



Japan-China Relations:

All about *Gyoza*: Almost all the Time

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While Japanese and Chinese political leaders and diplomats worked to build the mutually beneficial strategic relationship and to advance the spring visit of China's President Hu Jintao, both sides found it hard going. The safety of imported Chinese *gyoza* (dumplings) became a major issue as reports of food poisoning of Japanese became front-page news in early February. Responsibility for the poisoning, whether the result of the manufacturing process in China or deliberate action by individuals after the *gyoza* left the factory, became the center of contention. Health Ministry and public safety officials in both countries pledged cooperation in resolving the issue but failed to identify the cause, while retreating to positions that attributed responsibility to the other side.

At the same time, expectations for a resolution of the East China Sea dispute before the Hu visit, raised during the visit by Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo to China in December, faded. By mid-March, both sides were taking the position that resolution should not be linked to a previously anticipated April cherry-blossom visit. Scheduling problems, failure to resolve the East China Sea dispute, and the *gyoza* controversy, combined to push the visit back to an early May, post-Golden Week time frame.

The new year: policies, trends, and concerns

In his address to the opening session of the 169th session of the Diet, Foreign Minister Komura Masahiko told the Diet that Japan will work to establish a "mutually beneficial relationship on common strategic interests" with China. Noting that 2008 marks the 30th anniversary of the Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship as well as the Japan-China Youth Exchange Friendship Year, Komura committed Japan to a "build-up of dialogues and exchanges across a broad array of fields while making efforts to resolve outstanding issues."

2007 marked another banner year in Japan-China economic relations. After replacing the U.S. as Japan's largest trading partner in 2006, Finance Ministry's preliminary report on 2007 indicated that, for the first time on a calendar year basis, China, including Hong Kong, had replaced the U.S. as Japan's biggest export market. Exports to China hit ¥17.4 trillion, surpassing the ¥16.9 trillion of exports to the U.S. Exports to China and Hong Kong surged 19 percent while exports to the U.S. declined 0.2 percent.

At the same time, China's surging economy was becoming a matter of increasing concern. The Jan. 8 editorial in the *Tokyo Shimbun*, "Thoughts on the 'China Problem' at the beginning of the Year," called attention to the fact that China's economy, should it continue to grow at current rates, "is certain to surpass the size of the Japanese economy in the near future." Notwithstanding China's primacy as a trading partner for Japan, the editorial expressed the view that "Japan-China relations and the future of China and the world around it warrant no optimism." Citing China's double-digit increases in defense spending over the past 19 years, its lack of transparency, the degradation of its environment and potential instability, the editorial argued that "The 'China Problem' associated with its rapid development and its growing national power has surfaced as the toughest challenge of the 21st century for its neighbors."

On Jan. 16, Foreign Minister Komura hosted a Japan-Mekong ministerial meeting, involving counterparts from Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma. At the meeting, Japan committed to providing the Mekong countries with \$40 million in non-reimbursable aid to address poverty and to provide for the construction of infrastructure and distribution networks. Japan also committed to increasing official development assistance (ODA) to the five countries over the next five years as well as hosting approximately 10,000 students and trainees beginning this year. At the same time, Japan's Vice Minister of Defense Masuda Kohei visited Malaysia Jan. 22-23 for talks aimed at increasing defense exchanges with member states of ASEAN. The *Nikkei Shimbun* also reported that Japan is contemplating periodic defense ministerial meetings with ASEAN as well as participation in the ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting in 2010. Both the *Nikkei* and the *Sankei Shimbun* portrayed the economic and security initiatives as steps aimed at countering China's growing influence in Southeast Asia. In mid-March, the *Nikkei* reported that Japan and China had agreed to a low-level dialogue on policy toward Southeast Asia and Africa, including ODA programs.

On Feb. 10, Komura addressed the subject of Asian security at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. To enhance regional stability and prosperity, Komura advocated increasing transparency to build relations of trust and confidence in both political and military fields. In this context, Komura called attention to China's continuing military expansion and areas where it lacks transparency. If it continues, China's lack of transparency would only increase security concerns in the region. Turning to bilateral relations with China, Komura explained that both countries are committed to advancing a mutually beneficial strategic relationship

On March 4, China released a military budget of \$45 billion for 2008, marking 20 consecutive years of double-digit increases in defense spending. In contrast, Japan's draft military budget for 2008 calls for a 0.5 percent decrease over 2007. China's military spending in 2007 surpassed that of Japan for the first time, and as the *Sankei Shimbun* pointed out, with the 2008 budgets "the disparity is only widening."

