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East Asian Approaches to Human Security - The Concept and Practice of Human Security in Japan and China's International Relations.

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Proceedings of the Fifth Afrasian
International Symposium

**Conflict Resolution in the Afrasian Context:
Examining More Inclusive Approaches**

Edited by

**Nobuko Nagasaki, Pauline Kent, Kosuke Shimizu,
Shiro Sato and Kazue Demachi**

6 February 2010

**Afrasian Centre for Peace and Development Studies
Ryukoku University**

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Poverty and other issues associated with development are commonly found in many Asian and African countries. These problems are interwoven with ethnic, religious and political issues, and often lead to incessant conflicts with violence. In order to find an appropriate framework for conflict resolution, we need to develop a perspective which will fully take into account the wisdom of relevant disciplines such as economics, politics and international relations, as well as that fostered in area studies. Building on the following expertise and networks that have been accumulated in Ryukoku University in the past (listed below), the Centre organises research projects to tackle new and emerging issues in the age of globalisation. We aim to disseminate the results of our research internationally, through academic publications and engagement in public discourse.

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Preface

With substantial support from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Afrasian Centre for Peace and Development Studies was established in 2005 to conduct thorough research on conflict analysis. Our Centre has organised annual symposia ever since its establishment. We focused on “*Conflict in the Middle East and Asian Approaches to Conflict Resolution*” (March 2006), “*Conflict Resolution in Everyday Life*” (February 2007), “*Sustainability of the Local Community*” (February 2008) and “*Poverty and Development*” (November 2008).

Unlike the previous symposia which were organised on issue based perceptions towards conflict resolution, this year’s symposium aims to focus on theories (and practices) of it. This means that the Centre is now moving towards a new term of its research, the second phase of conflict resolution. This second phase aims at not merely conflict ‘resolution,’ which is based on a relatively short-term analysis of conflict, but also at conflict ‘reconciliation,’ which leads to a long-term peace and conflict prevention.

In order to achieve the new goal, but at the same time retain our extensive focus on Asian and African regions, we set the title of this year’s symposium as “*Conflict Resolution in the Afrasian Context: Examining More Inclusive Approaches.*” The Centre invited a variety of scholars specialising in different academic subjects ranging from international relations, post-colonialism, and post-structuralism to history, philosophy, and intercultural studies.

We are extremely honoured to have such distinguished scholars as participants, and hope this symposium would be able to contribute to conflict resolution and reconciliation studies.

Kosuke Shimizu

Programme Chair of the Fifth Afrasian International Symposium

March 2010

East Asian Approaches to Human Security: The Concept and Practice of Human Security in Japan and China's International Relations

Yih-Jye Hwang and Lindsay Black

Leiden University

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to investigate East Asia's approach to human security. It is intended to comprehend how the concept of human security has been received and developed in East Asia, and how this in turn reconstructs or reshapes the connotations of the concept and the discursive contours in which humans are secured in international society.¹

The concept of human security is an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities. It presumes that the concerns of security ought to be the individual rather than the state, and people-centred rather than national. Human security thereby shifts the primary security referent from the state to the human being by focusing on 'freedom from want' and on 'freedom from fear.' The concept, since it was first proposed in the 1990s, has become 'a catchphrase in the global debate on the changing meaning of security,' visibly influencing, changing, and challenging international politics (Oberleitner 2005: 186).² In East Asia, academic and policy-making circles have been readily accepting the concept,³ despite the fact that the region has traditionally been associated with the national security paradigm (Friedberg 1993-4; Measheimer 2001). The favourable reception of the concept rose in particular in the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) influenza of 2003, and the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. Many scholars have devoted themselves to this new security concept.⁴ The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum also openly discussed the concept of human security in the Bangkok Declaration of 2003.

Moreover, East Asia's treatment of human security is becoming all the more relevant as the area becomes increasingly globally significant. From Ezra Vogel's 1979 publication *Japan as Number One* to Kishore Mahbubani's 2008 book *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*, academic literature and popular political commentary on international relations have repeatedly emphasised the rise of new East Asian Great Powers. Emerging East Asian Great Powers are making the concept of human security more inclusive and thereby transforming the related norms of sovereignty, intervention, development and the 'responsibility to protect' in international society. There is therefore a

¹ According to the International Relations theory posited by the English School, the term international society refers to the rules, institutions and norms that states have established amongst themselves to preserve order between states (Bull and Watson 1984: 1). English School proponents contrast international society with a world society, comprising transnational entities and human communities, which may demand that the international society better meet their needs (Buzan 2004b: 100, 107, 158-60).

² Accordingly, there is a need to revisit various problems in the international society, like the 'responsibility to protect,' 'sovereignty,' 'intervention' or 'the legitimate use of force.'

³ For the recent accounts of the human security discourse in East Asia, please see Caballero-Anthony (2005); Kent (2007); and Curley and Thomas (2004).

⁴ Examples are Yang and Zheng (2007); and Liu (2004). Recent works in Japanese on the subject of Human Security include: Takahashi and Yamakage (2008); Shinoda and Uesugi (2005); and Mushakoji (2004).

need to chart the evolution of Japan and China's comprehensions of the concept of human security. This article, therefore, seeks to transcend the Western-centric discourse that perceives the evolution and application of the human security concept in terms of a Western-centric core attempting to socialise East Asian states into the norms of international society.

