (ibid.).

However, on the contrary to 2001 reaction, this time the reluctance of China's leadership also witnessed a shift to a more hard-lined approach to Japan. This was evident in Beijing's incremental responses to Koizumi's Yasukuni visit. As in opposition to the visit, the Chinese leaders postponed confidence-building measures and held-off on bilateral summits (Reilly 2012: 133). To cite few examples, Beijing postponed the scheduled April 27-30 visit of Japan's Defence Minister Gen Nakatani as well as delayed a visit to Japan by People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Navy's port call scheduled for May in Tokyo, the first such visit ever. In response to the postponement, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed that the delay was linked to Koizumi's surprise visit to Yasukuni Shrine. As People's Daily Online (2002a) reported the Chinese official statement that "The Japanese leader's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine has hurt the Chinese people's feelings and harmed Sino-Japanese relations", and thereby, "China believes that at this time it is not appropriate to carry out these two activities."

In relation to Beijing's postponement, China's Defence Minister, Chi Haotian told a visiting Japanese opposition party delegation in the end of June that, had China allowed such military exchanges in the aftermath of the Yasukuni visit, the events would have drawn a negative reaction from the Chinese People (Wan 2006: 246; Reilly 2012: 133). This suggests the increasing domestic nationalist constraint on China's state-elites in policy-making towards Japan. This further confirms that public opinion plays a vital role in shaping China's policy choices towards Japan. Besides, following the Chinese indignation, President Jiang ultimately postponed Koizumi's state visit to China as well as postponed the summit, scheduled to coincide with the 30th anniversary celebration of diplomatic normalisation. As a result, Koizumi decided to postpone his visit to China as well on 9 August.

Beijing's such a response was clearly motivated by China's discontentment with Japan. Specifically, it can be said that Koizumi's unwillingness to satisfy Chinese demand to declare a halt to his Yasukuni visits acted as the key factor in China's suspension of this symbolically important trip. Rose and Sykora

(2016: 16-17) suggest that the suspension can be viewed as a result of Koizumi's 'betrayal' not just to "hurt the feelings of the Chinese people", but he "allegedly broke a promise to his counterpart (Jiang Zemin), thus undermining his credibility and integrity further – he did not live up to his words", as interpreted by Jiang. As a result, there were no further summit meetings during Koizumi's time in office. Therefore, in 2002, Beijing's response was just not high in rhetoric but also higher in response as compared to 2001, which was bolstered by a sense of betrayal.

However, interesting to note that the security dialogue was soon resumed. Against its suspensions of Japanese leaders visiting China, Beijing proceeded with senior CCP leader Zeng Qinghong's Japan visit (Lai 2008: 198). In addition, Koizumi met Chinese leaders at various multilateral summits. To cite few examples, on 22 September, Koizumi met Chinese leader Zhu Rongji in Copenhagen at the Asian- European Summit (ASEM) meeting. It is reported that Zhu did not mention Yasukuni or Koizumi's official visit to China, instead, he praised Koizumi's visit to North Korea (Wan 2006: 247). While on the other occasion, Koizumi met Jiang Zemin on 27 October at the APEC meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico. However, Jiang based on his determined opposition to Koizumi's Yasukuni visit in April is reported to have mentioned Yasukuni three times during a 45-minute meeting. Jiang pointed out that Yasukuni is the issue "that touches on the feeling of 1.3 billion Chinese people" and "we usually separate a small amount of militarists from general Japanese public"; thus, it is better not to visit Yasukuni shrine again (Yang 2013: 171).

These high-level interactions reflect that China kept its communication channels open with Tokyo even after amidst the Yasukuni tension. This points at the ambivalence in China's attitude towards dealing with the Yasukuni issue. Explaining this asymmetry in Beijing's diplomatic behaviour, Wan (2006) suggests that:

"Beijing aimed to take measures that were sufficiently high profile to send a clear message of discontent without compromising interests such as trade, investment, and official development assistance or jeopardizing collaboration on issues such as North Korea or World



Trade accession that have a greater substantial impact on China's long-term economic and political interests" (ibid.: 248)

In an overall assessment of Beijing's response to Koizumi's second visit, it can be concluded that the response was both rhetorical as well as had some reactive responses on the diplomatic exchanges. There was a visible shift in China's reluctant attitude as well as trust factor in dealing with Koizumi. There was a strong sense of betrayal felt by the Chinese side, which in a way bolstered Beijing's reactive response. However, there is a clear understanding that Beijing still believed that by applying pressure Koizumi could be influenced to put an end to his Yasukuni visits.

### **5.2.3 KOIZUMI'S 2003 VISIT**

Following 2003, Koizumi revisited Yasukuni Shrine on 14 January 2003, telling reporters: "It's the new year. I want to visit (the shrine) with a fresh spirit and in appreciation of peace" (The Japan Times 2003). As indicated by Koizumi, the visit was made in an official capacity as prime minister and he also vowed that Japan would "never again wage war" (ibid.). Koizumi's visit came just before the inauguration of new leadership in China.<sup>21</sup> Hu Jintao became CCP's General Secretary on 15 November 2002, and Chinese President on 15 March 2003. As Yomiuri's editorial suggested, Koizumi's third visit, was apparently, timed to avoid potential diplomatic clashes with the new leadership in Beijing and Seoul, respectively (Lai 2008: 222). Tokyo may have been optimistic about the coming of China's 'fourth generation' leadership, perceived as more pragmatic, less consumed by 'history', and certainly not tainted by personal experiences of Japanese war occupation. As mentioned in Chapter Four, indications of a "new thinking on Japan" by the 'Hu-Wen' leadership were apparent from Ma Licheng's December 2002 article, which triggered fierce debates in China, but welcomed by the Japanese intellectual and foreign policy communities, and Japan's rightwing press, as well. Further explaining Koizumi's decision, Wan (2006: 248)

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<sup>21</sup> It is found that Koizumi's visit on 14 January to the Yasukuni Shrine was a deliberated choice. First, as outlined already outlined, the visit was scheduled at this time given the new leadership taking office in both Beijing and Seoul; second, January 14 was just an ordinary day in Koizumi's mind with no relationship to the anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, or Spring/Autumn festivals. However, this mindful choice by Koizumi failed to stop Beijing's criticism.

argues that Koizumi believed that a third visit would not damage the relations given China's past reactions which Koizumi believed had "been in an acceptable range of severity" that is, limited to a "strong discontent expressed in a symbolic manner" without any impact on the bilateral interests.

However, on the contrary to Japan's held perception, China's expressed pragmatism was overshadowed by Koizumi's Yasukuni visit resulting into Beijing's negative response. To suggest so, as on the Chinese side, Koizumi's third visit made it clear to Beijing of Koizumi's unwillingness to yield to Chinese pressure unlike his predecessors such as Nakasone and Hashimoto. In addition, the new Hu-Wen leadership's pragmatic approach towards Japan was also not feasible given China's domestic criticism, thus, leaving less room to compromise or hold a mild attitude towards the Yasukuni issue.

On 14 January 2003, Chinese Ambassador Wu Dawei visited Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi and protested that "this act is the provocation for 1.3 billion Chinese people" (Yang 2013: 172-173). Vice Foreign Minister Yang Wenchang summoned Japanese Ambassador Anami and expressed China's strong discontent and indignation on Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine. Prime Minister's incorrect act hurt the feeling of Chinese people and Asian people."

At the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's Press Conference on 14 January, Spokesperson Zhang Qiyue calling the visit an "erroneous move" by Prime Minister Koizumi, stated that such an act "seriously undermines the political foundation of China-Japan relations, and hurts the feelings of the people of the victim Asian countries, including China as well" (Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, 2003). Reflecting on Koizumi's unrepentant attitude, Zhang pointed that the "move goes against a series of statements and commitments on the historic question by the Japanese Government" to which the Chinese Government and people express "strong dissatisfaction and indignation" and that it needs "to adopt a correct attitude towards history, take actions to correct the mistake and eliminate ill effect" (ibid.).

What is important to note, is China's change of attitude towards the Japanese prime minister's Yasukuni visit. As opposed to the 2001 visit on 15 August and 2002 visit on 22 April, this time the Chinese Government resolutely opposed the Yasukuni Shrine visit irrespective of the date of the visit. As the Spokesperson clearly stated that: "The essence of the question is how the Japanese leaders treat historic issue." And thereby, "no matter when the Japanese leaders chooses to visit the Yasukuni Shrine are all resolutely opposed by the Chinese Government and people". This reflects a significant shift in China's attitude towards the Yasukuni issue, wherein any visit at any time by Japanese prime minister was an act to be condemned. Apart from China's official discontent, the heated polemics comprised of People's Daily questioning Koizumi's intentions, in a strongly worded commentary stated:

"In defiance of strong opposition from Japan's neighbors [China and South Korea] following his previous visits, Koizumi is playing a trick by expressing his sincere wish to examine the past on the one hand, and insisting on continuing his shrine visits on the other. Such controversial behavior forces Asian peoples to question his real intention" (China.org.cn, 2003).

This reflects that China's strong rhetorical response, which as opposed to 2001 and 2002, questioned the intentions behind Koizumi's repeated visits-argued as that of Koizumi playing a "trick".

While on the policy line, given its strong resentment, China maintained its policy of rejecting mutual visits. On 6 March 2003, when asked about how to restore the mutual visits that were stopped because of the visits of Koizumi to Yasukuni, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang said that as a condition to restore mutual visits, the prime minister should promise that he would not visit Yasukuni again (Yang 2013: 173). Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda invited new Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to Japan when they met on 10 August, Wen said that he expected that "leaders from both countries can visit each other in a good atmosphere." However, he added, "there is a problem that Japanese leader kept visiting Yasukuni Shrine" (ibid.).

