

오래된 적대, 새로운 접근: 인도의 관점

Old animus, new approach: An Indian View

Vyjayanti Raghavan
Jawaharlal Nehru University

우리는 지역 간의 조화가 지역 평화를 위해 필수 불가결하다는 것을 알고있다. 지역 내의 각 국가가 조화롭게 공존할 수 있는 방법을 배우지 못한다면, 동아시아는 평화를 달성할 수 없다. 코로나 바이러스의 확산은 지역 국가들간의 상호연결성을 더욱 입증하고 있다. 그 어느 때보다도 지역 각국 간의 조화로운 삶이 필수적인 시기가 되었다. 무엇보다, 대한민국과 일본이 서로의 과거를 해결할 방법을 찾는 것이 필수적인 과제 중의 하나로 떠오르게 되었다. 이전과는 다른 관점에서 이 문제에 접근할 수 있는 방법이 있을까?

21세기는 아시아 파워의 시대라는 점은 국제관계 전문가나 학자들 사이에서 널리 인지되고 있는 사실이다. 역사적으로도 아시아는 세계에서 중요한 역할을 담당해 왔으며 18세기 중반까지는 전세계 총 생산량(GDP)의 절반 이상을 차지했었다. 지난 200년 간은 그 세력의 축이 서방으로 옮겨지는 이탈 현상의 시기였다고 여겨진다. 그러나 다시 한번 그 궤도가 변화하고 있다. 만약 이 변화에 스스로 대응하지 못한다면 아시아 국가들은 힘의 중심으로 성장하는 기회를 자본화하거나 잡지 못할 것이다.

지역 간의 조화로운 관계를 가로막는 주요한 장애물들은 지역 내에 속한 국가들 사이의 논쟁들이다. 본 논문은 그 논쟁들을 해결할 방법을 제시하기 이전에, 왜 지금까지 이 논쟁들이 해결될 수 없었는지에 대해서 우선적으로 분석한다. 이를 위해 본 논문은 분석적인 방법론을 채택한다. 나의 분석은 지역 내의 이웃 국가들이 서로 조화를 이루면서 동시에 자국의 이익을 돌보는 삶의 방식이 앞으로 다가올 시대의 질서라는 전제를 기반으로 한다.

전통적으로 한국은 평화로운 상호-공존에 대한 믿음을 가진 국가였다. 한국은 항상 “나름의 삶의 방식이 있다”는 태도를 취하여 왔다. 비록 도교는 중국으로부터 왔지만 한국은 도교 안의 철학을 적절하게 수용했다. 한국에서는 주변 국가들 뿐만 아니라 그 주변 환경 모두와 조화를 이루는 삶에 대한 믿음이 있었다. 이처럼 조화의 철학에 적응하는 국가의 저력을 기반으로 한국은 급속한 진보를 이루면서도 겸손의 미덕을 유지할 수 있었다. 사회적 계급의 아래에 위치하는 사람들에게 손을 뻗으면서도 동시에 사다리의 정상(계급의 위)에 도달할 수 있었다. 한국은 뒤에 있으면서도 선도적인 역할을 맡을 수 있었다. 이제 한국은 세계의 주목 뿐만 아니라 존경까지 받게 되었다.

하지만, 이러한 우수성에도 불구하고 한국이 수용할 수 없었던 혹은 떨쳐 버릴 수 없었던 한 가지 아픔이 있다. 그것은 바로 식민지로서의 과거이다. 식민지 역사에 대해서 잘 알고있는 사람이라면 누구라도 그 이유를 알 것이다. 누군가가 식민지배를 그 당시의 관점에서 보았을 때 어쩌면 꼭 부적절하지만은 않은 하나의 시행으로 인정한다고 하더라도, 식민지배자들은 피식민지배자들을 매우 잔인하게 다루었다는 사실을 부정할 수는 없다. 식민 지배가 한국인들의 자존감에 남긴 무형의 상흔은 겉으로 인지할 수 있는 상처보다 심각한 것이었다. 이 경험은 당연히 한국인들의 영혼에 지워지지 않을 상처를 남겼다.

