



*Asan Public Opinion Report*

Challenges and Opportunities for  
Korea-Japan Relations in 2014

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## Executive Summary

This report offers an in-depth look at attitudes of the South Korean public on Japan. It uses public opinion data collected by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies via its public opinion surveys. Its core findings are outlined below.

- Following Prime Minister Abe's Yasukuni visit, his favorability rating declined to 1.0 on a 0-10 scale. This is the same favorability rating found for Kim Jong-Un. The favorability rating of Japan declined to 2.4 following the visit. This was a 0.2 point decline from early December.
- A near majority (49.5%) of the Korean public remained supportive of a Korea-Japan summit, and a similar number (50.7%) stated support for the signing of GSOMIA. The public also remains supportive of President Park taking a proactive role in improving relations (57.8%).
- The continuing support for improving Korea-Japan relations stems from China's rising influence in the region. If China continues its rise, a clear majority (63.9%) stated that security cooperation with Japan would be a necessity. A disproportionate number of those who support an improvement between two countries are more wary of the rise of China.
- Dokdo is still cited as the biggest obstacle to improving Korea-Japan relations. This was also true among those respondents with the most favorable attitudes towards Japan, with 49.5% of this group stating as such. The result implies that Koreans will react strongly to any participation by Abe's government in the upcoming events marking Japan's Takeshima Day on February 22.
- The data also suggests that perceived U.S. support for Japan could harm Korean perceptions of the United States. Following U.S. support for Japan's eventual expansion of its collective self defense, an increased number of Koreans saw the Korea-U.S. relationship as competitive.





## I. Introduction

Korea-Japan relations deteriorated even further following Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's December 26, 2013 visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. In doing so, he was the first sitting prime minister to make such a visit in more than seven years, and the visit set off a tidal wave of indignation in South Korea and China. It also caught the United States off guard. While Korea and Japan are ostensible allies, and both cooperate with Washington on a far-reaching agenda, bilateral cooperation on a range of issues is now off the table for the foreseeable future.

President Park Geun-Hye and Mr. Abe came into their respective offices at nearly the same time, and the relationship immediately got off on the wrong foot. President Park holds a deep mistrust of her Japanese counterpart, and declared that a summit would not take place unless there were fresh apologies for Japan's past atrocities. Mr. Abe has done little to help matters. His questioning of the definition of the word "invasion" was one of several actions that drew ire in the region.

The South Korean media and government reacted strongly to the Yasukuni visit, but the response of public opinion has been relatively muted. The data suggests that the general public remains surprisingly supportive of efforts to improve the relationship despite the deep freeze in official ties. Even President Park softened her tone on a potential summit with Mr. Abe. As this report illustrates, much of this may have to do with an underlying caution exhibited towards China.

Using public opinion surveys conducted by the Asan Institute, this report will offer an in-depth look at South Korean public opinion on Japan. It will investigate attitudes on the most important issues affecting the relationship—Dokdo, sex slaves, and history textbooks. It finds that while the issue of sex slaves has increased in importance, and history textbooks remains the second most important issue to the Korean public overall, it is Dokdo which serves as the biggest flashpoint for the Korean public. Upcoming events that highlight territorial disputes and disagreements on the interpretation of history may further hurt Korea-Japan relations.

These issues not only serve to block improvements in Korea-Japan relations. The reticence of the United States to take a stance may be seen as tacit consent for Japan's actions. While it has not yet come to the fore, this may serve to undermine positive public opinion in Korea for the United States. These issues will come to the



fore in the coming months, and if handled improperly, could further set back Korea-Japan relations.

## **II. Favorability of Countries and the Heads of State**

### *Decline of Japan Favorability*

Japan has never been popular among Koreans. The perceived rightward shift of the country—which 76.4% of the public stated was taking place under the leadership of Prime Minister Abe—has certainly not been helpful. But even before this perceived shift, Japan was one of the least favored countries in Korea.

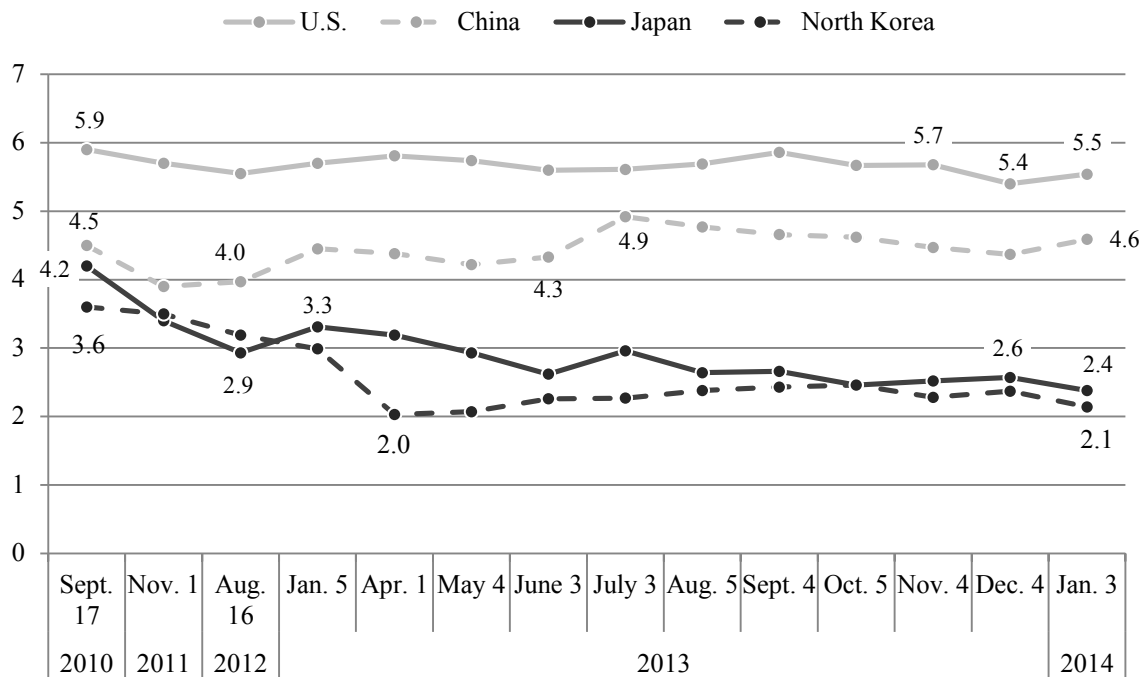
In 2010, Japan was viewed nearly as favorably as China, with a mean favorability of 4.2 (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> By August 2012, favorability had fallen to 2.9. Indeed, 2012 was only the beginning of rocky relations between South Korea and Japan. On August 10, 2012 then-President Lee Myung-Bak visited Dokdo, drawing a sharp rebuke from Japan. The Japanese government officially criticized President Lee and stated that the dispute over Dokdo should be taken before the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

