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研究課題名（和文）Apology and Reconciliation in the Age of Social Media: Reassessing China's Response to Japan's Political Apologies

研究課題名（英文）Apology and Reconciliation in the Age of Social Media: Reassessing China's Response to Japan's Political Apologies

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研究成果の概要（和文）：この研究は、中国社会が戦争と植民地主義に関する日本の国家的な謝罪をどのように捉えているかを探究します。ソーシャルメディアやインタビューから得られたデータに基づいて、中国社会の日本の国家的な謝罪に対する認識を「過激なナショナリスティックな視点」「穏健な視点」「代替的な視点」の3つのタイプに分類します。その結果、日本の未悔悟のイメージが依然として支配的であるものの、過去の謝罪は無駄にされておらず、中国社会においてわずかながらも肯定的な影響を持っていることが明らかになります。ソーシャルメディアは、代替情報へのアクセスや日本の過去の謝罪の記録保存など、このプロセスにおいて重要な役割を果たし続けています。

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

This study articulates how individuals accept or deny state apologies for the past wrongs and questions the representativeness of the state in the process of reconciliation. It reveals that Japan's past apologies have not been made in vain, and have had marginal positive effects in Chinese society.

研究成果の概要（英文）：The 'history problem' has been a long-standing issue affecting the relations between Japan and China. One of the major obstacles to bilateral reconciliation is the negotiation and controversy regarding Japan's state apologies over the past wars and colonialism. This study explores how Chinese society views Japan's state apologies regarding the past wrongs. Based on data obtained from social media and interviews, it categorizes Chinese society's perceptions regarding Japan's state apologies into three types: the radically nationalistic view, the moderate view, and the alternative view. It reveals that although Japan's unrepentant image remains to be dominant, Japan's past apologies have not been made in vain, and have had marginal positive effects in Chinese society. Social media continues to play a key role in this process, such as facilitating access to alternative information and archiving Japan's past apologies.

研究分野：International relations

キーワード：apology the history problem reconciliation Sino-Japanese relations social media

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1 . 研究開始当初の背景

Political apologies over past wrongs have become an emerging norm in the current global politics scenario. While many scholarly works have explored the topic of apologies and reconciliation between states, it continues to occupy a marginal status in International Relations (IR). We have seen some relatively successful cases of apologies in settling past grievances in postwar international relations such as between Germany and its European neighbors; however, if apologies are regarded as hypocritical and insincere, they may create distrust and conflicts between states. Therefore, the questions of whether and how states should make apologies to address historical injustices, and to what extent apologies are effective in reducing conflicts deserve further attention.

As part of such an exploration, this study focuses on the case of Sino-Japanese relations. The ‘history problem’ has been a long-standing thorny issue affecting the relations between Japan and China. One of the major obstacles to bilateral reconciliation is the controversy regarding Japan’s state apologies over the past wars and colonialism. A long-term puzzle is that although there is a record of Japan’s apologies, as in the case of Japan-Korea affairs, they are regarded as insufficient and insincere by China; in turn, China’s dissatisfaction with Japan’s apologies galvanizes the country’s nationalist resentment and distrust toward Japan.

While many studies have investigated how Japan crafts and issues apologies and why it fails to adequately apologize, most of them have only concentrated on state-to-state actions. The state-centric perspective ignores some important variants and nuances in apology politics. It assumes the government as the sole actor and that it holds the monopolized power to accept or deny apologies, but never questions the representativeness of the state in society. It does not look into how social groups and individuals react to apologies. Since conflict and reconciliation are not limited to inter-state relations, what the public thinks and says also matter. Therefore, it is vital to ‘bring the society back’ into the existing understanding of apologies in Sino-Japanese relations.

2 . 研究の目的

This study seeks to challenge conventional wisdom and deepen the understanding of the consequences of state apologies by focusing on China’s *social* response to Japan’s apologies. It ‘brings the society back’ into the study of apologies and incorporates the role of social media, focusing on decentralized grassroots discourse and perception. It intends to explore how Japan’s past state apologies are viewed in Chinese society. For example, do people know of Japan’s past apologies? If they are aware of Japan’s apologies, how do they evaluate these apologies? How do they place state apologies in the bilateral reconciliation?

3 . 研究の方法

This study adopts textual analysis and interviews as research methods.

4 . 研究成果

This study presents a complex picture of China's response to Japan's apologies, contributing to the existing relevant literature. It brings the society back into the study of apologies and articulates the reception and denial of apologies at the social and individual level. It contributes to the understanding of state apologies from Japan to China in the following ways:

First, the empirical data reveals that Japan's past apologies have not been made in vain, and have had marginal positive effects on some groups in the Chinese audience. At least among the informants of this study, partly recognizing Japan's past apologies with varying degrees of dissatisfactions was a typical reaction as opposed to an utter denial of the apologies. There also exist silent minority groups that are completely satisfied with Japan's apologies and which in turn question China's domestic politicization of the history problem. Although the state tries to impose a unified, authoritative response to apologies, there exist different interpretations of apologies in society.

Second, it raises the skepticism regarding to what extent a government can represent its society in responding to apologies. We tend to use government leaders' responses as the criteria to judge the consequences of Japan's apologies and make a simple conclusion that one apology is satisfying or not. Yet, whether an apology is sincere or not also depends on interpretations by social groups and individuals. The recipient state's political manipulation of denying apologies may also cause domestic backlashes. This is true even in authoritarian societies, as this study reveals. In this study, the backlashes against the state are produced by marginalized groups, often in a silent way. Therefore, the consequences of apologies are more uncertain than we conventionally think.

Third, this study grants attention to the role of social media in the process of society's responses to state apologies. In authoritarian societies, social media is perhaps the only channel that can allow for information pluralism. Despite state censorship, some social media platforms in China facilitate access to different information about apologies and Sino-Japanese relations. Different ideological groups interpret information about apologies in divergent ways, and no single voice can monopolize in the age of social media. Additionally, the storage function of social media makes past apologies be remembered. When an apology is made by state representatives, it will be stored and shared on the Internet, having a lasting effect on society.

Fourth, it is worthy of noting that although this study observed some diversity regarding attitudes toward Japan's apologies, the image of Japan being unrepentant remains dominant in Chinese society. Given the entrenched anti-Japanese sentiments, the existence of vocal radical nationalism, and the divided historical views in Japan, it is unrealistic to expect Japan's state apologies to be highly satisfying for Chinese society. Japan's apologies, when made appropriately, could play a marginally positive role in expressing goodwill; however, to enable apologies to facilitate bilateral reconciliation, state cooperation based on shared strategic interests is vital. The social perspective in this article is a complement and refinement, rather than replacement, of the existing state-centric theoretical viewpoint. There is a long way to go before real reconciliation between China and Japan can be achieved. Both sides need to squarely face this issue.

5. 主な発表論文等

〔雑誌論文〕 計0件

〔学会発表〕 計1件（うち招待講演 0件 / うち国際学会 1件）

1. 発表者名 WANG Yi
2. 発表標題 Apology and reconciliation in the age of social media: reassessing China's response to Japan's political apologies
3. 学会等名 International Studies Association Annual Convention 2021 (国際学会)
4. 発表年 2021年

〔図書〕 計0件

〔産業財産権〕

〔その他〕

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6. 研究組織

氏名 (ローマ字氏名) (研究者番号)	所属研究機関・部局・職 (機関番号)	備考
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7. 科研費を使用して開催した国際研究集会

〔国際研究集会〕 計0件

8. 本研究に関連して実施した国際共同研究の実施状況

共同研究相手国	相手方研究機関
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