하지만 두 나라는 이웃 국가이기 때문에, 그리고 오늘날의 시대에는 같은 지역에서 자국의 이익을 추구하는 두 나라가 차이를 인정하고 공존하는 것 뿐만 아니라 조화를 이루고 협력하여 살아가는 길을 찾아야 하기 때문에, 문제에 대한 해결책을 찾는 것이 시급해지고 있다. 이제 그저 “나름의 삶의 방식이 있다”는 태도를 취하는 것으로는 충분하지 않다. 아시아를 세계에서 가장 강한 힘으로 만들기 위해서 각 국은 모든 면에서 조화롭게 협력할 필요가 있다. 이를 실현하기 위해 모든 국가는 그 과거를 먼저 받아들여야 하고 그 과거를 넘어서야 한다.

대한민국은 이전과 다른 접근법을 취하여 일본과의 관계에 있어 주도권을 잡을 수 있을 것인가? 최근 대한민국은 다른 국가들과는 다른 일들을 해낼 수 있다는 것을 세계에 보여주고 있다. 한국은 세계적 전염병의 공황적 초기 단계에 중국과의 국경을 봉쇄하지 않았던 유일한 국가였다. 중국의 가장 우방국인 북한마저 국경을 봉쇄했었다. 대한민국이 그러한 결정을 내렸던 이유는 세계적 전염병은 짧은 시기 안에 끝날 것이지만 국가 간의 관계는 지속될 것이며 그러한 국가간 관계들에 민감하게 대응해야 한다고 느꼈기 때문일 것이다. 이것은 가장 어려운 시기에 한국이 보인 모범 사례 중의 하나이다. 과연 한국은 화해에 있어서도 그 특유의 행보를 보여줄 수 있을 것인가?

*핵심단어 : 화해, 과거사, 식민지 과거, 결단력, 조화로운 공존

Abstract

We are aware that regional harmony is imperative for regional peace. East Asia cannot aspire for peace unless the countries of the region learn to exist harmoniously with each other. Moreover, the spread of the Corona virus also bears testimony to the inter-connectedness of the countries of the region. It has become more essential now than ever before for countries of the region to live in harmony with each other. Therefore, among various other things, one thing that would be essential is for South Korea and Japan to

first find ways of resolving their past. Are there ways in which things can be done differently than before to achieve this?

It is also recognized by experts and scholars of international relations that the 21st century is that of Asian power. Historically too, Asia has been playing a major role in the world and had been contributing more than half of the world's GDP until the mid eighteenth century. The last 200 years are said to be an aberration where the power shifted to the West. There is a course-correction taking place again. The countries of Asia cannot capitalize or grab the opportunity of becoming the hub of power if they do not prepare themselves for it.

The major impediments to harmonious relations in the region are the many contentious issues between nations in the region. This paper analyses why resolution has not been possible so far before suggesting ways of doing it differently. The methodology adopted was an analytical one. The analysis is based on the premise that living harmoniously with the neighbouring countries of the region, while at the same time, taking care of ones interest, would be the order of the coming era.

Traditionally Korea has been a country that believed in peaceful co-existence. Korea has always adopted a 'live and let live' attitude. Though Taoism was a Chinese import, but Korea adapted very well to the philosophy it enshrined. Korea believed in living in harmony with both, its surrounding environment as well as the surrounding countries.

It is this strength of the country to adapt that allowed it to progress by leaps and bounds while it still retained its humility. It has been able to reach out to those on the top of the ladder even while speaking from below. Korea has been able to lead even from behind. Furthermore, it has been able to, not only catch the attention of the world, but also win their admiration.

However, despite all these qualities there is one pain that Korea has not been able to accept or rid itself of. It is that of letting go its colonial past. Anyone familiar with its colonial history would know the reasons. Even if one were to accept that colonialism as a practice was not entirely inappropriate during the times in question but the methods adopted by the colonisers on the victims was most brutal. The intangible injury to Korea's self-respect was graver than the tangible injury it had to face. This has understandably left an indelible mark on its psyche.

