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Japanese Public's Mood Rebounding, Abe Highly Popular

China and South Korea Very Negative Toward Japan

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After more than two decades of economic turmoil and political transition in Japan, the public's mood is showing some decided improvement. Japan now has strongly popular political leadership, and there are indications of a growing Japanese aspiration to play a larger security role on the world stage.

Public satisfaction with Japan's direction is at its highest level since the Pew Research Center began regular surveys of Japan in 2002. While still sub-par, economic satisfaction in Japan has improved 20 percentage points in just the last year. And optimism about the nation's economic trajectory over the next 12 months is second only to that found in the United States among publics in advanced economies. This may help explain why about seven-in-ten Japanese have a favorable opinion of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Looking outside of the country, Japan's image in the region is mixed. Japan is generally seen favorably in much of Asia, but its immediate neighbors – China and South Korea – are highly skeptical of Japan. They are unfavorably disposed toward Abe. And, both the Chinese and the Koreans are critical of what they see as Japan's failure to atone for Japanese military actions in the 1930s and 1940s.

These are some of the results from a 39-nation survey – including Japan and seven other Asia/Pacific nations – conducted by the Pew Research Center March 4 to April 6, 2013.

Economic Mood Looking Up

Public Sentiment About the Economy and Country Direction Rebounding

	2002	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	12-13 Change
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Satisfied with direction of country	12	27	22	23	25	20	25	20	33	+13
Economy is good	6	--	28	13	10	12	10	7	27	+20
Economy will improve in next 12 months	11	--	--	5	18	14	17	16	40	+24

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q1, Q4, & Q5.

In absolute terms, the public mood in Japan remains mostly one of dissatisfaction. Only a third of the public is pleased with the direction of the country, barely a quarter think the economy is doing well and just four-in-ten are optimistic about the future.

But in relative terms, such sentiment has shown a dramatic improvement in just the last year. And, the Japanese are actually much more upbeat about the future than are the Europeans.

While just 33% of Japanese are content with the direction of their country, such sentiment is up 13 percentage points from 2012 and 21 points from the quite gloomy view in 2002. Moreover, Japanese satisfaction with how their nation is doing overall is better than that in South Korea, Britain or France, and comparable to that in the United States.

Only 27% of Japanese think the economy is doing well, however, hardly an endorsement of current economic conditions. But just 7% thought the economy was good in 2012 and Japanese economic sentiment has rebounded to roughly that found in 2007, before the Great Recession. Moreover, among 14 advanced economies surveyed by the Pew Research Center in 2013, in only five was the public more upbeat than the Japanese about the present economy. *(For more on global economic conditions see [Economies of Emerging Markets Better Rated During Difficult Times](#), released on May 23, 2013.)*

Women, the Middle Aged More Concerned about Economy

	Good %	Bad %
Total	27	71
Men	32	67
Women	22	76
18-29	37	63
30-49	17	83
50+	30	68
College degree	24	76
No degree	26	72

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q4.

The economic optimism that the Abe government has hoped to engender through its monetary and fiscal stimulus and its promised economic reforms appears to be working. Fully 40% of Japanese think their economy will improve over the next 12 months, a measure of optimism that is up 24 points in the last year and is at its highest point in seven Pew Research Center surveys in Japan since 2002.

The Japanese mood about the state of the economy and its future divides along gender, age and educational lines. Men are more

Economic Outlook Upbeat

	Improve %	Remain the same %	Worsen %
Total	40	47	11
Men	48	40	11
Women	33	54	10
18-29	43	47	9
30-49	36	52	11
50+	41	45	11
College degree	50	40	9
No college	37	49	11

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q5.

upbeat than women about present economic conditions and whether the economy will improve over the next 12 months. Middle-aged Japanese are particularly upset about the current state of the economy. And those with a college degree are more likely than those without a degree to think that the economy will improve.

On a personal level Japanese are more upbeat about their own situation than they are about the national economic condition, which parallels results in other countries. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) say their personal finances are good. But just 12% envision their own economic situation improving over the next year.

However, the Japanese are deeply pessimistic about prospects for the next generation. Only 15% believe that today's children will be better off than their parents. Among countries with advanced economies in the 2013 survey, only the French are more pessimistic than the Japanese about the future for kids.

The Japanese public, much like those in many other nations, is worried about particular economic conditions. Roughly six-in-ten think public debt (60%) and the lack of employment opportunities (58%) are very big national problems. When asked what their top priority is for action by the Abe government, 52% say create more jobs.

