

# PROBUS

## *CHINA AND JAPAN, THROUGH THICK AND THROUGH THIN*

### 1. INTRO

- THANK YOU PROBUS CLUB; THANK YOU GEORGE ADAMS;

- OFTEN INVITED TO SPEAK ABOUT CANADA AND ASIA;

HUGE SUBJECT BUT RELEVANT ONE:

GEOPOLITICS/two largest economies; tech present and

future; US/ASIA DYNAMIC; CANADA/ASIA/interests,

historical, present and future, e.g. missionaries, trade,

immigration, security, and dynamic driver essential to

Canada's future;

- WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THROUGH

PRISM OF JAPAN/CHINA; EACH HAS DEFINED IN MANY

WAYS OUR RELATIONS WITH ASIA PACIFIC;

- IN TIME AVAILABLE: PERSONAL HISTORY;  
THUMBNAIL SKETCH OF CHINA/JAPAN RELATIONS  
HISTORY; THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF THEIR  
RELATIONS; THE SENKAKU/DIAOYUTAI CONUNDRUM,  
AND CONSEQUENCES; DEAL WITH CANADIAN  
DIMENSIONS DURING Qs&As; GIVEN TIME AVAILABLE,  
THIS WILL BE AN IMPRESSIONIST PAINTING, NOT A  
CHUCK CLOSE 'SUPER REALISM' PAINTING;

- TO MAKE COHERENT, NEED SOME CLARIFYING  
DEFINITIONS: INESCAPABLY, HAVE TO HAVE IN BACK  
OF MIND THREE CONCEPTS: FR, IR, FP, AS THEY  
INTERWEAVE;

## 2. MY STORY

- HOW I WAS DRAWN TO ASIA: FAMILY; UNIVERSITY;  
WHAT ASIA SAYS ABOUT THE HUMAN CONDITION;  
FASCINATED BY CONCEPT THAT CANADA BEYOND

OUR BORDERS MEANS DEALING WITH 'THE OTHER'/groups, tribes, nations, states, FR in all its forms;  
SERVICE TO CANADIANS/public service values, and what better place to serve Canadians than in countries and regions where average knowledge and personal contact is so limited, for most Canadians;

### 3. CHINA AND JAPAN

- STARTS WITH GEOGRAPH/map
- CHINA: CONTINENTAL/center outward; JAPAN: ISLAND FACING EAST;

- TWO SOLITUDES:

*THE BELL OF THE GION TEMPLE TOLLS INTO EVERYMAN'S HEART,  
TO WARN HIM THAT ALL IS VANITY AND EVANESCENCE. THE  
FADED FLOWERS OF THE SALA TREES BY THE BUDDHA'S  
DEATHBED BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH THAT ALL WHO  
FLOURISH ARE DESTINED TO DECAY  
THE TALE OF THE HEIKE/Yukinaga*

*HERE BEGINS OUR TALE. THE EMPIRE, LONG DIVIDED, MUST  
UNITE; LONG UNITED, MUST DIVIDE. THUS IT HAS EVER BEEN.*

### THE THREE KINGDOMS/Luo Guanzhong

- GREAT NOVELS AS FICTIONALIZED HISTORY WRAPPED IN SWASHBUCKLING MEDIEVAL STORIES OF FALLIBLE HEROES AND COMPLEX VILLAINS, NUMBERLESS BATTLES AND ENDLESS BLOODLETTING, POLITICAL INFIGHTING AND ENDLESS VARIETY OF HUMAN RELATIONS;
- THEY REFLECT SOME OF THE IMMENSE CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE JAPANESE AND CHINESE IN THE PAST AND THE JAPANESE AND CHINESE TODAY.
- MY OPENING POINT IS THAT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND JAPANESE ARE SUCH THAT SUCH DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN SIMILARITIES HAVE TO BE THE START OF ANY UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR OFFICIAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.
- CLUE TO NATIONAL DIFFERENCES EMERGE FROM THE TRADITIONAL WORLD VIEWS OF CHINA AND JAPAN, MUCH GREATER THAN YOU FIND BETWEEN TO GREAT HISTORICAL EUROPEAN POWERS.
- CHINA, AT THE HEIGHT OF ITS GRANDEUR – ESPECIALLY THE MING AND QING EMPIRES - HAD ADOPTED A UNIVERSALIST PERSPECTIVE, BASED ON INFORMED VIEWS OF THE KNOWN, CIVILIZED WORLD. OVERWHELMING CULTURAL POWER AND PRESTIGE, AS MUCH AS TERRITORIAL ACCRETION, DEFINED FOR THE CHINESE THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD.
- overwhelming influence in places such as Korea, Southeast Asia, e.g. Vietnam;
- PEOPLE MOVEMENT HIS LONG HISTORY/Tang Dynasty (7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> cent) traders in today's Iraq, and 11<sup>th</sup> cent in Indonesia; waves in Qing;

