

The Spectre of Militarism on Sino-Japanese Relations: mutual threat perceptions in the 21st century

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Abstract

The spectre of Japanese militarism has loomed large over Sino-Japanese relations since normalisation in 1972. In particular Japan's perceived failure to fully acknowledge the actions and consequences of the Japanese military during World War Two have caused sporadic problems between the two countries. Recent developments in Japan's security policy, and the shift towards 'normal nation' status has sometimes served only to exacerbate Sino-Japanese relations where Japan is seen to be lacking the credentials of a responsible state, unworthy, for example, of gaining a permanent seat in a (reformed) UN Security Council. At the same time, the so-called 'rise of China', in particular its military modernisation and naval activities have caused some concern in Japanese military and strategic circles. In addition, the emergence of non-traditional security threats such as concerns over the impact of China's environmental impact and energy needs have also been the focus of discussion in Japanese academic and politics spheres. This presentation considers changing mutual perceptions in recent years, and considers the ways in which both states have attempted to mediate perceived threats and overcome the legacy of the past.



Caroline Rose is Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies and currently Head of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Leeds. Her primary research focus is on the history problem in Sino-Japanese relations, having written two monographs on the textbook issue and reconciliation. She has also written on issues in Japan's foreign policy and Japanese history education, and is currently involved in a number of projects relating to World War II history and memory, and Japan in World War I.

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