Prime Minister Abe Strongly Popular

Prime Minister Abe is seen favorably by 71% of the Japanese public, with no evident gender gap, generation gap, class difference or rural-urban split in his support. This positive public assessment of the Japanese leader is widely shared among both men and women, people with a college degree and those without a degree and low, middle and high income individuals. Notably, Abe, whose Liberal Democratic Party's original political base was overwhelmingly in rural areas, now does equally well in metropolitan areas and in peripheral cities, towns and villages of Japan.

Abe's Public Support Widespread

	Favorable Unfavorable	
	%	%
Total	71	28
Men	71	29
Women	71	28
18-29	69	31
30-49	68	32
50+	74	26
College degree	72	27
No college	71	29
Low income	70	30
Middle income	71	29
High income	73	26
Metropolitan area	71	28
Peripheral city/town/village	71	28

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q43asia.

Increasing Support for Constitutional Change

As public sentiment about the economy changes, Japanese attitudes about the country's strategic role in the world are evolving. For some time, there has been a robust public debate within Japan about whether Tokyo needs a military capacity and a willingness to engage in security operations commensurate with the country's stature as the world's third largest economy. But such ambitions have long been constrained by Japan's post-World War II constitution.

Article 9 of the [current Japanese constitution](#) states that Japan renounces war as a means of resolving international disputes and will not maintain land, sea or air forces.

Notwithstanding such strictures, Japan does have a large Self-Defense Force. And, in recent years, these forces have been deployed internationally to provide humanitarian assistance and in peacekeeping operations sanctioned by the United Nations.

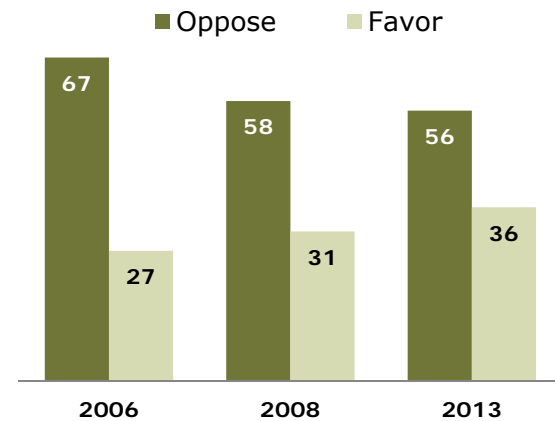
A majority of Japanese (56%) oppose changing their constitution so that Japan could officially have a military and declare war. But that opposition has declined by 11 percentage points since 2006, when 67% were against constitutional revision. Men (45%) are much more willing to support constitutional revision than are women (28%).

Asia/Pacific Views of Japan

Perceptions of Japan in the Asia/Pacific region are mixed. About half or more of the publics in five of seven Asia/Pacific nations surveyed have a favorable view of Japan, most strongly so. Eight-in-ten Malaysians and nearly as many Indonesians (79%), Australians (78%) and Filipinos (78%) see Japan in a positive light.

Opposition to Constitutional Change is Eroding

Do you favor or oppose changing the Japanese constitution so Japan could officially have a military and declare war?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q65b.

However, anti-Japan sentiment is quite strong in China, where 90% of the public has an unfavorable opinion of Japan, and in South Korea (77% unfavorable).

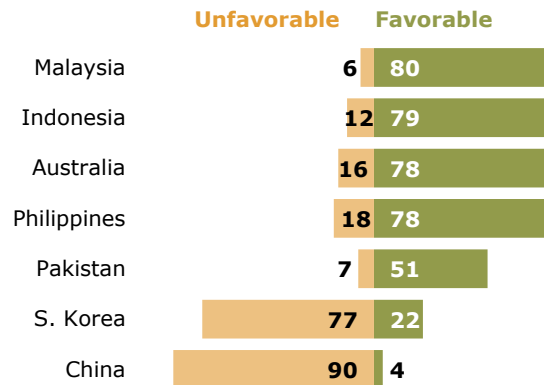
Moreover, sentiment about Japan has worsened over time in both countries. Favorability of Japan is down 25 percentage points in South Korea since 2008 and it has fallen 17 points in China since 2006. There is a notable generation gap in attitudes toward Japan in South Korea. Koreans 50 years of age and older (82% negative) are far more likely to see Japan unfavorably than are Koreans under the age of 30 (66%).

One reason for such anti-Japan sentiment in China and South Korea may be because neither the Chinese nor the Koreans believe Japan has sufficiently apologized for its military actions during the 1930s and 1940s.

