

If you study Asia for any period, you are bound to come across the “Asian Paradox”—the idea that despite strong economic networks and overlapping interests, many states in Asia remain at odds on a range of important issues. The paradigmatic example is that of Japan and South Korea, who hardly communicate—much less cooperate—on the challenges that North Korea’s actions pose to the region. From Taiwan to Sri Lanka, Asia is filled with examples of stalled cooperation between and within states. Why?

The answer to this paradox posits that historical grievances keep states in a constant state of conflict. The remembered past of Western colonialism, Japanese imperialism, and World War II remain as contentious issues in public policy debates. For South Korea and Japan, the issue of comfort women is at the core of the dispute. History and how it is remembered by the public has become an impediment to the normal course of international relations.

Yet, this conception of history and “paradox” *itself* results in weak policy. The December 2015 agreement between the Abe and Park administrations has not ended the debate over comfort women “forever,” but rather has reinvigorated the redress movement in South Korea and frustration in Japan. In this case, and in cases across Asia, policymakers have failed to see history as alive in the memories of the public. The past as recalled in the present sets the outer limits of what is possible, in the rest of the world as much as it does in Asia.

Despite the problems of the Asian Paradox, scholars, historians, and policymakers cannot work within what Masamichi S. Inoue calls “opposition only,” rather, an alternate conception of history’s importance as well as coherent policy recommendations are necessary to move forward. The underlying idea guiding this issue of the *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs* is as follows: policy that incorporates memory and promotes social cohesion is crucial for cultivating cooperation in Asia. Time and again, this issue will feature a case study which demonstrates that the problems of Asia are neither intractable nor endemic, but only require innovative solutions. Rather than “getting over” history, the authors in this issue consistently advocate for integrating history into comprehensive policy recommendations.

Considering this framework, the *Journal’s* editorial board is pleased to present our Policy Forum, “Bound by History: Asia’s Enduring Past.” It is our hope that together, these case studies will illustrate the larger issues involved with history, memory, and policy, while providing real solutions that promote cooperation and cohesion.

In the introduction to the Policy Forum, Alexis Dudden explicates the living nature of memory in her article “History in the Raw.” She explores the usages of history in modern South Korea and Japan at a time when both nations are marked by deep social

¹ The most famous use of the Asian Paradox is in President Park Geun-hye’s speech to a joint session of U.S. Congress. For full text of the speech see: “Full text of Park’s speech at U.S. Congress,” *Yonhap News*, 8 May 2013.

turmoil: in South Korea, due to entrenched inequality and memories of corruption, and in Japan, because of anxiety over a clash between widespread cultural pacifism and more assertive security policies.

In the first Policy Forum article, Mandy Sadan provides an insightful critique of the field of Southeast Asian studies. Sadan argues that the field is mired in questions over the very existence of Southeast Asia as a region, identity, and subject of inquiry, which obscures state use of history. To move forward, we must look beyond traditional questions of nationhood, and instead ask penetrating questions of the past. Such scholarly inquiry will help us better define the goal of social cohesion within the states of Southeast Asia.

Rekha Chowdhary follows with the article “The Shifting Nature of Kashmiri Identity Politics and the Need to Reinvent the Past.” By tracing the evolution of Kashmir’s politics over the past fifty years, Chowdhary isolates the moments in which the movement for autonomy and social inclusion were turned aside. The call for a “reinvention” of those historical values is a compelling response to the current state of division and violence.

The issues inherent in the state’s usage of history are clear in Morris Rossabi’s article on Chinggis Khan’s image in modern Mongolia. The warlord’s ever-changing status as national hero, outcast, god, or pride of Mongolia is tied to social and economic conditions, not to his actual behavior. The state’s use of Khan’s image leads to rhetorical hypocrisies—such as the advertisement of Chinggis as a feminist—that do not solve the public’s underlying concerns with their country. Pacifying the public by cynically bolstering the state with historical references may only work for so long.

The question then bears asking: how do states try to “move on” from contentious historical issues? J. Bruce Jacobs provides one answer in his case study of Taiwan’s official state apology to the island’s aboriginal population. The rhetoric of apology is tempered by Tsai Ing-wen’s actual policies regarding aboriginals, and the policies are regarded as the true measuring stick for “indigenous reconciliation.”

