

Novelist Kenzaburo Oe: Japan should Reflect on its Colonial History

On the Diaoyu Islands issue, the Japanese government has attempted to turn back the wheel of history,

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BEIJING: Japanese novelist Kenzaburo Oe, a Nobel laureate, has called on the Japanese government to reflect on its view of history and stop creating a “vicious cycle” on the Diaoyu Islands issue.

A civic group’s statement, endorsed by about 1,300 Japanese people, including Oe, said on Friday that the root cause of the souring Japan-China ties on its 40th anniversary is Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara’s announcement of “buying” the islands, and the subsequent “nationalization” of the islands by the Japanese government.

“The most important thing for Japan is to recognize and reflect on its historical issues,” the statement stressed, referring to Japan’s invasion of its neighboring countries during World War II, and to “honestly express that both to itself and to other countries.”

Such are the voices of reason from the people. The statement has given a remarkably objective analysis of the the crux of the Diaoyu Islands issue that has plunged the China-Japan relations to a historical low.

The Diaoyu Islands have been a silent witness to the Japanese aggression and colonization. The Japanese government has not yet, even to this day, given up its colonialist attitude to Asia, attempting to “legitimize” the land it stole from China and continue its colonization.

Such a move is an open denial of the outcomes of the victory of the world anti-fascist war, and a grave challenge to the post-war world order. Moreover, it severely hurts the feelings of the people in the countries that it had invaded only decades ago.

On the Diaoyu Islands issue, the Japanese government has attempted to turn back the wheel of history, which seriously undermined the political foundation of the China-Japan ties and set the bilateral ties, even the entire region, in a dangerous direction.

As a matter of fact, Japan’s provocation has not only led to worsening tension over the Diaoyu Islands, but also will ultimately boomerang on itself.

China's Assistant Foreign Minister Le Yucheng has recently warned that Japan should abandon the illusion that it can occupy the Diaoyu Islands and that sending a few envoys to China to explain the issue will be the end of it.

It is clear that China will by no means tolerate a two-faced partner, which talks of friendly ties and cooperation on the one hand but intentionally creates damage on the other.

To maintain a healthy China-Japan relationship, efforts on both sides are needed and the onus does not only fall on China.

Now it is crucial for the Japanese government to make some real efforts to rein in domestic rightist sentiments and to prevent the ugly scenario of a militarism resurrection.

Nobody should be so foolish as to interpret China's commitment to peaceful development as being weak and easily bullied or to even take advantage of that to grab the Chinese territory.

Any idea that China would sit idle to see its rightful land stolen by a foreign country will always remain a mere illusion.

The recent moves by the Japanese side concerning the Diaoyu Islands have played havoc on the China-Japan relationship, which has entered its 40th year since far-sighted leaders on both sides overcame great challenges and normalized the bilateral ties.

At such a critical juncture, the wise choice for the Japanese government is to listen to voices of reason from both its own people and the international community, give due respect to history and reality, and forgo the illusion that it could grab the Diaoyu Islands from China if it tries hard enough.

It is indeed desirable for all that the China-Japan relations return to the right track as soon as possible.

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