



**Japan-Korea Relations:
No Major Changes**

David Kang, Dartmouth College
Ji-Young Lee, Georgetown University

Japan-Korea relations in the past quarter showed no major surprises, and no major changes. Although there was real progress within the larger context of the Six-Party Talks, the agreement in principle by Japan and North Korea to “normalize their relations in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration, on the basis of the settlement of the unfortunate past and the outstanding issues of concern,” was both a step forward and yet also the mere reiteration of agreements already made between the two sides. The real issues – and the real work – will begin in the future, as the two sides begin discussing details of just exactly how to settle the abductee issue and move toward normalized ties. It is significant, however, that Japan was willing to forego greater pressure on North Korea on the abductee issue in favor of a broader agreement with the six parties.

With the focus on the two meetings of the six parties in Beijing, much of the heat between South Korea and Japan over disputed islands and textbooks faded to the background. Although the issues are still quite prevalent, the surge of emotion over the issues subsided, although most likely this is a temporary respite. Although Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro made both a deep bow and public statement of apology in general for Japan’s role in World War II, this apparently did little to assuage South Korean resentment over Japan’s policies on specific issues. However, despite the friction over textbooks and history, Japan and South Korean cooperation continued to increase on matters such as judicial cooperation on international crimes, and the two militaries found ways to cooperate on issues such as high-level officer exchanges and Coast Guard operations. Economic interactions between South Korea and Japan continued to deepen over the quarter. Although much of this was “business as usual,” the most notable move was an alliance by Samsung and Sony to cooperate on various technical matters, marking a further integration of the economies of these two high-tech Asian nations. Finally, in cultural issues, Japanese continued to see Koreans as more friendly than Koreans saw Japanese.

Tentative agreement at the Six-Party Talks

The two meetings of the Six-Party Talks brought up key issues in Japan-North Korea relations: North Korea’s nuclear development program, the abductee issue, and the normalization of bilateral relations. While the focal points of disagreements centered on the North’s right to have a peaceful nuclear energy program, and the possibility of construction of a light-water reactor,

the negotiations did yield an important opportunity for Tokyo and Pyongyang by agreeing to resume bilateral talks toward normalizing relations.

While Japan welcomed the North's decision in early July to resume the Six-Party Talks as a sign of progress, the strain in their bilateral relations was noticeable from the outset and remained after the signing of the joint statement. Of the six parties, the positions of Japan (along with the U.S.) were farthest from those of North Korea. Although both Japan and North Korea adopted the joint statement that North Korea pledged to "abandon all nuclear weapons and existing programs," and the other parties respected North Korea's right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, they have been adamant in their divergent stances throughout the negotiations.

While expressing its desire for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, Pyongyang has insisted on its right to have a civilian nuclear program and demanded it be provided a light-water reactor first in exchange for the abandonment of its nuclear programs. Japan has been wary and distrustful of the North's intentions; Chief Cabinet Secretary Hosoda Hiroyuki reaffirmed Japan's position Sept. 15 that "it has always been Japan's position not to approve even the peaceful use of nuclear technology for countries that are not credible." He added Japan would not accept Pyongyang's demand for a light-water reactor "because it would be used to produce atomic weapons." When North Korea raised the sequencing issue a day after the signing of the joint statement commenting that "the United States should not even dream of the issue of the DPRK's dismantlement of its nuclear deterrent before providing light-water reactors," Japan sided with the U.S., clarifying its stance that the North's claim was not acceptable.

In the meantime, "a pointed war of words" between Tokyo and Pyongyang continued; on July 4, DPRK's state-run *Korean Central News Agency* called Japan a "political dwarf," saying that Japan should step aside from the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula, hitting back at Japanese calls for a tougher international approach to the North's nuclear issue. In mid-July, when Japan urged other parties to adopt a policy of pressing for a ban on the use of any nuclear technology by North Korea, including for peaceful purposes, Pyongyang responded by saying it wanted to raise Japan's alleged moves for nuclear armament ambitions at the upcoming Six-Party Talks, criticizing Japan's "filibuster" tactics.

