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Small Islets, Enduring Conflict: Dokdo, Korea-Japan Colonial Legacy and the United States[1]

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At a time when territorial conflicts in East Asia repeatedly raise tensions between China and Japan (Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands), North and South Korea (the Northern Limit Line) and Japan-Russia (the Northern Islands/Kurils), it is worth recalling that disputes continue to simmer not only between long-time rivals, but also among allies.

Dokdo/Takeshima/Liancourt Rocks (hereafter Dokdo) remains a sharp thorn in the side of contemporary Japan-ROK relations. The contentiousness of the issues is emblematic of unresolved political and territorial legacies of two centuries of colonialism in East Asia as well as of the post-war territorial disposition of the San Francisco Treaty and the global conflict that it mirrored and defined. The story has frequently been told in terms of Japan-ROK conflict. We explore its historical and contemporary ramifications here in a triangular century-long framework involving Japan, Korea and the United States.

Dokdo/Liancourt Rocks Location: East Sea (Japan Sea) 37°14'30"N 131°52'0"E

From many angles the problem should be among the simplest to resolve of several outstanding conflicts that divide Japan and Korea. The two islets and some 35 rocks that comprise Dokdo are minuscule (totaling 46 acres), largely uninhabited (save for a Korean octopus fisherman and his wife, a poet, and a rotating team of approximately 35 Korean coast guard/light house staff), and of scant direct economic value, though the fishing grounds in the area are rich and the environs may contain natural gas and mineral deposits.[2]

However, the combination of Korean anger over colonial legacies, territorial conflicts and multiple unresolved bi-lateral and regional issues, many of them legacies of Cold War/hot war conflicts, assures that the matter will continue to be contentious.

For more than half a century, since 1953, Dokdo has been under South Korean jurisdiction. The Dokdo question was not resolved, however, by bilateral or multilateral agreement, and although the issue surfaced at various times including the 1965 negotiations over Japan-ROK normalization, it was not until 2005 that Japanese claims led to public standoff over the islets. So, while tensions have repeatedly roiled the waters between Japan and South Korea since 1945, Dokdo was not prominent among them, particularly in the public arena. Moreover, in contrast to a range of territorial issues that emerged as a result of the Asia-Pacific War and the dismantling of the Japanese empire, and were left unresolved in the San Francisco Treaty of 1951 that ended the occupation of Japan, for example, the controversy over the Kuriles/Northern Islands (hereafter Kuriles) that have long been a Japan-Russia bone of contention of sufficient seriousness to derail a World War II peace treaty, there is no significant security issue or population at stake in the case of Dokdo. Finally, while for sound historical reasons that are discussed below, Dokdo is emotionally important to Koreans, there is no significant Japanese national constituency for whom the islets loom large.

I propose to examine the Dokdo question within the framework of a century long multifaceted, complex and frequently troubled Japan-Korea relationship while drawing attention to the fact that the United States has played a crucial role in defining the Dokdo question not only since 1945, and especially 1951, when the US sowed the seeds for many contemporary territorial conflicts in the Asia-Pacific in framing the San Francisco Treaty, but dating back to the dawn of the conflict in 1905.

Dokdo figures in territorial, economic and border conflict issues. Perhaps equally important from a Korean perspective, it poses sensitive issues of nationalism and national interest that resonate in such realms as historical memory, as manifested in controversies over textbook treatments, national monuments, historical museums, films, manga, and other forms of representation that highlight the divide separating the two nations six decades after the end of colonial rule. This complex of historical memory legacies and territorial conflict of course bedevils not only Japan-ROK relations but also Japan-China, Japan-Russia, China-ROK, and DPRK-ROK relations, among others.

Dokdo in longue durée perspective and in the era of Japanese colonialism

As Alexis Dudden observed in *Troubled Apologies: Among Japan, Korea and the United States*, the competing longue durée historical claims by Japan and Korea provide no firm basis for contemporary resolution of the Dokdo controversy.[3] The history of the long twentieth century does provide such a basis, however, at least to the extent of clarifying the events and actors that led to the islets' changing fate and the various claims and counter claims. While many analyses of the problem center on the post-colonial and post-San Francisco Treaty disposition of Dokdo, what is critical for understanding and assessing competing claims in the new millennium

Map shows both Dokdo (Liancourt Rocks) and Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, the latter contested between Japan and China

is that Japanese forces seized Dokdo in January 1905, the very year in which Japan compelled Korea at gunpoint to accept a treaty that made it a protectorate.[4] Control of Dokdo and nearby Ulleungdo Island played important roles in Japan's decisive defeat of the Russian navy.[5] The 1905 Korea-Japan Treaty brought to an end a long epoch during which Korea's international relations were primarily governed by its tributary relationship with China, one in which Chinese political and cultural influence was strong. In contrast to the colonial relationship that followed, the tributary framework allowed Korea a high degree of autonomy in domestic affairs.

