

# Non-state perspectives on Sino-Japanese relations : insights from Chinese students' experiences in Japan

He, Christabelle Shimin

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**NANYANG  
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UNIVERSITY**

**Non-state Perspectives on Sino-Japanese relations: Insights from  
Chinese Students' Experiences in Japan**

Submitted by:

Christabelle He Shimin

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In September 2012, before I headed to Tokyo, I was given numerous words of caution. The words of warning went along the lines of: “Be careful not to speak Chinese in the public” to “There are some Japanese people in Tokyo who are anti-Chinese, so do not wander too far from school till the situation is more stable”. These comments came from a Singaporean Chinese and a Chinese national, who was especially concerned after reading negative news updates on events in China and Japan. At that time, the news media was frequently reporting on events in the East China Sea, in particular, China and Japan’s tussle over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. The news reports mainly focused on the negative actions and reactions of China and Japan – Japan coastguards warn Chinese ships to get out of disputed waters, anti-Japanese riots take place in China, anti- Chinese rallies staged in Tokyo (“Could Asia really go to war”, 2012; “Hundreds in Tokyo rally”, 2012) – making the political situation between China and Japan appear very grim.

Practical aspects of life– transnational mobility, businesses (“JAL to extend Japan-China flight cuts”, 2012) and safety in both countries (Japan Inc. sees "China risks", 2012) – had also been affected as a result of the political disputes between China and Japan. Travel to Japan previously took up 20 per cent of China’s tour companies’ trade, but political disputes forced some Chinese tour companies to cancel tours to Japan (Wang, 2012). Japanese tour companies were also affected by the territorial disputes. CEO Chairman of US-Asia Finance Corporation, Kazuhiko Yoshida, mentioned in an interview on Channel News Asia on November 26, 2012, that the cancellation of Chinese tours to Japan has had significant impact on Japanese tour companies who have been relying heavily on the Chinese market for business.

In this undesirable atmosphere, I set off for Tokyo with several questions in mind. What would it be like for a student from the Chinese mainland going to Japan now? What made them

decide to pursue their studies in Japan? How would these Chinese students think and feel, as Chinese persons in Japan currently? How would they act as well as interact with other Japanese? Can Chinese students affect the development of Sino-Japanese relations at the non-state level? What did they have to say about the island disputes? And what can answers to these questions tell us about the current and future state of Sino-Japanese relations?

To answer these questions, I planned to interview and mingle with Chinese students in Japan to understand how they coped with life in Japan and what they thought about Japan and its people. I hoped to be able to appreciate their thoughts and behaviours within the context of the current political environment, that is, the state of the relations between China and Japan. There were a few assumptions I had in mind before I began.

First and foremost, I presumed that the Chinese students I was about to meet were most probably in Japan because they wanted to learn from Japan. They might think that education in Japan could offer them something that an education in China could not. I also supposed that these Chinese students were likely to say positive things about Japan since they had chosen to go there for their studies. I had a hypothesis that these Chinese students could even be pro-Japan or at least, neutral, if they had to take a stand regarding a disagreement between China and Japan. And there were a few possible reasons that could have influenced their decisions to study in Japan: the allure of Japan as a modern nation, the attractiveness of Japanese culture, or simply its label as a “cool” place (Katzenstein & Shiraishi, 2006). I hoped to find out what were the reasons for Chinese students’ decisions to study in Japan. Lastly, I wished to know why these Chinese students were not deterred by the deteriorating political environment between China and Japan in their pursuit of an education in Japan, a nation which many other Chinese still viewed as the “enemy”.

With these curiosities, I set off to meet and understand Chinese students in Japan and hoped that by looking at China and Japan's relationship through their eyes, I could gain a fresh perspective on Sino-Japanese relations. The next section of this thesis establishes the significance of the topic.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Brief historical account of Chinese student movement to Japan**

For hundreds of years, China saw Japan as a small neighbouring nation and a modest student of Chinese culture, expertise and political structures. Japan was not a popular educational destination for Chinese students until its military overpowered the Chinese navy in the Yellow Sea and the Chinese army in Manchuria and on the Korea peninsula in 1894-5. After witnessing Japan's military victories, China became fascinated with Japan's modernity and Qing scholar-officials started to look to Japan to change China.

Several scholars have examined the impact of Japanese education on China during the time of late Qing Reforms and the 1911 Revolution. Special mention goes to historical figures like Dr. Sun Yat Sen, Huang Zunxian, and Zhang Zhidong. These men are prominent Chinese leaders who made great changes in China after being educated and trained in Japan. They have also promoted Japan as a study destination for promising Chinese students during their time (Fairbank and Goldman, 2006, pp. 241; Liu-Farrer, 2011; Wang, 2012).

But before Japan impressed China, Japan itself had undergone a period of intense political, economic and social transformation. These changes happened as a result of reforms implemented by the Meiji Emperor during the Meiji Restoration from 1868-1912. The successful implementation of reforms enabled Japan to go through an industrial revolution and become a forward-looking capitalist society. Japan had to change from being a nation absorbed

in its own culture to being an open and entrepreneurial nation. This ensured that its economy could continue to serve its people. And its rulers also created institutions to oversee the people (Wilson, 1992, pp. 2). Such advancements helped Japan to surpass other nations, including China.

Thereafter, the Chinese believed that China could copy the Japanese developmental model. They started to desire to enter Japan to study. And they wanted to study in Japan rather than in the West due to a few reasons. Firstly, Japan delivered a shortcut to modernism. The Chinese believed they could pick up an improved and abridged version of Western civilization in Japan. They thought the Japanese must have already cultivated the information they learned in the West by sifting out redundant information and preserving relevant principles for real-world application (Liu-Farrer, 2011). In addition, the Japanese language was reasonably easy for the Chinese to learn due to its similarities (especially in writing) to Chinese language. It was more effective for Chinese students to learn Japanese and later study in Japan than it was for them to learn a Western language. Moreover, because of some common traditional customs, the Chinese felt more able to identify with Japanese practices and ways of life than with Western ones. Linguistic and cultural similarities between China and Japan thereby convinced Chinese people that living in Japan would be more suitable for them. Chinese students could also go back to China straightaway if there was a crisis (as Japan is geographically close to China). If they were to study in the West, such convenience would not be possible. Lastly, the costs of studying in Japan for Chinese students were lower compared to that of studying in America. Due to all these reasons, many Chinese students flocked to Japan from 1896 to 1945. And during this period, Japan was the favourite study destination of Chinese students (Liu-Farrer, 2011).

The movement of Chinese students into Japan was continuously affected by the shifting political, institutional, social and economic circumstances in China and Japan as well as by events in Sino-Japanese diplomatic ties from 1896-1945. But Chinese student migration into Japan did not end even during the Second World War. In fact, the movement of Chinese students into Japan persisted in spite of deteriorating Sino-Japanese diplomatic ties during Second World War, even though their numbers did change.

In recent decades, Chinese students have pioneered the resurgent migration trend from China to Japan. Migration from mainland China to Japan was virtually halted from 1949 until 1972 when the two countries re-established diplomatic relations. Between 1972 and 1978 several dozen Chinese students were sent to Japan to study Japanese by the Chinese government. And in 1979, Japan and China started official educational exchange programmes (Liu-Farrer, 2011).

Presently, Japan Education Fairs in China have been cancelled (Japan Education, 2013) and as of May 2012, the number of Chinese international students in Japan had dropped by 1.4% (International Students in Japan, 2013). The political context in China and Japan as well as the events in Sino-Japanese ties could have affected Chinese student movement into Japan in 2012. But with the declining local high school graduate populace in Japan in view of low fertility rates and over 40 per cent of private universities in Japan experiencing admission below capacity (Liu-Farrer, 2011), it would seem fair to say that Japan still needs Chinese students. Currently, despite a decrease in their numbers, Chinese students still make up the bulk of the international student population in Japan. Japan also remains the top Asian destination for Chinese student's education. My review of literature found that the number of articles written on Sino-Japanese educational ties exceeds that of articles written on China's educational links with other Asian countries. I found at least 20 articles written on issues related to Sino-Japanese educational ties



(Guo, 2012; Wang, 2012; McNeill & Hennock, 2012; Liu-Farrer, 2008, 2011; Yaoxuan et al., 2010; Jin, 2006). Amongst these, four of the authors (Guo, 2012; Wang, 2012; McNeill & Hennock, 2012; Jin, 2006) highlighted that Sino-Japanese political ties impacted the movement of Chinese students into Japan, while the other two authors (Yaoxuan et al., 2010; Jin, 2006) emphasized the economic impact of Chinese students on Japan. On the other hand, there were comparatively fewer works on overseas Chinese students in other Asian countries, such as South Korea (Cha & Chang, 2009; Choi, 2001), Singapore (Dimmock & Leong, 2010; Lian, 2005), Thailand (Wongsurawat, 2008) and Taiwan (Lin, Hsu, & Lai, 2011).

This is a possible signal that the phenomenon of Chinese students entering into Japan remains important. Notably, studies that focused on the relation between Sino-Japanese political ties and educational ties were published within the last five years. This indicates a need for more research to be done on this topic. And this is a gap that this thesis tries to address.

## **2.2 Significance of Chinese students in Sino-Japanese relations**

The commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan, Mr. Seiichi Kondo, recently reiterated: “China and Japan can learn from each other, thanks to friendly exchanges for thousands of years, despite the setbacks in the 19th and 20th centuries” during the eighth Beijing-Tokyo Forum (Cai, 2012).