- JAPAN'S WORLD VIEW FOR MANY CENTURIES COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFERENT. IN FACT THE CHINESE INADVERTENTLY CAPTURED THIS BEST I THINK, AS EARLY AS THE 3<sup>RD</sup> CENTURY, WHEN THE WEI CHRONICLES DESCRIBED "THE PEOPLE OF WA, LIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN, ON MOUNTAINOUS ISLANDS, NORTHEAST OF KAIFANG".

- THE JAPANESE LARGELY STAYED ON THESE ISLANDS FOR MOST OF THEIR HISTORY, VENTURING FORTH ONLY IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> CENTURIES, IN THE 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, AGAIN AND FORCEFULLY IN THE 16<sup>TH</sup>, AND THEN, DISASTROUSLY, IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES.

- THIS LATTER IMPERIAL POLITY STILL DEFINES JAPAN'S IMAGE IN THE MINDS OF MANY PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD, BUT IN FACT, THIS OUTWARD THRUST WAS TRULY EXCEPTIONAL. FOR MANY CHINESE, THIS AGGRESSIVE JAPAN IS THEIR DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC;

- JAPAN'S PERCEPTION IS DIFFERENT: ISOLATION/10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> (Heian to Muromach) and 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Tokugawa);

- GIVEN THIS LENGTHY AND VERY HETERODOX EXPERIENCE, AND TO GROSSLY OVER-SIMPLIFY, JAPANESE AND CHINESE – CERTAINLY AT THE POPULAR LEVEL – CAN HAVE VERY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THEIR RELATIONS OVER THE CENTURIES.

- WHEN I WAS IN CHINA, ONE FREQUENTLY CAME ACROSS THE VIEW THAT CHINA WAS REWARDED FOR PROVIDING 2,000 YEARS OF CULTURAL ENRICHMENT TO JAPAN WITH JAPANESE PIRATES, JAPANESE COLONIALISM AND JAPANESE IMPERIALISM.

- THE JAPANESE, FOR THEIR PART, RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IMMENSE DAMAGE TO LIFE AND PROPERTY CAUSED BY 50 YEARS OF IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM, BUT ARGUE, QUITE REASONABLY, THAT THIS UNFORTUNATE AND REGRETTABLE PERIOD DOES NOT ALONE DESCRIBE TWO MILLENNIA OF FRUITFUL CONTACT.

- SO HISTORY MATTERS A GREAT DEAL;

### 3. CURRENT CONTEXT

- AND SO DO GEOPOLITICS:

- CHINA TODAY IS VERY EXPLICIT, SYSTEMATIC AND DETERMINED IN ITS EFFORT TO DEVELOP THE CALCULUS OF NATIONAL POWER – DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC, MILITARY, TECHNOLOGICAL, ACCESS TO ENERGY AND SO FORTH – WITHOUT WHICH THE CHINESE BELIEVE THEY CANNOT PURSUE FULLY THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THEIR NATIONAL INTERESTS.

- JAPAN POSSESSES A MUCH MORE MATURE, GLOBAL ECONOMY AND IT IS SECURE IN ITS ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES.

- CHINA HAS A SMALL NUMBER OF CLOSE ALLIES – PAKISTAN, NORTH KOREA – BUT IT LARGELY NAVIGATES ON ITS OWN.

