

“Political Cold and Economic Hot” in Sino-Japanese Diplomatic Relations Since the New Century

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Abstract: Japan is China's important neighbor and the only developed country among its neighbors. The relations with Japan are China's important external relations. Since the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972, the two countries have benefited from extensive exchanges and cooperation. In the 21st century, with the changes in the international environment and the reversal of the overall strength comparison between the two countries, the two countries have entered a new period of coexistence of competition and cooperation, and intensified strategic game, showing a situation of “cold politics and hot economy”. For China, it is an important task in the new century to seek advantages and avoid disadvantages in dealing with its diplomacy with Japan under the background of “cold politics and hot economy”, so as to ensure the sound and stable relations between the two countries.

Keywords: Sino-Japanese relations, Japan policy, political cold and economic hot

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

As the two most important countries in East Asia, China and Japan regard each other as one of the most important neighbors. Since the Sui and Tang Dynasties, when Japan sent emissaries to the Tang Dynasty to learn religion and culture, the governments of China and Japan began formal exchanges. However, since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Sino-Japanese relations have undergone great changes. In the international Cold War, the two countries were in a state of severed relations for a long time. After the war, the US military occupied Japan in the name of the “Allied forces”. Under the control and support of the US, Japan vigorously developed its economy and followed the pace of the US in the issue of China and was hostile to the new China. It was not until Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's visit to China in 1972 that Sino-Japanese relations began to normalize [1]. Since then, with the issuance of Sino-Japanese Joint Statement in 1972 and the signing of Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1978, Sino-Japanese relations have developed rapidly and made a qualitative leap [2]. However, with the improvement of China's comprehensive strength after the Cold War, the ideological gap between China and Japan and the adjustment of Japan's foreign strategy, China and Japan kept emerging new contradictions. In the 21st century, the international landscape has become increasingly multi-polar, with the rise of emerging economies,

and the world landscape has begun to change. Japan's economy has yet to fully recover, while China's is booming. Japan, as an economic power, urgently pursues its political rise, while China, as a political power, pursues economic development. The exchanges between China and Japan became more important during this period. After the Koizumi cabinet came into office, blindly catering to the United States and the domestic right-wing forces made the relationship between China and Japan tense, "political cold and economic hot" situation.

1.2. Significance

In today's world, peace and development remain the most important issue for all countries. Without a harmonious and stable international environment, economic prosperity and development are out of the question [3]. As the largest developing country in the world and the only developed country in Asia, China and Japan share important responsibilities for keeping the world peace and stimulating the development. The Sino-Japanese relations is not only very important to the two countries, but also has a significant influence on the development in the Asia-Pacific region and even the whole world. Today, China-Japan relations have become one of the fastest growing, most extensive and valuable bilateral relations in the world. It is widely acknowledged by the Chinese and Japanese civilians to analyze the "political cold and economic hot" China-Japan relations and find out the root cause of its formation, so as to promote the sound development of China-Japan relations. Both of the two countries should "take history as a mirror" and jointly promote the friendship, which is also the purpose of China's "harmonious world".

2. Literature Review

2.1. Domestic Scholars

Many domestic scholars have analyzed the reasons for this phenomenon [4]. Professor Wang Zili from Hunan Academy of Social Sciences said in his book "Politics Cold and Economy Hot -- The Current Situation of Contemporary Sino-Japanese Relations" that the growth of right-wing forces in Japan and the incorrect understanding on the issue of invading China are the root causes of the phenomenon of politics cold and economy hot. Instead of making amends, the Japanese right-wing forces blame China for dwelling on the past and doing all kinds of improper acts against China [5]. Professor Liu Jiangyong of Tsinghua University said in his book Sino-Japanese Relations with Cold Politics and Hot Economy that the Koizumi Cabinet's successive visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and the changes in the world pattern after the Cold War were the main reasons for the situation of cold politics and hot economy between China and Japan [6]. However, Professor Huang Zhijun of Qingdao University said in the Analysis of the "Political Cold and Economic Hot" of Sino-Japanese relations that the cold in politic and hot in economy situation of Sino-Japanese relations is caused by the differences in the national system and ideology of the two sides and the hostile attitude generated by the one-sided media reports. The academic circle has different opinions on the causes of "political cold and economic hot", but most of the existing researches only analyze the causes of this situation, but few scholars put forward solutions to alleviate this situation. Domestic scholars' analysis of this problem has also turned from the perspective of realistic analysis to the perspective of concept and cultural differences.

2.2. Foreign Scholars

In the analysis of foreign scholars, at the University of Miami and a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research The Institute, a professor of political science named Dreyer, indicated that the reason for the cold in politic and hot in economy between the two countries is caused by historical factors.

