

# Heavy Storm and Gentle Breeze

Tang Jiaxuan's Diplomatic Memoir

*A decade's experience of a Chinese diplomat*

*An accurate portrait of the contemporary*

*Chinese diplomatic history*

*Personal experiences at eleven major international events*



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

# **HEAVY STORM and GENTLE BREEZE**

**A Memoir of China's Diplomacy**

**Tang Jiaxuan**



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# Foreword

I was deeply honored to be one of the first readers of Mr. Tang Jiaxuan's book *Heavy Storm and Gentle Breeze*. I would like to extend my warm congratulations on its publication.

Mr. Tang is an esteemed leader on the diplomatic front who has had over forty years experience. His book covers a part of the major diplomatic events and state activities during the period from March 1998, when he became foreign minister, to March 2008 when he retired as state councilor.

During that decade, China's overall strength and international influence rose. China responded confidently to the vicissitudes of international situation and handled properly a series of major international events. Historic changes took place in China's relations with the rest of the world.

China's relations with major powers advanced. Despite the twists and turns caused by the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, and the incident of air collision over the South China Sea, China-US relations returned to the path of healthy and steady development and continuous

progress. The China-Russia strategic cooperative partnership strengthened, and the two countries signed the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation. China and Japan broke the deadlock caused by Japanese leaders' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, and opened up a new mutually beneficial relationship. China established various forms of strategic partnership with the European Union, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany as well as reinforcing its cooperation with major emerging countries, including India, Brazil, South Africa, and Mexico. China pursues a policy of fostering friendship and partnership with neighboring countries and actively expanding regional cooperation. ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, and the East Asia Summit were fruitful. The founding, in 2001, of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) bore good fruits. The Beijing Summit of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum concluded successfully. The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum was founded, and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Latin American countries deepened. China played an active role in multilateral affairs, advocated peace, cooperation, and development, greatly contributing to the building of a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.

The splendid accomplishments in diplomatic work over the decade are attributable to the leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council, the concerted efforts of relevant departments, and the firm support of the people nationwide. They also embodied the wisdom and energy of Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, foreign minister and state councilor in charge of foreign affairs.

In this book, Mr. Tang selects eleven representative events, and presents them with vivid narration and incisive analysis. The book is a skillful application of theory in practice. The patriotism shown in handling the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, the diplomatic art of strict adherence to principles combined with strategic flexibility in facilitating win-win China-Russia and China-Vietnam boundary negotiations, the strong organization and coordination ability during the

Beijing Summit of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, the high sense of political responsibility in addressing the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, the strategic thinking in promoting the steady development of China's relations with major powers and his style of telling truth from facts and keeping up with the times—all this constitutes a valuable treasure of our diplomacy. In a sense, the book is a true portrayal of Mr. Tang's diplomatic experience, as well as a valuable diplomatic document.

Mr. Tang has been a leader, a mentor, and a helpful friend. He is ready to listen to views from all. He is democratic and decisive. He is amicable and easy to approach. He is demanding and considerate. I have been deeply impressed by his leadership, diplomatic charisma, and great sense of responsibility. In early 2003, he visited New York four times in just over a month to attend the UN Security Council meetings, seeking a solution to the Iraq issue. Faced with complicated situations, he employed well-planned strategies and won praise for his prudent and pragmatic style. As ambassador to the United States at the time, I was deeply moved by his earnest devotion to the cause of world peace.

Writings are for conveying truth. *Heavy Storm and Gentle Breeze*, with its rich content and profound ideas, provides important guidance to the cause of diplomacy. Under the prevailing heavy storm in the international situation, we diplomats will benefit from the gentle breeze in China's diplomacy. The book will give us wisdom and strength, inspiring us to enrich China's diplomatic theory and practice, thus bringing new impetus to our work.

Yang Jiechi  
September 27, 2009



# Preface

I retired as a state councilor in March 2008 but, as a veteran diplomat, I am still concerned about and support China's diplomatic causes. Many colleagues suggested that I should write my recollections of the important events in my diplomatic career in order to record history, give advice, and impart knowledge. Some described it as a duty and obligation on my part to my country, to the cause of diplomacy, and to history.

Indeed, during the forty-plus years of my diplomatic career, particularly from March 1998, when I became foreign minister to March 2008, when I retired as state councilor, complicated and profound changes took place in the international situation. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, major readjustments had emerged in international political and economic patterns, resulting in historic changes in China's relations with the rest of the world. Over this decade, under the correct leadership and direct guidance of the central authorities, China's diplomacy forged ahead with the times, transforming challenges into opportunities and opening up new prospects, thus achieving brilliant successes. During this period, there were indeed many events worth recording in China's diplomacy. Memories of these events linger in my heart. With the passage of time, I have gained an increasingly deep understanding of those events.



After thorough consideration, I decided to accept the suggestion to write and publish this book, because it is not an entirely personal matter of mine.