To note, China with its new leadership under Hu-Wen held a pragmatic approach towards Japan, given the influence of the “new thinking” to improve the Sino-Japanese ties beyond the historical impediments. However, Koizumi’s repeated Yasukuni visits and uncompromising attitude left little room for the Chinese leadership for diplomatic manoeuvre. Following which, the new leadership had to maintain an assertive policy in line with Jiang Zemin’s tough approach of suspended bilateral visits. As a result, China maintained its suspension policy and repeatedly rejected the Japanese proposal for a bilateral summit between the heads of the states. To which, China imposed a clause that a halt to the Yasukuni visits is the pre-requisite to materialise any top-level exchanges between China and Japan. However, although Beijing maintained its policy of no mutual visits with Japan, but Chinese leaders met Koizumi in third countries.

This again reflects China’s balanced approach, where other forms of diplomatic channels of communication were not suspended. To cite an example, Chinese President Hu Jintao and Koizumi held their first summit meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia on 31 May 2003. Hu asked Koizumi to “bear in mind the history and lessons” from it; adhere to the three official documents in Sino-Japanese relations (China-Japan Joint Communiqué, Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan, and China-Japan Joint Declaration on Building a Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation for Peace and Development), to carefully handle “historic issues and the Taiwan question”, and most importantly, stressed on to “take history as mirror and face the future” (MOFA, PRC 2003). Also to note, Hu “thanked” Tokyo for help in fighting SARS and proposed to establish a “New 21st Century Committee for Japan-China Friendship” (ibid.). Here, it is important to note that although Hu raised concerns over Japan’s attitude towards the history issue but he made no direct reference to Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni shrine. This reflects the duality in the new leadership’s policy towards Japan, however, the categorical points made by Hu, clearly reflect Beijing’s attitude that Japan needs to correctly handle the history issue.

While on the sidelines of the ASEAN+3 Summit Meeting in Bali, Indonesia, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Koizumi met for “China-Japan” Summit on 7 October 2003. In his statement, Wen reiterated Hu’s position that Japan should conform to the “three basic documents” and of “taking history as a mirror, and looking toward the future”. Wen pointed that:

“The history issue is a sensitive one which affects the relation between the two nations. The responsibility lies upon the militarists in the past and the Japanese citizens are also its victims. However, to deal with the past is crucial to the relation between the two nations” (MFA 2003).

That is, following up on Hu’s line of approach, Wen too reflected on the ‘history issue’ but made no direct mention of the Yasukuni issue. It is also said that Wen hinted at the possibility of the resumption of mutual visits at the highest level between China and Japan- again denoting China’s eagerness to improve the Sino-Japanese bilateral ties. From the above two high-level interactions, it is noteworthy that unlike Jiang Zemin who explicitly addressed and made repeated references to Koizumi’s Yasukuni visits on every interaction at various diplomatic forums such as in Los Cabos in 2002, the new Hu-Wen leadership practiced a flexible attitude towards Japan.

In highlighting a marked shift from Jiang’s hardline approach, the new Chinese administration made subtle comments on the larger history problem rather than making direct comments on the Yasukuni problem. Such a behaviour on China’s part can be understood in the new leadership’s positive intention towards improving the Sino-Japanese ties with a perception of a reciprocal response from the Japanese side to carefully handle the Yasukuni issue. This Chinese intention is well-defined in the meetings of China’s top-level exchanges with Japan, wherein Beijing constantly reiterated on Japan’s need to carefully handle the history issue to improve Sino-Japanese ties. Lai (2008: 200) calls these tactics of Beijing as a “veiled attempt” to pressurise Koizumi against further Yasukuni visits.

But China’s veiled attempts met with a failure, as immediately after the summit on 8 October, Koizumi made it clear in his comments to Japanese

media that he intended to continue his visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in the future (Uchiyama 2010: 100). Furthermore, Koizumi claimed that the Chinese side “understood” his view that visits to Yasukuni are not the same as a revival of militarism and that his visit to the shrine would not “compromise” Japan-China friendship (Wan 2006: 250). This very statement by Koizumi sparked new tensions as the Japanese prime minister not only confirmed that he will continue his visits to the shrine but most interestingly cited that the Chinese conceded on this matter.<sup>22</sup> This remark by Koizumi as Zakowski (2012: 54) points had caused Wen Jiabao’s “loss of face inside the CCP”, given his interaction with Koizumi just a day before at the ASEAN+3 summit. This thereby, resulted into hardening of Beijing’s new leadership’s attitude towards Japan, who so far practiced a pragmatic “new thinking” approach towards Japan.

In response to Koizumi’s remarks, on 9 October 2003, the Chinese side pressured Japan immediately. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Zhang Qiyue in a press conference stated: “while China wanted to have a good-neighbor relationship with Japan. It hoped that Japan would learn the history lesson” (Yang 2013: 175). Three days later on October 12, Zhang criticised more strongly that it was hard to understand why Koizumi kept visiting Yasukuni Shrine. She also pointed out that the Japanese side should recognize that the Yasukuni issue is highly sensitive (ibid.).

Although China took a strong stance, bilateral economic and diplomatic initiatives between China and Japan continued through the year. Even after Koizumi’s repeated testing of Beijing’s resolve, China expressed interest to develop the ties. To say so, as contradictory to the comments made on 9 October to Koizumi’s remarks, on 14 October, Zhang pointed out that: “The Chinese Government attaches importance to developing China-Japanese relationship, hoping to maintain the exchanges of high level visits. But both sides should contribute to the end” (ibid.) This toning down of Beijing’s

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<sup>22</sup> To explain what made Koizumi to think this way, Wan (2006: 251) points that Japan felt so as Hu Jintao was more flexible regarding the history issue than Jiang Zemin, and Hu arranged several high-level visits, and thus, Japan expected the Chinese government to concede in the Yasukuni issue.

position again points at China's pragmatic approach in building ties with Japan. That is, the new leadership still hoped for some reciprocal response from Koizumi over his shrine visits. To elaborate further, on 20 October 2003, on the sidelines of the APEC Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, Hu met Koizumi. In response to Koizumi's pronouncement, Hu said:

“Leaders of our two countries should take history as a mirror and look forward to the future, so as to push forward bilateral good-neighbourly and friendly relations from a long-term viewpoint. In particular, the issue of history should be handled carefully, and things that would harm the feelings of people of war-time countries should never be done again” (Uchiyama 2010: 100).

From the above statement by Hu, it is clear that unlike his talk with Koizumi at St. Petersburg, this was much strongly worded and pointed at the need for Koizumi to reconsider his adamant attitude on continuing the Yasukuni visits, however, still there was no direct mention of the shrine.

In an overall assessment of Beijing's response to Koizumi's third visit, it can be concluded that the response was both rhetorical as well as had some reactive responses on the diplomatic exchanges. There was a visible shift in China's policy given the new Hu-Wen leadership's pragmatic approach of “new thinking” on Japan. There was an eagerness on the Chinese side to develop the Sino-Japanese ties by going beyond the history issue, which faced problems due to Koizumi's willingness to continue with the Yasukuni visits. However, continuing with Jiang's position, the new leadership maintained the tough position of holding back on mutual visits by the leaders of China and Japan. However, the Chinese leaders proceeded with interactions with the Japanese side on other fronts. This implies that Beijing still believed that by applying pressure Koizumi could be influenced to put an end to his Yasukuni visits. That is, the Sino-Japanese tension remained high throughout 2003 following several history-related quarrels, but China's new leadership appeared pragmatic in handling and suppressing them. In understanding China's attitude, Wan (2006: 248) suggests that:

“Beijing aimed to take measures that were sufficiently high profile to send a clear message of discontent without compromising interests [...]

that have a greater substantial impact on China's long-term economic and political interests".

#### **5.2.4 KOIZUMI'S 2004 VISIT**

After his three consecutive visits to the Shrine in 2001, 2002 and 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi visited Yasukuni Shrine on the 1 January, on the New Year's Day of 2004. It was Koizumi's fourth annual visit to the shrine since he took office in 2001. Koizumi told the Japanese press, "I made the visit to both express my appreciation to those who gave their lives in past wars as well as pledge to never again cause war" (Yang 2013: 176). Defending his visit to the shrine, Koizumi said: "No country interferes in other countries' respect for history, tradition, custom. Since I am visiting here every year, I hope to gain understanding gradually" (Taipei Times 2004). Given the strong dissatisfaction, Beijing expressed deep discontent.

As China Daily (2004a) reported that Huang Xingyuan, a spokesman at the Chinese Embassy to Tokyo, urged the Japanese Government to "completely abide by the three key bilateral agreements and statements" and to "stop further activities which will harm the feelings of the Chinese people and damage Sino-Japanese relations". While Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue in firmly opposing the visit, stated that: "China hopes Koizumi does not take actions that will offend people from countries victimised by Japan in wartime" (China.org.cn 2004).

Beijing's reaction remained firm in expressing strong indignation. On 1 January, the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi summoned Japanese Chargés d'Affaires Ad Interim Harada Chikahito and lodged solemn representations over Koizumi's visit and strongly condemned the act. Wang stressed that: "The shrine honors Class-A war criminals whose hands were blotted with blood of people of China and other Asian countries" and accused that Koizumi "not only went back on his promise but also impaired the political basis of Sino-Japanese relations" (Xinhua New Agency 2004). Insisting that Koizumi's repeated visits have further damaged the political



foundations of the relationship, Wang strongly stated that Chinese people could “absolutely not accept” the Japanese prime minister’s behaviour, which he called a “betrayal of good faith” (ABC News 2004). In resolving the ties, Yang emphasised that “Taking history as a mirror and looking forward to the future” is the only right attitude to historical lens” (Xinhua News Agency 2004a). Similarly, Xinhua issued a strongly worded editorial, which called Koizumi’s visit “a perfidious act” carried out in “defiance of opposition in Japan and from other Asian countries” which has “undermined the political basis for Sino-Japanese ties” (China Daily 2004b).