Emboldened by military victories over China and Russia in 1895 and 1905, and bolstered by British and American support for Japanese claims, Japanese forces proceeded to disband the Korean army in a crackdown that took more than 15,000 Korean lives between 1907-09. In 1907, the Japanese compelled King Kojong, who continued to oppose the protectorate, to retire in favor of his mentally retarded son, Sunjong, en route to the annexation and subordination of Korea to colonial rule in 1910.[6] In other words, for Koreans, the seizure of Dokdo is inseparable from the subjugation and humiliation of the nation at the hands of Japan, a trauma that remains vivid to this day. As Bruce Cumings puts it, "Japanese imperialism stuck a knife in old Korea and twisted it, and that wound has gnawed at the Korean national identity ever since."[7] For Japan, by contrast, its immediate use in the Russo-Japanese War aside, Dokdo was a matter of little moment.[8] Certainly, it was among the least significant of the numerous territorial conquests over the coming decades, conquests which eventually included Korea, Manchukuo, large areas of China and much of Southeast Asia as well as Micronesia, all incorporated in a vast but short-lived Asia-Pacific empire.

Already in 1905, however, this was not simply a Japan-Korea, or even a Japan-Korea-China story. The Taft-Katsura Agreement, which formalized Japan's seizure of Dokdo and paved the way for annexation, was predicated on a US-Japan understanding in which Japan endorsed the colonization of the Philippines in exchange for US recognition of its annexation of Korea. The decade 1895-1905 thus nicely displays the imperial ambitions of the two rising colonial powers in Asia, Japan and the United States. In this instance, their shared interests were at the expense of subjugated people in Korea and the Philippines. The US would again play a critical role nearly half a century later in sowing the seeds for subsequent Japan-Korea conflict over Dokdo in the wake of the Asia-Pacific War.

The San Francisco Treaty, US-Japan-Korea relations, and American wars in Asia

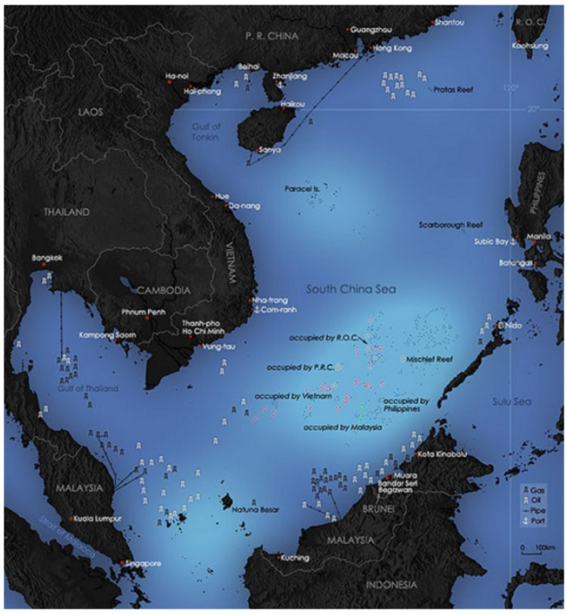
Kimie Hara has traced the postwar framing of the Dokdo and other territorial issues through successive US and US-UK drafts of the San Francisco Treaty in the context of the evolution of the US-Soviet/Chinese conflict—which she terms the Cold War system in the Asia-Pacific.[9]

The critical point from the perspective of the continued salience of Dokdo as a flashpoint between Korea and Japan is the fact that, by leaving vague or unresolved the disposition and specific boundaries not only of North-South Korea and Taiwan-China but also of Dokdo and a plethora of other contested insular territories in the South China Sea, the US in the San Francisco Treaty sowed the seeds of future conflicts that have plagued bilateral and regional relationships to the present. Of particular interest in this instance, is that the clash involves putative allies within the camp of nations occupied by US forces in the wake of the Asia-Pacific War. Hara shows that these conflicts "all share the important common foundation of the San Francisco System, instituted by the Peace Treaty with Japan in 1951."[10] The parties to this legacy of territorial conflict, many of them excluded from the treaty itself by the United States, include Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of China, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union (Russia), and many Southeast Asian nations. The disputed territories, in addition to Dokdo, include Taiwan, the Southern Kuriles/Northern Islands, the Senkakus/Diaoyutai, and the Spratley (Nansha) and Paracel (Xisha) Islands with multiple Asian claimants.