But since they are neighbouring countries, and since the current times require that in the self-interest of the countries of the same region they not only learn to co-exist with their differences but find ways to cooperate and live harmoniously, it becomes compelling to find a solution. It is no longer enough to adopt just a 'live and let live' attitude. In order to make Asia the number one power in the world countries need to cooperate harmoniously in every aspect of the term. For that to happen the countries have to first come to terms with their past and then move beyond.

Can South Korea take the lead in its relations with Japan, by doing things differently? Recently South Korea showed to the world that it could do things differently from others. It was the only country that did not shut its borders with China even during the early days of the pandemic when there was a panic. Even North Korea, China's closest ally shut its borders. The reason why South Korea took that decision was because it felt that while the pandemic is short-lived relationships are enduring, and countries have to be sensitive to them. This was a show of sensitivity during the most difficult times. Can Korea attempt a unique way of resolution this time too?

*Keywords : Reconciliation, past history, colonial past, resolution, harmonious co-existence.

We are aware that regional harmony is imperative for regional peace, and regional peace for growth. East Asia cannot aspire for peace unless the countries of the region learn to exist harmoniously with each other. The recent spread of the Corona virus also bears testimony to the inter-connectedness of the countries. With the level of interconnectedness that has happened in the 21st century it is difficult for countries to go back to living in silos. Therefore, it has become more essential now than ever before for countries of a region to live in harmony with each other.

It is also recognized by experts and scholars of international relations that the 21st century is that of Asian power. Historically too, Asia has been playing a major role in the world and had been contributing more than half of the world's GDP until the mid eigh-

teenth century. The last 200 years are said to be an aberration where the power shifted to the West. There is a course-correction taking place again.¹⁾ The countries of Asia cannot capitalize or grab the opportunity of becoming the hub of power if they do not prepare themselves for it.

The major impediments to harmonious relations are the many contentious issues between nations in the region. These need to be resolved. It would be difficult to discuss all. The scope of the paper is to look to resolve the historical differences between Japan and South Korea, which is among the major conflicts hampering a strong regional cooperation in Northeast Asia. It is hoped that once this is resolved then resolution of other smaller differences would follow automatically. The paper tries to find solutions that are different from those tried before.

This paper tries to briefly analyse why resolution has not been possible so far and tries to suggest ways of doing it differently. The analysis is based on the premise that living harmoniously with the neighbouring countries of the region is desirable by all countries, in the coming era, and will be pursued by them while simultaneously taking care of their own interest to the extent possible. However, it needs to be said at the outset that though the problem needs to be addressed by both Japan and South Korea, the researcher makes suggestions for South Korea to take the initiative, to take a leaf from Gandhiji's teachings.

Brief background of the differences between Japan and South Korea

The region of Northeast Asia, comprising largely of China, Japan and the two Koreas, has strong shared historical connections and relationships. They have strong racial and cultural affinity too. Yet, what creates the differences?

While Korea's historical relations with China was that of a tributary state and one of reverence and cooperation in return for protection, but its relations with Japan has been one of conflict throughout history. This is because at various points in the history of the region Japan has been aggressive towards Korea and tried to invade it either to plunder it or to access Manchuria or Mainland China. Even when Japan started expanding, being

an island country it could do so only outwardly.

The Korean peninsula was so placed geographically that it became the first target for Japan. But, on the other hand, due to this very geographical reason Korea also became the mediating country transmitting knowledge and culture from mainland Asia to Japan. Therefore, Korea had always felt at par if not superior to Japan. Japan, on the other hand, was not a part of the Chinese tributary system, but as an adjoining country also sent emissaries and scholars to China to learn medicine, Buddhism, art etc. So the original stock of knowledge and culture for both countries came from the same source though these undertook transformations in each country in their own ways, giving it their uniqueness.

The post WW II period brought Japan and Korea together under the US umbrella. Many scholars are of the view that Korea and Japan, as strong allies of the US, would be better off cooperating and forming a united front along with the US. But I would tend to go with the view that a regional cooperation among the countries of Northeast Asia would be a more desirable and a sustainable one. However, regardless of the format, the outcome has to be one of cooperation between Japan and Korea.