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<sup>1</sup> Favorability is measured on a scale from zero to ten, with zero representing “zero favorability”. The mean score is used as a country’s overall favorability.



**Figure 1: Country Favorability**



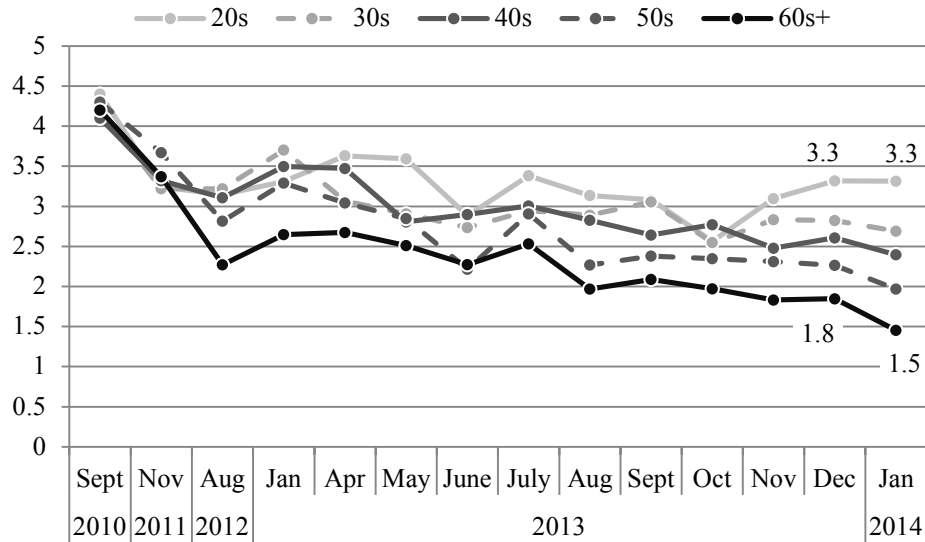
Although there was a slight bump to 3.3 in January 2013, the favorability of Japan steadily declined throughout the remainder of the year. By January 2014, it had fallen to 2.4. This decline can be attributed to a steady stream of inflammatory events—offending remarks made by Japanese politicians on sex slave issues, Prime Minister Abe’s determination to expand the interpretation of collective self defense, and continued claims to Dokdo. (See Appendix for a list of issues occurring between Korea and Japan)

In the latter half of 2013, the favorability of Japan was consistently similar to that of North Korea, an incongruous pairing for many observers. Perhaps Mr. Abe’s only saving grace has been that North Korea has continued to pursue provocations, ensuring that Japan remains only slightly more favorable.

When the question of country favorability was first asked in 2010, there was wide agreement on views of Japan across generations (Figure 2). That consistent grouping was largely maintained through the 2011 data. While the relationship in these years was still not overly friendly, it was certainly much more cordial that it was in 2013. However, views began to diverge in 2012, and that divergence increased throughout 2013. In early 2014, the difference in views between Korea’s youngest and Korea’s oldest with regard to Japan stood at its widest point.



**Figure 2: Country Favorability by Age**



Of particular interest is how the different age cohorts reacted following the December 26 Yasukuni visit. As illustrated, the visit had its largest impact on those in their 60s and older, driving a 0.3 decline in Japan’s mean favorability among this cohort. But for each subsequent age cohort, that degree of decline decreased. For those in their 20s, there was actually no decrease whatsoever.

This should not be taken to mean that Korea’s youngest cohort is becoming less sensitive to issues that affect Korea-Japan relations. Instead, it appears that they are sensitive to different issues than are their older countrymen.

As Figure 2 shows, there are two steep declines for those in their twenties—one from May to June 2013 and the other from September to October 2013. The former coincides with the statement by Hashimoto Tōru—the mayor of Osaka—that comfort women were “necessary” for Japan’s soldiers during war. This statement was well-covered by the South Korean media and is the likely source of decline. The second decline came at a time when Korean media reporting was at its height on concerns that fish imported from Japan were not safe to consume due to potential radiation. A nearly identical decline was seen among Koreans in their thirties.

Taken together, this suggests that younger Koreans are sensitive to Japan-related issues, but their sensitivities differ significantly from older Koreans. The Yasukuni Shrine is certainly one that is problematic, but it has thus far not elicited the same

