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## A comparative study of “patriotism” as a goal of school education in China and Japan

### Vergleichende Analyse des „Patriotismus“ als Erziehungsziel in China und Japan

In the eyes of much of the Japanese public, “patriotism education” in China is synonymous with anti-Japanese education, and a source of friction. Much of that friction, however, can be attributed to the differing roles and functions of “patriotism” in the two countries as well as the variant connotations of the very word for “patriotism”.

In China, the communist party avails itself of the strong levels of patriotism among the people in order to advance modernization of the country. Patriotism education is not designed to serve as anti-Japanese education. In Japan, however, given the country’s past role as an aggressor nation, that word has had consistently negative connotations. Debates over its own patriotism have continued and there are accordingly inexorable apprehensions over patriotism education in China.

To address the recurrent frictions between these two countries, both must overcome their ignorance about the differences that Chinese and Japanese societies manifest.

Unter der „patriotischen Erziehung“ in China versteht man in Japan generell eine anti-japanische Erziehung. Der bilaterale Streit um diese chinesische Bildungspolitik liegt aber in der unterschiedlichen Stellung begründet, welche der Begriff „Patriotismus“ in der Gesellschaft der beiden Nationen einnimmt.

In der Annahme, dass es einen ausgeprägten Patriotismus im Volk gibt, hat sich die Kommunistische Partei die patriotische Erziehung zunutze gemacht, um den Staat zu modernisieren. Die anti-japanische Erziehung war dabei zumindest nicht beabsichtigt. Andererseits bekam der Patriotismus in Japan, durch die eigene Erfahrung des Invasionskriegs, eine negative Konnotation. Dort ist die Debatte um den heimischen Patriotismus noch nicht abgeschlossen, und auch die chinesische Bildungspolitik wird sehr kritisch angesehen.

Um die wiederholten Konflikte zwischen den beiden Ländern zu lösen, muss man bei der Überwindung des gegenseitigen Unwissens und der Gleichgültigkeit bezüglich der Unterschiede ihrer Gesellschaften anfangen.

#### Keywords:

civic education, socialism, nationalism, transformation of patriotism, Chinese-Japanese relations

Japanese education in China to achieve a measure of success.

There has been, however, a lack of critical inquiry into the issues of whether patriotism education in China is truly anti-Japanese, and why Japanese have interpreted it as such. Whenever Japan, for example, expresses through various channels its wish that China refrain from engaging in anti-Japanese education, Chinese interpret that as gratuitous interference in China’s domestic affairs. Upon eliciting a response to the effect that, “There is no anti-Japanese education going on in the first place,” the Japanese almost without exception perceive in that response insincerity on the part of the Chinese. This paper seeks to address these issues by clarifying the different functions the word “patriotism” serves in both Chinese and Japanese political contexts.

Before we examine the differences in how patriotism is understood, it might be useful, particularly to Western readers, to revisit how the ideas of constitutional patriotism were received in both countries. In sum, in both countries, its advocates are only to be found in intellectual circles. To some degree or another, the same trend can be found in Europe (Edye 2003). Nevertheless, there is a difference in the way in which constitutional patriotism was received in China and Japan.

#### 1. Sino-Japanese tensions over the issue of patriotism

In the eyes of much of the Japanese public, “patriotism education” in China is synonymous with “anti-Japanese education.” This view quickly became even more prevalent after the pelting and attacks of the Japanese consulate and Japanese-owned businesses by young demonstrators in Shanghai in April of 2005. The notion that it has served to fuel anti-Japanese sentiment among the Chinese public has been advanced not only by right-leaning Japanese media outlets, as may be expected, but even by prominent Japanese researchers of Modern China (Yabuki 2004; Amako 2004). There have also been, of course, voices in Japan calling for an understanding of the stances taken by the Chinese people and the Chinese government. When one considers the wars of aggression that have been waged against China in the past, and the litany of words and actions even in the post-war era by right-of-center Japanese politicians intended to glorify that aggression, it would hardly be surprising for anti-



In China, constitutional patriotism began to gain attention when Jürgen Habermas travelled in April 2001 to Beijing and Shanghai to give a series of eight lectures. As we shall see below, policies were being pursued at the time that sought to place nationalism at the foundations of patriotism, and constitutional patriotism captured the theoretical interests of some scholars and students as an alternative to those policies.

