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A Collision of Discourses

Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese during the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Crisis

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In September 1996, Hong Kong was roiled by a wave of angry demonstrations over a Japanese right-wing group's assertion of Japanese sovereignty over the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.[1] Hong Kong's mass media decried what they called "a resurgence of Japanese militarism"; anti-Japanese banners and petition drives sprang up throughout Hong Kong; and, a number of large and boisterous anti-Japanese demonstrations took place. At the same time, however, Japanese presence in Hong Kong remained ubiquitous: not only merchandise, but also tourists and other sojourners, most of whom were shocked by the frenzy of anti-Japanese sentiment suddenly before them. How, in the midst of this tension, did Japanese sojourners in Hong Kong perceive of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong people's views of them as Japanese? What sense did they make of Hong Kong people's anger at Japan? How, in turn, did Hong Kong activists perceive the Japanese sojourners in their midst — as innocent tourists and students or as ongoing incarnation of Japanese aggression? And, how can we comprehend the very different comprehensions of these two groups?

This paper seeks to use a very small series of particular events and viewpoints — the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands protests in Hong Kong in autumn 1996 — to arrive, eventually, at an understanding of capitalism vs. nationalism, a collision of discourses in today's world. I first set forth the history of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute. I then examine the dispute from alternative points of view: those of Japanese tourists and exchange students and of Hong Kong Chinese student activists, correlating these views

with mass media reports. I then explore the complex of motivations behind all sides of the dispute. Finally I examine the dispute as a conflict of social positions, cultural shapings, and most of all, of opposing frames of global discourse, filtered through Japan's worldwide economic reach and Hong Kong's resurgent sense of Chineseness: the discourses of capitalism in its myth of a pastless present and nationalism in its myth of past as present.

The Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute: A Brief History

The Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are a group of small, uninhabited islands some 200 kilometers northeast of Taiwan and 300 kilometers southwest of Okinawa. China and Japan — and of late, the two Chinas and Japan — all have laid claim to the islands, based on geography and history. The first Chinese mention of the islands was around 1430, in a manuscript by the Chinese navigator, Zheng He (Wills 1996); this historical claim is used to argue that the islands indeed belong to China. Japan incorporated the islands into its territory in 1895 (Wain 1996), following the Sino-Japanese War; the islands fell under American jurisdiction after World War II. China seemed to accept non-Chinese sovereignty over the islands during the 1950s and 1960s: "Outsiders take the view that Beijing and Taipei's 'sudden' interest in the islands was caused by a United Nations agency report in 1968 revealing the presence of oil in the area" (Lau 1996). In 1971, the first major protest over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands took place in Hong Kong, "turning Victoria Park and the streets of Causeway Bay [a central Hong Kong shopping area] into a battleground, with passing cars being stoned and vehicles burnt" (Wan and Kwong 1996); but this did not prevent the islands from reverting back to Japanese control in 1972, along with the island of Okinawa.

The current round of unrest began in July 1996, when members of the Japan Youth Federation, a Japanese right-wing group, constructed a lighthouse on one of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands,

sparking off the demonstrations. In Hong Kong, demonstrations began in earnest in September. On 11 September, Chinese University students held an all-night protest in front of the Japanese consulate (*Ming Pao Daily News* 1996a); by 15 September, 12,000 people "took to the streets... in a growing wave of anti-Japanese sentiment.... A Japanese military flag was burned to mark the end of the five-hour protest" (Won 1996). On 18 September, the anniversary of the Manchurian Incident of 1931, marking the start of Japan's war with China, 6,000 more braved a driving rain to demonstrate (*Ming Pao Daily News* 1996b); on the same day, activists scuffled with security guards at Sogo, a Japanese department store in Hong Kong, demanding a boycott in Hong Kong of Japanese goods and ostentatiously buying non-Japanese goods (Lee and Wong 1996). On 19 September, a Hong Kong legislator urged China to set a deadline for Japan's return of the islands, and to go to war if the deadline passed; Japan must understand, he held, that "the Chinese people are not a weak nation" (*South China Morning Post* 1996a). Several days later, the head of the Professional Teachers' Union in Hong Kong said, "We should make use of the [Diaoyu Islands protest] movement to educate our younger generation, alert them to the growing Japanese militarism and let them understand more about China and its history" (Ku 1996).

Demonstrations spread across the Chinese world, at least in Hong Kong newspaper headlines — "Thousands take to the streets in Taipei" (Chan 1996); "Hunger strike planned in U.S." (Li 1996) — but China itself was leery. Chinese activists began a petition drive in mainland China, urging the government to take stronger action against Japan; Beijing responded by sending them on work assignments far from the capital (Chan and Lee 1996). Members of a pro-China Hong Kong political party, travelling to Beijing for a meeting with a Chinese government official, found themselves under surveillance by plainclothes policemen fearful that they might stir up Chinese people to engage in Diaoyu Islands protests; but surreptitious protest groups formed anyway on Chinese campuses (Chan and Yuen 1996).

On 22 September, a flotilla set out from Hong Kong and another from Taiwan of demonstrators vowing to tear down the Japanese lighthouse and plant the Chinese flag in its place. The first flotilla was turned back by the Japanese Coast Guard, which was present *en masse* to guard the islands. The second ended in tragedy on 26 September when the Hong Kong protest leader David Chan dove into the ocean from his vessel, a freighter, to "swim in what he insisted were the Diaoyu's 'Chinese waters'" (Lee 1996); he was sucked under the vessel and drowned. He was thereafter proclaimed a martyr by many, although by no means all of Hong Kong's people, giving up his life in the fight against Japanese militarism (ironically, it was a Japanese medical team that attempted to save his life and did save the life of a drowning fellow protester, airlifting him to Japan for medical treatment). After David Chan's death, the Japanese consulate asked for police protection for its citizens in Hong Kong, so worried were they about a backlash (*South China Morning Post* 1996b). A candlelight vigil mourning David Chan drew 40,000 people (Choy and Won 1996).[2]