But the bitter legacy of that period appears to weigh more heavily on people in Northeast Asia than in Southeast Asia. While the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia were also occupied by Japan during World War II, the memory in those countries appears less powerful. A quarter of Indonesians and nearly four-in-ten Malaysians express no opinion about the need for a Japanese apology for its previous actions. And those who do have a view are generally divided over whether Japan needs to seek more forgiveness or whether the time has passed for such apologies. Such is the case in the Philippines, where 47% say Japan needs to apologize more, whereas 48% say no request for forgiveness is necessary or that Japan has sufficiently apologized.

Such sentiments stand in stark contrast to those held by many Japanese. Nearly half (48%) of Japanese think Tokyo has sufficiently apologized for its military actions in the 1930s and 1940s. Another 15% think no apology is needed. Taken together, this means a strong majority

Japan Generally Seen Favorably



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q9v.

Apology Accepted?

Has Japan sufficiently apologized for its military actions during the 1930s and 1940s?

	No	Yes	No apology necessary	DK
	%	%	%	%
S. Korea	98	1	1	1
China	78	4	2	16
Philippines	47	29	19	5
Indonesia	40	29	6	25
Malaysia	30	22	10	38
Australia	30	29	26	16
Japan	28	48	15	9

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q65a.

of Japanese (63%) think the past is behind them. Such views are even more prevalent among young Japanese: 73% of those aged 18 to 29 think Japan has already asked enough for forgiveness or need not apologize at all. The contrast with the views of other young Asians is quite striking: just 3% of young Koreans, 4% of young Chinese, 31% of young Indonesians and 36% of young Malaysians are willing to drop the issue of Japanese war guilt.

Generally there is no generation gap in the region on the need for Japanese atonement. But in Indonesia, younger Indonesians are actually more likely than older Indonesians to say Japan needs to apologize more: 43% of those under 30 say they want more of an apology; only 31% of those who are 50 years of age and older see such a need.

A national leader often is the symbol of his or her country abroad, buoying a nation's image when he or she is popular with foreigners, undermining it when the leader is unpopular abroad. Prime Minister Abe's strong showing at home is not mirrored overseas, in part because he is still not well known outside Japan. Only in the Philippines (62%) and Malaysia (53%) do more than half see Abe in a favorable light. And 38% of Malaysians and 23% of Filipinos have no view on the Japanese leader. In South Korea and China, where a greater percentage of the public does voice an opinion, it is overwhelmingly negative: 85% of those surveyed in both nations see Abe unfavorably. This may, in part, be a byproduct of Abe's 2012 visit to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine for Japan's war dead, which includes homage to some of Japan's Class A war criminals from World War II.

The Japanese public appears to be painfully aware of its image problem abroad. Six-in-ten Japanese think their country should be more respected around the world than it is.

Mixed International Views of Shinzo Abe

	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK
	%	%	%
Japan	71	28	0
Philippines	62	15	23
Malaysia	53	9	38
Indonesia	46	11	42
Australia	30	16	56
Pakistan	12	3	84
S. Korea	12	85	2
China	9	85	6

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q43asia.

Survey Methods

About the 2013 Spring Pew Global Attitudes Survey

Results for the survey are based on telephone and face-to-face interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see below.

The descriptions below show the margin of sampling error based on all interviews conducted in that country. For results based on the full sample in a given country, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus the margin of error. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Country:	Australia
Sample design:	Random Digit Dial (RDD) probability sample of landline and cell phone households
Mode:	Telephone adults 18 plus
Languages:	English
Fieldwork dates:	March 4 – March 18, 2013
Sample size:	800
Margin of Error:	±4.4 percentage points
Representative:	Telephone households (roughly 98% of all Australian households)

Country: **China**
Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by China's three regional-economic zones and urbanity. Twelve cities, 12 towns and 12 villages were sampled covering central, east, and west China.
Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus
Languages: Chinese (Mandarin, Hebei, Shandong, Yunnan, Chongqing, Guangdong, Hubei, Henan, Hunan, Jiangsu, Gandu, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Anhui, Shanghai, Jilin, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and Beijing dialects)
Fieldwork dates: March 4 – April 6, 2013
Sample size: 3,226
Margin of Error: ±3.5 percentage points
Representative: Adult population (excluding Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Macau, or roughly 2% of the population). Disproportionately urban. The data were weighted to reflect the actual urbanity distribution in China.
Note: The results cited are from Horizonkey's self-sponsored survey.