In Japan, on the other hand, constitutional patriotism was introduced with a speech by President Richard von Weizsäcker to the Bundestag commemorating the 40th anniversary of the end of the war. It continued to receive attention in Japan as a position articulated by Habermas during the Historikerstreit. More specifically, it was embraced by some – mainly on the left – as a formula for addressing the pressing "history issue" that Japan faced. It took root as a political concept that was critical of post-war Japanese society. The notion of allegiance to the constitution made constitutional patriotism particularly attractive to the left, which holds as an ideal strict adherence to the current Japanese constitution and its renunciation of war. At the same time, however, there was also a strong aversion to the word "patriotism". Those who argued for the deconstruction of the nation-state in particular viewed constitutional patriotism as a tactic to extend the life of that very nation-state, and therefore distanced themselves from it.

The above demonstrates the difference in context in which "patriotism" is viewed in the two countries: namely, in China it is an entirely ordinary member of the lexicon, whereas in Japan it is a concept that must be broached with a great deal of sensitivity. The failure by people of both countries to understand this difference is a significant source of friction.

It is safe to conclude that one of the biggest reasons for the misunderstanding involves the Chinese characters that have been used in Japan since the fifth century. Pertinent here is the fact that Japan and China share the same two-character compound that approximates the English "patriotism" (pronounced *aiguo* in Chinese and *aikoku* in Japanese).

While the compound *aiguo* is first attested in *Zhan Guo Ce*, a work of history written in China in the first century BCE, it only gained popular currency in the latter half of the 19th century, and in Japan. Over the course of Japan's modernization, Japanese thinkers had learned the word "patriotism" from Europeans. In translating the word into Japanese, they chose the word *aikoku*, which has a Chinese-sounding quality to it, and words of Chinese origin have a canonical air of authority to most Japanese ears. The word was eventually "reintroduced" into the Chinese language by Chinese intellectuals that had studied in Japan.

Early in the 20th century, however, *aiguo* and *aikoku* began to take on separate connotations. Socialists and pacifists in Japan began to interpret *aikoku* as

causes of war or as tools of imperialism. A Japanese work published in 1931 called the *Proletariat's Dictionary* defines patriotism as:

A fanatical belief in and love of the current state as supreme. To this, Marxists respond, "The state exists as a historical form. The state is an organ of one class's repression of other classes. Patriotism is an ideology that seeks to protect the interests of capitalists and landowners by exploiting and enslaving laborers and farmers." (Kyoseikaku Henshubu 1931, 1)

As is described below, in the early years of post-war Japan there were socialist figures who held up the ideal of *aikoku*, but any such stance among the political left in present-day Japan would indeed be an anomaly.

Among Chinese socialists, on the other hand, *aiguo* came to form the core of their own political slogans. For example, writing in 1938, Mao Zedong rhetorically answers the question of whether a Communist Party member, who is by nature an internationalist, can also be a patriot, by unambiguously stating, "We hold that he not only can be but must be" (Mao 1970, 242-243). Mao held that no fundamental contradiction existed between the internationalism and patriotism as espoused by the Communist Party.

Such differences in attitudes on *aikoku/aiguo* among socialists in China and Japan clearly stem from the relations between the two countries from the latter half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th. Socialists in the aggressor nation argued that patriotism was a deceit to mobilize the citizenry to engage in war. In contrast, the socialists on the other side – those in the nation with no recourse but resistance – made it their *raison d'être*.

Previous studies on Sino-Japanese friction have not taken sufficient note of these differences in the histories of the two countries in the first half of the 20th century. Furthermore, little study has been done on the differing connotations of "patriotism" in the two countries. Section 2 below describes the evolving policies on and realities of patriotism education in China, and Section 3 explores the same issues in Japan.

## 2. Patriotic education in China: policies and realities

### 2.1. The transformation of patriotism

The nature of patriotism as an educational goal in schools in China has undergone major transformations over the course of the economic reforms that began in 1978 and gained momentum in the 1990s. Specifically, the principle underpinning patriotism has changed from socialism to nationalism.