On 7 October, another flotilla of 140 protesters on 31 boats arrived at the islands, and this time a boat evaded the Japanese Coast Guard and landed several protesters. They hoisted Chinese and Taiwanese flags side by side before quickly departing, and before, just as quickly, the Japanese Coast Guard took the flags down. "Mission Accomplished," the *South China Morning Post* proclaimed, in a capital-lettered headline of a type size usually reserved for the ending of world wars. Its lead story began as follows: "It was ironic that, as the sun rose over the Diaoyu Islands, the forces of the Land of the Rising Sun were at last to be overcome" (K. Ng 1996). Chinese-language newspapers in Hong Kong outdid one another in expressing patriotic fervor: "The Chinese noble spirit lives on in the Diaoyu Islands forever" (*Ming Pao Daily News* 1996d), "Diaoyu heroes write new episode in defending the nation" (*Ming Pao Daily News* 1996e), "Long live the Chinese nation!" (*Oriental Daily News* 1996a).[3]

And then, suddenly, the tide turned. Hong Kong protesters had for weeks been demonstrating outside the Japanese consulate and presenting petitions to consular officials; but on 9 October, a dozen Hong Kong protesters, led by two Hong Kong legislators, broke through a police cordon and occupied the consulate. This, many acknowledged, was going too far: "Protest is one thing, lawlessness another," the *South China Morning Post*, suddenly sanctimonious, proclaimed in an editorial (1996c).[4] After this, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands suddenly vanished as a topic from television and newspapers in Hong Kong. Small-scale protests continued, but as a topic convulsing Hong Kong the affair was over.

In retrospect, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands crisis may appear, aside from David Chan's tragic (or, from a different view, pathetic) death, as something of a tempest in a teapot: much ado about very little. However, it is clear that the dispute was not simply over a few obscure uninhabited islands, and the fish their waters contain and the oil that possibly underlies them. The storm of emotions swirling through the dispute arose, from the Hong Kong Chinese point of view, from the unhealed war wounds China suffered at the hands of Japan and Japan's failure to fully apologize for its actions in World War II; they arose from "Chineseness" and Chinese cultural pride sensed as having been insulted, belittled, besmirched by the Japanese; and they arose from a history that Japanese may endeavour to forget but that Chinese insist upon remembering. From the Japanese point of view, however, this seems bewildering: why should the poisons of past historical resentments be allowed to infect the present's benign interchanges? These different points of view become clear from interviewing different parties in the dispute. Let us now examine, in turn, the views of Japanese tourists in Hong Kong, then Japanese exchange students more committed to interchange with Hong Kong's people, and finally Hong Kong anti-Japanese student activists.

Japanese Tourists in the Midst of the Dispute

A survey of Japanese tourist guidebooks shows that virtually none deal with the history of the Japanese incursion into Hong Kong in World War II. Of 20 guidebooks I examined, only four spare a page or two on Hong Kong history, of which all but one only briefly mention the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong.[5] A typical entry is, in its entirety, as follows: "Japan took Hong Kong under control on 25 Dec. 1941, and thus began its 3-year-and-8-month military administration of Hong Kong" (Oba 1995). Most guidebooks deal only with the present: food and shopping and interesting sights to see.

In late September, before the height of the crisis but after the news of a Japanese flag burned in a Hong Kong protest had reached Japan, my wife (who is Japanese) and I interviewed Japanese tourists of various ages at sites in Tsim Sha Tsui, the leading tourist area of Hong Kong. We heard comments such as these: "We understand the feelings of Hong Kong people, but burning the Japanese flag is too extreme. The dispute should be solved by the two governments." "We saw from the tour bus anti-Japanese banners. There isn't militarism in Japan now — we don't even have nationalism like Chinese people — but because of the war people still think Japan is militaristic. But we don't feel upset, because Hong Kong people are angry at the Japanese government, not at us." "Japan isn't militaristic today, but probably people still think there is militarism in Japan because of the war. But this has no relation to us." For these tourists, the shadow of World War II remains an awkward legacy, but one that has vanished in Japan and should vanish in Hong Kong, they seemed to say; and in any case, that legacy has nothing to do with them personally, they felt.

In ensuing weeks, however, this insouciance became more difficult to hold. On Saturday, 5 October, there was a demonstration at the Star Ferry Terminal at Tsim Sha Tsui, featuring exhibits about the islands and who they truly belonged to, and showing photographs of Chinese slaughtered by the Japanese in World War II; hundreds of people were jammed into the tiny area, as speaker after speaker decried what they saw as the return of Japanese militarism. The Star Ferry Terminal is all but unavoidable for tourists, and the Japanese tourists we tried to interview in Tsim Sha Tsui on that day were clearly spooked. Asking Japanese tourists about the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands was, we found, like yelling "fire" in a crowded theater: not only would the person questioned dash away, mumbling "I'm sorry, I'm busy," or "it has no relation to me" (*watashi to kankei ga arimasen*) — beyond this, all Japanese within earshot would scatter. In malls normally crowded with Japanese tourists, we found ourselves with large spaces around us, as everyone Japanese sought to avoid having to interact with us.

By the end of the first week of October, the Diaoyu Islands protests were having a definite effect on tourism. The Hong Kong television station ATV reported on 9 October that 10,000 Japanese tourists had cancelled their planned visits to Hong Kong, often forfeiting deposits; some stores in Hong Kong dealing with Japanese tourists were recording a 40 per cent drop in sales. "Tour operators say Japanese tourism has dropped 20 percent since the Diaoyu Islands dispute started," reported the *South China Morning Post* on 11 October:

> Japan Travel Bureau managing director Akira Moriyama said one of his groups was mobbed by activists.... Protesters waving anti-Japanese pamphlets and shouting in Japanese stopped tourists and held banners to tour bus windows.... Legislative Councillor Howard Young said he would hate to see the waste of "the millions" used to promote the territory in Japan. He urged activists to leave Japanese tourists alone. (Delfino 1996)

As earlier discussed, the occupation of the Japanese consulate and the sense that this was "going too far" led to a cessation of large-scale protest in Hong Kong. My wife and I took a Japanese tour in mid-October and were told by the guide that "the anti-Japanese movement hasn't affected our business at all." Indeed, dur-

ing the tour we saw no sign of the anti-Japanese movement in Hong Kong, except for one banner proclaiming "Protect Diaoyu Islands" — but since "Diaoyu" is for Japanese an unfamiliar name for the islands, few Japanese tourists would likely have noticed it. Everywhere the Japanese tourists went on our tour they were greeted with smiles; as tourists, bringers of money, they were shielded from any anti-Japanese sentiment Hong Kong people might feel.

