

The Baltic Sea and the Sea of Japan: History of Cooperation

Yulia Lamasheva

要 旨

環バルト海の国々は昔から国際協力をしていたので、冷戦後の協力の発展も当然である。他方、環日本海では第二次世界大戦の負の遺産があるので、国際協力が難しいと考えられる。しかし、どこの地域の歴史の中にも戦争の時代と協力の時代があったはずである。本論文の目的は、環バルト海と環日本海の歴史を考察したうえで、双方の地域における協力の発展過程を明らかにすることである。その際、特にハンザという、今、環バルト海圏で広く使われている概念に注意が払われる。また、環日本海圏には「ハンザ時代」があったかどうかについても論じた。

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I. Introduction: the research settings

From far away, the Baltic region looks perhaps as a rather homogeneous area. The Baltic Sea is situated in Europe, all bordering States are maritime States.

However, in each of the ten Baltic countries different languages are spoken. Seven languages belong to the Indo-European family of languages: Danish, German and Swedish are Germanic languages, and Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian are Slavic languages, Estonian and Finnish are probably Asian languages. Religious cleavages divide the mainly Protestant Nordic countries and Estonia/Latvia from Greek Orthodox Russia and from the influence of Catholicism in Poland and Lithuania. The different ethnic origin of the Baltic nations explains to some extent countless rivalries and conflicts throughout the recorded history of the region of some thousand years.

How did it happen then, that the Baltic nations turned to cooperation? The answer that comes first to mind is the common past and experiences in this field, in the first place Hansa. That is, probably, because this name is being widely used by politicians, economists, journalists, and many other categories of people, who wish to make it clear, that cooperation in the Baltic Sea region has a long tradition. However, everyone agrees, that Hansa ceased its existence in the early 17th century, that its influence was not always positive, that Hansa was fighting wars with the Baltic Sea countries, and so on and so forth. Why do people talk about a new Hansa then? Because it is a symbol of a prosperous Baltic community, of subregional cooperation, of a time, when the Baltic Sea was connecting people, rather than separating. The Hansa is partially a myth, created for the purpose of helping people around the Baltic sea to re-establish their Baltic identity. One way of rebuilding a common identity is referring to the period of cooperation and prosperity.

As neighbors, countries always share a common past. Except for the periods, when one or another country closed itself to the outside world, there has always been some kind of interaction. Naturally, there have been times of peace and times of war. Remembering times of war is important in order to prevent future conflicts, but is not a constructive element for promoting cooperation and building a common identity. Concentrating on past cooperation and common successes instead is more fruitful as it calls for future cooperation in order to reach even more. That is exactly what Hansa is good for.

Then the next question arises. What about the Japan Sea Region? Does it not share a common past? Have there been no times of cooperation and prosperity? This is a reasonable question, indeed. In order to find such a period, which could be used for creating a myth about the Japan Sea's glorious past, I make a

short review of history of the Baltic and Japan Sea regions, and then compare periods of their development. Naturally, I am aware of my limitations concerning this article's size as well as my knowledge of history. I do not intend to make the most complete and perfect picture of the past 2 millennia, neither am I going to describe every century in detail. My goal is to find and describe a period of active cooperation in the Sea of Japan and, if possible, give it a name, which could become a slogan in the future, if the countries of this region wished to create a common regional identity some day.

II. The Baltic Sea Region history

To a large extent, the early history of the Baltic Sea region is a chronicle of struggles for power, wars and rivalry between neighboring countries. Still, it is a fact, that cooperation has been developing for several centuries, has assumed different forms and has reinforced the common Baltic identity. It is virtually impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between periods of conflicts and times of cooperation, since both process were simultaneous, and cooperation of two countries often meant a conflict with a third one. However, I tried to separate different periods of international relations development according to the major trends. Even when cooperation and conflict walk hand in hand, it is still possible to define it as war or peace.

1. The era of exploration

8th-10th century: Viking expeditions

13th century: Incursions into the Baltics by Teutonic Knights

The Varangians or Variags were Vikings who travelled eastwards from Sweden. Promoting trade, piracy and mercenary militarism, they roamed the river systems and portages of what later became Russia. They created a network of strongholds and trade posts establishing the first Russian state.

In 1226, Prussia was conquered by the Teutonic Knights, a military religious order, who converted the Prussians to Christianity. The Teutonic Knights were overthrown by the Prussians with help from Poland and Lithuania in 1454.

The Danes conquered the northern half of Estonia in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. From then onwards the greater part of areas now occupied by the states of Latvia and Estonia gradually fell under the

dominion first of the Knights of the Sword, and then of the Order of Teutonic Knights, to whom, in 1346, the Danes sold their share of Estonia. In Lithuania, on the other hand, the Teutonic Knights were never able to make much headway except in the Memel (Klaipeda) territory.

