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Kazantsev Artem Evgenievich

HISTOTICAL POLITICS OF CHINA TOWARDS JAPAN (2013–2022)

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

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Summary of Research

Research context and statement of research problem (The Background and Aims of Research)

Appealing to and manipulating the memory of the historical past is a common tool for shaping the collective identity of peoples and legitimizing power. This can be clearly seen, among other things, in today's events. In Asia, problems related to the historical past are almost more acute than in the West. China and Japan are two examples of two states whose bilateral relations have been traumatized by military conflicts. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Japanese Empire made a massive attempt to establish its order in the region by denying China the status of "perpetual empire." This attempt culminated in the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945), referred to in China as the "war of resistance of the Chinese people against Japanese invaders" (中国人民抗日战争) or the "anti-Japanese war" (抗日战争). During this war, many tragic events occurred that left a deep mark on the collective memory of the Chinese. The memory of them has influenced Sino-Japanese relations up to the present day. The tragic killing of a Japanese boy in Shenzhen, China, on September 18, 2024, the Mukden Incident Remembrance Day, is a prime example. In addition, such historical problems as the visits (and offerings) of Japanese elites to Yasukuni Shrine, the issue of Japanese apologies, the softening of interpretations of the events of the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945), etc., have not yet been overcome.

This is mostly due to two factors: the anti-Japanese war is an important event that influenced the formation of the national identity of contemporary Chinese. At the same time, this does not negate the fact that it is advantageous for the Chinese leadership to appeal to the memory of the Sino-Japanese historical past to solve both domestic and foreign policy problems, i.e., to use historical politics. In general, all PRC leaders have resorted to it.

In the period from 2013 to 2022, the PRC faces a few domestic challenges, such as the decline in the CCP's authority and the need to consolidate the population. These factors make historical politics highly relevant at this stage. In addition, China is beginning to position itself as a great power (大国) and pursue an increasingly active foreign policy in line with the concept of the Chinese dream of the "Great Rebirth of the Chinese nation". The latter is directly linked by the Chinese elite to the victory in the anti-Japanese war, which also has an impact on China's historical narrative.

At the same time, during the period under study, significant changes occurred in Sino-Japanese relations, which could not but affect China's historical policy. In 2012, the biggest crisis since the restoration of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972 occurred, caused by

the escalation of the territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea. China considers the islands to be its territory, which was reclaimed by Japan during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) along with Taiwan, as it was part of Taiwan Province of Taiwan. After the defeat in the anti-Japanese war, Japan renounced its rights to the island and, formally, it became part of China again. However, firstly, the Japanese side has never explicitly stated about the transfer of Taiwan to China, and secondly, Tokyo does not believe that Diaoyu was part of Taiwan Province of Taiwan. This is how Japan controls the islands and does not recognize the existence of a territorial dispute with China.

Although the dispute has a long history, it has become particularly relevant during the transfer of power to the 5th generation of Chinese leaders, led by Xi Jinping, due to the nationalization of the islands by the Japanese government. China's main task at this stage is to induce Japan to recognize the territorial dispute and resolve it in its favor. The pronounced historical background of the Senkaku/Diaoyu issue is also one of the reasons for the actualization of China's historical policy during the period under study.

It is important to note that this issue is significant from a security perspective. During the period under study, the PRC leadership made active attempts to pressure Japan in the East China Sea, and Japan, in turn, pursued a policy to contain China. The same applies to the latter's actions in the Taiwan Strait. The increased acuteness of the problem in the Taiwan Strait for both China and Japan has been noted by a few researchers. Japan is extremely interested in Taiwan's preservation of de facto independence. The current Taiwan lobby in Japan includes influential representatives of the Japanese elite, who pursue both economic and political interests and the interests of state security. In the latter's view, Japan's security is directly linked to Taiwan's security.

This problem became particularly acute in 2022 after the visit of Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to the island. Japan, acting in line with its strategic interests, has taken several important steps to strengthen Japan-Taiwan defense cooperation. This was perceived in China as a gross violation of state sovereignty, which led to a series of retaliatory measures against Tokyo by the Chinese leadership. Since the annexation of Taiwan by Japan after China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War is one of the most tragic episodes of the “century of humiliation”, the historical policy in this area also acquires high relevance as a foreign policy tool of the PRC in relation to Tokyo.

Thus, the high importance of the memory of the anti-Japanese war for the Chinese, as well as the acuteness of the problems of the historical past in Sino-Japanese relations and the need to find new means of pressure on Japan by the PRC make this study relevant.

Literature review. The problems of the historical past in Sino-Japanese relations, as well as the use of the memory of them for political purposes, attract the attention of many researchers.

For the convenience of perception, we can divide the works into several groups. The historiographical sources used in this dissertation research are presented in Russian, English and Chinese.

1. Scientific works concerning Sino-Japanese relations in general, and Sino-Japanese contradictions in particular. The classical studies of Sino-Japanese relations, including in the context of historical past problems, include the works of such scholars as G. Efimov¹, N. Nozikov², B. Sapozhnikov³, M. Sladkovsky⁴, S. Tikhvinsky⁵ and others. The value of these works for our thesis lies, first of all, in the detailed study of the prehistory and course of the Sino-Japanese wars, especially the Sino-Japanese war (1931-1945). The latter had and continues to have a key influence on Sino-Japanese relations and the formation of historical policy in China. In general, such classics of Soviet Chinese studies as M. Sladkovsky, S. Tikhvinsky, and others note the strong “burdening” of Sino-Japanese relations with the problems of the historical past. These problems did not lose their acuteness during the period under study.

Among modern Russian researchers in this field we should mention the following B. Vidmarovich⁶, A. Dikarev⁷, L. Zabrovskaya⁸, A. Kireeva⁹, A. Lukin¹⁰, C. Dent¹¹, R. Hoppens¹²,

¹ Efimov G.V. *Essays on the new and modern history of China*. Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1951. 584 p.

² Nozikov N.N. *Sino-Japanese war 1894-1895*. Moscow: State Military Publishing House, 1939. 104 p.

³ Sapozhnikov B.G. *Japan-China War and Japanese colonial policy in China (1937-1941)*. Moscow: Nauka, 1970. 226 p.

⁴ Sladkovsky M.L. *China and Japan*. Moscow: Nauka, 1971. 336 p.

⁵ Tikhvinsky S.L. *The History of China and Modernity*. Moscow: Nauka, 1976. 360 p.

⁶ Vidmarovich B. *Political-historical problems and contradictions in Sino-Japanese relations from 2001 to 2009*. Ph. D. thesis. Moscow, 2011, 222 p.

⁷ Dikarev A. *China-Japan: territorial conflict or regional cooperation? // Contours of global transformations: politics, economics, law*. 2017. №5. P. 162–171.

⁸ Zabrovskaya L.V. *Features of Sino-Japanese relations: China's pragmatism and Japan's maneuvering // Problems of National Strategy*. 2013. №3. P. 67–83.