I have chosen eleven topics, all related to events significant to China's diplomacy over that decade. The book reflects not only the development of and changes in China's relations with major powers in the world, but also the dialogue and cooperation between China and other developing countries. Confucius said, "Recalling the past helps understand the present." Therefore, I strive to review history from a realistic point of view. In this way, I try to reveal, on the basis of historical truths, the intentions and thinking, pains and gains of decision makers and participants, and present to the readers a comprehensive account of the essence, national interests and work results. I hope this book will have a practical reference value. Owing to limited space and the diplomatic sensitivity of certain issues, the events related in this book constitute only part of my diplomatic experiences. I believe readers will understand.

I hope the book will help readers learn about the diplomatic history of that particular period and obtain some information to be passed on to future generations.

In the past decade, China had faced all kinds of diplomatic challenges; some were very severe and came like a heavy storm. China had adhered to an independent foreign policy of peace and the building of a harmonious world. This policy, along with China's firm yet flexible practices, has brought peace, friendship, cooperation and development to the world like a gentle breeze. The title of this book, *Heavy Storm and Gentle Breeze*, roughly embraces the contents of the book and summarizes the international situation as well as the ideas and style of China's diplomatic policy.

Tang Jiaxuan

September 17, 2009

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# The Tortuous Road of Sino-Japanese Relations

Over the course of my diplomatic career of more than forty years, I have witnessed the diplomatic progress made by the People's Republic of China, and have experienced many significant historical events. I have kept in touch with my counterparts in most countries, but it is with Japan that my connections go deepest.

My involvement in Sino-Japanese relations began in 1958, when the Chinese government, with an eye to developing bilateral relations with Japan, decided to have a contingent of people learn Japanese. Selected as part of this group, I was transferred from the Department of Foreign Languages of Fudan University in Shanghai to the Department of Oriental Languages and Literature of Peking University. In 1964, I was assigned to work in the translation group of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was the beginning of my connection with China's diplomacy and of my dealings with the Japanese.

Japan is a neighbor of China across the ocean. During the course of two thousand years of friendly contacts, the Chinese and Japanese peoples have learned from each other, and thereby advanced their development and progress, but Japan is also the country that has done the greatest

harm to China. From the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) to World War II (1939-45), Japan launched repeated wars of aggression against China, and colonized Taiwan. Consequently, how Japan looks at this history and the Taiwan issue, and whether it can properly solve these historical issues, remains a core problem in the rebuilding and development of Sino-Japanese relations in the postwar period.



May 21, 1979, Japan's Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira receiving a Chinese delegation headed by Liao Chengzhi (2nd L) and Su Yu (1st L). Tang Jiaxuan (3rd L) was the interpreter.

History has shown that Sino-Japanese relations will progress smoothly provided that these two issues are properly handled, otherwise, the political basis for the relationship will consequently be damaged, and it will suffer a setback, if not a reversal.

Thanks to our protracted efforts and struggle, Japan has, in bilateral political documents and speeches by its leaders, made a series of positive promises and statements concerning the historical and Taiwan question, thus providing a political assurance to the normalization and consequent sound development of Sino-Japanese relations.

However, during the term of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi—

from April 2001 to September 2006—he breached the bilateral consensus regarding these issues, and persisted in making annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. This seriously damaged and destabilized the political basis for Sino-Japanese relations, thereby plunging them into the most difficult time since normalization.

During those years, the Yasukuni Shrine problem remained the focal point of Sino-Japanese relations.

## Why Is the Yasukuni Shrine a Problem?

Shrines are where the Japanese commemorate and worship various Shinto spirits. There are more than 80,000 shrines throughout Japan.

Built in 1869 in the Chiyoda district of Tokyo, and originally called the Tokyo Shokonsha, the Yakusuni Shrine commemorated soldiers who died for the emperor during the Meiji Restoration and resulting civil war. It was renamed Yasukuni Shrine in 1879. *Yasukuni*, a term chosen by the Emperor Meiji from the Chinese classic, *Zuo Zhuan*, meaning “pacifying the nation.”

However, the shrine never played a pacifying role. On the contrary, it was used as a propaganda tool to imbue the Japanese people with militarism and obedience to the emperor during all of Japan’s modern wars of invasion. For the purpose of invasion and expansion, the extreme rightists trumpeted ideas of loyalty to the emperor and dedication to the nation, promising that if one died for Japan and the emperor, one’s spirit would return to the Yasukuni Shrine and rise to heaven as a *kami* (deity) to be worshipped forever.

It is important to point out that the Yasukuni Shrine has never been an ordinary shrine. Its priests had close links with political and official circles since its establishment, and enjoyed various privileges. Most of its *guji* (chief priests) were appointed by the emperor or the Ministry of Military Affairs; there was even a case of a serving general being appointed as a *guji*.