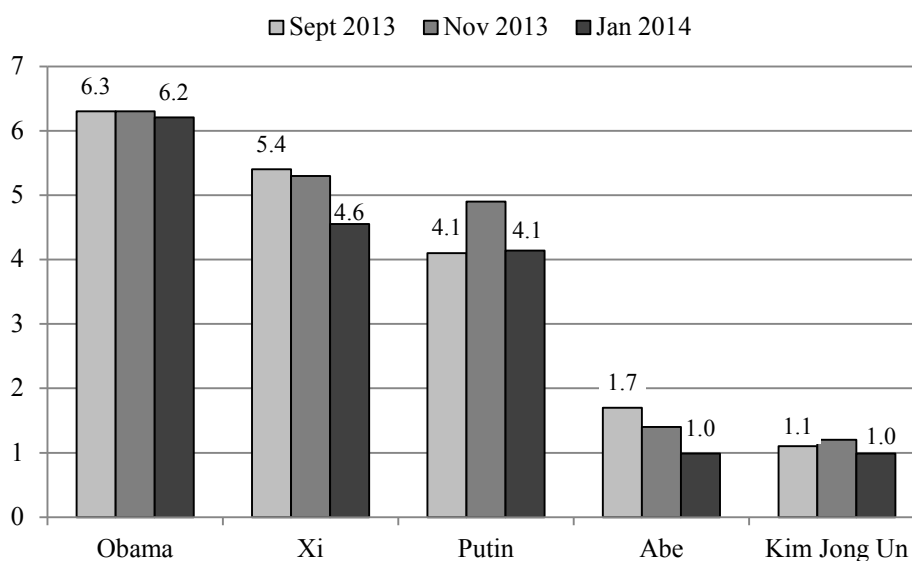


response from young Koreans as from old. This could be because young Koreans do not fully understand what the Yasukuni Shrine represents. But more likely is that a Yasukuni visit lacks a concrete, visual link to how such a visit directly affects Koreans. The events that significantly decreased Japan's favorability among Korea's youth include that strong visual link. In the case of comfort women, those who were impacted are visible via weekly protests in front of the Japan Embassy in Seoul as well as through videos and documentaries detailing their experience. In the case of fish imports, the perceived danger was to the very health of the Korean youth themselves. This link also explains why Japanese claims to Dokdo act as a significant irritant in the relationship—Dokdo serves as the face of the nation, drawing a direct connection between actions of Japan and its potential impact on Korea.

### *Favorability of Leaders*

To be sure, Prime Minister Abe is never going to win a popularity contest in Korea. Even before his December 26 Yasukuni visit, he was the second least favored leader included in the surveys. His only serious competition was Kim Jong-Un—certainly not good company. Following the visit to Yasukuni his favorability decreased even further, and in early 2014 he was tied with Kim Jong-Un for the least favored leader in the region (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Leader Favorability**

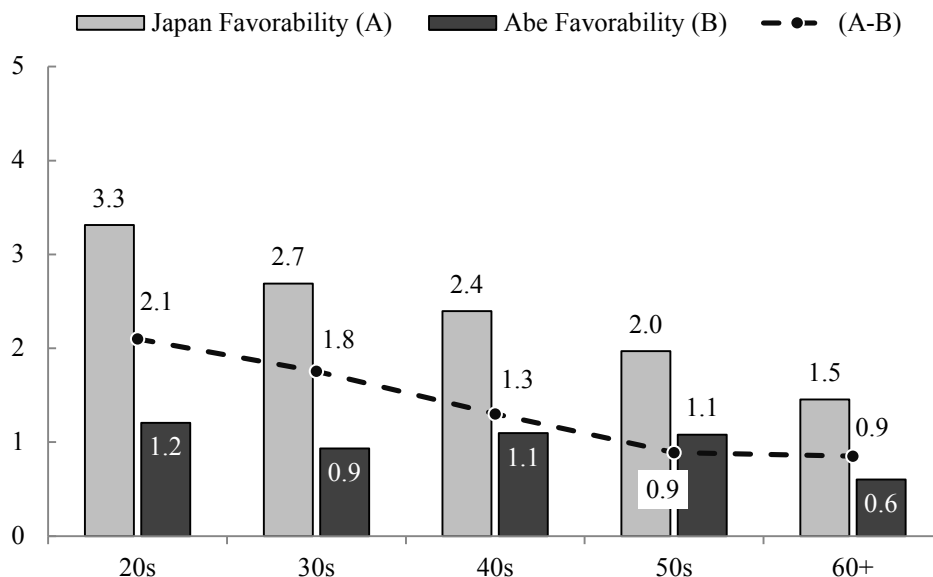






One interesting point to highlight is the favorability of Prime Minister Abe among Koreans in their 20s. While the favorability of Japan among the youth was not affected by Mr. Abe's Yasukuni visit and remained higher than all other cohorts, the favorability of Abe among this same cohort was as low as other age groups. While those in their 20s maintained a mean favorability of 3.3 for Japan, the mean favorability for Abe was 1.2 (Figure 4). The spread between the favorability for Japan and Abe among Korea's youth was 2.1. This result suggests that the Korean youth considers the poor relations between Korea and Japan to stem from Japanese politicians rather than Japan itself.

**Figure 4: Japan/Abe Favorability: By Age**



### III. Opportunity Despite Challenges

Despite the negative views of Japan and of Prime Minister Abe, the Korean public is not opposed to the idea of improving relations with Japan. The data across a series of surveys, both before and after Prime Minister Abe's Yasukuni visit, found that the public does indeed want to see an improvement in Korea-Japan relations. This suggests that there is space for strong political leadership to take a leading role in doing so.

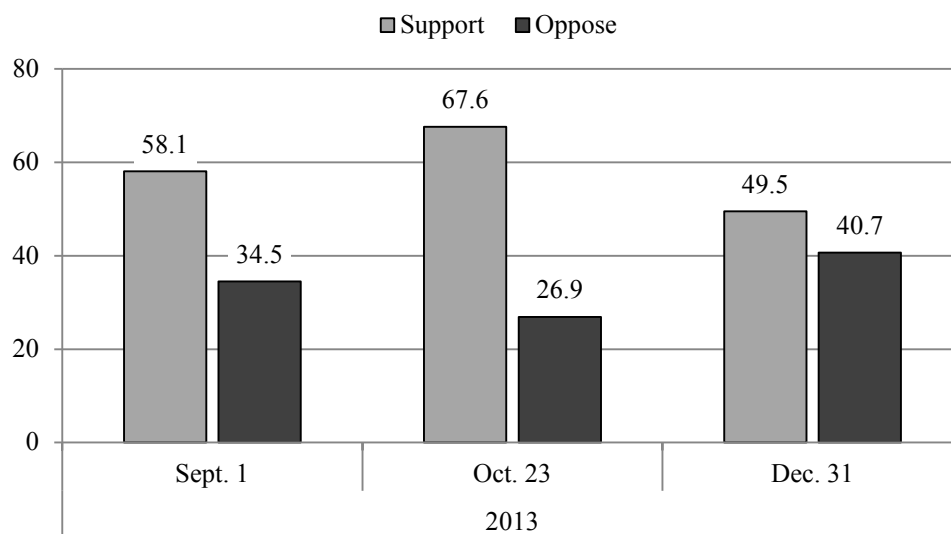


In mid-October, as relations remained tense, a broad swath of the public agreed that relations with Japan should be improved, with 61.8% stating as such.<sup>2</sup> This finding was consistent across all age cohorts and ideological dispositions. This was despite more than three-quarters (78.7%) stating that they did not believe that Japan would offer a future apology for its past.