⁹ Kireeva A. *A new historical milestone in Sino-Japanese relations: how deep is the warming and what is behind it? // Japanese Studies*. 2020. №1. P. 21–47.

¹⁰ Dikarev A., Lukin A. *PRC approach to territorial disputes in the South China Sea and Russia's foreign policy // World Economy and International Relations*. 2021. №2. P. 5–15.

¹¹ Dent C.M. *China, Japan and Regional Leadership in East Asia*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008. 328 p.

¹² Hoppens R. *The China Problem in Postwar Japan*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. 313 p.

N. Katagiri¹³, K.P. Clements¹⁴, M. Söderberg¹⁵, C. Rose¹⁶, J. Fogel¹⁷, S. Shen¹⁸, J.C. Weiss¹⁹, P. Khanna²⁰, C. Liu²¹, P. Sun²², L. Cai²³, etc.

The subject of research in the works of the above-mentioned scholars is Sino-Japanese contradictions, including geopolitical ones. In this regard, let us note the article by A.A. Kireeva. The article examines the territorial conflict over the Diaoyu Islands from the point of view of water area delimitation. The author has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the Sino-Japanese territorial dispute in the East-China Sea. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to investigate the relationship between historical politics and the territorial dispute in the East-China Sea. This aspect seems crucial given the fact that the territorial dispute is one of the key areas of the PRC's historical policy. This dissertation attempts to fill this gap. Overall, these works provide a broad perspective on the origins, background, and cultural and historical context of Sino-Japanese disputes. This dissertation will contribute to this area of research by analyzing the impact of the PRC's historical politics on Sino-Japanese relations considering the territorial disputes.

¹³ Katagiri N. Evolution of Sino-Japanese Relations: Implications for Northeast Asia and Beyond [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/04/10/evolution-of-sino-japanese-relations-implications-for-northeast-asia-and-beyond/> (accessed: 27.01.2021).

¹⁴ Clements K.P. Identity, Trust and Reconciliation in East Asia. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 302 p.

¹⁵ Söderberg M. China-Japan Relations in the Twenty-first Century. London: Routledge, 2003. 220 p.

¹⁶ Rose C. Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations. London: Routledge, 2005. 277 p.

¹⁷ Fogel J. Articulating the Sinosphere. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009. 217 p.

¹⁸ Shen S., Cheung M. Reshaping Nationalism: Chinese Intellectual Response towards Sino-American and Sino-Japanese Relations in the Twenty-first Century // *The Pacific review*. 2007. Vol. 20(4). pp. 475-497.

¹⁹ Weiss J.C. Powerful Patriots: Nationalism, Diplomacy, and the Strategic Logic of Anti-Foreign Protest. Ph. D. thesis. San Diego, 2008, 208 p.

²⁰ Khanna P. The Brilliance of China's Grand Strategy: Don't 'Own' Land, Just 'Use' It [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-brilliance-chinas-grand-strategy-dont-own-land-just-use-15741> (accessed: 01.02.2022).

²¹ 刘建平. 战后中日关系 "不正常" 历史的过程与结构 (Liu Q. "Abnormal" Historical Process and Structure of Postwar Sino-Japanese Relations). 北京: 社会科学文献出版社, 2010. 285 页.

²² 孙平化. 中日友好随想录 (Sun P. Reflections on Sino-Japanese friendly relations). 沈阳: 辽宁人民出版社, 2009. 449 页.

²³ 蔡亮. "中日矛盾中的 "聚旗效应": 日本介入台湾问题的特征及影响" (Cai L. "Cohesion Effect" in the China-Japan Conflict: Characteristics and Impact of Japan's Intervention in the Taiwan Issue) // *东北亚学刊*. 2022 年. 第 6 期. 82-95 页.

2. Works on the peculiarities of the implementation of historical politics, particularly in China. D. Efremenko²⁴, L. Mazur²⁵, O. Malinova²⁶, A. Miller²⁷, M. Halbwachs²⁸, A. Assmann²⁹, J. Assmann³⁰ and others have devoted their works to the study of the phenomenon of historical memory and memory politics. These works served as a basis for the formation of the framework of the research definition of the concept of "historical politics" given above.

In general, the founder of memory studies is M. Halbwachs. The author's works are mainly devoted to the phenomenon of collective memory, i.e. the functioning of memory at the collective level. Among the fundamental works of Russian historiography, the central theme of which is historical politics, belongs the collection of scientific works "Methodological Issues of Studying the Politics of Memory" edited by A. Miller and D. Efremenko³¹. The collection contains important materials for our study, namely: articles that analyze the methodological problems of studying memory politics, investigate the mutual influence of memory politics and cultural identity, and reveal the main problems of such a scientific field as memory studies. In this context, it is also important to mention the collective monograph "The Politics of Memory in Modern Russia and Eastern Europe" edited by the above-mentioned authors. The work analyzes the "use" of the World War II theme in the memory politics of different post-Soviet countries. Special attention is paid to the interaction of mnemonic actors and their narrative strategies. We also note V. Malyavin's essay "Memory of War and Memory Wars", in which the ontology and psychology of memory are distinguished on the example of Russian memory of the Great Patriotic War³². Understanding this distinction serves as a prerequisite for research in the field of memory politics.

As for works on PRC memory politics and research on historical memory in the PRC, it is worth highlighting the works of the following authors: S. Kutulukov³³, Y. Leksyutina³⁴, B.

²⁴ Miller A., Efremenko D. The Politics of Memory in Modern Russia and Eastern Europe. Actors, institutions, narratives. Saint Petersburg: Publishing House of European University, 2020. 632 p.

²⁵ Mazur L.N. The Image of the Past: The Formation of Historical Memory // Proceedings of Ural Federal University. 2013. №3. P. 243–256.

²⁶ Malinova O. Political Use of the Past as an Element of Symbolic Politics: Evolution of the Discourse of the Ruling Elite in Post-Soviet Russia // Politex. 2012. №4. P. 179–204.

²⁷ Miller A.I. Russia: power and history // Pro et contra. 2018. №3. P. 6–24.

²⁸ Halbwachs M. Social Frameworks of Memory. Moscow: New Publishing House, 2007. 343 p.

²⁹ Assman A. The Long Shadow of the Past: Memorial Culture and Historical Politics. Moscow: New Literary Review, 2014. 324 p.

³⁰ Assmann J. Cultural Memory: Writing, Memory of the Past and Political Identity in the High Cultures of Antiquity. Moscow: Slavic Culture Languages Publishing House, 2004. 363 p.

³¹ Miller A.I., Efremenko D.V. Methodological Issues of Studying the Politics of Memory. Saint Petersburg: Nestor-History, 2018. 224 p.

³² Malyavin V. Focuses. Ivanovo: Roshcha Academy, 2011. 489 p.

³³ Kutulukov S. The Politics of Memory in Socialist China. Riga: OmniScriptum Publishing KS, 2013. 2016 p.