2. The era of cooperation

1241 Lübeck and Hamburg conclude a treaty of mutual protection, forming Hansa

1260: Greenland and Iceland recognize the Norwegian king and Norway reaches it's largest size.

1380-1814: Danish-Norwegian union.

1389-1521 The Kalmar Union

Originally a Hansa was a company of merchants trading with foreign lands. The merchant guilds and town associations led to leagues. Most notable was the company of German merchants with headquarters at Visby; pushing east, they founded a branch at Novgorod. In London, where German merchants had traded since the 11th century, the privileges granted to Cologne merchants were extended to other Germans, and a Hansa of German merchants was formed. A major impetus to the league's development was the lack of a powerful German national government to provide security for trade. In order to obtain mutual security, exclusive trading rights, and, wherever possible, trade monopoly, the towns drew closer together. In 1241 Lübeck and Hamburg concluded a treaty of mutual protection. Other cities joined this association, and a strong league grew up led by Lübeck. Ports and inland towns from Holland to Poland entered the league, but the north German cities remained the principal members. The league vigorously extended its operations, founding principal foreign branches at Bruges and Bergen. The Hansa towns reached their summit in their victories over Waldemar IV of Denmark, gaining in the Treaty of Stralsund (1370) a virtual trade monopoly in Scandinavia. Their Baltic hegemony continued through numerous wars until their defeat by the Dutch in 1441. Despite its success, the league suffered from lack of organization. Although assemblies of the league met irregularly at Lübeck, many towns did not send representatives, and decisions were subject to review by the individual towns. The number of members fluctuated, probably from less than 100 to over 160. By the 16th century internal dissension, curtailment of freedom by the German princes, growth of centralized foreign states and consequent loss of Hanseatic privileges, advances of Dutch and English shipping, and various changes in trade all operated against the league. The last Diet was held in 1669, but the league was never

formally dissolved. Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen are still known as Hanseatic cities. The Kalmar Union was a union of three Nordic kingdoms formed in 1389, when Queen Margrete - already regent in Norway and Denmark - was elected regent in Sweden. The union treaty stated that the countries were to act as a single kingdom vis-à-vis other countries and states, and assist one another in the event of war. The union functioned in practice up to 1521, when Gustavus Vasa was elected king of Sweden. The owners of large tracts of land in Sweden and Norway disliked the Kalmar union.

3. The era of battles for power

1410: Poles defeat the Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Grunwald.

1561: Swedish troops occupy Reval and large parts of Estonia

1563-70: The Seven-years-war between Sweden and Denmark.

1569: Union of Lublin: Poland and Lithuania join under a single crown

1582: Almost the whole territory of the Baltic countries (other than northern Estonia) under the overlordship of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

1611-1718: Sweden reaches it's largest size

1700-1721: The Great Nordic War

1721: At the peace in Nystad Sweden lost the Baltic provinces and parts of the Karelia to Russia

1772, 1793, 1795: Partitions of Poland

1794: Kosciuszko leads an uprising against the Russians.

1809: Russia conquers Finland

At this period of history, Denmark was the largest and richest of the Nordic countries. The Norwegian and Swedish landowners - along with the German members of the Hanseatic League - were of the opinion that Denmark dominated the decisionmaking process. This period also marks the emergence of Sweden as a major power, when King Gustavus Vasa proved capable of exploiting the discontent amongst the landowners.

In the meantime the more volatile shore of the Baltic is the eastern one, where Sweden, Poland and Russia fight over the regions now known as Estonia and Latvia. Grouped together under the medieval name of Livonia, they have been harshly governed for some three centuries by a German military order, the Teutonic Knights. By the mid-16th century the Knights are vulnerable. Already disbanded in neighbouring

Prussia, they are enfeebled in Livonia.

The weakness of the Teutonic Order leads to intervention by all the neighbours of Livonia. In 1558 Sweden annexes the northern part of Estonia. In the same year the Russian tsar Ivan the Terrible invades from the east. Three years later Poland claims regions in the south.

The Nordic region was split. Sweden and Finland formed one alliance, while Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands formed a counter alliance.

During the next seventy years, in a series of wars and treaties, Sweden prevails over its rivals. After the truce of Altmark, ending a war between Poland and Sweden in 1629, the whole of Estonia is in the Swedish empire. So is Latvia north of the Daugava.

In the 16th century, Poland and Lithuania expanded eastward to annex much of the Ukraine and some Russian territory. From this time Poland became involved in wars with Sweden, Russia, and Turkey. In 1610 the Poles succeeded in occupying Moscow, but this success was short-lived. Russian advances on Polish territory and a Swedish invasion in 1655 created a major crisis. The Poles fought back, however, and the Swedish invasion was checked while a truce with Russia was obtained.