Let us first examine that change as reflected in the curricula of academic subjects pertaining to politics. China's school system has courses in political subjects for pupils and students at every stage of their education, from primary school through university. The



government has attached a great deal of importance to political subjects, as is evident from the way in which the educational content of these courses has often been dictated directly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCPC), which is the top tier of the leadership, and by the CCCPC's Propaganda Department. These are subjects that deal

with political philosophy, human values, social morals, and other components of the basic norms that shape how people live and how society functions. The transformations mentioned above become more apparent when one looks at how the educational content required of political courses by the government's curriculum guidelines has changed.

**Table 1: Changes to the educational content of political subjects in junior and senior secondary schools**

	Main educational content	1980s	1990s	2000s
1	Moral education, encompassing patriotism, fraternity, honesty, etc.	x	x	x
2	Cultivating communist morality	x		
3	Marxist theory of historical development	x	x	
4	Basic tenets of Marxist economics	x		
5	Basic tenets of Marxist political science	x		
6	Basic tenets of dialectical materialism	x	x	x
7	China's economic system, political system, and foreign policy	x	x	x
8	Knowledge of taxation, finance, and other aspects of economics; awareness of market economies		x	x
9	Instilling respect for the law; tenets of democracy		x	x
10	Mental, physical, and personal development; adolescent education		x	x
11	Inheriting traditional cultures; cultivating a sense of national identity			x
12	Education of the people-as-sovereign and social participation regarding rights and civic values			x
13	The state of globalization; cultivating international perspectives			x

(Compiled by Wu based on curriculum guidelines for political subjects issued in 1982, 1996-97, and 2003)

Table 1 above shows that in the early 1980s, soon after China embarked on its policy of reform, Marxist-related content still overwhelmingly dominated lessons and students were still receiving communist-oriented educations. In the 1990s, however, content related to market economies had increased. And since 2000, China's response to globalization has become a major concern.

Although patriotism has consistently been an education goal in this period spanning over three decades, during that time the object of that patriotism has shifted from a socialist state to a national collective. Put differently, students in the 1980s were expected to have a grounding in Marxist education and serve the ideals of socialism, but in the 1990s they were expected to contribute to the modernization of the country by using their knowledge of market economies. Furthermore, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a more international perspective and a sense of national identity have come to be expected of students. In this progression, the objectives of political science education, together with those of the Communist Party itself, have successfully transformed.

A similar, profound transformation can be seen in history education as well. This is epitomized in the way in which the Second Sino-Japanese War is written about. In history textbooks from the early 1980s, the clash between the Communist Party and the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) form the core of descriptions of the conflict, with accounts of the achievements of the former and criticisms leveled at the governance of the latter taking up considerable space. The significance of the victory over the latter is portrayed in terms of the defeat of imperialism, and even the numbers of enemy troops vanquished are proudly touted.

In contrast, in textbooks used in the 1990s, there is more mention of cooperation from the Chinese National Party in the war of resistance against Japan. At the same time, acts of violence committed by the Japanese army and the devastation wrought upon the Chinese people came to be written about in more detail. In other words, the focus shifted from the losses inflicted upon enemy forces to the losses suffered by the people of China. Furthermore, the significance of outcome is framed less in terms of a victory over



imperialism and more as a victory for the "Chinese nation".

Perhaps it is inevitable that this kind of history education, i.e. that practiced in the 1990s, is seen by many Japanese people as anti-Japanese. However, the educational reforms mentioned above were not necessarily intended from the start to target Japan. Rather, they are the product of larger changes in international and domestic circumstances.

As the Cold War came to an end and the economy was increasingly marketized since the 1990s, the amount of discourse on socialism fell off sharply, and people began to focus on economic development, or to borrow Deng Xiaoping's analogy, as long as it catches mice, it does not matter whether the cat is black or white. A host of socioeconomic problems were to follow as a consequence, such as massive unemployment resulting from reforms of state-owned companies, large influxes of migrant workers into urban areas with the relaxation of restrictions on migration, and widening gaps between the rich and the poor. In dealing with these problems, nationalism was embraced as an alternative to socialism as a basis for social integration.