³⁴ Memory of the Second World War outside Europe / scientific ed. A. Miller, A. Soloviev. St. Petersburg: Publishing House of the European University in St. Petersburg, 2022. 264 p.

Khubrikov³⁵, K.A. Denton³⁶, J. Gordon³⁷, Suping Lu³⁸, Lihe Wang³⁹, Q.E. Wang⁴⁰, Daqing Yang⁴¹, Zheng Wang⁴², Yanjun Liu⁴³ etc.

Among the works presented above, it is worth highlighting the chapter on the PRC's historical politics in the book "Memory of the Second World War outside Europe" written by Y. Leksyutina. This is one of the few attempts in Russian historiography to comprehensively comprehend the transformation of the PRC's historical narrative from 1949 to the present (2022). The merits of the work include a detailed analysis of the terms of naming "World War II" in China. The author explores the peculiarities of the use of the terms "World Anti-Fascist War," "War of Resistance of the Chinese People against Japanese Invaders," "Anti-Japanese War," and "Fourteen Years War of Resistance."

However, in describing the internal historical narrative, the work overlooks the period of Hu Jintao's reign. As this thesis will show, the latter had an important influence on the historical narrative constructed under Xi Jinping. This is particularly important in the context of studying the transformation of the PRC's historical narrative from victim to victor. In addition, the paper lacks an analysis of the continuity of the narratives of different PRC leaders, as well as the PRC's foreign policy narrative.

We should also highlight the work of B. Khubrikov "Historical Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping". As the title suggests, it is limited only to the period of Xi Jinping's rule. The main idea of this work is the CPC-initiated switch of the "memory regime" about the Second World War from the "memory of the victim" to the "memory of the victor". However, the issue of narrative transformation is not addressed in its entirety. The tendency to change the narrative did not arise under Xi Jinping, but in the late 1980s, which is confirmed by the comprehensive work of P. Coble⁴⁴, while in practice the shift of emphasis occurred under Hu Jintao. However, P. Coble also

³⁵ Khubrikov B. Historical Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping // *The New Past*. 2020. №1. C. 66–83.

³⁶ Denton K.A. *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014. 360 p.

³⁷ Gordon J. The Nanjing Massacre: Analyzing Japanese and Chinese Interpretation and Memory of Nanjing 1940s-Present. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://minds.wisconsin.edu/handle/1793/69487> (accessed: 05.09.2021).

³⁸ Lu S. The Nanjing Massacre: Primary Source Records and Secondary Interpretations – A Textual Critique of Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi's Review // *China Review International*. 2013. №3-4. pp. 259–282.

³⁹ Wang L. 'The century of humiliation' and the politics of memory in China // *Leviathan*. 2020. № 1. pp. 38–42.

⁴⁰ Wang Q.E. The Study of "Comfort women": Revealing a Hidden Past-introduction [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00094633.2019.1691414> (accessed: 05.09.2021).

⁴¹ Yang D. Convergence or divergence? Recent historical writings on the rape of Nanjing // *American Historical Review*. 1999. Vol. 104. №3. pp. 842–865.

⁴² Wang Z. *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. 312 p.

⁴³ 刘燕军. 南京大屠杀的历史记忆 (Liu Y. Historical Memory of the Nanjing Massacre) // *抗日战争研究*. 2009年. 第4期. 5-22页.

⁴⁴ Coble P.M. China's «new remembering» of the anti-Japanese war of resistance, 1937–1945 // *The China Quarterly*. 2007. № 190. P. 398.

fails to consider that in practice the shift in emphasis occurred under Hu Jintao. Without taking this factor into account, it is impossible to accurately determine the peculiarities of the implementation of China's historical politics toward Japan under the fifth generation of leaders, since the ground for the historical politics under Xi Jinping was prepared under the previous leader of the PRC.

In addition, B. Khubrikov points out the role of Xi Jinping's policy in the formation of the myths consolidating the nation. The main one is the myth of September 3, marking the transition to the memory of the victor. The former narrative of the "hundred years of humiliation", cultivating the image of the victim, the scientist considers anachronistic⁴⁵. However, this thesis also requires clarification. It is important that both the image of the victim and the image of the victor can serve as a consortium. They do not exclude, but complete each other, and equally fit into the concept of "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation". L. Wang emphasizes the relevance of the image of the victim in the contemporary Chinese politics⁴⁶.

3. Works devoted to the influence of historical narratives shaped by historical politics on Sino-Japanese relations. Fundamental research in this area is carried out by P. Kulneva⁴⁷, V. Perminova⁴⁸, K. Sanin⁴⁹, D. Streltsov⁵⁰, P. Coble⁵¹, Y. He⁵², J. Reilly⁵³, R. Mitter⁵⁴, A. W. Moore⁵⁵, Y. Chan⁵⁶, Z. Jian⁵⁷ etc.

One of the most important works on the topic of the dissertation in Russian historiography is V. Perminova's paper "War Remembrance in China and its influence on Sino-Japanese Relations in the 1950s – Early 1980s". The undoubted merit of the work is a detailed analysis of the formation of the memory of the anti-Japanese war (the foundation of the current historical

⁴⁵ Khubrikov B. Historical Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping. P. 79.

⁴⁶ Wang L. 'The century of humiliation' and the politics of memory in China // *Leviathan*. 2020. № 1. pp. 38–42.

⁴⁷ Kulneva P. Japanese Aggression in China and the Feeling of Guilt // *Japanese Studies*. 2020. № 4. P. 21–39.

⁴⁸ Perminova V. War Remembrance in China and its influence on Sino-Japanese Relations in the 1950s – Early 1980s // *NSU Bulletin*. 2021. №4. P. 80–90.

⁴⁹ Sanin K. Problems of the historical past in PRC relations with East Asian states // *Comparative Politics*. 2015. №3(20). P. 48–59.

⁵⁰ Streltsov D. War Memory as an Independent Factor in Japan's Relations with Neighbors: on the 75th Anniversary of Japan's Surrender // *Japanese Studies*. 2020. №4. P. 78–97.

⁵¹ Coble P.M. China's «new remembering» ... pp. 394–440.

⁵² He Y. Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950–2006 // *History & Memory*. 2007. №2. pp. 43–74.

⁵³ Reilly J. Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan // *Modern Asian Studies*. 2011. Vol. 45. № 2. pp 463–490.

⁵⁴ Mitter R. *China's Good War: How World War II Is Shaping a New Nationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020. 336 p.

⁵⁵ Mitter R., Moore A. *China in World War II, 1937–1945: Experience, Memory, and Legacy* // *Modern Asian Studies*. 2011. Vol. 45. № 2. pp 225–240.

⁵⁶ Chan Y. *World War Two legacies in East Asia. China remembers the war*. London, New York: Routledge, 2018. 238 p.

