Rising Tensions in East Asia?
A Transatlantic Perspective
Toward East Asian Historical Reconciliation
- How can Europe/Germany help us?-

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Asia’s rise: Opportunities? Or Threats for transatlantic relations?

• Opportunities?


With innovative policies and effective cooperation, Asia can continue **economic development**, and more people would be **part of the rich world**, with per capita income levels equal to that of Europe today . . .
Economically, Asia is promising, however, will there be enough stability and peace as a basis for economic development?

- Especially in East Asia tensions are rising
Deepening Economic Ties Coexists with political tensions

Japan’s trade by country
Asian Paradox situations in East Asia

“Asia suffers from ‘Asian paradox,’ the disconnect between growing economic interdependence on one hand, and backward political, security cooperation on the other,” especially, “differences stemming from history are widening.”
South Korean President Park Geun-hye at joint session of the Congress, May 2013.
East Asia Still Haunted by “Past”
-History Problems

1. Yasukuni shrine controversy
2. Descriptions of WWII in Japanese history textbooks
3. “Comfort women” issue
Yasukuni Controversy (Dec. 2013)
Anti-Japanese movement in China (2005) as a response to revisionists’ textbook in Japan
“Comfort women” issues (Glendale, CA)
“comfort women” issue is increasingly recognized as human right issue

Korea’s Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se at a UN human rights meeting in Geneva (March 5, 2014)
Current Japan’s Choice: Look to the West

1. **Panoramic perspective diplomacy**
   - Abe has visited a total of **49 countries**, especially tried to strengthen ties with European countries

2. **Value-based Diplomacy**
   - Emphasize that promoting “**liberal values**” such as **freedom, democracy, human rights** as its diplomatic goal.
History problems are really messy. However, is it really possible for Japan to avoid facing them?
History problems even intrudes on Security

Ex.

Korea’s failure in signing a **Korea-Japan General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)** in May 2012, due to strong opposition from the public.
Korean people’s deep distrust toward “militaristic Japan.”
Abe cabinet is ready for more active security role in the region, yet the neighboring countries are not.
How Europe /Germany can help East Asian historical reconciliation

1. As a **Model** of Reconciliation
2. As an **Actor** involving East Asian reconciliation
   - informal/ non-governmental level (ongoing)
   - formal/government (future?)
Germany as a Model
- East Asian textbook dialogues (1990s~)

A History that Open the Future (2005)

First common teaching material for Japan, China, and Korea.
The ideal of “common textbook” is now shared by politicians

“As Germany and France, and Germany and Poland did, we can publish a joint history textbook for Northeast Asia and build up practices of cooperation and dialogue.”

Park Geun-hye at the National Diplomatic Academy, November 14, 2013
Germany/Europe as an Actor of East Asian history dialogues

- Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research
- European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO)

- Teach European/German methods to East Asian historians and educators
Future: Germany as a Mediator?

- US or Germany?
  - US: more reasons? (strategic interests/history)
  - Germany: more qualified? (long experience of reconciliation, accumulated methods)

- History problem is becoming a diplomatic issue, but not a purely diplomatic issue
  - In addition to settling disputes, mediator should help bringing historical justice for durable peace.
Proposals for Future

1. Toward East Asian historical reconciliation

2. Toward better EU-Asia relations
Key for future East Asian reconciliation: a wider range of societal actors

- Who should be the actors toward historical reconciliation?

1. Political leaders?
2. Historians /experts?
3. Citizens
Historical Reconciliation as a Continuous Process - Roles of Citizens esp. Youth

De Gaulle’ address, September 9, 1962, Ludwigsburg
Future EU-Asia interregional relations

Asia’s Rise: “Yellow Peril” again?

Painting by H. Knackfuss (Germany)

“Peoples of Europe, guard your dearest goods” (1895)
Toward peaceful and mutually beneficial EU-Asia Relations

- Can Asia share core values with Europe?

Freedom
Democracy
Equality
Rule of Law
Human Rights

- East Asian history problem should be addressed according to these core values