Sweden's successes in the eastern Baltic are rapidly followed by similar gains from Denmark in two wars between 1643 and 1660. These wars bring into Swedish hands the two largest islands in the Baltic and even more significantly - after a Swedish march across the ice towards Copenhagen in 1658 - the ceding of the province of Skåne on the northern side of the narrow entrance to the sea. These conquests give Sweden an unbroken stretch of the Baltic coastline all the way from Göteborg in the west to Riga in the east.

The Great Nordic War in the early part of the 18th century brought an end to Sweden's period as a major power. By the treaty of Nystad, in 1721, Peter the Great obtains the east Baltic coast from Vyborg down to Riga (a stretch in which he has already built himself St Petersburg). With these advantages Russia replaces Sweden as the leading power in the Baltic. In 1809 Russia attacked and occupied Finland.

Prussia, Russia, and Austria all annexed parts of Poland in 1772. In 1793 Poland was further partitioned among the three powers. The patriot Thaddeus Kosciuszko led a peasant army in a national insurrection against the Russians. In 1795 Poland's last remaining territory was occupied by the three partitioning powers. Many Poles fled the country. In 1807 Napoleon supported the formation of a small and weak Polish state, but after Napoleon's defeat by Russia the Russians returned.

Sweden joined forces with England in waging war against the French and the Danish-Norwegian union. France and Denmark lost, and Frederik VI, king of Denmark, was forced to cede Norway to Sweden (the

Peace of Kiel). Karl Johan became king of the union between Sweden and Norway, which lasted until 1905.

4. Scandinavism

1815-1905: Union between Sweden and Norway

1873-1914: Currency union:- Denmark - Sweden – Norway

Scandinavism is the term used as a designation for the sense of solidarity shared by the people of the Nordic region, and for all activities designed to promote co-operation between people or to unite them at political level. In a narrower sense, the term is used to refer to a movement advocating political union between the Nordic kingdoms from 1830 to around 1860.

After a few months of independence, in 1814 Norway abandoned union with Denmark in favor of a new union with Sweden. King Karl Johan had a government in Stockholm, and another in Oslo to govern Norway. The countries were united under one king - a form of union also referred to as "a personal union. In the 19th century the Norwegian parliament forced the king to adopt the practice of appointing ministers from the party with the majority in the parliament. Norway was thus the first Nordic country to introduce parliamentarism. In 1905, the system suffered a total collapse. The Norwegian government resigned, and the king failed to persuade other Norwegians to serve as ministers. It was agreed then that Norway should become independent and have its own king.

Towards the end of the 19th century, trade increased as a result of the developments in railway traffic and shipping. With a view to facilitating trade, it was decided to introduce a Nordic currency in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The governments decided to use a common unit of currency - the krone - applying the decimal system. Finland, which had introduced gold as the basis for the mark in 1878, now introduced the silver mark.

5. Battles for freedom

1914-1918: World War I

1917: Independence of Finland

1918: Independent Poland is reborn

1939-1945 World War II

Sept. 1, 1939 Nazi Germany attacks Poland; World War II begins.

1944: Iceland declares independence from Denmark.

During World War I Russia fought Austria and Germany, often on Polish territory, and during this time the population suffered greatly. The Polish leaders, however, gained the support of the Allies, especially France, and in 1918 an independent Poland again appeared.

The Baltic States declared independence in 1918, fought independence wars against German freikorps and Bolshevik Russia and were recognized as independent countries in 1920.

1914-18: The arms race between the European powers leads to the outbreak of World War I. Initial German successes quickly give way to the attrition of trench warfare. November 1939-March 1940: During World War II Finland was in war with Soviet "The Winter War".

During the 1930s Nazi Germany put forward demands for the annexation of the free city of Gdansk (Danzig) and began to organize incidents on the Polish-German border. On Sept. 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Germany and the Soviet Union annexed parts of Polish territories. In 1940, under the terms of the Soviet-German Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of interest, the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, Latvia, and later Lithuania. In 1941, Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union and occupied all of Baltic states. By late 1944, the Soviet Army, driving the German occupants back West, reached the region again, and re-established control by early 1945. The Baltic republics were established as the Estonian SSR, the Latvian SSR and the Lithuanian SSR, being constituent parts of the Soviet Union.

Polish frontiers underwent a major shift after the Allied conference in Potsdam, Germany, in 1945. The Soviet Union retained control of the territories that it had obtained in 1939, while Poland gained large areas of former German territory in the west, including the industrial region of Upper Silesia, the ports of Gdansk and Szczecin, and a long Baltic coastline.

6. Post-war developments

1972: No to EU in Norway.

1973: Denmark joins EU

1995: Sweden joins EU

1990-1991: Independence of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia

2004: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland join NATO and EU

1949: Germany is divided into the Federal Republic of Germany in the west and the Communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the east.

