

China Comparisons: Images of China in Japanese Popular Non-Fiction

Matthew PENNEY

University of Auckland, New Zealand

IN APRIL 2005, anti-Japanese protests broke out in several major Chinese cities. The protests were sparked by the Japanese government's approval of middle school textbooks that critics held had whitewashed aspects of the nation's wartime history. The visits of Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō to Yasukuni Shrine – a site associated with Japan's militarist past– have also angered many Chinese. It is commonly acknowledged in academic and journalistic accounts of international relations in East Asia that ill will towards Japan exists in China.¹ Less widely discussed, however, are anti-Chinese feelings that exist in Japan. These sentiments were in large part inflamed by televised images of Chinese demonstrators hurling stones at the Japanese embassy in Beijing, and reports of attacks on Japanese restaurants and on Japanese citizens at the time of the protests. A July 2005 poll conducted by the Japan Research Centre reported that 71% of Chinese and 57% of Japanese surveyed responded that their feelings toward their neighbor were "not good". Of those Japanese who responded in this fashion, 76% also cited anti-Japanese feelings in China as the reason behind their own view.² The number of Japanese who had negative feelings towards China increased by approximately 10% between 2003 and 2005, suggesting that the April 2005 protests and other recent incidents have brought about a considerable shift in attitudes.³ While the Chinese protests were clear evidence of an outpouring of pent-up anger toward Japan, they also had the added effect of drawing similar anti-Chinese feelings to the surface in Japan.

From 2005 until mid-2006 the Chinese government, citing outrage over Prime Minister Koizumi's expressed intent to continue visits to Yasukuni Shrine refused high-level talks with its neighbor.⁴ Only when Koizumi stepped down and was replaced by fellow conservative Abe Shintarō in September 2006, did any steps toward reconciliation take place. Nevertheless, negative feelings remained high within popular consciousness. In China, major news sources such as the *People's Daily* have continued to castigate the Japanese side of the conflict for 'incorrect' views of history and 'insincere' promises in regards to war crimes committed in China in the early half of the 20th century.⁵ In Japan, a variety of popular publications critical of China have appeared since the April 2005 protests. Although works of this type existed prior to 2005, current titles are now distinguished by their increasingly harsh tone and the extent of international interest they have generated.⁶

The November 1, 2005 edition of *The Times* ran a feature entitled, "Neighbor fails to see funny side of comic," detailing the appearance of a number of Japanese manga (comic books) that engage in often venomous attacks on China and Korea.⁷ A similar story entitled, "Ugly Images of Asian Rivals Become Best Sellers in Japan,"

appeared in the *New York Times* on November 19, 2005.⁸ While harshly anti-foreign works are a rarity in Japanese publishing, these newspaper pieces and other reports outside of the country have given a work entitled *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* (A Manga Introduction to China) a measure of notoriety.⁹ *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* was illustrated by popular artist Akiyama Jōji and edited by Kō Bunyū.¹⁰ Taiwanese Kō is famous in Japan for books that are critical of mainland China.¹¹ *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* combines Akiyama's penchant for the macabre with Kō's often extreme anti-Chinese views. The tone of the work is set by its subtitle – *yakkai no rinjin no kenkyū* (Research on a Bothersome Neighbor). It begins by playing up the idea that in Sino-Japanese disputes, the Chinese are just plain wrong. "The Yasukuni problem, which is something close to our nation's very soul, is being turned into a 'problem of international affairs' by China."¹² The majority of Japanese, some 50% according to recent surveys, with 41% approving and 9% undecided, who oppose Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, would no doubt dispute the conjecture that the current problem is one that pits Japan's soul against Chinese falsehoods.¹³ A variety of opinions exist on both sides, but *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, which serves as a self-styled guide for understanding Chinese culture and behavior and as a means of penetrating untruths, presents a rather simplistic, adversarial dichotomy of Japan versus China. Seldom does it acknowledge the validity of Chinese positions.

Parts of *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* are clearly inflammatory. Without citing evidence, Kō and his co-authors claim that prostitution comprises over 10% of China's GDP.¹⁴ Other parts are typical of Japanese nationalist revisionism. One section asserts that, "The Nanking massacre is made up."¹⁵ Even more disturbing is the emphasis that the book places on the supposed role of cannibalism in Chinese culture in a section entitled, "A horrifying country that had a cannibalistic culture."¹⁶ Comments on cannibalism, AIDS, drug abuse, and out-of-control sexuality, place the focus of the work on the strange, even deviant 'otherness' of the Chinese. It could simultaneously be described as a dehumanizing portrait. The authors write, "We can even say that anarchism is the true essence of the Chinese."¹⁷ Chinese are depicted as poor neighbors – irrational and even uncivilized.