The most obvious signpost of improving relations would be a summit between the respective leaders. Of course, such a summit has never seemed more distant than in the wake of the Yasukuni visit. However, there is surprising public support for such a summit to take place. In mid-October support for a summit had reached 67.6%—up from 58.1% just a few weeks earlier—with more than 60% of every cohort in support. But the Yasukuni visit eroded much of that support.

Following Mr. Abe’s December Yasukuni visit, support for a summit fell to 49.5% (Figure 5). Even with this 18.1pp decline, a near majority remained in favor. The negative effects were relatively evenly spread across all age cohorts, except one. While declines among every cohort aged 30 and older were approximately 20pp, the decline among those in their twenties was a mere 7.4pp. This offers support to the previous finding that the youngest age cohort in Korea is not as seriously affected by events involving the Yasukuni Shrine.

**Figure 5: Support for Korea-Japan Summit**



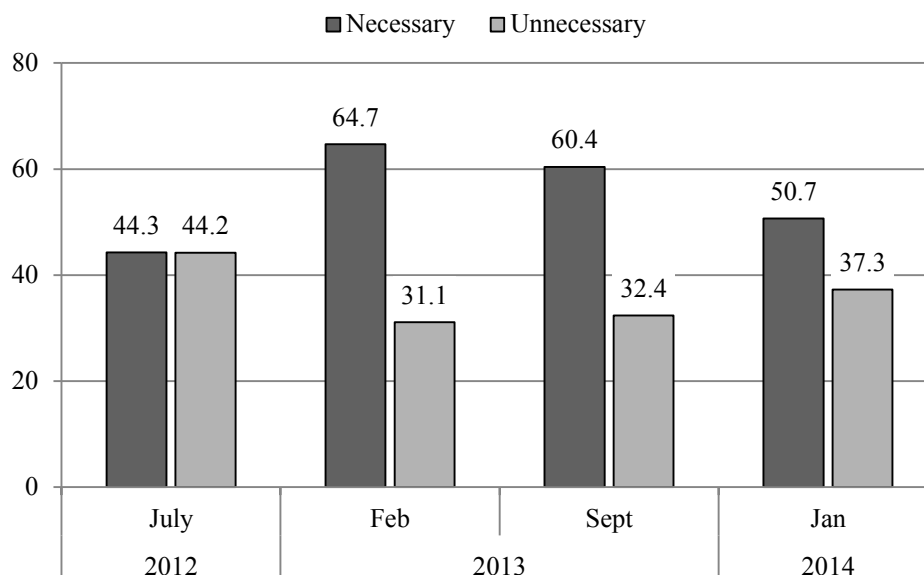
<sup>2</sup> Survey conducted Oct. 12-14, 2013



Another sign of improving relations—but one that remains slightly removed from the table—is the enactment of GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement). All parties involved agree that passing GSOMIA would serve as a platform to enhance the security of both Korea and Japan, as well as align with the strategic goals of the trilateral alliance both share with the United States. The agreement was nearly signed under President Lee Myung-Bak, but was withdrawn at the last moment due to public backlash over the perception that President Lee was attempting to put the agreement into effect without informed public debate.

The broad lesson drawn in the media, and presumably by politicians, was that the South Korean public was opposed to any kind of military cooperation with Japan. However, analysis of Asan polling at the time revealed that the opposition to the deal was overwhelmingly due to the unpopularity of President Lee himself, with attitudes toward Japan proving to be a statistically insignificant factor. This finding is confirmed by subsequent polling that finds support for the signing of GSOMIA remains elevated. While support for its passage was 60.4% in September, 2013,<sup>3</sup> a slim majority (50.7%) remained in favor following Mr. Abe's Yasukuni visit (Figure 6).<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 6: Support for GSOMIA**



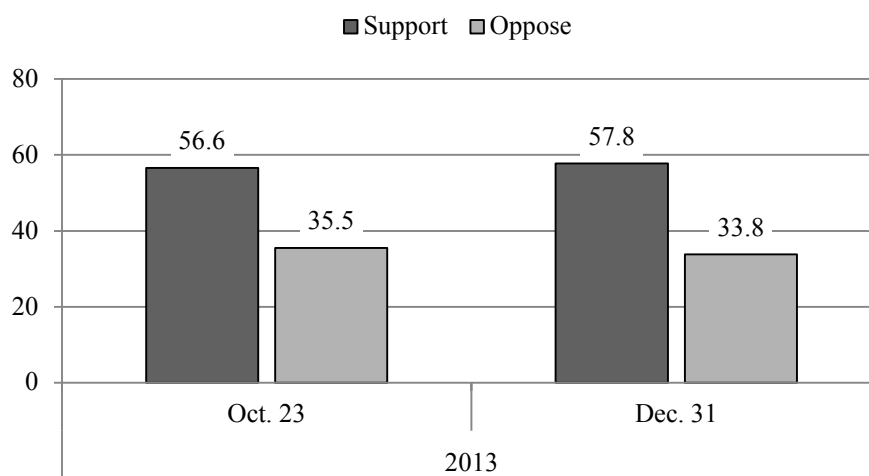
<sup>3</sup> Survey conducted Aug. 30 – Sept. 1, 2013

<sup>4</sup> Survey conducted Dec. 29-31, 2013



Finally, a majority of the Korean public remained in favor of President Park taking a proactive approach on improving relations with Japan. While the support for a summit decreased significantly, there was little change in views on this proactive role. As illustrated in Figure 7, even after Prime Minister Abe's Yasukuni visit 57.8% of Koreans thought President Park should play a proactive role to improve Korea-Japan relations.