The various controversies that still exist between Korea and Japan, particularly pertaining to the historical past, are issues related to the legality of the annexation treaty itself, the contents of the Japanese history textbook, the compensation package for comfort women and for the forced entrenched labour, visits to the Yasukuni shrine by the Japanese Prime Ministers, and the Dokdo/Takeshima Island ownership. There are others that have risen recently because of these unresolved ones.

Let us briefly touch on these controversies and see the possible ways in which South Korea could handle them. To start from the beginning, it is the forced signing of the Annexation Treaty, which is considered to be illegal, which it was. It was, however, also agreed by both nations later in 1965 that all treaties concluded between the two on or before August 22, 1910 was null and void (the Annexation Treaty was signed on August 22, 1910). So this issue can be considered settled. In any case, it is a historical past, which only reflects the nature of the colonizing party and the methods adopted by the perpetrators then.

Regarding the contents of the history textbook in Japan, the issue certainly needs set-

tlement. History needs to state all facts as they happened. The books are expected to present all aspects of the fact and leave the interpretation of these to the teachers and the readers to debate and argue. A way to ensure a fair representation of facts would be, as has been suggested by scholars before, a collaborative effort towards a jointly written book or at least a joint chapter of that period. Until that happens, the way South Korea can come to terms with the fact that Japan tends to downplay the acts of atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese imperial army in its textbooks, is to take this very act as an admission of guilt by Japan and acknowledgement of their wrong doings. Otherwise why would a country leave out crucial historical facts?

The next issue is regarding the reparations and compensations to be paid by the Japanese government. Since this is the major dispute that flares up time and again it is dealt with in detail later.

Regarding the visits to the Yasukuni shrine, President Abe of the conservative LDP party has been particularly insensitive towards this issue. Hopefully the new Prime Minister, Suga, even though groomed under the Abe administration, would be more sensitive and refrain from such acts. The minimum that the Japanese leadership could ensure is that the historical facts are also stated correctly at these sites. If governments understand the need for good relationship with neighbours, for the larger good of the region, then they need to be sensitive to the sentiments of the people in the region and take corrective measures. But that is for the Japanese government to decide. The South Korean government could take the wind out of the Japanese sails by ignoring what happens in Japan. The Japanese Prime Ministers, hopefully, will then find this act bearing little fruit domestically, and therefore refrain.

This is the moral high ground that the researcher suggests South Korea to take.

For the territorial dispute of Dokdo/Takeshima, the only way forward is for an international organization to monitor it and ensure that there is joint collaboration and exploration of the region. The cost of maintaining coast guards then would be greatly reduced and the resources can be used fruitfully elsewhere.

All the above cases certainly need the cooperation of both the parties, in this case – Japan and Korea. But the paper makes suggestions only for South Korea to take the initiative of forgiving, forgetting and moving on. By doing so it will put itself on a higher ped-

estal by adopting a moral high ground and thus set itself as an example for the world

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Expressions and Actions so far of Regret and Forgiveness

Japan and Korea have time and again tried to move beyond these differences and co-exist. In spite of many attempts at reconciliation the matter invariably returns to square one between the two. The differences then permeate into other areas, as has been seen recently, where differences over historical issues affected both economic as well as strategic relations. However, now a time has come where co-existence is no longer the desired end product. Co-existing would merely mean absence of war and friction, but the two countries now need to move beyond, to a state of acceptance that would provide peace of mind for them to cooperate productively and make an impact regionally and globally.

The basic issue that raises its head ever so frequently is the issue of compensation for the comfort women and forced labour engaged by Japan during the colonial period. Attempts at reconciliation and resolution of these have been made in the past.