Manga Chūgoku nyūmon has gained international notoriety as a symbol of anti-Chinese feelings in Japan and a sign of a new nationalism built as much on denigrating other cultures as on extolling the virtues of Japan's own. While *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* has grabbed attention, to what extent is this type of ultra-critical, some would say hateful, polemic typical of recent Japanese discourses on China? In a time of strained relations, what sort of meaning has China come to acquire in Japanese popular non-fiction tracts? With criticism of China becoming increasingly common, is there room for self-reflection as well? This essay will argue that most current conceptualizations of China in Japanese popular non-fiction, written since the April 2005 protests, are neither hateful nor xenophobic and frequently combine criticism of China – most notably its environmental problems and human rights record – with an equally critical look at Japan itself. These critiques fall into two broad categories – contemporary and historical. At present, China is experiencing high economic growth or a boom period not unlike that experienced by Japan in the 1960s. China's economic expansion has brought such attendant problems as pollution, industrial diseases and population displacement in order to make way for monumental building projects. Similar problems were also a characteristic feature of

Japan's own period of high growth. Consequently, China's present woes often serve as a standpoint from which to reassess an important stage of Japanese history. In addition, despite frequent Chinese assertions that frank discussion of its own imperialist and militarist past are taboo in Japan, many authors have sought to compare present Sino-Japanese relations with that of the 1930s and 1940s, a time of great violence and colonial exploitation.¹⁸ Most significantly, present 'parallels' prove to be attractive and are subsequently drawn. Unbalanced criticism of China frequently gives way to more nuanced, layered critiques of both the Japanese government and anti-Chinese ideas that exist within the country.

Rather than emphasizing 'otherness', comparisons between Japan and China, past and present, become the foundation of critical takes on Japanese society.¹⁹ In her article, "House of Mirrors – American History Writing on Japan," Carol Gluck argues that the United States, and also Japan have, "... often operated by seeing [their] national self in the reflection of others."²⁰ While negative feelings toward China have increased, a trend toward Japanese writers seeing their own country, past and present, reflected in China has become increasingly important. For most of the postwar period, America was the country to which Japanese politicians, authors, and commentators looked when trying to put Japanese society and history into perspective. This led to a number of positives including effective economic strategies as Japan's economic planners studied American innovations in the 1950s.²¹ It also catalyzed moments of friction such as Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro's notorious 1986 comment that Japanese education was more successful than that of the United States because racial minorities had dragged down American test scores and Ishihara Shintarō's famous assertion that Japan had surpassed America and could now, "say no."²² In these cases and in many others, America served as a yardstick by which Japan's progress and problems could be measured.²³ Since 1995, there has been a shift and it can be argued that China has come to rival the United States as a central site of comparison and contrast in Japanese popular discourse. The diverse ways in which China is represented in Japan have the potential to shed light on the discursive means by which criticisms of Japan - an important form of self-reflection - are articulated in works of popular non-fiction.

Contemporary Comparisons

Chūgoku ha ima nani wo kangaeteiru ka (What Is China Thinking Now?) by Oonishi Hiroshi, a professor of Economics at Kyoto University, was published in December 2005. From the beginning, the work draws comparisons, rather than essentialising contrasts, between anti-Japanese sentiments in China and the recent outpouring of anti-Chinese feelings in Japan. Oonishi describes a recent outbreak of discrimination against Chinese exchange students in Japan and other incidents, such as threatening phone calls directed at Sino-Japanese friendship organizations.²⁴ In his estimation, the decline in the relationship between Japan and China is not due solely to the actions of the Chinese demonstrators in April 2005 and there is a need for a frank examination of attitudes and actions within Japan as well.²⁵ By using this contemporary comparison, Oonishi encourages a calm, balanced and rational reaction by Japanese.²⁶

In calling for a more conciliatory stance toward China, Oonishi also uses another important comparison to criticize Prime Minister Koizumi. He describes

Koizumi as an individual who, "... puts himself over national interests."²⁷ Japan is a democracy and China is not. Oonishi explains how this has created the idea that, "...the Chinese government can, to a large degree, ignore nationalism and public opinion in conducting foreign affairs while the Japanese government cannot ignore public opinion when defining national policy."²⁸ On the surface, this appears to utilize a standard political binary wherein Japanese democracy is distinct from Chinese communism and vice versa. The criticism of China's government, which discourages freedom of expression and lacks accountability, is common in Japan and internationally. It is typically assumed that this particular form of governance is absolutely antithetical to that of democratic nations such as Japan and the United States. Oonishi, on the other hand, questions this perception and argues that, in fact, the Chinese government does not simply ignore public opinion.²⁹ In order to stay in power and to avoid becoming the focus of mass demonstrations, the Chinese government has had to pay particularly close attention to the views of the public. On the other hand, in Oonishi's view, it is in democratic Japan ironically enough, where leaders have routinely ignored popular opinion.³⁰ The major example that he draws upon is Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine. These visits do not enjoy widespread public support, and Oonishi suggests that Koizumi's "self-centered" political style is grounds to question the relative responsibility and even the democratic character of the Chinese and Japanese governments, comparing their often autocratic nature rather than making self-serving contrasts.

The work also raises another important comparison. In recent years, the number of crimes committed by Chinese in Japan has increased. A number, including the brutal murder of a Japanese family of four in Fukuoka by a group of three Chinese students in 2003, have become major news stories. There are works of popular non-fiction with titles like *Chūgokujin hanzai gurūpu* (Chinese Criminal Groups) by Morita Yasuro that detail this rise in crime and raise awareness of it.³¹ Unfortunately, 'Chinese' and 'criminal' are words that are frequently paired in Japanese reporting and popular non-fiction, causing stereotypes to be propagated.