Domestic political pressure within Japan meant that this round of the six-party negotiations was as much about the abductee issue as about the nuclear development program on Japan's side. Upon the announcement of the North's return to the negotiation on July 9, Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka said that Japan would use the Six-Party Talks to raise the abductee issue and the missile program besides the North's nuclear development program. According to *The Japan Times*, a top Foreign Ministry official said that although North Korea's nuclear agenda was more important in terms of Japan's security, Japan had no choice but to bring up the abduction issue at the Six-Party Talks if it were to avoid public criticism at home.

Families of the abductees visited Foreign Minister Machimura on July 14 and urged the Japanese government to raise the abduction issue during the Six-Party Talks. They also called for the extradition of Shin Gwang-su who taught Yokota Megumi and Soga Hitomi the Korean language and North Korean philosophy in Pyongyang. According to *The Chosun Ilbo*, Shin was one of 63 long-term political prisoners in South Korea and admitted the kidnapping of Hara Tadaaki from

Osaka in 1980 during his trial. *The Japan Times* reported July 15 that North Korea rejected the Japanese government's request to extradite Shin, claiming that Hara "voluntarily" came to North Korea. Japanese authorities issued an arrest warrant for Shin but only after he had been repatriated to North Korea in September 2000.

Chief negotiator Sasae Kenichiro raised the abductee issue in Beijing during his opening remarks at the plenary session on July 25, drawing objections from both Koreas and China. On July 28 former North Korean secret agent An Myong-jin testified before a panel in Japan's House of Representatives investigating the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korean agents. An testified 15 abducted Japanese were alive in North Korea between 1988 and 1991, mentioning nine of them by name and stated that North Korea was "lying" about what happened to some of the abductees.

Most Japanese foreign policy elites believed the possibility of holding bilateral talks about the abduction issue during the Six-Party Talks would be slim; North Korea had refused to receive phone calls from Japanese officials through diplomatic channels in Beijing since last December. Even during the talks, North Korea held bilateral talks with all other parties except Japan until Aug. 7 when the negotiation went into recess. At their first (brief) bilateral meeting, Japanese delegate Sasae told the North's Kim Gye-gwan that Japan wanted North Korea to send back all abductees still alive and to hand over North Korean suspects of the kidnappings. The talk made little progress while families of the abductees' expressed disappointment over the Six-Party Talks and demanded economic sanctions on North Korea.

Given this backdrop of cold relations, the North's abrupt change in its attitude and the fact that it "listened to Japanese views on the highly charged abduction issue" at the bilateral talks for two days in a row on Sept. 14 and 15, one of which was held at the request of Pyongyang, took Japanese delegates aback. Japanese Foreign Ministry officials wondered if North Korea was planning to offer more information on the abduction issue, thereby securing more cooperation from Japan in breaking an impasse with the U.S. With Prime Minister Koizumi repeating his intention to normalize Japan-North Korea relations during his tenure, Japan and North Korea have decided to take steps to normalize bilateral ties based on the Pyongyang Declaration in 2002 as written in the joint statement signed on Sept. 19. Chief negotiator Sasae told families of the abductees that Tokyo hoped to hold the bilateral talks before the next round of the Six-Party Talks, which are expected to convene in early November.

Japan-South Korea relations

North Korea and history issues contributed to shape Japan-South Korea relations against the backdrop of Japan's move toward a more assertive foreign policy. Three developments were worthy of notice this quarter; first, with the fourth round of Six-Party Talks going on, Japan-South Korea relations seem to have been affected by Japan's attitudes toward North Korea, as South Korean foreign policy largely revolved around North Korea. Second, bilateral tension continued to come from issues associated with history, while South Korean responses to Japan's seeming retreat from the pacifist Constitution were not as vociferous. Third, significant cooperative measures were taken in the realms of judicial and military exchanges.