The first attempt was the Basic Treaty of Friendship between the two countries signed on June 22, 1965. This was the outcome of bilateral talks between the two parties that lasted from October 1951 to June 1965. This could not be made part of Article 14 of the Treaty of San Francisco where redress for actions committed by Japan during and before WW II were sought, because Korea was not a signatory state of the treaty. So this had to be negotiated separately between Korea and Japan. This long negotiated separate treaty not only established diplomatic relations between the two but was also for the settlement of property and other claims by the citizens and nations of the two countries, and for economic cooperation between the two. This was signed in Tokyo on June 22, 1965, and registered there on December 15, 1966.

Under the Agreement Japan paid USD 300 million as economic aid, USD200 million as loan, and a further USD 300 million as loan to private trusts. In retrospect this was a grossly under-calculated sum. The fault lay with the negotiators from both sides. However, most of these funds were used wisely by the Park Chung-hee administration for the economic development of the country, like setting up of the Pohang iron and Steel

Industry, the Soyang dam, the Gyeongbu Expressway etc. The treaty had a clause that says that all problems concerning the property, claims and interests of the two contracting parties stand settled “completely and finally.” It is most unfortunate the issue of the “comfort women” was not even discussed under it as these issues were not in the public sphere then. This was clearly an oversight then and a lost opportunity.

Then there was the Kono statement of 1993, which was an apology statement made by the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yonei Kono on behalf of the Japanese government on the issue of the “comfort women”. It was an undiluted acknowledgement of the wrong doings by the Japanese military, both directly and indirectly, in the recruitment of operators and also in the operation of comfort stations. It also acknowledged the miserable state the women had to live in and also the physical and psychological injury to their dignity. They agreed to face the historical facts and sincerely treat them as lessons of history, never to be repeated again. They acknowledged that it was incumbent on them to see how best to express their sentiment.

Following this, the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF) was set up in Japan in 1995 where funds were collected as “atonement” money to be distributed along with the Prime Minister’s signed apology. But this again, was not considered to be good enough as the money was a voluntary contribution from public and private corporations. It was criticized because it was said to be a non-official compensation. In other words, it was not considered as official reparation. Moreover, the apology note was read as one issued by a leader as his personal statement and not accompanied by a cabinet or Diet resolution.

Next was the Murayama statement of 1995 issued by the Prime Minister of Japan on 15th August 1995, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of WW II. It was a reiteration of the Kono statement and a clear statement of remorse, regret and apology of all the wrong doings that Japan had indulged in in the neighbourhood. It seemed a statement issued with an intention of moving forward with peace and co-operation in the region. Similarly, the statement issued years later by Prime Minister Kan in 2010 where he acknowledged the damage and sufferings caused during the colonial rule and expressed deep remorse and heartfelt apology.

Then there is Comfort Women Agreement of December 28, 2015, a deal reached between the Abe administration and the Park Geun-hye governments. As per the agree-

ment the Japanese government apologized and agreed to contribute one billion yen to a fund to support the victims who are still alive.

Thus there have been several instances when apology was expressed but the issue remains unresolved.

Issues and Possible Ways of Resolution

In all these negotiations the expectations of fairness have been different for the two parties. Japan has felt that expression of regret and payment of reparations was a fair step that it took. Korea on the other hand, has felt that just the acceptance of wrongdoings or just settlement by way of reparations is not good enough if the spirit of the apology is not withheld by subsequent administrations. If the parties get caught in the different aspects of justice, of which there are many,²⁾ then there can be no concluding resolution. It would be no different an approach from the one that has been followed until now.

Settlements regarding compensations have been reached between the leaders of the two countries in the past. It is a fact that the terms when negotiated in 1965 were done under a restrained atmosphere of having the US in the background.³⁾ But once agreements are reached and accepted they need to be respected, regardless of how underestimated the cost has been and what issues get left out as an oversight. It needs to be recognized that in democratic nations the public sentiments matter and are very difficult to assuage. There have been backlashes in both countries regarding these agreements. But, nevertheless, these agreements are arrived at after due deliberations and signed by official representatives of both governments, elected by the people. It is in the interest of both parties to consider the matter closed. If not, then there will remain no sanctity of official agreements or of the office of the elected representatives of governments. Moreover, each time the issue is discussed it only reopens old wounds of the people, resulting in worsening of relations between the two countries.