One of the interesting aspects of this process of transition is the rise in popular levels of interest in traditional culture. Beginning at the end of the 1980s, people began to reappraise traditional Chinese culture, which had been decried as feudalistic during the socialist era, and statements calling for its rehabilitation began to appear frequently in policy documents. This shift in the government's stance sparked renewed interest in traditional culture that had been present among certain sections of the public and the print media. By the latter half of the 1990s that interest had given rise to what came to be called the "Chinese classics (*guo xue*) boom". It is possible to discern in these phenomena an attempt to use distinctly Chinese values to react to western ideological, philosophical and socioeconomic influences, such as those embodied by the socialism of its past and the globalized economy of the contemporary era.

The reform and "open-door" policies meant more than a mere shift in political education. It required that changes take place in the Communist Party of China at a more fundamental level. Such change is clearly evident in the "three represents", which was championed by Jiang Zemin in 2000 and went on to become the guiding philosophy of the party. The basic idea of this philosophy is that the Communist Party should devote itself to the development of China's economy and culture, and that "the Party must emphasize working for the interests of the people more than ever before." What is most important is that what is being called for here is not the representation of the interests of the proletariat. In fact, when the Constitution of the Communist Party was amended

at the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CPC in 2002, language was added to the sentence "the Chinese Communist Party is the vanguard of the Chinese working class" from the Party's Statutes so that the Constitution read "vanguard both of the Chinese working class and of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation". Qualifications for Party membership likewise became more inclusive. Specifically, the stated qualifications of "Any Chinese worker, poor peasant, lower-middle peasant, revolutionary armyman or any other revolutionary element who has reached the age of eighteen" was changed to read "Any Chinese worker, farmer, member of the armed forces, intellectual or any advanced element of other social strata who has reached the age of eighteen", a revision that opened membership to many more sections of society, including the new bourgeoisie (Zhang 2008). In doing so, the Communist Party of China managed to transform itself from essentially a party of the proletariat to a party of the Chinese people.

There is little doubt that this transformation of the Party itself played a part in the changes to the curriculum guidelines described above. For example, in its 1983 Ideas on Strengthening Education to Promote Patriotism, the Propaganda Department stated:

We must, through patriotism education, cultivate among the public and young people an awareness of themselves as patriots. Further, by building upon that foundation, it is important that we deepen the level of ideological and political education, and develop patriots into communists. (He 1998, 2108)

In contrast, in 1994 the CCCPC included in the Outlines of Patriotic Educational Environment the following:

The purpose of patriotism education is to strengthen a sense of national identity and power of unity of people, instill a sense of self-respect and pride as a people...direct the patriotic sentiments of the people to contributions toward the unification, prospering, and strengthening of the homeland, create socialist citizens with ideals, morals, culture and discipline, and unite for the common ideals of the people. (He 1998, 3680)

Although we see here the qualifier "socialist (citizens)", it is void of any substantial meaning. Following this publication, in 2001 the CCCPC issued the Executive Outlines of Citizen's Moral Construction, and these were followed by the Executive Outlines of Education of National Spirit in Schools issued jointly in 2004 by the Propaganda Department and the Ministry of Education. Common to all of these is the pursuit of a kind of education in patriotism and public morals rooted in a sense of national identity. In characterizing this series of outlines that began to appear in the mid-1990s, it would not be an exaggeration to say that together they form a kind of "holy trinity" in that they



call for the restoration and cultivation of the national spirit of the great Chinese nation at all stages in the education of the public.

## 2.2. The diversification of patriotism

Of the three outlines noted above, the Outlines of Patriotic Educational Environment led to the designation of Patriotism Education Bases around the country. Playing a particularly central role are the model National Patriotism Education Bases named by the Propaganda Department, of which there were 356 as of 2009. There are also numerous Patriotism Education Bases designated independently by other central agencies, local governments, and private groups. In addition to schools being encouraged by the government to visit the bases, the bases are visited frequently by companies and other groups as part of their educational efforts, and even advertised in the mass media.