⁵⁷ Jian Z. The influence of Chinese nationalism on Sino-Japanese relations // *China-Japan relations in the twenty-first century: creating a future past?* / Ed. Michael Heazle, Nick Knight. Cheltenham (UK), Northampton (MA, USA): Edward Elgar Publishing, 2007. pp. 15–34.

politics of the PRC) in post-war China. In the foreign policy realities of that time, the main rivals. The PRC's main rivals were the United States and the USSR (since the late 1960s), not Japan⁵⁸. This factor was one of the determining factors in the issue of silencing postwar crimes in Maoist China. Importantly, the seminal work on this period in foreign historiography is the book "The Legacy of World War II in East Asia. China Remembers the War" by Chinese author Y. Chan.

The upper chronological boundary of these works is the early 1980s. Subsequently, the historical narrative of the PRC underwent a significant transformation due to the state of Sino-Japanese relations in the later period.

China's historical politics towards Japan at the present stage is covered in the article by V. Perminova "War Remembrance in China and its Influence on Contemporary Sino-Japanese Relations"⁵⁹. The author scrupulously analyzes the transformation of the PRC leadership's position on the issues of the Sino-Japanese historical past and concludes that since 2014, China's approach to the historical past has been renewed and the Sino-Japanese relations have been "unfreezing". This opinion has a basis, but due to the fact that V. Perminova did not set herself the goal of analyzing the transformation of China's historical narrative as a whole, her work does not focus on the instrumentalization of anti-Japanese war-related issues under the fifth generation of leaders. From this perspective, the thaw in Sino-Japanese relations in 2014 did not lead to a softening of Beijing's rhetoric and a significant normalization of relations between the two countries. This is particularly evident in China's historical policy toward Japan on the issue of island ownership in the SCS and the Taiwan Strait security issue that emerged in 2021. The novelty of this dissertation stems from the need to investigate the above-described side of the issue.

P. Kulneva and D. Streltsov are engaged in research on Japan's historical politics in the context of Japan-China relations. Their works are extremely important from the point of view of analyzing the mechanisms of historical policy making in East Asia, but they do not address the specifics of the historical narrative shaped by the Chinese leadership. This dissertation will contribute to the field by examining the peculiarities of the Chinese leadership's historical policy toward Japan.

The paper of Y. He, which reveals the tendency of interpreting historical events in the PRC. He confirms, the interpretations of history are not based on scientific facts in China. They are dependent on the ideological and logical line of the party and the changing interests of Chinese elites⁶⁰. The changing interests of elites in the PRC are revealed in J. Riley's "Remember History,

⁵⁸ Perminova V. War Remembrance ... P. 83.

⁵⁹ Perminova V. War Remembrance in China and its Influence on Contemporary Sino-Japanese Relations // Electronic scientific and educational journal "History". 2020. №12. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ras.jes.su/history/s207987840010292-0-1> (accessed: 31.01.2024).

⁶⁰ He Y. Remembering and ... P. 67.

Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan". The author briefly touches upon the need to change the historical narrative of the PRC under Hu Jintao due to the destabilization of the domestic political situation. It is also important to note P. Coble's work "China's 'Renewed Memory' of the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945". It is notable for its analysis of the preconditions and consequences of the "renewed memory" of the war in China, i.e. victimization of China's image, cultivation of nationalism and resentment in Chinese society.

For all the merits of the above-mentioned works, the PRC's historical politics toward Japan is not the subject of research in them. There are reasons for this: historical politics, as it will be shown in this paper, underwent a transformation during the period of the fifth generation of leaders in power. Many of the above-mentioned works do not consider this period. However, even in the works on China's historical policy under Xi Jinping, scholars are more attracted to the study of this tool for solving domestic political problems than to the foreign policy dimension of China's historical policy toward Japan, i.e. the Diaoyu problem, the problem of security in the Taiwan Strait, and ways of discrediting Japan in the international arena. This issue was touched upon by K. Sanin mentioned above. However, he did not aim at a comprehensive analysis of the foreign policy dimension of China's historical policy. In addition, the author paid more attention to the USSR than to Japan. I

In this regard, of particular interest is Zhao Suisheng's article " Foreign Policy Implications of Chinese Nationalism Revisited: the strident turn" and A. Costa's book "The China-Japan Conflict over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands: A Useful Rivalry". Both works explore the influence of China's historical politics on China's foreign policy relations, particularly with Japan. It is important that only the problem of disputed islands in the East China Sea is in the authors' field of view. In the Zhao's work is due to the chronological framework: it is limited to 2013. As will be shown below, the historical politics on the Taiwan issue and the issue of disputed islands in the South China Sea began to be actively used in the later period. The author refers in passing to the PRC's response to Japan's actions in the East China Sea, particularly after the nationalization of the Diaoyu Islands, in the context of historical past issues. However, Zhao does not examine the PRC's foreign policy historical narrative, but only analyzes China's actions in the context of the controversies.

Costa's work explores the problem around the Diaoyu Islands in more detail. The author scrupulously examines the background, history, and current state (until 2017) of the issue, which leads to the conclusion that it is beneficial for China and Japan to support the conflict. It helps shape national identity and create an image of an external enemy. At the same time, the analysis of the reasons for the instrumentalization of historical issues and the peculiarities of the implementation of China's historical policy on this issue is also not the subject of this study. At

the same time, it is limited only to the Diaoyu problem, and the latter is not considered in connection with other equally important historical issues, such as the Yasukuni problem, the problem of Japanese apology, the problem of security in the Taiwan Strait, etc. This seems to be a great omission, as such a perspective does not allow for a full analysis of the PRC's historical politics.

It is also worth highlighting the work of the above-mentioned G. Pugliese and A. Inisa “Sino-Japanese Power Politics: Might, Money, and Minds”⁶¹, as well as the work of M. Dian “Contested Memories in Chinese and Japanese Foreign policy”⁶². They are notable for their detailed analysis of the influence of the historical past on the foreign policy of the countries under study. At the same time, the authors of the first work do not limit themselves to historical issues proper and from the issues of interest to us dwell in detail only on the Senkaku/Diaoyu problem. M. Dian, in turn, analyzes the influence of historical past problems on China's (and Japan's) foreign policy in general and does not examine in detail the PRC's historical policy towards Japan. Moreover, the author does not aim to analyze in detail the specifics of the influence of historical policy on China's domestic policy. This seems to be an omission, since the domestic and foreign dimensions (the use of anti-Japanese issues to achieve domestic and foreign policy goals) of the PRC's historical policy are closely related.

Thus, the limited number of comprehensive studies of the PRC's historical policy toward Japan accounts for the scientific novelty of our dissertation.

Research question

How and for what purpose has the PRC's historical policy been used toward Japan from 2013 to 2022?

Aims and objectives

The aim of the study is to identify the features and objectives of the PRC's historical policy toward Japan in 2013-2022.

To achieve the aim, the following **tasks** were set:

1. Characterize the main historical events of the “century of humiliation” that influenced the PRC's historical policy toward Japan during the period under study;

⁶¹ Pugliese G., Inisa A. Sino-Japanese Power Politics. Might, Money and Minds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 146 p.

