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3 Comparison for *com-passion*

Exploring the structures of feeling in East Asia[1]

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Negative feelings in East Asia

This paper intends to put Taiwan in a comparative perspective by *juxtaposing* Taiwan's nationalism to others in the neighboring region.[2] It is often held that nationalism in Taiwan has been characterized by grief or "sadness" (*beiqing*). However, if we look around, we will soon find that grief is not only a characteristic of Taiwanese nationalism, but also is a common feature of many nationalisms in the surrounding area (e.g. China, Japan, and Korea). For instance, when analyzing the so-called "new nationalism" in China since the 1990s, Zheng Yongnian (2001) contends that, just as Taiwan has "Taiwanese grief" (*Taiwan beiqing*), so, too, does China have "Chinese grief" (*Zhongguo beiqing*). Similarly, Korean nationalism has been known for its hatred and resentment towards Japan and later towards the US (Shin 1996, 2006; Park 2005). What is more, scholars doing research on post-war Japan have also pointed out that national identity of contemporary Japanese has to a large extent centered around the so-called "victim's consciousness," in which sorrow and grief also play a big part (Orr 2001; Seraphim 2006). It appears to us that nationalisms in these countries all bear, explicitly or implicitly, negative feelings of some sort. How can we make sense of these negative feelings? What kind of role have they played in nationalism in each case, and how are they related to each other? What can be learned if we compare them to each other? To answer these questions, this paper is a preliminary attempt, with a modest scope, to explore what can be called the "structures of feeling" in East Asia.

The term "structures of feeling" is borrowed from the British cultural critic Raymond Williams, who appears to be the first scholar to bring up this concept. By "structures of feeling" he refers to "social experiences in solution, as distinct from other social semantic formations which have been precipitated and are more evidently and more immediately available" (Williams 1977: 133–134). The term "feeling" is chosen:

> to emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of "world-view" or "ideology." ... It is that we are concerned with *meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt*, and the relations between these and formal

> systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable), over a range from formal assent with private dissent to the more nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and acted and justified experiences.
>
> (Ibid.: 132, italics added)

Furthermore, the term is coined to highlight "characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships; not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought." These elements are defined as a "structure," because they form "a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension" (ibid.).

Based on Williams' formulation, Clarke *et al.* (2006: 11–12) further elaborate on the concept of "structures of feeling" to include:

> enduring configurations of affect which give expression to an era or epoch, where this is regarded as something which stretches beyond the contingencies of a particular regime, nation or class but which may nevertheless find exemplification within a regime or nation at a particular time.

It is meant to:

> draw our attention to the way in which economic, social and institutional forces give rise to enduring configurations of emotion … But these configurations are not just expressions of structural forces; they have a dynamic quality of their own. They do not just set "effective limits on experience and on action," but also provide the energy which galvanizes new cultural and political interventions.
>
> (Ibid.)

My use of the term basically follows Williams' tradition, as I intend to highlight "thought as felt and feeling as thought" as well as "meanings and values lived and felt." However, there is another theoretical resource that I shall draw upon, namely, Max Scheler, a German thinker whose phenomenological and sociological analysis of resentment, or *ressentiment* in his own word, remains to be the most insightful classic in the field. Above all, his concept of "emotive *a priori*" and non-formalist theory of ethics are of particular relevance to our concerns about meanings and values here.[3] While it is not the place to introduce his rich works (which, unfortunately, have gone underappreciated until recent years) here, I shall simply provide a brief summary of his analysis of *ressentiment* in a later section.

The term "East Asia," too, needs further qualification. Although some may contend that the whole idea of "East Asia" is barely more than an ideological construct by the US hegemony, it is used here merely as a loose term to refer to the geographical and geopolitical features that the three cases—Taiwan, Japan and China—commonly share, without any reference to an essentialized

connotation. In addition, "East Asia" thus construed often includes Korea, but, due to the limitation of my capacity, the following analysis will not take Korea as the focus of inquiry. However, what is to be discussed below can also apply to Korea to a large extent, and it will be mentioned in due contexts when necessary.

In the following, I shall lay out some significant elements in the structures of feeling that have shaped the configurations of nationalism in East Asia. Instead of providing a comprehensive framework to analyze all the feelings involved in the nationalist sentiments, I shall simply examine a few key issues and phenomena that are found to be crucial in forming the structures of feeling of nationalisms in Taiwan, China, and Japan. Specifically, I select three elements for investigation: (1) negative feelings and nationalist claims; (2) *ressentiment* and value systems; and (3) multi-layered *ressentiment* and the "frames of nation."

Negative feelings and nationalist claims: grief, humiliation, and suffering

Nationalisms in Taiwan, China, and Japan are profoundly intertwined with negative feelings such as grief, humiliation, sorrow, and suffering.[4] The causes of these feelings vary with the distinctive historical contexts of each case. At the risk of oversimplifying the picture, let me try to provide a brief outline of each of them.

a) Taiwan: from "the orphan of Asia" to "the sorrow of being born as Taiwanese"

It has been publicly known and widely held that Taiwanese nationalism has deep historical roots in grief and sadness. The standard historical narrative of Taiwanese nationalism maintains that Taiwan's fate was determined by outside forces and that it is now for the Taiwanese people to determine their own future. According to this view, Taiwan was heartlessly abandoned and ceded to Japan by the Qing court of the Chinese Empire after the first Sino–Japanese War. During the colonial time, Taiwanese people underwent all sorts of oppressions from the Japanese government. Even during the wartime period when Taiwanese tried hard to become the loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor through the *kominka* movement, they found themselves nonetheless discriminated against by the colonizers. Wu Zhuo-liu's novel, idiomatically titled *The Orphan of Asia* (*Ajia no Koji*), best captures the agonies of Taiwanese people for being abandoned and/or mistreated by both the Chinese and Japanese (Wu 1956). Such a sentiment of being an "orphan," further enhanced by Taiwanese's disappointing encounter with their motherland during the postwar era, epitomized in the tragic 2–28 Incident, gave rise to the burgeoning of Taiwanese consciousness that eventually lent support to the political call to turn Taiwan into an independent nation.[5]