Meanwhile, in Japan, the establishment of such bases has been viewed with a great deal of suspicion. In Japanese, the Chinese characters for "base" used here denote a military base, so to Japanese ears, the phrase "Patriotism Education Base" evokes images of a military installation where people receive patriotic education.

In reality, however, most of these Patriotism Education Bases are cultural centers housing historic sites and museums of history and science. People who visit "bases" such as the Great Wall or the Forbidden City ostensibly for the purposes of patriotism education generally have a more tourist-oriented mindset. According to government statistics, only about a third of visitors to Patriotism Education Bases responded that the purpose of their visit was to receive education in patriotism (Liu 2007). In fact, there has even been controversy stirred over smiling tourists taking commemorative photos at Patriotism Education Bases commemorating the war of resistance against Japan while wearing the uniforms of Imperial Japanese soldiers.

Also noteworthy is the growing interest in the economic benefits as tourism to the bases becomes more common. Many hopes are resting on the development of tourism to bases to invigorate local economics, especially in rural areas. The Patriotism Education Base Tourism ("red tourism") Development Plan, promulgated by the General Office of the CCCPC and the General Office of the State Council in December of 2004, set economic and employment targets to be met by 2010: 100 billion yuan in income from tourism, and two million persons directly employed in the tourism industry (Cui 2009).

Exposing more of the citizenry to artifacts of Chinese history is undoubtedly an effective means of achieving the educational goal of cultivating patriotism. However, people do not necessarily take away

the same things from such educational experiences. At the very least, there is little question that not all of those educational opportunities are the sorts of things that many Japanese find disconcerting.

Furthermore, as the fundamental underpinnings of patriotism shift from socialism to nationalism, people's notions of patriotism are becoming more diverse. In 2006 a questionnaire survey was given to one thousand junior and senior high school students in Guangdong Province. The survey revealed that these young adults, who had grown up with patriotism education, have a unique conception of patriotism. For many of them, patriotism has very little to do with political teachings. For example, getting a receipt when eating at a McDonald's is an act of patriotism in their eyes, because it prevents tax evasion at the restaurant and thereby helps ensure that the government receives tax revenues. In addition, learning proper Chinese, being polite and well-mannered while traveling or studying abroad, and protecting the natural environment are all seen as acts of patriotism (Wang 2006).

The government has also had to respond to young people's notion of patriotism. In 2005, Shanghai selected a pop song titled "Snail" that was popular with youngsters as a patriotic song. During the selection process, there were objections to the effect that the song's lyrics, which include the lines, "I'll keep climbing step by step; At the top of the tree I will fly, riding on a leaf; The tears and sweat I've shed will be blown away by the wind; And someday I will have my own sky," do not extol the virtues of serving the state or society and are far removed from patriotism, but eventually it was concluded that the song could be considered patriotic in that the lyrics encourage people to work hard (Yue 2005 <http://gb.cri.cn/3821/2005/03/16/143@482919.htm>).

In relation to Japan, when the anti-Japanese demonstrations erupted in cities throughout China in 2005 as mentioned at the beginning, the Propaganda Department of the CCCPC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs created Sino-Japanese relations propaganda teams that held lectures at universities and called for "rational" displays of patriotism (Zhang 2005). Furthermore, it should be noted that the Communist Party's newspaper ran a special series and collection of interview essays with the theme "How to express the passion of patriotism", criticizing extreme forms of nationalism (Xie 2005). One can see from these developments that the government does not simply promote patriotism, but rather tries to exercise control of it.

The government's aims have, at least to a certain extent, been realized. It is true that similar incidents repeatedly occur whenever there is a new source of friction between Japan and China. Nevertheless, patriotism on the part of young people is, for the most part, directed at working toward the modernization of the country.





This trend is also evident from the results of a survey of attitudes of 1,411 students at ten junior and senior high schools around China conducted by this author (Wu) in 2008 and 2009 (see Table 2).