Again, a statement issued by an elected leader of the government should be treated as an official statement. To demand that it be passed as a parliamentary resolution of apology in the perpetrating country is not an easy matter. In order to get such a reso-

lution passed in the Japanese Diet would involve getting a majority vote in favour of it and would depend on the composition of the members. Members of a parliament collectively tend to become more nationalistic and do not want to be seen individually letting down the government. Moreover, the opposition party becomes an impediment to arriving at a consensus.

South Korea could possibly now take the moral high ground by writing off the balance of the funds it feels is due. The adoption of this attitude is sure to shame the perpetrators. It could create a feeling of guilt and shame amongst them. There is, certainly, the danger of the South Korean government having to incur the indignation and wrath of its people. It will depend on the incumbent government how best it handles it. A suggestion is made later in the paper.

Yet another way to look at this issue would be to calculate the economic loss the two governments would face because of the stalled economic relations or disruption of the supply chains (like what happened recently). This is likely to be greater than the delayed compensation received or paid, as the case may be. Therefore, writing off the balance could be one way of cutting the losses and moving ahead. Japan could also think of diverting some of the money saved this way to paying compensation to the victims.

In the case of Japan, once their Prime Ministers had acknowledged wrong doings and apologized, it is incumbent on subsequent leaders to keep the spirit of the written letter. Visiting the Yasukuni shrine and revering the 'Class A' war criminals should not take place, and should not at any cost be publicised. This is gross insensitivity with an eye only on elections. It has been pointed out by analysts who study election results that these issues in the final account play very little role in the outcome.

The suggestion made is that it might now do both the governments good to publicise and circulate those statements made by the higher Japanese authorities amongst the people of the two countries. This would help refresh the public memory of the unstinted apology offered and the sense of remorse expressed by the Government of Japan at various times. This might help to keep matters in check..

Possible Alternative Way Forward

Traditionally Korea has been a country that has believed in peaceful co-existence. Whether it was due to its tendency to live as a hermit nation or whether it was because of its size, Korea has always adopted a 'live and let live' attitude. Though Taoism was a Chinese import, but Korea adapted very well to the philosophy it enshrined. Korea believed in living in harmony with both, its surrounding environment as well as the surrounding countries. It observed nature and adopted its humility and also accepted its contours. It has never been in favour of invading countries even when the peninsula was a united whole and was a sizeably large country under one of its ancient kingdoms (Goguryeo, 37 B.C.E – 668 C.E), when it held huge parts of Manchuria and Mongolia.

As an ally of the US and because of the Defence Agreement signed between the two countries the few times South Korea has been involved in the battles abroad, like the Vietnam War or the US invasion of Iran have been under duress and because of the commitment under this agreement. As a consequence, it has also had to face a lot of backlash from its citizens because of the collateral damage.

One of Korea's many strengths is to adapt to the surroundings, be it a situation or the environment. It is this strength that has allowed it to progress by leaps and bounds while it has still retained its humility. It has been able to reach out to those on the top of the ladder even while speaking from below. In other words, Korea has been able to lead even from behind. Both, its role as a middle power in the G 20, or its initiatives in the South-South cooperation in Southeast Asia,⁴⁾ are cases in point. Furthermore, it has been able to, not only catch the attention of the world, but also win their admiration through its very responsible conduct. Even though a small nation in size it has grown so much in stature that it is being considered as a special invitee to the upcoming G 7 meeting along with Russia, Australia and India.

It is therefore painful to see that despite all these qualities there is one wound under which Korea is still hurting. It is the wound of its colonial past. Anyone familiar with its colonial history would know that asking it to be forgiving towards a power that has inflicted so much pain is perhaps not right. Even if one were to accept that colonialism as a practice was not entirely inappropriate during the times in question but the methods adopted by the colonisers on the victims was most brutal. It is now apparent that the intangible injury to Korea's self-respect has been graver than the tangible injury it had to

face. This is what has made and left an indelible mark on its psyche.

