

Abstract

Japan's Public Awareness and Policy Towards China

There was the amicable stance on China until 1994 the diplomatic normalization between two nations in 1972 and the Tianamen Square Protest in 1989. However, Japan's public awareness and policy have dramatically changed into a significantly different attitude since 1995. This paper carefully considers, from four perspectives, the causes of negatively-changing public awareness and policy towards China. The findings are as followings.

To begin with, the change of the policy towards China was driven by a shift in relations among political forces under the situation that political parties and politician claiming the pro-China policies lost their political clout as well as the emergence of 'Chinese Threat' theory used for political purpose. Secondly, the gap in historical awareness between two nations and Yasukuni Shrine issue triggered anti-China sentiment in the wake of the recently-rising nationalistic mood. Thirdly, the groundless anxiety about the contrasting economic reality between two countries was interlinked with political conflicts, prompting the public in Japan to hold more negative perception towards China. Lastly, it is impossible to build up the status quo-maintaining relation because of the race for hegemony caused from reinforcing the political and diplomatic polarization between two nations as well as the China's potential threat.

Key words: Japan, Japan's Public Awareness of China, Japan's Policy of China, Anti-China Sentiment, Hegemonic Race