**Figure 7: Support for Proactive Approach by President Park**



#### **IV. Japan as a Strategic Partner**

Despite current tensions, the public does not want to see a further deterioration in Korea-Japan relations. Although there is doubt about the effectiveness of a summit, a near majority remained in favor of holding one. The public wants President Park to work to improve the relations and supports GSOMIA. How can these incongruous opinions be understood?

A closer look at the poll results offers a clue: China.

China has become one of the most favorable countries in Korea since the successful summit between President Park and President Xi Jinping in June 2013. The favorability of China reached 4.9 in July following the summit and 62.5% stated that the Korea-China relationship was a cooperative one at that time, an increase of 10pp from the previous month. Even at the end of 2013, the relationship continues to be seen as much more cooperative than in 2012.

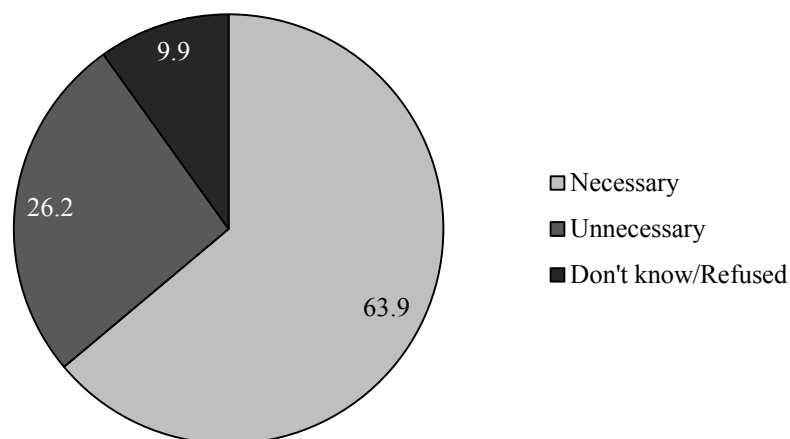




A shared grievance over Japan's perceived whitewashing of history and territorial disputes has created a large swath of common ground between South Korea and China. This common ground could serve as an area of cooperation as they try to work together to pressure Japan on a range of sensitive issues. This is something that the Korean public would support, with 74.5% stating Korea should cooperate with China to resolve historical disputes with Japan. But the data also suggests that the Korean public views China with caution.

To many Koreans, China poses a threat to regional security. When asked about the necessity to cooperate with Japan on security in the event of China's rise, 63.9% stated that such cooperation would be necessary. Only 26.2% said it would be unnecessary.

**Figure 8: Security Cooperation with Japan as China Rises**



When this question was asked as part of the Asan Annual Survey in September 2013, 44.9% stated that security cooperation with Japan would be necessary facing the rise of China. That marks a 19.0pp increase despite the Yasukuni visit. This increase may be partly due to a wording change. In December 2013 respondents were asked about *security cooperation*, but in September 2013 they were asked about *military alliance*. However, some of this increase could be attributable to China's expansion of its air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in November 2013. This may have been interpreted as a Chinese military expansion to much of the Korean public.

Caution is exhibited across a range of issues related to China when cross-tab analyses are employed. Responses to the question of security cooperation with Japan were



compared to responses to several other questions. Overall, those that think that security cooperation with Japan is necessary are more likely to support a Korea-Japan summit, President Park’s proactive role, and GSOMIA.

As stated previously, a clear majority (57.8%) wanted to see President Park take the lead in improving relations with Japan—a finding that included a majority of every age cohort. When cross-tabbed with attitudes on China’s rise, among those that stated security cooperation with Japan would be necessary if China’s continued its rise, 65.2% stated that President Park should be proactive—much higher than the average (Table 1). However, among those that said such cooperation would be unnecessary, a near majority (49.6%) stated that President Park should not be proactive.

**Table 1: Cross-tab Analyses with Korea-Japan Security Cooperation**

		Korea-Japan security cooperation in the case of China’s rise	
		Necessary	Not necessary
Pres. Park should play a proactive role	Agree	<b>65.2</b>	45.0
	Disagree	29.4	<b>49.6</b>
Summit necessary	Approve	<b>57.7</b>	35.1
	Disapprove	35.4	<b>60.3</b>
GSOMIA	Necessary	<b>66.0</b>	20.3
	Not necessary	25.0	<b>75.1</b>

Similar findings were revealed via cross-tabs of security cooperation with Japan and attitudes on a Korea-Japan summit. While 57.7% of those who thought such cooperation would be necessary viewed a summit as necessary, 60.3% of those who stated security cooperation was unnecessary also opposed a Korea-Japan summit.

Finally, support for security cooperation with Japan was cross-tabbed with support for the signing of GSOMIA. Among those that supported security cooperation with Japan in the case of a rising China, 66.0% viewed GSOMIA as necessary. However, among those who opposed, 75.1% viewed GSOMIA as unnecessary.