1961: The GDR builds the Berlin Wall to stop the exodus of its population to the free and affluent West.

1989-99: The Berlin Wall is opened and, in 1990, the two Germanys are reunited. In 1994, Russian, British and French forces withdraw from Berlin. In 1999 Germany adopts the Euro.

In 1946 the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian ministers of justice decided to appoint a committee to draw up proposals on co-operation in the future on legislation in the Nordic region.

1948: The Faroe Islands get autonomy in Denmark.

1949: Denmark becomes a member of NATO.

In February 1953, the Nordic Council became a reality. Finland joined the council in 1956. Today the council has 87 members. The autonomous territories - Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland - also have Nordic secretariats.

The Nordic Council of Ministers was formed following the adoption of amendments to the Helsinki Treaty, which stipulated that the Council of Ministers was to serve as the official joint co-operation body for the Nordic governments. Each country appoints its own minister for co-operation, who assumes responsibility for overall co-ordination of co-operation measures.

The three Baltic states declared their independence in 1990 and their independence was recognized by the Soviet Union on September 6, 1991. Rather than new states, they declared themselves to be in fact restorations of the pre-war republics that had existed between the first and second world wars. Membership of NATO was achieved on 29 March 2004 and accession to the EU took place on 1 May 2004.

Historically speaking, the Baltic Sea region has been a stage, for which powers inside and outside the region have struggled with each other, seeking for material gains, and/or for strategic advantage. In the background of political strifes in the region through centuries, there was the Baltic Sea as a main artery linking different ethnic groups and civilizations into closer relations with each other.

It had been the reason for the activities of the Vikings. The Hanseatic League also aimed at the

monopoly of East-West commerce through the same sea routes. In modern ages, the Baltic Sea region contributed to the economic development of Western Europe as commodity markets and sources for the supply of raw materials, with the result that commercial confrontation between the Great Britain and Holland focused on the Baltic Sea region. Although the Baltic Sea region was left outside the active zone of European trade since the end of the 19th century, it never decreased in economic importance. Economic features of this region changed entirely after the Second World War, not only because Nordic countries located on the Northern coast of the Baltic Sea were Camp on the southern coast launched into industrialization through planning economic system. Under such circumstances, there swiftly came up the questions of resources and ecology, which have taken place of the commerce, which had declined under the East-West confrontation, to strengthen the ties of intercourse between the countries in the drainage basin of the Baltic Sea.¹

Here we can distinguish several periods of cooperation, the first of which was, indeed, Hansa. The Hansa was a network, to use a modern term, but the monopolistic aspirations of the German based Hansa also caused resistance among Swedes, Danes and Russians.

The second period of clear and straightforward order in the Baltic Sea Region occurred during the time when Sweden was a great power in Europe. This period, stretching from the middle of the 16th century to the beginning of the 18th century, partly coincided in time with that of the Hanseatic League. In fact, Sweden took over the dominance of the Baltic Sea from the Hansards and when order was based on military, mainly naval, strength. The Swedes exercised their power over the Baltic Sea Region through various measures, one being toll payments for merchants passing the numerous river mounts in the region. Other areas around the Baltic Sea, such as Finland, Estonia and parts of present-day Latvia, were also Swedish provinces. The Swedish power was later crushed by the Russians who did not, however, achieve ascendancy over the Baltic Sea.

It must be also mentioned, that during the inter-war period 1918-39 the contacts between the countries around the Baltic Sea increased. The recently independent states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became new actors in the region. The connections between Sweden and Finland on the one hand, and Estonia and Latvia on the other, increased. However, the contacts were never very intense. The Nordic countries directed their commerce towards Western Europe.²

III. The Japan Sea Region history

In the similar manner I would like to analyze the historical background of international relations in the Japan Sea region. In fact, the cooperation here started much earlier than in the Baltic Sea due to the earlier formation of states. Russia has appeared on the map of this region almost 2 000 years later, and that gap is still to be felt. The main question here is, however, is whether there was something like Hansa in the Sea of Japan, and if there was, can we give this period (organization, country, person) a name and exploit this positive image of past cooperation experience in order to foster the present relations in the region.³

