

Sino-Japan Relations in the Heisei Era in Japan's Diplomatic

Bluebook

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On April 30th, Japan's Heisei era was over. How were the Sino-Japan relations during the Heisei era? We often see that the Japanese criticize the Chinese for analyzing Japan's behavior and Sino-Japan relations from a Chinese viewpoint, leading to a misperception of Japan, and the Chinese also accuse the Japanese of doing the same. Therefore, this presentation will analyze the discourse on Sino-Japanese relations in the 1989 to 2019 edition of the Japan's Diplomatic Blue Book, in order to find out how the Japanese government views the Sino-Japanese relations in the Heisei period.

Although each edition may have some differences, the text on China-Japan relations generally consists of three parts: the summary, key areas and China's situation.

So, I will firstly introduce my four findings about the description of key areas and China's situation in the bluebooks. Then, I will summarize the track of the development of Sino-Japan relations which is shown in the Blue Book.

From my observation of the 1989 to 2019 editions of blue book, I have four findings: 1. Economic relations are always the key part of Sino-Japanese relations; 2. The East China Sea is placed as the most prominent position of issues between the two countries; 3. Interpersonal exchanges at all levels and mutual understanding between the people is becoming more and more important. 4. The growing skepticism towards China's increasing military power.

1. Economic relations

Economic relations have always been the main content, and the editions from 1989, 1990 and 1991 only introduced economic relations. Moreover, it seems that economic relations in the Heisei era are generally satisfying, because there is very little negative information about such relations written in the Blue Books. From the blue book, we can also find that there have been some new changes around 2001. Since then, Sino-Japanese economic relations became more closely interdependent, mutually beneficial and complementarity is stressed.

The first one is the change in Japan's ODA (official development assistance) policy towards China. Japan has been providing ODA since 1979. In 2000, the Japanese government found that they need to review it because of China's economic growth and Japan's stringent economic and fiscal situation. Moreover, the Japanese began to complain that China didn't make adequate propaganda on Japan's aid to China and also that China's economic growth directly impacted Japan, such as creating environmental problems. And from October 2001, Japan announced a new ODA policy, which further focused on areas such as environmental issues which aimed to benefit Japan, the development of China's inland regions and the promotion of mutual understanding. Japan also decreased its ODA budget.

The second is that the two countries had a trade friction for the first time in 2001. On April 23, Japan imposed provisional safeguard measures on Welsh onions, shiitake mushrooms, and tatami-omote, because of a surge in imports of these products, most of which are from China.

Then, China responded by imposing special customs duties on automobiles, mobile and car phones, and air-conditioners imported from Japan on June 22. This is a new issue rooted in the deepening economic interdependence between the two countries. In 2002, at the Boao Forum, Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi expressed his view that China's economic development is not a threat, but a challenge and opportunity for Japan. (中国の経済発展は、日本にとって「脅威」ではなく、「挑戦」、「好機」であり、日中経済関係は、「対立」ではなく、「相互補完関係」にある)

The third is since China became a member of WTO in December 2001, the economic relations between China and Japan have shown impressive progress. The total value of trade increased quickly, and China became Japan's largest trade partner since 2007. For a large number of Japanese firms, China was not only an export processing base, but also became a promising market. It is worth mentioning here that Japan played an active role in China's accession to the WTO and was the first developed country to complete negotiations between the two countries (1999).

2. East China Sea issues are highlighted

There are some issues or disputes between China and Japan. I calculated what kind of issues are listed in the bluebooks and how many times they are mentioned respectively. The results are as follows:

Diaoyu Islands (13),
the disposal of chemical weapons abandoned in China by former Japanese Army (12), Resources development in the East China Sea (11),
Chinese marine research operations (5), the interpretation of history(5)
Fishing Issues (3),Taiwan issue (3), Nuclear tests of China (3),
Chinese anti-Japanese activities (2), China's food safety issues (2), Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (2),
Japanese Self-Defense Forces overseas activities (1), Economic friction (1), Consular issues (1),
Chinese nuclear submarines entering Japan's territorial waters (1), Rare earth exports (1)

Matters related to Diaoyu Islands, chemical weapons abandoned in China by the former Japanese Army, and the East China Sea resources are mentioned frequently. The contents of the issue on chemical weapons in the bluebook are mainly about Japan's positive response. Diaoyu Islands and resources development, Chinese marine research operations, and fishing issues are mostly related to maritime rights in the East China Sea. We may conclude that the Japanese government regard the issue of the East China Sea as the most prominent aspect of the bilateral problem. During the APEC in November 2017, Shinzo Abe pointed out if the East China Sea remains unstable ,then Japan-China relations will not really improve.