⁶² Dian M. Contested Memories in Chinese and Japanese Foreign Policy. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science & Technology, 2017. 304 p.

2. Identify the main stages in the evolution of PRC's historical policy toward Japan up to the beginning of the period under study (up to 2012);
3. Identify the peculiarities of Chinese historians' interpretation of the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) characteristic of the period under study;
4. Identify the peculiarities and motives for the formation of the PRC historical narrative in relation to Japan in the context of Sino-Japanese controversies over the interpretation of the events of the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) during the period under study;
5. To determine the peculiarities and goals of the PRC's historical policy towards Japan on the problem of the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands during the period under study;
6. Identify the peculiarities of Chinese historians' interpretation of the period of Japan's colonial rule in Taiwan, as well as the specifics and goals of the PRC's historical policy toward Japan in the context of the Taiwan issue during the period under study.

Methodology and conceptual apparatus. The methodology of this study is based on the principles of historicism, systematicity and scientific objectivity. The principle of historicism made it possible to trace the evolution of PRC historical policy and identify its features characteristic of the period under study. The principle of systematicity made it possible to identify the relationship between the individual elements of the PRC historical narrative and highlight the features characteristic of the PRC historical policy as a whole.

The key concept of this study is “historical politics”. It seems to be the most appropriate for the study of China, as it implies a directive instrumentalization of the past to achieve specific goals of the ruling elite - the Communist Party of China, which has full power.

The concept of “historical politics” was developed in the works of K. Leggevi and K. Mayer, A. Assman, V. Achkasov, A. Miller and others. The researchers have a similar view on its conceptual basis: under “historical politics” they understand the use of power resources in the field of history for political gain.

In shaping the official historical narrative (derived from history politics), PRC ruling elites make extensive use of the state-controlled media and school textbooks. It is important to consider the legislative acts regulating the sphere of history, mobilization campaigns in the sphere of education (for example, the campaign of “patriotic education”) and “places of memory”⁶³. Official speeches by the Chinese president, which set the narrative, and statements by officials are also an important element of China's history politics.

⁶³ A concept introduced by the French historian P. Nora to describe a set of phenomena in which national memory is embodied: monuments, museums, books, holidays, films, songs and others.

When considering historical politics in the context of the research topic, all the above-mentioned aspects relate primarily to the PRC's domestic political agenda, rather than to Japan itself. However, it is important to consider them for three reasons: first, many elements of the historical narrative have a foreign policy dimension along with the domestic one. This is primarily the case with museums, monuments, holidays, and articles in major media outlets. Second, through domestic propaganda, the PRC leadership forms certain perceptions of Japan among the Chinese population, which influence Sino-Japanese relations and are used to influence Tokyo (e.g., initiating protests, boycotts of Japanese goods, etc.). Third, the domestic political agenda, i.e. the official position of the state, often influences the foreign policy of the state.

As for the foreign policy dimension of historical politics, it is widely used to exert pressure on opponents. For example, to create a negative image of competing countries. This, along with A. Miller, is also pointed out by V. Achkasov. The latter understands historical politics as “the use of history as an instrument of political struggle and achievement of political goals”. The political struggle in this case means, among other things, the struggle in the international arena. Consequently, the PRC leadership's appeals to the problems of the Sino-Japanese historical past can also be attributed here. In this regard, the main points of tension are the problem of the Yasukuni Shrine, the problem of Japanese history textbooks, the problem of Japanese apologies to China, the issue of belonging to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, and others. Appeals to these issues allow the PRC leadership to discredit Tokyo in the international arena, as well as to apply economic and political pressure to Japan. These aspects are studied in the works of such scholars as Y. Leksyutina, V. Perminova, D. Streltsov and others.

Thus, for the completeness of the study, it is necessary to consider the PRC's historical politics, i.e. appeals to the past of Sino-Japanese relations as a tool for achieving both domestic political goals, such as consolidating the population and strengthening the authority of the CCP, and foreign policy goals - discrediting Japan in the international arena (and demonstrating China's merits), as well as economic and political pressure on the Japanese side by appealing to the problems of the historical past of Sino-Japanese relations.

Study Methods

- **The comparative-historical method** made it possible to compare the PRC's historical narrative toward Japan at different historical stages and to identify the specifics of China's historical policy within the period under study;

- **The historical-genetic method** made it possible to trace the evolution of China's historical policy due to the transformation of internal and external tasks of the Chinese leadership;

- **The systemic approach** allowed us to comprehensively examine the specifics of the formation of the PRC's historical policy towards Japan and identify common patterns characteristic of its internal and external dimensions;

- **Discourse analysis** made it possible to analyze speeches, speeches and statements of PRC officials and identify specific elements of the PRC's historical policy towards Japan.

- **Linguistic analysis** made it possible to identify the peculiarities of the terminological apparatus characteristic of the PRC historical narrative on Japan: stylistic, contextual and semantic features of the terms used.

Hypothesis

During the period under study, the main domestic political goals of China's historical policy were to consolidate the population and strengthen the legitimacy of the CCP. In the foreign policy arena, historical policy was used as an instrument of pressure on Japan to discredit the latter on the world stage, justify its territorial claims, and counter historical revisionism on the part of some of the Japanese elite. This led to the transformation of China's historical policy toward Japan, including the instrumentalization of historical issues related to the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) in new areas, such as the territorial dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu and the Taiwan issue.

Scope and limitations of research

The research covers the period from the appointment of Xi Jinping as President of the People's Republic of China in 2013 until stabilization of Sino-Japanese relations in 2022. This timeframe is chosen since politics of memory began to be actively used as a tool in relation to Japan from 2013, because of tensions in Sino-Japanese relations and the peculiarities of the new leader's vision of China's political course. The upper boundary is determined by the end of Xi Jinping's second term in power. This will make it possible to identify the peculiarities of the implementation of the historical policy towards Japan by the 5th generation of PRC leaders. In addition, in 2022 Sino-Japanese relations escalated on the grounds of tension in the Taiwan Strait. Analyzing these events will allow for the most comprehensive examination of the PRC's historical

policy toward Japan. The year 2022 is also of great symbolic significance, as it is the year of the 50th anniversary of the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations.

Selection of empirical data

The source base of the study can be divided into three groups.

The first group includes act sources, namely treaty sources, which fix the common course of development of China and Japan.

The second group includes statements of official representatives of the People's Republic of China on the issues of Sino-Japanese relations. It also includes speeches of presidents timed to important events. This group of sources is key for our study because statements of PRC officials express the official point of view of the Chinese leadership on Sino-Japanese relations.

The third group includes media materials and Internet sources, namely materials from online magazines, forums, blogs, and various Internet articles.

