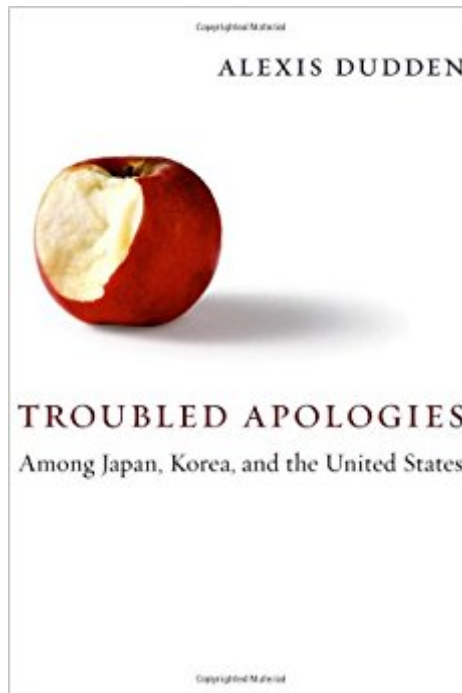


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# Troubled Apologies Among Japan, Korea, And The United States



## Synopsis

Whether it's the Vatican addressing its role in the Second World War or the United States atoning for its treatment of native Hawai'ian islanders, apologizing for history has become a standard feature of the international political scene. As Alexis Dudden makes clear, interrogating this process is crucial to understanding the value of the political apology to the state. When governments apologize for past crimes, they take away the substance of apology that victims originally wanted for themselves. They rob victims of the dignity they seek while affording the state a new means with which to legitimize itself. Examining the interplay between political apology and apologetic history, Dudden focuses on the problematic relationship binding Japanese imperialism, South Korean state building, and American power in Asia. She examines this history through diplomatic, cultural, and social considerations in the postwar era and argues that the process of apology has created a knot from which none of these countries can escape without undoing decades of mythmaking.

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## Customer Reviews

Dudden engagingly explores how the nexus of politics, war memory, and apology shapes contemporary trilateral relations between Korea, Japan, and the United States. (Jeff Kingston Japan Times) Richly and eloquently written.... Recommended. (Choice) A significant contribution on the issue of historical apologies... This book should be required reading. (Matthew Penney Pacific Affairs) Rich with insights... for specialists, for twentieth-century historians, and for general readers interested in a deeper understanding of the politics of history. (Sarah Kovner, University of Florida Journal of World History) Dudden traces the intricacies and ironies of history in Northeast Asia in a

compelling narrative that indicts many governments and political figures in the process, providing essential reading for anyone wishing to learn more about these complex issues. (Elizabeth S. Dahl ID: International Dialogue)

Apologizing for history has become a standard feature of the international political scene, and interrogating this process is crucial to understanding the value of the political apology to the state. When governments apologize for past crimes, they take away the substance of apology that victims originally wanted for themselves. They rob victims of the dignity they seek while affording the state a new means with which to legitimize itself. Examining the interplay between political apology and apologetic history, Alexis Dudden focuses on the problematic relationship binding Japanese imperialism, South Korean state building, and American power in Asia. She examines this history through diplomatic, cultural, and social considerations in the postwar era and argues that the process of apology has created a knot from which none of these countries can escape without undoing decades of mythmaking.

It was exactly what I was looking for, a 3rd party unbiased view to nullify both sides arguments. It is a great resource for any school reports regarding the Japan Korea bilateral relationship. It has information that you will not normally find.

it is a book to be read for a class at CCNY. Therefore I have no comments yet. It looks interesting.

At just under 200 pages Dudden's book on international relations is short, almost too short given the complexities of the issues. This is not to say that the author did not conduct thorough research on the subjects of his chapters. He offers valuable insight and introduction to interest groups and political figures in ways that contextualize the significance of their political force in their respective country. For example, the comparison of a Japanese political critic to Bill O'Reilly really connected the issue he was discussing. Dudden's writing is articulate, educational, but also engaging in this way and I did not find it a dull read in the the least. However, I can not help but feel that he only scratches the surface of diplomatic apologies between the three countries. Many incidents and facts that he places within his chapters have the potential to incorporate more detail and help paint a fuller picture between the two countries. To contrast this critique, it has to be understood that international relations is vastly complex and the information demands that authors pick which issues to focus on to paint a picture of the dominant issues between these countries. Nonetheless, Dudden

mentions issues and incidents that beg to be explored more thoroughly. And at its current size I can't help but think that it wouldn't have hurt to do just that, especially given its current listed price (\$50 at time of writing.) 'Troubled Apologies' is broken into four chapters that involve international issues between Japan, Korea, and the United States. He covers a wide-array of issues to explain the complex and politically charged atmosphere, any of which is insightful and worth studying. They are broken down into the following:

Chapter 1: 'An Island by Any Other Name' - the land and sea disputes regarding who owns the Takeshima/Dokdo islands (South Korean occupied, claimed by Japan) and insights into the larger issue of how sea borders contributes to the equation

Chapter 2: 'Apologies All Around' - the rise in popularity in diplomatic apologies following World War II; the Japanese emperor's role in diplomatic apologies in context of atonement for Japanese expansionism in Asian nations; Japan and North Korean relations following N. Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens; the rise in popularity of Korean television programs in Japan

Chapter 3: 'Illegal Japan' - the history of Japanese occupation of Korea pre-WWII and the history of American/Soviet occupations of Korea post-WWII and the complexity of the claims of Korea that the occupation had been illegal; fishing boundaries between Japan and South Korea; state-sponsored violence in Korea since the 1950s; the legal/political struggles of South Korean comfort women and Japan

Chapter 4: 'History Out of Bounds' - international relations following two South Korean schoolgirls being run over by U.S. military vehicles in 2002; the deaths of Korean civilians at the hands of American Soldiers in the village of No Gun Ri in 1950; American censorship on the reporting of radiation sickness following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the hydrogen bomb testing in the Marshall Islands and the radiation exposure to Japanese fisherman; the refusal of the American government to apologize for civilian casualties of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

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