

It has become a stereotype. Today's Japanese government is incapable of or refuses to offer "sincere" apologies for the dreadful harm done by its predecessors in World War II.

Before I plunge in, let me say I consider it would have been equally fair, if less provocative, to have titled this talk Will Americans ever get apologies right? or Will Korea ever get its apologies right? The understanding I most want to leave you with is that apologies for wrong doing are profoundly shaped by culture and language and that, global common usage of the English language notwithstanding, international incidents regularly leave ugly feelings in their wake. Just one example of festering US problems: the JAL Boeing 747 plane crash in 1985 in Japan leaves a bad taste on the Japan side to this day because of quite specific defects in Boeing's response. Boeing's 2019 difficulties in Ethiopia and Indonesia are sadly likely do the same. Wrong-doing across international boundaries is extraordinarily hard to handle appropriately.

National ideals, legal and cultural, for basic traits like honesty, evidence, blame, punishment and recovery vary profoundly, even within the big three nations of NE Asia. This talk will not do a rerun of Japan's long list of official statements about World War II, testing each one against some abstract ideal for honesty, blame etc.. Instead, with examples drawn from recent major incidents in Japan and South Korea and across in the Pacific in the USA, it will be possible to see several features of their different national coping strategies in the face of internationally significant crises. As we end, using a 2016 US/Japanese example, I hope to encourage you to imagine that it is possible to come to better terms about World War II, even in nations which once also competed with each other in that war-victimization contest which still preoccupies the authorities in China and South Korea.

Apologies are partly a matter of what one says. They are also a matter of process, of what one does. I'll begin with language because two specific language issues are particularly illuminating. For all of you, who live in a truly multi-lingual world what I have to say is likely generally familiar. In the apology world two specific words, both often used, one in Japanese and the other in English, simply do not translate smoothly from one language to the next. Because I am a native English speaker, let me begin with the limitations of my own language.

I used the word "wrong-doing" in my opening because at its simplest level, wrong denotes that a problem or incident is more than "harmful." Wrong often implies a moral failing as well. Opposite to the word "wrong" English commonly uses the word "right." Now let me jump straight to what was, for me, a linguistic surprise: If one tries to translate the word "right" into German there are at least six different equivalent words, differences in meaning which people from the UK or USA largely convey by

variations in our tone of voice. [*stimmt* (1), *oder?* (2), *ja* (3), *rechten* (4 and 5), *richtigen* (6), and *genau so* (7).] Similar tangles exist in other languages' attempts to translate the word "right." Academics trying to sort out negatives from positives across many different languages groups have been forced to conclude that the very notions "right" and "wrong" are literally untranslatable in some languages. The notions "good" and "bad" translate easily. "Right" and "wrong" do not.

Which is not to suggest that these other languages are devoid of moral tones. No. What's missing is a reliable way to convey from one language to another the nature, the intensity or the significance of a given moral stance. That a massacre or a holocaust is bad there is no doubt. It is much harder across cultures to convey what kind of moral harm either one might entail This I believe is the reason historians resort to arguments about numbers of casualties — those surely are inter-translatable. And yet they are not either — is a single death by machete in Rwanda more or less wrong than a death by drone in Afghanistan? rather than elaborating this example, let me simply assert that one challenge in international apologies is accurately to convey the moral weight of the action.

The nature and acceptance of apologies also rests on process. If I tell you I meditated on my sins is that more significant or less so than having someone else investigate and judge my sins? This issue stands out because there is one particular word in common usage in Japanese acknowledgements of wrong-doing that is routinely dismissed by Chinese and Korean critics as trivializing the seriousness of the suffering perpetrated in WWII. That word is Hansei, a sound/word with no specific resonance in English. Its component characters, 反省, do have meaning in Chinese — something like "soul searching" or introspection.