East China Sea

Early in the new year, *NHK* broadcast an interview with Foreign Minister Komura during which he expressed hope that the long-running issue concerning gas exploration rights in the East China Sea would be resolved before President Hu Jintao would visit Japan in the spring. China Ambassador to Japan Cui Tian-kai shared Komura's hopes, telling the press that two sides "are making progress" and that he was hopeful that "we will arrive at a solution well before Hu's visit." Cui thought it possible to advance a "practical formula" that would allow for joint development without ceding territorial or legal claims. From contacts on both sides, he was "optimistic."

In working-level talks during Prime Minister Fukuda's December visit to China, Beijing advanced a proposal for joint development in areas near Japan's claimed mid-term boundary. In Tokyo, a Japanese diplomat characterized the Chinese proposal as a "huge step" toward Japan's proposal for joint development in areas that straddled the mid-line, one that implicitly acknowledged the Japanese position on the mid-line boundary. At the same time, China dropped previous proposals to develop areas around the disputed Senkaku (Diaoyutai) Islands or in areas along the Okinawa trough closer to Japan's home islands. The "bottom line" for the Japanese diplomat was that "they have come much closer to the Japanese view." While recognizing the ambiguity of the Chinese position, which would provide Beijing with deniability regarding territorial claims, he observed that "they are fully aware of the steps they have taken."

On Jan. 17, newly appointed Administrative Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka Mitoji told the *Nikkei Shimbun* that "We'd like to settle the issue if we can, without waiting for President Hu to visit Japan." He went on to say that the two sides had been "negotiating quite hard," that "mutual understanding has been deepening," and that "we're now talking with each other in a sincere manner."

On Feb. 5, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that the Fukuda government advanced a new proposal for joint exploration of two of the four natural gas fields, Shirakaba (Chunxiao) and Kashi (Taiwaitian). With a settlement involving all four fields and agreement on boundary lines not considered practical, Tokyo focused on a two-step process, which a Japanese diplomat involved in the negotiations thought was "more feasible."

However, hopes for progress in Tokyo were dialed back in mid-February, when Beijing, in advance of bilateral talks scheduled for the end of the month, announced that China did not want to tie resolution of the East China Sea issue to President Hu's visit to Japan. On Feb. 22-23 Vice Minister Yabunaka visited China and met with his counterpart, Vice Minister Wang Yi, in search of a breakthrough. On Feb. 26, Foreign Minister Komura told reporters that resolution of the issue is "not necessarily tied to President Hu's visit to Japan." Later, the *Sankei Shimbun* reported that at some point in the bilateral talks, when Japan had proposed taking the dispute to the International Court for adjudication, a "high ranking" Chinese government official admitted that "Japan would probably win its case." The Chinese official was reported as saying that losing to Japan in international adjudication could not be allowed.

Meanwhile, the LDP's Special Committee on Ocean Policy met on Feb. 21 to discuss the government's draft plan on ocean policy. With regard to gas exploration rights in the East China Sea, the draft noted that "problems have been caused over resource development because areas asserted by the other side straddle the Japan-claimed exclusive economic zone." The diplomatic language did not go down well with many who attended the meeting. One LDP member observed "The key point of how to protect Japan's rights and interests in the East China Sea is not included." Also at issue was the vague reference to "the other side," which drew a comment that the government gave "excessive consideration to China in drafting the plan."

Responding to the LDP's concerns, Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura said that while he did not think it was significant whether individual countries were named, "the issues raised by the LDP would be addressed frankly and, if necessary, the points that should be revised, would be revised." On March 3, the Cabinet adopted the Basic Plan on Ocean Policy aimed at continuing development and commercialization of the ocean's resources, strengthening controls to deal with intrusion of foreign ships, and protection of the environment. The reference to "other countries," which troubled some LDP members, survived in the final document, but language referring to securing Japan's "interests" was included.