In fact, many Japanese people harbor a deep sense of inferiority toward China. Japan borrows a large number of elements from traditional Chinese culture and has historically been a tributary state to the Chinese Empire [7]. In modern times, the technology Japan learned from the Western countries enabled it to find the way to rely on the western countries to become strong quickly and gradually separated from the development path of Asian countries [8]. In the Pacific Review, Koo said the long-standing territorial disputes in East Asia have led to increased political conflict between China and Japan (especially over the Diaoyu Islands in recent years), but China's growing economic power, Japan's urgent need for economic partners in the Asia-Pacific area and the area's resource problems have also brought the two countries closer economically. Social scientists have been trying to find a common approach, a common path to economic wealth between China and Japan, and from that a common political vision of harmony.

3. Political Cold and Economic Hot Performance of Sino-Japanese Relations in the New Century

3.1. China and Japan Are Cold at the Political Level

3.1.1. The Relationship Between Japan and the United States Has Grown Closer

"Us-Japan alliance" is the core of the US Asia-Pacific strategy after the World War II[9]. After experiencing the "alliance drift" in the post-Cold War period, the US and Japan identified the Taiwan issue as the new goal of their alliance. All kinds of practices during the Koizumi administration seriously damaged Sino-Japanese relations. In 2005, the foreign ministers of the United States and Japan formally included the Taiwan issue in their alliance goals. During Abe's tenure, Japan actively maintained interaction with the United States, and during Obama's tenure, A number of consensus were reached between Japan and the US government to promote US-Japan cooperation and build an Asia-Pacific joint network based on the US-Japan alliance. After many high-level dialogues, the two sides have gradually reached a consensus to lead the world and contain China based on the US-Japan alliance.

3.1.2. Fewer Meetings Between Chinese and Japanese Leaders

As a way to carry out official communication between countries, summit meetings play an significant part in the process of inter-state relations. However, since the new century, the number of summit meetings between China and Japan has been decreasing. According to statistics, between 2001 and 2010, Premier Wen Jiabao's "ice-melting tour" in 2007 was the only official visit from China to Japan in the past decade. In late 2010, a meeting between Chinese and Japanese leaders was blocked because of misinformation spread by Japan. The lack of summit communication makes China and Japan lose the official platform for communication, and the political contradictions and disputes cannot be solved, which makes the political relations between China and Japan fall into a vicious circle.

3.2. China and Japan Are Hot at the Economic Level

3.2.1. Growth of Bilateral Trade

According to statistics, from the 1990s to the early 21st century, the trade volume between the two countries increased 7.3 times from 2.60 trillion yen to 19 trillion yen, with an average annual growth rate of 14.6 percent. From 2001 to 2004, Sino-Japanese trade relations maintained a strong momentum of rapid growth. In 2002, China and Japan's trade volume exceeded 100 billion US dollars for the first time. In 2003, the bilateral trade volume continued to grow, with a growth of 31.1% over the past year, exceeding the amount of Japan and the US's trade growth in the same period. Despite

the low point after the financial crisis, the overall trade volume remains at a high level. Since the beginning of the new century, China has become the largest trading companion of Japan. The structure of Sino-Japanese trade has also changed from the original situation where Japan exported technology and knowledge-intensive products to China and imported raw materials from China. China began to focus on the optimization and upgrading of products and the development of high-end exports. It indicates the deep development of Sino-Japanese trade structure and the long-term growth of bilateral trade relations.

3.2.2.Improvement of Cooperation Mechanism

Under the general framework of China-Japan strategic relationship of mutual benefit, the two countries will further develop high-level economic dialogue and promote more stable economic cooperation. China and Japan have maintained constant communication and improved cooperation policies on inter-departmental economic cooperation and major regional and international economic issues. In 2010, China and Japan held the third high-level Economic Dialogue in Beijing. Important consensus was reached on macroscopic, strategic and long-term issues of bilateral economic cooperation, emphasizing the core of mutual benefit and win-win results between China and Japan [10]. After the meeting, seven cooperation documents including the Memorandum on the Establishment of China-Japan Circulation and Logistics Policy Dialogue Mechanism were signed.

