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**TODAY**

**NATIONAL**

**Pared wish list**

The DPJ may drop some pledges in the platform that catapulted it to power last year. Prime Minister Naoto Kan said.

**ASIA-PACIFIC**

**Warning on rice**

A projected rise in temperatures because of climate change will slow the growth of rice production in Asia, a new study says.

**WORLD**

**Israeli threat**

Israel threatens to pull out of a U.N. inquiry into a deadly raid on a Turkish flotilla heading for the Gaza Strip after failing to receive agreement to sell out Israeli soldiers to testify.

## Kan apologizes for colonial rule of Korea

Statement just for South echoes Murayama text

### Gist of apology

Japan's colonial rule inflicted damage and suffering on the Korean people, and the Japanese government will take steps to help recover the damage and help South Koreans living in North Korea.

Japan will hold over Korean culture artifacts.

Japan and South Korea are partners working together and taking the lead for peace and prosperity in the region and the world.

We must be respectful where we need to be, and work jointly toward the next 100 years to create a stronger bilateral relationship, Kan said.

end of the war and Japan's rule over Korea.

He thanked Lee for "maintaining a positive attitude toward strengthening bilateral ties."

"I hope today's statement will point forward such issues, and contribute to our advancement in the future," Kan said.

Unlike the past statements that were in more general geographic terms, Kan's remarks were directed specifically at South Korea, and the North.

The statement said Japan will turn over to South Korea certain confiscated cultural artifacts kept by the Imperial Household Agency, most notably a record of Korean royal ceremonies known as the Joseon Wangjo Sigae.

Kan also thanked on working through humanitarian efforts, including the recovery of the remains of Koreans in Japan.

"It is important that we build a forward-looking relationship," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Taniguchi said, adding that the Cabinet unanimously endorsed the statement.

But the message was quickly greeted by conservative as a whole, with some fearing it could anger South Koreans to demand financial compensation. Such issues came up in



Looking back, looking forward: Prime Minister Naoto Kan holds a news conference Tuesday after issuing a statement apologizing to South Korea for Japan's colonial rule of Korea.

## No Aug. 15 Yasukuni visit by Cabinet

Prime Minister Naoto Kan and all of his ministers have expressed their intention not to visit Yasukuni Shrine on Sunday, the anniversary of the end of World War II, out of respect for Asian victims of Japanese militarism.

Kan announced in June that he wouldn't visit the shrine, which honoring Japan's war dead along with war criminals as long as he is in office. Past Yasukuni visits by prime ministers triggered fierce criticism, most notably from China and South Korea.

"I clearly stated my position" on the issue after assuming office, Kan said at a news conference. "I believe my position will win people's understanding."

This will be the first anniversary of the end of the war since Kan's Democratic Party of Japan came to power. Under Liberal Democratic Party-led governments, six of

Owning up: The Japan Times' Aug. 11, 2010, front-page coverage of Prime Minister Naoto Kan's Aug. 10 speech expressing "deep remorse" and "heartfelt apology" for Japan's colonial rule in Korea. North Korea expressed resentment at being left out of the apology.

## Uneasy neighbors across the sea

### Japan's colonial rule in Korea between 1910 and 1945 has left open wounds that are still far from being healed

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Both nations maintain that their claims are stronger and better documented, but discussion of Takeshima is relatively muted in Japan, with the exception of Shimane Prefecture which, in 2005, declared Feb. 22 to be Takeshima Day to commemorate the seizure of the islands from Korea in 1905. As a result, on that day there are now annual festivities in Matsue, the prefectural capital, attracting nationalists from around Japan who try, with little success, to stir up some primordial emotions among an indifferent public that goes about its business while their deafening "hate buses" (as Julian Dudden, a 5-year-old friend of mine calls them) blare out patriotic songs and exhortations.