In the 1990s, the grief of Taiwan found a new expression. When the former President Lee Teng-hui was interviewed by the Japanese writer Shiba Ryōtarō

in 1994, he used the phrase "the sorrow of being born as Taiwanese," which was interpreted as "the sorrow of location (birthplace)," to refer to the fate of Taiwanese people: once born on this island, one is left with no choice about his/her identity—first one was forced to become Japanese, but later to become Chinese. This interview, originally done in Japanese, was later translated into Chinese and published in the newspaper under the title of "The Sorrow of Being Born as Taiwanese."[6] While the interview stirred up debates and incurred harsh criticisms from many mainlanders, it also gained support from the advocates of Taiwan independence because it legitimized the call for nation-building. The sorrow of being born as Taiwanese is that Taiwan's fate has been determined by outsiders, and it is high time for the Taiwanese to determine their own fate.

The sentiment of being an orphan has been further spread and reinforced by Taiwan's ambiguous status in world politics and isolation in the international community. During the 1970s and 1980s, a sense of being an "international orphan" was emerging in Taiwan, and it grew fast and became widespread during the 1990s because of globalization through which process Taiwanese society had more and more interaction with the outside world. Not recognized as a state, Taiwan has been constantly denied membership from major international organizations (such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization), while the unrecognized passport of the Republic of China has caused numerous troubles all over the world when the passport holders traveled with such a dubious document. Such a sentiment further reached the peak in 2003–2004 when the People's Republic of China (PRC) impeded Taiwan's attempt to join the World Health Assembly (WHA) after the SARS outbreak inflicted the island. One can find countless examples of this kind especially during 2000–2008 when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was in power. It turns out that, the more the Chinese government represses Taiwan, the stronger the Taiwanese consciousness becomes. Consequently, we may well say that the more Taiwanese suffer from grief, the more Taiwanese nationalism gains justification.[7]

b) China: "one hundred years of humiliation" and patriotic education

In China, humiliation, along with suffering, has been one of the central themes in the standard narrative of nationalism. Master nationalist narratives begin with the story of "one hundred years of humiliation" (*bainian guochi*) and "the suffering of the nation" (*minzu kunan*). The line of the story starts with the initial frustration of the Opium War in 1840, through the humiliating defeat in the first Sino–Japanese War, along with a series of unequal treaties and lost territories—notably Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan—accompanied by horrifying episodes such as the imperialist looting in Beijing in 1900 and the Rape of Nanjing in 1937, to the hard-won victory of the War of Resistance against Japan, with the glorious ending of the great triumph of the Liberation War. It has been a story of the journey from humiliation to salvation.

Accompanied with humiliation is a similar concept of shame. Humiliation or shame is not always a bad thing. As an old Confucian teaching goes: "Knowing your shame is close to bravery." By stimulating people to know their shame, humiliation can help to foster the sense of self-awakening and self-strengthening. This is exactly what has been observed in the nationalist movements in China during the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Humiliation turned the "sick men of East Asia" (*dongya bingfu*) into the proud descendants of the awakened dragon; it glued a dish of loose sands (*yipan sansha*) together and turned them into unified concrete of the Chinese nation. The subject of the Chinese nation has been evoked through a series of humiliations and sufferings. It is neither the individual person, nor the universal humankind, but the nation, that has been conjured up. As William A. Callahan (2004) has put it, humiliation has become a key part of modern Chinese subjectivity.

When the PRC was founded in 1949, Mao Zedong declared with confidence and pride: "The Chinese people have stood up!" If a standard nationalist narrative is a story of defeat–humiliation–revenge–victory, then the founding of the PRC was indeed a glorious moment to be celebrated. When Mao declared that Chinese people had stood up, it signified that the humiliations of China had been cleansed. During the 1950s, the entire nation was indulged in the joy of the (re)birth of the nation, the emphases in nationalist narratives being more on the celebration of the victory over imperialism than on humiliation. Even in the 1960s and 1970s, nationalist narratives did not talk so much about humiliation and suffering of the nation. However, humiliation re-emerged in the 1980s to become one of the central themes in nationalist discourses, while more and more emphases on suffering and victimhood have been put in the ever prospering patriotic education. There are many reasons behind this. The most obvious one is said to be the ideological shift of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since the economic reform. It is widely held that the CCP has shifted from the socialist ideology to a nationalist one. Nationalism has replaced Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to fill up the ideological vacuum in the reform era, and patriotic education has become the central theme in official indoctrination.

There have been international factors, too. It is said that, when the PRC was founded, the government was cautious in dealing with its pre-1949 national traumas because it wanted to gain more international support from foreign countries. This applies especially to the case of Japan. The War of Resistance against Japan, the only major war that China had won in its modern history, did not play a central role in the nationalist discourses until the post-Mao era (Mitter 2003). When Mao was in power, he told visitors from Japan that there was no need for Japan to apologize; on the contrary, the CCP had to thank Japan because, had there been no Japanese invasion, the CCP would not have been able to defeat Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomingtang party (KMT) to seize power. Mao went so far as to say that Japanese jingoism had "brought great interests to China" in that it helped to awaken

Chinese people by teaching them a lesson through invasion.[8] It was not until the mid-1980s that the War of Resistance, along with Japan's atrocities during the wartime, was highlighted in nationalist narratives. This is in part a reaction to the observed revival of ultra-nationalism and militarism in Japan in the 1980s, manifested in controversies over the revision of history textbook and the official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese Prime Minster Nakasone.