Let us take a closer look at the first group. This group includes treaty sources that fix the common course of development of China and Japan. First, these are 4 Sino-Japanese political documents: the Sino-Japanese Joint Statement of 1972⁶⁴; the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1978⁶⁵; China-Japan Joint Declaration of 1998⁶⁶ and the China-Japan Joint Statement on the Comprehensive Development of Strategic Mutually Beneficial Relations of 2008⁶⁷. These documents regulate Sino-Japanese relations. The 10-point consensus⁶⁸ reached by Xi Jinping and Shinzo Abe also should be mentioned in this regard. It does not have a status comparable to Sino-Japanese political documents, but it is an important attempt to stabilize relations during the crisis period.

In addition, one of the key issues facing China and Japan is the issue of ownership of the Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku). Sino-Japanese relations on this issue are regulated on the basis of a 4-

⁶⁴ 日本国政府和中华人民共和国政府联合声明 (Joint Statement of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China) [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.cn.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_zh/bunken_1972seimei.html (accessed: 05.09.2023).

⁶⁵ 中日和平友好条约 (Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship) [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/tytj_674911/tyfg_674913/201807/t20180726_9866505.shtml (accessed: 05.09.2023).

⁶⁶ 中日关于建立致力于和平与发展的友好合作伙伴关系的联合宣言 (Joint Declaration of China and Japan on the Establishment of Friendly Partnership and Cooperation Promoting Peace and Development) [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/zyxw/199811/t19981126_269878.shtml (accessed: 05.09.2023).

⁶⁷ 中日关于全面推进战略互惠关系的联合声明 (Joint Statement of China and Japan on the Comprehensive Development of Strategic and Mutually Beneficial Relations) [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/yz_676205/1206_676836/1207_676848/200805/t20080508_7993021.shtml (accessed: 05.09.2023).

⁶⁸ 外交部官员：习近平会见安倍晋三 双方达成十点共识 (Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman: Xi Jinping met with Shinzo Abe and the two sides reached consensus on ten points) [Electronic resource]. URL: http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2019-06/27/c_1124681233.htm (accessed: 05.09.2023).

point consensus⁶⁹. This consensus allowed the PRC and Japan to overcome the crisis in bilateral relations triggered by the nationalization of the Diaoyu Islands in 2012. In addition, the website of the Chinese embassy in Japan contains several statements expressing the Japanese side's complaints about its unwillingness to recognize the islands as Chinese territory. One such document is a statement by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on the Japanese government's announcement of the "purchase" of the Diaoyu Islands and its surrounding islands⁷⁰.

The second group includes public speeches and statements by PRC officials on issues of both the geopolitical situation in East Asia in general and Sino-Japanese relations. For example, the response of Foreign Ministry spokesman Qing Gang to a reporter's question about the statements of the Japanese Foreign Minister about the so-called "Chinese military threat"⁷¹, the responses of Foreign Ministry spokesman Kun Quan to reporters' questions at a press conference⁷², the responses of Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao to reporters' questions at a press conference⁷³, the statement of Foreign Minister Wang Yi made in connection with Shinzo Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine⁷⁴, etc.

In addition, the official speeches of the PRC presidents are crucial for this study. For example, speeches of the presidents at the CPC congresses, their official speeches timed to commemorate the anniversaries of the anti-Japanese war, etc. Importantly, the paper analyzes Xi Jinping's speech at the 20th CPC Congress made in 2022.

This group also includes materials of official websites of government ministries, which publish statements of the ruling elite of the PRC and Japan. The materials of two websites were

⁶⁹ 中日就处理和改善中日关系达成四点原则共识 (China and Japan reach a four-point consensus in principle on resolving and improving Sino-Japanese relations) [Electronic resource]. URL: http://sapporo.china-consulate.gov.cn/chn/zrdt/201411/t20141117_5275936.htm (accessed: 05.09.2023).

⁷⁰ 全国人大外事委员会就日本政府宣布 "购买" 钓鱼岛及其附属岛屿发表声明 (The Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress issued a statement on the Japanese government's statement on the "purchase" of the Diaoyu Islands and the surrounding islands) [Electronic resource]. statement on the Japanese government's statement on the "purchase" of the Diaoyu Islands and adjacent islands) [Electronic resource]. URL: http://jp.china-embassy.gov.cn/zrgxnew/zywjnew/201209/t20120912_9463635.htm (accessed: 05.03.2021).

⁷¹ Response of the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Qing Gang to the reporter's question about the statements of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan about the so-called "Chinese military threat" [Electronic resource].

URL:<http://www.chineseembassy.org/rus/xwfw/fvrth/fyrbthdhdw/t228117.htm> (accessed: 05.03.2021).

⁷² Answers of Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kun Quan to reporters' questions at the press conference on September 21, 2004 [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/rus/xwfw/fyrth/lxjzhzhhdh/t191969.htm> (accessed: 05.03.2021).

⁷³ Answers of the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Liu Jianchao to the questions of correspondents at the press conference on June 23, 2005 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/rus/xwfw/fyrth/lxjzhzhhdh/t201345.htm> (accessed: 05.03.2021).

⁷⁴ Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi [Electronic resource].

URL:https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/2461_663310/t1116500.shtml (accessed: 05.03.2021).

used as the main ones: the website of the State Council of the People's Republic of China⁷⁵ and the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China⁷⁶. In addition, the websites of the PRC embassy in Japan⁷⁷ and the Japanese embassy in the PRC⁷⁸ were used. All sources were selected by keywords, with the help of major website search engines. This allowed us to determine with great accuracy a relevant sample of the necessary materials that were introduced into scientific circulation. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the selection of the sources on the above-mentioned issues goes beyond the chronological framework, since the study had to trace the transformation of the foreign policy aspect of the PRC's historical politics over a long period of time.

The third group includes media materials. It should be reminded that this study will mainly use official statements and addresses of the PRC Foreign Ministry and other high-ranking officials. This is since they are only duplicated in the media. China's official media include the Xinhua News Agency (新华)⁷⁹, the daily newspaper Renmin Ribao (人民日报)⁸⁰, the socio-political newspaper China Daily (中国日报)⁸¹.

Original scholarly research contributions to the subject field

- The reasons and timeframes of the transformation of the PRC historical narrative from the emphasis on sacrifice to the propaganda of the image of the Chinese people as the victor in the war are clarified;
- The peculiarities of interpretations of the events of the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) during the period under study are revealed;
- The transformation of China's historical policy towards Japan in the context of internal and external tasks of the Chinese leadership is analyzed;
- China's instrumentalization of the issues related to the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) in the context of the territorial dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu and the Taiwan issue in relation to Japan during the period under study is proved;

⁷⁵ State Council of the People's Republic of China [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.gov.cn> (accessed: 10.03.2021).

⁷⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/> (accessed: 10.03.2021).

⁷⁷ Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Japan [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://jp.chineseembassy.org/chn/> (accessed: 10.03.2021).

⁷⁸ Embassy of Japan in the PRC [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.cn.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_zh/index.html (accessed: 10.03.2021).

⁷⁹ 新华 (Xinhua) [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://m.xinhuanet.com/> (accessed: 10.03.2021).