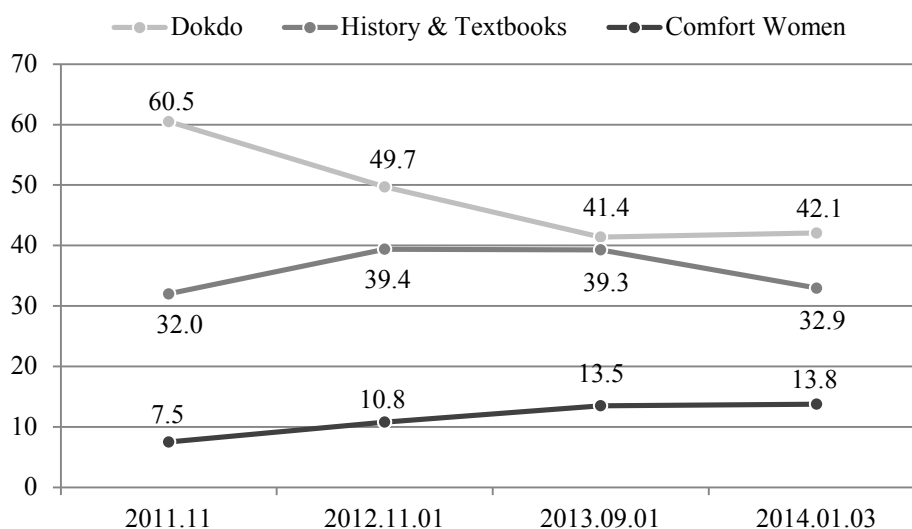
These findings suggest that support for improving ties with relations on a range of issues are at least partially driven by an underlying caution that Koreans hold toward China. This also suggests that, at the moment, a major push by the Park administration to increase cooperation with China to oppose Japan would be met with unease among the public.

## V. Obstacles to Moving Forward

When discussing Korea-Japan relations, history is obliquely cited as the cause for the prolonged chill in the relationship. Such an observation is unhelpful. Instead, these issues—Dokdo, history textbooks, and comfort women—need to be broken down realizing that it is history that informs each of them but does not define any of them. These issues act as built in irritants to the relationship, sometimes coming to the fore due to a pre-determined schedule and sometimes due to unforeseen comments or actions.

Primary among these irritants is Dokdo. These islets are consistently cited as the biggest obstacle to improving Korea-Japan relations by the Korean public (Figure 9). Although the percentages citing Dokdo as the largest obstacle have declined since 2011, it remains the most important with 42.1% stating as such. Issues related to history textbooks were second.

**Figure 9: Obstacles in Korea-Japan Relations**





Of increasing importance has been the issue of forced sexual slavery, euphemistically referred to as comfort women. There is a growing awareness of the issue in Korea for several reasons. First, there is increasing coverage of the women in the media, with acknowledgement that as they age the very real chance exists that all of them will die without ever having received an official apology or compensation from Japan. Japanese politicians, including Mr. Abe himself, have made insensitive comments on the issue saying that no coercive mobilization of sex slaves took place or that it was a common thing among all countries during war. The impact has been especially strong among Korea's youngest cohort. While it remains the least cited issue overall, among those in their 20s its importance increased from 6.1% to 19.7%—the largest increase among any cohort.

Yet, the focus remains on Dokdo. Disputes over history textbooks, sex slaves, and Dokdo were always present between the two countries, but the current stalemate in relations can be traced back to President Lee Myung-Bak's visit to Dokdo in 2012. Among respondents, views on Dokdo varied slightly depending one's view of the future of Korea-Japan relations.

Among those that thought President Park should play an active role in improving relations, a plurality (44.7%) considered Dokdo to be the most important issue. Among those who disagreed with her being proactive the history textbook issue (38.0%) was as important as Dokdo (39.2%).

Similarly, Dokdo was the most important issue to those who cited GSOMIA as necessary. While 46.0% of respondents who viewed GSOMIA as necessary cited Dokdo as the biggest obstacle, 30.4% of this group cited history textbooks. Among those that thought GSOMIA was not necessary, a plurality (41.2%) cited history textbooks. There was no statistically discernible gap between the respondents who support and oppose a summit, with 43.7% and 42.3%, respectively, citing Dokdo as the most important issue.

Next, the sample was narrowed to identify those who hold the most favorable opinions of Japan. These respondents were those that thought: (1) President Park should be proactive to improve Korea-Japan relations; (2) there should be a summit; (3) GSOMIA is necessary; and (4) security cooperation with Japan is necessary in the case of China's rise. These respondents can be considered to be the most pro-Japan group among the Korean public. The size of this sample was 217 respondents.





A near majority of this group (49.5%) cited Dokdo as the biggest obstacle, whereas only 27.1% cited history textbooks (Table 2). Thus, for those who most want to see progress in Korea-Japan relations, Dokdo is the most sensitive issue. This result has important implications.

**Table 2: Critical Issues Among those Most Favorable to Japan**

	Sex Slaves	Dokdo	History Textbook
Number of Respondents	38	107	59
Proportion (%) <sup>5</sup>	17.4	49.5	27.1

Japan's Takeshima Day, an event held by the Shimane Prefecture each year on February 22 to mark Japan's claims to the islets, inevitably kicks off a wave of protest in Korea. The intensity of these protests will likely correspond to the level of the official sent by Tokyo to appear at the events. If Prime Minister Abe were to send a high ranking official, or were to visit the event himself, it would deal a serious setback in moving Korea-Japan relations forward. It would almost certainly be more damaging than the Yasukuni visit, and even the most dovish Koreans would shy away from hopes for better relations. Prime Minister Abe's statement that Japan is seriously thinking of bringing the Dokdo case to the ICJ is already having that effect.

## **VI. Steps for Damage Control**

Tensions are rising in Northeast Asia. Various survey results indicate that anti-Japanese sentiment is at its highest point following Prime Minister Abe's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. More than 80% of Koreans stated that relations between the countries were bad and the favorability of Japan is deteriorating.

Yet, many Koreans recognize the importance of Japan as a strategic partner, and regardless of their feelings about Japan think an effort to improve the relationship should be made. In particular, when the rise of China was hypothesized, a clear majority thought security cooperation with Japan would be necessary. This may offer

<sup>5</sup> Missing 6.0% were "Don't Know" respondents.



some hope.

What Japan should avoid at all costs, if it is seriously interested in improving the relationship with Korea, is to avoid further enflaming Korean public sentiment on comfort women, history textbooks, or Dokdo. As the analysis here indicates, even those most positive towards Japan are very sensitive to the Dokdo issue. If Prime Minister Abe makes any further provocation regarding Dokdo—such as again proposing to take the Dokdo case to the ICJ or by attending Takeshima Day events on February 22—relations will face a longer-term set back. The Japanese government should clearly understand that the dispute over Dokdo is the single most important issue to the Korean public.

