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THE TRAJECTORY OF the China-Japan-US triangular relationship is likely to have greater bearing on the future of global affairs than that of almost any other international relationship. For that reason, it is extremely important that we think more deeply about how to skillfully manage its dynamics. I am delighted that the authors of this volume have been willing to grapple with this critical issue by taking part in a three-year Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) study that was launched in 2007 and has culminated in this book. The three senior figures who have served as leaders of this study—Gerald Curtis, Ryosei Kokubun, and Wang Jisi—are among the most prominent and thoughtful foreign policy experts in their respective countries. In order to encourage the development of a new generation of experts in each country who are equipped to go beyond bilateral approaches and to think in trilateral terms, they have been willing to give guidance to and share their insights with the other contributors to this volume, a team of some of the most promising younger scholars from the three countries.

Of course, the question of how to best manage trilateral relations is not necessarily a new one. In fact, in 1996, JCIE launched a similar set of interrelated studies on China-Japan-US relations that eventually resulted in five publications on the topic. These were part of the first wave of studies to identify relations among China, Japan, and the United States as one of the most potentially volatile and consequential factors in the region. Remarkably, there was some debate at that time over whether the terms “trilateral” or “triangular” were even appropriate to describe the relationship given that relations were so asymmetrical, primarily because China’s power was still more potential than actual. For example, the United States and Japan boasted the largest and second-largest economies in the world at the time, while China ranked seventh. The mismatch among the three countries in terms of military force and political influence was similarly stark.

However, tensions in the region were clearly growing. In December 1995, in response to Chinese missile tests over the Taiwan Strait, the United States dispatched an aircraft carrier battle group to the waters off of Taiwan as a show of force. Shortly thereafter, in April 1996, Japan and the United States began a review of their alliance framework, and the new US-Japan defense guidelines that were released in 1997 signaled for the first time that

alliance obligations might extend to military action against China in order to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

By 2007, a decade later, the big news was China's rise as a global power. China had climbed in economic rankings to the number three position, behind only the United States and Japan, and its growing influence in regional and even global affairs was increasingly palpable. In the span of just a decade, it had become accepted wisdom that the relationship between the three countries would be key to the future of Asia. In fact, everywhere we looked there was growing evidence of how interconnected the political and economic dynamics of the three bilateral legs of these relations—i.e., the China-Japan, US-China, and US-Japan relationships—had become. It was clear to observers that discussions between Tokyo and Washington were affecting how the US and Japanese governments were dealing with China, that tensions in China-Japan relations were complicating US policy in the region, and that Japanese policy was affected by the course of US-China relations.

In sum, by 2007, the dynamics of the trilateral relationship had proven to be even more complex and consequential than we had anticipated a decade earlier. For this reason, we launched a new study on “Managing China-Japan-US Relations and Strengthening Trilateral Cooperation.” Conceived out of the conviction that a better understanding of the trilateral dynamics is essential for leaders in the three countries to minimize the potential for conflict in the region, this study set out to assess how China, Japan, and the United States have become more interconnected, what impact the trilateral dynamics have on the bilateral legs of the relationship, and how the three countries can build mutual confidence and cooperate in ways that spill over to other aspects of their relations.

I hope and expect that the final result, this volume, will encourage policymakers in all three countries to think trilaterally even while acting bilaterally and will encourage them to explore how to better manage their crucial relations and deal with the increasing number of shared challenges before them. These include issues particular to trilateral relations as well as traditional and nontraditional challenges at the regional and global levels. And, of course, the ultimate aim in stabilizing trilateral relations is to encourage leaders in the three countries to find a way to avoid the clashes that have arisen so many times throughout history when there have been shifts in the regional and global balances of power—shifts that are comparable to what we are seeing today in Asia.

One aspect of this project that has been particularly gratifying is that this was an intensely trilateral endeavor. The three senior experts who agreed

to lead this project convened a stellar group of emerging intellectual leaders from the three countries who have worked together closely as a team over the three years of the study, engaging in deep and thoughtful debate, expanding upon one another's analysis, and generously offering suggestions, feedback, and encouragement to one another. The entire research team came together for workshops in Tokyo, Beijing, and Honolulu—and it was heartening to see how they developed a common sense of purpose. Their participation in the project represented a major commitment of time and energy, and I wish to profusely thank Wang Jisi, Ryosei Kokubun, and Gerald Curtis for their guidance and the entire team for their efforts.

Going beyond the project team, there is a long list of people who should be acknowledged for making this endeavor a success. First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to the Henry Luce Foundation and especially to Terry Lautz and Helena Kolenda for generously funding the project and, moreover, for providing the encouragement and inspiration to undertake this important endeavor in the first place. I also wish to relay our deep appreciation to the Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation for providing the additional funding that has made this study possible. In addition, we are grateful to Peking University for supporting our Beijing workshop and to the East-West Center, and especially its president Charles Morrison, for serving as host for our Honolulu workshop.

Also, I wish to recognize and thank the JCIE staff who have contributed so much to this study. This includes Jim Gannon and Ryo Sahashi, who have overseen the editing of this volume and who coordinated the project with assistance from Atsuko Geiger, Hiyuko Fujita, Yuka Inabata, and others. In addition, Kimberly Gould Ashizawa, Susan Hubbard, and Lilian Haney played key roles in editing this book, and Patrick Ishiyama adeptly prepared the layout and graphics, along with David Monico.

If the last 10 years are any indication, the coming years will bring many unanticipated challenges that threaten to shake relations among China, Japan, and the United States. However, I believe that all of the project participants join in my hope that leaders in the three countries will be able to manage the dynamics of the relationship with wisdom and dexterity and that the seeds of trilateral cooperation that are currently being planted through the intense efforts of many individuals in the three countries may blossom and grow.

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