Reports on Chinese criminals are often presented without acknowledgment that there is a general increase in what can be termed 'international crimes' on a global scale. Oonishi explains that Japanese have been involved in a variety of criminal activities in many regions internationally, including China. He describes the illegal smuggling of drugs, antiques and articles of cultural significance out of China by Japanese citizens.³² However, while crimes committed in Japan by Chinese grab national headlines, crimes that are perpetrated by Japanese in China have not received significant press attention.³³ It can be inferred that the Chinese government, which exercises considerable control over the media, has refrained from circulating these stories so as to avoid further inflaming anti-Japanese sentiments. Oonishi contrasts this attitude with that of the Japanese mass media that have used crimes by Chinese and other foreigners to grab the attention of readers and viewers, warning his audience that, "We cannot just one-sidedly criticize Chinese for crimes committed in Japan."³⁴ By comparing crimes committed by Japanese in China with crimes committed by Chinese in Japan and the respective press reactions in both countries, Oonishi encourages his readers to be more reflective when considering the types of criticisms of China that appear in Japan's public discourse.

Oonishi uses a treatise on Sino-Japanese relations in the wake of the anti-Japanese demonstrations of 2005 as a foundation from which to critically discuss aspects of Japan's present socio-political and discursive milieu. China provides the context for comparisons and contrasts that examine the autocratic tendencies of Koizumi's political approach, the excesses of Japanese media reporting on crimes committed by Chinese, and the involvement of Japanese in crimes in China. Where *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* was an often harsh attack on the 'other', *Chūgoku ha ima nani wo kangaeteiru ka* uses that same 'other' as a powerful means of critically examining the self.

Oonishi's *Chūgoku ha ima nani wo kangaeteiru ka* is a work aimed at popular audiences from Ōtsuki Shoten, a small left-wing publishing house. In many ways, Oonishi's writing, with its conciliatory approach toward China and layered interpretations that resist essentialism, is typical of Japan's academic discourse.³⁵ Works like *Chūgoku ha ima nani wo kangaeteiru ka* are important, but how representative are they of popular non-fiction in general? Is the willingness to make comparisons between Japan and China a mainstream approach? The remainder of this paper will survey important popular works in the "shinsho" format. Shinsho are small, pocket-sized paperbacks. This format is favored by Japanese publishers who wish to provide short, inexpensive, topical non-fiction offerings. Shinsho are usually penned by academics or journalists and emphasize readability over documentation. Many lack a bibliography or index, and most are around 200 pages in length. Shinsho are very popular with readers. The bestselling non-fiction works in Japan are typically released in this format.³⁶ Since the April, 2005 protest movement in China, a cross-section of Japan's leading publishers have released non-fiction works about China in the shinsho format and this essay will survey major examples to examine the rhetorical role that China has come to play.³⁷

In both China and Japan, the Internet has proven to be a locus of nationalist activity for young people. This phenomenon has been looked at critically and comparatively in a January 2006 work entitled *Chūgoku ga hannichi wo suteru hi* (The Day China Casts "Anti-Japanese" Aside) written by Shimizu Yoshikazu and released as a part of Kōdansha's "plus alpha" shinsho series – a line of general works for mainstream audiences on topics of current interest. Shimizu is a journalist specializing in China and Sino-Japanese relations and while the title may suggest a book that condemns contemporary China, the actual content is much different.

Chūgoku ga hannichi wo suteru hi looks in detail at the phenomenon of online nationalism and focuses on the racial and cultural attacks that appear on Chinese and Japanese message boards. Shimizu argues that while the tone may differ slightly, the root causes of the streams of cyber insults beg comparison. "When you examine the online writings and posts of Chinese and Japanese young people... an outpouring of rage is evident from the Chinese users and from the Japanese, condescending and cynical views. The tone is different but the anti-foreign feelings and abusiveness are points in common."³⁸ Shimizu theorizes that the root of these online attacks lies in feelings of uncertainty and discontent common to both Chinese and Japanese young people.³⁹

In Japan, graduating from a top university no longer guarantees a career with a top company. In China, despite rapid economic growth and a host of opportunities, unemployment remains a very real problem for many young people, including

university graduates. In Shimizu's opinion, the issues that young people face have caused many to take refuge in basic, yet powerful, nationalist creeds. Xenophobia and the denigration of other countries are a welcome, even necessary, distraction. The fact that these attitudes can be expressed or consumed anonymously on the Internet makes them all the more attractive to some. Shimizu emphasizes areas that Japan and China have in common, highlighting the similar roots of jingoistic discourses in a manner equally critical of his own country and the Chinese 'other'. In the end, *Chūgoku ga hannichi wo suteru hi* is not only critical of online abuses. Shimizu also argues that many of the recent Japanese debates about China have been influenced by prejudice.⁴⁰ What he describes as, "black and white judgments," and the evocation of stereotypical arguments about communist dictatorship should not replace layered consideration of Japan's role in current disputes.