1. The period of active exchanges

1st century: Buddhism comes to China

37 BC – 668 AD Three Kingdoms in Korea

Ca 400: Yamato Japan created

538/552: Introduction of Buddhism to Japan

581-617: Sui Dynasty in China

618-907: Tang Dynasty in China

645: The Taika reform in Japan

In the 1st century trade routes between China and India brought Buddhist missionaries and established the "Silk Road" that led to contact with societies as distant as the Roman Empire. Numerous tribal states on the Korean peninsula consolidated into three kingdoms: Koguryo, Paekche and Silla. All were strongly influenced by Chinese culture and government administration, including the use of the Confucian examination system to train government officials. Buddhism, originally from India, was also adopted from China and became an important part of Korea's religious culture to the present day. Like the Japanese and Vietnamese, Koreans adopted the Chinese writing system. The powerful nation state of Koguryo dominated northern Korea and much of the Manchurian Plain, fighting China's Sui and Tang dynasties for both territory and independence. A major Paekche expedition to Kyushu, Japan, led to the creation of the Yamato Kingdom (ca 400) and the beginnings of a new cultural legacy. The Kingdom of Silla unified Korea and took on the cloak of Tang Chinese culture. Silla was also very active in maritime trade in East Asia, and the kingdom was

even known by Arab traders, who were the first to transmit knowledge of Korea, or "al-Sila" as the Arabs called it, to the West.

Japan's classical period (ca. 550-1185) is the first of several periods in Japanese history where the Japanese genius for deliberate cultural borrowing and adaptation is evident. In the 6th to the 8th centuries the Japanese study and borrow from the continental culture of China, first introduced to them by Koreans. The Japanese then send study missions to China. In the 6th century Koreans introduce Buddhism, and with it Chinese culture, to Japan and the Japanese proceed to study and consciously borrow and adapt elements of Chinese civilization to Japan. The Japanese borrow the notion of a centralized state, Confucian values of moral cultivation of individuals in service of the state, Buddhism, and Chinese language. They use Chinese written and spoken language as an official language of government; the Japanese also take the Chinese writing system and adapt it to develop a writing system for their own spoken language, i.e. Japanese, which up until this time was only spoken. Following the adaptation of the Chinese written script to the Japanese spoken language, Japanese literature flourishes. In 645 a new government and administrative system was established after the Chinese model (the Taika reform). All land was bought by the state and redistributed equally among the farmers in a large land reform in order to introduce the new tax system that was also adopted from China.

The Sui (581-617 CE) and subsequent Tang (618-906 CE) dynasties reunify China. The Tang was a period of great imperial expansion, which reached its greatest height in the first half of the 8th century. At that time, Chinese control was recognized by people from Tibet and Central Asia in the west to Mongolia, Manchuria (now the Northeast region of China), and Korea in the north and Annam in the south. China becomes the preeminent civilization in East Asia and the world with links east to Korea and Japan and west, along the Silk Route. Buddhism played a dominant role in Tang dynasty China. Buddhist religious art of the Tang period is today seen in Japan, where it spread over the course of the Tang period. The Tang dynasty of China (7th century-10th century) was a "golden age" of Chinese civilization, and Chinese culture strongly influenced China's neighbors at this time, especially Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. Of the three, Korea was probably the most faithful to the Chinese "model," although it maintained its cultural distinctiveness and, unlike Vietnam, was never incorporated into the Chinese empire itself.

The East Asian cultural sphere evolves when Japan, Korea, and what is today Vietnam all share adapted elements of Chinese civilization of this period (that of the Tang dynasty), in particular Buddhism, Confucian social and political values, and literary Chinese and its writing system.

2. The period of invasions

- 1191: The Zen sect is introduced to Japan
- 1206: The first Mongolian state is formed
- 1274: Mongols attempt to invade Japan
- 1279: Mongols invade China
- 1281: Mongols make second attempt to invade Japan
- 1368 Mongols leave China
- 1467-1573: Sengoku (war) period in Japan
- 1550: Mongols come back to China
- 1592,1597: Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi invades Korea
- 1627, 1636: Korea is invaded by Manchus
- 1639: Almost complete isolation of Japan from the rest of the world.
- 1644: China is invaded by Manchus
- 1772: Russia and China define the Mongolian border
- 1792 The Russians unsuccessfully try to establish trade relations with Japan

In 1206 AD, a single Mongolian state was formed based on nomadic tribal groupings under the leadership of Chinghis Khan. In 1279 the Mongols invade China from the north, ruling less than one-hundred years, to 1368. After subjugating China Mongols invaded Korea. Under Khubilai Khan (1215-1294), the supreme leader of the Mongols and a grandson of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan (d. 1227), the Mongols move the Chinese capital to Beijing and establish the capital of their empire there. The Ming defeated the Mongol conquerors in 1368 and reasserted Chinese military and political authority.

The Mongol forces attempt to invade Japan twice, in 1274 and 1281. They are forced to turn back during both attempts by typhoons at sea. These typhoons are called kamikaze, or "divine winds," by the Japanese and are understood as winds sent by Shinto gods. The Mongols never occupy Japan.

Following the end of Mongol occupation, Choson established deeper relations with the neighboring countries of China and Japan. Ming China's symbolic tributary system created a model for diplomatic relations and economic trade with Korea and Japan.