Dissatisfactions were expressed by China’s top officials on various occasions of meeting with Japanese leaders. Most importantly, on 15 January 2004, Hu Jintao during his meeting with former Japanese prime minister Nakasone Yasuhiro indirectly hinted at and criticised the Yasukuni visit, as he suggested that “leaders of both countries should do more things good for the friendship between the people of the two countries, and never do anything not good” (People’s Daily Online 2004). While Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi in meeting Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi on 11 February 2004 at the Ninth Sino-Japanese Security Consultation in Tokyo expressed China’s deep regret over and dissatisfaction with recent wrong remarks made by Japanese leaders about their visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (Consulate-General of PRC in San Francisco 2004a).

From the Japanese side, a representative of the Komeito Party, Takenori Kanzaki, visited China and met with President Hu Jintao and former Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan on 12 February. During his interaction, Hu told Kanzaki that “both leaders need to take responsibility toward history”, while Tang criticised that the Yasukuni issue “restricted the political development between China and Japan” (Yang 2013: 177). Further adding to tension, in August Koizumi expressed clearly that he would visit the Yasukuni Shrine the following year. To this comment, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Kong Quan expressed China’s regrets over “Japanese leaders constantly making provocative remarks, ignoring the voices of people who were victims crying out for justice.” He further reiterated that- “the political basis for

China-Japan relations is for both nations to have a correct understanding of the history of that previous time” (Przystup 2004: 121).

Apart from official criticism over high-level exchanges, in its policy action, Beijing maintained the freeze in high-level diplomacy. Most importantly, Beijing postponed the mutual navy visits, which had just been resumed after visit of Japan’s Defence Agency director general Ishiba Shigeru to Beijing in September 2003- as both sides agreed to realize the navy visits as soon as possible (Wan 2006: 252). Thereby, Koizumi’s New Year’s Day visit to the shrine not just changed these prospective plans but also guaranteed that there would not be any reciprocal visits by the heads of the government and the state in 2004 (Ibid.).

Apart from the official protests, Koizumi’s visit also drew strong public reaction from China. To cite few examples, Reilly (2008b: 81) suggests that spontaneous protests were organised via the internet were held at the Japanese Embassy in Beijing on 2 January and at the consulate in Shanghai on 3 January. Griffith (2012: 17-18) notes that the response of the Chinese public to Koizumi’s fourth visit was the “strongest reaction to date”, and also that the protests appeared to have been “unauthorized” by the Chinese government. What bolstered this societal reaction is that the year 2003 was marked by tensions as a result of the Qiqihar chemical weapons incident, the Zhuhai sex scandal, and the Xian show incident- which heightened China’s public animosity and resentment towards Japan.

The Chinese media echoed the strong public dissatisfaction and indignation among Chinese public as the popular newspapers carried stories of Chinese public frustrations and denunciations of Koizumi. For instance, the media reported Chinese public’s comments, such as: “Koizumi cast a shadow over Sino-Japanese relations at the beginning of the new year”; “Koizumi's repeated wrongdoing would only arouse disgust among the Chinese people”; “We can not tolerate the Japanese leader's shrine visit at any time, because his act hurt Chinese people’s feelings and impaired the basis of Sino-Japanese tie”; “If Japanese leaders persist in their wrongdoing, they are sure to lose

their credibility among the people of China” and others (China Daily 2004b). As a result of this public anger, China’s leadership was left with no choice to compromise on the Yasukuni issue but to exhibit strong response.

Following the strong official rhetoric and symbolism, on 6 March 2004, at the second session of the 10th NPC and CPPCC, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing stated:

“But the most prominent issue in the bilateral relations,” he said, “is that the Japanese leaders insist on visiting the shrine that houses 14 Class-A World War II criminals and that has deeply hurt the feelings of the people of China and other Asian countries.” He expressed the hope that Japanese leaders should show sincerity and do not be burdened down by historical issues. He said, “The Japanese leaders should take history as a mirror and draw on lessons from history, and make up their minds to live in peace with other countries and treat each other as equals.” He also pointed why the Japanese leadership why it cannot do what some European countries can. He further recommended, “Whatever the case, if China and Japan are to develop their friendship from generation to generation, it is necessary to take history as a mirror and look into the future” (Xinhua News Agency 2004b).

What is interesting to note, is China’s top leadership’s reactionary behaviour wherein they directly criticised Yasukuni issue frequently. In a press conference, shortly after the the closing meeting of the Second Session of the Tenth NPC on 14 March 2004, Premier Wen clearly pointing at Yasukuni as “the main problem” in the relations, stated: “Japanese leaders’ visits to Yasukuni Shrine, where top war criminals are enshrined, have tremendously harmed the feelings of the people in China and Asian at large” (Xinhua News Agency 2004c). Wen further urged Japanese leaders to abide by the three political documents, learn lessons from the history, look forward to the future and do not do things that harms the feelings of the Chinese people anymore (ibid.).

While on 3 April 2004, Wen Jiabao met Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi and noted that the visits by Japanese leaders to the Yasukuni Shrine had hurt the feelings of the Chinese people (Consulate-General of PRC in San Francisco 2004b). On September 22, President Hu Jintao met Yohei

Kono, president of the House of Representatives of Japan<sup>23</sup>, and underscored the importance attached by China to the Yasukuni issue, telling Kono that it was- “imperative now to resolve the shrine issue in an appropriate way” (Przystup 2004: 122). Hu’s such a direct reference to the Yasukuni issue, which Mainichi Shimbun reported as “extremely rare” is interpreted as a message to Koizumi to find a way out (ibid.).

Apart from expressing indignation through indirect diplomatic channels, on 21 November 2004, President Hu Jintao met with Koizumi during the APEC summit in Santiago, Chile, and urged Japan to properly treat its wartime history with an eye to the future, and called for a halt to visits by Japanese leaders to the shrine. (Xinhuanet 2004a). Unlike his earlier remarks in 2002 and 2003, which had no direct mentions of the Yasukuni Shrine, Hu this time strictly pointed out to Koizumi that:

“the core problem staying in the way of the development of bilateral ties is Japanese leaders’ visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo which honors convicted war criminals.” And further stated that, “the Japanese side will properly handle the issue and prevent bilateral ties from suffering unwanted damages” (ibid.)

Following the standard norms of his earlier statements, Hu again emphasised on the need to “abide by the three political documents” signed between China and Japan and on “taking history as a mirror and looking into the future” (Ibid.). Similarly, on 30 November 2004, in a meeting with Koizumi on the sidelines of the 10th summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in Vientiane, Laos, Wen Jiabao categorically pointed out that:

“[T]he major obstacle to further development of the bilateral relations is in politics and the crux is Japanese leaders’ visits to Yasukuni Shrine, adding that the way the Japan government handles the issue would affect the bilateral relations directly”. Wen further noted, “Treating history rightly is the basis of the Sino-Japanese relations and it is important to “Take history as a mirror and look to the future”” (Xinhuanet 2004b).

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<sup>23</sup> This meeting was Hu Jintao’s first meeting with a senior Japanese leader after he assumed the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission on 19 September 2004.

Apart from expressing direct criticism to Koizumi on his visits, Chinese leaders also reacted by refusing to meet Koizumi even in other countries- a shift in Beijing's policy from that of 2001, 2002 and 2003. For instance, Wen Jiabao refused to meet him at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Hanoi in October 2004, despite Japanese requests. This refusal on Wen's part is argued to have been instigated by Koizumi 's remarks just after their previous meeting in October 2003, which provoked Wen to refuse to meet Koizumi (Griffith 2012: 18; Yang 2013: 179).

In an overall assessment of Beijing's response to Koizumi's fourth visit, it can be concluded that the response was both high on rhetorical as well as had some reactive responses on the diplomatic exchanges. There was a visible shift the new leadership's exchanges with Japan, wherein unlike the past, both Hu and Wen were vocal about their criticism of Koizumi both directly and indirectly. Most important to note, the 2004 visit also witnessed strong public reaction from China. However, although China still kept its communication channels open given the eagerness to develop the Sino-Japanese ties, but as a result of the strong societal reaction there was an equal pressuer on the Chinese side to handle the Yasukuni problem carefully without hurting the sentiments of the Chinese public. This thereby, left the Chinese leadership with no more choice to concede the Yasukuni issue.

As a result, continuing with Jiang Zemin's hardline position, the Chinese leadership maintained the suspension of the mutual visits by the leaders of China and Japan and also postponed the mutual navy visits. However, the Chinese leaders proceeded with interactions with the Japanese side on other multilateral fronts. It can be said that by now Beijing realised that applying pressure on Koizumi would not put an end to his Yasukuni visits given his adamant attitude. Thereby, Beijing opted to put the onus on Koizumi to find ways to settle the Yasukuni issue, as reflected in the statements made by the Chinese leaders. As a result, the criticisms of the Chinese leadership became more strong in reacting to the Yasukuni issue and also there was a direct charge at Koizumi to handle the issue properly. Therefore, the Yasukuni issue

was clearly a major stumbling block for developing smooth relations between China and Japan.

### **5.2.5 KOIZUMI'S 2005 VISIT**

Keeping up to his pledge, Koizumi paid his annual visit to the Yasukuni shrine on 17 October 2005. This was his fifth visit in row to the shrine. This visit came at a time when Beijing-Tokyo relations declined to the poorest in the decades. It coincided with the start of a fall festival, and most importantly, came at the time of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. However, Koizumi maintained that he visited the shrine as a private citizen and not in his official capacity and offered prayers “to those who died in the war, with the conviction that we must never wage such a war again” (The New York Times 2005). Raising the tension further, the day after Koizumi’s visit, 92 members of the LDP, including Party Secretary General Takebe Tsutomu visited the Shrine accompanied by nine members of the opposition and an additional 94 Diet members were represented by their secretaries. This brought China-Japan relations to a record low.