This article explores some of the ways in which 'human security' has been conceptualised in East Asia. It examines specifically Japan and China's discourse of human security. The article argues that Japan and China do not indiscriminately and unconditionally accept the concept of human security; rather, they selectively adopt and partially advocate certain components of human security against their respective historical legacies, political contexts, and, above all, self-identifications. Such moves are facilitated by the vague, indefinite, nebulous and somehow inconsistent definition and scope of human security that allow a variety of interpretations at both the theoretical and practical levels. Indeed, human security is not based on a single conception of the term 'human,' but on various competing and sometimes contradictory perspectives. Different people attach different connotations to this term. To grasp China and Japan's understandings of human security, this article poses the following three questions. Firstly, what are the discursive contexts in which human security has emerged in Japan and China, respectively? Secondly, how have different conceptualisations of human security in Japan and China impacted the implementation of their foreign policies? Thirdly, is human security a concept through which Japan and China seek to transform the discursive contours in which humans are secured in international society?

In what follows, the article will firstly problematise the notion of human security and argue that human security is a discursive entity. It will then, respectively, investigate to what extent Japan and China's historical legacies, political contexts, and self-identifications have affected their engagement with the concept of human security, internationally and domestically. Next, the article will contend that, while human security discourse has emerged from these diverse backgrounds, both Japan and China have struggled to fulfil their leadership ambitions in the international arena. In conclusion, the article suggests that international society needs to consider how Japanese and Chinese approaches to securing humans not only differ from those of the 'West,' but also provide valuable alternatives for the 'West' to take seriously.

1. WRITING 'HUMAN SECURITY': A DISCURSIVE CONSTITUTION OF 'HUMAN SECURITY'

The concept of human security was first advocated in the early 1990s in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP),⁵ of which its proponents challenged the political realist-derived orthodoxy that employed a military-focused and state-centric approach. In one of the UNDP's annual reports – the 'Human Development Report of 1993' – the UNDP urges a need for a new conception of security. The report states:

“The concept of security must change – from an exclusive stress on national security to a much greater stress on people's security, from security through armaments to security through human development, from territorial security to food, employment and environmental security” (UNDP 1993: 2).

⁵ The notion of human security originates in the works of economists, such as Adam Smith (King and Murray 2002: 2), as well as the Enlightenment project that focuses on individual liberty and freedom (Rothschild 1995).

The following year the UNDP further identifies seven components of 'human security,' namely, economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (UNDP 1994: 24-25). For each of these components threats are also spelt out. As Edström summarises,

“[Threats] to economic security are lack of productive and remunerative employment, precarious employment, absence of publicly financed safety nets ... threats to food security are lack of food entitlements including insufficient access to assets, work, and assured incomes ... threats to health security are infectious and parasitic diseases, diseases of the circulatory system and cancers, lack of safe water, air pollution, lack of access to health care facilities ... threats to environmental security: declining water availability, water pollution, declining arable land, deforestation, desertification, air pollution, natural disasters ... threats to personal security are violent crime, drug trafficking, violence and abuse of children and women...threats to community security are breakdown of the family, collapse of traditional languages and cultures, ethnic discrimination and strife, genocide and ethnic cleansing ... threats to political security: government repression, systematic human rights violations, and militarization” (Edström 2009: 24-25).

Human security thereby shifts the primary security referent from the state to the human being by focusing on freedom from want, comprising development issues such as the provision of health care, education and employment; and on freedom from fear, comprising protection issues such as denoting liberation from political oppression and physical harm. Hence, human security discourse goes beyond the traditional coverage of security agendas that comprise a military-focused and state-centric approach. The concerns of (in)security ought to be the individual rather than the state; the essence of security ought to be societal, cultural, economic and environmental rather than exclusively militarily and politically focused.

Nevertheless, this new agenda of the security issues has in the meantime received a great deal of criticism. Critics contend that this new articulation of the security agenda, among others, undermines the effectiveness of the notion of 'security,' not only at the analytical but also at the practical level. Keith Krause, for instance, argues that the conception of human security is 'nothing more than a shopping list' (Krause 2004: 67). Neil MacFarlane also notes that the widening of the concept of security would 'diminish its political salience,' making the establishment of priorities in security policy difficult (MacFarlane 2004: 369). Likewise, Barry Buzan contends that the notion of 'human security' does not add much analytical value (Buzan 2004a: 369-370). Gary King and Christopher Murray hence conclude that all-inclusive definitions of human security 'wound up not meaning anything' (King and Murray 2002: 593). Indeed, the above-mentioned criticisms point out the vague, nebulous and inconsistent definition and scope of human security.

Yet, it is crucially noted that the indefinite nature of human security does not come to appear without a good reason. David Campbell contends that one's 'security' or 'threat(s)' to one's security are in fact the product of one's cognition. In his analysis of American foreign policy, Campbell argues that nothing is a threat in and of itself in the first place; it all depends on how one identifies things 'through an interpretation of their various dimensions of dangerousness' (Campbell 1992: 2). Campbell does not deny that there exist *real* dangers that might cause physical harm and death, but he insists that not all risks are held to be equal, as there is a profusion of risk in the world. He therefore notes, 'Danger is not an objective condition. It [sic] is not a thing that exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat' (ibid., 1). Campbell

asserts that security issues are intimately related to the politics of state identity. A state's self-identification is actually produced through the representation of 'security' and 'threats' in its foreign policy. Yet, threats are not only based on state conceptions of fear, but also constructed on the basis of values to be preserved. Furthermore, actors in international relations must not only articulate threats to their values, but these threats and values must be legitimised in order to be sustained. Foreign policies in this regard become a practice of sustaining, producing, or reproducing the identity of the state. In this vein, it is understandable that every country has differing interpretations of security in accordance with their own respective self-identifications (Berger 2003; Katzenstein 1996).