Another important factor in the politics of memory is generation.[9] As Kirk A. Denton has pointed out, the emergence of a narrative of atrocities and victimization in post-Mao China is related to generations: "Those who suffer real historical trauma tend to want to forget it; it is the next generation, removed from the actual suffering, that does the remembering and develops what [Ian Buruma 1994] calls a 'pseudoreligion of victimhood,'" for "the only way a new generation can be identified with the suffering of previous generations … is for that suffering to be publicly acknowledged, over and over again" (Denton 2007: 247). The memories of national traumas and sufferings, reiterated and institutionalized through patriotic education, have provided the psychological drive for the development of new nationalism since the 1990s, manifested in its strong emotional expressions of xenophobia and anti-foreignism (Gries 2004). Some may contend that the "irrational" emotions in Chinese nationalism are merely ephemeral and should not be exaggerated (Zhao 2002), but, as will be shown below, the "world images" constructed by the structures of feeling can direct the track of nationalism to a large extent.

c) Japan: victim's consciousness and the sentiments of "abnormal country"[10]

Unlike Taiwan or China, grief or humiliation did not become characteristics of Japanese nationalism until 1945 when Japan lost the war. In terms of cause, it is quite similar to the case of China—namely, the defeat in the war; but, in terms of content, it is quite different and distinctive. The so-called "victim's consciousness" has been a cornerstone for national identity in post-war Japan. Such consciousness of being a victim is mainly associated with collective memories surrounding atomic bombing, but it also has its popular roots in shared experience of wartime hardship.

Although the victim's consciousness has been widespread in postwar Japan, "who made them victims" has remained unclear because the problem of war responsibility has never been solved. At least three views can be distinguished on the political spectrum when it comes to war responsibility. A more "conventional" and "convenient" view—"conventional" and "convenient" in the sense to be discussed below—holds that only a handful of ambitious and jingoism-minded military staffs in the wartime cabinet were responsible for war because they brought Japan onto a mistaken road by "cheating" the emperor and the people. According to this view, Japanese people were victims of their own fellowmen—albeit only a handful of them—who led the country in a wrong direction, and what they have to do now is to try their best not to repeat the same mistakes committed by those forerunners.

Such a view, however, has been criticized by the leftists because they consider it as nothing more than an excuse made up by the US authority to exempt Emperor Hirohito, as well as the Japanese people as a whole, from war responsibility, for the sake of the US's own expediency. According to the leftist criticism, it is exactly because such a view was implemented and made popular by the US authority that made it difficult for ordinary Japanese people to reflect on their own responsibility for war.[11]

On the other hand, the rightists also criticize the US, yet for rather different reasons. According to this view, neither the emperor nor the Japanese people are responsible for the war, but Western imperialism, including the US, is. This is the view held by right-wingers and has been made popular by neo-nationalism since the 1990s. Since our concerns are primarily with nationalism, this view will constitute the main focus of inquiry in the following analysis.[12] According to this view, Japan as a nation, along with its people as a whole, was the victim, because the US won the war through unjust means such as indiscriminate bombing, including the use of incendiary as well as atomic bombs.

Furthermore, the US is considered guilty for leaving negative impacts or legacies that have made postwar Japan an "abnormal country." Among them, the so-called "Peace Constitution" and the "self-abusing view of history" (*jigyaku shikan*) are two of the most contested in nationalist politics. On the one hand, the Peace Constitution prescribes that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes," and that any means of armed forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. In addition, "the right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized." If we follow the Weberian tradition to view the modern state as a political community that claims to have the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence (Weber 1946: 48), then we will find the Japanese state "abnormal" in the sense that it renounces the legitimate use of violence, at least in part, in the international arena. For this very reason, nationalist groups have been advocating to "rectify" the constitution in order to make Japan a normal country, while issues surrounding Article 9 have been hotly debated throughout the decades. Some may contend that, despite the constitution, Japan does maintain *de facto* armed forces in the name of "Self-Defense Forces," but this creates more tensions and has becomes exactly where all the controversies originate.

On the other hand, the so-called "self-abusing view of history" is another institutional legacy that is considered by Japanese nationalists as harmful to Japan's national dignity. According to the nationalist point of view, the current history textbooks cannot help to foster a healthy, positive Japanese identity because the textbooks teach school children only dark sides and bad aspects of Japan during the wartime period, since the history taught in school repeats that Japan invaded neighboring countries and did horrible things to their people by waging an unjustifiable war. Japanese receiving such an education, as a result, cannot hold a positive view of their own country, and they have to feel ashamed and apologetic for the past of the nation all the time.

Japanese nationalists criticize the current history education as "self-abusing" or "masochistic," and, more importantly, such an interpretation of Japan's past has been unjustifiably imposed by the US during the Occupation period.

Thus, neo-nationalism in Japan since the 1990s has also been built upon negative feelings. First it was the humiliation of the defeat, the widespread sufferings of the Japanese people from incendiary bombing and later from the much more horrifying atomic bombs, and the unjustifiable Tokyo Trial—all of these have contributed to foster the "victim's consciousness" in postwar Japan. Moreover, two institutional legacies left by the US during the Occupation period, namely, the "Peace Constitution" and the "masochistic view of history," are also criticized for being unjustifiable because they have made Japan an "abnormal country" that cannot foster healthy and normal citizens. The aim of Japanese neo-nationalism, therefore, is to remove these anomalies to restore Japan to a "normal country."