Country: **Indonesia**
Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by province and urbanity
Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus
Languages: Bahasa Indonesian
Fieldwork dates: March 9 – March 27, 2013
Sample size: 1,000
Margin of Error: ±4.0 percentage points
Representative: Adult population (excluding Papua and remote areas or provinces with small populations, or 12% of the population)

Country: **Japan**
Sample design: Random Digit Dial (RDD) probability sample of landline households stratified by region and population size
Mode: Telephone adults 18 plus
Languages: Japanese
Fieldwork dates: March 5 – April 2, 2013
Sample size: 700
Margin of Error: ±4.3 percentage points
Representative: Landline households (roughly 86% of all Japanese households)

Country: **Malaysia**
Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by state and urbanity
Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus
Languages: Malay, Mandarin Chinese, English
Fieldwork dates: March 4 – April 3, 2013
Sample size: 822
Margin of Error: ±4.3 percentage points
Representative: Adult population (excluding difficult to access areas in Sabah and Sarawak, or about 7% of the population)

Country: **Pakistan**
Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by province and urbanity
Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus
Languages: Urdu, Pashto, Punjabi, Saraiki, Sindhi
Fieldwork dates: March 11 – March 31, 2013
Sample size: 1,201
Margin of Error: ±4.3 percentage points
Representative: Adult population (excluding the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir for security reasons as well as areas of instability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa [formerly the North-West Frontier Province] and Baluchistan, or roughly 18% of the population). Disproportionately urban. The data were weighted to reflect the actual urbanity distribution in Pakistan.

Country: **Philippines**
Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by region and urbanity
Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus
Languages: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilonggo, Ilocano, Bicolano
Fieldwork dates: March 10 – April 3, 2013
Sample size: 804
Margin of Error: ±4.5 percentage points
Representative: Adult population

Country:	South Korea
Sample design:	Random Digit Dial (RDD) probability sample of adults who own a cell phone
Mode:	Telephone adults 18 plus
Languages:	Korean
Fieldwork dates:	March 4 – March 18, 2013
Sample size:	809
Margin of Error:	±3.7 percentage points
Representative:	Adults who own a cell phone (roughly 96% of adults age 18 and older)

**Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project
2013 Spring Survey Topline Results
July 11, 2013 Release**

Methodological notes:

- Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see Survey Methods section.
- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline “total” columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.
- Since 2007, the Global Attitudes Project has used an automated process to generate topline. As a result, numbers may differ slightly from those published prior to 2007.
- Not all questions included in the Spring 2013 survey are presented in this topline. Omitted questions have either been previously released or will be released in future reports.
- Previously released questions are from “*Economies of Emerging Markets Better Rated During Difficult Times*”, released May 23, 2013.

		Q1 Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?			
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	33	61	6	100
	Spring, 2012	20	78	2	100
	Spring, 2011	25	72	3	100
	Spring, 2010	20	76	4	100
	Spring, 2009	25	73	2	100
	Spring, 2008	23	74	3	100
	Spring, 2007	22	71	7	100
	Spring, 2006	27	72	1	100
	Summer, 2002	12	86	2	100

		Q4 Now thinking about our economic situation, how would you describe the current economic situation in (survey country) – is it very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad?					
		Very good	Somewhat good	Somewhat bad	Very bad	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	1	26	55	16	1	100
	Spring, 2012	0	7	44	49	0	100
	Spring, 2011	1	9	46	42	1	100
	Spring, 2010	1	11	49	39	0	100
	Spring, 2009	1	9	47	43	1	100
	Spring, 2008	1	12	57	28	1	100
	Spring, 2007	1	27	54	17	2	100
	Summer, 2002	0	6	42	51	0	100

		Q5 And over the next 12 months do you expect the economic situation in our country to improve a lot, improve a little, remain the same, worsen a little or worsen a lot?						
		Improve a lot	Improve a little	Remain the same	Worsen a little	Worsen a lot	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	1	39	47	9	2	2	100
	Spring, 2012	0	16	49	25	8	1	100
	Spring, 2011	1	16	31	36	16	1	100
	Spring, 2010	0	14	52	25	8	1	100
	Spring, 2009	1	17	53	21	8	1	100
	Spring, 2008	0	5	47	38	10	0	100
	Summer, 2002	0	11	63	21	5	0	100

		Q6 Now thinking about your personal economic situation, how would you describe it – is it very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad?					
		Very good	Somewhat good	Somewhat bad	Very bad	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	1	37	46	12	4	100
	Spring, 2012	1	33	46	18	1	100
	Spring, 2009	3	44	38	13	2	100
	Spring, 2008	1	36	48	13	3	100

		Q7 And over the next 12 months do you expect your personal economic situation to improve a lot, improve a little, remain the same, worsen a little or worsen a lot?						
		Improve a lot	Improve a little	Remain the same	Worsen a little	Worsen a lot	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	1	11	65	18	3	2	100