Despite trilateral policy coordination efforts among Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington on July 14, the gap between South Korea and Japan on how to approach the Six-Party Talks was very clear as South Korea tended to be the most sympathetic toward North Korea of the five parties, while Japan took the opposite tack. Accordingly, Seoul hailed Japan when Tokyo made steps for “better” relations with Pyongyang, and criticized when it did otherwise. On July 20, Seoul welcomed Prime Minister Koizumi’s call for early normalization of Japan-North Korea relations, saying the South Korean government would “actively cooperate and assist...to ensure that intention is realized.” In the meanwhile, South Korean officials repeated that they were opposed to Japan bringing up the abduction issue at the Six-Party Talks so that the negotiation could solely focus on the North’s nuclear development program. *The Korea Times* (July 26) reported Japan was drawing criticism from the South Korean public and officials by speaking out on “what other countries in the denuclearization talks do not want to hear, including the ‘abduction issue.’” According to *The Chosun Ilbo* (July 19), a senior South Korean government official is said to have called on Japan “to take a more positive and forward-looking attitude” at the upcoming Six-Party Talks.

While the Six-Party Talks were under way, Japan took a series of steps that will have important implications for the security of Japan and of the entire region, but they received less notice than if there had been no talks. On Aug. 1, Japan’s ruling LDP’s Basic Committee on New Constitution confirmed that its draft of the new constitution will be declared in November this year. The revised draft stipulated that the Self-Defense Force (SDF) would be upgraded to “Self-Defense Military,” and deleted clauses on “not possessing land, sea, and air forces, and other war potential” and on “not recognizing the right of the belligerency of the state” from the original, although it kept clause 1 of Article 9 which “renounces war.” The poll by *Mainichi Shimbun* after the Lower House Election on Sept. 11 showed that a majority of Japanese lawmakers at the Lower House advocated revision of the Constitution; 402 of the 480 lawmakers supported reform of the Constitution, while 36 legislators or 8 percent did not, with the rest holding a mixed view.

On Aug. 2, Japanese Diet approved its fiscal 2005 Defense White Paper, which emphasized the SDF ability to better deal with new threats such as ballistic missile attack and guerilla warfare by pursuing “multifunctional and flexible defense capability.” The Defense White Paper pointed out the need to closely monitor China’s increasing defense spending and the modernization of its military; stated that the North would develop and deploy weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles as well as assist in their proliferation, reported Japan’s *Yomiuri Shimbun* on Aug. 3.

On several occasions, news about Japan’s attempts to raise its military profile were heard; on July 23, *Associated Press* reported that Japan’s Diet approved legislation authorizing the Defense Agency head to order the shooting down of missiles without permission from the prime minister or the Diet; according to *Reuters* (July 23), Japan might start deploying a missile shield by the end of next March, a year earlier than planned, to counter the threats of North Korea and China’s ballistic missiles; *Donga Ilbo* (July 27) reported that the Japanese government decided to deploy an unmanned surveillance aircraft to monitor the military activities of neighboring countries, including China, South Korea, and North Korea.

Interestingly, voices of concern from the South Korean government were directed more toward the Tokdo/Takeshima islets than toward Japan's actual policy shift toward more military activism. South Korea's Defense Ministry lodged a formal diplomatic protest with Japan over the designation of the Tokdo/Takeshima islets as Japanese territory in Japan's Defense White Paper and demanded "the offending section" be erased, reported to *Chosun Ilbo* (Aug. 3).

Seemingly trivial disputes but indicative of the ongoing tension over the Tokdo/Takeshima islets went on; Japan's Defense Agency protested to the South Korean government over a website photo that showed two Japanese Ground SDF personnel standing with a South Korean soldier holding a banner that read "Tokdo is South Korean territory." The picture was a frame by the South Korean soldier. On another occasion, Seoul dismissed a complaint by Tokyo regarding the name of the South Korean Navy's latest landing vessel, "Tokdo Ham." While Seoul said "Tokdo is our territory and there is no problem in naming the landing ship after it," Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hosoda Hiroyuki expressed his uneasiness over the naming of the vessel, saying it was "beyond his understanding."

The disputes over the Tokdo/Takeshima islets drew attention once again as the South Korean government released all 156 diplomatic documents that detailed the 14-year long Japan-South Korea diplomatic normalization talks. A total of 35,354 pages documents revealed that Japan proposed that the territorial disputes over the Tokdo/Takeshima islets be brought before the International Court of Justice, while South Korea suggested that it be resolved through third-party mediation. According to *Asahi Shimbun* (Aug. 27), South Korea in the subsequent negotiations took a tougher stance, arguing that the islets were part of South Korean territory and refused to discuss the issue. On Sept. 3, 1962, a director-level official in Japan's Foreign Ministry said, "Tokdo is valueless. The size of Tokdo is only that of Hibiya Park (in Japan). There will be no problem if we blow up the islets."