Through successive treaty drafts, US policies shifted in tune with geopolitical considerations in the context of the US-Korean War and US-Soviet/China conflict. This led in most instances to a more favorable disposition of territorial issues with respect to Japan, and in the case of Dokdo, as we will show, at the expense of Korea. This coincided with the change in the US position from initial sympathy toward anti-colonial movements, including those in China, Korea and Vietnam, to a preoccupation with the threat of communism as rising US-Soviet and US-China conflict coincided with and reinforced prioritization of an expansive US territorial and base thrust in the Asia-Pacific. By 1945, this empire of bases and territories already included US military occupation or colonization of Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, the Philippines, and Micronesia. In particular, as Chinese Communist forces advanced to victory in the Chinese Civil War, by 1947, Japan would be transformed from an enemy to be disarmed and prevented in perpetuity from engaging in war to a subaltern ally whose re-industrialization would be prioritized, and who would be programmed to play an active rear area support role in US wars in the Asia-Pacific, beginning with the US-Korean War in June 1950. US perspectives on territorial settlements that were a legacy of the Asia-Pacific War shifted in accord with a post-war logic dominated by US-Soviet and US-China conflict.

Early drafts of the San Francisco Treaty, which was to end the allied occupation of Japan and serve as a peace treaty for Japan and its former enemies, envisaged the return of Dokdo to Korea. From 1949, with US tensions with the Soviet Union and China growing, however, successive drafts recognized Dokdo as Japanese territory. By the time the Treaty was signed in September 1951, specification of the precise borders and disposition of all of the above-mentioned territories had given way to vague formulations that left their precise disposition unresolved and opened the way for potential discord between Japan and her neighbors. Indeed, the treaty was silent on the question of Dokdo. Hara suggests that deliberate vagueness in this and other territorial issues—failing to allocate islands to a specific nation and/or to pinpoint the latitude and longitude of territories—was John Foster Dulles' strategy to maximize US leverage via its ability to resolve conflicts that were sown precisely by the vagueness of treaty language.[11] Certainly, the result was to give immense leverage to the US, then as today the dominant military power in the region, with which to intervene and shape the outcomes.

Seokwoo Lee and Jon Van Dyke, who also closely studied the successive drafts of the San Francisco Treaty relevant to the Dokdo



Disputed islands in the South China Sea

issue, point out that the first five as well as the seventh draft returned the islets to Korea while the 6th, 8th, 9th and 14th drafts stipulated that Japanese territory included Dokdo. However, the 10th through 13th and 15th through 18th drafts, and, most importantly the final text, made no mention of Dokdo.[12] Why? Where Hara suggested a Machiavellian explanation, Lee and Van Dyke argue that the US and its allies, facing time constraints with the US-Korean War underway, chose to complete the Treaty quickly, leaving certain issues unresolved. They go on, however, to note that under Dulles's stewardship, and with the US-Korean War raging, a premium was placed on Japan's supporting role. Rather than grant Dokdo to Korea and risk losing it in the event of a North Korean victory, thus opening the possibility of attack on Tsushima and Japan, the framers left the issue unresolved. Whatever, the logic driving the decision, it is certain that Hara's explanation is consistent with the outcomes of the last six decades: not only Dokdo, but also the Northern Islands, Diaoyu/Senkakus, the Paracels and others became minefields of conflict, most of which remain unresolved to this day, allowing the US to play a critical role in shaping the outcomes. Equally certain is the shared conclusion of Hara, Lee and Van Dyke, and Kent Calder that the decision on Dokdo had little to do with assessing the historical claims and everything to do with US and allied geopolitical considerations.

While the treaty drafters debated, Dokdo was not merely sitting idle. Between 1947 and 1952, the US turned the islets into a bombing range for Japan-based US pilots.[13]

Shortly after the signing of the treaty, on January 18, 1952, Syngman Rhee proclaimed the so-called Rhee line defining the border dividing Japan and Korea, and including Dokdo on the Korean side. Although Japan protested and did not recognize the ROK claim to Dokdo, the following year, a small number of ROK forces occupied the island. In 1954 the ROK erected a lighthouse, and it has maintained control of the islets to the present in the absence of a formal treaty. The ROK brushed aside repeated Japanese attempts to raise the question of Dokdo in the form of 24 notes between 1952 and 1960.[14] In the midst of the Korean War, with Japan directly supporting the US-ROK coalition, and in the wake of the 1953 armistice, neither Japan nor the US acted to publicly challenge this outcome and the issue of Dokdo disappeared as an international flashpoint. Or so it appeared.