Campbell's elucidation of the fluid/changing meaning of 'danger,' 'fear,' 'threat,' and 'security' in accordance with a given state's self-identification connects with social constructivism of international relations, which contends that the connotations of security (or insecurities) are socially constructed, and can therefore be altered and reshaped. Alexander Wendt, for instance, stresses the significance of 'ideas' (in contrast to 'material factors') in international society. As Wendt notes, like the nature of the international system, identities and interests are not objectively grounded in material forces; instead, they are the result of ideas and the social construction of such ideas (Wendt 1999: 92-138). The conception of security is thus subject to one's perception. Martha Finnemore also contends that state security, interests and behaviour 'are not just "out there" waiting to be discovered; they are constructed through social interaction' (Finnemore 1996: 2). Her research focuses on the notion of 'state preference,' and contends that state preferences are not endogenous but socially constructed, structured, and constrained by various ideas, norms, institutions and values (ibid., 1-33). Thus, the concept of 'security,' in the theoretical framework of social constructivism, can be altered in accordance with countries' self-identification, ideas, and preferences. In this vein, the concept of 'security' is neither naturally given nor premeditated but socially constituted. Likewise, Peter Katzenstein draws attention to cultural determinants of country's national security policy (Katzenstein 1996). Hence, as Edward Newman suggested, human security is not a coherent concept. Rather, 'there are different, and sometimes competing, conceptions of human security that may reflect different sociological, cultural and geostrategic orientations,' reflecting 'the impact of values and norms in international relations' (Newman 2001: 240).

The aforementioned scholars of social constructivism highlight the constitutive and changing nature of 'security.' Nicholas Onuf further stresses the significance of 'language' in the constitution of international relations (Onuf 1989; 1998). Onuf's constructivism is built upon three premises. Firstly, any coherent set of social relations (including international relations) is also, and always, a process in which human agency (i.e. state) and social structures (i.e. international society) constitute each other. The mutual constitution between agency and structure contributes to the pervasive change and the appearance of constancy in social relations. In other words, people make society, and society makes people in a continuous and two-way process. Secondly, Onuf stresses the importance of 'social rules,' which link people and society together. According to Onuf, 'Social rules (the term *rules* includes, but is not restricted to, legal rules) make the process by which people and society constitute each other continuous and reciprocal' (Onuf 1998: 59). Thirdly, *linguistic practices*, or what he calls 'speech acts,' are the ways in which people negotiate rules. A rule is a statement that tells people who they are, who others are, what are appropriate social goals, and ultimately what we should do. The constitution of social relations is accordingly produced through the media of various linguistic practices, or 'speech acts.' Hence, according to Onuf, we all live in a world of language; we all depend on language to express our thinking, and to act accordingly. In short, Onuf's view of

international relations denies that the world and words are independent; it sees them as mutually linguistically constitutive.

In international security studies, the pioneering work of the Copenhagen School, which includes such writers as Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, also places particular emphasis upon the linguistic aspects of security. They argue that actors in international relations 'securitise' perceived threats through 'speech acts' that aim to convince other actors of the necessity to undertake action in response to the articulated threat (Wæver 1995: 55; Buzan et al. 1998). The process of securitisation is hence intersubjective, which is neither a question of an objective threat or a subjective perception of a threat. Rather, certain issues are discursively constituted to become a matter of security. Accordingly, the Copenhagen School suggests that while studying security we need to understand 'who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent object), why, with what results, and not least, under what conditions' (Buzan et al. 1998: 32).

The Copenhagen School's conception of security as a speech act with distinct consequences provides a powerful and convincing explanation of how threat, fear or security is socially constructed. However, the Copenhagen School's conception of 'speech acts' is limited to 'language,' or 'linguistic practices.' 'Speech acts,' as this article argues, should be understood as a much wider application, which can be articulated in Michel Foucault's notion of discourse.

The term 'discourse,' according to Foucault, is to describe a highly diverse, fragmented and heterogeneous process. Discourse is a realm that includes both linguistic and non-linguistic acts, a synthesis that encompasses discursive practices and social practices, and a domain in which discursive practice and social practice are exercised (Foucault 1972). The distinction between discursive practices and social practices is contested. Any social practice has its discursive dimension; any discursive practice has its material foundations and is, in effect, a social practice (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 107-108). Foucault therefore punctuates these two terms with a slash. Thus, the term 'discourse' refers to a domain of dispersion, in which various discursive/social practices intersect, intertwine and interact. In view of this understanding, when considering the process of securitisation in international society, the term 'speech act' should be conceived as the realm in which the respective discourse concerning threat or fear is formed by various practices, the context in which the discourse is disseminated, and the site in which the discourse of security is reproduced, forming and transforming the subject – 'security.' There is a discourse of/about security in international society, and the discourse is constituted, sustained, undermined, or transformed by an intricate web of discursive/social practices; when discursive/social practices 'speak' of the term, the connotations of security are formed as a result of this 'speaking.'