⁸⁰ 人民日报 (Renmin Zhibao) [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.people.com.cn/> (accessed: 12.03.2021).

⁸¹ 中国日报 (China Daily) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://cn.chinadaily.com.cn/> (accessed: 12.03.2021).

The structure of the research

The dissertation consists of two chapters. The first chapter is comprehensive in nature and provides a basis for the study of the causes of transformation and the specifics of the implementation of China's historical policy. In it, in order to identify and categorize the historical past-related contradictions of China and Japan, the events of the “century of humiliation” will be examined. It will then identify the main stages of the evolution of the PRC's historical policy throughout the state's history (from 1949) to the beginning of the period under study (up to and including 2012). Subsequently, the peculiarities of Chinese historians' interpretation of the events of the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) during the period under study will be revealed and the transformation of the PRC's historical narrative toward Japan will be examined in the context of Sino-Japanese contradictions regarding the interpretation of the events of the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945).

The second chapter will analyze the PRC's historical policy toward Japan on two key issues: the Senkaku/Diaoyu issue and the Taiwan issue. However, it will be necessary to first turn to the history of these issues and characterize their status at the beginning of the period under study.

The summary of the findings and conclusions

The conducted study has led to the following conclusions:

1. The PRC's historical policy, the core of which is the memory of the Second Sino-Japanese War, has undergone several stages of transformation. In the PRC's first postwar decades, the events of the war were silenced. Subsequently, the events of the war, on the contrary, were publicized and became the basis of PRC historical policy. Up until the beginning of the 21st century, China was positioned as a victim of Japanese and Western imperialists. However, with the advent of the new millennium, the emphasis in China's historical narrative began to shift: official propaganda began to focus more and more on China's merits rather than its failures. The author agrees with the opinion that this trend was most evident under Xi Jinping. However, it has existed throughout the history of the state. Moreover, emphasizing victory does not mean forgetting Japanese crimes. The memory of the Sino-Japanese wars over the past 40 years has influenced Sino-Japanese relations. At the present stage, China's main claims against Japan related to its wartime past can be summarized as follows: 1. “Softening” the interpretation of the events of the Second Sino-Japanese War; 2. Visits of high-ranking Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni Shrine. 3. The insincerity of Japanese apologies.

2. The features of the PRC's historical policy toward Japan during the period under study can be defined as follows: 1. The tendency to increase the influence of the memory of the

anti-Japanese war with an emphasis on victory on the PRC's domestic political agenda and the establishment of a campaign to counter historical nihilism. 2. Increased propaganda on the merits of the Chinese people and China's contribution to the World Anti-Fascist War. 3. Emphasizing Japan's historical revisionism. 4. A pronounced emphasis on the territorial integrity of the PRC and the belonging of Taiwan and Diaoyu to China. 5. Propaganda of the brutality of Japanese crimes.

Most of these aspects have both internal and external dimensions. In terms of domestic politics, the more pronounced emphasis on victory and the propaganda of the merits of the Chinese people helped consolidate the population around the significant event and cultivate the national dignity of the Chinese, inspiring them to overcome internal and external challenges. The CCP's key contribution to the victory in the anti-Japanese war was particularly emphasized. Contradictory interpretations were censored as part of a campaign to combat historical nihilism. In addition, the emphasis on the historical revisionism of Japan, which threatens, among other things, the territorial integrity of the PRC, as well as the propaganda of the harshness of Japanese aggression, made it possible to “counter” historical revisionism on the part of some of the Japanese elite, legitimize China's territorial claims, and present Japan to the Chinese population as an unrepentant aggressor seeking to revive militarism.

In the foreign policy arena, China used historical policy to broadcast its merits to the international community, including Japan, as part of the struggle for regional (world) leadership; to assert “its” version of history in the international arena against the background of attempts to deny aggression on the part of Japan's ruling elite; to propagandize the brutality of Japanese aggression, contrasting it with the PRC's peaceful aspirations; to position Japan as an unrepentant aggressor unworthy of a global role (expansion of international influence); to justify the right of the PRC to take a global role (expansion of international influence); and to justify Japan's position as an unrepentant aggressor unworthy of a global role.

3. The PRC's historical narrative toward Japan on the issues of the historical past underwent a transformation during the period under study. The problem of Yasukuni Shrine and the problem of interpretations of the events of the anti-Japanese war were put into a modern context. The PRC's narrative on these issues emphasized the merits of the Chinese people, i.e., the victory in the anti-Japanese war and its significance in shaping the postwar international order. In addition, the Japanese elite's offerings to the Yasukuni Shrine, contradictory interpretations of the events of the Second Sino-Japanese War in Japanese history textbooks from the Chinese point of view, revisionist statements by high-ranking Japanese officials, etc. gave China an opportunity to discredit Japan on the international arena as a peace-loving state, positioning the latter as an unrepentant aggressor unworthy of expanding its international influence. This is confirmed by the

multiplied role of the memory of the Nanjing Massacre in the period under study. This is a significant opportunity to counterargue the attempts of some parts of Japanese society to present the war as a forced measure, to demonstrate the extent of Japanese cruelty. In the early 21st century, during Hu Jintao's presidency, the rise of resentment due to China's long positioning as a victim began to threaten the internal stability of the state. At the same time, China as a victim correlated poorly with the China of Hu Jintao's time, which was approaching the status of the world's second economy. It was necessary to transform the historical narrative to be able to pressure Japan from a position of strength. Therefore, China began to be positioned not as a victim but as a winner in the war. This made it possible to suppress resentment and at the same time gain a convenient lever of pressure on Japan.

The issue of Japanese apology, in turn, had more relevance when China was positioned as a victim. However, it also influenced the PRC's historical narrative. This can be seen in the characteristic demands to repent (反省) and reinterpret history (正视历史).

4. During the period under study, the issue of territorial integrity became highly relevant. It is especially important in the context of the above-mentioned concept of the Chinese dream of the “Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation”, which implies the return of all “ancestral Chinese” territories “to the motherland”. Thus, this concept has both domestic and foreign policy dimensions. Therefore, gaining control over Senkaku/Diaoyu becomes one of China's main objectives during the period under study. In addition, an important goal within the Chinese dream is the actual reunification with Taiwan. Although Japan is not the determining party in the Taiwan issue, Sino-Japanese relations became significantly strained at the end of the study period due to Japan-Taiwan security interactions.

The need to confront Japan as a strategic rival in the context of these issues led to an important transformation of historical policy during the period under study. Regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu issue, China began to directly link the actions of contemporary Japan in the context of this issue and the war crimes of the Japanese army in China to discredit Japan as a “peace-loving” power and position Japan as an unrepentant aggressor who did not return the territories that belonged to China by right of victory in the war. In addition, China applied economic and political pressure on the Japanese side. China's historical narrative also provided an opportunity to justify China's increased military presence in the East China Sea: since the official narrative positioned the Diaoyu as an integral part of China, Japan's control over the Diaoyu was presented as a threat to national security.