In Japanese their meaning is considerably more formal than the Chinese suggests — Hansei entails a detailed and commonly collective analysis of an event with the intention of designing strategies and tactics to ensure the wrong action does not occur again. Hansei is not only an idea, it is a practice learned and continued over a lifetime, a practice which permeates the entire Japanese culture. Hansei was one of the three legs of Toyota's management stool. The practice of hansei begins in early childhood, repeated day after day in school classrooms, in sports teams, in business work teams and even at home. In normal life it is probably best conceived as a form of self-evaluation. In the aftermath of a negative incident, it's significance intensifies.

Hansei has essential components: (1) honest, truthful, unvarnished self criticism, (2) the requirement to consider ones impact on others, (3) a process which includes all parties who played a role in the incident, even victims, all in aid of a single outcome: avoiding perpetrating an equivalent wrong in the future.

Hansei looks forward not back. Hansei is a practice which both eschews singling out specific people to be blamed for past wrongs, and scorns the attempt to make

individual excuses which might mitigate the amount and direction of blame. Hansei looks back only in so far as it makes it possible constructively to look forward.

Hansei is both a word and the name for a particular corrective process in the aftermath of a problematic incident. Nothing like it permeates group experiences in either South Korea or the United States. In brief, now four incident comparisons that highlight other deep cultural differences in apology processes used across the three corners of my US-Japan-South Korea triangle. These revolve around some of the concepts which which I began: evidence, blame, punishment and recovery.

EVIDENCE AND BLAME

(1) Fukushima Nuclear Power and BP's Deep Water Gulf oil spill — two internationally significant social/environmental catastrophes. Radiation and oil pollution spread well beyond the immediate national frontiers. Both Deep Water and Fukushima were investigated in rigorous detail, Fukushima by the first ever Japanese Parliamentary Investigative Commission. The evidence for severe and ongoing damage on land and in international waters was and is voluminous. In the USA, the BP Chairman's testimony to Congress: "I understand people want a simple answer about why this happened and who is to blame?" Fukushima's Parliamentary Investigative Committee report, Chairman's letter: "This report singles out numerous individuals and organizations for harsh criticism, but the goal is not—and should not be—to lay blame." Blame in Japan is independent of compensation, though not in the USA. In both places huge amounts of money will continue to go towards clean up and towards compensation for human suffering. The Japanese commission's report advocated deep structural change to avoid future difficulties, which sadly is very likely to be ignored. BP largely glossed over the question of change in the future.

PUNISHMENT

(2) Japan's ancient tradition, that the samurai dishonored commits suicide, has a modern counterpart revealed in a marked contrast between Japan and Korea. Two "national icon" cell biology labs both falsified data. The Korean case (2004) involved Hwang Woo-Suk : Seoul National University — the Harvard and Todai of South Korea, investigated and fired Hwang saying "Such [an] act is none other than deceiving the scientific community and the public at large." These days in 2019, despite a criminal conviction for embezzlement and scientific deceit — Hwang has set up major business joint venture with a Chinese cloning company and his Korean "Foundation" is said to charge as much as \$100,000 a time to clone celebrity pets i.e. for Barbra Streisand. He claims 900 pets regenerated. The Japanese case begins similarly. In a highly regarded Kyoto lab, a junior scientist Haruko Obokata falsified data — the outcome is deeply different. Obokata was stripped of her PhD by Waseda University and laments "There is no second chance for failures. I am socially killed and my future is gone." More dramatically shortly after the crisis erupted the head of the lab committed suicide

right there in the lab, leaving a note implying he still wanted to believe that Obokata would discover a way to replicate her results. Sasai is dead. Obokata has left science. Hwang, meanwhile is a rich science-centered entrepreneur.