In South Korea, Dokdo is a very big deal and much more than a territorial dispute. While taking the ferry to Dokdo, passengers can get in the mood by watching an anime featuring a massive



robot repelling Japanese invaders. Korea's assertion of sovereignty over Dokdo enters the realm of the sacred and is historically sound, while Japan's claim is portrayed as profane, a groundless legacy of colonial rule and Imperial arrogance.sk

However, any suggestion of submitting the rival claims to international arbitration is rejected because to do so would be tantamount, in the Korean view, to rewarding colonial aggression. While international lawyers could find some merit in the competing claims, this is to ignore the vehemence animating public discourse in Korea about the dispute that renders legal hairsplitting irrelevant, since the seizure of Dokdo in 1905 is seen as the opening act of Japanese colonial aggression and as such an unforgivable perfidy and non-negotiable.

The Japanese government is keenly aware of Korean sensitivities and, in order to avoid provoking uproar during the fraught centennial, has delayed release of the Defense White Paper because it refers to the taboo Takeshima. So what might have been a hullabaloo in August has been punted to September.

If this all seems a bit over the top, remember that in July a Korean threw a rock at the Japanese ambassador in Seoul and some South Koreans have cut off fingers to register their anger about Japan's conceit over Dokdo.

The fact that the Japanese government maintains its claims, and that middle-school textbook guidelines now require teaching about Japan's "spurious" sovereignty, outrages Koreans.sk

Togo explains, "Korea's position is that there is nothing to talk about. But in order to resolve the dispute, it is necessary to talk. Track-two efforts by academics and scholars can open discussions and it is possible to have good exchanges. There is room to learn from the confidence- building measures (CBMs) such as fishery agreements, no-visa visits and humanitarian assistance that helped change the context of negotiations between Japan and Russia regarding the (disputed) Northern Territories. CBMs can help shift perspectives and allow actors to see the situation from a different angle and break the impasse. They do not have to be islands of eternal dispute."

Perhaps, but as Christian Caryl of the journal Foreign Policy points out, "North Koreans publish their own set of Dokdo postage stamps; any smidgen of compromise by Seoul on territorial issues will immediately be seized upon by the North for its own propaganda purposes."

### **Nullification?**

At the crux of colonial controversy lies the 1910 Treaty of Annexation. Koreans maintain that the treaty was never valid, principally because it was negotiated

under coercion and there are procedural flaws and discrepancies involving the signatures and state seal on the treaty and the Imperial edict that promulgated the treaty. The 1965 Treaty of Normalization states that all treaties signed before Aug. 22, 1910 are already null and void — but the Japanese government maintains that the treaty was valid at the time it was signed until Korea's liberation in 1945.

Haruki Wada, professor emeritus of the University of Tokyo, has played a key role in pressuring the Japanese government to nullify the 1910 Treaty of Annexation. He and colleagues in Japan and South Korea have gathered more than 1,000 signatures of intellectuals from each nation on a joint statement calling for official recognition that Japanese colonialism in Korea was illegal. In doing so, the hope is to open the door for individual compensation and to raise awareness in Japan about the specific crimes of colonial rule in Korea, while igniting a wider debate about colonialism.sk

The petition also calls on the Japanese government to normalize ties with North Korea.

Alexis Dudden, author of "Japan's Colonization of Korea" (2005) and "Troubled Apologies" (2008), states that, "the point isn't whether or not the annexation was legal or illegal, but rather to understand what constituted 'legality' in 1910, thus, even though it is possible to demonstrate that the annexation was legal at the time, that doesn't mean it was 'good.' Japan's annexation of Korea was legal because forced and forged treaties, assassinations, bribes, and deceit were the colonial game. In the summer of 1907, the world sided with Japan to agree collectively that the Koreans were 'unfit to rule themselves.' "sk

And thus Korea was abandoned to Japanese violence and ambitions.

Stanford professor emeritus Peter Duus, renowned author of "The Abacus and the Sword" (1995), does not see much hope in the nullification movement, arguing, "The recent movement to have the Japanese government declare the annexation treaty 'null and void' from the start seems quixotic at best, and questionable as a matter of international law unless there is evidence that Yi Wan Yong, the Korean prime minister at the time, was bribed or signed the treaty at gunpoint. All the major world powers, the United States included, accepted the treaty as legitimate, and most thought that Korea would be better off under Japanese guidance."sk

Andrew Horvat, director of the Stanford program in Kyoto, is equally skeptical, describing the nullification movement as the polarizing equivalent of Jane Fonda going to Hanoi during the Vietnam War. Horvat argues that reconciliation depends on forging a consensus within Japan about the colonial era — one that will lead to concrete acts of contrition.sk

In his view, the nullification movement will divide domestic actors and prevent

any consensus, thereby derailing reconciliation initiatives.