From March 22-24, the LDP's former Secretary General Nakagawa Hidenao accompanied by former Defense Minister Koike, visited China and met Tang Jiaxuan and Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi to exchange views on the East China Sea.

Advancing the Hu visit

On Feb. 18, the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo announced that State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan would visit Japan Feb. 20-24 and meet Prime Minister Fukuda and Foreign Minister Komura to discuss details of Hu's anticipated spring visit to Japan. Tang also took up the increasingly contentious dispute over poisoned *gyoza* imported from China. With Fukuda, Tang proposed the building of a liaison structure that would provide for cooperation to ensure food safety, which Fukuda defined as "a matter of grave concern for both countries." Tang also said that both sides should "not let this incident affect Japan-China relations as a whole" and pledged that China would deal with the issue "in a responsible manner." Later, in a meeting with Democratic Party of Japan President Fukushima Mizuho, Tang acknowledged that the *gyoza* incident was a "serious matter" and offered his apologies. Tang said that China is carrying out a "thorough examination" and "with Japan will carry out reciprocal investigation."

Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura observed that the purpose of Tang's visit was to make wide-ranging preparations for the Hu visit. While there were many things to be discussed, not all could be taken up in Hu's meeting with the prime minister. For example, there were discussions over adulterated food and the East China Sea, which were best left to the working level or senior officials. Discussions with the prime minister should be conducted from a high strategic perspective.

The *Mainichi Shimbun* reported that Tang had sounded out Japanese officials on the prospects for a Hu visit starting on April 20. In response, the government began preparations that would include an audience with the emperor and a speech at Tokyo University. On Feb. 29, Foreign Minister Komura told reporters that he did not think the dates of the Hu visit would be determined by any findings from the ongoing *gyoza* investigations. On March 4, Fukuda took a similar line. However, the next day the *Sankei Shimbun* reported a senior government official had expressed his concern that the *gyoza* dispute would not produce a welcoming environment in Japan and would lessen by 50 percent the results of the pending visit.

Meanwhile, the dispute over the poisoned dumplings intensified, with each side accusing the other of being at fault, either in not accepting responsibility for the incident or failing to use proper testing methods in their respective investigations. At the same time, the government's calendar began to fill up. Korea's newly elected President Lee Myung-bak was scheduled to stop in Tokyo April 21-22 on his return from Washington. Soon the press was reporting that Hu's visit would be postponed until mid-May.

On March 4, when asked about Hu visiting Japan during the cherry blossom season, Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura replied that the cherry trees bloom in February on Okinawa and in May on Hokkaido; he assured reporters that Hu would visit Japan at an "appropriate time." Two days later, Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei told the *Yomiuri Shimbun* that "May was still springtime." Wu went on to say that the leadership in both countries is engaged in developing 21st-century relations from a long-term, strategic perspective" and the *gyoza* incident would not affect this effort. Wu observed that in both countries investigative efforts were underway and that it was premature to judge the results of the investigations.

Meeting with the Japanese press at the Chinese embassy on March 11, Ambassador Cui, touching on the East China Sea issue and the *gyoza* controversy, said that their resolution should not be linked to the pending Hu visit. While expressing his understanding that that the *gyoza* incident had nothing to do with food safety but was the result of human actions, the ambassador acknowledged that Chinese and Japanese police authorities had yet to determine the source of the incident. As for the delay in announcing the schedule for the visit, the ambassador asserted that it had "no relation" to the outstanding issues and, in all likelihood, would be released shortly.

Tibet and the Hu visit

In mid-March, unrest in Tibet played into Japan-China relations. Concern with the safety of Japanese citizens in Tibet caused the Japanese embassy in Beijing to request a visa to allow diplomats to travel to Lhasa. The Chinese Foreign Ministry, however, turned down the request on the grounds that Tibet was a domestic issue. Foreign Minister Komura told the Upper House Budget Committee that it will be difficult for diplomats to gain entry into Tibet, even if foreign citizens suffered no injury there.