However, Koizumi’s intention to visit the shrine was already hinted as on 16 May, when he told a House of Representatives Budget Committee Session, Koizumi said: “I don't understand why I should stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine. I will decide appropriately when to go” (China Daily 2005a). In direct response to Koizumi’s hint, Vice Premier Wu Yi abruptly canceled the scheduled meeting with Koizumi and returned to China on 23 May because of Koizumi’s remarks on visiting Yasukuni (China Daily 2005d). here, it is important to note that Koizumi’s expressed interest to revisit the shrine came in the backdrop of his meeting with Hu Jintao on 23 April, in the sidelines of the Asia-Africa Summit, in Jakarta, Indonesia. Wherein, Hu pointed out at the “difficulties” facing the China-Japan relations and that the leaders of the two nations “need to handle it seriously” (MFA 2005b). Hu also proposed five propositions for the development of the Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The Five propositions of Hu: First, to strictly adhere to the three political documents, namely, the Sino-Japanese Joint Communiqué, Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship and Sino-Japanese Joint Declaration and remain committed to developing China-Japan friendly cooperative relations oriented to the 21st century. Second, to truly stick to the principles of "regarding history as a mirror and looking into the future". The aggression war initiated by the Japanese militants has brought

Apart from Beijing's efforts to restore the ties, it is important to note that the year 2005 also marked the worst phase of Sino-Japanese relations. Even before Koizumi's visit, the atmosphere was tensed as a result of a series of events. As Yang (2013: 181) suggests: first, on 9 February, the Japanese government took control of the lighthouse in the Diaoyu Islands as national property and named it - Uotsurishima today (Lighthouse of Uotsuri Island); second, on 19 February, the U.S.- Japanese Security Consultative Committee declared a common statement that put a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan Strait into their common strategic goal; third, the Japanese Education Ministry approved a controversial version of the history textbook on 5 April; and fourth, Japan's bid for a permanent membership in the UNSC.

As always, Beijing responded in a ritualistic manner. In its immediate response, on 17 October, China's Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing urgently summoned Japanese Ambassador to China Koreshige Anami and voiced strong condemnation for Koizumi's visit. In the statement issued, Li stressed that the move: "randomly hurts the feelings and dignity" of the countries and their people that were victimised during WWII and "seriously undermines Sino-Japanese relations" and further warned that Koizumi "must bear the responsibility for the severe political consequences resulting from his wrongdoing" (Xinhuanet 2005a). The statement also pointed at Beijing's efforts to build the relationship, as it stated:

"the Chinese side's sincerity and efforts did not win due responses, while right on the contrary, Prime Minister Koizumi, regardless of the achievements made by many ancestors and personages of insight from both countries in the past years for bilateral friendship, obstinately sticks to a wrong and dangerous course, "which cannot but outrage us" (ibid.).

On the same day, Chinese Ambassador to Japan, Wang Yi lodged a strong protest to

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severe disasters to the Chinese people and great harm to the Japanese people as well. To correctly understand and treat history, Japan needs to reflect on the aggression war seriously with actual deeds and never do things that hurt the feelings of the people of China and other Asian countries. Third, to properly handle the Taiwan question. Taiwan represents China's core interest and concerns the feelings of 1.3 billion Chinese people. The Japanese government has indicated on a number of occasions that it sticks to the one-China policy and does not support "Taiwan independence". Japan is expected to fulfill the above commitments with actual deeds. Fourth, to appropriately address the differences between China and Japan through dialogues and consultations on an equal footing, actively explore the methods to settle the difference and avoid interfering with China-Japan friendship. Fifth, to further enhance bilateral exchanges and cooperation in a wide range of areas and boost civil friendly exchanges so as to enhance mutual understanding, expand common interest and push forward the sound and stable development of China-Japan relations.

Japanese Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka. Wang said Chinese government firmly opposes such visit at “any time and in any form” and emphasised that Koizumi should “take the historic responsibility for undermining the bilateral relationship” (Xinhuanet 2005b). Wang also reflected that Koizumi’s act constituted a “serious provocation to the Chinese people” against their celebration of the successful return of the Chinese manned spacecraft Shenzhou-6 (Ibid.). This is indicative of the fact that the Chinese public drew parallels between the two events as they interpreted Koizumi’s visit as a provocation towards China by specifically selecting the day when China was celebrating its success.

The Chinese media strongly expressed that Koizumi must shoulder the responsibility for all the consequences (Chinese government and people’s outrage) resulting from his action. Calling it Koizumi’s “hypocrisy”, the media reported:

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“[if Koizumi] is a believer of friendly Sino-Japanese ties, then he should respect the feelings of the Chinese people and stop visiting the shrine and, instead, do more to promote the ties” and stressed that “[i]f Japan wants to avoid repeating its mistake, it should take history as a mirror” or else they will find themselves “lifting a rock only to drop it on their own toes” (Xinhuanet 2005d).

In further denying Koizumi’s visit “not a faux pas or a personal foible”, the Chinese media pointed that: “To pay homage at Yasukuni is nothing but an innocuous political act. Koizumi has been dismissing the controversial connotations the shrine has.” And that this visit has “driven a wedge between Beijing and Tokyo” (Xinhuanet 2005e). Additionally, in reflecting on the grave situation, the Chinese media quoted various Chinese experts views on the matter. To cite few examples, Liu Jiangyong of Tsinghua University expressed that “Koizumi’s act sabotaged the political trust between China and Japan and could worsen the already cold Sino-Japanese relations” (Xinhuanet 2005a). While Jin Xide, a professor with the Japan Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said Koizumi’s shrine visit “shakes the relations between Japan and neighboring countries as the importance basis of such relations lies on Japan’s reflection on history” (ibid.).



In addition to China's official protests, China's public also expressed strong indignation towards the visit. On 17 October, Chinese people lodged protests outside the Japanese Embassy in Beijing and yelled that Japan "must apologise" for its past militarism (The Free Library 2005). To note, this was the first public display of anti-Japan sentiment since the Chinese government restrained the protests after the massive public anti-Japan demonstrations held in April 2005 due to the history textbook issue. But with Koizumi's visit, the anti-Japanese public demonstration in China revived. With strong resentment, the protesters in Beijing handed over a petition to the Japanese Embassy, which read- "They (the Japanese invaders) have trampled their feet in the blood of Asia's people" (China Daily 2005b).

Apart from domestic protests in mainland China, the Chinese people also lodged protests in Hong Kong against Koizumi's Yasukuni visit. Further adding to the societal resistance, overseas Chinese in Japan issued a joint statement on 18 October to solemnly protest against Koizumi's visit and stressed on bringing a halt to such an act. The statement read: "On behalf on more than 600,000 overseas Chinese in Japan and Chinese-Japanese, we are expressing our profound frustration and indignation over Prime Minister Koizumi's fifth visit to the Yasukuni Shrine" (People's Daily Online 2005b).

This visit caused a political freeze in the Sino-Japanese ties. At the helm of affairs, in general, the reciprocal visits remained suspended between the two countries in continuation to the preceding four years. In particular, the scheduled meetings got suspended. Taking a tough stance, Beijing reacted by officially postponing Japanese Foreign Minister Machimura's scheduled visit to China from 23-24 October. The visit was to discuss the possibility of a summit meeting between Koizumi and President Hu Jintao sometime before the end of the year, as well as issues related to history, North Korea, and the East China Sea (Przystup 2006: 110). At a press conference on 18 October, China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Kong Quan attributed the postponement to the "current gloomy situation" and that the visit does not come "at an appropriate time" and "it is inconvenient for China to receive him" (Xinhuanet 2005c). Further calling Koizumi's visit "a grave event", Kong stated that "Koizumi's visit broke his promise to the

Chinese people as well as to the peace-loving people around the world” and that “[s]uch wrongdoing will certainly bring severe consequences” (ibid.). These strong statements exemplify Beijing’s natural strong response over the issue.

Likewise, meetings on sensitive East China Sea issues were cancelled and prospects for China-Japan leadership summit before the end of the year went from slim to none. Most importantly, unlike following the norms of meeting Koizumi at multilateral fronts in a third country, this time the Chinese leadership cancelled such meetings. To say so, as a series of high-level diplomatic events such as- the APEC Summit in Busan, South Korea, 18-19 November; the ASEAN + 3 meeting on 12 December, followed by the first East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur on 14 December, provided three big opportunities for a China-Japan summit to happen as seen in the previous years. However, in 2005 the Chinese side expressed no such interest of interaction with Koizumi. Although Koizumi expressed Japan’s interest in making it happen, but China suspended all forms of high-level talks- appearing no more accommodative towards Japan. From the Chinese side, there was a constant emphasis that the atmosphere was not suitable to have such interactions with Japan. On 8 November 2005, at a press conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Liu Jianchao clarified:

“China-Japan relations encounter difficulties, the responsibility of which does not lie with the Chinese side. Japan has to honor its commitment to treating history correctly in practice and refrain from further moves to hurt the feeling of the people in China and other victimized countries, which is a necessary and important condition for improving and developing China-Japan relations” (Embassy of PRC in USA 2005a).