The term 'discourse' does not only refer to the language, but also to other forms of expression, e.g. visual expression. Moreover, it is not restricted to linguistic acts, but also includes the material expressions of those acts. Furthermore, discourse is understood as, in effect, a social practice that can be elucidated in two aspects. The first aspect refers to the way in which discourses are produced by various practices, which are, by nature, dispersed, fragmented and heterogeneous, including both discursive/linguistic (what people say) and social/non-linguistic (what people do) practices. The second aspect refers to the way in which discourses get disseminated in society. On the one hand, discourses systematically form the objects/subjects of which they speak – the constitution of social entities – and, on the other hand, they reproduce/reshape discourses themselves. The social entities are accordingly constituted in discourse.

It should be however stressed that the use of words/statements has limits. According to Foucault, one

cannot just 'say' and 'do' what one wishes to 'say' and 'do.' The discourse involves a complex set of practices that keep certain statements, utterances, and conducts in circulation but take other statements, utterances and conducts out of circulation (Foucault 1972: 215-238). Such complex sets of practices involve the play of power, thereby implying the production of exclusion and inclusion (Foucault 1991: 76-100). Indeed, only certain discourses are disseminated in society, thereby only certain forms of subject are formed accordingly. Thus, the theory and method of discourse analysis identifies which and whose statements, utterances and forms of conduct emerge and which and whose do not; it is a probe of the site at which different discourses interact, intersect and compete; and it is an examination of the *politics* of the appearance and disappearance of certain statements, utterances and modes of conduct. The study of discourse therefore needs to expose the power relations that exist within society at any given moment in order to consider how marginal and subordinate groups (e.g. non-state actors) are oppressed by the dominant group (e.g. state actors); or alternatively, how they might appropriate space. A specific discourse limits or excludes alternative ways in which the notion of security can be conceptualised. Since many other alternative political possibilities are omitted, repressed and made to disappear in the discursive formation of security, the concept of security needs to be critically interrogated.

Following this line of argument, it is appropriate to argue that there is no single concept of 'human security,' as it is subject to different practices – people's speech and actions. Each practice has an input, making it possible to talk about 'human security' in general and attach a specific substance to it. These practices intersect, compete and intertwine in a mutually constituting relationship. Particular discourses of human security in turn make certain actions possible, sustaining or undermining what people say and do.

The concept of 'human security' is therefore conditional, lodged in contingency. 'Human security' in this sense should be seen as a dynamic and fluid rather than as a static value. The connotation of 'human security' is always deterred and deferred. It never has final or fixed meaning, and each 'stop' is arbitrary and contingent. The value of human security is not naturally given, but exists in the way people talk and act. And this discursive constitution does not necessarily lead to a coherent or single conceptualisation of 'human security.' Instead, those conceptualisations are highly diverse and fragmented, not only in the way they are uttered but also in the content of what is uttered. The notion of 'human security,' in terms of its definition and scope, therefore becomes vague, indefinite, nebulous and inconsistent, allowing for a variety of interpretations at both the theoretical and practical levels (Paris 2001).

In short, countries do not indiscriminately and unconditionally interpret 'security' in general, nor do they accept the concept of human security in particular; rather, they selectively adopt and partially advocate certain components of security or human security to meet their respective self-identifications and realise their separate national interests. Such moves are facilitated by the discursive nature of human security. Indeed, East Asian countries including Japan and China, while speaking on human security, have referred to different conceptions, with different connotations entailed, of human security, particularly, in comparison with countries in the West such as Canada.⁶ Japan and China have adopted a more development-oriented notion of human security, with a focus on 'freedom from want.' It should be noted that although East Asian approaches to human security stress the component of 'development,' their articulations of development vary from one another. More importantly, their articulations are produced according to their

⁶ Canada's view on human security focuses more, to an extent, on 'freedom from fear,' preventing physical abuse against human beings, such as genocide. In practice, Canada's approach to human security normally entails, especially in comparison with Japan, military intervention, infringing on the notion of sovereignty.

self-identifications. The following two sections will examine the historical background/legacies and political contexts in which the human security discourse of Japan and China, respectively, has been formed and transformed.

2. WRITING 'HUMAN SECURITY' IN JAPAN

For Japan, there are historical factors that gave an initial motivation for promoting human security discourse. After Japan's defeat in the Second World War, the American-led occupation pushed the Japanese authorities to accept a constitution designed to prevent Japan's remilitarisation.⁷ Though the US reversed this initial position with the onset of the Cold War and encouraged the establishment of Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDF) (Dower 1999), Yoshida Shigeru, the Japanese Prime Minister for two separate terms in the post-war period, ensured that the pacifist constitution remained a cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy. The Yoshida Doctrine blended the norms of pacifism and economism, relying on the US military for Japan's security and building economic power to guide the country's international relations. Successive Japanese governments adopted Yoshida's formula as Japan rose to become the second largest economy in the world by the end of the Cold War (Samuels 2007).

The anti-militaristic sentiments embodied in the constitution also pervaded Japanese society. Japanese militarism led to wars causing millions of lost lives, ravaging families, and the ruin of the country. Memories of this period left the Japanese public suspicious of the use of force as a tool in Japan's foreign policy. As a result, Japan has turned itself from a militarist state into a 'pacifist country' (Dower 1999).

Due to the constraints on the exercise of military force, the Japanese government has been using economic aid, or '*yen* for development' (Islam 1991), as a foreign policy strategy. Academic literature has frequently critiqued Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy, which focused on building trade and investment links and developing the infrastructure and economies of East and Southeast Asian states, in particular, in order to expand the Japanese economy (Hook and Zhang 1998). In doing so, Japanese ODA grants created a structure of dependency in which East and Southeast Asian economies were exploited for cheap land and labour (Hatch and Yamamura 1997). Economic aid also became a means for the Japanese government to secure natural resources that were vital to ensure the health of the Japanese economy.