Tibet also played into the planning for the Hu visit. At a March 17 news conference, Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka told the press that “Basically, the riots have nothing to do with the visit.” An unidentified official involved in the planning of the Hu visit was quoted in the *Yomiuri* as saying “We don’t want to make waves at this point in time in connection with relations with China.” But, on March 18, Fukuda expressed his concern and asked that both the Chinese authorities and those participating in the demonstrations act in a calm and appropriate manner. Foreign Minister Komura took a more critical position. While acknowledging the unrest was an “internal problem,” he thought it “only natural for the international community to take interest in human rights issues.” He said China should be “more transparent about its own account, as well.”

The Japanese media asked if Tibet would be raised during the Hu visit. When Komura indicated that it would be, the press asked Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura what message he would like Japan to send. He replied that “if that’s what the foreign minister has indicated, that’s the way it will be. Beyond that I’m not thinking about any specific message.” Meanwhile, Komura made it clear that Japan would not boycott the Beijing Olympics, but that he would like to see the Olympics produce behind the scene results.

In Beijing, during a March 20 press conference, the Foreign Ministry’s deputy spokesperson said that he had not heard talk that Tibet would influence the Hu visit. The visit would take place in early May, and, “as long as there was no thought in Japan to turn Tibet into a new obstacle in China-Japan relations, planning was likely to move ahead smoothly.”

The Hu visit again drew political attention at a March 24 meeting of the Upper House Budget Committee, when the prime minister was asked if Tibet would be a discussion topic during the Hu visit. Fukuda replied that he “wanted to work to build a relationship in which the two countries could discuss issues frankly, if a frank exchange of views should prove to be necessary.” Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura, when asked whether Tibet would come up during the April 17-21 visit of China’s foreign minister, replied that he was not at all thinking that the topic should be completely left off the agenda.

Gyoza

On Jan. 31, Deputy Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei met in Tokyo with Foreign Minister Komura. Among the issues discussed was food safety. In Chiba, a family fell ill after eating *gyoza* imported from China, and the *gyoza* issue came to dominate Japan’s front pages in early February. The *gyoza* were found to contain a high-level of the pesticide methamidophos, at levels 100 to 400 times greater than that allowed under Japanese health standards for imported Chinese cabbage, indicating that it was not residue from cultivation but had been introduced during the production or distribution process.. Police in Hyogo prefecture reported a 3 millimeter hole in a package of dumplings that caused the family to become ill after eating. On Feb. 2, *Kyodo News* reported 1,088 cases of claimed poisoning in 38 of Japan’s Prefectures.

The suspect *gyoza* packages were traced to Tianyang Foods located in Hebei province, where they were produced on Oct. 1 and Oct. 20, 2007. Beijing carried out a preliminary inspection of the factory site, but found no evidence of pesticides. At the same time, Tainyang was ordered to cease production and to recall its products from both domestic and foreign markets. The suspect *gyoza* was imported into Japan by JT Foods, a subsidiary of Japan Tobacco. Japan's Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare Masuzone Yoichi announced "This is a life-threatening matter" and told consumers to "please check your refrigerator and never eat the food products." Sales of Chinese food products plummeted in Japan.

In China, Cheng Fang, head of the Hebei Inspection and Quarantine Bureau, told a press conference that the factory did not use the pesticide found in the suspect dumplings. Samples were taken of dumplings produced within 11 days of the Oct. 1 and Oct. 21 dates and "no problems" were found in either the ingredients or production process. Investigations would continue to find out "how the harmful pesticide found its way into the product...."

On Feb. 3, Beijing dispatched a five-man team of experts to Japan, led by Li Chunfeng, vice director of the Import and Food Safety Bureau at the General Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine. Li told reporters that "by cooperating closely with the Japanese side, we would like to swiftly reach a scientific conclusion." In the meantime, Li called for "objective and fair reporting" from the media. The next day, Li's team met with officials from Japan's Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry and Cabinet office. Hotta Shigeru, a senior official from the Cabinet office, emphasized the importance of bringing the issue "under control immediately, as it has become a major public concern in Japan." Both sides underscored their interest in cooperating to produce an early resolution of the matter.