In China’s view, the ‘unsuitable atmosphere’ was interpreted as created by Koizumi’s unrepentant and adamant attitude towards continuing with the shrine visits. In line with the official view, the Chinese media too pointed at the uncondusive situation, stating that: “Only when the Japanese leaders take a correct attitude toward the country’s history of aggression and express apology and remorse for Japan’s war past, can the impasse be broken” (China Daily 2005c). This further explains that Yasukuni acted as the single most stumbling block in Sino-Japanese relations- bringing the relations to a political freeze. Thus, leaving the Chinese leadership with no options for compromise.

Chinese leadership's reluctance to any form of compromise towards Japan was visible at various political fronts. Taking a tough call on the issue, China rejected its summit talks with Japan on the sidelines of the two-day APEC Summit, in Busan, South Korea. To which the Chinese Foreign Ministry made clear that "the atmosphere and conditions are not available for the meeting of leaders of the two countries at present" (People's Daily Online 2005a). Concomitantly, the meeting between the foreign ministers of China and Japan also failed to materialise.

In further raising the stakes in the row over Koizumi's visits, on 15 November, Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing, during a press conference in Busan, rhetorically asked: "What would European people think if German leaders were to visit (memorials) related to Hitler and Nazis?" (The Japan Times 2005). He further raised a query: "Have the Japanese people ever considered whether Asian people's feelings are hurt by Japanese leaders paying homage to war criminals who launched a war that victimized so many people?" (ibid.) While highlighting on the fact that Sino-Japanese relations "face difficulties", Li straightforwardly posited that "China is not responsible for that" (ibid.). Here, it is important to note that in Beijing's view, the difficulties in the relationship was completely Tokyo's fault. While on 16 November, Chinese President Hu Jintao and South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun joined hands to oppose Koizumi's repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by urging that the problems of history not exercise a negative influence on cooperation in Northeast Asia and in expressing the view that correct understanding of history is the foundation of stability in Northeast Asia (Daily Report NAPSNet 2005; Przystup 2006: 112).

In its relay of response to Koizumi's visit, China further suspended the annual China-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Summit<sup>25</sup> scheduled during the ASEAN+3 meeting in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005 (Zhang 2007: 29). Commenting on the postponement of the tripartite summit, on 6 December 2005, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Qin Gang, at a press conference pointed that: "China attaches great importance to the tripartite cooperation [...] We [China] hope the country [Japan] in the question will create proper atmosphere and condition for stronger tripartite cooperation" (Embassy of PRC in USA 2005b).

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<sup>25</sup> The China-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Summit only resumed in 2007, with the first annual summit held in 2008.

Expounding on Japan's right attitude, Spokesman Qin Gang, in another press conference on 8 December, clarified: "In our [China's] opinion, what is important is Japan should take concrete efforts, not only orally but in action, to eliminate the political obstacle in developing friendly and cooperative relations" (Embassy of PRC in USA 2005c).<sup>26</sup> Qin further announced that there were no plans for a China-Japan-South Korea foreign ministers' meeting during the ASEAN+3 Summit. While in outlawing Tokyo's hopes of any kind of high-level interaction in the future, Director General Cui Tiankai of the Asian Affairs Department warned, "it is impossible to expect everything to go ahead as usual, as if nothing has happened" (Pryzstup 2006: 113). Cui charged that the Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni "have harmed the political foundation" of the China-Japan relationship (ibid.). These official statements explain China's rigid attitude towards Japan and also suggests the 'unsuitable atmosphere' for any kind of talks to happen.

It can be stated that Beijing this time opted out of its reluctant behaviour and put forward a rigid attitude in retaliation against Koizumi's unwillingness to concede. This marked Beijing's stronger than ever response to Japan as compared to the other four years. Apart from continuing with the suspension of the mutual visits, China called off other summit meetings with Japan. The Chinese leaders even refrained to meet Koizumi at other political fronts such as APEC, ASEAN+3, EAS and others. There was strong criticism of Koizumi both at official as well as the societal level in China. In view of these dynamics, Griffith (2012: 22) argues that this was a "calculated hard line" that was taken against Koizumi's fifth visit in a way that had not been seen on any of the previous four occasions, despite there being perhaps for the first time a clear understanding that his behavior could not be altered by Chinese pressure. In addition, Beijing's strong response can also be equated with that of the rise in Chinese public sentiment against Japan, which prompted the Chinese leadership's tough stand- leaving no scope to back down over conflicts with Japan, and in this case it was the Yasukuni issue. Therefore, the Yasukuni issue was clearly the central impediment in the Sino-Japanese relations.

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<sup>26</sup> To note, Qin Gang remarks are a response to Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso's Asia policy speech on 7 December where he pointed that China needs to embrace political transparency and be more open about its military budget to ensure its rising economic and diplomatic power is not seen as a threat in Asia. To which Qin, argued that Japan should first explain its own military tendencies to the world, where its own recent moves have raised serious concerns in the international community. Here, it was indirectly hinted at Koizumi's Yasukuni visit.

### **5.2.6 KOIZUMI'S 2006 VISIT**

With Koizumi's five consecutive annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine from 2001-2005, Beijing was clear on its perception as well as policy stand. China became certain of the fact that no pressure can thwart Koizumi from taking the visits and that Beijing needs to have an assertive position unless Japan steps down from its Shrine visits.

Acting in contrary to Beijing's expectations as well as under a tough diplomatic stance, Koizumi fulfilled his 2001 pledge with his final visit to the shrine on 15 August 2006- on the anniversary of Japanese surrender in World War II, before his step down in September. This visit was the first 'August 15' visit by a Japanese prime minister since Nakasone's visit in 1985. Unlike his earlier five visits, this visit was significant as it was made- first, on the controversial date of '15 August' and second, under the official capacity of 'prime minister'- the two critical factors that complicates the Yasukuni issue in Beijing-Tokyo relations.

To contextualise, Koizumi's sixth visit came in the backdrop of two major prevailing situations, which advertently shaped Beijing's response. First, Koizumi's adamant attitude to visit the shrine- which irked Beijing to adopt an uncompromising attitude towards Japan on the Yasukuni issue. For instance, on 4 January 2006, at a press conference, on the question of impasse in Tokyo-Beijing relations due to the Yasukuni Shrine issue, Koizumi reflected that the visits should "not be treated as a diplomatic issue", and how it goes beyond his understanding that foreign governments "try to intervene in a matter of the heart and make the Yasukuni Shrine issue into a diplomatic issue" (MOFA 2006).

Second, given the deadlock in the relations as a result of Koizumi's visits, China intended a way forward in Beijing-Tokyo ties under the new Japanese leadership. This conciliatory approach was motivated by a willingness to restore the ties as long as the successor of Koizumi would not visit Yasukuni. For instance, in his address to

the media on 14 March 2006, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, on the question of the new Japanese leadership's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, Wen categorically stated:

“Pending a solution to this issue, the China-Japan relationship could hardly develop in a smooth manner. As China and Japan are close neighbours, we have an unswerving policy of developing friendship with Japan that will be passed on from generation to generation. To further the China-Japan relations, we must follow the spirit and principle of taking history as a mirror to guide the future growth of our relations and the three Sino-Japanese political documents signed since the establishment of diplomatic ties” (News of the Communist Party of China 2006).

Further highlighting Beijing's expressed interest in the backdrop of the diplomatic deadlock, on 31 March, Chinese President Hu Jintao met with the heads of seven Japan-China friendship groups, headed by former Japanese prime minister, Hashimoto Ryutaro. Hu made it clear that:

“So long as the Japanese leaders explicitly express the determination of no longer paying homage to the Yasukuni Shrine where Class A war criminals are worshiped, I will be willing to conduct meetings and dialogue with Japanese leaders on improving and developing China-Japan relations” (Embassy of the PRC in Estonia 2006).

On the same line, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Liu Jianchao, at a press conference on 8 June 2006 stressed that:

“China has a principle for improving and developing China-Japan relations, that is, Japan has to take a correct attitude on the history issue and Japanese leaders have to stop visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. Only in this way will the necessary atmosphere and condition be created for improving and developing our relations” (Embassy of the PRC in Zimbabwe 2006).

While on 10 June 2006, Hu Jintao, meeting with the new Japanese ambassador Miyamoto Yuji, too observed that under the proper conditions and at an appropriate time he would hope to visit Japan. Hu noted the current difficult stage of bilateral relations but made no reference to the Yasukuni issue and stressed the importance that China attaches to relations with Japan.

From the above statements by China's political elites, it is clear that Beijing was firm in its policy choice that discontinuation of the shrine visit was the only condition to resume the summit meetings. This also reflects that Yasukuni shrine visit was the most critical impediment in restoring of Sino-Japanese relations, which can only be resolved by stopping further visits to the shrine by Japanese leaders. This was a clear

indication from Beijing to Tokyo that it would not be feasible for future prime ministers to continue in this vein. As Griffith (2012: 23) argues that there was a clear understanding that “the norms and accepted patterns of the relationship were in flux under Koizumi and a failure to mould them into a form acceptable to the Chinese”- would have serious consequences for the Sino-Japanese relationship.

Beijing’s such a calculated policy also exemplifies China’s shift of attention from Koizumi to that of putting concentrated efforts on Japan’s incoming leadership. While Beijing also signaled its interest by resuming the ministerial level exchanges between China and Japan, after a suspension of one year. To cite an example, on 23 May 2006, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing met his Japanese counterpart Taro Aso for their first bilateral talks in a year, on the sidelines of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting, in Doha, Qatar. Wherein, Li renewed China's demands that Koizumi stop visiting the shrine as a condition for better relations as the visits have damaged the foundation of the political ties (China Daily 2006a). To add, China’s Commerce Minister Bo Xilai traveled to Japan from 28-30 May, to join an environmental forum in Kyoto representing Chinese leaders (Yang 2013: 188).