Ressentiment and value-shifts/transvaluation

Another type of feeling deeply intertwined with the three nationalisms is resentment or *ressentiment*, a concept first brought up by Friedrich Nietzsche (1969) and later elaborated on by Max Scheler. Since Scheler has a rather distinct (and insightful) theorization of *ressentiment*, it is worthwhile to elaborate on his theory of *ressentiment* at some length here.

According to Scheler's phenomenological analysis, *ressentiment* is different from other negative feelings such as anger and hatred. Writing in German, Scheler intentionally uses the French word *ressentiment*, for he thinks there are two elements in "the natural meaning of the French word" to which we can find no equivalent in German. On the one hand, *ressentiment* is the "repeated experiencing and reliving of a particular emotional response reaction against someone else." The "continual reliving of the emotion sinks it more deeply into the center of the personality, but concomitantly removes it from the person's zone of action and expression." On the other, the French word *ressentiment* signifies the negative quality of this particular kind of emotion in that it contains a movement of hostility. *Ressentiment* in itself, Scheler adds, "does not contain a specific hostile intention, but it nourishes any number of such intentions" (1998: 25).

Scheler gives a rather succinct summary of what he thinks about *ressentiment*:

> *Ressentiment* is a self-poisoning of the mind which has quite definite causes and consequences. It is a lasting mental attitude, caused by the systematic repression of certain emotions and affects which, as such, are normal components of human nature. Their repression leads to the constant tendency to indulge in certain kinds of value delusions and corresponding value judgments. The emotions and affects primarily concerned are revenge, hatred, malice, envy, the impulse to detract, and spite.
>
> (Ibid.: 29)

Scheler identifies a number of sources of *ressentiment*: thirst for revenge, envy, jealousy, and the competitive urge, but all these feelings will give rise to *ressentiment* only when they are accompanied by a sense of impotence. Those who are able to retaliate immediately will not have *ressentiment*, because their thirsts for revenge are quenched once the retaliation has been made. Only in those who are incapable of revenge, or who have to postpone their revenge due to situational constraints, will *ressentiment* take root. The same can be said to be true for envy, jealousy, and the competitive urge. The mere existence of envy, jealousy, and the competitive urge will not give rise to *ressentiment*; only when they are accompanied by a sense of impotence—incapacity to obtain the desired goods or of achieving the desired goals—will *ressentiment* occur.

Moreover, Scheler brings forth an important sociological proposition of *ressentiment*: the "psychological dynamite will spread with the discrepancy between the political, constitutional, or traditional status of a group and its factual power. It is the difference between these two factors which is decisive, not one of them alone" (ibid.: 33). To be more specific, the two factors that Scheler talks about here include *theoretical comparability*, on the one hand, and the *discrepancy between the theoretical (expected) and factual (actualized)*, on the other. In a caste society in which hierarchies are strictly obeyed, there is little chance for *ressentiment* to emerge. People of the lower class may envy those of the higher one, but they do not resent them in that the former realize that their statuses are incomparable and that there is little chance to change this. In a so-called "egalitarian" society, in contrast, *ressentiment* has a better chance to ferment because people are comparable to one another. Thus, Scheler comments:

> *Ressentiment* must therefore be strongest in a society like ours, where approximately equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality, publicly recognized, go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, property, and education. While each has the "right" to compare himself with everyone else, he cannot do so in fact. Quite independently of the characters and experiences of individuals, a potent charge of *ressentiment* is here accumulated by the very *structure of society*.
>
> (Ibid.: 33, italics original)

The consequence of *ressentiment* is self-poisoning that eventually leads to what Scheler calls "value-shift," "transvaluation," or "the falsification of the value tablets," which means "the transformation of the value scales in a way which denigrates the originally supreme values, replacing them with notions which are unimportant, external, or indeed bear in the original scale the negative sign" (Greenfeld 1992: 16). This can happen not only to individuals, but also to a collective. It can become a collective mentality of a certain social group, and its consequence can be overwhelming.

Just as the "world images" are to human action in Weber's famous "switchmen" formulation, so is *ressentiment* to the dynamics of nationalism.[13]

Like a switchman, *ressentiment* can determine the track along which nationalism moves. Liah Greenfeld (1992) has deftly illustrated this in her comparative study of nationalism in five countries—characterized as "five roads to modernity"—by showing how *ressentiment* among the intellectuals in Germany and Russia has led to the transvaluation that made people view their nations as topping all other nations. In all the three cases that we are concerned with here, *ressentiment* has also played a significant role. Again, each case has undergone very different historical process to experience *ressentiment*, and the specific factors contributing to the emergence of *ressentiment* also differ from each other. While it is almost impossible to get into detailed analysis of each case here, let me simply focus on how the consequence of *ressentiment*, namely, value-shifts and transvaluations, manifests itself in each case.[14]

In Taiwan, transvaluation can be observed in the evaluation of Japan and China, the two most significant others that Taiwan has been facing in the modern era. When Taiwan was handed back to the Chinese government after Japan's defeat in 1945, there was a widespread joy all over the island, celebrating the "return to the motherland." After the tragic 2–28 Incident, the joy was soon replaced by resentment, as Taiwanese people realized that the KMT was even worse than their preceding colonial ruler. While some people began to be nostalgic for the colonial period, the evaluation of Japan gradually changed as well.