**Table 2: What is a patriotic act? (Valid responses: 1,359; multiple choices allowed)**

Choices	%	Choices	%
A Participating in flag-raising ceremonies	81.5	G Agreeing with everything the government says and does	5.2
B Cherishing history and traditions	88.2	H Studying and working diligently	66.2
C Buying domestically produced products	16.5	I Protect the unity of the country even if it means the use of force	21.3
D Being critical of the government and society	41.5	J The people uniting	82.3
E Creating a free and peaceful society	61.4	K Working toward economic and technological development	79.0
F Following the policies of the government	49.4		

When asked, "What to you is a patriotic act?", most junior and senior high students chose: the people uniting or showing unity (A and J), valuing traditional culture (B), and working toward the development of the country (K). These results demonstrate that the message of the government mentioned above is being quite accurately conveyed to adolescents. At the same time, the low figures for C and I indicate that these students are not all exclusionist or aggressive in their beliefs.

Another interesting finding was that, when asked in a separate question about the ideals they subscribe to the most, "world peace" (33.9%) and "the development of the Chinese people" (32.2%) far outweighed "the ideals of socialism" (8.5%). Policies designed to effect a shift from the principles of socialism to the principles of nationalism have resonated with young people, and at the same time, it seems they have acquired a certain degree of caution regarding the dangers of exclusionary nationalism.

It goes without saying that the results above represent to a certain degree what students think to be the model answers. In other words, there is no guarantee that they accurately reflect the students' value systems. However, these results nonetheless demonstrate that patriotism education is being conducted with the intent to direct the patriotic sensibilities of the people not toward hostility for Japan, but toward the desire to contribute to the development of the country.

### 3. The introduction of "patriotism" in Japanese schools

#### 3.1. Patriotism in post-war Japanese society

The nationalistic form that patriotic education has taken in China since the 1980s has been viewed in Japan with apprehension and mistrust. Interestingly enough, however, not long after its establishment in the Chinese educational system, people in Japan be-

gan demanding that patriotism be introduced as an educational objective in Japanese schools.

In June of 2006, various Japanese newspapers reported that the patriotism of pupils was evaluated in the grade reports of primary schools throughout the country. In all, the number of such schools totaled 190 (Asahi Shimbun 2006), which amounted to about 0.8 percent of the nation's primary schools. Right around the same time, amendments to the Basic Act on Education were being debated in the Diet, with the conservative government pushing for the inclusion of patriotism as an educational goal and the opposition parties opposing it, and each with intellectuals paraded to back its side of the argument. Put differently, these primary schools had redesigned their grade reports before the matter was settled by the Japanese Diet. While 0.8 percent may appear to be an almost negligible figure, it can nonetheless be seen as symbolic of the attitudes of many primary school teachers at the time.

However, these developments are relatively recent.

The general perception in the field of education in Japanese, which few would doubt is strongly influenced by left-leaning ideas, is that from the 1950s, under the direction of the American government, the conservative government of Japan has consistently pushed for a stronger sense of patriotism among the populace. The move that is perhaps most symbolic of this effort was the set of demands made by US Assistant Secretary of State Walter S. Robertson in 1953 to the future Japanese Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda that Japan's self-defense capabilities be strengthened and that patriotic education be instituted. As a result, in 1958, classes in "morals" were introduced for the first time into the Curriculum Guidelines for primary schools. This triggered criticisms that such classes were a restoration of the pre-war "moral science" (*shūshin*) classes taught to instill patriotism. Comments by conservative politicians lamenting a lack of patrio-



tism have continued more or less without interruption since.

While the perception that education has gradually but steadily taken on a right-wing bent since the 1950s is valid to a point, it overlooks two important facts.

First, in the post-war years there were voices on the left that supported patriotism. Particularly worthy of note is the fact that the leadership of the Communist Party followed the Comintern in asserting that they were the true patriots. Their logic was that the Emperor-worshiping conservative factions in Japan, under the direction of American capital, were exploiting the Japanese people and preventing the formation of an independent socioeconomic and cultural entity. Such assertions and views were expressed in educational circles at that time as well. Tokumitsu Yagawa, a scholar of Soviet education and prominent critic of the democratization of education being advanced under American occupation, wrote in a journal for educators, "Japanese schools are producing children with no national self-esteem" (Yagawa 1952, 7). The arguments presented here demonstrate that around 1950 there was a "tug-of-war" between the right and left in Japan regarding patriotism. There were even people on the left who looked to the socialist patriotism of the Communist Party of China for models of education.