Reconciliation is also the driving theme in “The Enduring Impact of Tamil Separatism” by Asoka Bandarage. The article argues that the Sri Lankan government—supported by the UN and international community—are incorporating the Tamil separatist movement into society in a way that fails to include non-Tamil populations. These policies will likely result in a chaotic and divided state, controlled by external powers. Bandarage suggests that historical accountability and inclusive solutions are critical in a world rife with ethnic separatist movements.

When states create solutions without incorporating the public’s perception of historical experience, it can backfire. Masamichi S. Inoue explains that resistance to U.S. bases in Okinawa is rooted in historical memories of domination. Inoue posits that the “Okinawan multitude” can access these memories to advocate for security policy without U.S. bases; such a solution in accordance with the will of the public could establish

a paradigm solution for the world.

Pyong Gap Min explores how citizens can reject the versions of history that affect policy. Min criticizes the facts and intent of Park Yu-ha's recent book on comfort women, and connects it to the government's December 2015 passage of the comfort women agreement. Min advocates for an accurate historical record that puts victims first. Only such a policy will satisfy the redress movement, and permit the security and economic cooperation that both governments desire.

The article "The Abdication Issue and the Future of the Imperial House" by Ken Ruoff addresses a situation in which history and politics impact political elites, in this case, the emperor of Japan. Memory of the role of past emperors and beliefs about the imperial house are preventing abdication, while also reinforcing traditional gender roles that are out of step with modern policy.

Finally, Jessica Chen Weiss rounds out our Policy Forum with an interview on Chinese nationalism. Though nationalism is both a foreign policy tool and a liability, Weiss argues against its use in China's current disputes, implying that control of the Chinese state over the public includes the expression of historical grievances.

Appearing alongside the Policy Forum is an incredibly thorough research article by promising scholar Zi Yang on China's Public Security Intelligence. Drawing on Chinese-language materials heretofore unexplored by outside researchers, this article fills a large gap in knowledge on the state of China's PSI. Beyond elucidating the status and limitations of current PSI reform, Yang also plots a map for future researchers of intelligence and of China.

At the conclusion of the issue, it is the *Journal's* tradition to include a set of interviews on timely topics. First, we are pleased to feature Franz Stefan-Gady, Peter Feaver, Robert Ross, and Avery Goldstein on President Trump's likely foreign policy in Asia. Next, renowned China scholar Andrew J. Nathan reviews the state of China's domestic politics, from the mainland's relationship with Taiwan to Chinese exceptionalism. Finally, L.H.M. Ling anchors the issue with a thought-provoking exploration of alternative international relations theory as it relates to Asia.

I cannot help but conclude with a sincere expression of gratitude for the many individuals who made the Spring 2017 issue of the *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs* possible. Senior Editor Yuhao Du was instrumental in shaping the overall direction of the issue, while Managing Editor Abigail Becker helped animate the entire editorial team. Moreover, this edition was graced by the sharp, analytical minds of our Associate Editors and by Assistant Editors indefatigable in tackling the *Journal's* most difficult problems. Special thanks go to the Editorial Interns whose skills and ideas far exceeded their level of experience. The dedication of the entire editorial team is, in my experience, unmatched.

I would also like to thank Diana Kim, Dennis Wilder, Christine Kim, Michael Green,

and Victor Cha for providing advice and assistance along the way. The *Journal* is grateful for the anonymous reviewers whose thoughts and expertise were invaluable in developing the issue; we would also like to thank our advisory board for their support and guidance. Finally, many thanks to publisher Daye Lee, without whom this publication would likely not exist.

Thus, I conclude both this editorial note and my time as an editor for the *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs*. Over the past three issues of my tenure, the *Journal* has grown and changed for the better. I look forward to many future editions driven by the same curiosity and passion that created this issue. With great pleasure, I present “Bound by History: Asia’s Enduring Past.” I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed curating its contents.

Jennifer R. Mayer
Editor-in-Chief