The disclosure of the documents came with a new approach by Seoul on the comfort women compensation issue; on Aug. 26, it held a "Public-Private Joint Committee Meeting for the publication of documents of the ROK- Japan talks in 1965," presided over by Prime Minister Lee Hae-Chan and decided to bring the issue before the U.N. Human Rights Commission, while urging the Japanese government to accept its legal responsibility. This was the first time that the South Korean government has declared the Japanese government's legal responsibility for the comfort women issue. Earlier in July, Japanese court had rejected a lawsuit brought by 180 Chinese citizens demanding compensation for Japan's World War II-era germ warfare program.

Efforts were made by Japan to placate the feelings of its neighbors observing the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II; Prime Minister Koizumi expressed Japan's "remorse" and "apology" for actions committed during World War II and mentioned South Korea and China for the first time in a statement, calling for improving relations with them. According to *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Aug. 17), drafting the statement began secretly about three months ago and Koizumi and Foreign Ministry officials paid special attention to its wording.

Also, despite the encouragement from over 300 lawmakers, Koizumi did not visit Yasukuni Shrine on the day of the 60th anniversary, Aug. 15, although two members of his Cabinet and a group of lawmakers did so. On Sept. 5, however, Koizumi indicated that he would continue his

annual visit at an “appropriate” time when asked at a series of TV appearances ahead of the Sept. 11 Lower House election. *The Chosun Ilbo* (Sept. 14) reported that the Japanese public was showing greater interest in if and when Koizumi would visit the Yasukuni Shrine. North Korea on Sept. 14 demanded that Koizumi and other politicians stop visiting Yasukuni, calling it “a center of spreading the idea of militarist overseas aggression.”

Amid tension over history issues, the two countries marked a good record of cooperation in judiciary and military exchanges. On July 17, *Asahi Shimbun* reported that South Korea and Japan were to sign a bilateral treaty on judicial cooperation. The treaty was first suggested by Japan in exchange for a visa waiver program for Korean tourists. *The Korea Times* (July 17) reported that on signing the treaty, two countries would directly assist each other in matters such as the exchange of documents and critical information regarding criminal investigations and the shortening of the length of time in completing inquests on international crimes by both sides.

On July 18, Japan’s Chief of Staff of Ground Self-Defense Forces Mori Tsutomu arrived in Seoul at the invitation of South Korea’s Army Chief of Staff Kim Jang So for a four-day visit to discuss ways to boost bilateral military exchanges. Seoul and Tokyo have implemented military exchanges, including goodwill visits by military leaders, and an education program for military officers since 1996.

Finally, this summer, the Japanese and South Korean Coast Guards conducted joint exercises off Tsushima. The exercise in terror response simulated a situation in which the Pusan-Kyushu ferry had been seized by terrorists, and the Japanese and Korean Coast Guards needed to coordinate their intervention and response. A week later, off the coast of China, the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Coast Guards participated in a short series of rescue and antiterrorism exercises, as well.

Economics: continuing integration and competition

Reports comparing the economic performances of Japan and South Korea drew attention; South Korean trade deficit with Japan was \$24.4 billion, the highest level on record among all its trading partners. In terms of corporate capital spending, South Korea was expected to remain half of Japan’s this year, according to *Korea Times* (Aug. 24). The Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) said Japanese firms’ investment in new equipment and facilities was forecast to grow around 11.6 percent year-on-year this year; manufacturing firms’ capital spending increased 19.8 percent in the first half year-on-year. South Korean facilities investment was expected to expand 6.3 percent this year, according to the Korean Development Institute (KDI).

There were concerns about the future of South Korean electrical and electronics industries as these pillars of South Korea’s export-dependent economy were shaking, posting around \$43 million in sales in the first quarter, a 1.2 percent decline year-on-year. Export sales of IT products such as mobile phones and computers were also reported as \$21.41 billion, down 5.3 percent on-year, and sales of home appliances recorded \$4.4 billion, a drop of 15.9 percent.