Another expert (who requested anonymity) comments, "For a movement with overt political aims, its organizers' dizzying lack of political acumen on multiple fronts will likely yield unnecessary backlash to a worthy and necessary aim: historical understanding between Japan and Korea."

## **Imperial visit**

In September 2009, President Lee Myung Bak invited Emperor Akihito to visit on the occasion of the centennial, in the hope this would facilitate a future-oriented relationship. Imperial visits have played an important role in promoting reconciliation, but the government is mindful that the Emperor's 1992 visit to China was premature and did little to appease public opinion or ease tensions over history. Any incidents during a visit also carry the risk of causing a significant setback for bilateral relations.sk

Dudden suggests another option: "If Japan is serious about moving on from the so-called 'history problems' in productive and substantive ways befitting East Asia's most successful democracy, the answer lies *not* in sending Emperor Akihito to Seoul, but first in having him address the Japanese nation on television and apologizing (with a bow) to those in Asia and in Japan (in that order) whose lives were devastated by the course of the Japanese empire and war."sk

Kenneth Ruoff, author of "The People's Emperor" (2001) and "Imperial Japan at its Zenith" (2010), acknowledges that Japan was slow to own up to its wartime behavior and make amends, but thinks this has changed, "beginning with Emperor Akihito's apology to President Roh Tae Woo during his 1990 visit."

Subsequently, the Emperor made reference to his Korean ancestry, "a statement with tremendous symbolic importance because it mocked the notion that the Japanese are a 'pure' race.

"A visit, if carefully choreographed by both governments, might improve relations. The Emperor is Japan's national symbol after all, and it was also in the name of the Emperor that Japan's colonial policies were executed."

## **Prospects for reconciliation**

It won't happen soon and it may take until the centennial of liberation in 2045 before Korea (or the two Koreas) and Japan manage to alleviate the miseries of the shared past.

Mark Caprio, author of "Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea" (University of Washington, 2009), notes that colonial officials believed it would

take a century to assimilate a people they regarded as inherently inferior. The wounds of belittling and eradicating Korean cultural identity and trampling ethnic pride remain painful and healing them could take just as long.

The flawed attempt to compensate the comfort women through the Asia Women's Fund (1995-2007) helped relatively few victims (364) while stoking anger and disappointment in both nations. It was an equivocal effort over an issue demanding a grand gesture, thus provoking recrimination and underscoring how important a problem it remains for Japan. Redress is hostage to domestic politics and general heedlessness.sk

Ruoff observes, "Although more and more Japanese have a general sense that their country's colonial rule over Korea was exploitative, they still lack a sense of just how dreadful it was for Koreans." Duus also notes the lack of, "a willingness on both sides to take the other's point of view into account, but unfortunately those with extremist views often seem to speak with the loudest voices — or maybe just attract the most media attention."

And as Horvat points out, giving the Japanese their due might help, saying, "Much also depends to what degree Koreans are willing to gaze steadfast into a past in which economic progress took place in a period of national humiliation."

Howard French, former New York Times bureau chief in Tokyo and Shanghai, asserts that, "Japan's acts of reconciliation have been inadequate in scope, in terms of the weight of the language or the drama of the acts themselves . . . never rising to the level of a consensus wholly embraced among the mainstream political class.sk

"Japanese governments have come and gone, and their ardor for reconciliation has varied considerably. . . . the impression this leaves in others is of insincerity."

But, he adds, "There is a responsibility incumbent on Japan's neighbors to extend their hand of friendship, to make it easier, in effect, to make the definitive magnanimous gestures needed. This means giving up the cynical use of war issues and flag-waving to energize the base.sk

"It means accepting the idea that real reconciliation requires generosity from all parties. It requires a willingness to expend some political capital to end an unsightly and ultimately harmful state of affairs."

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