Japanese popular culture and Japanese popular non-fiction are not the exclusive products of Japanese producers for Japanese consumers. In the months since the anti-Japanese demonstrations in China, a significant number of Chinese authors and journalists have taken the opportunity to air their views in popular media in Japan. Kō Bunyū, who supervised the ultra-critical *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, is Taiwanese. Many other writers from the Chinese cultural sphere have penned more balanced works.

In October of 2005, Mō Bangfu, an author and journalist originally from Shanghai and now resident in Japan, released *Nicchū ha naze wakari aenai no ka* (Why Can't Japan and China Understand One Another) as a part of publisher Heibonsha's shinsho series. In the introduction of the work, Mō reveals that he preferred a more inflammatory title *Nicchū yūkō jidai ga owatta!* (The Era of Sino-Japanese Friendship is Over!), but was overruled by the publisher.⁴¹ Heibonsha chose a less forceful title, a clear contrast with other works such as *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, the subtitle of which described China as a "bothersome neighbor." Despite disagreement over the title, the contents of Mō's work follow a balanced strategy, criticizing both contemporary China and Japan while avoiding the type of one-sided bashing that brought *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* international scrutiny.

Early in *Nicchū ha naze wakari aenai no ka*, Mō describes how the common mentality on both the Japanese and Chinese sides prevents meaningful dialogue:

The problem between Japan and China is now that some Japanese politicians and a part of the Japanese population (probably a very large part) are making absolutely no effort to understand the feelings of Chinese. On the other side, the vast majority of Chinese have no opportunity to see Japan with their own eyes and lack both the desire or even the possibility of understanding.⁴²

In this way, contemporary criticisms are shared.

Mō follows with a number of sections critical of Japan. An early section is entitled, "China Reporting that Ignores the Facts."⁴³ He makes the point that extreme criticism of China has increasingly become the norm in the Japanese media. In his opinion, balanced viewpoints are becoming increasingly rare. Mō argues that Japanese need more background knowledge about contemporary China before passing judgment. "In Japan, many feel that China is only looking critically at Japan but in my view, this is not correct... the Chinese people are looking critically at more

and more problems, both international and domestic.”⁴⁴ This viewpoint opposes the Japan-centric consideration of China and its protests that have dominated the Japanese press. Mō makes the point that criticism is not limited to Japan and that there has also been condemnation of the Bush administration and the Iraq war by Chinese protestors, criticisms with which many Japanese would agree. Mō also describes how criticism of Chinese public figures by Chinese commentators, especially of the online variety, has also undergone a great expansion in recent years. This book attempts to demonstrate that, as in Japan, reasoned Chinese perspectives that are critical of Japan’s public discourses are frequently aired in a discursive context that is more open to criticism than many in Japan are willing to acknowledge. Mō draws comparisons that reveal a lack of necessary context in debates on both sides but that also suggest the potential for reconciliation.

It is frequently argued that Japanese journalists have difficulty articulating critiques of Japan.⁴⁵ Audiences, editors, and other factors, it is held, place constraints on criticism. As is suggested by the works described above, however, Japanese non-fiction reportage on contemporary concerns has seen China used as an important source of critical comparisons. China’s position in Japanese popular discourse is not exclusively that of a negatively essentialised ‘other’. The emerging Asian superpower is an important point of reference that commentators can use when discussing Japan at present and in the past.

Historical Comparisons

Nicchū 100nen Shi (100 Years of Sino-Japanese Relations), by Meiji University’s professor Marukawa Tetsushi, was released in January of 2006. The book, a part of Kōbunsha’s shinsho series, presents a detailed history of Sino-Japanese relations in the 20th century, as well as a variety of perspectives on anti-Japanese protest movements in China. Marukawa does not see Chinese anti-Japanese sentiments as a unique phenomenon and makes a variety of comparisons with discursive trends in Japan’s public sphere. He is critical of Japan, “What is most widely seen, is a discursive tone that is very convenient for Japanese.”⁴⁶ He sees Japanese discourses as consistently criticizing China as ‘undeveloped’ or ‘backward’ while neglecting critical analysis of Japan’s position in Asia. The author also makes a number of points critical of the Japanese right including the assertion that the denial of the Nanking massacre and other war crimes by some extremists has proven inflammatory. In short, anti-Chinese sentiments in Japan are partly to blame for the Chinese demonstrations just as anti-Japanese sentiments in China are partly to blame for a flare up of excessive criticism of China. Marukawa evokes important comparisons between the discursive environment in the two countries in order to explain how this vicious cycle is created.

While *Nicchū 100nen Shi* makes a variety of contemporary comparisons between Japan and China, its most scathing critique, as the title suggests, is built around an assessment of the history of Sino-Japanese relations from the early 20th century until present. Marukawa writes,

At present, it is evident that Japan has come to rely on Chinese labor, the Chinese market, and even on Chinese management.... To put it briefly, the

economic life of Japanese now relies on China. In part, this is a continuation of the character of old-style imperialism and reliance on outside territories.⁴⁷

He puts Japanese criticism of Chinese authoritarianism, pollution, and other problems in this context and describes how Japan, through a combination of reliance and influence on China, bears a degree of responsibility as well. In Marukawa's view, Japan's virtual colonial-style exploitation of China at present has helped to create many of the problems and contradictions that are attacked in works like *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*. Marukawa argues that before condemning China at present, it is necessary for Japanese to consider the whole of China and Japan's modern history and to effectively compare Japan's 1930s imperialism and militarism with the current Sino-Japanese relationship. This type of historical comparison highlights the fact that reflection on the history of the 1930s and 1940s is far from absent in Japan's public discourse and that it can also serve as a useful foundation for reflecting critically on contemporary Japan. Just as China has been used as a mirror with which to reflect Japan's problems and discursive contradictions, the past is also a mirror for the present in Japanese popular writing.