On the other hand, the evaluation of China has also gradually changed over time. To resist the nationalist ideology imposed by the KMT state, Taiwanese nationalism usually had a negative evaluation of China, but that was mostly directed against the China represented by the KMT regime, not the Communist China. With the outbreak of the outrageous "Thousand-Island Lake Incident" (*Qiandaohu shijian*) in 1994, there emerged a trend to portray the PRC, the "real China," as a backward, barbarian country, and such a trend of demonizing China has become even stronger since the 2000s.[15] Ironically, the KMT's anti-communist ideology, which Taiwanese nationalism strongly criticized in the past, is now taken up by nationalists in their campaign of demonizing China. As many nationalists are unable and unwilling to face the fact that China is rising on the global stage as a strong power, the representation of China in the nationalist discourse has been one-dimensionally negative and evil. The enterprise of "desinicization" that goes so far as to deny any cultural affinity between Taiwan and China is another sign of value-shift that tries to demean Chinese culture by characterizing it as backward, authoritarian, and feudalistic.

In China, the *ressentiment* in the new Chinese nationalism is mainly directed against the West, particularly the US, and the long-time rival Japan. However, such emotions are also transferred to Taiwan, for reasons that are both apparent and complicated. First of all, Taiwan is considered as a "territory lost," due to the defeat of the first Sino–Japanese War, that is yet to be "recovered." It symbolizes a national humiliation not cleansed yet. Moreover, Taiwan has been able to remain separate from China due in part to the protection from the US. It is widely believed by nationalists in the PRC that, had there been no imperialist intervention from the US, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would have already "liberated" Taiwan. Third, while the KMT was considered the ally of American imperialism in the past, now the advocates of Taiwanese nationalism are regarded as the "lackey" of both Japanese and American imperialists. All in all, Taiwan symbolizes such rich meanings in Chinese nationalism—a lost territory to be recovered, a humiliation to be cleansed, the intervention from imperialist forces to be revenged, and an unfinished nationalist mission to be accomplished—that can easily provoke negative feelings such as *ressentiment*.[16]

On some occasions Chinese officials speak of Taiwan using vicious expressions and having an extraordinarily condescending attitude. Many Taiwanese regard the Chinese government as overbearing or domineering (*badao*), but where does such an overbearing attitude come from? Some people use "big country mentality" (*daguo xintai*) or "upper country mentality" (*shangguo xintai*) to explain this, but *ressentiment* may provide an alternative explanation. Besides, the indulgence in the one-sided story of "a century of national humiliation" also prevents Chinese people, along with the government, from reflecting upon China's role as an imperial hegemon in the region before the newly arisen Western powers arrived to challenge its hegemony in the mid-19th century. All too easily is it forgotten that China, as an imperial center, has also brought sufferings of various kinds to its peripheries such as Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan, not only in the past but also in the present.

Furthermore, China's rejection of freedom, democracy, and human rights can be understood, to a certain extent, as a result of trasvaluation owing to *ressentiment*. Greenfeld has found that nationalism based on *ressentiment* leads to the emphasis on indigenous traditions that, in turn, construct a new system of values hostile to the original national principle. This is exactly what is happening in contemporary China. By characterizing freedom, democracy, and human rights as merely "Western values," numerous Chinese scholars and intellectuals, chorusing with the Chinese government, have been endeavoring to construct a value system that is "of Chinese character" based on "indigenous traditions."[17] There do exist value conflicts between the East and the West, but to what extent are they a reflection of the so-called "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1996), and to what extent are they a consequence of transvaluation resulting from *ressentiment* in different political agents around the world? These are the questions that remain to be examined.

In Japan, *ressentiment* is mostly directed against the US. The value-shifts made them unable to admit the wrongdoings that Japan committed during wartime. They refuse to shoulder the responsibility for damages and misconducts that they did to the people in the neighboring countries. Such a rejection has subsequently incurred more reactions from China and Korea (and, to a much lesser degree, Taiwan). With only a few exceptions, Japanese officials have been unwilling to extend formal apology to the neighboring countries because they admit no wrongdoings. The victim's consciousness has

been so widespread and so deeply rooted that many Japanese have indulged in their own sufferings with little knowledge about, and even indifference to, the sufferings of other people, particularly those caused by the Japanese themselves in the past.

Indeed, such self-indulgence is not peculiar to Japan, but can be commonly observed in the other two cases, too. The transvaluation caused by *ressentiment* further leads to self-righteousness and self-importance, which, in turn, makes people ignorant of the thoughts and feelings of others.

Multilayered *ressentiment* and the "frames of nation"

The negative feelings discussed above—be they humiliations, grief, anger, hatred, or *ressentiment*—have been the common feature of nationalism in Taiwan, China, and Japan. The same can be said to be true for South Korea and other cases in the region. In his celebrated essay on "What is a Nation?" Ernest Renan (1990 [1882]) was absolutely right in asserting that it is grief, not joy, that helps to evoke the spirits of the nation and consolidate national identity. In each of these cases in East Asia, we find abundant manifestations of humiliation, suffering, and victimhood throughout their nationalist narratives.