Sino-Japanese history has shown that educational exchanges between China and Japan have helped sustained diplomatic ties and mitigated the harsh effects of political wrangling between the two nations (Vyas, 2011). Chinese students represent the part of China that is still engaged with Japan not only during the time they study in Japan, but also after. The linkages they form with Japan are widespread and diverse. First, Chinese students form connections with Japan and its people when they learn the Japanese language, work culture and societal habits. Some

Chinese students eventually manage to build close social relations with Japanese individuals – neighbours, professors, bosses, and friends they meet through social activities (Liu-Farrer, 2011). They are the group of Chinese who continually maintain face-to-face interactions with Japanese in spite of the diplomatic situation between their home and host country. In the course of their studies and residence in Japan, they promote non-official cultural exchanges between China and Japan that promote mutual understanding even as both countries disagree over other matters. And even after Chinese students go back to the mainland, historical accounts have proven that many continued to tie their home and host country together through their personal networks with Japanese people, especially during turbulent times in Sino-Japanese relations. (Liu-Farrer, 2011, pp. 18).

Chinese students become engaged with Japan's society not only through their role as students, but also as labourers and tourists in Japan (Liu-Farrer, 2008, 2011; Yaoxuan et al., 2010). In terms of tourism, Kim, Guo, and Agrusa's (2005) study showed that Japan has been the most preferred Asian destination for tourists from mainland China. And Japan is preferred by Chinese tourists because of the low cost of travelling there, the well-established tourism infrastructure and services, the availability of different types of leisurely and recreational activities, and the low crime rate (Kim et al., 2005).

Berger (2010) illustrated in his analysis of Japan as a tourist destination that Americans visit Japan for various reasons. He explored the reasons for tourists' travel preferences using the "uses and gratification" methodology. From this methodology, Berger derived some possible reasons for people to want to travel in Japan: 1) to be charmed and kept entertained 2) to experience the beautiful 3) to satisfy curiosity 4) to learn about history 5) to help reinforce national identity 6) to obtain a sense of community with others (Berger, 2010, pp. 29-32).

Since Liu-Farrer (2011) has already done much to explore the role of Chinese students as labourers in Japan, this thesis shall not touch on this aspect of the students' lives in its study. Rather, this thesis shall seek to understand Chinese students' travel experiences in Japan using Berger's (2010) analysis. But why is it necessary to explore the role of Chinese students as tourists in Japan?

One important focus of this thesis is the role of Chinese students in the development and construction of Sino-Japanese relations at the non-governmental level. This thesis believes that in the process of travelling around Japan, Chinese students meet new Japanese people, try new Japanese products, and possibly learn about Japan's history, geography and society along the way. Tour and travel activities in Japan help Chinese students to get to know Japan and its people. After they understand Japan better, they become better able to relate to the country. Berger mentioned that travel helps people build camaraderie with others they meet along their way. This implies that travelling in Japan may provide a platform from which Chinese students form personal connections with other Japanese they meet. This thesis should explore these spontaneous connections as they also constitute Sino-Japanese interactions and the building of Sino-Japanese relations at a non-governmental level.

This thesis hereby recognizes that cultural exchange between China and Japan occurs not only through education but also through tourism. It is necessary, therefore, to also carry out an analysis of how Chinese students' travel experiences shape their understanding of Japan and Sino-Japanese relations. The thesis is keen to explore the study and travel experiences of Chinese students as it believes that Chinese students construct an image of Japan through their study and travel experiences. These experiences later impact how they relate to Japan as well as how they view Sino-Japanese relations.

## **2.3 The development of Sino-Japanese relations**

### **2.3.1 An official perspective**

China and Japan's history of contact goes back about 3000 years. After the two countries established normal ties in 1972, China has tried to promote Japan as a non-threatening and diplomatic neighbour who could profit China. Beijing's fears of yet another Japanese military rise had been eased due to the fact that Japan was securely entrenched within a security alliance with the United States. From the Chinese point of view, Japan is important to China within the area of business, investment, and aid. Chinese bureaucrats see their country's economic progress, partially assisted by Japan, as a crucial element of their peaceful and stable development as a nation. And ever since the late 1970s, Japan has played one of the most valuable roles in the Chinese economy (Jian, 2007). From 1979 to mid-2005, Tokyo gave more than JPY3.13 trillion (\$26.6 billion) in loan aid, JPY145.7 billion (\$1.23 billion) in grant aid, and JPY144.6 billion (\$1.23 billion) in technical cooperation aid to China in the form of Overseas Development Assistance (Sentinel Security, 2007).

But China's political ties with Japan have been far less optimistic or steady. Even if China acknowledges that a good relationship with Japan is advantageous. Several disagreements between China and Japan continue to impede the development of positive and consistent relations. For a long time, China and Japan have not agreed over a variety of matters. China disagrees over how Japan addresses its war past. And both hold different stands on the issue of Taiwan. Both also claim ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea. But some Chinese experts see the US-Japan alliance as the most basic problem between China and Japan. These Chinese experts do not see the strain in Sino-Japanese ties as merely bilateral and

blame it on a third party. They believe Japan being friends with a nation that wishes to restrain China – US – is the fundamental issue (Jian, 2007).

From the Japanese point of view, a stark progress in ties with China could be seen since relations were made normal in 1972. Japan's engagement with China can be outlined in three main stages (Mochizuki, 2007). From 1972-89, it was a period in which Japan followed a supportive and peaceful plan in their dealings with China. This plan contained three features: improving business ties, accommodating China with respect to the issue of Japan's past antagonism against it, and staying away from competing with China in terms of security. The second stage, beginning with the Tiananmen Square incident in June 1989, continued until around 1995. There was sustained commitment but also more caution on Japan's part as the suppression of Chinese political efforts during Tiananmen had tainted the reputation of China in the eyes of the Japanese. Other Chinese actions such as declaring control over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 1992, carrying out nuclear tests in 1995, and conducting military exercises near Taiwan (and sending off missiles near Okinawa), also adversely affected Japanese attitudes toward China. The third stage, from 1996 to present, is a time when both nations attempt to find a balance by engaging externally. A major component of this stage is Japan's concentrated efforts on reviving their alliance with the United States. Not only did Japan make clear the cases in which it would provide backing for U.S. forces, it also tried to acquire ballistic missile defence (BMD) capabilities, which might have consequences for China because Japan could equip its ships with BMD abilities to help Taiwan fend off China's missile attacks (Mochizuki, 2007).

The above perspectives were derived from official political and economic viewpoints. If one were to consider Sino-Japanese relations from a non-official viewpoint, one might find the scenario quite different.

### **2.3.2 A non-official perspective**

A review of literature on Sino-Japanese relations has revealed that there is a lack of analysis on China-Japan affairs at non-official levels. As such, Vyas's (2011) examination of Sino-Japanese relations at the grassroots level stands out. Vyas wrote about how Sino-Japanese relations had been sustained by non-governmental organizations even when political ties between China and Japan had been strained. One clear example was formation of a group of Christian doctors in 1938 to help take care of evacuees from the Japan-China war (Vyas, 2011).

Vyas further showed the extremely important role of sub-state (semi-governmental organizations) and non-state level agents (non-governmental organizations and non-officials) as personalities that are important when examining global relationships and the mechanism of the international structure. Through his research on educational connections planned by the Japan-China Friendship Association in China, he warned of the inadequacy of typifying International Relations (IR) through the convention medium; that is, seeing the relations between and amongst nations as primarily made up of communication between countries' rulers and officials, to the point that players outside this official group actually disappear from the global scheme of things (Vyas, 2011).

Vyas stated that in Japan's dealings with China, non-official exchanges have helped much in creating connections amongst the citizens in these two nations since the two countries' political relationship often creates a tricky environment (Vyas, 2011, p. 131). This thesis sees the Chinese student community in Japan as a non-state level agent playing a range of roles that

help construct, develop, and maintain Sino-Japanese relations. In fact, the efforts made by various researchers to seek ways to promote a deeper understanding of Chinese students in Japan attest to their significance (Yaoxuan et al., 2010; Liu-Farrer, 2008; 2011).

According to Yee (2011), the expansion of people-people relations is one of the causes for change in modern Japan-China affairs. The increase in the number of Chinese tourists to Japan over the years has helped improve economic ties and cultural understandings between China and Japan. Tourist movement between China and Japan has expanded personal interactions between citizens from both countries. According to Japan National Tourism Organization, the number of Japanese who visited China grew from 27,828 in 1978 to 1305190 in 1995 to 2385700 in 2001 to 3446117 in 2008. The number of Chinese who visited Japan rose from 7220 in 1978 to 220715 in 1995 to 391384 in 2001 to 1000416 in 2008. And the ratio of Chinese out of all the foreigners who visited Japan increased from 6 percent in 1995 to 12.0 percent in 2008 (Yee, 2011, pp. 127).

But Sino-Japanese relations are not just about what happens between China and Japan only. The development of these ties is also affected by the behaviours of other nations. And the most significant one is the US. Yee (2011) has warned that expanding US-China ties in recent times will impact on the relationship between Japan and the US, as well as the ties between China and Japan. For now, Sino-Japanese ties are deteriorating while both countries attempt to engage US. This phenomenon can once again be illustrated by looking at the educational and intellectual links amongst China, US and Japan. Even though there are insufficient numbers of Chinese experts in Japan, China is sending more and more students to America and allowing more American students to study in China. The development of Chinese specialists on American issues, US experts on China, and the strengthening of individual networks between China and the

U.S, is going to deepen US- China ties (Yee, 2011, pp. 132). Subsequently, Japan, famous for its strong alliance with the US, will find it increasingly difficult to gain US support against China. As such, Japan is increasingly pressed to face its own problem of having depended on the US for protection from China. Eventually, Japan is deciding on developing the capability to protect its own security (Ching, 2013).

And as US figures out its future role and status in Asia-Pacific, China and Japan are going to have to face the task of reconciling with each other if they are both serious about maintaining peace in the region (Teo, 2006, pp. 87). This thesis views the Chinese student community in Japan as valuable agents in facilitating this task. They are the group of Chinese that China is allowing to cultivate as experts in all things Japanese. And their personal connections are likely going to help, to varying extents, to deepen Sino-Japanese ties. Moreover, they may also be a viable resource for Japan to tap on as Japan figures out how it is going to deal with a rising China.