The most frequent demand of many outside Japan, especially representatives of the Chinese government, has been that Japanese must guard against a militarist revival by, "taking the history as the mirror while looking into the future."⁴⁸ Interestingly enough, this is precisely the approach that many of Japan's popular commentators choose to undertake. Marukawa's association of present Sino-Japanese relations with Japan's history of colonialism shows how honest perspectives on the past are present in Japan's mainstream discourse.⁴⁹ The use of historical comparison makes *Nicchū 100nen Shi* a work with powerful present relevance.

Nicchū 100nen Shi uses past comparisons mainly to criticize the current economic relationship between Japan and China. Yokoyama Hiroaki's *Hannichi to hanchū* (Anti-Japan and Anti-China), on the other hand, draws important comparisons between Japan's present-day discourses on its Asian neighbor and those prevalent in the 1930s and 1940s. Yokoyama outlines parallels between the contemporary climate of China-bashing exemplified by works such as *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* and the types of public attacks on China and Chinese culture that took place in Japan in the 1930s. Yokoyama explains that during the war period, China was portrayed as uncivilized, even barbaric, in Japanese discourse.⁵⁰ The implication was that China needed to be 'pacified' and forced into a more reasonable state. At several points in the work, Yokoyama outlines how this type of thought has repeatedly emerged in a variety of contexts. For example, he describes how, just as in the war period, China is now often represented as a sort of essential 'other' that lacks reason and must be introduced to international norms.⁵¹ This is a condemnation of present attacks on China and of the imperialist discourses of the 1930s.

Kankyō kyōdōtai toshite no Nicchūkan (Japan, China, and South Korea as an Environmental One), edited by Hitotsubashi University Professor Teranishi Shūichi, and the Higashi Ajia Kankyō Jōhō Hatsudensho (East-Asia Environmental Information Propagation Centre), a NGO dedicated to sharing information and facilitating cooperation on environmental problems between Japan, China, and South Korea, was published in January 2006. The work focuses on what is described as an 'Asian' pattern of high economic growth. Japan's development in the 1960s is

described as pioneering, but it is also placed in the context of subsequent developments in East Asia. Japan's period of high economic growth came to an end in the 1970s, but after that time, annual GDP growth rates of around 10% were seen in Taiwan, South Korea, and most recently, China, a country that has undeniably entered an economic boom phase.⁵² The main point that the authors hasten to make is that while Japan's experience may have set the pattern for rapid economic growth in East Asia, it also set the pattern for environmental devastation.

At present, pollution originating in China has negative environmental effects that extend well beyond its borders. Neighbors such as Japan and South Korea suffer a variety of problems, such as acid rain, because of the waste emitted by Chinese factories.⁵³ In Japan, condemnation of China's environmental abuses is very common, but *Kankyō kyōdōtai toshite no Nicchūkan*, does not seek to contrast China with the relatively environmentally sound Japan. It makes instead a series of comparisons, contemporary and historical, that are equally critical of the self and other. There is a section of the work entitled, "China and South Korea Have Carried on Japan's Past Environmental Destruction," that clearly describes how Japan was East Asia's first serious environmental offender.⁵⁴ Parallels are drawn between 1960s Japan and China at present. New industrial diseases such as Yokkaichi asthma became a problem for Japan in the early 1960s and similar cases have recently become common in China.⁵⁵ In short, China is not being portrayed as a unique polluter, but rather as a country that is following a potentially destructive pattern of economic development that was 'pioneered' by Japan. This is a critical view on the past that uses China to throw the darker side of Japan's postwar history into perspective.

While using the example of China's current pollution woes to reflect upon Japan's past is an important part of *Kankyō kyōdōtai toshite no Nicchūkan*, the authors also make clear that there is a solid connection between Japanese economic behavior and Chinese pollution at present. The book plainly describes how much of Japan's current economic achievement is based in the export of factories and the direct export of pollution, "Recently, Japan has been exporting a huge bulk to industrial pollution and waste to China and other countries."⁵⁶ There is even a section directly outlining how, "Japanese businesses create the conditions for environmental pollution in China."⁵⁷ *Kankyō kyōdōtai toshite no Nicchūkan* is a work that makes critical comparisons between Japan's polluting past and China's present environmental problems. This is an important historical comparison that leads readers to reconsider the darker side of Japan's economic development. It is also a book that criticizes Japan at present for causing much of China's pollution either directly or indirectly. Historical and contemporary critiques are combined in a way that forces readers to think critically not only about China but also Japan.