Re-establishing Japan-ROK relations in a divided Asia

It required two decades after Japan's defeat before Japan-ROK diplomatic relations could be restored. Despite US pressures to harmonize relations among erstwhile allies in the anti-communist alliance, and despite Japanese support for the ROK in the US-Korean War, latent antagonisms rooted in the harsh colonial relationship long stymied Japan-ROK normalization. The Rhee line and Dokdo also numbered among the conflictual issues. The Japanese Wikipedia entry for Takeshima states that, "Before June 22, 1965, when the Japan-South Korea basic treaty was concluded, 328 Japanese fishing boats were captured for having passed the [Rhee] line, 44 Japanese were killed or wounded, and 3,929 were detained. Japan Coast Guard patrol boats were fired on 15 times, and 16 boats were attacked."[15] No mention is made of how many Korean fishing boats were detained or how often Japan Coast Guard patrol boats fired.[16]

Let's turn to The Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea of 1965 with particular reference to Dokdo.

First, repeated Japanese efforts to bring up the Dokdo question, despite mediating attempts by the US to find a compromise involving a jointly administered lighthouse, were adamantly rebuffed by ROK diplomats.[17] In the end, as in the San Francisco Treaty, Dokdo is nowhere mentioned in the normalization treaty and the ROK maintained *de facto* control of the islets.

Second, the 1,200 pages of diplomatic documents on the 1965 Treaty that the ROK government released in 2005 reveal important elements of the settlement of claims pertaining to the colonial era. In the end, the ROK abandoned demands for compensation and accepted $800 million in grants and soft loans for development purposes. Although the ROK had demanded US$364 million in compensation for 1.03 million Koreans who had been conscripted as laborers or soldiers, the government paid victim families only modest sums of 300,000 won for each death, using the lion's share of Japanese payments for its own purposes.[18] For its part, Japan made no acknowledgment of war crimes or atrocities with respect to forced laborers (the comfort women issue also went unmentioned in the Treaty). Japan made no direct compensation to forced laborers and other victims then or since, with Japanese courts denying all claims. The Treaty, in short, provided no substantial basis for overcoming past conflicts or paving the way for reconciliation. Instead, historical antagonisms of the colonial era were left to fester.[19] With a divided Asia—the core bipolar structure of the postwar era in the Asia-Pacific was reinforced by the fact that China, Korea and Vietnam were all divided nations—and with a succession of wars (above all the US-Korea War and US-Indochina War), the Korea-Japan Treaty swept many of the most important issues under the rug.

Historical memories of colonialism and war and the Japan-ROK relationship after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Korean democratization

In the decades following the 1965 Treaty, important developments including the fall of the dictatorship and the strengthening of Korean democratic forces in the 1980s, as well as the demise of the Soviet Union a decade later, failed to resolve Japan-ROK tensions. Indeed, historical conflicts surfaced repeatedly in the 1990s and since. Major issues that had long been suppressed by the dictatorship and/or by US policy imperatives emerged in both South Korea and Japan with important implications for domestic politics and for the Japan-ROK relationship. The issues, pivoting on recognition of wrongdoing, acceptance of responsibility, and compensation for victims of Japanese colonial rule, included:

- The comfort women, who were drawn from all parts of the Japanese empire (the most credible estimates range from 80,000 to 110,000, with some suggesting figures as high as 200,000), with Koreans and Chinese comprising the vast majority. The comfort women provided coerced and largely unpaid sexual services wherever Japanese forces were stationed outside Japan's main islands in the years 1931-45.

- Korean and Chinese forced laborers, perhaps as many as one million of whom worked (and frequently died) under horrific conditions, frequently without pay, in mines and factories run by Japanese enterprises in Japan and

Manchuria.

• Korean victims of the atomic bombing, an estimated 40,000 of whom lost their lives in Hiroshima. Many more Koreans died in the firebombing of 64 Japanese cities, but no authoritative figures are available. While Japanese victims of the atomic bombs have long received Japanese (but no US) medical assistance, most Korean victims, particularly those survivors who returned to Korea, received no assistance and no formal recognition by either the Japanese or the North or South Korean governments.

• Japanese textbook treatments of colonialism and war. Critics singled out the representation of Korea and China, in particular the omission, or at best oblique reference to oppression, colonialism, war crimes and atrocities in Japanese history and social studies textbooks.