Hankyung Business Weekly published a joint survey with Japan's *Zaikai Magazine* of executives at 100 Japanese corporations. It showed the Japanese executives believed that the level of Korean technology was 6.24 years behind Japan's, and would fall to 18.7 years over the next decade; but they predicted that China would catch up with South Korea, narrowing the gap from 5.37 years to 4.83 years by 2015. Not a single Japanese corporation was planning on turning Korea into a production base due to hostile labor relations (32.5 percent), political instability (25 percent), and government regulations (10 percent). When asked about the core competitive power of Korean corporations, 37.5 percent said enthusiasm for education and excellent human resources, 20 percent said government support, and 17.5 percent suggested outstanding management.

The New York Times (July 25) reported that Sony, formally the world's first home electronics maker, formed a cooperative relationship with South Korea's Samsung to "revive its sagging fortunes" and to utilize Samsung's manufacturing prowess and innovative technology. Quoting a recent poll on brand power by *Interbrand-Business Week*, the article estimated that "for the first time, Samsung's brand is now more worth than Sony's." Samsung was ranked number 20 while Sony fell to 28.

There were indications that bilateral economic cooperation could be furthered within the trilateral context of Japan, South Korea, and China. On Aug. 25, the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) appointed the South Korean Committee of the Korea-China-Japan Business Forum to deal with private-initiated, tripartite business cooperation projects more systematically and to improve investment and business environments. The Forum was first proposed by South Korean former President Kim Dae-jung during the meeting with business leaders from the three countries on the sidelines of the ASEAN Plus Three in November 2001 to encourage further growth of the region.

On matters of currency, academics from China, South Korea, and Japan called for Asian countries to form a regional cooperative body like the European Union and to adopt a single currency for East Asia. In an international conference in Seoul, Uri Party lawmaker Chung Duck-goo said "the idea of a unified Asian currency is not, in the end, a wild dream... We must hurry the discussion on exchange rate cooperation by holding regular meetings of the Korean, Chinese, and Japanese finance ministers and central bank governors." Professor Kawai Masahiro of Tokyo University said that there was also a need to invigorate the Asian bond market, so that Asian countries could use their vast foreign exchange reserves more effectively within the region instead of buying U.S. government bonds.

South Korea's largest steelmaker POSCO on July 12 decided to list its global stocks on the Tokyo Stock Exchange at the end of this year. And Toyota has announced that it would start selling hybrid cars in South Korea from the second half of next year. As South Korea's Hyundai Motors also plans to launch hybrid vehicles from next year, competition is expected between two companies.

Culture: *Ssa u myun seo, chin hae jin da?* (Drawing closer through fighting?)

The disputes over history textbooks seemed to open ways for more bilateral interactions and exchanges at the grassroots level in an interesting way; civic groups of Japan and various parts of South Korean society have formed a loose coalition to discourage Japanese board of education officials from adopting the textbooks published by nationalistic Fusosha. After the results of the publisher's recent survey were announced, the coalition declared victory – kind of. The survey showed that the penetration rate of the revisionist textbooks was far below the 10 percent goal set by the publisher, but above 0.047 percent recorded in 2001: about 0.5 percent of roughly 11,000 junior high schools are likely to use the textbooks from next April.

Since the textbooks had been on sale, three municipalities adopted the contentious textbooks published by Fusosha: the board of education in the cities of Otawara on July 13, the Tokyo Metropolitan board of education on July 28, and the Suginami Ward board of education on Aug. 12. Upon the decision of Otawara in Tochigi Prefecture, the first municipality to choose the textbooks, South Korea's Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry issued a statement expressing "deep regret" and "disappointment" over the decision. Within Japan, a Tochigi teachers union denounced the decision, saying "we had called for an adoption of fair and transparent textbooks, but the decision was made at a closed-door meeting." In Otawara, about 40 local residents gathered in front of City Hall to demonstrate the decision. In Suginami Ward, the third municipality that adopted the textbooks, the discussion by the board of education attracted more than 500 people to Suginami City Hall to protest, while some 300 people who supported the textbooks also gathered.