The second and more important fact is that after the latter half of the 1950s, this virtual tug-of-war over patriotism gave way to a broader transformation in the political landscape whose lines could be drawn by positions on that issue. More specifically, as time went on, "patriotism" became a term used primarily by the right. Its use came to be avoided by the left.

The Cold War played a major role in this process. Once the conservatives – whose reign over government would last from 1955 to 1993 – gained power, that government attempted to restore the patriotism education programs of the past, as already described. In order to make their opposition to the cultural and educational policies of the right unambiguously clear, the left began to demarcate their vocabulary, preferring to use different words such as "people" (*jimin/minzoku*) and "public" (*minshū*).

One factor that played an important role in this shift in policy on the left side of the political spectrum was the collective experience of the war that had just ended. The term *aikoku* was associated too deeply with memories of the war. It may have been a useful term for the right-wing and conservative factions that sympathize, at least to an extent, with the political and social structures that pushed forward with the war, but for the left wing that opposed those factions, there existed concern over confusion on the part of supporters. By using different terms to convey essentially the same meaning, the forces on the political left were effectively able to convey their peace-oriented message.

Naturally, this does not mean that the left rejected or ignored the notion of patriotism. As one example, the student-led anti-American protests of the 1960s and 1970s were fuelled primarily by the framework of early 20<sup>th</sup> century communist thought. Although notions of the "people" and the "public" were favored in the discourse of the time, it would not be much of a stretch to deem the protests demonstrations of patriotism.

What is most important to remember is that the existence of this powerful left served as an impediment to patriotism education as administered by the conservative government. Despite the reality that both sides appealed to the patriotism of the people, the messages themselves conflicted. The real result was that neither the right, which actually used the term "patriotism" in its demands for education with a focus on tradition, nor the left, which made a strong show of opposition by teachers and educators, was able to achieve its objectives.

A definitive change to this situation happened around 1990. The left had been losing political momentum since the 1970s. Economic development had largely reduced the problem of poverty, which had been a major source of frustration among laborers, and after the US pulled out of Vietnam, notions of socialistic patriotism were all but relegated to the periphery. Not only the word *aikoku* but the very notion became the exclusive property of right-leaning, conservative factions, and this was happening just as the world order imposed by the Cold War was being dismantled.

The end of the Cold War marked the end of the era of the so-called "55-year regime" in Japan. The political left fell apart. Not only that, but the decades-long dominance by the Liberal Democratic Party was likewise brought to a close. Amidst the ensuing political chaos, the right pushed for patriotism as an educational goal, and achieved a measure of success. One of the more interesting facets of the arguments put forth to stress the importance of patriotism education was the issue of juvenile crime, which at the time was purported to be at record-high levels. According to the proponents of a "national reconstruction" based on traditional values, the fact that patriotism had not been taught in schools, which according to this argument were largely controlled by socialist teachers, was the reason for social ills such as juvenile crime. Though this is clearly at odds with the facts, it still holds sway with certain politicians.

### 3.2. The problem of assessing patriotism

The patriotism-oriented educational policies advanced under the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party began with revisions to the official Curriculum Guidelines. The Curriculum Guidelines issued in 1989 dictated thorough "guidance" regarding the national flag and national anthem. It should be noted that at



the time there were no legal provisions in place that declared the flag of the Rising Sun and *Kimi-ga-ya* to be the national flag and anthem, respectively. This led to the passage in 1999 of the so-called "National Flag and Anthem Act".