The social movements that empowered a democratizing South Korea in the 1980s and after led to calls for justice and compensation for victims. While Japan was a primary target, these included, but were not limited to, criticisms of Japan and calls for official apology and compensation for victims.[20] The ROK Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2000, also rigorously investigated crimes committed by the US and the ROK dictatorship, notably, in the case of the former, Nogunri and other incidents involving the massacre of civilians during the Korean War, and in the case of the latter, numerous repressive acts of the dictatorship including the Kwangju, Jeju and Taejon massacres.[21]

In each of these instances—though Korean patriots and media have frequently ignored or slighted their contributions—Japanese activists and lawyers, and at times international, researchers and activists, joined hands with victims in the ROK, Zainichi Koreans, and diaspora Koreans in Japan, North America, Europe and elsewhere, to research, publicize and prosecute the issues and press for official apologies and legal judgments and compensation for victims.[22] Indeed, with respect to such fiercely contested issues as the comfort women and forced laborers, international cooperation has been critical to bringing the issues to public attention and sustaining interest in the course of campaigns and law suits that have continued for decades. In each instance, too, the issues were hotly contested within and between Japan, the ROK and the United States.

Public discussion of the issues became possible in the ROK following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This coincided with the emergence of democratic forces in the ROK and international social movements, including women's and anti-war movements, that made it possible to link groups in the ROK, Japan, the United States and beyond. The fact that East Asia was basically at peace in the wake of the end of the US-Indochina Wars in 1975 may also have been critical to allowing these cross-national movements to gain traction.

Gains were not, however, won easily. Despite repeated apologies by Japanese leaders, Korean popular anger remained intense because official apologies and popular reconciliation movements invariably provoked powerful backlash in Japan in the form of neo-nationalist outbursts, as in successive textbook controversies.[23] The result was to undermine official apologies and deepen dissatisfaction with Japan on the part of Koreans who had suffered in the era of colonialism and war. These divisions similarly made it difficult to address the Dokdo and other outstanding Japan-ROK bilateral conflicts. The same was true of Japan-China relations.

Against this background, other developments affected the question of Dokdo and many other 'orphaned' islands whose affiliation and boundaries were left vague in the San Francisco Treaty. The importance of the islets increased with the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), adopted in 1982. In establishing the right to claim extension of territorial waters to 12 nautical miles from the coast, and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) to 200 nautical miles from the baseline of territorial waters,[24] these and many other islands attained enhanced significance. The prospect that natural gas and seabed minerals may be found in the area increased the value of the islands to both Japan and Korea. Each of these factors is evident in other problematic legacies of the San Francisco Treaty, notably the Diaoyutai/Senkaku islands contested by China and Japan, and the Spratlys/Nansha islands contested by China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and others.

Dokdo in regional perspective

The Dokdo question has repeatedly resurfaced in the years since 1994, in most instances in the wake of Japanese claims to the islets. When the United Nations Law of the Sea convention went into effect in 1994, both the ROK and Japan laid claim to 200 mile exclusive economic zones.[25] In 1996 Japan's Foreign Minister Ikeda Yukihiko laid claim to Dokdo, the first of many such claims.

Signs of accommodation can also be observed. In January 1999, the ROK and Japan established a provisional fishing zone in the East Sea (Japan Sea), including Dokdo, suggesting a possible resolution of the territorial issue within a broader bilateral framework. However, given popular opposition to the agreement, South Korea declined to implement the joint regulatory measures.[26]

Indeed, winds of accommodation quickly dissipated. On February 26, 2005, "Takeshima Day", local officials in Shimane prefecture reiterated the Japanese claim to Dokdo in the highest profile challenge to Korean control. The sentiment was not limited to Shimane. In 2008 newly published Japanese textbooks asserted historical claims to the islets. And on February 22, 2011, officials from the ruling Democratic Party for the first time attended a Shimane event claiming Takeshima for Japan.[27] This was soon followed up by Japan's Ministry of Education issuing new middle school history and social studies textbooks. All twelve textbooks approved for use in the schools claim that Dokdo (Takeshima) belongs to Japan, and four describe South Korea's sovereignty of the islands as "illegal occupation."[28]

At the same time, the Japanese government has for the most part ignored, diverted from official to private channels, or rejected repeated claims by victims and activists, including Korean comfort women and forced laborers, for official apology and compensation for wartime atrocities. Despite the achievements of Japanese and interntional researchers in fully documenting the crimes committed against victims, and despite court recognition of the justice of the claims, Japanese courts have repeatedly denied all claims to compensation on grounds that the statute of limitations had expired.[29]

It is worth noting, however, that several corporations have expressed interest in providing compensation for wartime forced laborers as a means of bringing the issues to closure. These corporations, of course, recognize greater economic opportunities for expansion in Korean, Chinese and US markets if they are able to put behind them the onus of forced labor. The identical logic could lead to addressing territorial grievances including Dokdo. Nevertheless, just as the corporations have been slow to move ahead, so has the Dokdo issue remained frozen.