REHABILITATION

(3) Rehabilitation like Hwang's is common in South Korea. At the major corporate level other incidents in South Korea would be inconceivable in the United States. The case: two successive chairmen of Samsung Corporation, the Lees father and son, have been tried for corruption, in the first case personal, the second political. They were both convicted. Both went to prison. The second Chairman Lee was sentenced to five years in August 2017 and freed in February 2018, returning at once to his former position in Samsung. If South Korean tradition holds, Jay Lee will be granted a complete pardon, probation lifted because of his value to the economy. That's what happened to his father, Samsung Group Chairman Lee Kun-hee, who was twice convicted of corruption -- and twice pardoned. Lee Kun-hee was pardoned in 2010 because the government wanted him back on the International Olympic Committee. America, though quintessentially a land of second chances would never, Martha Stewart notwithstanding, tolerate a return to exactly the same position of international leadership from which one had previously engaged in crime.

HANSEI AND THE LONG TERM

(4) My last case brings the USA and Japan together again, this time in the 1985 crash of JAL 123, a Boeing 747. The cause was made clear very quickly: a faulty repair by Boeing engineers of pre-existing damage in the tail section. Boeing's response — immediate financial compensation both for the casualties and to JAL for the plane. JAL's response — conduct an annual tour, to this day, nearly 35 years later, to the crash site in remembrance of the victims. Interview everyone from maintenance staff to air traffic controllers to build a moment by moment record of events prior to the accident. In a museum that shows these moment to moment details of all phases of the crash, bring every new JAL employee to record their commitment to avoid such an event in the future. Employees of JAL related companies like the people at Panasonic, who design video screens for planes also visit, as well as employee of other airlines. And the Chairman had to resign. . . . In this litany what is missing? Boeing has never allowed JAL or anyone else to interview the actual engineers who opted to make the defective repair. Hansei was never completed.

One part of my research, for which there is no time today, is to consider whether moral education, which conventionally begins when children are very young, might help explain why seeming moral failings by outsiders can evoke outrage in ordinary people. The national government in mainland China has made anti-Japanese thinking a central part of the school curriculum since the mid 1980s, but outrage is

not confined to China. Many Americans seem to have an almost visceral reaction against collective action — the Trump administration's hostility to "socialism" is a relatively mild form. Perhaps this populist American outrage is connected to the country's moral investment in individualism, dating back to the country's founding documents, instilled repeatedly in children, after fights in the school playground, in education's obsession with "cheating" as opposed to shared learning, in the isolation of families one from another along the suburban streets of America.

Let me move on now to a relatively positive note. Hostile relations even if propagated for decades in school curricula and the media can change. In 2016 Japan and the United States made real strides in laying World War II to rest. They did so in a pair of unprecedented visits: President Obama at Hiroshima and Prime Minister Abe at Pearl Harbor. The word apology was not spoken out loud by either leader, though the US media traveling with Obama to Hiroshima were primed with anxiety that he would use that particular word.

Instead Abe and Obama acknowledged that the two sites represented times and places of dreadful suffering. They agreed that all kinds of people died as a result— Obama specifically acknowledging that the casualties in Hiroshima included Koreans — and both vowed that the conditions which made Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima possible were long gone. In the 21st century the USA and Japan are allies in a complex world.

If Korean and Japanese people have difficulty reaching a similar accord, perhaps one contributor is to be found their deep differences in the personal cost of blame and chances for rehabilitation, Americans are not similar either to Japan or to South Korea. Americans like Koreans, believe in second chances — see the survival of President Trump but the Samsung Lee rehabilitations after criminal convictions would be inconceivable. So too would the mandatory resignation of the Chairman of JAL after the airplane crash. The Chairman of Boeing remained on the job in 1985 and will do so again in 2019.

I often wonder whether between Japan and Korea, hope for a better peace might reside in their shared commitment to ancestor veneration. Not in the near future but perhaps sometime leaders from both countries could also visit each others' World War II memorials. Certainly the 2015 abrupt attempt by Abe and Park Geun He to put the WWII Sex slaves story behind them failed. Another case of Hansei that is incomplete, because it was constructed without the affected victims. Incomplete hansei leaves as much of a sour taste in its wake as any other kind of poorly executed apology.

Apologies matter because in the near term a poorly spoken and poorly executed apology, far from "bringing closure," extends and even intensifies the wrong-doing it was supposed to ease.