The Japanese tourists we interviewed came to Hong Kong solely to eat, see a few sights, and shop. For them, Japan as a nation, just as China as a nation, has no relation to their tourism. These tourists are in a commercial bubble; many speak no more than a bit of English and no Cantonese, and so they cannot have any relation to Hong Kong beyond their hotels and the shops catering to tourists. As Befu and Stalker write (1996:115), commenting on Japanese tourism throughout the world, "getting to know the local people is the last thing on... [most Japanese] tourists' minds"; as Bauman notes (1996:30), commenting on tourism at large in today's world, "what the tourist buys, what he pays for, what he demands to be delivered... is precisely the right not to be bothered." The Diaoyu Islands protests were such a bother, breaking the implicit touristic contract. It was no coincidence that when Japanese tourism, and all the money that tourism brings, was threatened by protesters, voices for restraint were raised in Hong Kong, and the protest movement shortly thereafter abruptly collapsed.

Japanese Residents of Hong Kong in the Midst of the Dispute

Those Japanese who live in Hong Kong have a more extended relation to Hong Kong than do tourists, but they too have tended to live in a bubble. Research on Japanese companies (H. Wong 1996) and housewives (Nakano 1995) in Hong Kong shows that Japanese tend to associate among themselves, Japan remaining

more real than the Hong Kong world in which they temporarily happen to live. Japanese tourist magazines sometimes banter about how to become "Hongkongese" — "speak a few words of Cantonese, watch a Hong Kong movie, get some clothing tailor-made, buy some products in a Chinese department store" (*Honkon/Makao* 1996) — and thereby impress one's friends back in Japan with one's international expertise. On the other hand, periodicals for Japanese residents in Hong Kong focus on how to lead a Japanese life in Hong Kong, advertising restaurants serving "sashimi airlifted from Japan," and *juku* (after-school cram schools) for one's children so that they will not forget their "Japaneseness" (Shitakubo n.d.). Japanese tourists in Hong Kong, this implies, want to be seen as cosmopolitan global citizens by their fellow Japanese because they are securely nestled in Japaneseness in their non-touristic lives. Long-term Japanese residents of Hong Kong, on the other hand, seem concerned less with being global citizens than with wanting to preserve their "Japaneseness," a Japaneseness threatened by the fact that they are in some sense global citizens, at least in living outside Japan's shores.

The major source of information for Hong Kong's Japanese residents is the *Hong Kong Post*, a weekly newspaper in Japanese. For the six weeks during which Hong Kong was engrossed in the anti-Japanese movement, its reports emphasized Japanese as the harassed victims of Hong Kong extremists. To take just one example, the newspaper reported on a protest aimed at the students of a Japanese school: activists drew a Japanese military flag on the pavement in front of the school entrance, intending to force students to step on it. It quoted a young Japanese mother as saying, "I feel scared to go out alone with my child. I have this feeling that I might be surrounded by angry demonstrators and shouted at" (Noda 1996a). The newspaper's reports did not, however, indicate surprise or anger at the appearance of such anti-Japanese sentiment in Hong Kong. Indeed, it noted that Japanese businessmen in Hong Kong felt "hesitant to criticize the anti-Japanese protest movement because it has been carried out under the banner of

'protesting against the revival of Japanese militarism'" (*Hong Kong Post* 1996c). No article in the *Hong Kong Post* in this period makes any effort to deny Japan's past, but all make the implicit claim that that past is irrelevant to the present; the newspaper expresses concern that years of effort by Japanese to contribute to the Hong Kong community might have evaporated (Noda 1996b). A survey of its readers showed that more than half held that the largest factor behind the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute was not the actions of Japan but the sensationalism of the Hong Kong media and the anxiety of Hong Kong people over Hong Kong's handover to China (*Hong Kong Post* 1996b).

The Japanese residents in Hong Kong with whom I have had the most extended relation are exchange students at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. These students have a more personal relation to Hong Kong people than many Japanese in Hong Kong, but they, like most of their compatriots, remain acutely conscious of being Japanese and uniformly bewildered by the protests. One said:

> I was shocked — those people still feel so strongly about Japanese militarism. If you go to Japan, the people there will tell you, "we will never fight a war against China." When I saw a banner saying that "the issue of the island is equal to Japanese militarism. It will lead to the third world war," I was amazed.

In another's words:

> When I saw the demonstrations in Hong Kong, I felt as if I were thrown back to wartime Japan: it seemed so nationalistic.... When I see the news, the anti-Japan banners, the demonstrations, I feel scared. I talk to students, and tell them I'm an exchange student from Japan, and they're friendly. But I live at the university hostel; people are watching TV every night about the issue. I get scared then, because they know I'm Japanese.... When I talk about the issue, I always say, "I understand your feeling. I feel guilty about what the Japanese government did during wartime." As long as I say I feel guilty, they're not going to be too aggressive toward me.

Still another spoke of how, at a meeting of students, she was afraid to speak to her Japanese friends: "I thought that if I said anything in Japanese, I might become the object of their resentment.... I have only a few Hong Kong friends. I don't know how they really feel about the dispute and about the Japanese people." In one of my classes, consisting of both Japanese and Hong Kong students, a discussion of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands prompted one Hong Kong student to say, "Sometimes I feel that we can't believe anything you say, because you're Japanese."

The role of exchange student is generally thought of as involving the bridging of cultural and national differences; in one Japanese student's words: "I came to Hong Kong so that I could understand Hong Kong people. I want to get outside Japan and communicate with people in the world." But the global bridges students such as this one sought to build were spurned by some Hong Kong students, who saw the Japanese in their midst not as fellow pursuers of international understanding but as untrustworthy strangers, trailed by the ineradicable shadows of history.

These Japanese students seemed well aware of history's shadows. The student quoted above may use expressions of guilt as a means of easing her social interactions with Hong Kong students, but she also feels a real sense of guilt over the war: "Many people in Hong Kong and at this university, their ancestors might have been killed by Japanese. I can understand why they feel as they do." But these Japanese students did not feel that they should have to labour under such shadows; the war was not their responsibility, they felt. One said, "I think that the Japanese government and the Japanese people are different, but people in Hong Kong seem to think they are the same." Yet it was not just a government that killed Chinese people in World War II, but hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers. "Japan is completely unmilitaristic today. There's no nationalism in Japan," these students say; but there was nationalism not so very long ago. Because of that, these students' protestations of contemporary Japanese inno-

cence may be suspect in many Hong Kong eyes. Let us now turn to Hong Kong views of the dispute.