Is it possible to bring together the two types of issues—territorial and historical injustices—within a broader framework of common understanding and a shared future? Such an approach would have to transcend the nationalisms that dominate not only Japanese official thinking, but also Korean, Chinese and American official and popular thought in order to focus on the wide range of shared

Shimane Prefecture posters laying claim to Takeshima (Dokdo)

interests among East Asian nations. The alternative, failure to take advantage of opportunities to create regional comity, will surely impose—will continue to impose—a heavy price on all parties at a time when their closely intertwined economies suggest the importance of accommodation for both sides.

Conclusion

The case for ROK possession of Dokdo is, in my view, compelling, in terms of international law, the history of the long twentieth century, and morality. As Lee and Van Dyke observe, the "long period of effective occupation [since 1953], especially when coupled with Korea's strong historical claim to Dokdo, provides substantial support for Korea's claim of sovereignty over these islets."[30] That claim is reinforced by the historical circumstances of Japan's 1905 seizure of Dokdo and colonization of Korea, all the more so in light of Japan's failure to provide effective state apology and compensation for the victims of colonial era atrocities such as forced laborers and the comfort women. The issue can best be resolved between the two nations within the framework of an agreement like the 1996 accord on fishing rights that established (but never implemented) shared rights in the area. Such an agreement could extend to oil, gas and mineral development and other areas of mutual interest. It need not be limited to Dokdo, moreover, but could extend to other islands in the strait such as Tsushima. In this way, it could serve as a foundation for the two nations' cooperation.

The clashes of 2010 between the DPRK and ROK pivoting on different interpretations of their borders around the Northern Limit Line, and between China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and the waves of nationalist sentiment and military actions provoked in each instance, made plain the volatility of territorial sea issues that are rooted in claims that frequently originate in the nineteenth century but have been exacerbated in the wars of the long twentieth century.[31] The alternatives to accommodation are stark.

This is a revised and updated version of a paper prepared for the Johns Hopkins SAIS Conference on Dokdo, Takeshima, Liancourt Rocks: Rethinking Territorial Disputes in East Asia, Schools of Advanced International Affairs, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC June 26-27, 2009.

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Notes

[1] I am indebted for comments and suggestions to Reinhard Drifte, Kimie Hara, and Heonik Kwon.

[2] In addition to the residents, 613 households totaling 2,051 Koreans had formally established permanent residence on Dokdo as of 2007 in response to Japanese claims to the islets, link. In 2005, the first 26 Japanese residents established domicile; by February 2011, they numbered 69 and a total of 520 Japanese had established residence in areas contested by neighbors such as the Kuriles, Senkakus/Diaoyu, and Okinotorishima. Reiji Yoshida, "26 Japanese register Takeshima 'domicile,'" *Japan Times*, May 18, 2005; "69 Japanese Change Domicile to Dokdo Islets," *Chosun Ilbo* Feb 21, 2011. It should be noted that North Korea also claims Dokdo as Korean territory.

[3] *Troubled Apologies. Among Japan, Korea, and the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 19. The contrasting approaches of the English and Japanese language Wikipedia entries on Dokdo and the historical and contemporary Dokdo disputes, accessed April 15, 2009, , illustrate the problem. The English entry more or less randomly intersperses Japanese and Korean interpretations of the historical record dating back to the 12th century, making it virtually impossible for the reader to gauge the validity, or reconcile, alternate perspectives on the historical claims over the millennium. The English Wikipedia gives fair warning: "the entry may contain unverifiable claims, it may be confusing, it does not meet Wikipedia's quality standards, and much of it is written in the style of a debate rather than an encyclopedia entry." The Japanese entry, by contrast, presents a clear juxtaposition of the different positions of the ROK and Japanese governments grounded in such crucial sources as the relevant SCAPINS (677,

1033), international law textbooks, Gaimusho and Korean statements. Both entries introduce Japanese, Korean and English sources, including government documents. Eschewing the alternative approach of presenting side-by-side Japanese and Korean (and other) interpretations, English Wikipedia sallies forth in the conviction that with sufficient good will, the truth will emerge from the more or less indiscriminate presentation of historical evidence by all concerned. The results, however, mainly breed confusion. When I returned to the Japanese entry on March 3, 2011, the URL had changed.), the page was locked, a stern injunction called for preservation of neutrality, and Takeshima had been renamed as Takeshima-Shimaneken . . . Takeshima, a Japanese prefecture, meaning that the island was claimed for Japan.

