

**Japan-Korea Relations
under Lee Myung-bak:
Is current lull on history
issues sustainable?**

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Lee Myung-bak on Japan

- “Many years have passed since the normalization; economic relations and exchanges in private sectors have seen a lot of progress but relations among political leaders retarded. With Prime Minister Fukuda, I talked that we can have shuttle diplomacy. Since he emphasizes the importance of Asian policy, Japan and Korea may move to future oriented relationship.” (Asahi, 02-02-2008)

Lee Myung-bak on history

- “Since Japan is number two economic power in the world, it should be possible to have a matured diplomacy in Asia. I would like to leave to the judgment of the Japanese side the resolution of historical issues and proceed toward the future. On history, experts should discuss it with open heart. We should leave to the experts. For instance, German and French scholars created a single textbook through open debate.” (Asahi, 02-02-2008)

My basic position on history

- “In the 35 years of Japanese colonization, there were clearly things that the Japanese did too much (yarisugita) that hearted the feelings of the Koreans. The Japanese should know about it, and when they know about it they feel it sorry (moushiwakenai). This should be transmitted to the younger generation.”

History issues in Korea

- National pride of being in a higher echelon of the Sino-centric order
- Betrayal by the country, which they once thought to be the model of their independence (An Chung-gun)
- Memory of Japanization, which even endangered Korean identity (Hotaru)
- Total negation of pre-war Japan as the basis of post-colonial Korean identity (Soedaemun prison museum)

Not again !

- Japan-Korea Joint Declaration (10-08-98)
Clause 2 paragraph 3: “Further, both leaders shared the view that it was important that the peoples of both countries, the young generation in particular, deepen their understanding of history, and stressed the need to devote much attention and effort to that end.” →
01 textbook row → 02 joint study on history
- Roh Moo-hun: 03 & 04: no history and regular meeting → 05 Dokto: diplomatic war → 07 political relations very tense

Yasukuni

- Minimum: prime ministers refrain from visiting Yasukuni: Fukuda Yes; Aso?
- Film “Yasukuni” controversy
- Togo’s proposal (FEER, June 06): “A moratorium on Yasukuni Visits”: determine responsibility, remove Yushukan, → national museum
- Aso’s proposal for nationalization: where would be the role of Shinto? → Revision of Article 20?
- Showa Emperor’s will → Chinreisha

Comfort Women

- Minimum: inheriting Kono Statement and no provocative views by the Diet
- 2007: End of March: closure of Asian Women Fund <http://www.awf.or.jp>
- April 27: Supreme court decision on two Chinese comfort women cases
- Congressional resolutions: USA (07-30); Netherlands (11-08); Canada (11-28); EU (12-13)
- Why not act based on moral and humanitarian point of view?

Textbook

- Minimum: 09 screening: “maintain neighboring country clause”
- Improvement of Fusosha textbook (2nd edition): delete “some accepted annexation”; explain “soshi kaimei”; explain the content of “kominka”
- Progress in joint studies: second round of joint committee on history with textbook sub-group (07~)

Takeshima/Dokto

- Minimum: Not to take actions to politicize this issue
- Wakamiya's proposal and Park Yuha's proposal may not work
- Bridge the gap about fundamental discrepancies: first step of annexation vs historical dealings

In concluding, in perspective

- Not a single occasion of unpleasant rebuke in four months
- Students at the Seoul National, GSIS
- Park Cheol-hee: “carefully walk the minefield; Koreans do not provoke; Japanese should not provoke”
- Exchanges of people and civil societies; Kanryu and Yonsama phenomena