Moreover, from the bluebook, we can clearly notice that Japan's government thinks that these matters are caused by wrong behaviors conducted by China. Japan insists that there is no issue of territorial sovereignty to be resolved concerning the Diaoyu Islands and that it is China that is attempting to change the status quo unilaterally. On the issue of resources development, Japan holds that the Japanese government is making great efforts to promote joint development while China continues unilateral development. Japan complains that Chinese marine research vessels conduct research activities within its exclusive economic zone without having gained prior

consent from Japan.

3. Interpersonal exchanges and mutual understanding are more valued

Bluebook 1998 edition firstly mentioned that, with the deepening of China-Japan relations, the importance of mutual understanding between Japan and China at all levels is becoming more and more obvious. And in 2002, Japan proposed that projects such as talent cultivation that promote mutual understanding will be one of the priorities of ODA in China. Since the 2005 edition, interpersonal exchanges became an essential part of the bluebook, including the number of people from both sides and important exchange activities.

In 2004, the number of Japanese visiting China (3.35 million) was more than five times the number of Chinese visiting Japan in that year (650,000). After ten years in 2014, the two numbers became very close, with 2.41 million Chinese visiting Japan and 2.72 million Japanese visiting China. But the number of Chinese visitors in Japan soared to 4.99 million in 2015, almost twice the number of Japanese visitors in China (2.5 million). In the 2017 and 2018 edition of the Blue Book, the number of Japanese visitors ceased to be included and the number of Chinese visitors in Japan in 2016 and 2017 was 6.37 million and 7.36 million respectively. The reasons why Chinese visitors increased so sharply were not only due to China's economic growth, but also Japan's continuous relaxation of visas for the Chinese to gain entry into Japan. The Japanese government believes that shopping is not the only reason for Chinese visitors, and more and more Chinese are becoming attracted by Japanese culture.

In addition to the personal visitors, Japan invites young Chinese students to take part in a youth exchange with Japanese students every year. Japan also pays more attention to making sure to invite Chinese young leaders in central and local government positions and people who have influence in various fields like media, academia, economy etc.

4. The skepticism in response to China's increasing military power

Before the 2005 edition, Japan's concerns about China were generally related to its economy, politics and foreign policies. In the 1993,1995 and 1996 editions, China's nuclear tests were mentioned. Japan expressed deep regret and called upon China to work towards nuclear disarmament and froze their provision of financial support to China in August 1995.

In the 2005 edition, the bluebook began to pay attention to China's national defense and security. It points out that China's defense budget has increased by more than 12% compared to the previous fiscal year and that the Chinese side explains that the primary causes are the increases in personnel and equipment etc. From the 2006 edition, Japan started to call for greater transparency and criticized that China's explanation of budget details and reasons for budget increase are not sufficient to eliminate the concerns of other countries including Japan.

Since the 2013 edition, Japan has increasingly emphasized that the Chinese army is becoming more active in the waters surrounding Japan, and that China's attempt of changing the status quo has become a concern for the entire region. Japan will cooperate with relevant countries to ensure that China abides by a law-based international order. And in the 2018 edition, the Blue Book wrote that in recent years China has had great influence not only in politics and economy but also in the military field, and that Japan will promote China's active participation in

the international law-founded order through mechanisms such as the Sino-Japanese Security Dialogue.

the track of development of Sino-Japan relations in the Heisei era

Finally, I would like to talk about the track of development of Sino-Japan relations in the Heisei era. According to the Blue Book, Sino-Japanese relations can be divided into four stages.

The first stage is from 1989 to 2000, stable and friendly. During this period, no matter what kind of issues (like China's nuclear test, the interpretation of history) may have occurred, China and Japan generally maintained a stable and friendly relationship. Japan gave China great support during its reform and opening.

The second stage is from 2001 to 2006 then to September 2012(2001-2006-2012.9), deteriorated and unstable but with hope of improving. Although China-Japan relations have deteriorated during the 2001-2006 period, the two countries have both chose to avoid that any individual issues hinder the progress of the overall relationship. In October 2006, under Japan's proposal, they agreed to bulid a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests". Even when China-Japan relations became tense due to the Diaoyu Island issues in 2008 and 2010, they still continued to stand by their assertion.

The third stage is from September 2012 to November 2014. Due to the problem of the Diaoyu Island, China and Japan accused each other which resulted in hostility between the two countries. They stopped high-level exchanges and as a result, economic relations and personnel exchanges were negatively affected.

The fourth stage is from November 2014 till now. The relationship at this point is seen to tend toward improvement, and both of the two countries agree to go back to the creation of "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests". However, in Japan's eyes, China is covertly strengthening its military power and trying to change the status quo by force or coercion.