Hong Kong Chinese Activists in the Midst of the Dispute

Hong Kong Chinese newspapers were often extraordinarily jingoistic in their commentary. To give just one example, a column in *Ming Pao Daily News* — the most trusted newspaper in Hong Kong, according to a recent survey — stated:

> Chinese all over the world must think deeply about the fact that... Japan is giving a signal that it is preparing to invade China.... Every awake person, everyone with a Chinese face or identity, must devote himself to preparing for a coming inevitable holy war to protect the Diaoyu Islands. We experienced the eight-year war with Japan. What is now coming is a new and unending war. (H. Ng 1996)

However, Hong Kong people quoted in the media by no means shared such patriotic frenzy; one person interviewed by *Ming Pao Daily News* about David Chan's death stated, "I don't think there's any reason for Hong Kong people to sail to the Diaoyu Islands"; another said, "I think it means nothing to die as he did" (*Ming Pao Daily News* 1996c). A meeting of student activists from different Hong Kong universities yielded no consensus: one student leader argued, "questioning whether or not the islands are really Chinese territory is exactly an expression of how students don't admit themselves as Chinese, and of how weak their national feelings are"; but another said, "shouting about protecting the Diaoyu Islands only intensifies national hatred between China and Japan, making China move onto the path of militarism"; still another said, "I won't protect the Diaoyu Islands for the sake of national feelings!" (*U-Beat* 1996).

I interviewed a number of Hong Kong Chinese student activists at the Chinese University, who, while not as inflammatory in their rhetoric as some Hong Kong Chinese mass media, maintained, in one student's words, "the Diaoyu Islands are a symbol that Japan might invade China, just as it did before." "My mother told me about the terrible things that the Japanese did in World War II," said another. "In Hong Kong, after the Japanese invasion, the population dropped sixty per cent!" However, their animosity does not extend to all Japanese, they claimed; as one person said:

> It may seem that we hate Japanese, but we don't.... Some soldiers admit that they killed Chinese, but the government won't apologize. We don't need any compensation, but only for them to apologize and admit that they did it.... Not all Japanese are bad. Some of them are very nice, but they don't even know where the Diaoyu Islands are; and they don't know anything about what Japan did in World War II to China. The Japanese government controls the mass media about this: in Hong Kong we know everything, but in Japan the students don't know anything!

As opposed to this sense of Japan — or at least the Japanese government and Japanese mass media — as the source of evil in Asia, these students strongly expressed their dream of a greater China. "It's time for us to show that we love our country. Yes, China and Taiwan have different political structures, but we are all Chinese, one race and one culture." "We love our country and we want our entire country to be united: Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, and the Diaoyu Islands. As Chinese, we are one."

These students had to admit, however, that their sense of the oneness of China was belied by the fact that the protests were, after all, taking place only in Hong Kong, not in China proper; they reluctantly had to agree with a *Ming Pao Daily News* column that appeared early in the crisis: "Every Chinese worries about the Japanese invasion of the Diaoyu Islands. But only in Hong Kong can we see demonstrations in the streets. Where are the mainlanders?... Aren't they Chinese?... Hong Kong people are left lonely in this crisis" (M. Wong 1996).

Beyond this, there is the mutual antipathy felt by the different governments claiming to be "China." Some Diaoyu Islands pro-

testers carried mainland Chinese flags and others the flag of Taiwan; if the Japanese had simply packed up and left, Taiwan and China would have immediately fallen into conflict over which of them owned the islands. When I discussed this with one student, he said: "The argument between China and Taiwan is like an argument within the family. We can argue within the family very seriously, but no outsider can come in and join that argument." In other words, Japan can serve as the threatening stranger at the door of the home, unifying the bickering family members at each others' throats by giving them a common enemy.

But the irony of this metaphor is that Japan is already in the family home: every one of the family's appliances, not to mention their television sets, radios and automobiles, will likely be Japanese; many comics, pop music hits and television programmes are also of Japanese origin. As one Hong Kong student said:

> We know there was World War II; we know that the Japanese killed many Chinese in the war. But since I was born, there have been Japanese products all around me — comics, TV, music. Yesterday I listened to the radio and there were many telephone calls from people expressing their anger at Japan; but immediately after that, the radio played a song copied from Japanese musicians. In our culture we have so many Japanese things! You can't avoid Japan. It's part of Hong Kong now.

This student personally knows not Japan's attempted military globalization half a century past, but rather Japan's far more benign economic and cultural globalization, making Japan an ineradicable part of Hong Kong. This point was brought home ironically by an activist who raided Sogo department store at Causeway Bay demanding a boycott of Japanese goods: almost everything he wore, from his watch to his shoes, had been made in Japan (*Hong Kong Post* 1996a). I observed another such irony at the Star Ferry Diaoyu Islands demonstration on 5 October. Above the surging crowd, a video played, decrying Japanese imperialism; but the television was a National, a Japanese brand. At one point, the video malfunctioned, and, bizarrely, the word "National" repeatedly floated across the screen, as if an advertisement: a cool beacon of Japanese global commerce, as against all the heat of anti-Japanese passion on the ground below.

A Complex of Motives

As the above depictions indicate, there was more going on in the Diaoyu Islands protests than readily met the eye: there was, indeed, a complex of motives on both the Chinese and the Japanese sides.

On the Japanese side, for all the Japanese students' protestations about the lack of militarism in their society, in fact, members of an extreme nationalist group did construct a lighthouse on one of the islands; the Japanese government never repudiated the acts of the group, which were blatantly provocative. One recent survey (Shapiro 1992:43) showed that only 6 percent of the Japanese population said that they would be willing to fight in a war for their country (as opposed to 77 percent of Americans; Hong Kong and China were not represented). On the other hand, as the Hong Kong Chinese student activists I interviewed never tired of pointing out, Japan has never fully apologized for the brutalities it committed in China during World War II. If the Japanese people are not militaristic, the behaviour of its government can certainly convey the impression of militarism, with its recent history of cabinet ministers denying the brutalities of the Nanking Massacre and of the colonization of Korea.