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea that the cultivation of patriotism should be made an educational goal had already become widespread among right-leaning interests. In fact, this was the reason for some schools adopting grade reporting standards that evaluated views on patriotism even before the Basic Act on Education was amended. Once the Curriculum Guidelines reflecting the amendments to the Basic Act on Education were promulgated (2008), such educational policies were given more force. Particularly worthy of note is that during the deliberations of the proposed amendments, a right-leaning group led by Liberal Democratic Party members pressured the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to make sure that patriotism was taught in schools under the new incarnation of the law. As a consequence, for instance, the directive in the 1989 Curriculum Guidelines was "to instruct students in the national anthem", but in the new Guidelines this became more specific and directed teachers to "give students instructions until they can sing the national anthem". (Monbukagakusho 2008, 69)

That said, these educational policies were met with major problems even before the ruling parties changed in 2009. Even at the schools that had instituted reports that graded "patriotism", there were no clear ideas on how to assess patriotism. One primary school near Tokyo established the objective of "demonstrating an interest in and proactively studying Japanese history and traditions and loving one's country" within the realm of social studies, but ultimately the teachers ended up by giving tests, just as they had always done, and were left with no choice but to evaluate "patriotism" based on the results of usual social study's test (Asahi Shimbun 2006). More than a few schools have implemented assessments of patriotism only to abandon them later due to the difficulties associated with grading.

In addition to problems with grading, many people, including conservative figures, have been critical of the very idea of assessing students based on criteria that involve what students may think privately. Ultimately, contemporary Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi stated in a Diet session that assessments of patriotism are unnecessary (Tokyo Shimbun 2006).

Still, not assessing a subject does not necessarily mean not teaching it. The law clearly requires that patriotism be taught as an educational goal. Given these circumstances, some teachers and researchers in education continue to explore how patriotism can be taught effectively. One interesting idea that has emerged from these efforts is to conduct classes in

such a way that students explore different areas from the standpoint of tourists and find what appeals to them at the different locales (Tani 2008). In this respect one might discern a certain commonality with patriotism education initiatives in China.

#### 4. Commonalities between China and Japan

One very interesting aspect of nationalistic patriotism education policies in China and Japan is that they were instituted roughly at the same time. Moreover, in both countries those policies have lacked focus and are extremely difficult to assess. In this respect, one might conclude that both countries pushed these education policies through despite being able to anticipate from the beginning the difficulties that they posed.

Also, when one looks at the factors defining the same era in these two countries, there is little evidence to be found to support the argument that patriotic or nationalistic education in Japan was a contemporaneous reaction to the patriotism education of China that preceded it. However, it would be difficult to argue that that very contemporaneousness is a mere coincidence. An assessment would be that, as the Cold War's end shook the foundations of leadership in both countries, forms of nationalistic patriotism were fostered in both countries as a means to gain the support of the people.

Nevertheless, the political functions served by the word "patriotism" differ between the two countries. In China, the government uses it effectively to build consensus among broad sections of the population, while in Japan it tends to divide the population. The right in Japan maintains that "nationalism" is significant in that it will effect a spiritual restoration of the nation, though people with whom that message resonates are in the minority while opposition to that point of view is clear and present. The only victories at the turn of the century that the right can claim are as a result of cooperation from the conservative and centrist factions who wish to remain on the ruling side as the remains of the left-right narrative fade.

In addition to the differences mentioned at the beginning stemming from the Japan's role in relatively recent history as an aggressor and China as the victim of that aggression, the different degrees of modernization and different Cold-War political alignments have also played a role.

In the eyes of the majority of the Japanese people – not to mention the right end of the spectrum that already sees China as a threat – excessive focus on patriotism by the Chinese government and people is seen as dangerous. In contrast, people in China that recognize the danger of Chinese patriotism turning into nationalism are in the minority. A more widely-held apprehension is that of the danger of the speech and actions of right-leaning Japanese figures, which





they deem to have the approval of the Japanese public at large.

Lastly, with regard to the initial question, researchers in Japan should not overlook the fact that the sense of patriotism and anti-Japanese sentiment had persisted among the Chinese people for a long time, and that policies taken to curb anti-Japanese sentiment, however insufficient, have been taken.

In effect, patriotism education in China does entail aspects that do not serve Japanese interests. Still,

those policies are designed to maintain the hegemony of the Communist Party of China and to further the modernization of the state. Hence, there is no easy way to change them. In this context it is more important to deepen a mutual understanding of the history of the modernization of the two countries, modern-day society, and the current state of politics therein. Such understanding would make it possible to realize concrete measures to minimize the negative implications of nationalistic education in China

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