Unfortunately, such shared feelings have not helped to form a common ground for these people to understand each other, nor have they paved the way for mutual reconciliations; on the contrary, they became the obstacle for mutual understanding in the region, as these negative feelings are often directed towards each other. For instance, the *ressentiment* in Taiwan is first and foremost directed against China; both Korea and China resent Japan as much as they detest the US; and while Japan's *ressentiment* is mainly against the US, there has emerged a trend of resentful feelings against China and Korea, known as *kenchū* (嫌中) and *kenkan* (嫌韓) in recent years. It appears to us that something to be called "a multilayered structure of *ressentiment*" is taking shape in East Asia, where negative feelings surrounding humiliation, suffering and victimhood have been mobilized to resolve the problem within their own nationalist agendas. Their value systems are to varying degrees distorted if not transposed. As *ressentiment* is also found to be closely associated with the rise of populism (Demertzis 2006), there exists a danger that these nationalisms with populist support may someday collide head on with each other in this region. The escalation of nationalist politics in East Asia, manifested in the recent disputes over territories and historical memories among China, Japan, Taiwan and Korea, has given us enough warnings.[18]

To disentangle the complex situation, it is important for us to explore how the meaning of suffering has been understood in these cases. Here, Judith Butler's (2009) heuristic notion of "frames of war" and "grievability" can be illuminating. Using the recent US-led wars as example, Butler argues that wars have created a frame that enforces a distinction between lives that are recognized as "grievable" and those that are not. In distinguishing "we" (the righteous) and the other (evil), it is often seen that there are "subjects" who are not quite recognized as subjects and "lives" not quite recognized as lives (p. 4). Thus, in warfare there are lives that are cherished and their loss is considered "grievable," whereas, on the other hand, there are those that ought to be destroyed and their loss is not grievable. While such frames of recognition are termed by Butler as "frames of war," I submit that it can be alternatively called "frames of nation" for a few reasons. First of all, most of the wars in the modern era have been either waged in the name of the nation, or fought by the units formed by nation-states. Conversely, most of the nations (by which I mean the existing nation-states) in the world have, in different historical periods and to varying degrees, engaged themselves in wars, no matter in terms of expansion, self-defense, revolution, or whatsoever. In virtually all nations, the frames of war have been at work at least for some time and to some extent. Moreover, even if the war has ended, the frame of war can still exist and exercise long-lasting effects through memories and legacies of war. This is exactly what can be observed now in East Asia. Although people across different areas/nations in this region have suffered, it is only those of our nation who are grievable, while those who do not belong to our nation are not grievable. Thus Japanese nationalists only grieve for those Japanese who lost their lives during the Great East Asian War, paying little attention to those lives lost in the neighboring areas due to the aggression of Japan. Chinese nationalists only grieve for those who sacrificed their lives for the founding of the PRC, considering those on the opposite sides—be they Westerners, Japanese or those in the KMT camp—as not only non-grievable but destructible.

Thus, at the heart of the "structures of feeling" in East Asia we find the "frames of nation"—or, put more succinctly in collectivity, the nationalist framework. The negative feelings in all three cases have given rise to the nationalist framework in that the subject of the nation has been conjured up through the experience of grief, humiliation, and suffering, either inflicted by war or due to the consequence of war. The agenda of solving humiliation and suffering is, in turn, to be sought within the nationalist framework, too. However, the result is the reinforcement of *ressentiment* in these cases, while the reconciliation among these countries is becoming more and more difficult.

More specifically, people in this region suffered from the same or similar structural forces of modernity. Among them, two forces are the most powerful and the most overwhelming: the global expansion of capitalism, on the one hand, and the concentration/extension of state violence, on the other, which go hand in hand with the former in terms of colonialism and imperialism. Nationalism arose as a response to the devastating crises brought up by these two forces of modernity, but by conjuring up the nation that is eventually turned into a state, nationalism also partook in the project of modernity and lost its vantage point for the critique of modernity. As a result, people attribute their sufferings to wrong causes or wrong agents because they tried to understand their sufferings in the nationalist framework. Being part of the modernity project itself, nationalism neither confronts capitalism nor casts

any doubt on state violence; instead, new nations want to join the club of existing nation-states—in the name of international society, a concept first introduced to East Asia with the expansion of capitalism in the region. Under the pressure of military threat and/or due to the defeat of the war, both Japan and China were forced to open their doors to the outside world in which their old worldview could no longer hold. As a response to the challenges brought up by Western imperialism, nationalisms in both China and Japan have explicit or implicit intention to "overcome modernity" that they found problematic. However, by following the logic of nationalism/nation-state—which entails the expansion of state power and the consolidation of a reified nation as an imagined community—both Japan and China fell into the trap of modernity without being able to really overcome it.[19] This is exactly where the "Taiwan problem" originated. At first it was Japan that intended to join the club of Western powers by demonstrating its ability to beat China (and Russia at a later time), and by implication the ability to acquire overseas colonies such as Taiwan and Korea. Now it is China that exercises both physical and symbolic violence to maintain its national pride by asserting that Taiwan is an integral part of China that cannot and should never get away. Both follow the logic of modernity to exercise their "legitimate means of violence" (namely, the physical and symbolic expressions of state power) in terms of imperialism and nationalism. Caught in between and inflicted by both, Taiwan now also resorts to nationalism to resist oppression and fights for its own subjectivity.

Conclusion: from comparison to *com-passion*

Feelings and emotions are neither temporary nor ephemeral; as "structures" they may shape social practice in profound ways by generating meanings and values. They can even be institutionalized and reified to produce long-lasting effects on those who have not experienced such feelings and emotions. At the core of the structures of feeling in East Asia, as we have seen, lies the nationalist framework generated from negative feelings such as grief, humiliation, suffering, and resentment. Negative feelings are not always bad things, as long as they can help to foster a sense of self-awareness and self-strengthening, which has been observed in the three cases discussed above. However, negative feelings and emotions are also called upon to justify nationalist claims, while *ressentiment* has led to value-shifts or transvaluations that hinder people from understanding themselves and others in fair and reciprocal terms. This, too, has been observed in all the three cases. If nationalist claims can be justified by feelings, then the conflicting claims of all nationalisms can be said to be justifiable, and the rest, as the logic of nationalism will suggest, can only be settled by sheer force. This, of course, is not what we would like to see. The reason why I expand the scope of analysis to East Asia, rather than dwelling upon Taiwan or any other case alone, is because I believe a *comparative* and *relational* perspective is much needed here. It is thus worthwhile to elaborate on the idea of *comparison* and *relation* at some length.