It is the United States that is most frustrated by the turmoil in Northeast Asia. While it strongly backs Japan's efforts to expand the role of its collective Self Defense Forces, this expansion is viewed warily in South Korea and China. In a poll conducted in December, 66.8% of the Korean public viewed Japan's perceived expansion of military power negatively.<sup>6</sup> The disputes over history, sex slaves, and territories further aggravate the situation by sowing distrust.

Thus far, the United States has largely ignored history issues in Northeast Asia. But these issues are not disappearing any time soon. It is true that favorability of the United States has remained elevated over the past three years and support for the alliance has never been stronger. Nonetheless, the public can be fickle. This was briefly shown from November to December.

In October, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the United States supported Japan's right to expand certain aspects of its collective self defense. Subsequently, the favorability of the United States declined slightly from November to December. Also, the percentage of people who viewed the Korea-U.S. relationship as a competitive one increased to 14.9% in December. Throughout 2013, it was generally around 10%. It lasted only briefly, but suggests that the Korean public will react negatively to similar U.S. positions in the future. This incident hints at how U.S. handling of complex relations between Korea and Japan can influence the Korean public's attitude towards the United States.

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<sup>6</sup> In addition, 64.7% stated that Japan would pose a military threat in the future. Survey conducted Aug. 30 – Sept. 1, 2013



Furthermore, China has approached Korea about working together to address shared historical grievances with Japan. This is a smart move by China as many Koreans support the idea of cooperation with China on these issues. This could be damaging for the United States. China would be perceived as sharing historical scars with Korea, while the United States would be perceived to be insensitive to the issues, and thus siding with Japan. In Korea, there is already speculation about President Obama's Asia trip in April and the possible exclusion of Korea despite Japan being on the list. This is a moment for a sensible diplomatic gesture from the United States.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Following the Yasukuni visit, some may have expected that the Park administration's position to harden with regard to the required steps before a summit could take place. That is not the case. Instead, President Park has moderated her position stating that if Mr. Abe affirms that his administration recognizes the Kono and Murayama statements, steps could then follow to improve the relationship. This offers a new hope for a thaw in Korea-Japan relations. That the opportunity will be taken advantage of is far from certain. Should Prime Minister Abe decide to send a member of his cabinet to the February 22 Takeshima Day events—or even worse, attend the event himself—Seoul will be unable to pursue improved relations due to public backlash.

Even if issues related to Dokdo can be side-stepped without attracting inflammatory headlines, the release of revised history textbooks in March could also serve to further delay efforts to move the relationship in a positive direction. Mr. Abe and his administration should take this into consideration. If Japan can avoid stirring controversy on these issues—as well as having his political allies abstain from controversial comments on comfort women—polling data suggests that the Korean public is ready to support a thaw in Korea-Japan relations. While attitudes toward Abe are likely intractable, attitudes toward Japan itself are not. With the right political atmosphere, a more positive attitude toward Japan can be quickly established among the Korean public.

The role of the United States, and its perceived lack of action, is gaining increased attention in South Korea. There are increasing calls for it to clearly express its disapproval of Japan's treatment of Dokdo, sex slaves, and the whitewashing of history. Its failure to do so may begin to undermine support for the Korea-U.S. alliance and contribute to increased perceptions that the Korea-U.S. relationship is



one of competition rather than one of cooperation.

An improvement in Korea-Japan relations will require strong, consistent leadership from all involved parties, and a clear communication to the public of both countries about the steps being undertaken to repair the relationship. It should not be expected that the Korean public will immediately let go of its long-held grudges against Japan. But the data presented here suggests that the Korean public is prepared for a pragmatic, forward-moving relationship.





## **Methodology of the Surveys**

**Annual Survey 2010:** The Asan Annual Survey 2010 was conducted from August 16 to September 17, 2010 by Media Research. The sample size was 2,000 and it was a Mixed-Mode survey employing RDD for mobile phones and an online survey. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.2\%$  at the 95% confidence level.

**Annual Survey 2011:** The Asan Annual Survey 2011 was conducted from August 26 to October 4, 2011 by EmBrain. The sample size was 2,000 and it was a Mixed- Mode survey employing RDD for mobile and landline telephones. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.2\%$  at the 95% confidence level.

**Annual Survey 2012:** The Asan Annual Survey 2012 was conducted in two parts. The sample was recruited from September 5 – 14, 2012 via RDD for mobile and landline telephones. The data was gathered from September 25 – November 1, 2012 via an online survey. The sample size was 1,500 and the margin of error is  $\pm 2.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level. The survey was conducted by Media Research.

**Annual Survey 2013:** The Asan Annual Survey 2013 was conducted in two parts. The sample was recruited via RDD for mobile and landline telephones. The data was gathered from September 4 – 27, 2013 via an online survey. The sample size was 1,500 and the margin of error is  $\pm 2.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level. The survey was conducted by Media Research.

**Asan Daily Poll:** The sample size of each survey was 1,000 respondents over the age of 19. The surveys were conducted by Research & Research, and the margin of error is  $\pm 3.1\%$  at the 95% confidence level. All surveys employed the Random Digit Dialing method for mobile and landline telephones.

This report is a product of the Public Opinion Studies Program at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. To subscribe to the program's reports please contact Karl Friedhoff at [klf@asaninst.org](mailto:klf@asaninst.org).