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- Question

How the Japanese government views the Sino-Japan relations in the Heisei period?

- Approach

analyzing the discourse on Sino-Japan relations in Japan's Diplomatic Blue Book(1989-2019 editions)

Economic relations

- always the main content
- little negative information
- some new changes around 2001
 - more closely interdependent, mutually beneficial ,
complementarity is stressed.

1) the change in Japan's ODA policy towards China

- In 2000, the Japanese government found that they need to review it. China's economic growth and Japan's stringent economic and fiscal situation. Complain that China didn't make adequate propaganda on Japan's aid to China. China's economic growth directly impacted Japan, such as environmental problems.
- In October 2001, Japan announced a new ODA policy. further focused on areas such as environmental issues which will benefit Japan, the development of China's inland regions and the promotion of mutual understanding. Japan also decreased its ODA budget.

2) a trade fiction for the first time in 2001

- On April 23, Japan imposed provisional safeguard measures on Welsh onions, shiitake mushrooms, and tatami-omote, because of a surge in imports of these products. China responded by imposing special customs duties on automobiles, mobile and car phones, and air-conditioners imported from Japan on June 22.
- In 2002, at the Boao Forum, Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi expressed his view that China's economic development is not a threat, but a challenge and opportunity for Japan. (中国の経済発展は、日本にとって「脅威」ではなく、「挑戦」、「好機」であり、日中経済関係は、「対立」ではなく、「相互補完関係」にある)

3) impressive progress since China became a member of WTO in December 2001

- China became Japan's largest trade partner since 2007.
- For a large number of Japanese firms, China was not only an export processing base, but also became a promising market.

2. East China Sea issues are highlighted

issues are listed in the bluebooks and how many times they are mentioned:

- Diaoyu Islands (13)
- the disposal of chemical weapons abandoned in China by former Japanese Army (12)
- Resources development in the East China Sea (11)
- Chinese marine research operations (5), the interpretation of history(5)
- Fishing Issues (3), Taiwan issue (3), Nuclear tests of China (3)
- Chinese anti-Japanese activities (2), China's food safety issues (2), Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (2),
- Japanese Self-Defense Forces overseas activities (1), Economic friction (1), Consular issues (1), Chinese nuclear submarines entering Japan's territorial waters (1), Rare earth exports (1)

- We may conclude that the Japanese government regard the issue of the East China Sea as the most prominent aspect of the bilateral problem.
- we can clearly notice that Japan's government thinks that these matters are caused by wrong behaviors conducted by China.
 - 1) Japan insists that there is no issue of territorial sovereignty to be resolved concerning the Diaoyu Islands and that it is China that is attempting to change the status quo unilaterally.
 - 2) On the issue of resources development, Japan holds that the Japanese government is making great efforts to promote joint development while China continues unilateral development.
 - 3) Japan complains that Chinese marine research vessels conduct research activities within its exclusive economic zone without having gained prior consent from Japan.

3. Interpersonal exchanges and mutual understanding are more valued

- Bluebook 1998 edition firstly mentioned
- Since the 2005 edition, interpersonal exchanges became an essential part of the bluebook, including the number of people from both sides and important exchange activities.

2004: Japanese visiting China (3.35 million) Chinese visiting Japan (650,000)

2014: Japanese visitors (2.72 million) Chinese visitors (2.41 million)

2015 : Japanese visitors (2.5 million) Chinese visitors (4.99 million)

2017: Chinese visitors (6.37 million)

2018: Chinese visitors (7.36 million)

4. The skepticism in response to China's increasing military power

- Before the 2005 edition, Japan's concerns about China were generally related to its economy, politics and foreign policies.
- In the 2005 edition, the bluebook began to pay attention to China's national defense and security. It points out that China's defense budget has increased by more than 12% compared to the previous fiscal year and that the Chinese side explains that the primary causes are the increases in personnel and equipment etc.
- From the 2006 edition, Japan started to call for greater transparency and criticized that China's explanation of budget details and reasons for budget increase are not sufficient to eliminate the concerns of other countries including Japan.
- Since the 2013 edition, Japan has increasingly emphasized that the Chinese army is becoming more active in the waters surrounding Japan, and that China's attempt of changing the status quo has become a concern for the entire region.
- In the 2018 edition, the Blue Book wrote that in recent years China has had great influence not only in politics and economy but also in the military field.

The track of development of Sino-Japan relations in the Heisei era: four stages

- first stage :1989 - 2000, stable and friendly.
- second stage :2001-2006-2012.9, unstable but with hope of improving.
2006 -“Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests ”
- third stage : 2012.9 -2014.11 , the Diaoyu Island -hostility
- fourth stage :2014.11- , tend toward improvement ?