Sakakibara Eisuke's *Jinmingen kaikaku to Chūgoku keizai no kinmirai* (The Yuan Revolution and the Near Future of the Chinese Economy) was released as a part of popular publisher Kadokawa's "one theme" shinsho series in December of 2005.⁵⁸ In the introduction of the work, Sakakibara describes many of the other recent works about China and the Chinese economy as "misleading" or "one sided" and complains that many are simply emotional tirades, lacking in cool analysis.⁵⁹ He also writes, "The mutual reliance of the Japanese and Chinese economies is quickly deepening, but Japanese politicians and the media are still extremely anti-Chinese."⁶⁰

Sakakibara proposes that comparing China's present situation with aspects of Japan's own history can promote understanding and help to alleviate present hostility.

The dust cover of *Jinmingen kaikaku to Chūgoku keizai no kinmirai* contains comments proposing that, "Soon, China will democratize and become a great economic power. The aim is prosperity under one party – Japan's '1955 system'".⁶¹ This immediately forms a parallel between China and postwar Japan. In Sakakibara's view, Japanese attacks on China's government and lack of political freedom need to be seen in the context of Japan's "1955 system." It was in 1955 that the conservative Liberal and Democratic parties came together to form the Liberal Democratic Party, which has controlled Japanese politics for the majority of the postwar period. Close party ties with big business and the relegation of much legislative initiative to the bureaucracy are also oft discussed features of the "1955 system." Japan is unquestionably a democracy and the Liberal Democratic Party's hold on power has been due to legitimate popular support, but authors like Sakakibara see just as many parallels with Communist China as clear-cut contrasts:

[In China] the formulation and execution of policy is carried out by a clear-cut organization with the Communist Party and the State Council and ... we have an image of Communist Party dictatorship but ... it is really not all that different from Japanese politics under the 1955 system....⁶²

He also believes that China is far closer in governmental style to pre-1990s Japan than many Japanese would like to admit, "The main problem in the Chinese system of government is not necessarily dictatorship but rather a rigid bureaucracy."⁶³ In the author's mind, how to limit bureaucratic influence is the problem, and he also writes that, "The essential character of this problem is identical to Japan's."⁶⁴ He agrees that while the scale of reform necessary in China is different, the fundamental problem of bureaucratic influence is the same.⁶⁵ The author also sees China as going in the same direction as Japan – from being the world's factory to becoming an important market for consumer goods in its own right. Supporting this, he infers, will likely be a form of one party government not very different in character from that overseen by Japan's Liberal Democratic Party. Sakakibara's *Jinmingen kaikaku to Chūgoku keizai no kinmirai* tempers Japanese criticisms of the Chinese government by making a series of historical comparisons. Japan may be a democracy, but the character of Japan's postwar politics is such that comparisons to China's single party rule and influential bureaucracy are indeed valid.

Conclusion

It is important for Japanese and Chinese to acknowledge the diverse perspectives that exist across both societies. Japan's popular discourse is remarkably varied, capable of self-criticism as well as attacks on the 'other' that have captured international attention. There are Japanese works that tendentiously blame China for all of the problems in Sino-Japanese relations and attack the nation, and even Chinese culture, for everything from pollution to prostitution. Yet, there are others that are not only balanced, but which also use discussion of China as a means of articulating important critiques of Japan.

There are works that suggest that Japanese journalists and authors have major problems airing critiques of Japanese politics and society.⁶⁶ These concerns are largely groundless. As recent non-fiction considerations of the Sino-Japanese relationship indicate, what are perceived as important problems in other countries and other environments are often used to engender significant critiques of Japan from contemporary and historical perspectives. Japanese commentators will continue to criticize China for its human rights record, pollution, and other issues, but it is important to acknowledge that this has not become a one-sided China bashing that merely masks Japan's faults.

Nihonjinroni (theories of "Japaneseness") writings are the genre of Japan's popular non-fiction that has garnered the most attention in the English-speaking world. Works of this type typically argue that Japan is "unique" and even incomprehensible to foreigners.⁶⁷ The discursive devices described in this essay are the complete opposite of this type of writing. Notable works of popular non-fiction released in Japan in 2005 and 2006 show significant engagement with the idea of Japan as part of Asia. They describe Japan as a nation that bears comparison, not simply contrast, with China. This is a sophisticated form of representation of China that challenges Japan-centrism and the tendency to employ America or the 'West' as the sole referential 'other'. Many of the comparisons discussed in this article involve negatives such as pollution, crime, and online racism. Also important is the image of a Japan that can engage in constructive dialogue with China. Discussing problems in common in the public sphere is an important form of engagement that has the potential to open up a greater exchange of ideas in the future.

NOTES

¹ For information concerning anti-Japanese sentiments in China see Ijiri Hidenori, "Sino-Japanese Controversy Since the 1972 Diplomatic Normalization" in *China and Japan: History, Trends, and Prospects*, edited by Christopher Howe, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, and, Arif Derlik, "'Past Experience, If Not Forgotten, Is a Guide to the Future'; Or, What Is in a Text? The Politics of History in Chinese-Japanese Relations" in *Boundary*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1991.

² Nihon Research Centre, *Nicchū kankei nitsuite no kokusai hikaku yoron chōsa kekka*, July 15, 2005, [<http://www.nrc.co.jp/rep/rep20050715.html>].

³ Yokoyama Hiroaki, *Hannichi to hanchū*, Tokyo, Shūeisha, 2005, p. 15.

⁴ Yasukuni is a Shinto shrine in Tokyo that is dedicated to the spirits of soldiers who died in Japan's modern wars. Among the over 2,000,000 honored dead are 14 "Class A" war criminals including wartime Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki. Because of the enshrinement of war criminals and the revisionist stance of the shrine's museum and literature, many believe that it is actively attempting to glorify Japanese imperialism and whitewash atrocities. Prime Minister Koizumi repeatedly insisted that his visits to the shrine were to pay his respects and to pray for peace, but the Chinese government and others outside Japan took his visits as an attempt to glorify past aggression.

⁵ See, for example, "How can Koizumi win trust from world?" in *People's Daily*, [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200510/18/eng20051018_215043.html], 18 October, 2005.

⁶ Examples of earlier works of Japanese non-fiction that are extremely critical of China include Nishio Kaji, *Kokumin no rekishi* [A History of the People of the Nation], Tokyo, Sankei Shimbun-sha, 1999, and, Watanabe Shōichi, Komuro Naoki, *Fūin no Shōwashi* [A Sealed History of Shōwa], Tokyo, Tokuma Shoten, 1995. These works describe Chinese views of history as "incorrect" and directly contrast Japan's relative peace and prosperity with China's social problems.

⁷ Leo Lewis, "Neighbor fails to see funny side of comic" [<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-1851673,00.html>], Nov. 1, 2005.

⁸ Onishi Norimitsu, "Ugly Images of Asian Rivals Become Best Sellers in Japan", *New York Times*, November 19, 2005, Saturday, Late Edition – Final, Section A, Page 1, Column 1.

⁹ Aside from major features in two of the most important newspapers in the English-speaking world, *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* also sparked debate about "Japanese racism" on websites like Anime News Network, [<http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/bbs/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=19243>].

¹⁰ Kō Bunyū, et al., *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, Tokyo, Asuka Shinsha, 2005. Outside Japan, manga is often thought of more as a genre than as a medium. In Japan, however, there exists a wide variety of manga titles including non-fiction works. Since the publication of Ishinomori Shōtarō's seminal *Manga Nihonkeizai nyūmon* (A Manga Introduction to Japanese Economics) in 1986, manga has become an important non-fiction medium. *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, for example, was marketed through non-fiction channels and is displayed alongside prose works at Japanese bookstores. It combines fictional images with polemic prose passages. See Ishinomori, Shōtarō, *Manga Nihon keizai nyūmon*, Tokyo, Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1986.

¹¹ See, for example Kō Bunyū, *Sore demo Chūgoku ha hōkai suru*, Tokyo, Waku, 2004.

¹² Kō Bunyū, et al., *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, p. 2.

¹³ "Koizumi Shushō no Yasukuni sanpai, 'hantai' 50%, 'sansei' 41%", *Mainichi shimbun*, [<http://www.mainichi-msn.co.jp/seiji/etc/yoron/20050620-1.html>], June 20, 2005.

¹⁴ Kō Bunyū, et al., *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, pp. 45-47.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁸ For a work that describes Japan's war memory in terms of "amnesia" and a "cover up" see Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations – Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2000.

¹⁹ Japanese authors have not abandoned a self/other binary in writing about China. What has undergone recent change is the way of depiction of the other. In most mainstream works, China is not depicted as an essentialized, negative other. Points in common and shared matters for reflection have become very important and China/Japan considerations are an important part of Japanese identity formation and historical memory at present.

²⁰ Carol Gluck, “House of Mirrors – American History Writing on Japan”, in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, ed. Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 434.

²¹ Laura Hein, “Growth Versus Success: Japan’s Economic Policy in Historical Perspective” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993.

²² Ishihara Shintarō, Morita Akio, *NO to ieru Nippon* [The Japan that Can Say No], Tokyo, Kobunsha, 1989.

²³ For comments on Japanese and American connections and the frequent comparisons by commentators in both countries, see Yoichi Funabashi, “Japan and America: Global Partners” in *Foreign Policy*, No. 86, Spring, 1992.

²⁴ Oonishi Hiroshi, *Chūgoku ha ima nani wo kangaeteiru ka*, Tokyo, Ōtsuki Shoten, 2005, p. 1.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 2-3.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 26.

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

³¹ Morita Yasurō, *Chūgokujin hanzai gurūpu*, Tokyo, Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2002.

³² Oonishi, *Chūgoku ha ima nani wo kangaeteiru ka*, p. 54.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 54.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 54.

³⁵ For details on Japanese academic writing about China, see Mori Kazuko, *Nicchu Kankei – Sengo kara shinjidai he* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006).

³⁶ See Shiozawa Minobu, *Shuppan-sha* (Tokyo: Jitsumu Kyoiku Shuppan, 2000). The works discussed in this article have all been widely circulated. The sales rankings (in the “Japanese Books” category) of Amazon.co.jp, a leading Japanese online bookseller, ranked them on October 12, 2006 as follows:

Hannichi to hanchū #11,074

Nicchū ha naze wakari aenai no ka #43,966

Jinmingen kaikaku to Chūgoku keizai no kimmirai #70,851

Chūgoku ga hannichi wo suteru hi #13,237

Kankyō kyōdōtai toshite no Nicchūkan #36,306

Manga Chūgoku nyūmon #36,110

While these numbers shift constantly, it is evident that the sales of *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon*, while strong, are not exceptional compared to some other non-fiction offerings. *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* author Kō Bunyū’s latest title *Kenchūron* (The “Hate China” Theory) was ranked at #108,580 just three months after its initial release. The success of *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon* appears to be an exception, not the rule. Kō Bunyū, *Kenchūron*, Tokyo, Tokuma Shoten, 2006. While the Amazon.co.jp sales ranking shift constantly, they are an indication that the bulk of mainstream China titles are significant.

³⁷ This essay surveys Japanese non-fiction in the shinsho format from April, 2005, through mid 2006. Titles released between April of 2005 and mid-2006 that present a negative picture of China and rely on contrasting Japan and China for their rhetorical strategy include: Hiramatsu Shigeo, *Chūgoku, Kaku misairu no hyōteki* [The Targets of Chinese Nuclear Missiles], Tokyo, Kadokawa Shoten, 2006. Yamamoto Ichirō, *Ore-sama kokka, Chūgoku no Daikeizai* [The ‘I’m the Boss’ Country – China’s Giant Economy], Tokyo, Bungei Shunju, 2006. Seki Hei, *Nicchū Yūkō ha Nippon wo horobosu!* [Sino-Japanese Friendship Will Destroy Japan!], Tokyo, Kōdansha, 2005. More positive, conciliatory titles that introduce comparisons between Japan and China but are not discussed in this essay because of space constraints include: Katō Toru, *Kai to hitsuji no Chūgokujin* [The Chinese of Shells and Sheep], Tokyo, Shinchōsha, 2006. Shimada Eiichi, *Chūgokujin, Atte hanaseba tada no hito* [Chinese – If You Meet and Talk to Them, They are Just Ordinary People], Tokyo, PHP, 2006. Yanagita Hiroshi, *Kigyō suru nara Chūgoku he ikō!* [If You are Starting a Business, Go to China!], Tokyo, PHP, 2006. Kamimura Kōji, *Chūgoku no ima ga wakaru hon*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006. Miyazaki Masahiro, *Shusshinchi de wakaru Chūgokujin* [Understanding Chinese People by Place of Birth], Tokyo, PHP, 2006. Korogi Ichirō, *Chūgoku gekiryū – 13oku no yukue* [Turbulent China – The Path of 1,300,000], Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2005. Some of these works include criticisms of China but self-reflection and critical comparison are major features as well. Overall, critical and self reflective works released in the shinsho format between April 2005 and mid 2006 significantly outnumber jingoistic offerings. A variety of titles that portray China in a very positive

light continue to appear including: Liu Winbing, *Chugoku 10okunin no Nihon eiga netsuaishi* [A History of One Billion Chinese Who Love Japanese Movies], Tokyo, Shūeisha, 2006. Mori Kazuko, *Nicchū kankei – Sengo kara shinjidai he* [Sino-Japanese Relations – From Postwar to a New Era], Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2006.

³⁸ Shimizu Yoshikazu, *Chūgoku ga hannichi wo suteru hi*, Tokyo, Kōdansha, 2006, p. 236.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 236.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 247.

⁴¹ Mō Bangfu, *Nicchū ha naze wakari aenai no ka*, Tokyo, Heibonsha, 2005, p. 7.

⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴⁵ See, for example William De Lange, *A History of Japanese Journalism: Japan's Press Club As the Last Obstacle to a Mature Press*, Surrey (England), Japan Library, 1997.

⁴⁶ Marukawa Tetsushi, *Nicchū 100nen Shi*, Tokyo, Kōbunsha, 2006, p. 4.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 234.

⁴⁸ "Cui Tianshai, Director-General of the Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, States China's Stance on Issues Concerning China-Japan Relations", in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, [<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjzb/zzjg/yzs/gjlb/2721/2724/t191091.htm>]. Posted on April 7, 2005.

⁴⁹ For more information on critical discussions of wartime Japan in popular non-fiction, see Matthew Penney, "The Most Crucial Education': Saotome Katsumoto and Japanese Anti-War Thought" in *Popular Culture, Globalisation, and Japan*, ed. Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto, London, Routledge, 2006.

⁵⁰ Yokoyama, *Hannichi to hanchū*, p. 107.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

⁵² Teranishi Shūichi and Higashi Ajia Kankyō Jōhō Hatsudensho, *Kankyō kyōdōtai toshite no Nichūkan*, Tokyo, Shūeisha, 2006, pp. 8-9.

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁵⁸ Sakakibara Eisuke, *Jinmingen kaikaku to Chūgoku keizai no kinmirai*, Tokyo, Kadokawa, 2005.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, front cover.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 169-171.

⁶⁶ For example, Adam Gamble and Takesato Watanabe, *A Public Betrayed: An Inside Look at Japanese Media Atrocities and Their Warnings to the West*, Washington, DC, Regnery Publishing, 2004.

⁶⁷ Peter Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1986.