But now it is 75 years since Japan physically left the Korean soil. As neighbouring countries, and also since the current times require that they resolve their differences, cooperate and further the cause of the region becoming a future world power, it is compelling to find a resolution. It is no longer enough to adopt just a 'live and let live' attitude. Countries of Northeast Asia need to cooperate harmoniously in every aspect of the term for peace in the region. Forgetting past issues and resolving never to commit any again is a way forward. Japan has done its share of forgetting the past and moved on in its relations with the US, and has stood to gain greatly from it. It needs to continue with the spirit of Article 9 of its constitution. The US too has gained by making amends and investing in its relations with Japan.

Can South Korea take the lead in its relations with Japan, by doing things differently? Recently South Korea showed to the world that it could do things differently from others. It was the only country that did not shut its borders with China even during the early days of the pandemic when there was a panic. Even North Korea, China's closest ally shut its borders. The reason why South Korea took that decision was because it felt that while the pandemic is short-lived relationships are enduring, and countries have to be sensitive to them. This was a show of sensitivity during the most difficult times. Can Korea attempt a unique way of resolution this time too?

Suggestions

There has been various literature on ways of arriving at resolutions of conflicts between countries. Article 33 of UN Charter too talks of the following points:

negotiation, conciliation, seeking mediation, enquiry, arbitration and judicial settlement; and, of course, the role of the United Nations.

But the suggestion here is not any of those mentioned above but to adopt a moral high ground of forgiveness, thereby putting the other party on the defensive. This was a method that Gandhiji adopted and stood to gain from.

Once South Korea resolves to do that, a way forward could be a more pragmatic solu-

tion. Amongst the steps mentioned by the UN charter the inevitable and indispensable steps would be:

- (i) Negotiations: This is a most necessary element for any kind of resolution. Unless Japan and Korea sit across the table it would not be possible to either lay down the issues that bother the parties or find a resolution
- (ii) Conciliation: Again, for the success of this the foremost ingredient would be that the two countries are inclined towards a resolution of the issue. If the will is there then the way forward can be found. Both parties need to make concessions that have not been made earlier. If not, then the wheels will just keep spinning in the same place like one stuck in a slush pit.
- (iii) Seek Mediation: If the two countries so desire then the help of a mediating country, which is neutral and has no axe to grind in the final outcome, can be sought. The role of the mediator would be merely to ensure that the talks do not get derailed because of strong emotional outbursts. The mediating country could also be the venue for the negotiations, publicizing the outcome, and maintaining a record of the proceedings. One possible country that could take on this mantle is India, which has cordial relations with both these countries and has no personal benefits accruing from the outcome.

In order to create an atmosphere that is conducive for such meetings what is it that South Korea can do? Ways of dealing with the historical issues have been discussed earlier in the paper. But as a practical first step it would be a magnanimous gesture of the Korean government to resume invitations to Japanese artists for a cultural performance in Korea. The pop culture artists are very popular in both countries. As has been universally noted art and culture are effective resources in building peace. These would be the icebreakers or CBMs for the next step. The government needs to be involved in it and not merely private parties, for the following reasons. Firstly, it would provide credibility to the initiative and secondly, they are the only body that have the kind of resources required for their promotion. Lastly, only government backing can ensure the sustainability of these programs.

Hopefully such steps will help transform historical hatred and mistrust between the two parties to one of trust, calmness and peace of mind, and Asia could really work its way towards becoming the world's 'numero uno' power.

NOTE

- 1) This was a point made by Kishore Madhubani, a Singaporean civil servant, a career diplomat and an academician during his talk at the Seoul Defense Dialogue 2020 Virtual Seminar (Day 1), conducted by ROK Ministry of National Defense (Sept.1-3,2020)
- 2) Refer to "Different Approaches to Reconciliation", p. 37, available at https://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/pdfs/publications/Creative_Approaches.pdf
- 3) Refer Yoo Euy-sang, "1965 Korea-Japan agreement should be re-estimated", available at <http://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/History/view?articleId=134245>
- 4) Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC) initiative is particularly noteworthy. As a founding member of the PECC, South Korea played a key role in liberalizing trade networks throughout the entire Pacific region.