- AND SO DO DOMESTIC, BEHIND THE BORDERS CONDITIONS:

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- TODAY'S – THIS WEEK'S – CHINA: ALWAYS BIG/3<sup>rd</sup> in geography, 1<sup>st</sup> in population; but:
    - 7% = \$550B; economic growth machine;
    - 19.4% global trade, vs. 20% EU;
    - 400mm out of poverty;
    - this progress, global events such as Olympics and Tiangong 1 space lab: source of pride and nationalism;

#### BUT

- 20 of world's 30 most polluted cities, 43.2% of state-monitored rivers were classified as grade 4 or worse in 2010, meaning their water was unsuitable for human contact, and almost 1mm Chinese people die prematurely from pollution each year;
- corruption in endemic: Bo Xilai; Ling Jiahui; recent conversations;
- 150,000 to 180,000 'mass incidents, per year, due to corruption, land grabs, injustices;

#### - JAPAN HAS A STRONGER ECONOMY THAN PEOPLE REALIZE:

- Weak growth does not mean no growth. In fact, the Japanese economy grew by 22% since 1990, just a bit less than the Swiss economy, but we rarely hear of Switzerland's lost decades.) Per capita GDP increased by 1.1% per annum, higher than USA. When you visit Osaka and Tokyo, their cityscapes bustle with cranes hovering in commercial and residential districts, and Chinese and other Asian tourists in every shop and street corner.

#### BUT

- official Japanese debt is the highest in the world. The total outstanding volume of Japanese government bonds is an almost unfathomable \$9 trillion, just below the \$10.5 trillion in outstanding debt for the 17-country Eurozone, which has more than triple the population, and bond issuance exceeds tax revenue;
- number of households consisting of pensioners , those age 65 and older has nearly doubled over the last two decades, to 23%, compared with 13% for the U.S. and more than 16% for Europe; spending on healthcare and social security now consumes 29.2% of the budget, a one-third increase since 2000;

- 6 PMs follow PM Koizumi, when I arrived in Japan in 2006; 10 Finance Ministers during the same period; tremendous political and policy instability.

#### 4. WHICH BRINGS US TO TODAY'S TENSIONS OVER THE SENKAKU/DIAOYUTAI ISLANDS: ELEMENTS OF THE DISPUTE

- discovery; trumped by administration, in international law going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century; acknowledgement by other countries; contested by other countries; de facto occupation;

- Qing records 1532, but on the way to Ryukyus; but different Chinese notions of sovereignty then;

- Japan annexation of Ryukyus by Satsuma clan 1609;

- Japanese in 19<sup>th</sup> century considered it '*terra nullius*'

- formal Japanese admin between 1895 and 1945, when Japan annexed Formosa;

- 1940 declaration by RoC;

- Cairo Declaration 1943, returning the spoils of war;

- USA inclusion of region in security treaties, 1952 and 1960;

- uncontested administration by Japan, 1945 to 1970;

- 1970s geophysical evidence of oil and gas, and emerging LoS;

- UNCLOS, 1982/1984; Exclusive Economic Zones; International Seabed Authority;

- YOU GET THE PICTURE; SO, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- DIMENSIONS AT PLAY:

- rising domestic power inevitably bleeds into rising international power: interests; military power; pride and nationalism; domestic political dynamics and responses; China will be no exception to this very ancient rule of power;

- China's undefined view of how the international system should work: status quo? Chinese 'Monroe Doctrine'? global re-adjustment? Role of USA? Role of International institutions?
  - political 'conjuncture': China in transition, which is on its way to resolution; Japan's post-lost decades political adjustment, not yet on its way to resolution;
  - situation on the high seas around the islands: Japanese Coast Guard; Chinese PLAN, 'research' ships; fishermen from Taiwan, China and Japan; hot heads on all sides;
  - diplomacy up front and behind the scenes;
  - Chinese and Japanese economic interests;
  - 'Guns of August' or 'Ussuri River' Sino-Soviet clash scenario?
  - NO OPTION BUT TO WATCH THIS SPACE
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- HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS.

JOSEPH CARON

Vancouver, October, 2012