In his analysis of *ressentiment*, which is carried out as a diagnosis of modernity, Scheler contrasts between the morality of the noble man who "experiences values *prior to* any comparison," and that of the common man who can apprehend values only "*in* and *through* comparison" (Scheler 1998: 37, italics in original). The common man (to follow Scheler's term without gender implications here) is caught in endless comparison because he can arrive at value judgments only by comparing himself to others and others to himself. Comparison in this sense is judgmental and evaluative: Why do others have what I do not? Do they deserve what they have? Or reversely: Why do I suffer while others do not? Do I deserve this? The ultimate goal of such comparison, implicitly or explicitly, is to "get even": either I want to have as much as others do (i.e. to compete), or I want to make others suffer as much as I do (i.e. to avenge). The comparison of this mode implies a certain kind of centrism, where the "center" can be an individual ego, a group of people, a class, or a nation. The politics thus involved can be called the "politics of pity"—as opposed to compassion to be discussed below—which is the characteristic of politics in the modern era, a time also known as the Age of Revolution under the banner of humanitarianism. The true irony of the politics of pity is that, in the name of eliminating suffering (of ourselves or of others alike), it has paradoxically unleashed suffering on an unprecedented scale in that it has led to unlimited self-pity and self-indulgence.[20]

There is another, "juxtapositional" mode of comparison, to put it in Susan S. Friedman's terms, of which the ultimate goal is not to "get even" but to approach mutual understanding and co-existence. Instead of setting the self against the other, this mode of comparison tries to defamiliarize the self by exploring the unknown. As Friedman (2011: 759) puts it, this reciprocal defamiliarization "unravels the self/other opposition that reproduce systems of epistemological dominance," while its political effects can help us "enhance reciprocal understanding and co-existence."

In the judgmental and evaluative mode, human sufferings can hardly be compared with each other, for each of these peculiar experiences of suffering has its own uniqueness. We can hardly say that we suffer more while others do less, or that our sufferings are more miserable than others', because there is neither moral nor psychological ground on which we can make such an evaluation. However, in the juxtapositional mode, we can—indeed, ought to—compare our sufferings with others' because it simply puts human experiences side by side without judging them. The juxtapositional mode of comparison can free us from the existing "frames of nation," which have imprisoned our minds thus far, by defamiliarizing ourselves with our own sufferings, and only when we move beyond the frames of nation can we begin to learn to understand other people's sufferings. We ought to keep in mind that it is not only ourselves suffering, but many people and groups around us are

suffering as well. Knowing other people's sufferings will not solve our problems directly, but it can prevent us from falling into the trap of self-poisoning caused by *ressentiment*.

However, reciprocal defamiliarization, conceptualized in negative terms nonetheless, is too passive to generate an active principle of solidarity, nor can it provide a positive ground for action, if we wish to do something to change the world. Defamiliarizing comparison may bring down the barriers for mutual understanding, but it does not follow that mutual understanding will naturally occur in due course. What is to be done next if mutual understanding is to be achieved? Here I suggest that an affectionate tie between "us" and "others," who both suffer, can be the next to be established. For the sake of convenience, let us call this affectionate tie "*com-passion*," thus coined to be distinguished from the common usage of "compassion." There has been rising interest in compassion in both public debates and scholarly deliberations, but in these discussions compassion is merely thought of as a heightened form of pity from above, in which a distinction between sufferers and spectators, between those who suffer and those who do not, is drawn (cf. Berlant 2004; Hoggett 2006). *Com-passion* as conceptualized here, however, does not draw such a distinction. It emphasizes the literal, and hence original, meaning of the term: the co-existence in suffering, the common being in feeling the pain. In this sense it is more akin to Arendt's (1990) notion of compassion (as opposed to pity) and Scheler's conceptualization of "personal love", both of which are built upon the model of Christian love or *Agape*.[21] Since there is no distinction between spectators and sufferers, *com-passion* does not try to "share" others' suffering through pity, sympathy, or even empathy; rather, it tries to build ties between different persons by seeing those sufferings as commonly owned and experienced. It is essential to establish such ties of *com-passion* because, according to Scheler's theory of emotive *a priori*, what a person can know is first and foremost determined by the order of love and hatred in the person's mind, which directs the ways in which s/he sees the outside world as well as his or her own deeds and activities. Only when we "love" others can we understand them, not as objects, but as moral subjects, as persons in love.[22] This idea of *com-passion* may sound "unrealistic" to many, because it runs against the instincts of the "modern (Hobbesian) subject," who knows only fears and interests but not love, and it is not compatible with fundamental assumptions of modern politics, viz. the politics of pity, which is fashioned on the atomized individual and/or the rationalist self. However, if we want to change the world, we need, first of all, to change the ways in which we see ourselves as well as the ways in which we interact with the world. *Com-passion* is the first step to launch such a process of change. Only when such a step is taken can we truly tear down the barriers of mutual understanding that lie between "the grievable" and "the non-grievable" separated by the frames of nation; and reconciliation, if still reckoned as desirable, would become possible.

Notes

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2 The term "juxtapose" has to be emphasized here because the comparison made in this study echoes, in a way, what Susan Stanford Friedman (2011) calls the "juxtapostional mode of comparison" (as opposed to the judgmental or evaluative ones) but goes beyond that. I shall return to this point in the concluding section.