### **2.3.3 A historical perspective**

This thesis has to first establish Chinese students' knowledge on the history of Sino-Japanese ties before it can fully comprehend how they think and feel about Japan and Sino-Japanese relations. Historical memories, especially memories of the Second World War, remain very sensitive and controversial issues amongst East Asian countries. According to Jin (2006), one chief matter in building friendly relations amongst East Asian nations is the issue of whether the nations' leaders can effectively solve old problems as well as convince their people that friendly relations amongst each other are necessary for everyone's benefit.

Currently, in modern China, there appears to be agreement amongst the people that China should not carelessly pursue friendly ties with Japan and lower their standards on how the past



should be treated (Jin, 2006). In 2002-2003, when Chinese experts – Ma Licheng and Professor Shi Yinhong – recommended that the Chinese regime should remove the problems of the past from strategic thinking and help guide Chinese attitudes toward Japan in a more optimistic direction, their recommendations were strongly criticized by the public (Jin, 2006). Most of the criticisms were aired over 5000 websites. Chinese online users labelled Ma and Shi as “Japanese dogs,” “traitors” or “collaborators.” Some even displayed Ma’s home address and telephone number online and asked others to “harass” him (Huang, 2003). As a result of this event, Chinese leaders publicly overruled “new ideas towards Japan” in view of the people’s resentment.

Ironically, Chinese public opinions on Sino-Japanese historical problems are mainly derived from official formulations of these historical ties. In China, people rely mainly on historical information provided by the government and disseminated through the schooling system. That is how they remember and imagine the past. And Chinese leaders have been using history education as a means to stir up Chinese’s national pride and to keep a strict reign over the people’s views (Jin, 2006). Likewise, the Japanese government also sees history as an important means through which Japanese nationalism can be framed. The Japanese authorities continue to heavily censor school textbooks on Japan’s history. Jin (2006) posits that the methods of both Chinese and Japanese leaders towards Sino-Japanese history – the method of using history to instil nationalism (amongst Chinese against Japanese wartime aggressors, and amongst Japanese in view of their past military victories) – have had adverse effects on China- Japan affairs. On the Chinese side, it has led Chinese people to view (and even treat) Japanese with hostility as evident from the outbreak of anti-Japanese riots in China in 2012. On the Japanese side, history education has prevented the current Japanese generation from fully comprehending Japan’s role

as a war aggressor. Subsequently, their nonchalant attitudes towards their nation's war crimes aggravate Chinese people.

In the era of globalization, a strong China-Japan relationship is vital for harmony and wealth in East Asia. Jin (2006) feels that Chinese and Japanese leaders are responsible to point the way towards a more optimistic future since the state of the relations currently are partly a result of their selfish approaches towards cultivating younger generations. If Chinese and Japanese leaders do nothing to change the situation, rising nationalism and resentment amongst young people in East Asia will become the main roadblock to cooperation within the region in spite of growing economic collaborations; it may also ultimately endanger the development of economic partnership between China and Japan. The consequence of unsettled pasts should not be ignored. What more, with the growth of the Chinese economy, China is looking for a way to reclaim its role as a leader in East Asia. It had missed opportunity to lead as it had given this role away to Japan about a hundred years ago (Teo, 2006). Now Japan's economy is declining relative to China's and it is worried about its deteriorating influence and power in the Asia-Pacific region. And this change in power relations adds difficulty to the solution of historical problems in Asia.

Jin (2006) is of the view that public attitudes and emotions will be progressively significant parts in China- Japan relations, as they have abilities to reinforce or disrupt friendly relations. For steady and interdependent ties to be established between China and Japan, it is important for both leaderships to lessen challenges produced by discriminatory views of China-Japan's histories, and to lead its people in the direction of constructing friendly relations. In addition, both Chinese and Japanese leadership should source for methods in which they can deal with the past amicably rather than exploit past memories for their own advantage and utilizing

mass opinions for political goals. Jin believes that leadership in East Asia needs to have a common understanding of their histories, in particular that of the Second World War in Asia, in order to keep peace and sustain wealth in East Asia (Jin, 2006, pp. 47-48).

This thesis will thus explore Chinese students' perceptions of Japan and its society in the light of their historical knowledge. The purpose of taking this approach is to find out the extent to which Chinese students' historical knowledge impacts on their current views towards Japan as well as the present and future state of Sino-Japanese relations.

## **2.4 Review of Research Methods**

Few researches on Chinese students in Japan have employed ethnographic approaches. A majority of studies conducted utilized interview methods to gather information. Additionally, Chinese students' travel experiences have not been examined using ethnographic means before. As a result, this thesis infers that it would be apt to use the ethnographic method in conducting its research on Chinese students in Japan. As ethnographic methods are new to this field of study, this thesis hopes that it will also be able to explore the usefulness of this research method in understanding the subjects of study.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Method**

30 Chinese student participants were gathered for this research. 20 responded by answering a questionnaire sent to them through email and Facebook. The questionnaire was provided in English and/or Chinese as some of the students were not proficient in English. The remaining 10 students were interviewed. Out of these 10 students, two were interviewed together for 30 minutes in a classroom, one was interviewed in a common room for more than an hour, while the remaining seven students were interviewed and observed whenever I met them in and

out of school. I started by approaching Chinese students I met at orientation. Thereafter, when classes started, I approached Chinese students taking the same classes as me. Later, I managed to increase the number of participants through snowball sampling. Chinese students would forward the questionnaires to their friends through email and Facebook, and get their friends to send their replies to me. Additionally, they would also recommend other Chinese students to be interviewed. Only one female student started out as a stranger who I met, guessed was Chinese, and approached with friendly intentions. She later agreed not only to participate in the research but also to help me get other participants.

Comments that were relevant to the research but not covered by the questionnaire were also recorded and analyzed. Often, students who participated in the research continued to share their opinions about Japan, Japanese people and their culture, and Sino-Japanese relations, over a range of different activities in the four months that I had with them. I took notes when I was out of view so as to make them less conscious of my research task at hand. I did not restrict what they wished to discuss about Japan and its people, its society, and about Sino-Japanese ties. This means that I interviewed participants in a conversational manner (using empathy, reflecting, paraphrasing, and silences to probe and prompt them to share their opinions), rather than in a structured and formal way (by reading out the research question and recording their answers). As a result of this, the lengths of interviews for different interviewees varied vastly.

### **3.2 Demographics of Student Respondents**

18 female and 12 male students were interviewed. The youngest student was 18-years-old, the oldest was 35 years old, and the rest of the students fell between an age range of 23 to 26-years-old. Nine students came from Shanghai, four from Beijing, three from Liaoning, two from

Jilin, and one each from these provinces: Gansu, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Hubei, Henan, Ningxia, Sichuan, Yunnan, Dalian, Wenzhou, Zhejiang and Hainan.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

The findings below were selected for analysis based on their relevance to the research questions of this thesis. Data was significant if it illustrated how Chinese students coped with living in Japan especially during the period of high political tension between their home and host country in late 2012. Furthermore, findings had to show how these Chinese students thought and felt as Chinese persons amongst millions of Japanese and how they acted as well as interacted with other Japanese people. The next section will also provide an assessment of the current and future state of Sino-Japanese relations based on the data gathered. In particular, the thesis will highlight how Chinese students view their role in the development of Sino-Japanese relations at the non-state level and the reasons for their perceptions in the light of their understandings of the history of Sino-Japanese ties.

### **4.1 As a Chinese student**

The present findings attempt to display an understanding of Chinese students in Japan, beginning with why they choose Japan as a study destination. To this question, ten Chinese students revealed that one of the chief factors was that they had good impressions of Japan through contact with its products (including pop culture). Following this, the data shows how Chinese students cope with life in Japan after they arrive. Chinese students mentioned experiencing changes in their views towards Japan after they came to Japan. This is because in Japan, Chinese students are exposed not only Japanese views but also Western views on China. The exposure they gain in Japan has impacted on their mindsets towards China as well as towards Japan.

It has been observed as well as acknowledged by all the Chinese students that the similarities between Chinese and Japanese society and culture, as well as the physical appearances of Chinese and Japanese people, have helped them to blend in with the locals. As a result, Chinese students are able to relate to Japan and fit in to the society rather easily. They did not feel discriminated against or threatened as foreigners. Chinese students who could speak Japanese were even treated like the locals especially when it came to work issues (in this case, the experience was not necessarily a positive one based on Liqin's account below). And the results also showed that 20 Chinese students were keen to form social networks in Japan, within the student body as well as outside of student life.

In all, Chinese students clearly separated politics from their daily lives. And they tended to view China and Japan's political issues from a distance. Even as they shared a variety of stories regarding their encounters and experiences in Japan, they considered these stories personal events. Chinese students' stories about their lives in Japan were also peculiar to their personal backgrounds. As a result, the students gave a wide variety of reasons as to how they started to become interested in Japan, how they related to Japanese people, and how they coped with living in Japan regardless of whether political tensions were running high. Lixiong, a 35-year-old student who worked for the Chinese government before coming to Waseda, said, "In the media, everything seems tense, but Chinese-Japanese interactions in real life are pretty relaxed."

From the sum of these findings, it can be inferred that Sino-Japanese relations at the non-state level are a product of personal preferences. And Chinese students do not mix these personal decisions with politics. This could be one reason why Chinese students are not perturbed by the tense political situation between China and Japan when they decide to pursue their studies in Japan. If so, such a pattern of decision-making is helpful. It has ensured the

continuity of personal channels and networks between China and Japan even when political ties deteriorate, and thereby sustained Sino-Japanese relations, albeit at the non-governmental level.