[4] For discussion of the 1905 and 1910 treaties, see Totsuka Etsuro, "Japan's Colonization of Korea in Light of International Law," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol 9, Issue 9 No 1, February 28, 2011. Totsuka argues that Japanese coercion, and the fact that the Korean king signed neither treaty renders them illegal and null and void from the outset. The issue has spawned an immense, and immensely contentious, Korean and Japanese literature. Yet one wonders whether fruitful discussion might be directed toward interrogating the entire structure of international law that legitimated colonial rule.

[5] For a Korean interpretation of the role of Dokdo in the Russo-Japanese War see Northeast Asia History Foundation, *The History of Dokdo*, Seoul: 2007,

[6] Stewart Lone and Gavan McCormack, Korea Since 1850, New York: St. Martin's, 1993, 41-47. Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun. A Modern History*, New York: W. W. Norton, updated edition, 2005, pp. 143-45.

[7] Cumings, op.cit., p. 140.

[8] For a Korean discussion of Dokdo in the Russo-Japanese War, see "The Russo-Japanese War and Dokdo," pp. 27-37. – Takeshima. Imperial Japan's Real Motives for the 1905 Annexation of Dokdo, link. The depth of Korean passions over Dokdo is well documented in the blogosphere, including the number and tone of the thousands of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter entries, including official presentations, but much larger numbers of citizen creations and discussions. See Jukka Jouhki, Dokdo Island Dispute: Korean Reconstruction of History and National Identity in User-Created Content Media, link.

[9] *Cold War Frontiers in the Asia-Pacific. Divided territories in the San Francisco System*, London: Routledge, 2007. See also Kimie Hara and Geoffrey Jukes, eds., *Untying the Kurillian Knot. Asia-Pacific Regional Conflicts, Multilateralism and Inspirations from the Åland Settlement*, London: Routledge, 2009. A useful timeline on US policies toward Dokdo, drawing on US and Korean documentary sources, is "The United States' Involvement with Dokdo Island (Liancourt Rocks): A Timeline of the Occupation and Korean War Era," link.

[10] Hara, *Cold War Frontiers in the Asia-Pacific*, p. 9. Kent Calder subsequently noted that the failure of the San Francisco Treaty to establish clear territorial boundaries, thereby leaving unresolved numerous dispute, was a factor in making Northeast Asia the "'Arc of Crisis' that it has been ever since." "Securing Security through Prosperity: The San Francisco System in Comparative Perspective," *Pacific Review* 17, March 2004, pp. 135-139.

[11] Hara, pp. 44-45.

[12] Seokwoo Lee and John M. Van Dyke, "The 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty and Its Relevance to the Sovereignty over Dokdo," *Chinese Journal of International Law* Vol 9, 4, 2010, pp. 741-62.

[13] Liancourt Rocks Bombing Range: 1947-1952, beginning with SCAPIN 1778 in 1947, link.

[14] Lee and Van Dyke, "The 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty and Its Relevance to the Sovereignty over Dokdo."

[15] Link.

[16] See also Tessa Morris-Suzuki's compelling analysis of Japanese handling of Koreans in the postwar decade, specifically the border controls that denied Koreans (many of whom were Japanese citizens, from re-entry from Korea, and subsequently, sending tens of thousands of Korean residents (Zainichi) to North Korea. Guarding the Borders of Japan: Occupation, Korean War and Frontier Controls, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol 9, Issue 8 No 3, February 21, 2011; Refugees, Abductees, "Returnees": Human Rights in Japan-North Korea Relations, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, March 29, 2009.

[17] On the Dokdo dispute in the 1965 R.O.K.-Japan Normalization Treaty negotiations, see this link. This website provides documentation and analysis of the Dokdo question including the territorial dispute, link; Lee and Van Dyke, op.cit.

[18] Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea, link. See also Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea, link.

[19] The Treaty followed a pattern that is common to all Japanese treaties with former colonies and territories invaded by Japan. In none of these agreements did Japan acknowledge war crimes or atrocities. Japan sought to resolve, or finesse, its historical obligations with financial payments without acknowledgment of responsibility. This pattern is, of course, hardly unique to Japan. It applies to the colonial powers generally, including the United States, and continues to fuel conflicts across East Asia and the Pacific. Yet it is Japan which has borne the onus of its failure to resolve historical legacies of colonialism and war, while the United States, as a superpower, that has again and again been able to elude responsibilities while claiming to set moral standards for international behavior.

[20] William Underwood, "Redress Crossroads in Japan: Decisive Phase in Campaigns to Compensate Korean and Chinese Wartime Forced Laborers"; Ivy Lee with an Introduction by William Underwood, "Toward Reconciliation: The Nishimatsu Settlements for Chinese Forced Labor in World War Two"; Jian Kang, "Rejected by All Plaintiffs: Failure of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa "Settlement" with Chinese Forced Laborers in Wartime Japan"; Alexis Dudden, "Memories and Aporias in the Japan-Korea Relationship."