Whilst not necessarily benevolent, Japan's ODA did help Japan to gain international acceptance in the aftermath of World War II and became the principle means by which Japan contributed to international society. By the end of the Cold War, Japan had become the biggest provider of ODA in a global context. As Edström notes, the practices of Japanese economic aid were firstly initiated by Japanese reparations to countries that had suffered from Japanese aggression during World War II. In the 1980s, in response to US pressure, Japan further allocated its economic aid to countries that were strategically less important to Japan but vital to the US (Edström 2009: 144). As a result, Japan's role in economic aid to developing countries was described as constituting a major effort to play a bigger role on the international stage, shouldering global responsibilities. The country has been described and discerned as an 'aid great power.'

Moreover, Japan's ways of making substantial contributions to international society via economic aid,

⁷ Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution contains the key anti-militarist clause, stating, '... the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised' (Hook et. al. 2005).

according to Edström, manifest Japan's official credo of what it thinks of 'security.' As Edström noted, 'economic growth and development play a crucial role in people's well-being and in political stability and democracy, which make aid a means of improving Japan's security environment' (ibid., 143). Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi labelled this approach 'comprehensive security,' which became an antecedent to Japan's human security policy in the 1990s.

The economic focus of Japan's foreign policy faced severe challenges and criticism in the post-Cold War era, particularly after the 'failure' of diplomacy in the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Whilst Japan shouldered a sizable part of the cost of the military campaign against Iraq, it failed to contribute troops until after hostilities had ended, when the Japanese government dispatched a minesweeping flotilla. The international community derided Japan's financial generosity as mere 'chequebook diplomacy.' The diplomatic embarrassment of the 1990-1991 Gulf War prompted Japan to play a more active role in international society primarily through the passage of the 1992 Peacekeeping Operations Bill. Since then, successive Japanese governments have gradually eroded the constitutional constraints on the deployment of its Self-Defence Forces abroad (Hughes 2004; Samuels 2007).

Such moves have, however, raised concerns amongst East Asian leaders of a return to Japanese militarism and imperialism. As a result, promoting the concept of human security has concurrently enabled Japan to overcome a pacifist reluctance to participate in international security commitments and to shake off international and domestic criticism of 'chequebook diplomacy' as well as suspicions of a revival of its militarism and imperialism. The concept of human security in this vein has considerable significance, not only because it enables the country to send troops to conflict areas, but also because it poses the question as to what constitutes a genuine contribution to international security.

Hence, human security has become the key element of Japan's foreign policy since the mid-1990s. Murayama Tomiichi, Japan's Prime Minister from 1994 to 1996, stood out as one of the first heads of the government to endorse human security on the international stage. In a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in October 1995, Murayama advocated human security as a new strategy for the international organisation to promote peace and prosperity. As he notes,

“... Not only national security of the state as heretofore but a new 'human security' thinking has emerged as a major issue for the United Nations. This 'human security' thinking, which is based on respect for the human rights of each and every global citizen and defending us from poverty, disease, ignorance, oppression and violence, is consonant with my own political principles ...” (MOFA 1995, cited in Edström 2009: 77).

Japanese government officials subsequently presented human security as a key aspect of Japan's foreign policy. In March 1999, Japan and the United Nations Secretariat launched the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS). In 2000, the Japanese government announced the establishment of the Commission on Human Security. Apart from these international activities, the Japanese government also re-organised its ODA policy by incorporating the idea of human security as one of the basic principles of ODA in its charter (Ikeda 2009: 198).

Nevertheless, Japan's embrace of the human security concept remains focused on 'freedom from want' issues, as there is some reluctance to engage in military intervention to free humans from fear. One example is the UNTFHS, in which 'Japan has consistently raised its contribution up to some 207 million

USD ... distributed to 130 projects (as of December 2008) aiming for the “protection” and the “empowerment” of people in need’ (ibid.). The majority of its funding however, according to UNTFHS’s website, was directed towards ‘developmental concerns including key thematic areas such as health, education, agriculture, and small scale infrastructure development’ (UNTFHS 2010). Japan’s reluctance to adopt a more muscular form of human security is due to the continuing salience of the pacifist norm and the apprehensions of its neighbouring countries about the return of Japanese militarism and imperialism, as this article has analysed above.

Japan’s approach to human security has clearly been articulated in a series of events wherein human security in a political and military sense was not taken into account. In various crises or catastrophic situations, wherein thousands of lives were at stake, Japan has played an active role in securing human beings, such as the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis (in which Japan provided financial assistance), the SARS epidemic (in which Japan offered financial and medical assistance), and the 2005 tsunami in Southeast Asia (in which Japan deployed troops for humanitarian relief to tsunami-stricken areas).

It should be noted that Japan’s participation in those aforementioned events, wherein selected aspects of human security were being practised, in turn reinforces Japan’s articulations of human security with its emphasis on developmental issues. In the wake of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, for example, the Japanese Prime Minister, Kenzo Obuchi, stated in an address to a conference in Singapore on human security,

“... [human security] is the keyword to comprehensively seizing all of the menaces that threaten the survival, daily life, and dignity of human beings and to strengthening the efforts to deal with these threats To support Asian countries in the economic crisis, we have pledged and steadily implemented contributions of the largest scale in the world. With human security in mind, we have given, as one of the most important pillars of our support, assistance to the poor, the aged, the disabled, women and children, and other socially vulnerable segments of the population on whom the Asian economic difficulties have the heaviest impact” (Obuchi 1999: 18, cited in Edström 2009: 92).