Japan in the 1500s is locked in a century of decentralized power and incessant warfare among competing

feudal lords, a period known as the "Sengoku," or "Country at War" (1467-1573). Within this context of feudal civil war of the 1500s, Japanese pirates are active in the trade along the China coast — an alternative to the official relations between China and Japan. Zen Buddhism spreads among the samurai, emphasizing personal enlightenment through discipline and meditation. The Mongols returned and seized Peking in 1550.

In 1592 and 1597, the Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, having recently united the feuding domains of Japan under his leadership, invaded Korea as the first step in his attempt to conquer China. China, then under the Ming dynasty, came to Korea's aid and defeated Hideyoshi's forces, but in the process Korea was devastated by the war. Korea was again invaded in 1627 and 1636 by the Manchus. The Manchus went on to conquer China in 1644.

After this, the Choson government followed a policy of seclusion, restricting its interaction with Japan largely to ceremonial contacts through the island of Tsushima, and limiting its contact with China to a few tributary missions a year.

In Japan, from the beginning of the 17th century, in an effort to reestablish order in its international relations, the Tokugawa Shogunate prohibits trade with Western nations, prohibits Japanese from going abroad to trade (ending the unofficial piracy and trade on the China coast), and reaffirms Japan's official relations with China and Korea within the East Asian international structure. Following the "Act of Seclusion" (1636) setting forth these conditions, Japan is effectively "secluded" from interchange with Western Europe (but not with East Asia) for the next 200 years. Within East Asia, trade continues with the Koreans and Chinese, and exchange of goods and ideas with China is maintained. The East Asian political order, with China at the center, is reinforced.

In 1727, Russia and Manchu China concluded the Treaty of Khyakta, delimiting the border between China and Mongolia that exists in large part today.

3. Imperialist wars

1854: Commodore Matthew Perry forces the Japanese government to open a number of ports for trade

1876: Treaty of Kanghwa between Japan and Korea 1894-95: Sino-Japanese War

1898: Boxers Rebellion in China

1904-05: Russo-Japanese War.

1910: Annexion of Korea by Japan

1914-18: Japan joins allied forces in WW1

1931: Mukden incident

1937: Incident at Marco Polo Bridge leads to the Second Sino-Japanese War

1941: Pacific War starts.

In the 1800s China simultaneously experiences major internal strains and Western imperialist pressure, backed by military might which China cannot match. In the late 1800s Great Britain and other European nations, the United States, Russia, and Japan looked for spheres of influence in China. In some cases they seized Chinese territories, but usually they only sought the advantages of trade and commercial enterprise. In 1898 there was Boxers Rebellion. Boxers were attacking Western missionaries and Chinese converts to Christianity. In June an expeditionary force, made up of Russian, British, German, French, American, and Japanese troops, was organized to proceed to Peking, put down the rebellion, and protect Western nationals. It took a year for the parties to the conflict to agree on a settlement, which was entitled the Peace of Peking. Heavy fines were levied against the Chinese government, and existing commercial treaties were amended in favor of the Western powers. The foreign coastal defenses were dismantled. China's position in the world and self-image is reversed in a mere 100 year period (c.a. 1840-1940) from leading civilization to subjected and torn country.

The Japanese witness China's experience with the military power of Western nations, and after the arrival of an American delegation in Japan in 1853, Japan is also forced to open its ports. Japan is able to adapt rapidly to match the power of the West and soon establishes itself as a competitor with the Western powers for colonial rights in Asia. Japan rapidly becomes a major participant in this international system and seeks particular imperialist privileges with its East Asian neighbors, China and Korea. The 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa between Japan and Korea, named after the island off the west coast of Korea where it was signed, was a classic "unequal treaty" of the kind Western powers were imposing on Asian countries, including China and Japan, in the nineteenth century. The treaty gave Japan special trading rights and other privileges in Korea that were not reciprocated for Koreans in Japan. In 1894-95, Japan challenges and defeats China in a war over influence in Korea, thereby upsetting the traditional international order in East Asia, where China was the supreme power and Japan a tribute-bearing subordinate power. Japan defeats Russia, a major Western power, in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905-06 over rights in Manchuria and Korea. Chinese reformers and revolutionaries base themselves in Japan; Western nations take note of Japan's new power. By 1910, Japan

annexes Korea as a colony and takes control over indigenous Korean modernization efforts.

In 1931, Japan takes control of Manchuria and establishes the puppet state of "Manchukuo"; in 1937, Japan invades the rest of China.

Japan's influence over Manchuria had been steadily growing since the end of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05. By 1931, Japan had invested vast sums of money into the economy of Manchuria, which was effectively controlled by the South Manchuria Railway Company. In 1931 the Kwantung Army (Japanese armed forces in Manchuria) occupied Manchuria. In the following year, "Manchukuo" was declared an independent state, controlled by the Kwantung Army through a puppet government. In the same year, the Japanese air force bombarded Shanghai in order to protect Japanese residents from anti Japanese movements. By the mid-1930s the Japanese had seized Inner Mongolia and parts of northeastern China and had created the North China Autonomous Region with no resistance from the Nationalists.