Japanese press coverage of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute was minuscule compared to press coverage in Hong Kong; only David Chan's death made the front page of most Japanese newspapers. Japanese newspapers criticized Hong Kong newspapers' jingoistic coverage of the dispute. For example, *Asahi Shinbun* argued that "fierce competition among Hong Kong newspapers accelerated Hong Kong people's criticism of Japan," with their sensationalistic reporting of the dispute; it quoted a Hong Kong journalist as saying, "if we write about the Diaoyu Islands

dispute, papers sell; if we don't, papers don't sell" (Sakajiri 1996) — but on the other hand, Japan's own newspapers may be criticized for their comparative silence. This contrasts not only with Hong Kong's blaring press, but also with Japanese press coverage of the northern islands, the Kuriles, in recent decades; Japan holds these islands to have been unjustly appropriated by the Russians, and the Japanese press has never been shy about hammering this point. It is far easier being a victim than an aggressor; as Japanese sometimes say, "Those who hit others forget what they did, but those who get hit never forget" (*tataita hô wa wasuretemo tatakareta hô wa wasurenai*). It was natural that Japanese tourists and students should have been shocked by Hong Kong Chinese outrage, since little in Japan had given them any idea of such massive resentment of Japan. "Internationalization" (*kokusaika*) may be a buzzword in Japan today, but this is an "internationalization" based in present interchanges, remaining, for the most part, blissfully oblivious to the recent past.

On the Chinese side, one aspect of this complex of motivations was alluded to earlier — the fact that anti-Japanese demonstrations took place in Hong Kong and Taiwan, but not in China. "President Jiang... and his colleagues are worried that once public protests begin, they won't stop at the issue of the Diaoyu Islands or Japanese war crimes, but will inevitably turn against the communist leadership itself" (Spaeth 1996). The fact that demonstrations took place in Hong Kong but not in China represented in itself an implicit criticism of China; and indeed, the political groups most responsible for Hong Kong's demonstrations were those shunned by Beijing. "In Hong Kong, mass rallies have been initiated primarily by pro-democracy groups anxious to demonstrate their patriotism in the face of Beijing's assumption that those who do not back its plans for the territory are 'unpatriotic'" (Bowring 1996). By organizing demonstrations, pro-democracy groups could assert that they were more patriotic than the Chinese government, in that they were willing to stand up for China against Japan, as the Chinese government, worried about preserving its economic links with Japan, was not. This was

clearly an underlying motive for the protests, although one vociferously denied by the Hong Kong student activists with whom I discussed it.

To some, a mystery of the Diaoyu Islands protests was why so many Hong Kong Chinese seemed to see as their enemy not their totalitarian neighbour and soon-to-be ruler to the north but rather a society across the ocean. A letter to the *South China Morning Post* stated this plainly:

> I find recent calls which have been made to boycott Japanese goods most irrational. If taking over an uninhabited island is a crime, is the massacre of thousands of unarmed protesters [at Tiananmen Square] not at least equally criminal? Then why should a people boycott goods from a country that committed the former crime but not from the country that committed the latter? (Tam 1996)

One Japanese writer in Hong Kong explained the matter simply (Arai 1996). Japan, she argued, is but a scapegoat: "The current fury over the Diaoyu Islands has more to do with Hong Kong people's frustration toward Beijing than anything else." For such assertions, she was apparently forced to resign from the Hong Kong newspaper she worked for and was roundly criticized in Hong Kong for forgetting history (see F. Wong 1996): the history of Japanese aggression against China. As a Hong Kong Chinese commentator wrote: "It is said that Japanese are amazed [that Hong Kong people are so involved in the Diaoyu Islands protest]... but Hong Kong suffered the pain of Japanese occupation. Please do not think that we have amnesia" (Shek 1996).

As earlier noted, anger at Japan served as a unifying force for diverse political Chinas, normally at one another's throats. This was apparent at the height of the Diaoyu Islands protests; after Taiwanese and Hong Kong activists had succeeded in planting flags on the Diaoyu Islands, returning in triumph to Taiwan, "Taiwan separatists threw eggs and burned China's flag outside an inn where Hong Kong activists were lodged. The protesters were incensed the Hong Kong group had dared to raise the main-

land flag on what they insist is Taiwanese soil. Predictably, Beijing also took offense that the banners of Taiwan and China flapped side by side" (Ajello 1996).

Given these political differences, what is the common "Chineseness" the Diaoyu Islands protesters proclaimed? What is the "Chinese family" the aforementioned student proclaimed? These seem to be referring to an ethnic and cultural Chineseness that transcends political difference; but what exactly this larger Chineseness consists of seems problematic (Mathews 1996). If "Chineseness" is held to be "race," then the Hong Kong Chinese I spoke with must account for the fact that the Japanese they so assail are physically all but indistinguishable from Chinese. If "Chineseness" is held to consist of language, then these Hong Kong Chinese must account for the fact that Cantonese and Mandarin are as spoken languages mutually unintelligible. If "Chineseness" is held to be a common cultural tradition, then these Hong Kong Chinese must account for the fact that such tradition has been systematically obliterated in mainland China by communism, just as it has been eroded in Hong Kong by colonialism. The common "Chineseness" proclaimed by the Diaoyu Islands protesters seems an illusion, proclaimed by various political groups for their own power-seeking ends.

We thus can see that both the Japanese and Chinese arguments are shaped by the underlying complexes of motivations of each side; the tourists and students I interviewed are shaped and perhaps manipulated by these different motivations. This alone, however, is not enough to explain the two different sides' mutual incomprehension.

Positions, Interests, Cultures and Discourses

How can we most fully understand the mutual incomprehension of the Japanese and Chinese whose voices we have heard in this paper? Most simply, there are the social positions from which these voices emanate. In the broadest sense, tourists, expatriates

and exchange students seek, in their own various ways, to transcend cultural bounds, while those at home may seek to reinforce cultural bounds. International tourists tend to seek to experience the foreign in an enjoyable, domesticated package; exchange students tend to seek to transcend the foreign through the interpersonal bridges they build with those of another society. The Diaoyu Islands protests represented a denial of the validity of these social positions by emphasizing not commonality and commerce between Japanese and Hongkongese but difference, not bridges but walls. The Hong Kong student activists acted as defenders of what they saw as their cultural home — becoming a national cultural home after 1 July 1997 — as against the claims to friendship of those who they saw as outsiders and former transgressors.