In short, Japan’s conception of human security has been produced by a number of historical and political factors, including Japan’s pre-war militarism, its post-war pacifism, and the failure of ‘chequebook diplomacy.’ The certain conception of human security enables and encourages Japan to participate in chosen international events in relation to human security, which in return, restructures or reinforces Japan’s conception of human security.

3. WRITING ‘HUMAN SECURITY’ IN CHINA

The Chinese leadership still conceives of security in traditional terms, focussing on military means to achieve national security. Nevertheless, in the last decade the country has increasingly moved towards a more comprehensive conception of security, including human security.

China has battled with what it perceives as a Western notion of human rights designed to facilitate interference in its domestic affairs; akin to foreign imperialist interventions during the ‘century of humiliation’ – a period of foreign domination spanning from the mid-18th-century Opium Wars until the Chinese Communist Party victory in 1949. China has always distrusted Western affronts to their

hard-earned sovereignty. The Chinese government has perceived a Western stress on freedom from fear within the concept of human security as an extension of this foreign meddling in China's domestic affairs. Thus, China has been rather dubious about the notion of 'intervention.' They have assiduously promoted 'sovereignty' as a core of their values when engaging foreign countries, especially the Western countries (Mitter 2003).

Since 1978, successive Chinese leaders have focused on economic development, which is associated with the concept of freedom from want. Beijing frequently noted that the adoption of China's reform-and-opening-up policy has not only scored remarkable achievements in terms of economic development, but also made great progress in terms of human rights in China and the world as a whole. The foremost achievement, according to the Chinese government, has been to lift millions of people out of poverty, a feat, Beijing claims, that has improved China's human rights record. Compared to the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution, which caused widespread famine in China, efforts since 1978 to reduce poverty throughout the country have been a success, lifting two-thirds of the global population out of economic hardship. In addition to eliminating poverty, China's economic policies have also rapidly improved the quality of life for the majority of ordinary Chinese, building a society of relative prosperity in all respects. In the opinion of Chinese officials, two historic leaps have been realised: firstly, from poverty to adequate food and clothing, and secondly, from adequate food and clothing to a relatively prosperous level (Human Rights Magazine 2009).

The process of economic development however, has caused various social injustices and problems to emerge, such as a widening gap between the rich and the poor, rising rates of unemployment, and increasing environmental pollution. Hence, a rise in social unrest and political commentary have pressured the Chinese government to pay more attention to those social and environmental problems. Those problems and concerns caused by economic development have been particularly exacerbated by the current global economic downturn. As a consequence, the voices calling for the government to use more resources to solve the insecurities related to people's livelihood and quality of life, such as health, social welfare, sanitation security, food safety, and water security have also emerged. With the rise in the Chinese living standard, there is more concern about improving social welfare.

According to this rhetoric, the 'right to development' is particularly highlighted. The notion of 'development' seems to be an all-inclusive key to the solution to all sorts of social problems in China. For the Chinese government, the right to development is a fundamental human right and of primary importance. 'Development' brings a very positive result in terms of 'human rights' in China's society. A forum on human rights held by the Chinese government in Beijing in April 2008 fully elaborated on this conception of human rights. Luo Haocai, the president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, remarked in his speech at the opening ceremony:

"The right to development is an inalienable human right. Every person and every country have the right to pursue development and enjoy its fruits Development is the central agenda for the overwhelming majority of developing countries and the biggest human rights problem facing the world today. That's because development lays the groundwork for the full realisation of human rights. To advance other human rights, we should first of all realise the right to development, eliminate starvation and poverty and provide basic health care services" (Human Rights Magazine 2008).

Thus, by taking ‘development,’ which is interpreted as ‘freedom from want,’ as its central task, human lives could be said to have been made considerably more secure.

In addition, intimately associated with ‘development’ is the idea of political stability in the Chinese rhetoric of human security. Beijing has been promoting a particular conception of the right to security. In Beijing’s rhetoric, security is defined as a ‘state of existence free from fear’ and a fundamental human right (ibid.). ‘Everyone has the right to live peacefully and safely. Threats to peace and security come not only from international wars and conflicts but from domestic violence, organised crimes, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction’ (ibid.). If the right to security is not respected, one can enjoy neither political and civil, nor cultural and social rights. Society is capable of offering individuals more freedoms only under the conditions of peace and security.

Similar to the case of Japan, a number of events also contributed to China’s human security discourse. Those events encouraged China to speak about and implement certain aspects of human security. One of them was the outbreak of the SARS.

SARS played a significant role in the dissemination of human security discourse in China, as it illustrated the need for a more comprehensive conception of security. The SARS event has its significance in disseminating human security discourse in China for three reasons. Firstly, the event by nature encompasses concerns about both freedom from want, in terms of inadequate health care, and freedom from fear, in terms of threats to personal wellbeing. Secondly, as the event negatively affected other states and their people even though the issue emerged from China, the trans-national impact of SARS highlights the national interests of states at the domestic, regional and global levels. Thirdly, the Chinese government did not have the capacity to resolve the threat by itself. Hence, they had to rely on a wide range of actors, including international organisations, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), domestic organisations, and individuals (Curley and Thomas 2004). The event showed that security concerns ought to be of interest to and involve not only states but also non-state and trans-national actors. Other organisations’ assistance and intervention are required. The SARS event, accordingly, falls outside the purview of conventional security concerns; it represents a non-military and non-state-centric threat to the considerations about security issues.