Japan's Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21, running at the frontline of the anti- Fusosha textbook campaign, put an advertisement in South Korea's *Donga Ilbo* of Aug. 8. It read "we are Japanese citizens who are against the adoption of history and civic textbooks developed by 'Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform,' a group that distorts history and justifies Japan's rule over Korea." Under the ad was the explanation that "this advertisement was made with the contributions of 2,114 individuals and 153 groups (as of July 31)." Tawara Yoshifumi, director of Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21, said, "we posted an advertisement in Korean in a Korean newspaper in order to make it known to many Koreans that even in Japan there are many citizens and citizen groups that oppose the textbooks made by The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform." On the South Korean side, teachers and students in Kwangju and some school principals in Seoul sent letters to the heads and members of municipal boards of education in Saga and Iwate Prefectures, urging them not to adopt the textbooks. The letters were delivered in June and July.

On Aug. 15, *Chosun Ilbo* reported the results of a survey of 618 Japanese students and 521 Korean students by the culture and history team of the high school teachers' association of Kumamoto, Japan. The survey showed that 44.9 percent of Korean students chose Japan as the country that they feel *least* friendly toward, the reasons being colonial rule, history distortion, and the Tokdo/Takeshima issue. In contrast, Japanese students placed South Korea as No. 2 on their list of countries they felt *most* friendly toward the U.S. because South Korea is a neighbor; they see Korean entertainers on TV; and the two countries have much in common. But 43 percent of Japanese students named North Korea as the country they feel least close to.

On Aug. 6, *The Japan Times* reported stories about the changes in perception among younger Korean residents in Japan; they were no longer shy about revealing their ethnicity because South Korea's image has improved in recent years. The article asserted that South Korea's popular TV drama series, "Winter Sonata," featuring Bae Yong-Joon known as "Yon-sama," was a big reason for that change. Of the 2 million foreigners registered in Japan, Koreans made up the largest portion, with 607,419 or 30.8 percent, as of the end of 2004, followed by Chinese (24.7 percent) according to Japan's Justice Ministry.

Korean Airports Corporation said a total of 999,700 passengers flew between Kimpo and Haneda as of July 7, proving that the fast air route between Seoul and Tokyo was so popular that 1 million tourists used it only 19 months after it opened.

Conclusion

Japan-Korea relations showed some modest progress on North Korean issues, some political issues, and economic issues. There were no major developments, and even the principles that were signed at the Six-Party Talks were more the beginning than the actual realization of reconciliation between the two countries. However, relations moving in the right direction, however slowly, are better than no progress at all.

The coming quarter is likely to see the next round of negotiations between the six parties over North Korea's nuclear program, which are planned for November in Beijing. The key sticking point remains whether North Korea has the right to have a peaceful nuclear program, and whether the other countries involved will help provide a light-water reactor to the North at some time. These negotiations promise to be contentious and slow-moving. At this time, Japan's position is closer to that of the U.S., in arguing that North Korea should not have a civilian nuclear program. Whether Japan will continue with this policy or whether it will take a more flexible stance is an open question.

In economic matters, South Korea and Japan will continue their discussions about a free-trade area, although such negotiations are likely to make little progress, given that the issue of agricultural subsidies and protection – the main issue in the free trade talks – is also an important domestic political issue for both countries.

Chronology of Japan- Korea Relations July-September 2005

July 9, 2005: *Korean Central News Agency* reports that North Korea agrees to return to the Six-Party Talks in the week of July 25.

July 11, 2005: *Voice of America* reports that Japan's Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka says Japan will use the Six-Party Talks to raise issues besides the nuclear development program including the abduction issue.

July 12, 2005: South Korean Navy's latest landing vessel "Tokdo" is launched. A protest from Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hosoda Hiroyuki follows.

July 12, 2005: South Korea's largest steel maker POSCO decides to list its global stocks on the Tokyo Stock Exchange at the end of this year.

July 13, 2005: The board of education of Otawara, Tochigi Prefecture adopts two social studies textbooks published by Fusosha; the South Korean government issues a statement expressing "deep regret" and "disappointment" over the board's decision.