		Q8 When children today in (survey country) grow up, do you think they will be better off or worse off financially than their parents?				
		Better off	Worse off	Same (Volunteered)	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	15	76	4	5	100

		Q9v Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of: v. Japan					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Australia	Spring, 2013	16	62	12	4	6	100
	Spring, 2008	11	66	13	4	7	100
China	Spring, 2013	0	4	16	74	5	100
	Spring, 2008	2	19	35	34	9	100
	Spring, 2007	1	14	35	43	7	100
	Spring, 2006	2	19	41	29	10	100
	Spring, 2005	3	14	33	43	7	100
Indonesia	Spring, 2013	28	51	9	3	9	100
	Spring, 2008	18	59	12	2	9	100
	Spring, 2007	19	65	9	1	6	100
	Spring, 2006	22	56	13	3	6	100
	Spring, 2005	32	53	9	2	4	100
Japan	Spring, 2013	22	54	20	2	1	100
	Spring, 2008	18	51	26	4	1	100
	Spring, 2007	30	57	11	1	1	100
	Spring, 2006	28	50	20	2	1	100
Malaysia	Spring, 2013	22	58	5	1	14	100
	Spring, 2007	12	69	9	1	9	100
Pakistan	Spring, 2013	21	30	3	4	42	100
	Spring, 2008	21	28	12	7	31	100
	Spring, 2007	21	27	10	9	33	100
	Spring, 2006	18	25	8	8	41	100
	Spring, 2005	21	28	8	10	32	100
Philippines	Spring, 2013	18	60	15	3	4	100
South Korea	Spring, 2013	1	21	39	38	1	100
	Spring, 2008	3	44	38	13	2	100
	Spring, 2007	2	23	39	33	3	100

		Q10 Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right? (Survey country) is as respected around the world as it should be OR (survey country) should be more respected around the world than it is?				
		(Survey country) is as respected around the world as it should be	(Survey country) should be more respected around the world than it is	Both/Neither (Volunteered)	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	33	60	3	3	100

		Q21b Do you think b. A lack of employment opportunities is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all in our country?					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	58	32	7	1	1	100

		Q21d Do you think d. Public debt is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all in our country?					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	60	29	7	2	2	100

		Q22 Which one of these issues is the most important for the government to address first – rising prices, a lack of employment opportunities, the gap between the rich and the poor or public debt?								
		Rising prices	Lack of employment opportunities	Gap between the rich and the poor	Public debt	All equally important (Volunteered)	None (Volunteered)	Other (Volunteered)	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	9	52	9	25	2	1	0	1	100

		Q43asia Do have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe?					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Australia	Spring, 2013	2	28	11	5	56	100
China	Spring, 2013	2	7	23	62	6	100
Indonesia	Spring, 2013	7	39	9	2	42	100
Japan	Spring, 2013	15	56	21	7	0	100
Malaysia	Spring, 2013	6	47	8	1	38	100
Pakistan	Spring, 2013	2	10	1	2	84	100
Philippines	Spring, 2013	12	50	12	3	23	100
South Korea	Spring, 2013	0	12	37	48	2	100

		Q65a Thinking about Japan, overall, do you think that Japan has apologized sufficiently for its military actions during the 1930s and 1940s, that Japan has not apologized sufficiently, or do you think no apology is necessary?				
		Yes, has apologized sufficiently	No, has not apologized sufficiently	No apology necessary	DK/Refused	Total
Australia	Spring, 2013	29	30	26	16	100
China	Spring, 2013	4	78	2	16	100
	Spring, 2008	8	76	2	14	100
	Spring, 2006	3	81	4	12	100
Indonesia	Spring, 2013	29	40	6	25	100
Japan	Spring, 2013	48	28	15	9	100
	Spring, 2008	42	41	10	6	100
	Spring, 2006	40	44	14	2	100
Malaysia	Spring, 2013	22	30	10	38	100
Philippines	Spring, 2013	29	47	19	5	100
South Korea	Spring, 2013	1	98	1	1	100
	Spring, 2008	1	96	1	2	100

In 2006 and 2008, the wording was modified for Japan only to read as follows: "Now thinking about our country, overall, do you think that Japan has apologized sufficiently for its military actions in Pacific War and World War II during the 1940s, that Japan has not apologized sufficiently, or do you think no apology is necessary?" In 2013, the phrase "Thinking about Japan..." was added to the question.

		Q65b Do you favor or oppose changing article nine of the Japanese constitution so that Japan could officially have a military and could declare war?			
		Favor	Oppose	DK/Refused	Total
Japan	Spring, 2013	36	56	8	100
	Spring, 2008	31	58	12	100
	Spring, 2006	27	67	6	100