Against this backdrop of Beijing’s renewed efforts, Koizumi paid his final visit to the shrine on 15 August- triggering strong diplomatic and public reaction in Beijing. Following the standard behaviour, the Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing summoned the Japanese ambassador to China Miyamoto Yuji and expressed Beijing’s strong indignation and stern denunciation of Koizumi’s visit. Li said: China strongly requests Japanese leaders to make efforts to remove political barriers and push the Sino-Japanese ties back to the normal development track at an early date” (China Daily 2006b). The Chinese Foreign Ministry lodged a protest by issuing a statement that called upon Koizumi’s repeated visits- a move that “challenges the international justice and tramples the conscience of mankind” (Xinhuanet 2006a).

Given this rhetorically strong statement by Beijing, Griffith (2012: 23) argues that it can be understood in two ways. First, Koizumi’s visit was made on the sensitive date of 15<sup>th</sup> August, the first time he had done so and the first time a serving Japanese prime minister had done so since Nakasone in 1985. And secondly, and more significantly, it was fully understood that this would be Koizumi’s final visit as

prime minister and the last chance to make an impression on his yet-to-be-determined successor.

The statement further made a reference to United States criticism of Koizumi's visits. As it mentioned U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations Chairman Henry J. Hyde's letter to the speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, demanding that Koizumi not be invited for a speech at Congress during his June visit to the United States, unless Tokyo pledged the Japanese leader would not pay any Shrine visit after returning home (ibid.). This can be interpreted as Beijing's attempt to validate its discontent by equating it with United States negative attitude towards Koizumi's shrine visits. What is interesting to note is that Beijing equated its criticism with reconciliatory approach as noted in Li's statement, China attached importance to the development of Sino-Japanese friendship and cooperation- an indication of restoring the ties.

While the Chinese media, as Li (2006) notes that a commentary published by Xinhua, argued that the Japanese leader's behaviour once again "seriously hurt the feelings of Asians" who were victimised by Japan's past military atrocities. The article also refuted, as Li notes, Koizumi's justifications by arguing that Koizumi as a state leader does not enjoy the personal freedom to worship at the shrine, that the visit is not a purely Japanese domestic matter, and that the visit is not conducive to peace (ibid.). In addition, the Chinese newspapers also attributed Koizumi's visit to that of a rejection of the indictments made by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal (Tan and Ni 2009). This was in turn construed as the whitewashing of history by Japan, and a sign of Japan's return to militarism. To cite an example, an article that was cited by Xinhua from the People's Daily forum summed up the significance of the shrine as "a tool used to manipulate the feelings of the Japanese people, and to stir up militaristic spirit" (ibid.).

Besides China's strong rhetorical condemnation, Chinese public also expressed strong resentment. For instance, the China-Japan Friendship Association, a Chinese civil group, issued a written statement saying: "[Koizumi's] act has severely hurt the feelings of people in China and other Asian countries and we express our utmost indignation and strong protest over his wrong deeds" (China Daily 2006c). In addition, Chinese people lodged protests in Beijing and Nanjing (ibid.).



While at the policy level, Beijing continued with its no mutual visit policy. As a result, the bilateral negotiations and dialogues at various levels remained suspended since 2005. This time Beijing's response was mainly ruled by the anticipation of whether Koizumi's successor will be able to depart drastically from his predecessor's hardline or will continue on the same line. As for Beijing, the concern was that if the trend continued, it will be a loss of face for Beijing as well as hamper the interests involved in fostering Sino-Japanese relations. To say so, as although China maintained pressure on Koizumi over Yasukuni, but Beijing appeared to concentrate greater attention to his prospective successors, so as to ensure that the Shrine visits would not continue under the post-Koizumi administration.

Lai (2008: 235) suggests that the Chinese government, having contemplated, and accepted the worst-case scenario, namely Koizumi visiting on 15 August, had decided to wait out on him. Given this logic, Beijing's 2006 response to Koizumi's visit was indirectly hinted towards the incoming new Leadership in Japan. Wherein, China used this opportunity to sensitise the incoming Japanese leadership of the importance that China attaches to the Yasukuni problem and that improved bilateral ties were conditioned upon Japan putting a stay on the visits. It is noteworthy that as compared to the previous visits, Beijing's response to Koizumi's last visit had a certain degree of calmness. Jin (2008: 174) argues that the calm attitude reflected Beijing's readiness to embrace Japan's new leader regardless of political and ideological background and ideas.

Therefore, in analysing, Beijing's response to Koizumi's visits from 2001 to 2006, it is found that China's response to Koizumi's Yasukuni visits was informed by Nakasone's decision not to visit Yasukuni, which set the precedent for the Chinese leadership to deal with such an issue. However, such a tactic by China did not succeed in putting a stop on Koizumi's visits. In order to deal with the situation, China's new leadership held a pragmatic approach with the initial downplaying of the history issue. However, the anti-Japan public protests in China acted as a catalyst that forced the Chinese government to adopt a tougher attitude and policy toward Japan, resulting into ceasing

of firstly bilateral visits between the two countries from 2001 till 2005 and eventually to all high-level meetings at all political fronts.

In this period, China practiced harsh policy decisions but also maintained conciliatory gestures which were made with extra caution. China's pragmatism was visible even in the presence of troubles in the political front as Beijing did not block all communication channels. As although the bilateral summit visits were suspended with Japan but Chinese leaders held several bilateral meetings with Koizumi on the margins of various regional forums held in third countries. This indicates China's measured and cautioned conciliatory approach towards Japan in the background of political tensions. However, despite its conciliatory attitude, China failed to stop Koizumi from continuing his Yasukuni visits and this resulted Beijing to realise that there was little room for compromise with Japan given Koizumi's repeated mistake to visit the shrine. As the Chinese like to say, "The tree may prefer calm, but the wind will not subside" (shu yu jing, er feng bu zhi) (Yang 2007a: 274). Given this asymmetry in China's intentions vis-à-vis Japan, Lam (2005: 276) rightly points that: "[h]ad Koizumi not adamantly insisted on making annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (the symbol of Japanese militarism towards the Chinese and Koreans), then the burden of history which bedevils Sino-Japanese relations could have been lightened by half". This argument by Lam stands validated as in the post-Koizumi administration, the unfavourable conditions between China and Japan took a reverse turn with the incumbent Prime Minister Shinzo Abe<sup>27</sup>, who adequately responded to China's signals. Wen Jiabao congratulated Abe immediately and stated, "Japan-China relations are at a crucial historic moment"- reflecting Beijing's eagerness in restoring the fallen ties (Yang 2013: 188). While Abe at his inaugural speech to the Japanese Diet on 29 September called for "strengthening bonds of trust with China and South Korea (ibid.).

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<sup>27</sup> Shinzo Abe was elected president of the LDP on 19 September 2006 and became prime minister of Japan a week later.

The diplomatic stalemate caused under Koizumi was finally broken with Abe's visit to Beijing in October 2006. The visit was symbolic in many ways as it marked the first official visit by a Japanese prime minister since Prime Minister Obuchi went to China in July 1999. Abe also became the first Japanese postwar prime minister who chose China as the destination of his first official overseas trip. And most importantly, it was the first visit to China by a Japanese prime minister in five years as top-level visits had been halted because of Koizumi's repeated visits to the shrine. Calling Abe's visit a "turning point" in the relations (Xinhuanet 2006b), Hu in his meeting with Abe on 8 October stated:

“[Sino-Japanese relations] face difficulties because an “individual Japanese leader” kept visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, [...] This is not what we [Chinese] are willing to see. [Under Abe] China and Japan have reached consensus on overcoming political obstacles affecting bilateral ties and promoting Sino-Japanese relations, which creates conditions for the improvement and development of bilateral relations” (Embassy of PRC in Jamaica 2006).

To which, Abe pledged to handle the Yasukuni issue appropriately. Abe's visit was reciprocated with the visit of Premier Wen Jiabao to Japan from 11-13 April in 2007- reflecting the positive undertone in the ties. In this successful visit, Wen clarified the stance of China in the history issue in his speech at the Japanese Diet on 12 April 2007- “by stressing the importance of drawing the lessons from history, we do not mean to perpetuate hatred. Rather, we want to secure a better future for our relations” (Yang 2013: 190). Wen further acknowledged Japan's repeated apologies and pledged that: “The Chinese people will never forget Japan's support of China during our opening, reform, and modernization” (ibid.).

Since 2006 there has been a sustained commitment to regular visits between the leaders of the two countries. As after no official visits in either direction for four and a half years under Koizumi, Japanese prime ministers visited China annually for four consecutive years in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. While Premier Wen Jiabao visited Japan in 2007 and 2010 and President Hu Jintao visited in 2008. These reciprocal visits finally set the precedent of the starting point of the development of Sino-Japanese ties after the political stalemate created under Koizumi. There was a renewed commitment to the concept of a “strategic relationship of mutual benefit”

(McCarthy 2012: 71). As during Hu Jintao's visit to Japan in 2008<sup>28</sup>, China and Japan signed a Joint Statement on Comprehensive Promotion of a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests", as signed by Hu and prime minister Yasuo Fukuda. It is noteworthy that this marked the fourth political document that the two countries signed since 1972 normalisation. The Chinese media commented to be "clearly indicat[ing] the [sic] China-Japan relations have entered a new phase of development" (ibid.).

However, what is most important to note is that the Chinese side "expressed its positive evaluation of Japan's consistent pursuit of the path of a peaceful country and Japan's contribution to the peace and stability of the world through peaceful means over more than sixty years since World War" (MOFA 2008). This remark by China is of particular importance given the negative impact of the historical issues on the bilateral relationship since the early years of the twenty-first century. From Chinese perspective, Hu's visit to China was a real progress. Highlighting the importance of Hu's visit, Huang Dahui, a Japan scholar at Renmin University asserted that, "This visit will symbolize that relations are becoming normal. It won't solve any substantive issues. [However] [t]he symbolism of the visit itself will be the main substance" (McCarty 2012: 72).