In July 1937, the second Sino-Japanese War broke out. The Japanese forces succeeded in occupying almost the whole coast of China and committed severe war atrocities on the Chinese population, especially during the fall of the capital Nanking. However, the Chinese government never surrendered completely, and the war continued on a lower scale until 1945.

4. The Cold War

1945: Japan surrenders after two atomic bombs are dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki

1948: Two Korean governments are formed

1950-1953: Korean war

1952: The Allied Occupation of Japan ends

1956: Japan becomes member of the UN.

1972: Normalization of relations between Japan and China.

1978: Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan

The Japanese surrendered to the Allies on August 15, 1945, that ended World War II. Japan was devastated. After the Korean War, and accelerated by it, the recovery of Japan's economy flourished.

Korea was divided into zones of occupation by the victorious Americans and Soviets, which failed to reach an agreement on a unified Korean government, and in 1948 two separate governments were established,

each claiming to be the legitimate government of all Korea: the Republic of Korea in Seoul, in the American zone, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Pyongyang, in the Soviet zone.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces invaded the South. The Korean War drew in the Americans in support of South Korea and the Chinese in support of the North. In July 1953 the Korean War ended in a truce with Korea still divided into two mutually antagonistic states, separated by a heavily fortified "De-Militarized Zone" (DMZ). Korea has remained divided ever since.

After the war China was initially closely tied to the Soviet Union and firmly identified as a member of the socialist camp. Within a few years, however, the Sino-Soviet relationship had begun to deteriorate, the victim, among other factors, of differing national interests, differing interpretations of Marxism, and Chinese resentment over heavy-handed Soviet attempts at control. By the mid-1960s China and the Soviet Union had become openly hostile toward each other. Japan's relations to the Soviet Union were normalized in 1956, the ones to China in 1972. In 1972, North and South Korea signed a joint declaration on peace and reconciliation for the first time. A more extensive agreement on reconciliation, non-aggression, exchange and cooperation was signed in late 1991. In June 2000, the leaders of the two Koreas, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Il, met in Pyongyang for the first-ever North-South summit meeting, which appears, however, to be only the first step in a long process of mutual recognition and co-existence.

Since ancient times, the seas of Asia have linked one region with another and, as sites for the mutual exchange of people, objects, culture and technology, they became a cradle of history, serving as a driving force for the reforms that brought new eras. Korea has been greatly influenced by Chinese civilization, borrowing the written language, arts, religions, and models of government administration from China, and, in the process, transforming these borrowed traditions into distinctly Korean forms. Korea has in turn exerted a strong cultural influence on Japan. Various links were first formed between different regions at around the time of the Song dynasty in China, heralding a new age of interchange that could be called the age of great navigation in East Asia. This interchange mediated by the seas not only linked one country while founded on a Chinese-centered world view, but the seas of East Asia also bustled with the activities of maritime merchants for whom the sea was a communal world that paid no heed to national borders or nationalities. With interchange across the seas as its cornerstone, this era was the most glittering era in all Asian history. This was no Hansa in the meaning of a city union or a merchants' league, but there in fact was a long period of cooperation in the region. It can be called many names. My idea would be to call it Pohai in honor of one

of the Three Kingdoms (some sources call it Paekche, some – Bohai or Bokkai). This Korean kingdom was accepting Chinese culture, transferring it to Japan, and its territory was stretching into the present Russian land.

IV. Looking for Hansa in the Japan Sea Region

Below is the table composed on the basis of the two tables above (Table 1). It is made in order to compare the developments in the two regions in time.

Table 1. Comparison of historical developments in the Baltic Sea and the Sea of Japan

Period	Baltic Sea Region	Japan Sea Region
1st-12th centuries	The era of exploration 8 th -10 th centuries: Viking expeditions 13 th century: Teutonic Knights come to Baltic states	The period of active exchanges 1 st -4 th centuries: Chinese culture and administration system comes to Korea 5 th century: Chinese culture transferred from Korea to China 7 th -11 th century: China-centered North-East Asia
13th-16th centuries	The era of cooperation 1241: Hanseatic League established 1380-1814: Danish-Norwegian Union 1389-1521: The Kalmar Union	The period of wars and invasions 1274-1550: Constant attempts (sometimes successful) by Mongols to invade China, Korea and Japan 1467-1573: War period in Japan 1590ies – Japan invaded Korea twice 14 th -16 th centuries: Manchus disturb China and Korea
Late 16th-middle 19th centuries	The era of battles for power 1563-70: The Seven-years-war between	The era of isolationism 1639: Japan is closed for the rest of the