Soon after Japan's surrender in 1945, the US Occupation Authorities ordered the separation of religion and government. The shrine's priests were deprived of their political privileges, and the shrine became an ordinary religious institution. Yet it was not held to account for its criminal responsibilities, so the shrine has been kept intact. Enshrined there are 2,460,000 Japanese war dead since the Meiji Restoration, 80 percent of whom died in World War II. They include Hideki Tojo and thirteen other Class-A war criminals, and more than one thousand Class-B and Class-C war criminals.

Since the Yasukuni Shrine enshrines Class-A war criminals whose hands were stained with the blood of Chinese and other Asian peoples, for these Asian countries including China, the visits of Japanese leaders to the shrine are definitely not just an internal Japanese affair, nor is it an issue of religion or tradition. It is a significant matter of principle whether the Japanese government holds a correct attitude towards Japan's history of military invasion. Visits of Japanese leaders to the shrine are sure to damage the political basis for Sino-Japanese relations, and seriously offend people in all the countries, China included, that were war victims. We have always firmly opposed such visits.

On August 15, 1985, Japan's Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone led his entire cabinet to the shrine, an act that aroused strong criticism from the Japanese public itself, as well as from other Asian countries. China made great efforts to have the prime minister promise that there would be no more visits during his term. This was the first direct confrontation between China and Japan on the Yasukuni Shrine issue.

In July 1996, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, as a private person, paid homage to his cousin enshrined there. As a result of solemn representation from China, he promised not to visit the site again during his term. The next two prime ministers did not visit the shrine.

## **Koizumi Takes Office, Says He Will Worship at Yasukuni**

On April 18, 2001, Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori resigned. Six days later Junichiro Koizumi was elected president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and took office as prime minister on April 26.

Koizumi was born into a family of politicians. His grandfather Matajiro Koizumi, had been minister of Posts and Telecommunications, and his father Junya Koizumi, had headed the Defense Agency. Junichiro Koizumi himself was a veteran politician. In the 1990s, he held such posts as minister of Health, Labor and Welfare in the cabinet of Noboru Takeshita, minister of Posts and Telecommunications in the cabinet of Kiichi Miyazawa, and minister of Health, Labor and Welfare in the cabinet of Ryutaro Hashimoto. In 1995, he was defeated by Ryutaro Hashimoto in a contest for the LDP presidency.

Junichiro Koizumi is known for his distinctive personality; his speeches were brief, lively, easily understood, incisive, and appealing.

When he took office, Japan had just experienced the so-called lost decade of the 1990s. Economic gloom dragged on, political scandals came to light and feelings of loss, unease, anxiety and depression permeated the country, which was desperate for reform.

Aware of public resentment and dissatisfaction, Koizumi proposed structural reform with no off-limits and new millennium reform under the banner of “reforming the LDP, reforming Japan,” to arouse public hope for the future. His fresh style dazzled the mass of voters, and created the Koizumi whirlwind. His approval rating soared to 90 percent.

When running for prime minister, Koizumi repeatedly promised to pay formal homage at the shrine on August 15, the date of Japan’s defeat in World War II. He did so to gain the support of the Japan War Bereaved Association<sup>1</sup> and of rightist conservative forces. It was also deeply rooted

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<sup>1</sup> A national organization of the families of service personnel who died in WWII. It supports visits by officials to the Yasukuni Shrine.



in his wrong historical outlook and values.

Koizumi was born in 1942 and grew up after World War II. As the result of biased history education and family influence, he lacked a correct understanding of WWII history, and very much admired the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps (KSAC)<sup>1</sup>. He once told the Japanese Diet that, when in difficulty, he would tell himself to model himself on the kamikaze suicide pilots. He regarded the shrine as an important place that embodied his sentiments, and visited there every year during his political career.

His repeated assertions that he would visit the shrine in future filled me with foreboding of a rough ride ahead for bilateral relations.

In fact, there were already signs of trouble for the relationship, engendered by the rightist trend in Japanese politics. On April 3, 2001, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology published a history textbook compiled by rightist forces that distorted the history of Japan's aggression against China and other Asian countries. The Chinese government lodged a strong protest and demanded that the Japanese government correct its mistake. On April 20, despite China's repeated protests, and disapproving voices in Japan, the caretaker government of Yoshiro Mori obstinately allowed Lee Teng-hui (a former leader of the Taiwan authorities who had volunteered as a Japanese Imperial Army officer) to visit Japan on the excuse of medical treatment. The Chinese government lodged a solemn representation to Japan, and also suspended bilateral high-level contacts, a visit to Japan by ships of the Chinese navy, and dialogues on security.

Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni would cause even worse problems for our relations. Many Japanese were worried by this gloomy prospect, and called for efforts to curb the decline in bilateral relations.

Under these circumstances, we decided to make clear to Japan

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<sup>1</sup> After Japan's defeat at Midway Islands at the end of WWII, Admiral Takijiro Onishi proposed that the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps be formed to counter the powerful US Air Force. Armed by the bushido spirit, the aviators launched suicide attacks on US ships, landing troops and fixed group targets.