The following example illustrates the extent to which Chinese students remain undisturbed by political issues between China and Japan. Previously in the introduction, I mentioned that I had been warned by a Singaporean Chinese, and a friend from China, not to display my Chinese identity in Tokyo as it might incite negative reactions from Japanese people who were anti-Chinese. Friends advised me then not to speak Chinese in Japan. But in the time I spent in Tokyo, not only did I learn that Chinese people spoke Chinese freely wherever they went, I even saw a male student, Huangwei, proudly display his Chinese identity through fashion. Huangwei, in his 20s, is a third year student from Liaoning who attended classes held in Japanese in Waseda. He had gone to Japan to learn about China from a Japanese perspective.

I was intrigued when I saw him wearing a sports sweater with the words “中国” (China) printed on the front. I was curious as to how come he was not worried that his fashion statement might attract anti-Chinese reactions from Japanese in public. When asked about his sweater, he remarked that he simply thought the sweater was “cool”. This case appeared even more symbolic of the freedom that Chinese students enjoyed in Japan as Chinese individuals, other than the fact that they could speak Chinese freely wherever they went. He had been unafraid of proclaiming his identity as a Chinese national in public in Japan, even if it were just meant to be a fashion statement. Although I did not explore if fashion had in fact neutralized the political connotations behind the wearing of the sweater, I interpreted this case as evidence of the liberties a Chinese student enjoyed as a Chinese in Japan.

Huangwei could walk around the streets of Japan wearing a sweater that spelled out his Chinese identity, and not feel vulnerable or threatened. He exemplified the freedom that

belonged to Chinese students in Japan and the extent to which they could act liberally without fear of provoking retaliatory actions from Japanese people in the streets. Other cases below will continue to reveal more about what it is like for a Chinese student to live in Japan, beginning with the students' sharing on what were their preconceived notions of Japan before they arrived.

Mei Ting, in her early 20s, studied in Ohio, United States (US), before coming to Waseda University for her graduate studies. Born and raised in Beijing, she was the only child in her family. As such, her parents had high hopes for her. When she could not pass the university entrance exams in China, her family sent her to the US to pursue an undergraduate degree. Eventually, though her father would have preferred her to continue studying in the US, she decided to do her Masters in Japan. She said:

“Personally, I wanted to come to Japan because of this Japanese idol I like. His name is Yuya Tegoshi, and he is from the Japanese boy band, NEWS. He is part of the reason why I chose to apply to Waseda University, as I found out that he is also a student of Waseda. But he is not in our campus. But I could not give this reason to my father for choosing to come to study in Japan. I had to justify my decision based on Waseda's reputation, which was something he could accept.”

It was Mei Ting's personal interest in Japanese pop culture that had first led her to like Japan. She had initially been attracted to Japan because of Japanese music, pop idols, and related products. And after she came to Japan to study, she started to appreciate more aspects of Japanese culture (including its food, tradition and social etiquettes). She has even managed to positively engage with locals during the short time she spent here (she had been living in Japan for about two months when she was interviewed). She said:

“I like Japanese people because they are nice. Even if they did not like me, they would not say it... You know, I have even made new Japanese friends at the supermarket recently. We casually chatted, exchanged numbers, and have arranged to meet at a park this Saturday to do some volunteer work (picking up trash) together.”



Mei Ting commented that she felt happier and more comfortable living in Japan, than in the US. Several factors made Japan a preferable place compared to the US; in fact, the main reason was because Tokyo and Beijing (her hometown) were more similar than Beijing and Ohio. These were the factors that made it easier for her to live in Japan: people in Japan looked Asian like her, the pace of life in Japan (Tokyo) was more suitable for her, mobility was easier, and Asian food was more widely available. In contrast, when Meiting lived in Ohio, she had had to travel for more than an hour before she could reach school. Going to a supermarket in the US took about the same amount of time as well. Furthermore, she found it hard to fit in to American culture and cited an example to illustrate the distance she felt from American lifestyle:

“An American would say "My favourite drink is Mountain Dew" and I will be like, "What is Mountain Dew? I am actually more familiar with Japanese products and lifestyle."

All other Chinese students, like Meiting, also acknowledged that China and Japan have many similarities in terms of lifestyle and culture. One of the most visible similarities was that of the physical appearances of Chinese and Japanese. During my time in school, I observed that Chinese students blended in with the crowd. I could not tell if a student was Chinese or Japanese unless they spoke in Chinese. I spoke to Lixiong, 35, a first-year economics student in class and he said:

“Most people think I am Japanese until they hear me speak. I guess it’s because when speak Japanese, my intonation is strange. And the local people would give me ‘looks’ after they realize that I am not Japanese.”

Weiting, 25, has also been mistaken for being Japanese. She had not learnt Japanese before she came to Japan and could not speak Japanese at all. She had come to study in Japan simply because her boyfriend was in Japan. She was not motivated to learn the Japanese language as well. But due to her physical appearance, she looked like a local and often, Japanese

strangers would initiate conversations with her in Japanese. They would only find out later that she was a foreigner when she indicated through gesturing or facial expressions that she could not understand them. In the third month that she had lived in Japan, she posted online that “the most difficult part about Japan is that everyone speaks Japanese and I don’t”.

Nevertheless, seven Chinese students commented that Japanese people have been helpful towards them despite the language barrier. This finding implies that competence in Japanese language is not correlated with positive Sino-Japanese interactions. Conversely, competence in Japanese language might even increase friction in ties with the Japanese. Liqin, 26, was a Japanese language major. In all, she had spent about four years studying in Japan. She shared that knowing the local language had its disadvantages.

Liqin felt that Japanese were less forgiving to Japanese-speaking foreigners especially in the context of work. Once they knew you spoke Japanese, they would expect you to also understand their work culture and follow it strictly. She drew this conclusion from her own personal experience in Japan. Liqin said that she used to work for a Japanese boss who would set very strict work procedures, and demand her to follow his instructions on even the minutest detail (how she should sign on the contract sheet). Above all else, he imposed restrictions yet underpaid her. According to Liqin, Japanese workers are known to have to submit fully to their bosses and most would not dare defy their bosses even if they were mistreated. And as a result of her competence in Japanese, Liqin felt she had been treated like a typical Japanese worker and trapped in their work culture. She eventually resolved the issue by approaching the ministry in charge of employees’ rights in Japan. Indeed, Liqin’s case showed that knowing the Japanese language did not necessarily improve Sino-Japanese interactions. Competence in Japanese language has its pros and cons for Chinese students. While one of the benefits is the ability to

communicate better with Japanese people, knowing the language also means Chinese students have wider access to a range of experiences in Japan. And the more access they have, the higher the chances will be that they also get to experience the negative side(s) of Japanese culture.

Aside from learning more about other aspects of Japanese culture through their first hand experiences, Chinese students also learned more about their country while studying in Japan. Chinese students said that education in Japan changed the way they related to Japan. Three Chinese female students – Jiawen, Limin and Xiaoli – attested to a change in their attitudes towards Japan after going to study there. The following paragraphs will illustrate how Jiawen, Limin and Xiaoli, experienced a shift in their mindsets.

Jiawen, 30, is married without children, and had lived in Japan for four years. She moved to Japan in view of her husband's work commitments but enrolled in Waseda only in April 2012 (for a Master's degree in Chinese politics and governance conducted in Japanese). Jiawen, a class representative, invited me to sit in her class after she found out that I was doing a research on Chinese students in Japan. She introduced me to her classmates and informed me that I could interview some of the students after the lesson. Thereby, I sat in their class and got to observe how Chinese students interacted with their Japanese professor and teaching staff. All in all, there were ten Chinese female students, four Chinese male students, one Japanese teaching assistant, and the Japanese professor in class. Except for one Japanese female student, and another Japanese-Korean female student, the rest of the class was made up of Chinese students. The students sat in a circle, and listened to presentations given by their classmates. Unfortunately, the class was conducted in Japanese and I was unable to comprehend the contents of the lesson.

After the lesson, I sat down with Limin and Xiaoli, who were both in their early 20s, as well as with Jiawen. I learnt from Jiawen that her classmate had been sharing her research topic

– on the use of social media in China— with the class and receiving feedback and suggestions. I enquired if they talked about Sino-Japanese issues in class, and she said yes. But she went on to clarify that the atmosphere in class remains easy-going even if Sino-Japanese politics are discussed. The Chinese students trust that what they say will be kept within the walls of the classroom. They are also comfortable with sharing their personal opinions on Sino-Japanese politics with their Japanese professor, who the students saw in good light as he was not only knowledgeable about China's affair but also very conversant in the Chinese language. But Jiawen had heard about a Chinese student dropping out of a class before, due to her fears of being found out by the Chinese government for criticizing China and banned from returning to the mainland.

Limin is from Shanghai, while Xiaoli is from Dalian. I observed that both girls were dressed in Japanese fashion (elaborate dresses and make-up). Outwardly, they looked like Japanese university students. Later I learned that both of them were close followers of Japanese fashion trends and liked Japanese products (food and pop culture).

Both girls had contact with Japan in some way or other before coming to Waseda. Limin had attended an exchange programme in Japan during her undergraduate days and worked in a Japanese firm in Shanghai before. Her exchange programme was so enjoyable that it made her choose Japan as her study destination for her Masters. The decision to choose Japan was also affected by her work experiences, in which she had to deal with Japanese people. Going to Japan to pursue her Masters was one way for her to further hone her expertise in handling Japan-related matters. Meanwhile, Xiaoli majors in Japanese studies back in Dalian and came to Waseda as part of the course. Her school programme in the Chinese university requires her to study for two years in China and two years in Japan. She shared that many of her female friends

back in China were also like her in that they too followed Japanese fashion trends and appreciated Japanese food, as well as pop culture. Xiaoli said that she and her friends do not think about China's political ties with Japan when they consume these Japanese products, which they consider matters of individual preferences. In fact, she said many of her female friends back in the mainland want to visit Japan to gain a first-hand experience of its modern culture.