After three rounds of talks with Japanese officials, Li told reporters at a joint press conference that he believed that the dumplings had been contaminated during distribution and not at the Tainyang factory. Li asserted that the factory's strict quality control measures made it almost impossible to have introduced the pesticide during the production process. Li again spoke to the safety of Chinese products, noting 1 billion Chinese would eat *gyoza* during the Chinese New Year celebration and that he would be one of them.

On Feb. 5, Foreign Minister Komura told the Upper House Budget Committee that, while a firm conclusion had not yet been reached regarding responsibility for the incident, an investigation team would be dispatched to China to assist in identifying the source of the problem. That same day, Yoneda Tsuyoshi, director general of the Criminal Affairs Bureau of the National Policy Agency made clear that it was "necessary for us to cooperate with China and announced that efforts at coordination had been put in motion. Nevertheless, the *Mainichi Shimbun* quoted a senior policy official as saying "I wonder to what extent Chinese authorities will disclose to Japan information disadvantageous to their country." On Feb. 6, the Japanese inspection team, headed by Taiji Harashima, of the Cabinet office's Consumer Policy Division toured the Tainyang factory. Afterwards,

he told reporters that “the factory was clean and well kept” and that the team “did not find any problems during our tour.” And so, the mystery deepened.

On Feb. 10, Finance Minister Fukushima Nukaga met his Chinese counterpart Xie Xuren during the meeting of the G-7 finance ministers. Both agreed that the *gyoza* issue should not be allowed to harm accelerating favorable trends in the bilateral relationship. Meanwhile, reports of contaminated *gyoza* packages, some with small holes in the packaging, others with a slick residue coating on the surface, continued to pour in from across Japan. After reviewing reports of hospitalization from possible food poisoning, Japanese health officials confirmed that the number of people who had suffered from organophosphate poisoning stood at 10.

In China Vice Minister Wei Chuanzhong of the General Administration of Quality Supervision Inspection and Quarantine told reporters that in the process from production through export the possibility of someone contaminating the *gyoza* was “exceedingly small.” Wei also said that inspections at the factory site had failed to yield any clues as to the cause of the incident. Beijing labeled Japanese assertions that the pesticide had been deliberately introduced in China as “unscientific” and “irresponsible.” Looking at declining production figures, the Tianyang factory manager, after again rejecting the possibility that the pesticide was introduced at the factory, asserted that those who suffered overwhelming loss were his employees.

On Feb. 21-22, Japanese and Chinese officials met in Tokyo to exchange information. Asked to comment on Japanese judgments that there was “almost no possibility” of the *gyoza* being adulterated in Japan, a Chinese official was quoted as saying that it was too early to reach that conclusion. Similar exchanges marked the Feb. 25-27 visit to Beijing by Ando Katshuharu, the vice director of Japan’s National Policy Agency, with the Chinese sticking to the line that the possibility of the pesticide being introduced in China was “exceedingly small.” The visit, however, did produce agreement between police authorities to cooperate toward an early resolution of the issue, to exchange information and evidence to accelerate the investigations, and to work in strict confidence.

Despite expressions of cooperation and good intention, the situation soon deteriorated after Ando’s return to Tokyo. On Feb. 28, Yu Xinmin, a high-level investigator in the Public Security Ministry, announced that after extensive tests, inspections, and interviews at the factory site “We believe there is little chance of putting methamidophos into the dumplings in China.” The Chinese police believed that the incident was not result of “tainted raw materials” but “caused by man-made factors.” While refraining from saying whether he thought the pesticide had been introduced in Japan and acknowledging that the Japanese police thought it “highly unlikely,” Yu went on to say “we have convincing evidence supporting our conclusion and so do the Japanese police.” He also alleged a lack of cooperation from the Japanese police, saying “we regret the police authorities of Japan not only refused our request to inspect the scene and the relevant material evidence...but also gave no comprehensive introduction on how they collected and examined the evidence.”

In Tokyo, National Police Chief Hiroto Yoshimura replied “We have provided all the documents that we thought would be helpful to China and I do not understand why I have to hear the word regret.” As for evidence requested by China, Yoshimura explained that “we are ready to provide them if a request is filed by the Chinese side in order to identify the suspect and build a criminal case.”