In addition, at the end of the period under study, the Chinese elite began to perceive Japan's actions in the context of the Taiwan issue much more acutely. This was most clearly manifested at the end of the period under study. To influence Japan and induce it to refuse to cooperate with

Taiwan, China actively utilized historical politics. Chinese officials, in addition to political pressure measures (e.g., canceling the bilateral meeting between the heads of the PRC and Japan), often referred to Japan's historical guilt toward China, the period of occupation of Taiwan, and Japanese crimes. Linking modern Japan's actions to the wartime colonial policies of the Japanese Empire toward Taiwan seems to be a significant marker of the state of the PRC's historical policies during the period under study. Japan's opposition to the PRC in the context of issues important to China is beginning to be perceived by the Chinese elite as a manifestation of historical revisionism. From this point of view, it is possible to talk about the instrumentalization of issues related to Japanese wartime aggression to put pressure on the Japanese side both on the Diaoyu issue and in the context of the Taiwan issue.

5. Modern China and Japan are in a stalemate situation - the PRC appeals to the memory of the events of the anti-Japanese war to solve both domestic and foreign policy problems. Japan sees China as a threat and, in accordance with its strategic interests, pursues a policy of containment. It implies, among other things, a rethinking of military doctrine. The Chinese elite (and society) perceive this as a revival of militarism and attempts to forget the history of Japanese aggression. The PRC's internal narrative implies a unified view of the history of all issues at stake and does not assume multiple interpretations. Taiwan is a part of China with no right to political autonomy. The islands in the East China Sea and the South China Sea are historical Chinese territory returned to China after the victory in the anti-Japanese war. It is important that reunification with these territories is an important part of China's foreign policy course, which is determined by the concept of the Chinese dream of the "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation." It implies, among other things, the need for "reunification of the motherland" and the establishment of the PRC as a strong maritime power.

6. In practical terms, it is advantageous for China to position Japan as an aggressor country. At this stage, however, this narrative is already seriously aggravating Sino-Japanese contradictions. Their root cause is a different view of their past. Historical politics, for all its advantages, is not conducive to resolving them. Moreover, it carries potential risks for both China and Japan. The historical policy does not promote a positive image of the Japanese in the view of the Chinese population, but, on the contrary, fuels anti-Japanese sentiment and revanchism. These factors can become a threat to the internal stability of the state, as well as have a negative impact on Sino-Japanese relations and destabilize the situation in the region.

Statements to be defended

1. The motives of "victim" and "victor" are interrelated and have been present in the PRC's historical policy since the formation of the state. Under Mao Zedong, the exploits of

Communist war heroes were emphasized, and they were contrasted with the Kuomintang. At the same time, historical politics was hardly used to pressure Japan on the international stage. In the 1980s and 1990s, both the domestic aspect and the external aspect of PRC historical policy toward Japan were defined primarily in the context of the memory of China's "humiliations." However, the memory of victory also played a significant role in domestic policy and was gradually reinforced. Under Hu Jintao, a trend toward a transformation of China's historical policy can be observed: the emphasis in the historical narrative began to shift, and China's merits came to the fore. This was due to a number of domestic political objectives: the need to smooth out the contradiction between China's successes in the 21st century and the image of a humiliated state, as well as to suppress anti-Japanese sentiments caused by positioning China as a victim of Japanese aggression. However, this was mostly a domestic policy, and China's merits were not translated externally. Under Xi Jinping, China's historical policy is dominated by the "victor" motive, which influences both China's domestic policy and its policy toward Japan.

2. The peculiarities of the PRC's historical policy towards Japan, characteristic of the period under study, can be formulated as follows: 1. Strengthening the influence of the memory of the victory in the anti-Japanese war on the PRC domestic policy. 2. Strengthening the propaganda of the merits of the Chinese people and China's contribution to the World Anti-Fascist War. 3. Emphasizing Japan's historical revisionism. 4. Justification of the victory in the anti-Japanese war by the belonging of Taiwan and Diaoyu to China. 5. Propaganda of the brutality of Japanese crimes.

3. From a domestic policy perspective, historical politics has been used by the PRC leadership to accomplish the following tasks: 1. Consolidating the population around a significant event and cultivating the national dignity of the Chinese. 2. Strengthening the authority of the CCP. 3. Legitimizing territorial claims for a domestic audience. 4. Positioning Japan as an unrepentant aggressor, seeking to revive militarism, to the population.

4. In the foreign policy arena, China has used historical politics to: 1. To broadcast its merits to the international community, including Japan, as part of the struggle for regional (world) leadership; 2. To assert "its" version of history in the international arena and to counter historical revisionism on the part of some part of the Japanese elite; 3. To propagandize the cruelty of Japanese aggression. This aspect has two objectives: justification of the PRC's peaceful rise and positioning Japan as an unrepentant aggressor unworthy of increasing its influence on the international arena; 4. Justification of the rights to Taiwan and Diaoyu and pressure on Japan in the context of these issues (including economic and political methods).

5. Historical politics can be called one of China's tools in the context of Sino-Japanese strategic rivalry. China uses it to justify its territorial expansion and attempts to strategically

contain Tokyo. Therefore, it is advantageous for China to broadcast a negative image of Japan and impose a sense of guilt on the latter.

List of publications relevant to the thesis

1. Maliavin V., Kazantsev A. The Supremacy of Semblance. Chinese Worldview as a Resource of the New World Order // Russia in Global Politics. 2023. T. 21. № 2. C. 120-138. URL: <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/verhovenstvo-mnimosti/> (In Russian).
2. Kazantsev A. The Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) and the Politics of Memory in PRC // Problems of the Far East. 2022. № 2. C. 162-173. URL: <https://pdv.jes.su/s013128120018445-0-1/?sl=en> (In Russian).
3. Kazantsev A. The Taiwan Question and PRC Politics of Memory towards Japan // Problems of the Far East. 2023. № 1. C. 9-20. URL: <https://pdv.jes.su/s013128120024221-4-1/> (In Russian).
4. Kazantsev A. The South China Sea and East China Sea Issue from the Perspective of China's Historical Policy towards Japan // Southeast Asia: Actual Problems of Development. 2023. T. 3. № 2(59). C. 212-223. URL: <https://sea.ivran.ru/articles?artid=212787> (In Russian).

Thesis approbation

1. I International Scientific Conference “Civilizations of the East: a view from the XXI century”, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, October 21-22, 2022. The report "Sovereignty in the ritualized society".
2. Annual Conference "Economic, Socio-Political, Ethno-confessional Problems of Asian and African Countries", Center for Research on General Problems of Modern Orientalism of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, March 21-23, 2023. Report "Historical Politics as a Tool of the PRC (Focusing on Sino-Japanese Relations)".
3. V International Conference "World Majority in New Realities: Regional Dimension", Higher School of Economics, Moscow, November 30 - December 1, 2023. Report "Historical Politics as a Tool for the Regional Rise of the PRC (on the Example of Sino-Japanese Relations)".