Therefore, in the post-Koizumi administration, China gradually returned to its pragmatic policy of downplaying the history issue. One of the factors that caused the thaw in the relations was the Japanese leadership's sincere pledge in not making visits to the shrine. However, another factor that instigated China to downplay the history issue was the concern over Japanese yen loans, which Koizumi decided to end in March 2005. Given this issue of concern, it can be stated that Chinese government's proactive approach towards reaching a stability under Japan's new leadership was a diplomatic effort to stop the loans from getting suspended. This can be assessed from Beijing's changed attitude towards Japan. As in expressing gratitude, Premier Wen Jiabao on his visit to Japan in April 2007, stated: "Both sides shared the view that the Japanese yen loans to China which will conclude in 2008 played a positive role in the

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<sup>28</sup> This was Hu Jintao's first visit to Japan since taking office in 2003. This visit was timed to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. It was the first official visit of a Chinese President to Japan since Jiang Zemin visited in 1998.

economic development of China and Japan-China economic cooperation” (MOFA 2007).

In a similar tone, Hu Jintao in his 2008 visit to Japan praised Japan as a “teacher” for China’s economic reforms, as Beijing News quoted Hu saying:

“Thirty years ago, Japan reached out a helping hand to support China’s reform and opening up. Japan provided Official Development Assistance (ODA) to China ever since the signing of the ‘China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship’ in 1979. Though ODA is coming to an end this year, Japan provided an essential injection of support for China’s economic construction. Chinese people will not, and should not, forget this. Up until the end of the 1980s, Japan was a leading model of successful modernisation and economic development in Chinese people’s hearts. Chinese people would take Japan as a teacher without the slightest amount of embarrassment or discomfort. At that time, every time Deng Xiaoping would meet visiting Japanese friends, one sentence repeatedly came out of his mouth: ‘study from Japan’ (Reilly 2009: 15).

The above statements by Chinese top leadership exemplifies China’s actual interests behind the change in attitude. That is, economic interests topped the priority list and with a new leadership in Japan, China wanted to keep its interests intact. This reflects the pragmatic turn in China’s Japan policy. As a result, both China and Japan enjoyed a thaw in the relations in the post-Koizumi phase.

## **5.6 SUMMARY**

From the overall assessment, it can thus be stated that Japan’s official reluctance to take responsibility for its wartime atrocities and colonial excesses on China, has resulted into a strong Chinese perception that Japan has a total erasure of its sense of culpability for these actions- an unrepentant Japan. In this regard, such a perception of China towards Japan is exacerbated by Japan’s activities, wherein the Yasukuni shrine visits by Japanese leaders rank high. The visits as China perceives violently defend Japan’s wartime actions. This makes historical memory in China, one of the key factors that shapes China’s attitude towards Japan.

Saying that historical memories remain a diplomatic obstacle in Sino-Japanese relations, makes the Yasukuni Shrine issue, one of the single most impediment in the development of the relations. Given the victim mentality of China, its actions towards Japan seek to right the wrongs suffered by the Chinese people in the past. This makes the narrative of national humiliation act as a key driver that shapes China's attitude towards Japan.

What makes the so-called history problem a fundamental issue in Sino-Japanese relations is the fact that the issue itself is very differently perceived and understood in China and Japan. Given the logic of perceptual gap, the Chinese understanding of the Yasukuni Shrine as a bone of contention are mainly twofold: first, that the Japanese prime ministers visits to the Yasukuni Shrine represents a symbolic meaning which is perceived to suggest Japan's resurgent militarism. Second, the Chinese government and people perceive that the Yasukuni Shrine problem is a result of Japan's lack of understanding of history. The Chinese regard the Japanese leaders' visits to the shrine as proof of the insincerity of Japan's past apologies and expressions of regret to China. This forms the predominant Chinese perspective as reflected in the referral statements by Chinese government and public, wherein the emphasis is on "correct handling of history", "taking history as a mirror" and others.

The official Chinese responses were in line with the most popular answers chosen by Chinese respondents, as found in the Genron NPO<sup>29</sup> opinion polls on the Sino-Japanese relations to the question of which bilateral history issues need to be resolved, i.e. 'the need for Japan to recognise and apologise for its past invasion' and that Japan should 'respect the Chinese understandings of the invasions'. In this view, Japanese leaders visit to the Shrine is seen to represent Japan's unrepentant attitude and thereby, raises Chinese concerns over Japan's sincerity towards its expressed apologies. This is well illustrated by Prime Minister Koizumi's repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, wherein on one end, he repeatedly confirmed Japan's apologies for its wartime behavior but on the other end, payed homage to war criminals at the shrine.

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<sup>29</sup> See Genron NPO Japan-China Joint Opinion Polls 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016.

This asymmetry in words and actions thus, nullified Japan's apologies and thus, reassured China's perception of Japan's unwillingness to fully acknowledge its past wrong doings.

Given these serious contentions, to date, China has refused to recognise the Yasukuni Shrine as that of a memorial site for the Japanese leaders to visit. This is further exemplified in the Chinese public opinion polls, as the 2016 Genron NPO's survey polls suggest that 45.9 percent of the Chinese as compared to 22.4 percent of Japanese public believe that there will be no development in relationship without resolving historical perception issues. These are suggestive of China's awareness of the wartime atrocities visited upon China by Japan, for which the Chinese firmly believe that Japan should address this legacy squarely in apology. In doing so, Japan should not disrespect the memories of victims of the war by glorifying its wrong deeds. This belief makes Yasukuni stands controversial due to the enshrinement of Class A war criminals, which further makes the Japanese leaders visit to the shrine a disrespectful act towards China's historical memories.

These perspectives reinstate the role of historical memories in Sino-Japanese relations, that significantly hinders the condition of the relationship. These differential perceptions have further problematised the Yasukuni issue between China and Japan, based on widened perceptual gaps. There is no easy solution to the Yasukuni issue except for the fact that Japanese prime ministers and other government officials refrain from paying a visit to the shrine. However, on the whole, for China, the shrine's very existence is a constant reminder of the historical discord in the current relationship. This conflict of historical memories strongly contributes to the widening mistrust between China and Japan, which makes the relationship fragile and a reconciliation process highly problematic.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

In analysing the role of perceptions in foreign policy, it becomes imperative to understand how states shape their foreign policy behaviour towards the other. Is it just informed by material interests or there are other factors that come into play. In international politics, a state, mostly defined to be political, is also a social entity as its behaviour is constructed given the way it defines the international environment. This definition of the environment, which is understood as its perceptions thereby, defines the interests and objectives of its foreign policy.

Taking this as the point of reference, the present study attempted to address the ideational character of China's Japan policy. It has set out with a key emphasis on three aspects: What are Chinese perceptions of Japan? How does these perceptions impact China's foreign policy behaviour towards Japan? Does Chinese popular opinion influence China's Japan policy? Given these three pertinent queries, the study adopted a different approach to observe and analyse China's current relations with Japan.

The thesis has adopted a political and social psychological approach to understand as to why the 'history problem' still continues to impact contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. Rather than treating foreign policy as operating in a black box wherein it is seen to be a given, the thesis has taken into account the domestic factors in understanding the role of perceptions in defining policy choices. In addition, the research has adopted a Foreign Policy Analysis and Constructivist framework in order to understand the link between perceptions, foreign policy and domestic politics, that is, all the three factors are mutually constitutive.

There is an extensive literature that has empirically studied China-Japan relations, however, there still lacks a gap in terms of an overall framework that can conceptualise as to what mostly affects the relationship. Mainstream IR theories such as realism and liberalism has largely failed to explain as to why the history problem still exists in the contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. As with regard to China and Japan, neither balance of threat nor balance of power theory can adequately explain as to why the Sino-Japanese relations still remains a hostage to the past. Instead of highlighting on the mainstream IR assumptions, this thesis has studied the rational of



'historical memory' to contextualise the history problem in the current Sino-Japanese relations. In an attempt to fill this gap, the study has taken into account the ideational character of China's relations with Japan. In doing so, the thesis has studied China's perceptions of Japan from the perspective of historical memories. Wherein, Chinese perceptions of Japan have been treated as a cognitive construct driven from the historical memories embedded in the narrative of Century of Humiliation. Much of the analyses in this thesis has concentrated on the contents and contexts that characterised the Sino-Japanese relations in the 2002-2012 period.

The findings in the study suggest that Chinese perceptions of Japan are shaped by the historical memories of the wartime past. History is not just a matter of the past but a fact of the present and the future in China's relations with Japan. The overbearance of the historical sensitivity is caused by the consciousness of victimhood which is deeply integrated in the very Chinese identity. This Chinese identity of 'self' against the Japanese 'other' is driven from a particular historical narrative that is concentrated on the "Century of Humiliation". In this process, any form of alternate interpretation of the historical accounts creates a cognitive dissonance in the Chinese mind and is therefore, perceived as an assault on the Chinese national identity. This explains as to why China reacts when it perceives Japan of whitewashing the historical facts, as evitable in the case of revision of history textbooks by Japan or Japanese prime ministers' visiting the Yasukuni Shrine.

This psychological perspective further helps to understand that the importance of reconciliation of the past between China and Japan thereby, needs to take into account the emotional aspects of history. Here reconciliation cannot be reached on strategic calculations of material interests. Though seeking economic compensations have become a form of justice, however, this only meets half a goal. Here, the cure lies in compensating the emotional sensitivities, which are tough to reconcile with. This helps to understand as to why apology by Japanese leaders have failed to make any difference in the Chinese minds. For apology, as Chinese perceive was many a times retracted given the issues of textbook revisions and Japanese leaderships' visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. This dissonance creates a perpetual bias for the Chinese when assessing Japan's behaviour. This brings in the perplexity and apprehensions that further adds up to the deep distrust. These factors make it difficult to reach a

consensus on the issues of history problem that plagues the contemporary Sino-Japanese relationship.