Asked about the Chinese position on pesticide introduction, Fukuda told reporters on the evening of the Feb. 28 that China’s willingness to cooperate with Japan in a thorough investigation was “very forward looking.” The prime minister thoroughly felt that China too wanted to find the cause of the incident and those responsible for it. Earlier, looking toward the Hu visit, Machimura said that he wanted the Chinese side to understand that it was necessary to cooperate to make it a success. Addressing Chinese complaints about Japan’s cooperation in the *gyoza* investigation, Machimura replied “China is not producing documents which Japan can trust.”

In addition to not being able to determine where the pesticide was introduced, questions also arose on the results of the testing done by both sides, which produced different conclusions. China’s Public Security Ministry said that after extensive testing of the pesticide and the plastic bags used in packaging, China’s conclusion that the pesticide was externally introduced “better reflects the truth.” The data showed that “the safety of Chinese goods is fully guaranteed.” The Chinese conclusion produced a strong reaction in Japan’s National Police Agency where it came as an “unexpected development” – one not seen as “a plus in resolving the problem.”

The downward spiral resulted in the postponement of the scheduled March 2 visit of Li Changgiang, the director of the General Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine. Meanwhile, former Minister of Economics and Industry Hiranuma told a *TBS* broadcast that the government should be “resolute” in maintaining a position that the pesticide was not introduced in Japan but in China.

A week later on March 10, a liaison conference of ministries involved in the *gyoza* incident opened in the Cabinet office. Press reports of the meeting noted that of the 20 items requested by Japan’s investigators during their tour of the Tianyang factory, China had provided three. The media characterized China’s response as “close to zero.” Pressed on the issue the next day, Fukuda said that the issue had been raised on every occasion, that some items had been supplied, and that he would like to see the remainder sent quickly in order to resolve the issue. Additional documents arrived on March 13, but were not in complete compliance with Japan’s requests. Minister for Consumer Affairs Kishida Fumio announced that the contents would be carefully examined and, if not adequate, Japan’s requests would continue.

Security/Taiwan

On March 13, Takamizawa Nobushige, director general of the Defense Policy Bureau, Ministry of Defense, met with the LDP’s Security Research Panel to review the ministry’s analysis of Chinese military trends. Asked how Japan would respond to a

Taiwan Straits contingency, Takamizawa replied that “such an event would be a serious matter, and before determining whether it would be defined as a regional contingency, the SDF would naturally step up intelligence gathering activities. This would not be an alliance problem, but one of Japan’s security.” Takamizawa went on to say “if I was asked by China, would you recognize this as a contingency in areas surrounding Japan, my answer would be naturally.”

Takamizawa’s words raised questions as to whether he was referring to a “contingency in areas surrounding Japan,” a condition in which Japan had committed to provide rear area support for the United States. Upon returning to the ministry, he endeavored to clear up any confusion, telling an evening press conference that the government’s position had not changed, but that his words were inadequate. “I did not talk about the recognition of a contingency in areas surrounding Japan,” he told reporters. Rather, he explained that in the event of a China-Taiwan contingency, Japan should “strengthen warning and surveillance activities.” He pointed out that a “regional contingency is not a geographic concept” and that a China-Taiwan crisis would “not automatically extend to a regional contingency.” If it would lead to military action, Japan would naturally strengthen its intelligence gathering.” He apologized that his insufficient explanation had resulted in misunderstanding.

The next day, Minister of Defense Ishiba Shigeru acknowledged that parts of Takamizawa’s statements “could not help but give rise to misunderstanding.” Ishiba told reporters that “of all people, Takamizawa should well know that ‘regional contingency’ is not a concept that makes a specific region its target.” Noting that Takamizawa had already apologized for causing any misunderstanding, Ishiba concluded that he did not think there was “any problem.”

Outlook

Planning for the Hu visit should keep the relationship on track at least through early May. Afterwards, the Japanese will be looking for progress on the East China Sea and food safety. Looking ahead, a key question from Tokyo’s perspective will be what Hu can deliver.

Chronology of Japan-China Relations January-March 2008

Jan. 4, 2008: Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo visits Ise Shrine.

Jan. 5-6, 2008: Japan-China Joint Commission on the Study of History meets in Beijing.