Likewise, the Sichuan earthquake prompted people in East Asia to ‘speak’ about the idea of ‘human security.’ An earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale occurred on 12 May 2008, in Sichuan province of China. The disaster killed at least 87,000 and left millions of people homeless. In the wake of the Sichuan earthquake, ‘people’s lives’ were particularly stressed according to Chinese official rhetoric. As an editorial of *People’s Daily* noted, the essence of the term is ‘the people’s lives being above anything else.’ The article wrote:

“... life, either an individual life or the life of every Chinese citizen, is placed at the place of paramount importance. It is essential to show the respect and solicitude for and the understanding of people, to protect them and be at their service, and to explain the connotation of the concept of ‘making people first’” (People’s Daily 2008a).

In this rhetoric, the right to life is enunciated as the highest value in a country like China, which has to encounter frequent natural calamities and an acute shortage of per-capita resources (People’s Daily 2008b).

The earthquake redefined the discursive agenda on human security for China. The impact of natural

disasters emerged as the dominant issue in Chinese human security discourse. Chinese President Hu Jintao, while attending the 16th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting held in Lima, Peru, on 23 November 2008, delivered a speech that called for international society to enhance and improve human security. As Hu noted, China has suffered a series of natural disasters such as severe snowstorms in China in 2007 and a massive earthquake in Sichuan province in 2008, together with other numerous disasters like earthquakes, typhoons, droughts, tsunamis and floods in recent years that other members of APEC have also experienced. Those natural disasters all caused a huge loss of property and human life, and have become a major threat to the Asia Pacific region. Hence, Hu urged APEC members to continue to deepen cooperation on disaster relief, 'actively conduct policy dialogue, make further efforts to exchange experience and increase technical support,' so as to effectively protect the security of human life and property in this region (Xinhua 2008). In his address he also promised that China would actively support and participate in APEC's efforts at disaster prevention and reduction.

In short, after a number of devastating events such as the SARS crisis and the Sichuan earthquake, concerns centring on freedom from want and sustainable development became a security priority for the Chinese government both in terms of regime stability and international responsibility. China has long been projecting itself as a country that has to tackle frequent natural calamities due to an acute shortage of per-capita resources. The right to life is enunciated as the highest value in China. Those events have encouraged people in China to talk about 'human security,' and to engage in the discursive proliferation of human security. Nonetheless, the Chinese government only promotes and implements certain aspects of human security while excluding other alternatives.

4. GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN EAST ASIA

While human security discourse has emerged from these diverse backgrounds, both China and Japan have struggled to fulfil their leadership ambitions in the international arena.

Japan has made human security a pillar of Japanese foreign policy, which reflects the country's quest to solidify its position as a global 'humanitarian or civilian power' – a new type of great power (Funabashi 1991). Post-Cold War Japan has sought to play a more influential and leading role in international society. Rather than to pursue political leadership through realist means, such as by building military power, Japan has sought to set agendas, act as a norm entrepreneur, and contribute to improving the international order. Ikeda Josuke describes this sort of effort in pursuit of great power status as 'unique and great power' (Ikeda 2009: 205).

According to Ikeda, Japan has sought to achieve great power status through developing its human security policy to contribute to international society. As Ikeda states, 'pre-WWII imperial Japan was surely a great power in a military sense, which was totally abandoned after its defeat in war. Post-war Japan re-directed its course to "occupy an honoured place in international society" through an almost unrivalled economy, yet this was finally condemned as insufficient during the Gulf War period' (ibid., 206). He then notes that it is precisely at this point that Japan found the paradigm of human security useful, because the concept allows Japan to become a 'unique and great power' neither through military means nor money-centred policy. It provides Japan an opportunity to keep Article 9 of its constitution while showing the flag by doing more than just giving money. In this way, Japan can play a more active and perhaps leading role on the world stage without arousing antipathy domestically and internationally.

As for China, its rise has also prompted the Chinese leadership to engage with issues of great power security management, such as contributions to peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and the idea of a 'responsibility to protect.' On the other hand, Western powers have viewed China's international security role as posing a threat to international society, noting, in particular, China's increasing military expenditures, China's historical dominance of the East Asian region, and support for Southeast Asian communist insurgencies during the Cold War. Beijing has sought to counter the 'China threat' thesis by engaging in multilateral diplomacy in the East Asian region and contrasting China's 'peaceful development' with Japanese and Western imperialism. China has attempted to represent itself as a benevolent power in the East Asian region in and through its human security discourse.

Hence, for both China and Japan, the notion of human security is tied to not only achieving great power status but also great power management in terms of justifying intervention in international society. In order to attain great power status, China and Japan face a similar quandary of how to (re-)construct their identity as concerns their self-identification in international society. In other words, China and Japan's self-identification is determined in part by their respective discourse on human security. At the same time, these nascent great powers are challenging the normative boundaries of what constitutes legitimate security engagement and great power management in an international society they increasingly help define. Human security is a key concept through which to explore the transforming dynamics of great power management in the light of intervention in international society by China and Japan. In this vein, human security is related to China and Japan's self-identification as great powers and therefore used to promote realist and neo-realist agendas that secure human beings only as a secondary objective, if at all.