[21] Kim Dong-choon, "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Korea: Uncovering the Hidden Korean War"; Gavan McCormack and Kim Dong-Choon, "Grappling with Cold War History: Korea's Embattled Truth and Reconciliation Commission"; Heonik Kwon, "Healing the Wounds of War: New Ancestral Shrines in Korea"; Charles J. Hanley and Jae-Soon Chang, "Children 'Executed' in 1950 South Korean Killings: ROK and US responsibility"; Bruce Cumings, "The South Korean Massacre at Taejon: New Evidence on US Responsibility and Coverup."

[22] Kim Hyo Soon and Kil Yun Hyung, "Remembering and Redressing the Forced Mobilization of Korean Laborers by Imperial Japan"; William Underwood, "The Aso Mining Company in World War II: History and Japan's Would-Be Premier"; "Names, Bones and Unpaid

Wages (1): Reparations for Korean Forced Labor in Japan"; "Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages (2): Seeking Redress for Korean Forced Labor."

[23] Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, "Japanese Textbook Controversies, Nationalism, and Historical Memory: Intra- and International Conflicts."

[24] Kimie Hara, "Rethinking the Dokdo/Takeshima Dispute in a Multilateral Framework," Paper presented to the Taegu Conference on "Interdisciplinary Approaches to Dokdo's Sovereignty and Border Questions" held at Yeungnam University in Taegu on May 13-14, 2009; Reinhard Drifte, "Territorial Conflicts in the East China Sea – From Missed Opportunities to Negotiation Stalemate," The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol. 22-03-09, June 1, 2009.

[25] Kim Young-koo, ""What is the Controversy Over Dokdo All About?" Koreana 19:3, Autumn 2005, p. 14; Lee and Van Dyke, op.cit.

[26] Kim Young-koo, op.cit; Jon Van Dyke, "North-East Asian Seas—Conflicts, Accomplishments and the Role of the United States," *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law* 17, 2002, pp. 397, 405.

[27] Yoree Koh, "DPJ Attends 'Takeshima Day' for the First Time," *Wall St. Journal* Feb 24, 2011.

[28] Japan News Today April 15, 2011, link; KBS World News, "Japan's unlawful territorial claim over the Dokdo islets," April 1, 2011, Anguish at Japanese claims to Dokdo came on the heels of the announcement that South Koreans had contributed 23 billion won ($20.9 million), a record sum, in relief in the wake of the Northeast Earthquake.

[29] William Underwood summarizes the recent confluence of developments in Japan suggesting the possibility of a breakthrough at the highest levels concerning apology and compensation in a bid to move toward reconciliation. See his NBR Japan Forum post of June 13, 2009 on "Aso POWs, Lafarge, and the DPJ on WWII redress," link; see also Kazuhiko Togo's comments on the issues; Ivy Lee and Jian Kang debate appropriate resolution of the issues: Ivy Lee with an Introduction by William Underwood, "Toward Reconciliation: The Nishimatsu Settlements for Chinese Forced Labor in World War Two,"; Jian Kang, "Rejected by All Plaintiffs: Failure of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa "Settlement" with Chinese Forced Laborers in Wartime Japan."

[30] Lee and Van Dyke, op.cit.

[31] See, for example, Reinhard Drifte, Territorial Conflicts in the East China Sea – From Missed Opportunities to Negotiation Stalemate, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol 22-3-09, June 1, 2009; "Trilateral Statement. Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America," Washington D.C., Dec 9, 2010, link; The Korea Society/Shorenstein-APARC-Stanford paper, "New Beginnings" in the U.S.-ROK Alliance: Recommendations to the Obama Administration, March 2009, link; for a Chinese perspective on the changing security situation in Northeast Asia and beyond see Zhang Jie and Zhong Feiteng, "Caution the catchword for China," China Daily, Dec 27, 2010. The authors are researchers at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies; Gavan McCormack, "Small Islands – Big Problem: Senkaku/Diaoyu and the Weight of History and Geography in China-Japan Relations," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol 9, Issue 1 No 1, January 3, 2011; Tanaka Sakai, "Who Sank the South Korean Warship Cheonan? A New Stage in the US-Korean War and US-China Relations," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 21-1-10, May 24, 2010; Seunghun Lee and J.J. Suh, "Rush to Judgment: Inconsistencies in South Korea's Cheonan Report," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 28-1-10, July 12, 2010.