July 14, 2005: The chief negotiators of South Korea, Japan, and the U.S. meet in Seoul to coordinate strategies for the Six-Party Talks.

July 14, 2005: Relatives of abductees meet with FM Machimura to urge Japan to raise the abduction issue during the Six-Party Talks; they ask the Japanese government to demand North Korea extradite a confessed kidnapper, Shin Gwang-Su.

July 17, 2005: *Asahi Shimbun* reports that South Korea and Japan are to sign a bilateral treaty for judicial cooperation in August.

July 18, 2005: Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro reconfirms his intention to normalize relations with North Korea during his tenure.

July 18, 2005: Japan's Chief of Staff of Ground Self-Defense Forces Mori Tsutomu arrives in Seoul at the invitation of South Korea's Army Chief of Staff, Kim Jang-soo for a four-day visit to discuss ways to boost bilateral military exchanges.

July 20, 2005: ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young says the Six-Party Talks should solely focus on the North's nuclear development program; other issues like the abduction issue should not be on the agenda.

July 23, 2005: *Associated Press* reports that Japan's Diet approved legislation authorizing the Defense Agency head to order the shooting of missiles without permission from the prime minister or the Diet.

July 25, 2005: Japan's chief negotiator Sasae Kenichiro brings up the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea in opening remarks at a plenary session of the Six-Party Talks.

July 25, 2005: *The New York Times* reports that Sony and Samsung formed a cooperative relationship to produce innovative technology.

July 26, 2005: Six-Party Talks resume.

July 28, 2005: Former North Korean secret agent An Myong-Jin testifies at a Japanese Diet panel that 15 abducted Japanese were alive in North Korea between 1988 and 1991.

July 28, 2005: Tokyo Metropolitan board of education adopts two contentious social studies textbooks.

July 30, 2005: China presents a draft statement at the Six-Party Talks, which does not include provisions about human rights or missile development. Japan is said to be dissatisfied.

Aug. 1, 2005: *Donga Ilbo* reports that Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party Basic Committee confirms a draft of the new constitution will be revealed in November.

Aug. 2, 2005: Japan's Cabinet approves a new Defense White Paper, "Defense of Japan 2005" that emphasizes Self-Defense Forces' ability to better deal with new threats such as missile attacks or guerrilla warfare.

Aug. 3, 2005: South Korea lodges a formal diplomatic protest with Japan over references in Japan's Defense White Paper to the Tokdo/Takeshima islets controlled by South Korea but claimed by Japan.

Aug. 7, 2005: North Korea and Japan hold first bilateral talks in more than eight months.

Aug. 12, 2005: Suginami Ward board of education adopts Fusosha's history textbooks.

Aug. 15, 2005: PM Koizumi does not visit Yasukuni Shrine; he expresses Japan's remorse and apology for actions committed during World War II in his statement to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the war.

Aug. 15, 2005: *Chosun Ilbo* reports a survey of 618 Japanese student and 521 Korean students by the culture and history team of the high school teachers' association of Kumamoto shows that Korean students' dislike of Japan is not shared by Japanese students.

Aug. 19, 2005: Academics from Korea, China, and Japan call for Asian countries to form a cooperative body like the European Union and adopt a common East Asian currency.

Aug. 26, 2005: South Korean government releases 156 diplomatic documents that detail the 14 years of Japan-South Korea normalization talks. It includes diplomatic documents that cover the status of the Tokdo/Takeshima islets.

Aug. 26, 2005: South Korean government decides to bring the issue of comfort women compensation before the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Aug. 28, 2005: The Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) appoints the South Korean Committee of the Korea-China-Japan Business Forum.

Sept. 13, 2005: The Six-Party Talks resume after a five-week recess.

Sept. 13, 2005: *Mainichi* poll shows that 402 of 480 lawmakers in the new Lower House support reform of the Japanese Constitution.

Sept. 14-5, 2005: Japan and North Korea hold bilateral talks on the sidelines of the Six-Party Talks.

Sept. 14, 2005: North Korea demands that PM Koizumi and other Japanese politicians stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine.

Sept. 19, 2005: The six parties adopt a joint statement.

Sept. 18, 2005: Japan and North Korea agree to continue bilateral talks to normalize relations.