## Appendix

### Major Issues in Korean-Japanese Relations

#### 2013

- February 5            The Japanese government establishes an ‘office of planning and coordination dealing with territorial sovereignty measures’ within the cabinet secretariat by merging the current ‘measures and preparation team dealing with Takeshima’ and the ‘team dealing with the Northern territories’.
- February 21~23      Japanese Prime Minister Abe visits Washington D.C. for U.S.-Japan Summit
- February 22            Japan’s ‘Takeshima Day’ Celebrations in Shimane Prefecture
- February 28            Japan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs renews Japanese claim to Dokdo in speech.
- March                    Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe vows to revise Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, issuing the following statements throughout the month:
- March 9            “It is better to make it possible for Japan to participate in international collective self-defense activities.”
- March 11            “We urge the United Nations to be reformed. It is improper for (Self-Defense Forces) to exclude the responsibility (UN involvement) from the beginning.”
- March 12            “(If not participating in the UN), we will be confronted with a serious and unconscionable hindrance that we are only paying money to avoid responsibility in order to preserve peace.”
- March 27                Announcement of the results of Japanese textbook screenings. The textbooks repeat Japan’s argument that Dokdo islets are its territory.



- April 5 Japanese government includes Dokdo claim in diplomatic document.  
South Korea ‘strongly protests’ Japan’s renewed claim to Dokdo.
- April 21 Japanese Deputy Prime Minister visits the Yasukuni Shrine.
- April 23 168 Japanese lawmakers visit the Yasukuni Shrine.  
Prime Minister Shinzo Abe makes a controversial statement on Japan’s wartime aggression in Congress.
- April 25 South Korea summons Japanese Ambassador Koro Bessho, and gets tough on Japan’s stance on past wrongdoings.
- April 26 South Korean parliamentary committee adopts resolutions criticizing Japanese visit to the shrine and improper remarks.  
Japan, China, and South Korea to skip finance talks
- May 13 Osaka mayor Toru Hashimoto says comfort women were “necessary” part of war.
- July 1 U.S.-Korea-Japan Trilateral Foreign Ministers’ Meeting at ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum).
- July 21 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its coalition partner, the New Komeito party, win control of Japan’s Upper House in election.
- July 22 Tokyo Electric Power Company admits Fukushima Plant is leaking radioactive water into Pacific Ocean.
- July 29 Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso suggests Tokyo should look to Nazi Germany as a model in changing its pacifist constitution.
- August 1 Japan releases results of Dokdo opinion poll



- August 5 Korea warns Japan against Abe's visiting war shrine: "Worshipping at the Yasukuni Shrine by the Japanese government and political leaders is something that should not happen."
- August 19 Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida proposes summit to South Korea.
- September 6 Korea expands its import ban on all fisheries products from Japan's Fukushima region.
- September 25 Prime Minister Abe at the Hudson Institute: "Call me, if you want, a right-wing militarist."
- September 26 Prime Minister Abe advocates "active" pacifism in Japan's security strategy at UN General Assembly.
- October 3 Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC), known colloquially as the "two-plus-two". U.S.-Japan to revise Defense Cooperation Guidelines. U.S announces support of Japan's push to regain right to collective self-defense.
- October 18 Japan's Post and Communications Minister visits Yasukuni.
- November 7 ROK-China-Japan Trilateral Summit
- November 26 Japan's 'State Secrets' Bill passes Lower House.
- December 4 Japan launches National Security Council.
- December 6 Japanese Upper House enacts state secrets law despite protests.
- December 17 Japan, Resolution of New National Security Strategy and Defense Plan.  
Korea rebukes Japan over Dokdo and disputed territory claim in National Security Strategy and urges withdrawal.
- December 26 Japan's Prime Minister Abe visits Yasukuni Shrine.





December 30 Korea's National Assembly adopts resolution against Abe's Yasukuni Shrine visit.

## **2014**

January 1 Japan's Post and Communications Minister visits Yaskuni Shrine.

January 6 Shinzo Abe hopes for summit talks with China and South Korea; President Park says "No point in Japan summit without any change in Japan's attitude" during her first presidential press conference.

January 10 Former Japanese Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko accuses South Korean President Park Geun Hye of being a "tattletale."

January 13 U.S. state of Virginia passes legislation to recognize that Sea of Japan is also called East Sea.

January 14 Japan's Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Hakubun Shimomura, says the education ministry plans to revise and implement new screening guidelines for textbooks to be used in history classes in elementary and high schools nationwide.

January 15 U.S. Senate passes bill on 'comfort women' for the first time.

January 16 A group of Japanese lawmakers who want a comfort women statue erected in the U.S. city of Glendale to be removed visit Glendale City Hall to file a complaint.

January 18 Obama signs spending bill including comfort women legislation.

January 19 China opens memorial hall for Korean independence fighter Ahn Jung-Geun.

January 22 Abe says there will be a case review of Dokdo by the International Court of Justice.



- January 24 Abe's public statement about modifying the constitutional interpretation at the parliament, aiming to lift the country's self-imposed ban on exercising the right of collective self-defense.
- January 25 U.S. asks Abe not to visit Yasukuni Shrine.
- January 27 NHK Chairman Katsuto Momii, at his inaugural press conference: "Every country engaged in war had comfort women."
- January 28 Japanese government announces its official decision to state their claim that Dokdo is Japanese territory in a manual for middle and high school textbooks; South Korea summons Japanese Ambassador Koro Bessho.
- January 29 The U.S. state of Georgia legislature passes a resolution on East Sea.
- February 1 U.S. Representative Ed Royce visits comfort women statue, calling for the Japanese government to acknowledge its responsibility for the comfort women issue and willingness to build two more statues within the U.S.
- February 3 NHK Governor Naoki Hyakuta: "Nanjing massacre never happened."
- February 5 U.S. Ambassador Kennedy urges Japan to develop relations with Korea and China.
- February 6 Abe proposes to lift collective self-defense ban.
- February 7 Virginia passes 'East Sea' proposal; the bill will take effect in July after the signature of the Virginia governor.
- February 22 Japan's 'Takeshima Day' celebrations in Shimane Prefecture
- March Scheduled announcement of the result of Japanese textbook screenings



- April                      Scheduled announcement of Foreign Policy White Paper.  
Yasukuni Shrine Annual Spring Festival
- July                        Scheduled for announcement of Defense of Japan 2014 (Annual  
White Paper).