3 Scheler's non-formal ethics of values is an ambitious reevaluation of Kantian formalism, which lays down the foundation for the ethics in the modern era but is found by Scheler to be seriously flawed. See Scheler (1973).

4 In terms of terminology, I shall not try to refer to these feelings and experiences with a uniform term, as they apparently differ from one another. Aware of the nuances behind these terms, I do not use them as synonyms and will choose due terms according to the context. For the sake of convenience, however, I use the umbrella term "negative feelings" to refer to them as a collectivity.

5 It is noteworthy that Hou Hsiao-hsien's (1989) internationally renowned *A City of Sadness* (*Beiqing Chengshi*), the first Taiwanese film ever made to deal with the sensitive issue of 2–28 and ethnic conflicts, also registers "sadness" in its title. Interesting enough, while this film has been acclaimed for its bravery to touch upon the sensitive issue of the time and has been considered an important work in establishing Taiwan's subjectivity, Hou, himself a Hakka mainlander who openly opposes Taiwan independence, has never been a supporter of Taiwanese nationalism.

6 The Chinese translation of the interview was first published in the *Independent Morning* (*Zili Zaobao*) from 30 April to 2 May, 1994 and was later included in Lee's essay collection titled "Managing the Great Taiwan" (Lee 1995).

7 For further analyses, see Wang (2001, 2006).

8 Mao has on various occasions made such allusions, some of which are explicit, while some implicit. See, for instance, Mao (1969: 533, 534, 540).

9 The issue of generation in the politics of war memories is not peculiar to China, but can be observed in other cases too. See Winter (2006).

10 For a more detailed discussion of the Japanese case, see Wang (2010b).

11 For such a view, one can refer to Ienaga (1985) and Komori and Takahashi (1998), among many others.

12 One can find abundant examples of such a view in the works of right-wing authors, notably Kobayashi (1998), Nishio (2001), and Fujioka (1996), all of whom are founding members of the controversial "Society for Writing New History Textbook" (1997). For a detailed analysis, see Wang (2010b).

13 "Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest" (Weber 1946: 280).

14 For full discussions, please refer to my previous publications that deal with each of these cases respectively (Wang 2006, 2010a, 2010b).

15 As many commentators have noted, the Thousand-Island Lake Incident marked a watershed in the cross-strait relations between Taiwan and China. The incident involves 24 lives of Taiwanese tourists who were ruthlessly robbed and burned to death on the boat in the Thousand-Island Lake in 1994. The poor handling of the incident by the Chinese officials, who tried to cover up the truth at first and then showed

no respect for the rights of Taiwanese victims in the following investigation, caused strong reactions from both the Taiwanese government and society. The then President Lee Teng-hui even openly criticized the Chinese government as "bandits." The incident and its aftermath made the Taiwanese public begin to bear a "barbarian image" of China, a country in which human life is neither cherished nor respected.

16 One can find abundant examples of such resentful expressions on the internet forums such as *Qiangguo Luntan* (The Forum of Strengthening the Nation) and in the bestsellers such as *China Can Say No* (Song *et al.* 1996). For a discussion of how the "Taiwan question" is understood in the light of "Chinese grief," see Zheng (2001), especially pp. 33–38.

17 There have been numerous works on such an intellectual enterprise, of which the writers range from the conservative right to the so-called "New Left." Although approaching from different origins, they reach the common conclusion that supports a strong national state. For this reason they are sometimes characterized as "statism," an extreme form of nationalism. For a critical review, see Xu (2011).

18 The recent debates in conflicting war memories and ruptured history in the region are also manifestations of these unsettling issues and have received increasing scholarly attention (Jager and Mitter 2007; Gallicchio 2007). For further discussions on the multilayered structure of *ressentiment*, see Wang (2010a).

19 The term "the Overcoming of Modernity" (*kindai no chōkoku*) was the theme of a symposium held by a group of cultural elites in wartime Japan, later regarded as "notorious" in the postwar period because it turned out to be an intellectual endeavor that lent ideological support to the "Greater East Asian War" launched by the Japanese ultra-nationalist government. However, the theme of "overcoming modernity" is still considered as a serious challenge that has been revisited by Japanese intellectuals during the postwar period. For a review, see Harootunian (2000), Koyasu (2008). On the other hand, there is also a current of thought in contemporary China that seeks to overcome the pitfall of (Western) modernity by advocating a special developmental path of China, but in effect it lends ideological support to the existing state that underscores nationalism and patriotism. For instance, see Wang Hui (2009).

20 The "politics of pity," as well as the distinction between pity and compassion, has its conceptual roots in Hannah Arendt (1990) and has later been elaborated by Boltanski (1999).

21 As Olick and Demetriou (2006: 82) have nicely pointed out, Arendt's essay *On Revolution* is heavily influenced by Scheler's work, although Arendt herself does not explicitly acknowledge it. More importantly, both authors are strongly influenced by the Christian notion of love, particularly the tradition from St. Augustine. Scheler's phenomenological conceptualization of "personal love," which is highly abstract and too profound to be succinctly elucidated here, can be found in many different writings, especially Scheler (1954, 1973).

22 The concept of person, which is radically different from the rational self conceptualized by most social and political theorists under the impacts of rationalism from Aristotle to Kant, is the key to understanding Scheler's thoughts. It is also based on the concept of person that Scheler rejects the Enlightenment thinkers who endeavor to build a morality based on sympathy in the name of humanity. For further elaborations, see Scheler (1954, 1973).

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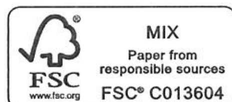

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