3.2.3.Expanding Cooperation Areas

The economic development of China and Japan is also reflected in the expansion of cooperation fields between China and Japan. This essay takes new energy cooperation as an example to discuss. With the growth of economy and the depletion of traditional energy, the new energy industry has attracted more and more attention. As major energy consumers, China and Japan both have their own advantages in the field of developing new energy and strive for more extensive cooperation. Since the beginning of the new century, the agenda of energy cooperation between China and Japan has been continuously advanced. In 2003, China, Japan and Korea established a strategic partnership for peace and common prosperity, endeavoring to expand the scope of cooperation in diverse interests and make joint efforts to enhance regional energy security. Since then, China and Japan have signed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, Cebu Declaration on East Asia's Energy Security, and Singapore Declaration on Climate Change, Energy and Environment at the three East Asia Summits in 2005 and 2007 respectively, to enhance strategic cooperation between the two countries and develop energy cooperation through investment and technology exchange [11]. From 2008 to 2010, China and Japan held several forums to exchange views on energy conservation experience, climate change and energy security, and the energy cooperation mechanism between the two countries has been gradually improved.

4. The Reason for “Political Cold and Economic Hot”

4.1. Political Cold

4.1.1.Changes in the Internal and External Environment

First of all is external changes. With the terminate of the Cold War and the Soviet Union's disintegration, the international pattern formed since World War II has changed, and the situation of the United States being “the dominant country” has emerged [12]. America's “containment camp” argues that China, the world's second-largest economic power at the US's heels, will overtake Japan

in 2010 and the United States in 2020 as the world's largest economy, with an annual growth rate of 8%. China's enormous economic potential is bound to threaten the United States.

At the same time, for the purpose of safeguarding its own security and development benefits, Japan is constantly influenced by the United States when formulating development strategies with China. When Asia-Pacific region became the new focus of the United States, Japan also became the main tool of its strategy to contain China. In this context, the US and Japan implemented two rounds of military strategic adjustments to China, emphasized the legitimacy of the "US-Japan alliance" and maintained the posture of containing China.

Against this background, in 2004, Japan issued the National Defense Program Guidelines, taking China and the North Korea as imaginary enemies, and vigorously advocating the China threat theory in politics. In addition, the territorial dispute over Diaoyu Island directly provided justification for its military and national defense construction. Liu Jiangyong, a professor at Tsinghua University, said that when the National Defense Program Guidelines were revised in 2004, there was an idea to "shift the strategic thinking from the former Soviet Union or Russia to the Nansei Islands." [13]. This revision is only more obvious, with the National Defense Program Guidelines further shifting the finger of blame toward China.

In addition, the internal changes of China and Japan are also important factors affecting their political development. Since the 1990s, China's political environment has been stable, its economy has been developing rapidly, and China's policy toward Japan has been increasingly positive. Since the beginning of the new century, China has always adhered to the China-Japan Joint Statement, the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, and the China-Japan Joint Declaration, attached great importance to its relations with Japan, and made great contributions to the further improvement of China-Japan relations. Japan, on the other hand, has shown the opposite trend, challenging the core spirit of the three basic documents. Since 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi has visited the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors the dead of Japan's war criminals, for four consecutive years, bringing the China-Japan political relations to a freezing point. In addition, the textbook incident and the Diaoyu Islands incident, as well as the provocative attitude of Japanese policy makers on these issues, are also important reasons for the "political cold" between China and Japan.

4.1.2. Security Dilemma and Geopolitical Security Dilemma

The security dilemma is a very important concept in the theory of international relations, and its core problem is the security fear between countries, also known as "Hobbesian fear" [14]. In the international system of anarchy in the world, there is no basic guarantee for the survival of a country, and the strategic intention of another country can be judged only on the basis of its military strength, rather than on the basis of its foreign oath, thus the mutual distrust is formed. The structural security dilemma between China and Japan is reflected in the enhanced distrust caused by the structural changes in the power comparison between the two countries. First of all, the popularity of the "China threat theory" in Japan has seriously affected the formation of Sino-Japanese mutual trust. Data from the World Bank shows that China's economy reached \$6.04 trillion, surpassing Japan's in 2010. In 2015, China's economy was more than twice the size of Japan's. In addition to economic threats, since most countries reduced their military expenditure after the end of the Cold War, China's military expenditure increased rapidly, which made the international community, especially the US and Japan, believe that China's military strength has great competitive potential with the United States, posing a great threat to the international community. In addition, China's rising status in the international community and its increasingly important role in international affairs have led Japan to view China as a potential enemy, which has greatly strengthened the sense of distrust between the two countries.

From the perspective of geopolitics, China and Japan, as important political and economic powers in East Asia, have acted a extremely important part in the peace and flourishing of the region. As a

newly rising country, the rising power of China poses a threat to Japan, the former leader in East Asia. Second, geopolitical issues have also raised issues such as the exclusive economic zone in the East China Sea, the delimitation of the continental shelf, and territorial disputes over the Diaoyu Islands. The Japanese government announced the “purchase” of Diaoyu Islands in September 2012, making its “nationalization” of Diaoyu Islands officially broke the political tacit understanding between China and Japan to “shelve disputes” on this issue, and also destroyed the vision of both sides to “jointly develop” resources in the East China Sea.