	<p>Sweden and Denmark</p> <p>1582: Almost the whole territory of the Baltic countries belongs to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth</p> <p>1610-1655: Poland at wars with Russia, Sweden and Turkey</p> <p>1700-1721: The Great Nordic War</p> <p>1772-1795: Poland is divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria</p>	<p>world</p> <p>1644: Korea follows a policy of seclusion</p> <p>1727: The Chinese-Mongolian border is defined</p>
<p>Middle 19th-middle 20th centuries</p>	<p>Scandinavism and battles for freedom</p> <p>1815-1905: Sweden-Norway Union</p> <p>1873-1914: Currency union between Denmark, Sweden and Norway</p> <p>1914-1918: World War I</p> <p>1917-1918: Revolutions in Russia and Germany</p> <p>1917-1920: Independence of Finland, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania</p> <p>1940 Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania are forced to join the Soviet Union</p> <p>1939-1945: World War II</p> <p>1944: Independence of Iceland from Denmark</p>	<p>The period of imperialist wars</p> <p>1894-1895: Sino-Japanese War</p> <p>1904-1905: Russo-Japanese War</p> <p>1910: Annexion of Korea by Japan</p> <p>1914-1918: World War I</p> <p>1937: Manchuria is occupied by Japan</p> <p>1941-1945 Pacific War</p>
<p>1945-present</p>	<p>The Cold War and its end</p> <p>1946: The Nordic Council is created</p> <p>1949: Germany is divided into the Federal Republic of Germany in the west and the German Democratic Republic in the east</p>	<p>The Cold War (not completely over yet)</p> <p>1945-1952: The Allied Occupation in Japan</p> <p>1948: Two Korean governments are formed</p> <p>1950-1953: The Korean War</p> <p>1956: A Trade Treaty (but no Peace Treaty) between Soviet Union and Japan</p>

	<p>1949: Denmark joins NATO</p> <p>1950ies: The start of European integration process</p> <p>1961: The Berlin Wall is built</p> <p>1990-1991: Independence of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania</p> <p>1991: Soviet Union is dissolved</p> <p>2004: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland join NATO and EU</p>	<p>1960ies: Hostility between Soviet Union and China, clashes on the border</p> <p>1972: Normalization of relation between China and Japan</p> <p>1972: Joint declaration on peace and reconciliation between North and South Korea</p>
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Source: made by the author.

Several conclusions could be made from this comparison. First of all, is it true, that in any region there are times of wars and times of peace, there is cooperation and competition, external threats and help etc. The Japan Sea countries are not the only victims of two world wars. The problem is, probably, how to deal with their consequences. Second, there was a period of cooperation, active exchanges and prosperity in the Japan Sea. There was no Hansa, because there were no actors like in Europe. Cities were bigger and better developed, but they did not have rights and liberties, like the European cities did. Therefore there could not exist any inter-subregional organization, and all contacts had to be made either on the state level, on between merchants – on a personal level. The European and Asian history differ greatly, there is no argument about that.

However, there are also some important similarities between the two regions. Firstly, it is the role of an inland sea as a “sea route” creating mutual relations between various countries and districts lying on its drainage basin since the time immemorial. Secondly, the relations supported by that sea route contributed to the development of commerce, bringing about prosperity to hinterlands. Thirdly, both regions decreased in economic significance in modern ages according as their military positions in world politics increased in importance. Finally, the Cold War confrontation was the biggest obstacle that denied any possibility that development in each region would be oriented towards peace and security.

In order to develop mutual trust to conduct commercial as well as non-commercial deals, a common identity would be helpful. The historical narratives, which could help to create it, are at the hand. People share common history, whether they are aware of it or not. It is time for us to be aware.

Notes

- 1 Momose, Hiroshi, “The Baltic Sea and the Sea of Japan: a comparative study of subregions”, in *Balto-Scandia: some reports of Balto-Scandian Studies in Japan*, Tokyo; Association for Balto-Scandinavian Studies, 1994, pp.23-46.
- 2 Dellenbrant, Jan Ake, “The Baltic Sea co-operation – visions and realities”, in *Nordic region-building in a European prospective*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2000, pp.83-95.
- 3 For the better and more detailed historical account see Shibuya, Takeshi, *Kan nihonkai ni okeru kokusai kankyo no keisei to henyo ni kansuru yobiteki kenkyu*, Niigata University, 1991, Furumaya, Tadao, *Tohoku Ajia shi no saihakken*, Yushindokobunsha, 1994, Taga, Hidetoshi, *Kokkyo wo koeru jikken*, Yushindokobunsha, 1992.

主指導教員（小山洋司教授） 副指導教員（高津斌彰教授・佐野誠教授）