I probed to find out what their political inclinations were. Xiaoli replied:

“We used to be very patriotic and proud of China before we came to Japan. After coming to Japan, we became more neutral towards our country and its nationalistic aims. The feelings for China are now gone.”

Limin, Xiaoli, as well as Jiawen, stated that it was their wider exposure to Japanese and Western thought in Waseda, plus their positive social experiences in Japan (through interacting more with other Japanese students and professors), that led them to develop more positive views towards Japan. Thereby, they also changed to having less biased reactions when discussing issues which touch on the Sino-Japanese relationship. For instance, Limin said, “Regarding the Diaoyutai issue, it is hard to say who the islands belong to. Back in China, we are constantly exposed to biased information from news media and will think that the islands belong to China. But when we are here, we understand that it is not that simple.” And Xiaoli nodded in agreement to this statement (her comments are shared below in section 4.4).

Limin and Xiaoli's views concurred with all Chinese student participants in this research. What is significant is that the political views of the students towards China and Japan changed only they left China to study in Japan. In China, these students were more nationalistic and supportive of their country's political aims (which are antagonistic towards Japan) even as they personally clamoured after Japanese modern products and culture. It is only after coming to Japan to study that Chinese students changed to adopt more neutral political attitudes towards

China, Japan, as well as the affairs going on between the two countries. Their detachment from Chinese nationalism could indicate that these Chinese students are unlikely to act or react out of patriotic feelings for China.

But not all students had positive impressions of Japan. Jiawen, who could read and write well in English, Japanese, and Chinese, had more pessimistic comments on Japanese attitudes towards China and Chinese. These are her thoughts towards Japanese in general:

"Japanese people look down on other peoples of Asia generally and do not like China; they have a superior mentality towards China (and the rest of Asia), as well as an inflexible approach towards the changing world order. Japan still thinks that it supersedes other Asian countries in terms of technological advancement. They are continuing to base their superiority on past successes. Who do you think the Japanese like? They like people of the West (US and Europe) and not people of the East... the US had been more pragmatic than Japan in dealing with China. One of the articles I read about Japanese perspectives on China has troubled me. The disturbing part was not the anti-China terms used in the article, but the type of mentality (anti-Chinese) it reflected... I made these assessments after being exposed to a variety of opinions (Western and Eastern) on Japan's relations with other countries, as well as by reflecting on my personal experiences.

Aside from Jiawen, four other students similarly gave negative evaluations of Japanese society, its people, and the feelings they had towards their life in Japan. One of them, Wenli, 24, a graduate in her second year in Waseda University, used three words to describe her life in Japan: "intense", "lonely", and "enclosed" Another student, Weiwen, 26, who is studying law at Sophia University and has lived in Japan for three years, felt life in Japan "is a little cold and heartless; it's hard to feel the warmth of other people." And he also used the word "lonely" to summarize his description of what living in Japan feels like. Wenjuan, 24, who has been studying IR in Waseda for 18 months says, "I became quieter (after coming to Japan to study) because Japanese people do not like talking." Significantly, these students who mentioned feeling alone could converse in Japanese, had been staying in Japan for more than a year, and were all engaged in part-time jobs in Japan. Yet they still felt lonely in Japan. Meanwhile, other

students who could also converse in Japanese, stayed in Japan for more than a year, and were engaged in part-time jobs did not display the same level of pessimism to the question of how is life in Japan. Their answers ranged from positive – “I am happy here, because I have learned a lot and also have a lot of friends... Japanese people have been nice to me” – to moderate – “...the only thing is to go with the flow. As time flies, you get used to life in Japan”. It is important to note that Chinese students defined the quality of their life in Japan largely based on the state of their social relations and the sense of satisfaction they have towards their social life in Japan. But while Jiawen feels that the challenge of living in Japan (where close social connections are harder to build) is worthwhile, another student, Xiaoyan, 25, who has studied in Japan for two years, still hopes for a change. However, she is less optimistic about prospect of Japanese people changing the way they conduct social relations as she sees them as “conservative” people.

Nevertheless, overall, Chinese students who responded demonstrated a common desire to make Japanese friends and to understand Japan. They try to do so by learning the Japanese language, reading up about Japan, participating in academic discussions about Japan, joining social activities, or working part-time, to increase their opportunities to interact with other Japanese people. These initiatives can empower Chinese students to create and build Sino-Japanese relations at the ground level.

Indeed, Chinese students feel they sincerely want to be included and accepted by other Japanese. But through their personal experiences, all but one student have concluded that it is difficult to forge deep relations with Japanese at the personal level. In the words of Xiaoyan: “Cooperation between China and Japan will remain at the superficial level (economic cooperation). Integration of both countries at social and cultural levels would be very hard to

reach.” Nonetheless, all Chinese students agree that it is easy to get help from Japanese people as they are generally “nice” and helpful at giving practical assistance (such as giving directions to a person who is lost).

It is necessary to remember that the students’ responses are subjective and should not be taken as truths. Even as Chinese students say they think that Japan is an exclusive society, I observed that the Chinese student community in Waseda was at times, also rather exclusive. In fact, an African student did remark that he found it hard to break into the tight Chinese social circles in school. And at the common room in Waseda’s graduate school, I saw Chinese students often grouped together amongst themselves. On the other hand, few Japanese students were seen in the school’s common room or library. But whenever I saw them, they would either be alone or mixing around with other Japanese or Japanese-speaking students. The rest of the students would mingle in a more random manner, with no fixed social group.

There were, at times, one or two Chinese students who I would see socializing with other international students in the common room. But most of the time, I observed that Chinese students met and chatted with other Chinese friends in school more than with non-Chinese students. Concerning this phenomenon, I managed to ask Huiling, 25, what she thought could be the reason for this pattern of behaviour amongst the Chinese student community. Huiling remarked that many Chinese students in Japan may only know how to speak Chinese and Japanese well, but not English. These students (herself included) were likely too shy to speak to other international students as they did not feel confident about their English skills. And since it was hard for them to break into Japanese social circles, these Chinese students turned to other Chinese students and friends for social support. This is, however valid, only one possible reason for Chinese students’ social behaviour in school. While Chinese students mentioned that



Japanese people were not ‘sociable’, and hence, difficult to befriend, there is some possibility that Chinese students do not try that hard to form friendships with Japanese as they can easily obtain social support from Chinese friends in Japan (since the Chinese student community in Japan is large and well-connected).

There are at least two reasons why Chinese students in Japan are so well-connected. First, many Chinese students already have kinship networks in Japan to assist them when they need help and to connect them with other Chinese people in Japan. Second, the Internet provides various means— such as websites and social media platforms – for Chinese students to connect with other Chinese students in Japan (Liu-Farrer, 2011).

#### **4.2 As a Chinese tourist**

In this section, I will expound on the tour and travel experiences of Chinese students in Japan, as well as on how these experiences leave a good impression of Japan in the minds of the students. The key point is that cultural dissimilarities between China and Japan also helped Chinese students to appreciate Japan. For example, Chinese students admire the honesty of Japanese people and their efforts at preserving tradition amidst modernity.

And for those Chinese students who have travelled Japan or want to travel Japan, they desire certain outcomes for their journeys. They want: to be charmed, to experience the beautiful, learn about history, obtain a sense of community with others, and to take a break from their daily routines (Berger, 2010, pp. 29-32).

Xiaohong, 25, a lively Chinese student introduced to me by a non-Chinese student, has lived in Japan for about three years. She likes to travel and feels that travelling helps her to escape the realities of daily life (which she occupies with school work and activities, part-time

work, and job hunting). She thoroughly enjoys visiting onsens (hot springs) and often organizes trips to onsens out of Tokyo.

The habit of taking a bath at an onsen is particular to Japanese culture and a highly recommended activity for foreigners to try in Japan. Xiaohong mentioned that her female Chinese friends also like to visit onsens because doing so benefited their health and provided them a relaxing way to spend time with each other. One of the most famous onsen destinations is Hakone. Although Xiaohong had visited before, she preferred to explore different onsens around Japan every time she made an onsen trip. She usually selected onsens to go based on the price and pictures on advertisements. Additionally she would usually find four other friends to go with. This was because travelling by car was more cost efficient, and a rental car in Japan could only take up to five people. I was fortunate to have befriended her. She eventually invited me along on one of the trips. Along the way, I managed to understand what travelling means to her. Our group was made up of four people: Xiaohong, a common friend (Thai student), her Japanese male friend, and me.

Before our trip, Xiaohong created an event on Facebook to inform the group about the details of the trip (total expenses, destinations, and things to bring). It was a convenient tool from which we could discuss the details of the trip, and address any concerns we might have. At that time, I was concerned about safety issues as it had been snowing for a few days, and I wondered if it would be safe to drive on the roads. Moreover, I was apprehensive of driving through tunnels to our destination, Nikko, as recently, a tunnel collapsed in Japan and killed several locals. Xiaohong assured that Japanese rental cars were well-equipped with snow tires for driving in the winter season. Furthermore, as we were relying on a Japanese friend to drive, she assured that the trip would be safe as Japanese people were generally responsible drivers.

However, regarding the safety of travelling through tunnels, Xiaohong had no direct response. I gathered that she was willing to take the risk to get out of Tokyo.

On the day of the trip, we met at the train station near school, walked to a car rental shop five minutes away, rented a car in less than 15 minutes, and were on our way. While Xiaohong's Japanese friend drove, she gave directions using the in-car Global Position System (which gave instructions in Japanese). I learnt from the trip that Xiaohong and her Japanese friend shared many common interests (travelling, music, and drinking) and that travelling was one of the common activities they enjoyed together. Both also liked to travel out of Tokyo to take in the view of rural Japan which evoked in them a sense of enjoyment and peace. During the car rides, Xiaohong and her Japanese friend would sometimes engage in long conversations (in Japanese) which I did not understand. But from it I inferred that travelling was probably also an opportunity for Xiaohong to get to know her Japanese friend(s) better.