Jan. 7, 2008: Chinese author Yang Yi nominated for Akutagawa literary prize given to new fiction authors writing in Japanese.

Jan. 9, 2008: Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro invited to Beijing Olympics.

Jan. 10, 2008: Japanese military attaché in Beijing questioned by Chinese police following visit to massage parlor.

Jan. 16, 2008: Foreign Minister Komura Masahiko hosts Japan-Mekong Ministerial Meeting; Japan pledges \$6 billion aid package.

Jan 16, 2008: Japanese Consul General in Shanghai, after visiting Nanjing Memorial Museum, expresses concern that exhibits could give rise to anti-Japanese feelings.

Jan. 17, 2008: Chinese youths injured by chemical weapons abandoned in China by the Imperial Army sue Japanese government seeking ¥66 million in compensation.

Jan. 18, 2008: FM Komura in a speech to the Diet defines policy toward China as pursuing “a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests.”

Jan. 22-23, 2008: Vice Minister of Defense Masuda Kohei visits Malaysia.

Jan. 23, 2008: Chinese internet service Baidu.com begins offering service in Japanese.

Jan. 30, 2008: Japan, China, Korea Policy Forum holds its first meeting in Tokyo. Former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro and Chinese and Korean ambassadors attend.

Jan. 31, 2008: Deputy Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei meets FM Komura in Tokyo to discuss food safety and contaminated *gyoza* issue.

Feb. 3, 2008: China sends expert team to Japan to discuss contaminated *gyoza* issue.

Feb. 5, 2008: Tokyo police arrest three Chinese and one Japanese in connection with amphetamine smuggling.

Feb. 6, 2008: Japanese inspection team travels to China to visit Tianyang *gyoza* factory.

Feb. 10, 2008: Finance Ministers Nukaga Fukushima and Xie Xuren meet and agree not to allow *gyoza* controversy to impair development of bilateral relations.

Feb. 10, 2008: FM Komura calls attention to China’s military build-up and lack of transparency in an address at the Munich Conference on Security Policy.

Feb. 13, 2008: Financial Services Minister Watanabe Yoshimi welcomes Chinese sovereign wealth fund investment in Japan.

Feb. 14, 2008: Toyota Motor Corp. President Watanabe Katsuaki announces plans to build new plants in China and India.

Feb. 20-24, 2008: State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan visits Japan to advance visit of President Hu and meets PM Fukuda and FM Komura on Feb. 21.

Feb. 21, 2008:LDP Special Committee on Ocean Policy meets to discuss government's draft plan on ocean policy.

Feb. 21-22, 2008: Japanese and Chinese police officials meet in Tokyo to exchange information on the contaminated *gyoza* issue.

Feb. 22-23, 2008: Vice FM Yabunaka Mitoji visits China meets with Vice Minister Wang Yi to discuss resolution of East China Sea issues.

Feb. 25-27, 2008: Investigators meet in Beijing to discuss contaminated *gyoza* issue.

Feb. 26-29, 2008: Japan's Chief of the Self-Defense Forces Saito Takashi visits China.

March 2, 2008: Visit of China's Director of the General Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine is postponed.

March 3, 2008: Fukuda Cabinet adopts basic plan on ocean policy.

March 4, 2008: China releases \$45 billion 2008 defense budget.

March 5, 2008: China's National People's Congress opens in Beijing. Premier Wen's work report touched on issues related to food safety.

March 10, 2008: Cabinet Liaison Conference on food safety meets in Tokyo as reports circulate of China's failure to provide requested information and documentation regarding the *gyoza* issue.

March 13, 2008: Ministry of Defense Director of Defense Policy Bureau Takamizawa Nobushige discusses Taiwan contingency with LDP's Security Research Council.

March 17, 2008: Vice FM Yabunaka, addressing unrest in Tibet and Hu visit, says riots have little do to with the Hu visit.

March 18, 2008: PM Fukuda expresses concern over developments in Tibet and his hope that Beijing and the demonstrators will conduct themselves in a calm and appropriate manner.

March 23, 2008: Finance Ministers Nukaga and Xie meet in Tokyo to discuss regional and global issues and bilateral cooperation.