Moreover, the increasing anti-Japan sentiments among Chinese public further complicates the process of reconciliation. These sentiments are highly nationalistic which makes it act as a dangerous force in constraining any form of conciliatory approach towards Japan. This is validated by the fact that it was the Chinese negative public opinion of Japan that constrained China's "new thinking" attitude towards Japan. Real and deep reconciliation can only be achieved at people-to-people level, for at the diplomatic level the relations are pragmatic but at the public level it is more emotional and sensitive.

This also exemplifies that the nationalist public opinion significantly influences China's foreign policy towards Japan. This was evitable in the events of anti-Japanese demonstrations in China such as in 2005 protests that brought the relations to a new low. This suggests that there is a perceptual divide between the Chinese people and the government on the approach towards Japan and this, therefore acts as an elemental force in deteriorating the Sino-Japanese relations. Furthermore, the Chinese public's negative bias towards Japan acts as one of the major barriers to the Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations despite their strong economic engagement.

This makes China's Japan policy exist in a state of dilemma. Wherein, on one hand, the Chinese decision-making elites seek to restore stable relations, while on the other hand, the domestic anti-Japan forces act as de-stabilisers to such restoration process. The perceptual dilemma has made the history problem an anathema in the Sino-Japanese relations, wherein the uncertainties attached and the difficulty to resolve continues to damage the relations. In this regard, a political and social psychological intervention to the understanding of contemporary Sino-Japanese relations brings to the fore the root causes of the conflict, which exists at two levels- foreign policy as well as Chinese domestic politics. This is enforced by the mutually constitutive nature of Chinese perceptions, its policy and the Chinese nationalist sentiments towards Japan. The cure to the problem lies in deep reconciliation brought about by high level of emotional healing at the popular level and constructive restoration of relationship at the policy level.

The case is well proved in terms of the Yasukuni Shrine issue between China and Japan, which has become as political friction between the two countries. For China, Koizumi's persistence had offended the Chinese people by showing a total disrespect to their feeling. Due to the deep-rooted memories of Japanese atrocities in the war, history has become the most critical issue to Sino-Japanese relations. Koizumi's repeated Yasukuni visit bolstered Chinese perception of 'unrepentant Japan'. China saw Koizumi's repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine as an appeasement or even an endorsement to the glorification of militarism, and the revisionist view on history.

Therefore, on every occasion, the CCP central government together with state-controlled media flooded with criticism. Beijing's hardlined approach was also influenced by Chinese public opinion that was reflected in the anti-Japanese demonstrations. This again proves that history in China's Japan policy is not a tool card, rather China's national identity and public opinion plays a vital role in shaping China's foreign relations with Japan. Using Yasukuni Shrine as a test case, it is clear that China's Japan policy is shaped by perceptions driven by historical memories. The past is very active in the current relationship.

Beijing's response to the Yasukuni Shrine issue proves that the shrine is a critical friction point between China and Japan. Wherein, given the burden of the historical memories, the Japanese prime minister's visit to the shrine is mainly opposed by China as it is perceived to be Japan's revisionist attitude in reviving the past militarism. The Chinese response is orchestrated by the historical consciousness of Japan's brutal atrocities. In this regard, paying homage at the controversial shrine raises China's concerns vis-à-vis Japan. Given China's heavy dependence on history in dealing with Japan, the Yasukuni case proves that the incidents that deny or beautify the history of Japanese aggression, automatically act as catalysts in deteriorating the Sino-Japanese relations.

In this regard, since 2001, the paying of homage to the Yasukuni Shrine have continuously reoccurred, severely disturbing the development of the Sino-Japanese relations. Here, it is noteworthy that such episodes will continue to reinvigorate the historical consciousness of China, thus, further clarifying that historical memories strongly affect China's present equation with Japan.

Based on the findings, the study has made four broad claims: First, Perceptions matter in international relations, and most particularly in foreign policy-making. Foreign policy cannot be treated as a process that happens in a black box. In case of China's relations with Japan, this factor stands adequately proven. Chinese perceptions of Japan are heavily drawn from the historical memories. The Century of Humiliation acts as the filter in shaping China's present perceptions of Japan. This helps explain China's dominant negative attitude towards Japan, wherein the narratives of the wartime past provide frames to the contemporary sentiments towards Japan. What is found that on the history issue there is no significant difference between the Chinese elite and the public. They mostly share similar sentiment based on Japan's wartime past.

However, there is just a slight difference in their policy choice towards Japan. That is, in dealing with Japan, Chinese decision-making elites are pragmatic given the strategic interests and concerns, and thereby, seek to promote stable relations driven by rational choice. This is evident in the CCP's basic policy which emphasises on remembering the history but facing the future. On the contrary, Chinese public are emotional and thereby, call for a tough Japan policy that seeks to go beyond the rational interests. From this one can derive two different kinds of perceptions of Japan- one is the negative perception commonly shared by both Chinese elites and public given the historical consciousness and the other is a strategic perception that is mainly shared by Chinese elites. However, it is the negative perception that shapes China's attitude towards Japan. This further reinvigorates the suspicion and distrust given China's perception and image of a militarist Japan. This thereby constrains China's Japan policy and hence, makes it difficult to reconcile with Japan.

Secondly, the 'history problem' in Sino-Japanese relations is not just a state-led mechanism used by the CCP to gain domestic legitimacy, but rather is more psychological. As the fact of the matter lies in understanding of the human sentiment involved. What instigates the history actor is the genuine Chinese reaction which is informed by their historical consciousness. To say that China plays the history card to gain concessions stands too simplistic and narrow in understanding. As this approach fails to take into account the sentiments of the Chinese people, which are genuine.

Thirdly, Public opinion plays a significant role in influencing Chinese foreign policy making. Particularly this is visible in China's Japan policy. This anti-Japan perception of Chinese public further validates the claim that Chinese perceptions of Japan is informed by the historical memories. The memories imprinted in the Chinese collective consciousness significantly determines the political discourse and diplomatic practice of the state, have become the central factor restraining the possible reconciliation between China and Japan. That is to argue that Chinese foreign policy towards Japan has become a prisoner of Chinese public opinion.

And finally, the Chinese insistence on the history problem, which is largely related to the collective memory and justice of reconciliation, not only magnifies the negative side of the history, but also implicates the difficulty for both the governments to deal with the reconciliation process. What has transcended the Chinese victim mentality is that of triumphant mentality – the need to win over Japan. This is invoked by the cognition to be the final victor given the loss of face in the past. In this regard, Chinese nationalism acts as an important factor that affects reconciliation. That is, the political culture between China and Japan makes reconciliation difficult. Economics have only helped to act as temporary pacifiers as the larger issues are rooted in the historical memories.

These claims in the study offer a broad range for implications for the study of China's relations with Japan. At the foremost, the relationship calls for an understanding of how China and Japan understand history. That is, what respectively defines their interpretation of the history problem. It is noteworthy that the 1972 normalisation was only an agreement that was reached between China and Japan, but the actual reconciliation process still remains to happen. What hinders the process is that the background still holds the militarist view of the history issue. There is a cognitive complexity that impacts the Chinese attitude in controlling the fall of events in the relationship.

To say that China's Japan policy is psychologically driven does not suggest that China's foreign-policy decisions are irrational and nor does it defy the notion that foreign-policy makers decide based on their calculated expected outcomes. It is evident from the fact that Chinese elites made conscious efforts to manipulate

Koizumi's decision in every occasion of his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. There was a calculated approach wherein it was seen that pressure buildup will help neutralise Koizumi's decision to visit the shrine. However, as the study reveals that most China's Japan policy was mainly shaped by the cognitive aspects of both Chinese decision-making elites and Chinese public in terms of their beliefs, images and analogies of Japan. This helps to explain that psychological constructs such as historical memories are not the means to explain deviations from the rational choice rather they are the crucial factors that helps understand what defines the context and content of the rationality of behaviour towards the other.

By taking a political and social psychological approach combined with a constructivist theoretical stance, this thesis has demonstrated the mutually constitutive relations between Chinese perceptions, China's Japan policy and domestic politics in the form of Chinese public opinion. Most broadly, this study offers an alternative understanding to the history problem in China's relations with Japan. This cognitive perceptual analysis to China's Japan policy-making helps to understand as to why states act differently to the same international environment. This is because the states make foreign policy based on their perceived reality of the international order, rather than the reality itself. And as decisions are made by humans thereby, it is the interpretation of the decision-makers that shapes the state's foreign policy behaviour towards the other.

This helps to understand Japan's exceptional standing in China's foreign policy, wherein the history problem tops the agenda. As the findings suggest that China's Japan policy is informed by the perceptions born out of historical memories. This further confirms that Chinese national identity and public opinion play a significant role in influencing China's foreign policy towards Japan.

In an overall assessment, it can therefore ne strongly argued that perceptions play an important role in Chinese foreign policy behaviour towards Japan. Beijing's approach towards Japan is mainly driven by strategic concerns and public sentiments that is greatly influenced by anti-Japanese popular nationalism. This results into a sense of insecurity causing China to perceive Japan as a potential threat. The negative image of Japan is constantly refurbished by active historical memories in the Chinese

psyche. This further shapes China's foreign policy attitude towards Japan where distrust and suspicion are deeply inherent. Thereby, it can be rightly stated that historical memories have strongly impacted China's present relations with Japan. And that, public perceptions of Japan drawn from historical memories significantly limits China's policy choices.

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