Later in the trip, our Thai friend realized she had lost her phone. She guessed that she might have dropped it at one of the pit stops and became very worried that she would not be able to get it back. Xiaohong assured her, however, saying that 90 per cent of the things you lose in Japan can be found because Japanese people are very honest and will always surrender lost items. On the contrary, Xiaohong said, "If this were to happen in China, 90 per cent of the time, you will not get your things back."

Her statement was tested and proven true when the Japanese friend called up the station where the Thai student guessed her phone had dropped. He found out that, just as Xiaohong predicted, someone had picked up the mobile phone and returned it to the staff at the station. We were amazed because the prospects of someone picking up an iPhone with a black casing, in the middle of a parking lot late at night, had seemed low.

Nearing the end of the trip, we were also given kind and earnest service by a Japanese attendant at a petrol station. He was the only attendant working at the station as it was a self-servicing station where drivers paid for the amount of petrol they wanted through a vending machine and thereafter pumped petrol into their own cars. Since we were foreigners and our Japanese friend was a new driver, our group was initially unsure of how to go about pumping petrol. We ended up holding up the queue of cars behind. The attendant noticed our clumsiness, and rushed out to help us. And even as the cars behind started to horn in impatience, he continued to assist us with a smile, friendly eye contact, and gave a deep bow when we eventually left the station. These events caused Xiaohong to exclaim at the end of the excursion that all had gone well because we met so many “nice” Japanese people who helped us along the way.

From this excursion, I experienced first-hand how a Chinese student shaped his or her image of and emotions towards, things and people in Japan through travel. Through all the positive encounters Xiaohong had during her trip, she affirmed that, “Japanese people are so nice” and that she “loved travelling on the road, seeing mountains, and visiting onsens”. My direct observations of how Xiaohong travelled in Japan led me to believe that a Chinese student also participates in positive Sino-Japanese exchanges as tourists in Japan. In fact, these feel-good experiences lead them to praise Japan for what it offers to tourists – beautiful sceneries, well-maintained heritage sites, and helpful people. Such compliments seem contradictory when set against the tense political environment surround China and Japan. All the more, Chinese students’ travel activities are needed to help encourage mutual understanding between Chinese and Japanese people. Chinese students form a potential market for tour companies to tap on. The findings suggest that tour companies could make up for the decline in Chinese tourists to

Japan during tense political situations by turning to Chinese student tourists. These student tourists are potential customers that tour and travel businesses in China and Japan can consider reaching out to. Chinese students' movements to Japan, as well as their mobility within Japan, do not face many restrictions. Especially during times of high political tension, Chinese student tourists form a formidable group of customers and consumers for the tourism industry. This is not limited to only Japanese tour businesses. For Chinese students also rely on family and friends from the mainland for travelling advice in Japan. This means that Chinese tour companies can also think about reaching out to Chinese student tourists who are already spending their free time travelling within Japan.

Indeed, Chinese students in Japan are also Chinese tourists who want to “experience the real Japan”, “understand the country” and “feel the local life”, all amidst intense political rivalry between their home and host country. Chinese students are not in the least affected by the political situation between China and Japan when they talk about tour and travel in Japan. They considered Japan a beautiful and safe place for them to travel. Meanwhile, individually, different Chinese students would express dissimilar preferences when it comes to what they like to do when travelling. Liqin, 26, a student previously quoted in the thesis, shared that when she travels around Japan, she likes to explore small alleys, meet the locals, and have a chat with them. Huiqin, 23, an exchange student from Peking University, was never at home (I found this out from her roommate) as she was always travelling! When I finally met her by chance in school, she would update me on where she had been. And within the four months she had spent in Japan she had travelled continuously within as well as out of Tokyo to places like Kyoto, down south to Osaka, Kyushu, and up north to areas around Hokkaido. Two places topped Chinese

students' list of preferred travel destinations in Japan – Hokkaido and Okinawa – mainly because students hear that these two places have beautiful sceneries.

Chinese students mainly rely on their friends to recommend places to go or tour groups to follow. They speak to both Chinese as well as non-Chinese friends (especially to Japanese friends) for travel advice. Additionally, it seemed that Chinese students did not limit themselves to travelling with other Chinese friends only. In fact, when I went with fellow Singaporean students to Oku-Tama, I met a Chinese female student who followed the tour group because a Singaporean friend told her about it. Thereafter when I followed a Singaporean tour group to Gifu, I met another two other Chinese students. And I managed to interview the female student, Shujin, at the onsen.

Shujin, 18, an undergraduate student at Waseda University, comes from Shanghai. She shared that her parents really like Japanese food and they often dined in Japanese restaurants in Shanghai. Likewise, when she tours Japan, she enjoys sampling different types of Japanese food. Additionally she also liked to “chase sunrises and sunsets” wherever she went in Japan. She would try to find out what time the sun would rise or set in the place that she was in so that she could catch the view. Sure enough, when I awoke the next morning (after the sun had risen), I saw her trudging through the snow back to the inn, with her camera in hand. She had awoken earlier than all the other students in the tour group to catch the sunrise.

Meiting, who earlier commented on the differences between living in the US and in Japan, also commented on the differences between China and Japan from a tourist's point of view. She found that Japan provides more opportunities for her to learn about history as they protected their traditions better than the Chinese did. She said:

“In Beijing, people would stare if you walked down the street in a traditional costume. I do not get to see anyone dressed in clothes from the past anymore in China. But in Tokyo, it is alright to walk around in a kimono. Seeing many Japanese women dressed in kimonos in this modern city helps me to better appreciate their historical culture. And because the Japanese preserve their traditions well, the Chinese influences found in Japanese practices (such as tea drinking) are also protected. It benefits us since we seem to be losing our own traditions”.

#### **4.3 Attitudes towards the history of Sino-Japanese ties**

Every Chinese student derived his or her basic historical knowledge of Sino-Japanese relations from Chinese textbooks. The second most widely used source of historical information was the Internet, followed by reading materials available through their universities. Generally, Chinese students displayed more forward-looking attitudes toward Sino-Japanese relations as they reflected about it in the context of history. Furthermore, they acknowledged that the history they learnt in China was not totally reliable and that the views on Japan back in China were heavily coloured by government propaganda through the education system and media. As such, the Chinese students saw necessity in getting to know non-Chinese assessments of Sino-Japanese issues. For all students, the most common events that came to mind when they thought about Sino-Japanese history was the Sino-Japanese wars. Out of all the participants, only two students placed emphasis on Japan's past contributions (such as their assistance in the form of money and expertise to help build railways in China) and not on Japan's war crimes against China. Another student, Liwei, 26, who studies law in Sophia University, was most conscious of Japan's successes over China when he recalled the history of Sino-Japanese relations. For him, he remembered that the Meiji restoration made Japan a modern country, whereas China repeatedly failed in bringing about democratic reforms. And as a result “Japan beat China twice” in history.

When I asked one of the students, Huiqin, for her opinions on China and Japan's historical ties, she said:

“We should treat history in an objective way, and respect real history. But we should not let the past affect the developments of today. I think if we have a right attitude towards the past, we can make rational and right choices for the present and the future.”

Jiawen, the 30-year-old student who was well-read, said:

“My understanding of historical Sino-Japanese relations used to be based on textbooks, and television (in China). Upon reflection, I can say that the knowledge that I have on Sino-Japanese relations before 1920s is accurate. Historical information of China after the 1920s is rigged for the Communist Party's aims. I only gathered such opinions after reading other Japanese and English articles. The problem is with the one-party rule and lack of democracy. We have been "brainwashed" by the Chinese government all our lives and never realized till we went overseas. Sometimes I am afraid to go back, because I now hold views that are against the Chinese government.”

Limin and Xiaoli also shared the same views as Jiawen:

Limin: “The information we have about the history of China and Japan’s ties comes from websites, parents, teachers, and of course, Chinese text books.”

Xiaoli: “I get information from journals as well. But the historical information we get in China about the Sino-Japanese relationship is biased, and hence, inaccurate.”

Limin: “For instance, we never discuss Tiananmen in China, not even with our parents. Our teachers would make a one-liner: ‘In 1989, there was the Tiananmen Incident.’ and then close the history book.”

Xiaoli: “My teacher did talk about it, but she closed the doors of the classroom whenever she did. That is how I know about the incident... We were "brainwashed" back in China! But we never knew we were brainwashed until we came to Japan.”

Meiting shared that her parents also did not discuss much about history with her, much less about Sino-Japanese history, as they did not care about the past between China and Japan.

Meiting’s parents were of the view that history has “no direct impact on their daily lives now”.

They were more concerned with practical matters such as doing business. Pertaining to the younger generation however, she mentioned that her friends who have gone either to a local or overseas university are more mature. Meiting said that amongst her friends, those who were more highly educated were also more likely to have realized that what they were taught in high school concerning China’s historical ties with Japan is biased. Subsequently, this group of



friends tended to be more neutral and hopeful that “things between China and Japan will get better”.

Conversely, in Meiting’s opinion, those friends who did not go on to study in a university still have anti-Japanese sentiments. Her comments fall in line with Wenting’s whose comments can be found in the next section on current issues between China and Japan. While they were the only two who shared the same views on how other Chinese people look at Japan, their argument remained significant. They believed that the level of education attained by Chinese individuals affected their views on Japan. Higher educational qualities (a degree and beyond) in a Chinese person could possibly correlate with less negative sentiments towards Japan and Japanese people. This line of argument might be useful in pointing the direction for future researchers who wish to find out why there is a wide range in Chinese perspectives towards Japan currently. It might be useful for them to study if higher education affects Chinese views about Japan.