These all shows that the security dilemma of China and Japan and the geopolitics have always resulted in the deep distrust between China and Japan at the political level, which led to the difficulty in achieving deep cooperation.

4.1.3. Antagonism Caused by the Legacy of History

The problems left over from history have always been an impassable gap in the progress of China and Japan’s political relations. The historical issues left over by China and Japan can be roughly grouped into three categories [15]: territorial issues, historical understanding issues and war compensation issues. Whether it is Japan’s distorted statements on the textbook issue, which constantly emphasizes the justification of the war of aggression; Or refusing to apologize for the comfort women issue; And the denial of the Nanking Massacre. In the new century, these historical issues left over from China and Japan have increasingly become the key issues restricting the bilateral relations. Before China and Japan established their formal diplomatic ties in a friendly and sincere attitude, China exempted Japan from war reparations for the purpose of promoting the normal development of Sino-Japanese relations. However, instead of realizing its mistake, Japan is constantly distorting facts and trying to cover up history. This has made the development of already tense Sino-Japanese relations even more difficult.

To sum up, affected by the changes in the internal and external environment, security dilemmas and historical issues left over from China and Japan, since the new century, the political relations between China and Japan show a cold situation.

4.2. Economic Hot

Although the political exchanges between China and Japan were cold during this period, the economic exchanges between the two countries showed a trend of continuous good development. The reasons can be attributed to the following points.

4.2.1. Economic Complementarity Between China and Japan

The trading ties between China and Japan also reflect a new North-South relationship. The terminate of the Cold War changed the situation of confrontation between the East and the West, the international situation on the whole moved towards easing, promoted world peace and development, and solved the issue of peace [16]. However, with the development of economic globalization, a new north-south problem has emerged, that is, the problem of development. Today, the development of the North and the South is unbalanced [17]. Lenin pointed out that “the development of capitalism is extremely uneven in each country, and it can only be so under the conditions of commodity production.” As an important capitalist country in East Asia, Japan’s inherent structural weakness in capitalist production needs to be made up by socialist countries like China. Besides, as the largest developing country in the world, China also has a certain say in the world, and its economic cooperation with countries like Japan is highly complementary. In terms of labor and market, Japan can provide abundant capital and advanced technology, but it lacks resources, market and low-cost labor, while China at this time can provide a large number of labor and a broad market. This kind of

complementarity encourages Japan in its economic maturity period to cooperate with China in its economic growth period. The second is that the two countries' composition of trade is complementary. The level of intra-industry trade in the manufacturing industry of China and Japan is relatively low, and the intra-industry trade index of labor-intensive products is lower than that of capital and technology-intensive products. In recent years, only a few products with high value-added and technology content have been exported from China, while Japan has already formed a specific trade structure of importing primary products such as raw materials and exporting technology-intensive and knowledge-intensive products [18]. The difference in trade structure also reflects the difference in industrial structure between the two countries. Japan has already realized an advanced structure dominated by the tertiary industry, while 50% of employment in China is still in the primary industry. China and Japan's economic cooperation has gotten closer and closer due to the complementarity of the two economies in terms of country type, labor force and market, trade and industrial structure.

4.2.2. The Need of Regional Economic Development

As the core of economic integration in East Asia, China and Japan have close economic ties. The GDP of the two countries accounts for 80% of the total GDP in East Asia. Sino-Japanese economic cooperation is avail to the effective resources allocation and the reasonable division of the market in East Asia, which meets the needs of the economic integration of East Asia. On 15 November 2020, 10 ASEAN countries, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and Singapore formally signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The agreement marks the establishment of the world's largest free trade agreement. This is the first time for China and Japan to establish direct free trade area relations. The easing of Sino-Japanese relations also provides more possibilities for the whole East Asia region's economic consociation. Finally, the economic development of East Asia requires steady cooperation between China and Japan [19]. Both the acceleration of bilateral trade and the cooperation between the two countries in energy conservation, environmental protection and personnel exchange have stimulated the vitality of the economic development of East Asia and provided more possibilities for regional development.

In conclusion, the sound momentum of Sino-Japanese economic cooperation in East Asia will also bring about all-dimensional, multi-field and deep-seated positive effects and promote the development of regional integration in East Asia.

5. Measures to Eliminate Political Cold and Economic Hot in Sino-Japanese Relations

5.1. Establish a Rational Understanding

The contradictions between China and Japan have a long history. Different national systems, history and culture, as well as differences over territory, history and the Taiwan question, all make it difficult for China-Japan relations to achieve a historical leap forward. But because of their special geographical location and mutual interests, China and Japan already have a strong economic dependence on each other, and neither country wants this relationship to be damaged. Therefore, we must first acknowledge the long-term nature of the "political cold and economic hot" in China-Japan relations.

Secondly, the Chinese government should try its best to be objective and rational when formulating foreign policies, and avoid giving up opportunities for exchange and cooperation due to historical factors. China should view its relations with Japan in the long run, focus on the common interests of both sides, and develop bilateral relations in a mutually beneficial and win-win manner while safeguarding its sovereignty and national interests.

Non-governmental communication and exchanges are also important channels for rational understanding between the two countries. Reconciliation between China and Japan requires not only the political consensus of the decision-makers on both sides, but also the change of people's attitudes. The ping-pong diplomacy between China and the United States in 1971 is a good example of people-to-people diplomacy. Under the background of the new century, with the improvement of science and technology and the society's prosperity, the channels of folk communication and exchange become more and more abundant and the ways become more and more convenient, which also makes the influence of folk opinion on the foreign policy of a country become more and more great. Therefore, it is an significant way to improve Sino-Japanese relations to reduce the animosity and hostility between the two countries and build a harmonious Sino-Japanese culture at the folk level. China and Japan should strengthen talents exchanges and enhance mutual understanding between each other in the way of personnel exchanges, academic exchanges, sports, literature and art activities. In terms of public opinion, both countries should comprehensively report information related to the two sides, reduce one-sided and sentimental propaganda, and guide the public to view bilateral relations in a comprehensive and objective manner so as to lay a solid folk foundation for the building of harmonious and friendly relations between China and Japan.

5.2. Properly Handle Differences

The core of the Sino-Japanese territorial issue is the Diaoyu Islands issue. According to data, Diaoyu Dao has been an inalienable part of China since ancient times, but Japan's insistence on the ownership of Diaoyu Dao has made it difficult to resolve the dispute. On the issue of the Diaoyu Islands, China should first of all firmly safeguard our territorial sovereignty. Secondly, we need to understand the reasons for Japan's insistence on this issue. This article holds the believe that the disagreement between the two countries over the Diaoyu Islands issue has a lot to do with the United States. This essay found that Japan is now faced with a dilemma. The United States does not want to eliminate the Sino-Japanese conflict, so it is bound to put pressure on Japan on this issue [20]. As an ally of the US, Japan's compromise on this issue would be seen as a betrayal of its own security and development interests.

To solve this problem, China needs to conduct in-depth negotiations with Japan and provide Japan with the guarantees it needs to realize that the normal improvement of Sino-Japanese relations cannot be achieved normally with the intervention of a third country. As China's power rises and the strengthening of its international voice, it is entirely possible for China and Japan to promote prosperity in East Asia on their own, without relying on the United States. If the current state of affairs continues, the entire international relationship will always be getting the command of the United States.

On the settlement of historical differences between China and Japan. We cannot completely ignore Japan's previous crimes, nor can we obsess over Japan's crimes and ignore the development of normal cooperative relations between the two countries. The way to resolve such differences is to strengthen strategic reassurance between the two countries and view bilateral relations from a new historical latitude. Focus on the common interests of both sides and the problems that need to be solved today, rather than deadlock over historical issues that hinder normal cooperation between the two countries. Under the background of the new century, China and Japan should strive to implement the China-Japan strategic relationship of mutual benefit and develop their common interests.

6. Conclusion

As neighbors separated by a strip of water, Sino-Japanese relationship is highly complicated due to the influence of historical factors and geopolitics. Since the beginning of the new century, under the

influence of factors such as changes in internal and external environment and the pursuit of common interests between the two countries, the situation of “political cold and economic hot” has emerged. Due to the objectively existing differences that cannot be resolved in the short term, this situation is expected to continue for a long time. After analysis, this article believes that the Sino-Japanese relationship under the condition of “political cold and economic hot” is both an opportunity and a challenge. On the basis of adhering to the basic principles, China should actively seek opportunities to promote the progress of China-Japan political relations, have a correct understanding of bilateral relations and promote people-to-people exchanges. Economically, the two countries should actively seek common interests, carry out cooperation in various fields and pursue further development of China-Japan economic relations. Any progress in relations is the result of joint efforts of both sides, and against the backdrop of the new era, both China and Japan should maintain a positive attitude and seek new opportunities for the development of China-Japan relations.

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