The conflict between these different social positions — the conflict between insider and outsider, between "family" and "stranger" — is universal; but the particular cultural shaping of Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese clearly exacerbates this conflict. The people I interviewed have been shaped, through their societies' educational systems and mass media, to see the dispute within the frame of their societies' self-interests, self-interests obviously at odds. The islands are potentially valuable: the Chinese sides can best stake their claim by decrying past Japanese militarism and its resurgence, while the Japanese side can best hold its claim by downplaying its past. In a larger sense, it is in the Japanese interest to minimize World War II, and in other Asian nations' interests to trumpet World War II ("Just as the Japanese deny or play down their aggressive war, the Chinese have been willing to mercilessly and cynically exploit Japanese guilt over what happened" for their own economic and political ends [McGregor 1996]). The people I interviewed are not wholly pawns of such shaping; among both the Hongkongese and Japanese I interviewed, there was a range of opinion, and at least a limited degree of skepticism toward one's government and its proclamations, one's education and its blinders. Yet the fact that the two sides could so little comprehend one another indicates the ultimate

power of such shaping in fixing the bounds of what one is able to think.

Such shaping, by definition, is cultural, if we see "culture" in terms of the underlying and, to a degree, enduring values transmitted to each generation within a given society. It seems clear that, to a degree anyway, the two sides have different culturally shaped views of history. The Japanese emphasis on *un*, "fate" (Lebra 1976:175-76), leads to a view of history not as a matter of rights and wrongs, but as the given course of things, with no one to be blamed for what transpired.[6] The Chinese view of a Sinocentric world impinged upon by colonialism may lead to a very different sense of history: of the historical wrongs done to China and particularly to Hong Kong that must be righted (Wang 1995:17-24). Perhaps not too much should be inferred from these different views of history. After all, the powers that be in Japan are perfectly capable of inventing history when circumstances suit them — the 2,600-year reign of the Japanese emperor promulgated and believed until the end of World War II — just as the powers that be in China are perfectly capable of obliterating history, as in the more recent case of the Tiananmen Square Incident. But in any case, these different cultural attitudes do seem to be used at present to serve the interests of their societies: the young in Japan are culturally shaped to forget recent history, while the young in Hong Kong are at present being culturally shaped to remember.

These different cultural shapings come into conflict because of Japan's globalization: the transformation of Japan, in just five decades, from a society devastated by defeat in war and on the brink of starvation to the world's second largest economy, whose products, corporations and citizens reach across the world, including, as we have seen, Hong Kong. Largely because Japan's affluence and resulting global reach have occurred so rapidly in history, the cosmopolitanism of many of its citizens may still lag behind the cosmopolitan reach of its products. In Befu and Stalker's words, "The disposition of the Japanese abroad is not... toward cosmopolitanization.... Their identification and their pride

as Japanese do not diminish during their foreign sojourn. Instead, if anything, these feelings are intensified as the Japanese become conscious of the cultural contrasts between Japan and the culture in which they find themselves" (1996:115). Indeed, even the Japanese students quoted earlier, eagerly pursuing international understanding, may find that their national-cultural moulding as citizens of Japan serves to undermine that pursuit. However, this may be true not only for the Japanese, but also for their Hong Kong hosts, and for all of us in today's world. Our national-cultural education within our particular societies may make "cross-cultural misunderstanding" all but inevitable.

But this cultural explanation is not yet sufficient for fully comprehending the miscomprehension of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputants. Globalization, writes Roland Robertson, "refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (1992:8); it is by definition not only national, involving states, but transnational, involving movement that transcends states. Given the fact of globalization, the idea of discrete cultures exclusively shaping their citizens is increasingly called into question. As Ulf Hannerz has written, it is now "more difficult than ever... to see the world... as a cultural mosaic, of separate pieces with hard well-defined edges. Cultural interconnections reach across the world. More than ever, there is a global ecumene" (1992:218). As Arjun Appadurai, most notably, has explored (1990, 1996), today we live in a world of massive global flows of people, capital, and ideas (1990); as Hannerz proclaims "there is now one world culture" (1996:111).

Within such a world, we are all not only culturally separated, but also culturally linked; the key for understanding this paper's disputants is to see them not only as members of separate cultures, but also as members of one world culture, a common metaculture (to use, in a somewhat different context, Robertson's term [1992:41]). Many theorists have considered global culture and globalization in macrocosmic terms, but what of microcosmic terms? How do people actually use this global culture to make sense of their worlds? To most fully understand the Diaoyu/

Senkaku Islands disputants, we must focus not only on their different cultural shapings, but also on their common global shaping: their adoption of different contemporary global discourses to formulate and legitimate their opposing views.

Discourse is a slippery term, but I define it as "a linguistically-shaped model that determines the preconditions of what may be thought within a given social position and cultural context." Discourse differs from culture in, among other things, its flexibility. Whereas a member of a culture, at least in the more traditional uses of that term, seems all but enveloped in its values and worldviews, its "way of life," discourse is more motile and adaptable. One may situationally use a number of different discourses, despite the fact that these discourses may in some senses be mutually antagonistic and even unintelligible, in that their underlying premises fundamentally differ. I argue that there are a small number of common discourses at play throughout the media-connected globalized world today, with each taking on an interest-specific and culturally specific form within different cultural and personal contexts, but nonetheless remaining still universally recognizable: these discourses include those of science, technology and progress, religious belief and rule of law. Two of the most dominant of these discourses, as I will now discuss, are those of nationalism and of capitalism.

Capitalism and Nationalism as World Discourses

Simply speaking, the discourse of nationalism specifies who one's group is apart from the world as a whole ("We are Chinese/Japanese/American, unlike you"), while the discourse of capitalism specifies whom one is as a part of the world as a whole in its commodification, the global parade of production and consumption. Most people, at least in more affluent parts of the world, situationally use these two discourses in constructing, maintaining and legitimating their senses of cultural identity.

Japanese tourists, businessmen and students in Hong Kong seem to have different purposes, but there is a commonality in these groups. The businessman is engaged in making money, the tourist in spending money — eating, shopping, buying souvenirs — and the student in greasing the wheels of commerce through the pursuit of international understanding. Members of all three of these groups may see themselves through the discourse of capitalism. Capitalism, as Marx declared, entails the obliteration of the past by the present and future ("All fixed, fast-frozen relations... are swept away.... All that is solid melts into air"), and the diminution of nation by trade across the globe ("In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations.... National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible") (Marx 1978:476-77). Today's writers on capitalism, from Kenichi Ohmae (1990) to Robert Reich (1991), repeat endlessly the mantra that in today's "borderless world," the era of the nation and of nationalism is over.

This discourse fits the interests of contemporary Japan in its pursuit of legitimacy and respect in the world. "Nationalism," for many Japanese, refers to the bad old days of the Japanese attempt to militarily dominate the world. When Japanese tourists and students expressed their shock at Hong Kong people's avowals of nationalism, they were giving this word its negative Japanese connotation (a connotation held by all but right-wing groups, such as that which built the lighthouse on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and some troglodyte politicians of the Liberal Democratic Party). As opposed to this dark past connotation, it is commerce with the world's nations that refers, for them, to the bright Japanese present. That such commerce is often seen by outsiders as being less than benign and, indeed, nationalistic (an occasional comment by outsiders in recent decades being that "Japan is trying to do commercially what it couldn't do militarily: take over the world") is beside the point. The point, rather, is that this discourse, of the goodness of international commerce and the

badness of nationalism, is self-evident and taken-for-granted for the Japanese people whose views appear in this paper.

If, for many Japanese, nationalism represents an ugly past best forgotten, commerce its glittering present, for many Hong Kong Chinese, commerce is the past and present *status quo*, nationalism a colonially repressed past but soon-to-come proud future. During its recent decades of economic growth, Hong Kong was often spoken of as a territory of pure capitalism, with minimal government interference; but the other side of this coin was that the colonial government did all it could to blunt the emergence of any nationalist consciousness. As said a Hong Kong university teacher I interviewed, "Hong Kong people are pragmatic and rootless... because we don't have any sense of belonging; we don't learn in school about national identity, citizenship, civics.... My schooling involved... a total neglect of the Chinese part of my education. I still have no understanding of Chinese literature and history." Nationalism, for such people, may involve the awakening of a sense of "Chineseness" long repressed by the colonial government — the awakening of Hong Kong people to whom they truly are, but have not been allowed to realize that they are.

"The idea of a man without a nation seems to impose a strain on the modern imagination," writes Ernest Gellner. "A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears" (1983:6). As one young Hong Kong resident told me in 1996, "Every time I travel to another country, I have to fill out the forms and write down my nationality.... I ask the stewardess, 'what should I write for nationality: British, Hong Kong, or Chinese?'" Those in Hong Kong who welcome the coming of Chinese control over Hong Kong do so in part because they will finally then have a national identity: the "nose and two ears" that they feel has long been denied them. They will be Chinese.

Many Hong Kong people have misgivings about reverting to a political China they see as totalitarian — one survey conducted shortly before the handover indicated that 40 per cent of young people in Hong Kong would emigrate if they could, and 30 per cent of Hong Kong people were worried about human rights

(Yeung 1997; see also Mathews 1997). This is why the Hong Kong students earlier referred to speak of a China that transcends the political: a China that is neither mainland China, nor Taiwan nor Hong Kong, but rather the cultural background of them all. This cultural China provides the only basis these Hong Kong students feel they have for claiming "Chineseness." Just as the Japanese students expressed amazement at Hong Kong people's expressions of nationalism, so too the Hong Kong students expressed shock at the Japanese students' distaste for nationalism, as if to say, "You have your nation, despite the terrible things it did. Why won't you let us have pride in our nation?" These two discourses, forming the taken-for-granted underpinnings of the Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese views we have recounted, seem to all but preclude understanding between the two groups.[7]

It is important to emphasize that these discourses of capitalism and nationalism are not equivalent to capitalism and nationalism as objective phenomena. Clearly, in the world at large, capitalism and nationalism are not simply opposites, but are complexly interlinked. It is on the level of discourse — involving the simplification and streamlining of the objective world, so as to provide contemporary human minds with structures of thought through which to comprehend the world — that nationalism and capitalism may come to function as encompassing opposites. Some discursive structurings are more sophisticated than others — leading some people to be able to view capitalism and nationalism more in shades of grey than in simple black and white — but all discursive structures involve simplification, to make the world's empirical chaos comprehensible. Capitalism and nationalism are the labels I have given to two such discourses, discourses that in their more fundamental, less subtle forms are incommensurate.

It is also important to emphasize that these discourses are situationally emergent, rather than being culturally intrinsic. The Japanese I interviewed concerning the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands used the discourse of capitalism, Hong Kong Chinese the discourse of nationalism. But one can imagine a situation — for

example, if a Hong Kong trading company were seeking to export China-grown rice to Japan and were resisted by Japanese farmers and the Japanese public — where the frames of discourse would be the opposite: Hong Kong Chinese speaking from the frame of international capitalism, saying "let commerce transcend national borders," and Japanese speaking from the frame of protective nationalism: "Japan only needs Japanese rice!" (Such cries could be heard in Japan a few years ago, when farmers sought to block the importation of American and Thai rice.) There is, again, nothing intrinsically "Japanese" or "Hong Kong Chinese" about the respective frames of discourse held to by the two sides in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute. Rather, given the nature of the dispute (over land that Japan was viewed to have "usurped," evoking historical remembrance and forgetfulness) and the timing of the dispute (shortly before Hong Kong's return to China and "Chineseness"), these global discourses of capitalism and nationalism were adhered to by Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese as the frames and justifications for their senses of cultural identity.

Conclusion: The Shadows of History

The foregoing analysis does not mean that these frames of discourse were adhered to consciously and calculatedly by the people I interviewed. The sheer "taken-for-grantedness" with which these discourses were adhered to, the clear inability of the two sides to fully comprehend one another, are an indication of how little these discourses were chosen, and how much they were seen as a natural, self-evident given by their adherents. Today's Japanese sojourners and Hong Kong Chinese protesters are, to a degree, trapped within their different discourses, pawns of the culturally conditioned patterns of forgetfulness and remembrance within their different societies — patterns that use global discourses for less-than-global ends.