On the other hand, one’s level of education might not be a primary factor. Rather, Chinese views towards Japan may be a result of the mindsets they adopt individually towards learning history. Jinwen, 23, shared with me that she was recently reading literature on Chinese history (which naturally includes China’s links with Japan) written by Westerners because she wanted to obtain a more objective view and to consider different perspectives of history. Additionally, not all Chinese students were forward-looking. Fenglin, 25, who comes from Beijing and majors in international relations, remained emotive when recalling the history between China and Japan:

“I want to point out that what happened in the aggression is never forgivable. However, the saddest thing today is, regardless of whether Japan has apologized to China for the matter of WWII, today's Japanese do not feel any remorse. To them, the war is already long gone and those who caused the war were already punished. So today's Japanese feel they are not responsible for anything that has happened in the past. I feel quite sorry once I think about this.”

#### **4.4 On China and Japan's disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands**

Finally, I address Chinese students' attitudes towards Sino-Japanese disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. It was encouraging to know that Chinese students were receptive and even enthusiastic as they shared their opinions regarding the disputes. One student explained that this was because Chinese students in Japan rarely had the opportunity to share their political views about Japan during their time of study in Japan. Three other students commented that they were also studying Sino-Japanese relations and were keen to discuss more with me about this topic in the future. So it seemed that even as Chinese students separated politics from personal, and viewed politics from a distance, they still tread with caution when it came to talking about a sensitive matter such as the island dispute between China and Japan.

In all, Chinese students had a sense of compassion to Japanese people affected directly by the riots in China that arose out of tense political situation. They were in fact more concerned about the safety of Japanese foreigners in China than that of Chinese people in Japan. And while they found room for resolution between China and Japan, they felt that any progress in the relationship would be slow. Nevertheless, Chinese students did not see the island disputes as an issue that would deter exchanges much at economic and socio-cultural levels. The following paragraphs will proceed to elaborate on the findings summarized above.

During a class on international law, the subject of maritime disputes was raised. The Japanese professor called on the class to share their views on laws for exclusive economic zones, territorial waters, etc. A Chinese student spoke up followed by an American student. At the end of the American student's sharing, the Japanese professor responded, "Since the both of you represent your country in this class, I thank you for your moderate views on such sensitive issues.

If this is the way China and US thinks about maritime disputes, then peace can be guaranteed. It is important for countries to seek peaceful ways of settling disputes.” The professor did not place his comments in the context of China and Japan’s tussle over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. But his statements acknowledged that Chinese student represented China in class and that the student’s views were important in the larger context of international peace-making.

It could also be inferred that the Japanese professor had been encouraged by the comment of a Chinese student in class. This scenario thereby supports to a limited extent the assertion that a foreign student can become “a cultural change agent, a potential key to world peace (Fordham, 2005, pp. 159). While this thesis is limited in that it did not measure the impact of Chinese students on settlement of disputes between China and Japan, the observation made above is a positive signal for future researchers. It might be worthwhile to identify the impacts that Chinese students have on peace-making efforts between China and Japan.

After that class, I walked to the common room with a fellow Chinese classmate, Wei Ting. Wei Ting, 25, a first-year student from Hainan, completed a Master’s degree in mass media in London before she came to Waseda. While she was in London, she was heavily exposed to Western mass media and literature and particularly interested in reading articles on China, especially those that were banned in China.

We sat down at a corner to begin the interview. Since we had just come from a class that was discussing maritime issues, I asked her what she thought about the disputes between China and Japan over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Weiting exclaimed, “I think they’re all stupid!” As mentioned earlier her opinions were the same as Meiting who believed that the less educated a Chinese person is, the more likely he or she would be anti-Japanese. She elaborated:

“I think that many of those who destroy properties in China because of this issue are uneducated. I mean, how can someone protest over something they have not even seen? Did you know that the Toyota shop destroyed in Beijing belongs to a Chinese? I think it is really stupid... the anti-Japanese protests have ended up hurting other Chinese people... These Chinese people riot because they are influenced by what the Chinese government prints in the local news which is nationalistic and highly biased... There are many people in China who have never come into personal contact with, or even seen a Japanese person in real life. Their perceptions of Japan and Japanese people are shaped only by the Chinese government.”

When I met Chinese students, I would ask them what comes to mind when they think about the island disputes. Weilian, a student who researches on maritime issues, shared his honest opinion on the islands disputes; he actually believed the islands belong to Japan. His line of reasoning was exemplified in the rhetorical question below:

“I think that the Diaoyu Islands belong to Japan. If the islands had belonged to China, there would have been no need for China to be so demanding about having it back. Why would anyone have to fight with others over something if it was really theirs? I feel that the claims asserted by the Chinese government are not reliable as well. I have personally looked at past historical records related to this issue and have noticed that some are not compatible with the current claims made by the Chinese government.”

Fenglin, 25, from Beijing, was critical about the Chinese people’s displays of nationalism over the islands. She said:

“It is not about the island or national sovereignty, but national pride/nationalism and national security. Nationalism is rising in Japan, but at a slower level than that in China. It is pathetic to see that many Chinese have been manipulated by the central government to reach their political purpose. We need to be careful about terms like “patriotism” since we so easily lose rationality when thinking about it.”

Mingchao, 24, was more concerned about the safety of Japanese foreigners in China. He felt that reactions in China and Japan towards the island disputes had been worse for the Japanese people living in China than for Chinese people in Japan:

“Actually, the situation in Japan for Chinese people is not that bad. Few Japanese really care about the territorial conflict. On the contrary, for Japanese now living in China, the situation is worse.”

His responses demonstrated a sense of empathy regarding the anti-Japanese riots in China. Likewise, Meiting and her best Chinese friend in Japan both felt sad for the Japanese in China. Her best friend, Yawen, also a student in Tokyo, works part-time in a restaurant for a Japanese boss. When the riots in China occurred, Yawen's boss told her that both China and Japan have to work harder at finding ways to reconcile. Meiting reported that Yawen felt "really bad" for the Japanese who were attacked in China, for they as Chinese in Japan had been treated well by Japanese people. And Yawen's boss, according to Meiting, was a "kind elderly man".

But Chinese students were not always more critical of their own country only. On the other hand, Yuling, 25, from Shanghai, said:

"Japanese people should recognize the mistakes they have made and give a sincere apology to China. Also, Chinese people should step out of the anti-Japanese stereotype which has always been reinforced by the (Chinese) party via the media; and Chinese people need to think of what is really good for both themselves and for Japanese."

From Yuling's opinions, the idea that politics and personal decisions (and actions) should be separate is repeated once again. She advocated Chinese people to "think about what is really good", that is, to be rational, instead of being influenced by politics. Another student, Lixiong, shared similar sentiments. Lixiong, who worked for the Chinese government before he came to Waseda to pursue his Master's degree, was at first reluctant to talk about politics because he was afraid it would jeopardize his position as a Chinese civil servant. It took about two months of rapport before he was willing to share his opinions with me. And it turned out his comments were the most defensive out of all the other respondents':

"Overall, the Sino-Japanese relationship is too complicated and it will likely not be resolved in the near future; last time, Deng Xiaoping wanted to put aside the island disputes till China was ready to address them. But Japan did not give China much of a chance. Look, they even went ahead to buy the island!"

Jinshen, 29, from Shanghai, was more discreet in his opinion. Without pointing fingers at either China or Japan, he stated:

“It is of no use to discuss the matter now. Think of the ordinary people (老百姓) on both sides. Everyone needs to eat and survive. We should share resources.”

One thing was evident: Chinese students concurred with each other in that they all acknowledged the complexity of Sino-Japanese disagreements. But different students had distinct concerns regarding the disputes. For instance, while Limin and Xiaoli’s opinions were similar to some of the comments mentioned above, they also discussed the role of America in influencing decisions made on international matters including the Sino-Japanese disputes. Xiaoli shared:

“The issues between China and Japan are too complicated. Regarding the Diaoyutai issue, it is hard to say who the islands belong to. Back in China, we are constantly exposed to biased information from news media and tend to think that the islands belong to China. But when we are here, we understand that it is not that simple. Even if China and Japan finally agree to submit the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), there will still be some possibility that the decision will be made based on US's stand on the issue since US holds much influence in the United Nations.”

Limin and Xiaoli were not the only students who raised the possibility of getting other parties involved in the dispute. Jinming, 23, another IR graduate student of Waseda, also preferred the Sino-Japanese conflict to be internationalized. He suggested for the territorial dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands to be submitted to the ICJ as he felt “it is the only feasible way” to resolve the problem. In all, four students demonstrated this mindset towards the resolution of Sino-Japanese disputes. They saw opportunity in treating the dispute as an international issue. These Chinese students showed that they did not subscribe to the Chinese government’s preference to settle differences bilaterally. Their views were also consistent with their assertions of being less nationalistic after they came to study in Japan.

I asked Xinlian, 24, who studies international relations, how her friends and family in China thought about the island disputes. She commented:

“Most Chinese people in the mainland are very sensitive over the Diaoyutai issue and strongly believe that the islands belong to China. Some also sincerely think that there will be war between China and Japan soon. Most of my friends back at home (Zhejiang) wonder why I am still in Japan at this point in time when there is so much tension between our country and Japan, and they keep asking me to go back to China (especially when I post pictures of myself on the web to update on what I have been doing in Japan). Even my parents are worried about my well-being here. It is mostly because they read about anti-China rallies in Tokyo. But they do not know the real situation here.”

All Chinese students were of the opinion that the majority of Chinese in China view Japan and Japanese people negatively. The students attribute these negative opinions to the shared national education they receive in China, and especially education on what happened during the Sino-Japanese wars. Words used by the students to describe the common opinions that most Chinese held towards Japanese were: “enemy”, “enmity” and “hateful”.

The fact that Chinese students did not feel empowered to help amend this situation is even more important. Jiawen, who reads Western, Japanese, and Chinese academic literature on this issue, felt tired of the whole matter. Meiting felt she could not do anything as an individual to help change the circumstances. Nonetheless, they remained optimistic about the future.