An example of this great power competition can be found in Japan and China's participation in various international events, though the competition is conducted not via a conventional 'hard' or military power, but via a 'soft' or civilian power, i.e. aid programmes. Lam Peng Er's study on Japan's human security role in Southeast Asia describes the competitive relationship between Japan and China in their respective pursuit of great power status in the region. As Er highlights, to deflect the 'China threat' thesis in the region of Southeast Asia, Chinese government officials offered a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to Southeast Asian countries in 2000 and 2001, giving them a stake in the Mainland's rapid economic growth. In response to the Chinese initiative, Japan proposed a comprehensive economic partnership between Japan and Southeast Asia in 2002. Moreover, Japan also declared that it would seek to alleviate poverty and prevent conflict in Aceh, Mindanao, and East Timor. As Er notes, 'The commitment to these conflict or post-conflict areas can be interpreted, in part, as Tokyo's desire to remain relevant and influential in Southeast Asia, notwithstanding China's wooing of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) states' (Er 2006: 142). In addition, according to Er, in order to avoid being left behind by China, Japan in 2003 accepted the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation with Southeast Asian countries during the Japan-ASEAN summit in Tokyo only following the Bali summit earlier in the same year, in which China had signed the same document with Southeast Asia countries. As Er notes,

"Japan had to play catch up in its strategic game with China in Southeast Asia. Against the backdrop of a rising China competing for influence in Southeast Asia – a region deemed by many Japanese to be their economic backyard – human security is a promising approach for Japan to play an active role in the region" (ibid.).

In the context of great power competition in East Asia, the process leading up to the Japanese

government's ratification of the Convention on Cluster Bombs in July 2009 demonstrates various ways in which Japan and China have competed with each other in the international arena. NGOs, such as the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), not only lobbied representatives of the Japanese Ministry of Defence over both the articulation and content of Japan's foreign policy on cluster bomb munitions, but the JCBL also simultaneously endeavoured to position itself as a key actor in the diplomatic negotiations that led to the signing of the Convention on Cluster Bombs in Oslo (Wacker 2009). The Japanese government, in contrast to the JCBL, has avoided engaging with the opprobrious discourse on China, a major producer of cluster bomb munitions that has yet to sign the Convention on Cluster Bombs. The official Japanese position in this case follows an existing trend in Japanese foreign policy, termed 'quiet diplomacy' or the actions of an 'aikido state' (Potter and Sueo 2003), of not pursuing a confrontational stance toward other states on freedom from fear issues. Despite concerns about China's growing military power (Samuels 2007), the Japanese government does not challenge China's self-identification as a benevolent power in the East Asian region in its human security discourse. The authors of this project assert that the Japanese and Chinese positions in this instance can only be understood once the nexus between identity formation and the discourse on human security has been ascertained.

In short, the concept of human security allows Japan and China to fulfil their objectives to play a larger role on the international stage, in pursuit of their respective great power status. Robert Cox, an International Relations theorist, once famously argued that 'theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose.' We therefore need to know, he continued, 'the context in which theory is produced and used; and we need to know whether the aim of the user is to maintain the existing social order or to change it' (Cox 1995: 31). If human security is connected to notions of responsible great power management, as critical security scholars such as Ken Booth (2004) and Alex Bellamy (2003) argue, rather than being a project of emancipation designed to secure humans, human security is merely a means to maintain the status quo in international society, as great powers at the core of international society assert their right to intervene on behalf of humans in a weaker periphery.

In other words, despite state rhetoric incorporating the term human security, the key security referent remains the state, and core interests in international affairs remain national in scope, undermining the security of humanity as a whole. Promoting the emancipation of human beings requires states to encourage dialogue with elements of world society through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), for example, in order to broaden and deepen participation by a range of agents in foreign policy-making on security issues. Such cooperative endeavours between states and non-state actors transform the notion of great power management in international society to consider security issues that go beyond the politically realist-derived orthodoxy.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HUMAN SECURITY REGIME

In conclusion, Japan and China have developed their conceptions of human security in accordance with their respective historical backgrounds, self-identifications, and the pursuit of great power status. Those conceptions of human security are implemented and practised in foreign policies in various events such as the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, the SARS epidemic, the 2005 tsunami in Southeast Asia, and the 2008 Sichuan earthquakes. These social practices/events became a discursive realm that mapped contests and concessions, thereby determining what human security is and who is responsible for securing humans.

This article finally suggests that the regime of international human security ought to be flexible enough to fully accommodate alternative conceptualisations of human security in order to realise its essential purpose: to promote and protect vital human interests. Truly taking the human being as the primary security referent requires cross-cultural communication that is open to different interpretations of what it means to be human and what the 'good life' is. Promoting 'human security' in a way that does not seriously engage with alternative conceptions risks widening misunderstanding and setting the stage for hostility, resulting in the deterioration of the legitimacy of the notion.

This article builds on the work by critical/constructivist scholars by demonstrating the influence of state identity on foreign policy to determine why Japanese and Chinese discourse on human security takes the specific forms it does. Considering East Asian countries' experiences of Western domination and imperialism, a Western discourse of human security imbued with human rights demands and centred on a premise that rising East Asian powers threaten global security is likely to be resisted and rejected. This study therefore contends that international relations theory and practice needs to consider how Japanese and Chinese approaches to securing humans not only differ from those of the 'West,' but also provide valuable alternatives for the 'West' to take seriously.

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