If they are thus in a sense pawns of their conditioned views of history, all the more so were their parents and grandparents: the

Japanese soldiers and their Chinese victims in Hong Kong, and in Nanking too, among other places — propelled by global political forces into hundreds of thousands of acts of individual violence. Underlying the all-but-mutually-incomprehensible discourses we have examined is an existential question, the question of guilt and innocence. Are today's Japanese guilty of what their fathers and grandfathers did? What responsibility do they bear? Japanese brutalities may have been worse than those of some other nations' conquering armies; but finally this issue transcends Japan, to address us all. Why, when our governments call upon us to do so, do we — Japanese, Americans, Chinese, Europeans — slaughter one another in war? All of us are both guilty and innocent: we are such nice people, and yet kill one another so readily when ordered to by our governments.

The discourse of capitalism has its own "false consciousness," breeding its own gross inequities and exploitations, but not the savagery that the discourse of nationalism may breed; and the latter — whether leading to the barbarisms of World War II, or the far paler threats of a few protests sixty years later — ever threatens to swamp the glittering forgetfulness of the former. Capitalism forgets, nationalism remembers; and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute represented at its broadest, the collision of these two discourses. It was a minor collision in this instance, but one with implications far transcending a few specks of island that are home to no one.

Notes

1. When I refer in this paper to these islands, I label them "the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands" — by both their Chinese and Japanese names. When referring to the protests in Hong Kong, however, I refer to "the Diaoyu Islands protests," since this is the name by which the islands are recognized in Hong Kong.

2. This made it arguably the largest demonstration in Hong Kong in 1996, rivalling the total reported for the demonstrations marking the Tiananmen Square Incident.

3. As I will later discuss, this "Chinese nation" does not refer to any existing Chinese state, but rather to the unity of all Chinese states, in an imagined "greater Chineseness."

4. Some Hong Kong Chinese newspapers, however, defended and glorified the action. The *Oriental Daily News* (1996b) proclaimed that "the twenty-four warriors of the Diaoyu movement protest the Japanese occupation of the island with 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' by themselves occupying the Japanese Consulate."

5. The only exception among guidebooks to this omission of history is in the Hong Kong guide of the *Chikyû no arukikata* series, roughly equivalent to the *Lonely Planet* Guides in English. It carries an article entitled "What Japan Did in Hong Kong in the Past," which urges Japanese tourists to remember that "many people in Hong Kong had their blood relatives killed by Japanese military forces.... In the minds of Hong Kong people there is always an anti-Japanese sentiment which can easily be ignited by the least provocation" (Suzuki 1996:429). It is not surprising that this guide for the independent traveller, dealing, presumably, to a greater degree with Hong Kong people, should be the lone Japanese guide to address the issue of Japan's past atrocities in Hong Kong. As for the actual extent of such atrocities, in their recent histories of Hong Kong, Welsh (1993) is somewhat less critical of the Japanese occupation than Morris (1997); but both seem to concur with Morris's assessment that "by and large the conduct of the Japanese in Hong Kong [in World War II] was despicable" (1997:249).

6. During the seven years in all that I, as an American, have lived in Japan, I cannot recall even once being in any discussion in which the United States was blamed for its atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (bombings that, arguably, were entirely unnecessary). Partly this was a matter of tact, but more, I believe it to be due to the cultural influence of *un*; as older Japanese have said to me, "That was a bad time back then; many bad things happened. But there's no need for blame. Let us simply be thankful that those bad old days are gone."

7. A number of letters written by Hong Kong Chinese to the *South China Morning Post* during the crisis seek to rebut the views of non-Chinese letter writers in words such as the following: "as a foreigner, [Mr. X] cannot understand the strong patriotic feelings that Chinese people throughout the world feel on this issue" (Chin 1996) — they cannot comprehend the language of Chinese nationalism, a language that, according to the letter, only Chinese can comprehend.

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(Note: The romanization of books and articles in Chinese published in Hong Kong are given in Cantonese, using the Yale system. For personal names of Hong Kong writers writing in Chinese, I use the more casual Hong Kong style of romanization, since this probably reflects their own romanized spellings of their names. Chinese-language newspapers in Hong Kong are designated by the romanized names they give themselves. The romanization of books and articles in Japanese follow the Hepburn system.)

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A Collision of Discourses

Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese during the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Crisis

Abstract

In September 1996, Hong Kong experienced a wave of angry demonstrations over a Japanese right-wing group's assertion of Japanese sovereignty over the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands; anti-Japanese feeling swept across the territory. At the same time, however, the Japanese presence in Hong Kong remained ubiquitous: not only merchandise, but also tourists and other sojourners, most of whom were shocked by what they beheld. How, in the midst of this tension, did Japanese sojourners in Hong Kong perceive of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong people's views of them as Japanese? How, in turn, did Hong Kong activists perceive the Japanese sojourners in their midst? And how can we comprehend the very different comprehensions of these two groups?

This paper analyzes a very small range of events — the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands protests in Hong Kong in autumn 1996, and the viewpoints of Japanese tourists and students and Hong Kong Chinese activists during those protests — to arrive, eventually, at an understanding of a collision of global discourses in today's world. These discourses, filtered through Japan's worldwide economic reach and Hong Kong's resurgent sense of Chineseness, are, I argue, those of capitalism in its myth of a pastless present and nationalism in its myth of past as present.

論述的撞擊
釣魚台事件中的日本人及香港中國人

Gordon Mathews

（中文摘要）

一九九六年九月，日本保守派公開聲明日本擁有釣魚台的主權。此事件引致香港的反日情緒高漲，因而引發一連串的反日示威。與此同時，日本的商品、僑民、遊客等卻仍充斥香港社會。而這些身處香港的日本人，則對他們所見所感的反日情緒感到十分吃驚。到底在這樣的一種緊張關係中，兩方面的人是如何理解對方的呢？對於這兩方面不同的觀點，我們又可以如何去理解呢？

就著這個問題，本文希望透過分析一九九六年間幾個相關的抗議事件，配合日本遊客、日本留學生及香港積極分子的看法，從而理解今日全球性論述之中的矛盾。我認爲，事件中所表現出來的衝突，是源於日本的世界性經濟成就，以及香港的「中國性」的復甦。這個矛盾，其實就是今日全球性資本主義和國族主義所締造的神話間的矛盾 — 一個「沒有歷史的現在」與及「過去等於現在」的矛盾。