Huixuan, 24, said, “It was the political changes in leadership for both China and Japan which started the recent disputes; things will calm down after the two nations’ leaders have settled down”. Another student provided a longer term perspective of the Sino-Japanese relationship, saying “I believe the relationship between China and Japan operates in a cycle— peace-conflict-peace-conflict. The two countries are still learning from, and about, each other.” Liqin also believed that the situation between China and Japan would improve after 2012 and felt that the relationship was tense because both China and Japan were undergoing major changes in their

governments at the same time in late 2012. It was hence normal for the ties between the two countries to become tense considering the concurrent domestic political changes and pressures that were happening. As such, Liqin reasoned that Sino-Japanese ties would be more peaceful in 2013. Luoxin, an exchange student from Peking University, was interviewed in September 2012 when the political climate was extremely tense. Nonetheless, she exhibited a calm response as she analyzed the situation within historical context:

“This territorial dispute has existed for many years. As Chinese in Japan, we should view this problem rationally... Problems won’t be solved very fast and they will exist for quite a long time. But the relationship between China and Japan won’t be too bad since both countries need a peaceful environment to develop.”

Overall, on the dispute, Chinese students generally desired and advocated peace and not war. They wanted China and Japan to consider matters in a rational way, to settle the disputes peacefully, and to even consider sharing the islands. Chinese students sought a win-win situation between China and Japan and hope that both parties can develop together. This outlook is markedly different from what was published in the Straits Times especially in the last quarter of 2012. At that time, newspapers provided pictures of Chinese protestors holding up anti-Japanese banners (Wang, 2012) and updates on Chinese ships provoking Japan by sailing around the disputed islands. Even the Economist asked, “Could Asia really go to war over these?” (The Economist, 2012) The outcomes of this research show that Chinese students do not want war, but peaceful ties between China and Japan. Additionally they think that anti-Japanese riots in China are wrong, and fighting over the islands is unnecessary.

Chinese students think about the Sino-Japanese relationship in both political and economic aspects, and clearly distinguished between the politics and economics of Sino-Japanese relations in their opinions. While the political aspects of the relations were complicated



and tense, the economic aspects were flourishing and progressive. Only one student evaluated the Sino-Japanese relationship from a socio-cultural point of view. Chinese students see Sino-Japanese relations in terms of state-state relations rather than people-people relations. They might either be less conscious of the social dimensions of Sino-Japanese relations, or of the view that people-people relations are not so important in Sino-Japanese ties. Consequently, Chinese students may not be conscious of their potential or importance as agents in the development of Sino-Japanese relations through their own individual networks and experiences in Japan.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

Education and tourism have provided avenues for sustenance of the relationship between China and Japan at the grassroots level. These two avenues have helped to maintain cultural exchange between China and Japan – through information flow as well as the spread of opinions and ideas – even as ties deteriorate. The findings in this thesis thereby support Vyas's stand; a look at Sino-Japanese relations from a non-governmental point of view provides different perspectives (positive) from that derived from analyzing bilateral relations at the state-state level (Vyas, 2011). This research has found that Chinese students in Japan are different from many other Chinese nationals who view Japan as the 'enemy'. The student respondents expressed a common desire to understand and experience the "real" Japan. Chinese students in Japan have shown that they are a group of Chinese who do not blindly subscribe to the Chinese Communist Party's depiction of Japan and Japanese people. Separating party politics from their individual goals, they have pursued higher education in Japan in order to learn about Japan as well as about China-Japan affairs from another point of view.

The findings have also showed that Chinese students going to Japan during a time of high political tension continue to enjoy liberties such as speaking Chinese in public and even wearing

clothes with the words “中国” (China) printed on it. They do not have to hide their national identity or live in fear. On the other hand, Chinese students in Japan feel that it is probably worse for Japanese people living in China. They feel sorry for Japanese people in China as they receive worse treatment from Chinese people there.

Overall, Chinese students in Japan gain a lot of exposure and knowledge about Japan as a nation, economy, and socio-cultural entity. They form positive impressions of Japan and Japanese people both through schooling, travelling, as well as through daily life experiences. These impressions are distinct from that previously formed in their minds (in most Chinese minds) by the Chinese government via national history education in the mainland. Chinese students admit that they undergo a change in mentality towards Sino-Japanese issues after gaining exposure in Japan. While they might have been more biased towards their own country before, they now become more moderate in their political views towards China's relations with Japan after studying in that country.

A majority of the Chinese students in Japan experience much goodwill through their associations with Japanese people. But the challenge of deepening Sino-Japanese socio-cultural relations remains as the majority of Chinese students view their ties with Japanese as superficial. While Chinese students acknowledge that Japanese people are “nice” to them, they find it hard to develop deeper relationships with Japanese people. Chinese students do not feel empowered to change the way social relations are conducted in Japan, nor do they see themselves as agents who can affect the development of Sino-Japanese relations at the non-state level. In addition, they appear to render little value to people-people relations as they talk about improving Sino-Japanese ties. Subsequently they doubt their own potential in influencing the development of Sino-Japanese relations. Nonetheless, Chinese students in Japan all desire China and Japan to

reconcile, share resources, and not fight over historical problems (especially the question of who owns Senkaku/Diaoyu islands).

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

Bilateral relations between nations today are no longer confined at the national level; neither are national governments sole players in forging and nurturing these relationships. This thesis examines bilateral relations between Asia's two most powerful nations at the non-state level. The Sino-Japanese relationship has recently become prominent again and evidence suggests that it is growing. The ties between China and Japan are likely to play an important role in shaping the future course of international relations (Lam, 2006). But the connections between, and facilitated by, actors not from the central governments of both nations, have been largely neglected by experts. Looking at Sino-Japanese relations through the eyes of Chinese students in Japan provides rich and insightful assessments of the Sino-Japanese relationship. Importantly, the results from this research provide a fresh perspective, one that differs from the usual negative and ominous outlooks found in most news media.

However, there are numerous limits to this study. First, it is an exploratory one which cannot be generalized since the participants are not representative of the entire Chinese student population in Japan in any way. Furthermore, all participants live in Tokyo. If the thesis had studied more than 30 students, and received respondents from different parts of Japan, the outcomes might have been different.

In addition, at times, my reactions during interviews and activities with the Chinese students may also affect their reactivity to the questions posed in research. I, as a researcher but also participant, might have disclosed my own values or thoughts unconsciously in the research

process, and thereby influenced the way the students respond. This means a different researcher carrying out this same study might have yielded a different set of results.

There were also many issues I faced while I used ethnographic methods. It was challenging to manage both the responsibilities of being a participant as well as an observer (Singleton & Straits, 2005). As I became more accustomed to the environment and built relationships with the subjects of the study, I might have become so absorbed in the participant's worldview and circumstances that I could have altered the environment in which the observation or participation took place; I may have at times forgotten my part as a researcher, became one of the participants, and over-identified with the subjects (Singleton & Straits, 2005). These factors might have affected the validity of the findings above.

The reliability of the research can also be compromised by the fact that I am unable to guarantee if the Chinese students actually gave their real opinions, for their answers were taken at face value. I was also unable to conduct member validation (by showing the notes that I took to the respondents so they could evaluate if my records were accurate and appropriate) due to time limits (Neuman, 2003).

Nonetheless, this thesis has found the ethnographic approach a useful method, although it may be not that efficient for researchers who do not have the benefit of time. This approach is useful in that it catches the participants in their natural environments, makes them less conscious of the research task at hand, and is more likely able to capture their natural thoughts, feelings and actions. And since this thesis is concerned about understanding Sino-Japanese interactions, the ethnographic approach has been an effective method of gaining insight of how Chinese students conduct relations with Japanese at the ground level. The data gathered by using ethnographic

approaches, interviews, and questionnaires have also been relatively sufficient in answering the research questions of this thesis.

As a result, this thesis recommends future researchers studying Chinese students to consider using the ethnographic approach for their studies. Scholars who wish to delve deeper into issues concerning Sino-Japanese relations might like to consider including Japanese participants in the future so they can compare Chinese and Japanese attitudes. Additionally, this thesis also suggests for future studies to enlarge their sample size and/or recruit participants from different parts of Japan as doing so might yet again reap a different set of results from the ones gained in this study.

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## Appendices

### Questionnaire

1. Age/ gender/province:
2. How long have you been studying in Japan?
3. What school do you study at?
4. Which is do you major in?
5. What made you decide to study in Japan?
6. How do you feel about life in Japan?
7. What do you like about Japan?
8. What do you do most of the time in Japan? Where do you like to travel in Japan and why?
9. Where do you usually get your sources of information from?
10. Is it hard to get help in Japan?
11. Have you changed after coming to study here? Why?
12. What are some things about Japan that you wish would change and why?
13. What comes to mind when you think about the history of Sino-Japanese relations (for e.g. what periods or events are important/ what do they mean to you)?
14. What are the sources of your historical knowledge?
15. What are your opinions on Sino-Japanese relations? How do you feel about the issue of the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands?
16. Does your Chinese friends/family think about Japan in the same way as you?
17. Any other comments:

### 调查问卷

1. 年龄/性别? 来自哪个省?
2. 在日本留学了多久?
3. 什么学校?
4. 什么学科?
5. 是什么让你决定到日本留学?
6. 你觉得在日本的生活如何?
7. 你喜欢日本吗?
8. 你在日本大部分时间是做什么的? 你喜欢到日本的哪一部分旅游? 为什么?
9. 通常从哪里获取信息? (例子: 朋友等)
10. 在日本會很难得到帮助吗?
11. 来这里学习后, 你有没有改变? 为什么呢?
12. 你希望日本改变什么吗 (例子: 工作作风等)? 为什么?
13. 当你想到中日关系的历史时候, 你会想到什么 (例如, 什么时期或事件是重要的/有什么意义)?
14. 你的历史知识的来源?
15. 对中日关系, 有什么意见? 对钓鱼岛问题, 有什么意见?
16. 中国朋友/家人如何看日本?
17. 任何其他意见: