—SPECIAL ISSUE—

The Other Binary: Why Japan-North Korea Relations Matter

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Copyright © 2006, University of British Columbia
ISSN 0030-851X
Publications Mail Registration No. 07775
GST No. R108161779
PRINTED IN CANADA
ABSTRACTS

The Dogma of Japanese Insignificance: The Academic Discourse on North Korea Policy Coordination
Linus Hagström

The message of Japanese insignificance in international affairs can be found in many different literatures, including that on the formation of policy towards North Korea in the 1990s and 2000s, in particular in regard to the recurring nuclear crisis. Books and articles on the topic either exclude Japanese foreign policy altogether or tend to emphasize the predominant role, or power, of the United States. Japanese foreign policy, it is implied, is under US control. The aim of this article is to question that dominant view, (1) by demonstrating that there is an undercurrent of statements in the same literature which could well be interpreted as implying Tokyo’s exercising of political, economic and perhaps even military power over Washington; (2) by clarifying the conceptual bias upon which the predominant view rests; and (3) by suggesting how another understanding of power is more coherent with the first two points, but at the same time renders the whole question of power in North Korea policy coordination practically a quagmire. By doing so, this article deconstructs the more uniform understanding of power in that discourse and reveals a patchwork of inconsistencies, differences and questions.

Tokyo’s Quandary, Beijing’s Moment in the Six-Party Talks: A Regional Multilateral Approach to Resolve the DPRK’s Nuclear Problem
Kuniko Ashizawa

The record of Japan’s diplomacy in the Six-Party Talks (SPT), the key multilateral mechanism to address North Korea’s unflagging nuclear ambitions, is unpronounced. Tokyo’s position in the SPT process has been often viewed as a secondary one, as if it was functioning as Washington’s henchman, and at times as unproductive, thanks to its attempts to address the abductions issue in this multilateral setting. This represents an interesting contrast to China’s SPT diplomacy, which has seen Beijing play an indispensable role, projecting itself as an honest broker. Further, the contrast between the two countries is intriguing when their general policies toward regional multilateral institutions over the past decade are taken into account. Both countries made a conspicuous shift in their attitudes toward regional multilateral institution-building, from negative and skeptical to positive and active. In the case of the SPT, a new multilateral institution in Asia, Tokyo’s activism appeared to be muted, while Beijing positioned itself in a most visible manner. With this backdrop, the article examines Japanese policy making toward the SPT through a specific comparison with the country’s general attitude toward regional institution building and with China’s SPT diplomacy. It argues that three aspects of the decision-making context—the nature of foreign policy questions, the composition of actors, and the type of available diplomatic tools—unique to Japan’s dealings with the SPT essentially shaped its diplomacy and thus brought about a conspicuous contrast with its general attitude toward regional institution-building and with Beijing’s growing regional activism.
Can Japanese Foreign Aid to North Korea Create Peace and Stability?

Marie Söderberg

Peace building and peace preservation are new key concepts in Japanese foreign aid policy. According to the revised ODA Charter of 2003, “Japan aspires for world peace. Actively promoting the aforementioned effort with ODA,” which Japan will carry out “even more strategically” in the future. Asia, and especially East Asia, is singled out as a priority region. North Korea, with which Japan has not yet normalized relations, would therefore seem like an important starting point. How come development aid is not extended to that country?

The answer is that aid is a very complex issue, and not giving is often regarded as being as effective as giving when it comes to eliciting concessions and bringing about changes in the recipients’ policy behaviour. For Japan, the question of North Korea policy is made much more complicated by the nuclear issue and the abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea. Various domestic opinions and interest groups have to be taken into consideration as well as security interests and foreign pressure. This article uses I. William Zartman’s “ripe moment” theory and addresses the question of whether Japanese ODA can be an effective tool for the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea as well as for helping to generate peace and stability in the Northeast Asia region.

The Political Economy of Japanese Sanctions Towards North Korea: Domestic Coalitions and International Systemic Pressures

Christopher W. Hughes

Japan has often been dismissed by mainstream international relations and policy discourse as a bit-part actor in Korean Peninsula security affairs. If ascribed any role at all, it is seen as a secondary and submissive actor, generally bending to US strategy and international systemic pressures. This paper argues, however, that Japanese policy towards North Korea is now challenging these international systemic pressures, and threatening divergence with US policy. This is due to the fact that Japan’s policy is increasingly driven by domestic political considerations that are rivalling or even superseding international influences in importance. In order to highlight these domestic dynamics, the paper utilizes domestic sanctions theory and a detailed empirical analysis of the Japanese policy-making process with regard to the imposition of sanctions on North Korea. It demonstrates that a “threshold coalition” has now emerged in Japan which is tipping government policy towards sanctions, irrespective of, or even in opposition to, international systemic pressures to desist from such actions. The paper highlights the changing disposition of a pluralistic range of domestic actors away from default engagement to default containment. The consequence of these aggregate domestic pressures is that the Japanese government is finding it progressively harder to converge with US and international strategy towards North Korea. Japan is thus set to augment its influence in Korean Peninsula security affairs by becoming a more obstructive partner in attempts to find an international resolution to the nuclear crisis.
Critiques of American mainstream and conservative media for their often dubious cheerleading of the US war against Iraq have become familiar elements of recent public discourse. However, such analyses have not generated equivalent intellectual engagement with media representations of North Korea. Considering how difficult it has been to obtain accurate information on North Korea, this relative paucity is surprising. I address this lacuna by analyzing the role of the Japanese media, particularly television, in generating public perceptions of North Korea.

Why did Japanese television coverage of North Korea reach saturation points following the 9/17 summit? Why were audiences so receptive? How did television shape public opinion? And how did domestic public opinion influence or constrict Japan’s North Korea policy? In answering these questions, rather than simply observe that the abductions themselves have been the most important issue in Japan, or note that there have been temporary increases or decreases in Japanese media coverage of North Korea, I argue that television (and other forms of mass media) herded the public into a relatively constricted range of views through narrow, biased saturation coverage of the issue du jour. An intersection of structural concentration, content isomorphism, malleable audiences and domestic policy conflicts allowed the media not only to set agendas, but to prime the audience and frame the presentation of information. Public opinion, maintained by conservative political lobbies, viewer ratings responses and broadcasting strategies, ultimately constricted the government policy agenda, range and choice in dealing with North Korea, generating very predictable behaviours.
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Taking Japan–North Korea Relations Seriously: Rationale and Background

Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg

The centrality of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) to politics in Northeast Asia has been underscored above all by the country’s suspected development of nuclear weapons since the early 1990s. North Korea provides a number of issues in regards to which the other regional actors try to coordinate their policies. Yet the literature analyzing the coordination of policy towards North Korea too often neglects aspects of the geostrategic context in which the nuclear drama is unfolding; diplomacy towards North Korea has been dissected predominantly from the viewpoint of US-North Korea relations. This binary focus is quite representative of international relations research in general, both in the post-Cold War era and earlier. Here, just as in many other contexts, the role, stature and leadership of the United States is often simply taken for granted. The assumption of US power functions as the unquestioned background against which research is done, and upon which analysis is built. In the sense that it possesses the greatest capability, the US may well be described as the most powerful state in the post-Cold War era. However, the limits of US power have recently been suggested by developments in Iraq, Iran and now North Korea, with the result that the extent of US power in concrete circumstances is a question that needs continuous elaboration. The tendency not to scrutinize sufficiently the issue of US power in the literature on multilateral coordination of policy on North Korea is probably further emphasized by the fact that most books and articles addressing the topic are written from a distinctively—often rather myopic—US perspective, engaging mostly US-based scholars.

In contrast, although Japan is one of North Korea’s closest neighbours, in the postwar era it has often been discounted as an actor of little importance.

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1 We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of *Pacific Affairs* for their useful comments in regard to this special issue.

on the Korean affairs scene. In much of the mainstream academic literature and policy discourse on the problems involving North Korea, Japan is seen as an inferior and obedient participant. If it is ascribed a role at all, Tokyo is depicted as operating primarily to support US and South Korean initiatives towards the North, and generally yielding to US pressure, whether in the bilateral context or in multilateral ones. The image of Japanese insignificance on the Korean Peninsula is also in line with the common interpretation of its foreign and security policies as curiously or intelligibly passive and reactive to the pressures of the international system.3

This special issue of Pacific Affairs problematizes the predominant approach to international relations by focusing on North Korea policy since the first nuclear crisis of 1993–94 from a distinctly Japanese point of view, rather than from a US perspective. Relations between Japan and North Korea matter for at least one very evident reason: the Japanese government has long regarded North Korea’s suspected development of nuclear weapons as one of the most destabilizing factors in the Asia-Pacific region, if not the world,4 and this issue clearly has all the necessary potential to turn Japan into a “military power,” transcending the mere possession of military capability.5

The articles in this special issue all delve further into the questions of why and how Japan-North Korea relations matter. They examine and highlight the Japan factor in North Korea policy coordination, by engaging discourse (Hagström) and international systemic explanations (Hughes); and they delve into the North Korea factor in Japanese domestic politics, when it comes to assessing relational power (Hagström), playing a constructive role in multilateral forums (Ashizawa), using foreign aid as a policy instrument (Söderberg), imposing sanctions on North Korea (Hughes), or understanding the media’s role in foreign-policy making (Lynn).

With their multifaceted theoretical and methodological approaches, the articles suggest a number of ways in which (1) the North Korea issue matters to Japan’s domestic politics and its evolving foreign policy; (2) the Japan-

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4 For examples of Japanese threat perceptions, see various issues of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Diplomatic Bluebook and the Japan Defense Agency’s Defense of Japan.

North Korea relationship matters to the politics of Northeast Asia; and (3) Japan matters in North Korea policy coordination. More concretely, most of the articles concur on three points. First, they point out that domestic politics plays a significant role in shaping Japanese North Korea policy, and thus that “Japan” should be problematized by seriously delving into the country’s domestic situation. Second, the articles agree that in academic terms, Japan is highly relevant to understanding the North Korea issue, or even international relations in general. Third, they tend to concur that Japan’s potential intransigence on bilateral or multilateral North Korea policy coordination is associated with certain policy implications. In particular, they suggest that recent instances of Japanese North Korea policy are representative of a Japan that is becoming a more assertive but less predictable security partner for the US and the regional community in dealing with North Korea.

Much North Korea policy-related research takes the US angle as a starting point. In contrast, the articles included here mostly focus on the relationship between Japan and North Korea, and the domestic Japanese context is thus generally emphasized over the international context. Although this special issue does not include any articles on “US North Korea policy,” “Chinese North Korea policy,” Seoul’s policy towards Pyongyang” or the like, this other binary focus does not totally exclude the US, China, South Korea and other state actors on the North Korea policy scene. Although they are not addressed in as much detail as Japan, those actors still come into the analysis as providing context (Hagström, Hughes, Söderberg and to some extent Lynn) or as objects of comparison (Ashizawa). As a result of the binary focus, moreover, issues that are secondary to the Japan-North Korea relationship are also not investigated very thoroughly. Examples include all aspects of North Korea’s domestic situation, the question of possible North-South unification, the North Korean refugees and human rights issues other than that of the abducted Japanese citizens, and economic exchanges other than the potentiality of foreign aid. Except for the abductions and foreign aid, the articles in this special issue are mostly concerned with matters related to the North Korean development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

**Empirical background**

The remainder of this introduction continues to set the stage for the articles in this special issue. This section does so by providing an empirical background to Japan-North Korea relations, in the context of great-power politics in Northeast Asia from the late 1800s to the present.

**From hot wars to cold war**

The Korean Peninsula has long figured fatefuly in the strategies of other actors in Northeast Asia. This is the geographical spot where the interests of
China, Japan, Russia and the US have overlapped and occasionally collided, often with dire consequences for the sovereignty of the Korean people. Since the late 1800s, the Koreans have been the victims of a number of wars between external powers. The struggle for suzerainty over Korea, for example, led to the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95). Although Korea was declared independent as a result of the Chinese defeat, in reality the competition for control continued. Some ten years later, the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) broke out and Japanese forces shocked the world by defeating the old great power. The Portsmouth Peace Treaty recognized Japan’s “paramount interest” in Korea, but it was not until 1910 that Korea was formally annexed by Japan. The Korean Peninsula suffered under Japanese colonialism for 35 years.

When Japan lost World War II in 1945 it was stripped of all its colonial possessions, including Korea. Japanese soldiers north of the 38th parallel in Korea capitulated to the Soviet Union, and those who were south of it surrendered to the US. The Koreans started to prepare themselves for freedom and independence, but the allied powers decided to administer the country for a period of five years. Since they could not agree on how to appoint an independent Korean government, the peninsula remained divided—a division that was cemented through the proclamation of the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) and the DPRK in the fall of 1948. Both governments laid claim to the whole peninsula, and tensions between them became aggravated and ignited the Korean War in 1950. American-led forces fought on the ROK side, while Chinese and Soviet forces supported the DPRK. Fighting continued until 1953, when an armistice agreement was reached.

As a result of the colonial legacy, anti-Japanese feelings remained strong in both Koreas and for some time there was no direct Japanese involvement in either country. Due to its central position within US policy for Northeast Asia, however, Japan became indirectly involved, and during the Korean War many US-led troops left for the battlefield from Japan. During the Cold War, the course of Korean affairs remained heavily affected by the antagonism between the US, Japan and South Korea on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, China and North Korea on the other.

In the early 1970s, a climate of détente brought about the establishment of relations between China and the US and the normalization of relations between China and Japan. At this time, there was also some improvement in

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Japan-North Korea relations. From the mid-1970s bilateral relations deteriorated again, and they grew even worse as a result of the North Korean bomb attack in Burma in 1983, directed against the South Korean cabinet. In retaliation to sanctions imposed by Japan, the North Korean government detained and imprisoned two crew members from the Japanese fishing vessel *Fujisanmaru*, which had been captured in North Korean waters.

**From détente to first nuclear crisis**

The end of the Cold War a few years later was accompanied by a number of radical changes. There was a South Korean initiative to approach the North in 1988, and while President Roh Tae Woo struggled to create better relations with Moscow and Beijing, he also promised to cooperate in Pyongyang’s efforts to upgrade relations with Tokyo and Washington.\(^8\) From Tokyo’s viewpoint, there were several reasons for entering into negotiations with Pyongyang. Peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula was the overall goal, but the government was probably also attracted by two other possibilities: (1) for Japanese companies to have access to a new market; and (2) for the crew of the *Fujisanmaru* to be released. It was not until 1990—after the first high-level Seoul-Pyongyang talks had been held—that a 40-member Japanese delegation from the incumbent Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ), visited Pyongyang and held direct talks with Korean Workers’ Party officials.

Through the visit and private talks between the delegation leader, LDP veteran Kanemaru Shin, and North Korean President Kim Il Sung, the North Korean government was induced to release the crew of the *Fujisanmaru*. In the Three-Party Joint Declaration issued after the talks, the Japanese side pledged to apologize for the period of colonial rule, to give economic compensation for the colonial and post-1945 periods, and to move towards the normalization of diplomatic relations. Back in Japan, Kanemaru’s “private” or “individual” diplomacy (*kojin gaikō*) received mixed reactions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) was quick to point out that this was a party-to-party agreement and not at all binding on the Japanese government. Kanemaru, moreover, was forced to explain himself to the ROK and US governments. In a meeting with President Roh, he promised that the normalization of relations between Tokyo and Pyongyang would be conditioned on South Korean consent and the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue.\(^9\)

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\(^8\) James Cotton, ed., *Korea under Roh Tae-woo: Democrotisation, Northern Policy, and Inter-Korean Relations* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

However, the complications following Kanemaru’s overture did not dampen the general tendency towards détente in the region: in September 1991, both Koreas were simultaneously admitted to the United Nations (UN), and a few months later they signed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchange and Cooperation, followed by a Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The George H. W. Bush administration, moreover, announced that it would withdraw all US tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea, and in early 1992 Pyongyang signed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Agreement. The same year Seoul established relations with Beijing to the disappointment of the North Korean leadership.

Between January 1991 and November 1992, eight rounds of normalization talks were also held between Japan and North Korea. The negotiations ultimately failed, for a number of reasons. First, the Japanese government refused to consider the North Korean demands for apologies and compensation in line with the Three-Party Joint Declaration, preferring instead to negotiate in line with the Basic Treaty of 1965 with South Korea, under which Japan settled its colonial past in the form of “economic cooperation.” Second, it made demands that Pyongyang should allow Japanese-born spouses of North Korean citizens (nihonjinzuma)—repatriated to the North together with their Korean husbands under a Red Cross “returnee” programme in the 1950s—to visit Japan. Third, and most importantly for the current state of bilateral relations, it urged the North to provide reassurances about the safety of a Japanese citizen thought to have been abducted to North Korea and implicated in the bombing of a South Korean airliner in 1987—the first of the abduction cases (rachi jiken) to emerge as a crucial bilateral problem.10 Japan-North Korea relations were further aggravated by the North’s successful test of a Nodong-I missile in May 1993.

At about the same time North Korean relations with South Korea and the IAEA were also tested: Pyongyang asserted that the IAEA inspections unequivocally proved the country to be innocent of the accusation that it was developing nuclear weapons. It stressed that nuclear-related issues must be resolved within the IAEA framework, and demanded that other states refrain from exerting pressure bilaterally. This approach was detrimental to the relationship with Seoul. Moreover, the IAEA discovered a considerable discrepancy between North Korea’s officially documented nuclear programme and the reality. When the IAEA demanded in February 1993 that Pyongyang permit special inspections of two suspected, but undeclared,

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nuclear facilities, the regime retaliated by threatening to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and thereby to put an end to routine inspections as well. These developments resulted in the first nuclear crisis of 1993-94.

When the situation seemed most critical, the North Korean leadership began to appear more cooperative, commencing in June 1994 in talks with former US President Jimmy Carter. Additional talks followed, resulting in the Agreed Framework Between the United States and North Korea on the Nuclear Issue on 21 October of the same year. Under this agreement, Pyongyang pledged to freeze its nuclear weapons programme and accept its obligations under the NPT in return for the promise of having its graphite-moderated reactors exchanged for light-water reactors (LWRs), and for an annual 500,000 tons of crude oil during a transitional period. Furthermore, bilateral relations would be normalized and US sanctions lifted. To administer, finance and coordinate the construction of the LWRs and the supply of crude oil, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was inaugurated in March 1995, with Japan, South Korea and the US as founding members. To manage various problems that subsequently arose, the Four-Party Talks were arranged between the governments of the US, South Korea, North Korea and China from 1997 to 1998. Tokyo, however, was left out of the talks.

**Negotiations for a normalized relationship**

The Japanese government instead attempted to restart bilateral normalization talks by dispatching a LDP-SDPJ-Sakigake delegation to Pyongyang in March 1995, and by providing rice aid to North Korea; and later by dispatching another LDP-SDPJ-Sakigake delegation in November 1997. Japanese demands that Pyongyang cooperate on the *nihonjinzuma* issue, together with increasing domestic pressure on the abductions issue, effectively blocked the restarting of negotiations between 1995 and 1998. As a sign of somewhat improved relations, groups of *nihonjinzuma* were allowed to visit Japan during 1997 and 1998.

However, when the North Korean military fired a Taepodong-1 missile over Japanese territorial waters in 1998—or put a satellite in orbit, as Pyongyang contends—the Japanese government suspended its $1 billion...
contribution to KEDO. In addition, it stopped all its humanitarian aid, withdrew its offer to resume normalization talks, banned all chartered flights between the countries and allegedly agreed on further defence cooperation with South Korea. The Japanese Diet, moreover, adopted resolutions condemning the test, and parliamentarians across party lines prepared legislation to halt remittances to the DPRK from North Korean residents in Japan and to tighten export controls should another missile test be undertaken. About two weeks later, the Japanese government brought the matter to the UN Security Council, which “expressed its ‘concern and regret’ and urged the North not to make further unannounced launches.”

Furthermore, in view of the missile threat, Tokyo shifted to a position of increasing military containment of North Korea through its decisions in August 1999 to begin joint research into a ballistic missile defence (BMD) system with the US and to launch four intelligence satellites, and then in March 1999 to chase North Korean spy ships (fushinsen) out of its territorial waters.

Meanwhile, President Kim Dae Jung had been elected president in South Korea, but his “sunshine policy”—a proactive strategy to lead North Korea down the path towards peace, reform and openness through reconciliation, interaction and cooperation with South Korea—did not lead to any immediate reduction of tensions. A major breakthrough for the sunshine policy came in June 2000 with the historic summit meeting between Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang. Although there is disagreement in South Korea on the wisdom of engaging the North, this policy is being continued under the current administration of President Roh Moo Hyun.

Towards the end of the Clinton administration, the US followed suit, culminating with the visit of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to Pyongyang in November 2000 and bilateral negotiations over possible restrictions on the North’s ballistic missiles.

Representatives of Japan and North Korea also agreed to resume normalization talks after another mission of Japanese politicians from all the major political parties again travelled to Pyongyang in November 1999, and Tokyo twice agreed to provide rice aid in 2000. At the talks in Tokyo in August 2000, the North Korean side repeated its demands for Japanese apologies and reparations for Japanese rule of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945; and the Japanese side kept raising the abductions issue. There was no breakthrough in this or the following two rounds of negotiations in Beijing.

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Taking Japan-North Korea Relations Seriously: Rationale and Background

**Between abduction frenzy and second nuclear crisis**

Although there was little progress in the formal talks, informal consultations between Japan and North Korea resulted in the unprecedented meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in September 2002. This meeting was sensational for several reasons. First, it occurred at a time when Japan’s ally, the US under the George W. Bush administration, was moving towards a strategy of containment of North Korea. Second, Pyongyang, which prior to the meeting had denied all accusations of involvement in the abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, suddenly admitted and apologized for twelve abductions, and agreed to let five surviving abductees return to Japan. Third, in the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, which was adopted in connection with the meeting, the Japanese side expressed “deep remorse and heartfelt apology” for the tremendous damage and suffering caused to the people of Korea during the colonial period. Both sides determined that they would make every possible effort to realize the early normalization of their relations. The claims for war compensation that North Korean negotiators had always made in previous meetings were now dropped, and replaced with Tokyo’s preferred formula of “economic cooperation.” Japanese negotiators also extracted pledges from their North Korean counterparts that North Korea would maintain its freeze on the nuclear programme and moratorium on missile testing. Normalization talks then resumed in October 2002, following Pyongyang’s granting of permission in the same month for the five surviving abductees to visit Japan.

However, relations very quickly turned sour again, for two reasons. The first reason was the emergence of the nuclear issue. Within a month of the Koizumi-Kim meeting, a US delegation visited Pyongyang to confront the regime with the suspicion that it had begun a secret nuclear programme using highly enriched uranium (HEU). Such an HEU programme was believed to contradict the Agreed Framework, and the US government and its allies in KEDO (including Japan) retaliated by stopping oil deliveries to North Korea. Pyongyang then declared the Agreed Framework dead, and again decided to leave the NPT and the Nuclear Safeguards Agreement.

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(NSA) with the IAEA. The situation escalated as the old plutonium-based North Korean nuclear programme was restarted.\textsuperscript{18}

To manage this second nuclear crisis and to get North Korea to abandon its nuclear programmes, in the summer of 2003 the governments of the US, South Korea and Japan struggled to persuade Pyongyang to agree to a new round of multilateral talks. An active Chinese role in these attempts, together with the suggestion that Moscow should be a party, contributed to secure Pyongyang’s approval. These multilateral talks became the Six-Party Talks (SPT). The issues on the negotiation agenda include a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of the North Korean nuclear weapons programme, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the future role of peaceful nuclear energy, security guarantees and economic aid, and the use of sanctions and force.

Between August 2003 and June 2004, three rounds of the SPT were held, but little progress was made. From August 2004 North Korea refused to take part in further talks, and in response to harsh US criticism in February 2005 it finally went ahead and declared itself a nuclear weapons state. The situation again seemed rather critical, but the SPT were reopened in July 2005 and went into recess until September 2005, when North Korea appeared ready to abandon its nuclear programme in return for energy assistance, security guarantees and the normalization of diplomatic relations with Japan and the US. Its statements on these points, however, were later shown to be less significant than thought at the time. The fifth round of the SPT in November 2005 ended with little apparent progress, and with no date set for future meetings.

Since then there have only been abortive attempts to get the SPT going again. The chief delegates of each country held bilateral talks on the sidelines of an academic conference on security issues in Northeast Asia in Tokyo in April 2006, but failed to reach an agreement on restarting the stalled talks. Pyongyang is allegedly willing to return only if Washington lifts its freeze on disputed North Korean assets at a Macau-based bank.\textsuperscript{19}

The second reason for the deterioration of Japan-North Korea relations was the abductions issue, which has in fact been the dominant concern in Japan, at least in the media and among the general public. The public was enraged by the fact that more than half of the abductees were reported as dead and that information on their deaths seemed inaccurate. The five abductees who returned to Japan were closely followed by the press in a


strongly nationalistic and anti-North Korean mode. When it was time for them to go back to North Korea, the Japanese government refused, and instead asked for their eight relatives to be “repatriated” as well, including the US army deserter Charles Jenkins, who was married to one of the returned abductees, Soga Hitomi. As a result, bilateral relations turned frosty in the extreme.

It would take until May 2004 before Prime Minister Koizumi returned to Pyongyang to negotiate the return of the relatives as well as a further investigation into the fate of ten other acknowledged or suspected abduction cases. Koizumi managed to get the eight relatives released and at the same time announced that Japan would provide food aid and humanitarian assistance. However, relations turned cold again in December 2004 as what were declared to be the remains of one of the deceased abductees, Yokota Megumi, were sent home to Japan and a DNA test allegedly showed that the remains were those of several other persons. The test methods were later criticized in *Nature* in February 2005, but the LDP nevertheless made statements that economic sanctions might be used to force Pyongyang to reveal the truth and hand over the abductors to Japanese justice. The food aid that Prime Minister Koizumi pledged to provide during his visit to Pyongyang in May 2004 was later suspended and remains so.

Despite all obstacles in the relationship, Tokyo and Pyongyang managed to hold three-track normalization talks in Beijing in early February 2006, with separate panels addressing (1) diplomatic normalization; (2) the North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens; and (3) Pyongyang’s development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. However, since there was no progress on the abductions issue, the talks deadlocked and no new rounds were decided upon.

Since then, the governments of both countries have again raised the stakes. On the one hand, in mid-June 2006 the Japanese Diet approved a bill that would require the government to impose sanctions on North Korea if it failed to make progress in addressing its human rights abuses, including the abductions of Japanese citizens. Japanese opponents of a normalized relationship with Pyongyang have also tried to bring the abductions issue onto the international stage. On the other hand, in July 2006 Pyongyang test-fired seven missiles, including a failed test of a Taepodong-2 missile with

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a range of 3,500–6,000 kilometres. Tokyo immediately retaliated by invoking its economic sanctions law for the first time, banning North Korean officials, ships and charter flights from entering Japan, and it is allegedly considering further sanctions. It also actively lobbied the UN, resulting in a resolution imposing limited sanctions on North Korea. The governments of the two countries thus seem trapped in a vicious circle.

Outline of this special issue

With the aim of further demonstrating why and how Japan-North Korea relations matter, the following articles provide more in-depth analyses of many of the issues touched on in this introduction. The articles are presented below.

The idea that the academic literature on North Korea policy coordination subscribes to and reproduces a dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance is central to most articles of this special issue, but this dogma is challenged head-on by Linus Hagström. Hagström’s article (1) demonstrates that an undercurrent of statements in the same literature could well be interpreted as implying Tokyo’s exercising of political, economic and perhaps even military power over Washington; (2) clarifies the conceptual bias upon which the predominant view rests; and (3) suggests how another understanding of power is more coherent with the first two points, but at the same time renders the whole question of power in North Korea policy coordination practically a quagmire. By doing so, the article deconstructs the more uniform understanding of power in this discourse, and reveals a patchwork of inconsistencies, differences and questions. By engaging a body of relevant literature, Hagström’s paper sets the stage for the other articles.

Kuniko Ashizawa’s article examines Tokyo’s and Beijing’s attitudes towards the Six-Party Talks as a case study of their respective approaches to a multilateral solution for North Korea’s nuclear ambitions over the past decade, and to multilateralism in general. Compared with China, and despite its recent activism in other multilateral forums, Ashizawa does not find that the Japanese government has played a constructive role in the SPT thus far. The reason, she argues, is largely a domestic condition that is unique to Japan-DPRK relations. Yet Ashizawa also points out some elements that reflect Japan’s potential influence, for example, the US hesitancy about criticizing Japan’s insistence on always bringing the abductions issue onto the negotiation agenda.

As suggested above, in terms of North Korea policy coordination, Japan’s importance in the process has mainly been understood as potential sponsor of US initiatives, but in her article Marie Söderberg analyzes the Japanese government’s attempts to deal with North Korea by its own means, that is, through Japanese foreign aid. According to the revision of Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter, peace building and peace preservation are new key concepts in Japanese foreign aid policy towards East Asia. North Korea and the nuclear issue thus seem like a natural starting point for a more strategic allocation of ODA. Söderberg’s article focuses on the question of whether Japanese ODA is an effective tool for the normalization of relations with North Korea and to help generate peace and stability in Northeast Asia. Comparisons are made with the role Japanese ODA has played for peace making in other countries, such as Cambodia or Burma.

The potential efficiency and effectiveness of economic aid having been analyzed, the next article turns to the issue of negative statecraft. In his article, Christopher W. Hughes examines Japan’s recent moves to impose unilateral economic sanctions on North Korea. His article utilizes domestic sanctions theory to analyze Japan-North Korea bilateral diplomacy; the form of sanctions being readied by Japan; the interests and stances of domestic actors involved in policy towards North Korea; and in what ways changing coalitions among these domestic actors have created a momentum for sanctions. By indicating theoretically and empirically under what conditions domestic politics matter in shaping outcomes, the article questions more widely the dominance of explanations for Japan’s foreign policy that are based on the international system, while building on the existing literature on its domestic sources.

Whereas most of the articles in this special issue—perhaps particularly that by Hughes—rigorously address domestic factors in Japan’s North Korea policy, only the final one makes them its primary focus for investigation, transcending the dichotomous relationship with systemic factors. The objective of Hyung Gu Lynn’s article is to elaborate on why the abductions issue from time to time has even taken priority over the nuclear issue in the perceptions of the Japanese public. In his answer Lynn highlights the role of the media, in particular television, in keeping the focus on the abductions. He examines how the combination of regular, saturation, sensationalized television coverage; organized lobbying and mobilization by the abductees’ families and related groups; and audience expectations primed by a compound of social ills, unawareness of modern history, and “reality” shows, has generated and sustained emotionally charged public responses towards North Korea.

Stockholm, Sweden, August 2006
Japan’s postwar development has been quite astonishing. The journey from military defeat to economic success only took twenty or so years to accomplish. Yet some international relations (IR) scholars have been rather surprised by the fact that Japan failed to fulfil what they prophesied—namely, to develop political and military power commensurate with its great economic capability. This is why realist Kenneth Waltz has given Japan the epithet of “structural anomaly.” The Japanese anomaly is epitomized in (and sometimes also explained as a result of) Japan’s “historical legacy,” including the promulgation of a pacifist constitution with its war-renouncing Article 9, the enactment of three anti-nuclear principles in 1967, and the three principles prohibiting the export of weapons in 1967 and 1976, and the fact that, in principle, Japanese defense expenditure occupies only 1 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). The image of Japanese insignificance in international affairs—reactivity, passivity, dependence or even non-existence—is reproduced in many different literatures.

One such body of literature addresses the coordination of policy towards the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) since the early 1990s. Academic works on the recurring nuclear crisis—particularly those

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1 I would like to thank a number of people for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this article, in particular Akihiko Tanaka and the three anonymous reviewers for *Pacific Affairs*. A collective thanks goes to the participants in the workshop on “Japan, East Asia and the Formation of North Korea Policy” in March 2005, the participants in the Stockholm Joint Seminar for International Relations in October 2005 and other colleagues at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (SIIA). I finally acknowledge the funding of the special foreign and security policy programme at the SIIA, under the auspices of which this article was written. The Swedish School of Advanced Asia Pacific Studies (SSAAPS)—set up by The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation and The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT)—also provided a generous publication grant.

written in English—tend either to exclude Japan altogether, or at least to emphasize the predominant power, role and leadership of the United States, and Tokyo’s subservience to Washington.3

One could argue that the emphasis on US power is solidly backed by history, but the aim of this article is to challenge that dominant view, (1) by demonstrating that there is an undercurrent of statements in the academic literature dealing with North Korea policy coordination, which could be interpreted as implying Tokyo’s exercise of political, economic and perhaps even military power over Washington; (2) by clarifying the concept of power upon which the dominant view rests; and (3) by suggesting how another understanding of power is more coherent with the first two points, while at the same time it makes the question of power in North Korea policy coordination practically a quagmire. The article thus aims to demonstrate how difficult it is to separate the image of Japanese foreign policy as “insignificant” or “powerless” from conceptions of power drawn from IR theory, and it suggests that a different approach to power must catalyze a reappraisal of the empirical data. The aim of the article, however, is not to pursue that reappraisal, or even to make any substantive claims about Japanese exercise of power over other actors. It aims only to stimulate that kind of analysis, by problematizing and perhaps blurring the picture conceived in the academic literature on North Korea policy coordination. The understanding of power relations in this literature is thus deconstructed into a patchwork of inconsistencies, ambiguities and questions; as a result, the power of this discourse is also challenged.

The analysis that follows aims to critically engage a large number of books and articles on (the Japanese involvement in) North Korea policy coordination from the first nuclear crisis and its prelude through the ongoing second one. While texts written in English are apt to make assumptions and draw conclusions implying US power and Japanese insignificance, texts

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written in Japanese tend to be more descriptive4 and/or normative.5 Since Japanese texts generally trace the coordination process without couching their analysis in terms of power or significance, they are not engaged to the same extent as those written in English. However, there are some exceptions, and the fact that many Japanese texts propose what Tokyo should do in its relationship with Pyongyang (rather than in its relationship with the other actors with which it coordinates)—in a sense assuming that the Japanese government could make a difference—is itself revealing, and it puts the fallacies in the English-language literature into perspective. As a supplement, this article will therefore take a closer look at a few selected pieces written in Japanese.

The first section outlines what I call the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance. In line with the definition provided by the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, “dogma” refers here to a belief or a system of beliefs, to be criticized for expecting people to accept it as true without questioning it. The second section questions the dogma by revealing that the academic literature on North Korea policy coordination often refers to Japanese foreign policy in terms which could be interpreted as implying Tokyo’s exercise of power over Washington. When “the anomaly of Japanese insignificance or powerlessness” is presented with what seems like an anomaly of Japanese power, one may wonder if the first anomaly was real to begin with. However, since the literature pays tribute to the idea of US power and Japanese insignificance while also presenting empirical data that could be interpreted, for example, as showing Tokyo exercising power over Washington, the dogma of Japanese insignificance is indeed real.

In any event, the tension between current and undercurrent, or text and subtext, still makes the question of the “Japanese anomaly” appear increasingly anomalous, and the third section of this article attempts to explain why. In short, it argues that the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance derives from the discursive over-reliance on a conception that equates power with capability. It then suggests that the dogma is undermined by using a concept of power which more clearly emphasizes the contextual


The article makes three distinct contributions to the debate. First, it demonstrates that even a body of literature that subscribes to the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance makes statements which, in relational power terms, could be interpreted as examples of the Japanese government exercising power over the US government. Second, it offers a more differentiated version of relational power, because the existence of interest pluralism makes it difficult to say unambiguously that one party exercised power over the other when both are corporate actors. Third, it emphasizes that the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance perhaps says more about the power of discourse than about anything else. These contributions fit well with the intended aim of this whole special issue, namely to problematize the predominant approach to international relations by focusing on North Korea policy from a distinctly Japanese perspective.

The dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance

The literature analyzing the coordination of North Korea policy since the early 1990s consistently portrays the US as the most important or powerful actor. Japan, in contrast, is either more or less absent from such accounts, or it is described as being absent in the policy-making process, dependent on US leadership and with little choice but to follow US initiatives and to coordinate closely with its alliance partner. Writing that “[t]he US has governed to a large extent both the pace and orientation of the Japanese alliance partner’s security policy towards North Korea,” Hughes explicitly supports the dogma. A similar message is conveyed in a Japanese text by Okonogi:

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… [I]t is undeniable that Japanese North Korea diplomacy so far has been severely restricted by US North Korea policy. Since US power [eikyōryoku] was just too enormous, and, even more fundamentally, since North Korea’s foreign policy was just too stiff, during the Cold War Japan could not develop its independent North Korea diplomacy. However, even after the end of the Cold War this situation has not changed.8

The way in which the literature construes two famous episodes of Japanese involvement in the coordination of North Korea policy is also quite illustrative of the dogma.

First, as described in the introduction to this special issue, the Japanese attempt to normalize relations with North Korea in the early 1990s was soon taken hostage by US concerns about the North’s nuclear research. Following his bold normalization initiative in 1990, for instance, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) strongman Kanemaru Shin reportedly had to apologize to US Ambassador Michael Armacost “for having acted without any prior consultation.”9 As a result, the Japanese government began to insist that diplomatic relations could not be normalized unless North Korean nuclear facilities were subjected to international inspection, and that development assistance and investment would be withheld until the nuclear issue had been satisfactorily resolved. The fact that “[t]his tough stance by Tokyo has been a major factor in sending North Korea a clear and unmistakable message on nuclear proliferation,”10 in the words of an official in the administration of then President George H.W. Bush, could be interpreted as Tokyo exercising

8 Okonogi, “Kitachōsen mondai,” p. 4.
10 Reiss, Bridled Ambition, p. 291, n. 17.
power over Pyongyang. Yet the fact that this “tough stance” originated in US demands is seen to be indicative of Washington’s exercise of power over Tokyo. If the Japanese government could not have acted differently, it merely comes out as a loyal ally, exercising power over North Korea as part of the US strategy.

As policy makers in Tokyo and Pyongyang again stepped up their efforts to normalize bilateral relations by planning a summit meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in 2002, analysts point out that the Japanese government again came under heavy US pressure. A few days prior to the summit, policy makers in Washington are said to have presented their Japanese counterparts with intelligence on a North Korean programme for producing highly enriched uranium (HEU) “and [they] called on Tokyo to respond appropriately.” According to information released to the public, President George W. Bush “supported Japan’s efforts to improve its bilateral relationship with North Korea,” but privately he is reported to have conveyed a conflicting message to Koizumi: “[S]ome speculated that Washington had engineered the confrontation [over the HEU programme] to warn Japan against making easy compromises in [the] normalization talks,” or to contain the country. In any case, DiFilippo notes, “the influencing dynamic associated with Washington’s dominant position in the US-Japan security alliance pressured Tokyo to follow America’s North Korea policy,” for instance so that Japanese heavy oil shipments to North Korea were suspended, and work on the two light-water reactors (LWRs) was postponed.

The US government is believed to have gained its prominent place in multilateral policy coordination partly as a result of the North Korean strategy of systematically addressing the nuclear and missile issues in bilateral terms.

16 Ducke, Status Power, p. 139; Manning, “United States-North Korean Relations,” p. 70; Cha and Kang, Nuclear North Korea, p. 147.
However, underlying the assessment of many analysts are also less contingent factors. For example, according to Eberstadt and Ellings, the reason why Japan has been regarded as ill-positioned to assume the burdens, obligations and responsibilities that one might expect from it is that its “defense capabilities are conspicuously confined—one might even say unnaturally limited.”17 This assessment clearly echoes Waltz’s argument above and, overall, I find that most of the literature engaged here is imbued with similar thinking.

**The anomaly of Japanese power**

The preceding section substantiated the argument that Japan is either largely absent in works analyzing the coordination of North Korea policy since the early 1990s, or is at least described as absent in the policy-making process and dependent on US leadership. However, the same body of literature also contains an undercurrent of statements which could be interpreted as implying that Tokyo exercised power over the actors with whom it interacted. Many texts actually present empirical data that could be construed as implying that the US government has been obliged to take China, South Korea and, in particular, Japan into serious consideration in formulating its North Korea policy.

An article by Kang provides the most explicit example of such an argument: given “the image of the sole global superpower passing quick moral judgment and flexing its muscles against what it see [sic] as rogue states,”18 Kang believes that US moderation towards North Korea has been anomalous. “What explains US restraint?” he asks.19 Why have there been so many carrots and so few sticks in US foreign policy? Kang clarifies that this behaviour is “not the result of North Korea’s superior negotiating tactics or US spinelessness,”20 as argued by some analysts. Instead, it is due to the Japanese unwillingness to support a coercive approach towards North Korea: “This uncertainty about Japan’s response is one of the factors that [has] contributed to the United States’ restraint and circumspection in dealing with North Korea.”21 Due to such considerations, unilateralism has never been an option in the US handling of North Korea. Rather, Washington has had to “rationalize its own approach with those of two key regional actors, South Korea and Japan.”22 Explained in this way, the rationale behind US

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20 Kang, “North Korea,” p. 25.
moderation is an anomaly for the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance.

The subsections below trace a number of other statements from the literature that could also be construed to imply Tokyo’s exercise of power over Washington in the coordination of policy towards North Korea from the first nuclear crisis through the ongoing second one. This analysis may appear overly binary and zero-sum-oriented, implying a balance of power alternating only between the US and Japan. If this article aimed to analyze relations of power more generally in the interaction over North Korea policy, the present focus would indeed be neither sensible nor realistic. However, the aim is rather to challenge the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance, which permeates the academic literature dealing with North Korea policy coordination. To draw the conclusion that there is an undercurrent of statements in research on North Korea policy coordination which can be interpreted as implying the Japanese government’s exercise of power over the US government is not equivalent to saying that Tokyo is exercising more power over Washington than vice versa, or that other potential actors are insignificant. It is merely to say that the undercurrent of statements implies a Japanese foreign policy that is potentially more significant than commonly conceived.

**Resistance to economic sanctions**

The sanctions option was given serious consideration in the US after the North Korean government declared in March 1993 that it would leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Japanese remittances to North Korea at the time amounted to between US$100 million and US$2 billion annually, so there is no doubt that the Japanese government controlled resources that would have been crucial in the event of sanctions.23

However, many works bear witness that sanctions never met with much enthusiasm in Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo,24 and Sato adds that the “US influence over North Korea by diplomatic and economic means was therefore limited.”25 In the spring of 1993, a senior Japanese official was quoted as saying that “even if we can get them passed, economic sanctions probably won’t do much good.”26 More concretely, there was allegedly apprehension that coercive methods would risk causing a collapse of the entire system in

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North Korea, causing distress for the whole region, including mass migration, instability and perhaps even war.  

Different texts make different assessments as to what extent the governments of China, Japan and South Korea presented stumbling blocks for the sanctions instrument, but the Chinese role is often emphasized: “[I]t was the threat of a Chinese veto on any draft sanctions resolution in the Security Council that enabled Pyongyang to obtain what it had been seeking from the beginning: direct bilateral confrontation or negotiation with the United States.”28 To get around that potential veto, in the spring of 1994 the US government raised the idea of acting outside UN auspices, but Tokyo and Seoul were reportedly “unenthusiastic” about imposing economic sanctions without a Security Council endorsement.29

With all due deference to the Chinese veto, therefore, an explanation of why the sanctions issue never managed to escape the realm of the Security Council does not necessarily lie in Beijing. Lind, for instance, finds it likely that the Japanese government would have pressed “as hard as possible to keep the issue in the realm of the Security Council, where China’s refusal to participate in sanctions would overshadow any reluctance on Japan’s part.”30 Reiss, moreover, states that Seoul and Tokyo countered Washington’s attempts to take stronger measures against North Korea, “even lobbying Beijing at times … to rein in the United States in the UN Security Council.”31 Since these measures against an alternative sanctions regime served to restrain the US government, Japanese resistance could be viewed as an example of Tokyo’s exercising political power over Washington.

**Abstention from the military option**

Since consideration of sanctions led to a deadlock, towards the end of 1993 the Clinton administration secretly started to consider the possibility of staging a preventive attack against North Korea. It reportedly “prepared plans and briefed the president for a cruise missile strike.”32 As the North Korean government started to remove the used fuel rods from the Yongbyon nuclear reactor in May 1994, war seemed to be drawing nearer. Sigal writes that the US administration “quietly sounded out South Korea, Japan and China on the possibility of attacking Yongbyon, should North Korea begin removing

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29 Sigal, Disarming Strangers, p. 120; cf. Hughes, Japan’s Economic Power, p. 109; Ducke, Status Power, pp. 144-45.
31 Reiss, Bridled Ambition, p. 282.
32 Reiss, Bridled Ambition, p. 259; Oberdorfer, Two Koreas, p. 312.
spent fuel from the cooling ponds and reprocessing it.” However, many texts testify that the reaction of the other governments was strongly negative. A year earlier, senior Japanese officials are quoted as having dismissed military solutions to the nuclear problem as being “too dangerous,” and in 1994 the Japanese government allegedly clarified that it would stick to that evaluation.

A Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force commander reportedly “informed the US Navy that Japan probably could not provide ships for surveillance and minesweeping unless Japan was directly attacked or the United Nations provided an appropriate mandate.” There was arguably apprehension that a preventive attack would risk provoking a second Korean War, with hundreds of thousands of casualties and the dispersion of radioactivity throughout the East Asian region. There was, moreover, fear that Japanese support of such measures would risk provoking violent protests from the North Korean community inside Japan. Since the US government could not wage a war without the support of its allies, Reiss notes, it was left with no choice but to pursue a diplomatic solution. Tokyo’s and Seoul’s abstention from the military option clearly circumscribed the US scope for action, and it can thus be seen as an example of the two countries’ joint exercise of power over Washington. The notion may seem far-fetched to some, but military non-action by Japan—not lending military support to US North Korea policy—could well be interpreted as the use of a military instrument of power.

Kang, however, has a different analysis of the importance of Japanese and South Korean resistance in this situation. The fact that most South Koreans did not wish to enter into a war might have influenced Washington, but if the US “decided to do something more aggressive about the common North Korean threat, there are hardliners in South Korea who would support such a policy.” As for Japan, in contrast, he asks, “Whither the alliance … if the United States finds it necessary to mount military operations against North Korea from US bases in Japan and needs active Japanese assistance?” Armacost and Pyle concur that “Japanese inertia at the time of the crisis with North Korea in 1994 was belatedly recognized as jeopardizing relations with the United States,” and hence as a political threat to the United States.

33 Sigal, Disarming Strangers, p. 118.
34 Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, p. 118.
35 Sigal, Disarming Strangers, p. 118; Kang, “North Korea,” p. 36.
36 Michael J. Green, Japan’s Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 121.
38 Kang, “North Korea,” p. 33.
39 Kang, “North Korea,” p. 35.
Diplomacy

As demonstrated in previous sections, the US allies are depicted as having left Washington with little choice but to seek a diplomatic solution. However, did the 1994 Agreed Framework Between the United States and North Korea on the Nuclear Issue and the 1995 Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) meet Japanese and South Korean expectations?

Sigal records a statement where the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher declared that the US government was conducting “intensive consultations with our allies South Korea and Japan, and other Security Council members.”41 Apart from that, however, Japan is conspicuous by its absence in the authoritative accounts of the first nuclear crisis,42 and representatives of the country are indeed reported to have “remained stoically on the sidelines during the nuclear standoff.”43 To let Green sum up, “the trilateral coordination during the nuclear crisis and the formation of KEDO has been ad hoc and largely directed from Washington.”44

The governments of Japan and South Korea, moreover, are said to have been unenthusiastic about the Agreed Framework, and reluctant to bear the costs for its implementation.45 Sigal writes that this unwillingness on their part “made a cooperative strategy more difficult for the United States” because to implement the treaty Washington was “dependent” on its allies.46 In the end, however, the governments of Japan and South Korea consented to provide the bulk of the US$4.6 billion that the LWRs were estimated to cost—Seoul was to provide around 70 percent of the total and Tokyo a significant amount, later fixed at US$1 billion—in the latter’s case allegedly “[u]nder pressure from Washington.”47

The above account contains possible power aspects, but those that put Washington in an advantageous position are usually emphasized, e.g., that it negotiated the Agreed Framework more or less without outside meddling and then managed to pressure the governments of Japan and South Korea to bear the costs despite their initial ambivalence. This is the essence of Miyashita’s chapter on the first North Korean nuclear crisis.48 However, it would also be possible to stress other aspects. Hoshuyama, for instance, reminds us that Tokyo and Seoul cornered Washington into pursuing a

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41 Sigal, Disarming Strangers, p. 198.
42 See note 6.
44 Green, Japan’s Reluctant Realism, p. 124.
46 Sigal, Disarming Strangers, p. 255.
48 That is, chapter 8 of Limits to Power.
diplomatic solution to begin with. Interestingly, this idea is also the very bottom line to Miyashita’s argument: “Had the United States not adopted an engagement policy, Japan would probably not have extended financial assistance.”

Okonogi, moreover, points out that the successful implementation of the Agreed Framework depended on Japanese funds, because “it is hard to imagine any country other than Japan being able to guarantee North Korea’s economic reconstruction.” The idea of US dependence on Japanese support could be taken to imply that Tokyo exercised political and economic power over Washington.

Sanctions

After Pyongyang allegedly launched a Taepodong-1 missile over Japanese waters in August 1998, Tokyo’s reluctance to impose sanctions on North Korea vanished completely; its reaction is described as “swift” and “decisive” or even “uncharacteristically quick,” and its stance as more “assertive.” In reaction to the launch, the Japanese government most importantly refused to sign the final agreement on financing the LWRs, which had at long last been achieved in August 1998 and which Bei claims it had been critical of for some time, and it suspended its US$1 billion contribution to KEDO. As outlined in the introduction to this special issue, Japan also took a number of other measures, such as suspending humanitarian aid and normalization talks, and bringing the issue to the UN Security Council.

In October, the Japanese government unfroze its KEDO funding while maintaining its restrictions on other dealings with North Korea. Tokyo’s reversal of policy after two months allegedly illustrates “the constraints under which it labors,” namely “American pressure to resume aid.” While this isolated assessment might be interpreted as confirming the image of US power and Japanese insignificance, other accounts of the incident provide a different analysis. One text emphasizes that Japanese policy subsequent to the missile launch “has moved out of step with that of the US and South

50 Miyashita, Limits to Power, p. 168.
51 Okonogi, “Dealing with the Threat of a Korean Crisis,” p. 84.
52 Ducke, Status Power, p. 145.
53 Oberdorfer, Two Koreas, p. 410.
55 Bei, “Chosen hantō,” p. 78.
57 Using this incident to test how reactive Japanese foreign policy is to US pressure, Sakai argues that not only is Tokyo’s de-freezing of the KEDO money not to be interpreted as the result of US pressure, it was actually “an imperative strategic choice that it made to halt North Korea’s future missile-firing tests by utilizing U.S. influence through that country’s ongoing talks with North Korea.” Sakai, “Continuity and Discontinuity,” pp. 71-72, emphasis in original.
Korea,” and another notes that “Japan adopted a harder line” than either of those two countries. While the South Korean government was allegedly enthusiastic about the policy of engagement with the North that US Secretary of Defense William Perry later decided to promote, “Tokyo … was less so.” The missile test also enabled the Japanese government to take several controversial initiatives. The launch of joint research on a Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) system, for instance, “served as an assurance and made it easier for Japan to lift its sanctions on the KEDO.” According to Sato, so did the Clinton administration’s offer to take “a firmer stance against the further testing, production and export of ballistic missiles by North Korea and to consult closely with Japan and South Korea on these issues.”

The Japanese government, moreover, had been “quietly” displeased about being excluded from the Four-Party Peace Talks from 1996, but after the missile launch it “began to assert the right to have … [its] voice heard in the talks regarding North Korea,” on various occasions proposing six-party talks on Korea’s future. Overall, Armacost and Pyle argue that Japan’s reaction to the Taepodong crisis “served to stiffen the US negotiating stance toward North Korea—an unusual but felicitous reversal of roles between Tokyo and Washington.” This reversal of roles, and the fact that the Six-Party Talks (SPT) later took place, could also be taken to imply that Tokyo exercised political and economic power over Washington.

Engagement

Four years later, Japan was again moving towards a normalization of relations with North Korea—a tendency best exemplified by Prime Minister Koizumi’s visit to Pyongyang in September 2002. As noted above, a few days prior to the Japan-North Korea summit, the US government disclosed information on a North Korean HEU programme; according to some observers—perhaps a little speculatively—the US motive was to deter Japan from establishing a closer relationship with North Korea. However, the summit took place nonetheless, in opposition to what was portrayed as US interests.

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61 Miyashita, *Limits to Power*, p. 162.
62 Sato, “US North Korea Policy,” p. 82.
65 Bei, “Chosén hantō,” p. 78; Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism*, p. 126; Okuzuno, “‘Kitachōsen mondai’,” p. 207.
67 ICG, “Japan and North Korea,” p. 5.
Observers have made the assessment that Koizumi’s trip “can be seen as the first step by Japan to change the nature of a half-century of subservience in its foreign relations with the United States”,68 that it “reveals Japan playing a leading role in an incipient regional shift”; and that the trip entailed “a weighty decision.”69 Despite the fact that consultative negotiations had been going on between Japan and North Korea for almost a year, some observers claim that the US government was notified of the forthcoming summit only three days in advance, and that it was unhappy about it.70 According to Asano, moreover, the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration of September 2002 is evidence that the Japanese negotiators did not raise any US concerns in the talks, most importantly concerning North Korean nuclear development.71 Tokyo’s independent effort to engage Pyongyang is thus depicted as having been different from the approach preferred by the incumbent Bush administration72 or even as posing a serious threat to the US government’s hard-line stance towards North Korea: “At a time when the [US] administration was struggling to gain allied support for its strict anti-proliferation stance, Koizumi’s move appeared dangerous as it showed Japan—a major US ally—seeking engagement over coercion.”73

After Pyongyang appeared to acknowledge the existence of an HEU programme in October 2002, the US government “engineered the suspension of deliveries of the 500,000 tons of heavy oil sent to the North each year under the 1994 accord,” beginning in December of that year.74 Laney and Shaplen, however, testify that the governments of Japan and South Korea did not welcome the hardened US stance against dialogue, and that they insisted that the situation must be handled diplomatically rather than by imposing sanctions.75 As mentioned above, Tokyo and Seoul, pressured by Washington, finally and very reluctantly went along with the decision to levy sanctions on North Korea. Later, however, “Washington, strongly urged by Seoul and Tokyo … agreed to talks.”76 The Japanese persistence in advocating engagement and the fact that the SPT started in August 2003 both suggest that Tokyo could again be interpreted as exercising political power over Washington.

71 Asano, “Nitchō shunō kaidan,” pp. 32-34.
72 Rozman, “Japan’s North Korea Initiative,” p. 536.
75 Laney and Shaplen, “How to Deal,” p. 18.
76 Laney and Shaplen, “How to Deal,” p. 19.
After engagement

In his analysis of the first North Korean nuclear crisis, Mayer quotes Silk and Kono as drawing the conclusion that “no evidence … surfaced of a reversion to ultranationalism and militarism [in Japan] … Any political leader who advocated a military course would immediately lose credibility and public support.” Although the Japanese government has continued its engagement policy—including a second visit by Koizumi to Pyongyang in May 2004 and the successful encouragement of a constructive US approach at the SPT—following the second nuclear crisis Kim concludes that North Korea is a major external factor in the rise and growth of assertive Japanese nationalism. McCormack, moreover, observes that in recent years representatives of such nationalism have “pressed” their case on “a receptive Washington.”

In preparing for the SPT, for example, the Japanese government is said to have repeatedly emphasized that “it did not support the United States agreeing to a nonaggression accord with the DPRK.” Shortly before the first round of the SPT, moreover, Director General of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Yabunaka Mitöji allegedly told US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly that Tokyo “opposed Washington promising not to use nuclear weapons against the DPRK, because without the protection afforded to Japan by the US nuclear deterrent, North Korea could attack it with either chemical or biological weapons.” Altogether, these excerpts could be taken to imply—at least to some degree—Tokyo’s exercising political power over Washington.

The anomaly of the Japanese anomaly

To recapitulate, texts analyzing the coordination of North Korea policy tend to establish the primacy of US power, while depicting Japanese foreign policy as insignificant. Yet there is an implicit assumption that the reason for US restraint towards North Korea during the first nuclear crisis—the reason why Washington abstained both from sanctions and from military attack—could be found in Japan, and that the US government was dependent on South Korean and Japanese support to supply replacement reactors and heavy fuel oil to North Korea in line with the Agreed Framework. Furthermore, those texts imply that Tokyo put pressure on Washington in

78 ICG, “Japan and North Korea,” p. 7.
80 McCormack, Target North Korea, p. 136.
the wake of the missile test in 1998, and that it was behind the more accommodating US stance after North Korea made its revelations about the HEU programme in 2002. Against this background one may wonder why only the US is ascribed power in the discourse, and not Japan. The literature neglects the fact that it presents “the anomaly of Japanese insignificance or powerlessness” with what seems like an anomaly of Japanese power.

The problem is that as long as a property concept of power in terms of capability is being applied, the image of Japan as an “anomaly” in the IR discourse is anomalous to begin with.83 In reality, not only does Japan possess great economic, civilian or soft capability, as is so often suggested, its military and political capabilities are likewise comparatively large.84 Scholars who define power in terms of capability should thus have to conclude that in addition to being an economic or civilian power, Japan is already a political and military power. The reason why they do not is probably that a tacitly assumed connection between capability and certain outcomes is regarded as unrealized in Japan’s case. In brief, the country does not seem to use its capability as tacitly anticipated, i.e., by taking security considerations and waging wars.85 However, if the Japanese military capability is invalidated as a shortcut to military power, it must in fact be doubted whether “control” in the economic field has been analyzed any more carefully so as to justify the apparently instinctive denomination of Japan as an “economic power.”

It seems that it becomes theoretically difficult to apply a concept of power in terms of capability to Japan, because the connection between capability and the less tangible relationship of “control” or, arguably, “the exercise of power” cannot be consistently sustained. This is why it has been argued that foreign policy analysis, in particular, should be directed precisely at instances of “control,” i.e., what everyone really wishes to pinpoint by their focus on capability.86 This approach implies relational power analysis, building on Steven Lukes’s definition that “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests,”87 and the idea that this includes both causal and constitutive effects on B’s interests.

That an anomaly is confronted with an anomaly indicates that there is no anomaly, and, in this case, perhaps that Tokyo is finally acting the way Waltz and others have expected for so long. However, it is only with this context-

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85 Hagström, Japan’s China Policy, pp. 17-20.
sensitive approach to power, which is open to all instruments of statecraft, that it becomes sensible to suggest that the statements identified in the previous section could be reassessed in terms of the Japanese government’s exercise of political, economic and perhaps even military power over the US government. The strength of the relational understanding of power is demonstrated by the fact that such statements can be found even in a body of literature that, overall, subscribes to the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance.

By taking power to be the dependent variable rather than the independent one, relational power analysis clearly does not result in the kind of parsimonious analytical endeavour traditionally espoused in IR theory. Yet the advantage of this kind of analysis is that it focuses attention on power itself and for its own sake, thereby facilitating the observation and interpretation of a vast array of power phenomena. However, as understood from Lukes’s definition, in addition to A’s action, B’s interests are a crucial component of the relational concept of power. By problematizing interests, the following section also brings attention to a potential shortcoming of the relational power approach.

An interest in interests

Many texts that analyze the coordination of policy towards North Korea emphasize the commonality of interest among the state actors involved; they allegedly all share an interest in avoiding nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula. However, relational power analysis as defined above would be rendered impossible in this context if a harmony of interests among the actors did indeed exist. Luckily for relational power analysts, therefore, a closer reading of the texts analyzed here reveals that the actors’ interests not only converged, but diverged as well. Unluckily for those analysts, however, interests are also depicted as having diverged within each corporate actor.

Some analyses of the first crisis are explicitly susceptible to a pluralist perspective. Kim, for instance, writes that “all the countries involved in Korean affairs have become moving targets on turbulent trajectories of their respective highly charged domestic politics, subject to competing and often contradictory pressures.” As a result, Fouse notes, “The extent of US-Japan policy convergence on North Korea may in the end depend on an internal struggle within the Japanese government.” As outlined below, the literature portrays different domestic struggles in the 1990s and the 2000s.

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90 Fouse, “Japan’s Post-Cold War North Korea Policy,” p. 11.
Interest pluralism in the 1990s

The fact that the Japanese attempt to normalize relations with North Korea in the early 1990s was taken hostage by US concerns about the North’s nuclear research has been used to exemplify US power and Japanese insignificance. However, texts dealing with the event give reason to believe that a multitude of Japanese interests were actually at play. Some argue that the personal interests of politicians like Kanemaru, who headed the two-party mission in September 1990, were most central to Japanese diplomacy. They also imply that Kanemaru was somehow connected with the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chōsen sōren)—an organization sympathetic to the Northern regime, which had many members in his constituency.

Whereas influential politicians like Kanemaru had constituency or financial reasons for taking an interest in normalization with North Korea, forces opposing the initiative reportedly gathered strength in other quarters of Tokyo. Leading figures in Japan’s MOFA, in particular, were allegedly concerned that Kanemaru had gone too far to accommodate Kim. South Korean demands, moreover, “enabled the MOFA to wrest control of the normalisation process back from the politicians.” Not all LDP politicians were as favourably disposed towards normalization as Kanemaru, and Mazarr concludes that, given the interests at stake, “it is entirely possible that Tokyo would have pursued exactly the same policy even if the United States had not requested it.”

Increased Japanese moderation in the normalization talks with North Korea thus also makes sense given the background of domestic politics in Japan, and so does the restraint Tokyo later showed as the US government started to prepare the way for sanctions or, possibly, a preventive attack. Yet in the latter case the literature portrays a situation where the domestic balance of interest again tilted towards politicians with ties to North Korea. Mazarr notes that “competing interests in Tokyo threatened to undermine Japanese support for the isolation of North Korea.” The influence of Chōsen sōren is referred to again by Lind in the context of the ensuing Japanese non-action.

According to Ducke, the tension between different domestic interests continued, with public opinion first shifting towards a stronger position in June 1993 after the first North Korean missile test. Many Japanese officials

92 Reiss, Bridled Ambition, p. 291, n. 17.
93 Sigal, Disarming Strangers, p. 26; Hughes, Japan’s Economic Power, p. 83; Takasaki, “Nitchō kōshō,” p. 27.
95 Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, p. 75.
96 Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, p. 73.
allegedly saw both this test and the one in 1998 as chances to bolster domestic support for the TMD project.\textsuperscript{99} After the Agreed Framework had been concluded, moreover, some groups of policy makers were reportedly more in favour of joining KEDO than others: “MOFA convinced an initially reluctant LDP to do so by arguing that participation in KEDO was the best way for Japan to play a more active role in addressing the North Korean threat.”\textsuperscript{100}

It clearly becomes more difficult to judge if \( A \) affected \( B \) in a manner contrary to \( B \)'s interests when both \( A \) and \( B \) are corporate actors, each housing a multitude of different and even conflicting interests.

**Interest pluralism in the 2000s**

In a similar manner, a pluralistic distribution of interests in Japan also makes it difficult to arrive at definite conclusions about the dynamics of power in the coordination of policy towards North Korea in the 2000s. According to the dogma of US power and Japanese insignificance, Tokyo was pressured in September 2002 to follow the US lead on North Korea policy. However, as demonstrated above, the story could also be told from a different perspective: the Japanese government persisted in its engagement policy and together with the South Korean authorities managed to get the US to acquiesce in the SPT. Yet, now that a more unrelenting North Korea policy again seems to be developing in Japan, one must ask if this policy is not precisely the result of the tougher approach instigated by the US government in 2002.\textsuperscript{101}

At the same time, however, it is important to note that at least since the North Korean missile launch in 1998, there has been a growing tendency in Japan to favour more coercive measures while strongly opposing normalization. Many texts claim that the preoccupation with the abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korean agents has been particularly important in this respect.\textsuperscript{102} The negative atmosphere which increasingly surrounds North Korea in the Japanese public discourse could arguably be interpreted as the result of an orchestrated campaign,\textsuperscript{103} but the US is not necessarily behind it. Instead, Hughes suggests that domestic actors like the Modern Korea Institute, together with the media and the families of the suspected abductees, have “in part been responsible for revitalising the *rachi jiken* [sic] [abduction incidents] as a bilateral issue.”\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{100} Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism*, p. 122; cf. Fouse, “Japan’s Post-Cold War North Korea Policy,” p. 5.
\textsuperscript{103} McCormack, *Target North Korea*, pp. 7, 135.
\textsuperscript{104} Hughes, *Japan’s Economic Power*, p. 184.
In spite of such impediments to normalization, a new series of formal bilateral talks commenced in April 2000, after having been suspended since November 1992. The restarting of talks could be understood as a result of the DPRK’s “unparalleled, and heretofore entirely uncharacteristic, burst of international diplomacy” in 2000.105 However, Hughes reminds us that the Japanese government houses a powerful Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which can serve as a counterweight when politicians and public discourse get too carried away by their sentiments, for example in regard to the abduction issue.106 To promote bilateral talks, the Japanese government lifted all sanctions and even donated rice to North Korea before the ninth and eleventh rounds of normalization talks.107 It is said to have done so, however, against fervent domestic opposition: “The families of the kidnapped and their advocacy groups strongly protested against these moves.”108

In connection with the 2002 Koizumi-Kim summit, the US government allegedly tried to persuade Japan off the engagement track, but there is evidence that it had allies even within the governing party, the LDP, for example former Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō.109 After the summit, the balance of interest in Japan arguably again tilted in the direction of those opposed to conciliation with North Korea, especially in connection with the new momentum gained by the abductions issue.110 According to Morriss-Suzuki and others, a sense of hysteria developed around this issue, impeding meaningful progress on all other issues, including the nuclear one.111

In its report, the International Crisis Group notes that “since coming to power in April 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi has walked a fine line, attempting to appease activists on the abduction issue while simultaneously pursuing normalisation. For the first goal, he appointed Abe Shinzō, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, to head a task force on the abduction issue.”112 The MOFA bureaucrats who negotiated the Pyongyang agreements, in contrast, have been publicly discredited, threatened and even forced to resign, while any scholars, journalists and other public figures who supported them have

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106 Hughes, Japan’s Economic Power, p. 177.
112 ICG, “Japan and North Korea,” p. 11.
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been insulted.113

In sum, this section serves to reinforce the idea that relational power analysis is hampered if the US, which is taken to exercise power over Japan, has allies in the Japanese government and the other way around, because it makes it difficult to say unambiguously that one exercised power over the other.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that the literature analyzing the coordination of policy towards North Korea typically ascribes the US power while portraying Japan as a rather insignificant or powerless actor. However, it has also shown that an undercurrent of statements in the same body of literature could well be interpreted as going against that predominant view because, on a large number of counts, the implication seems to be that the Japanese government (also) exercises power over the US government, politically, economically and even militarily, if military non-action is to be counted as such. In this way, the literature confronts the anomaly of Japanese powerlessness with what seem like an anomaly of Japanese power.

I have argued that the reason behind this seeming inconsistency cannot be sought in any Japanese lack of capability—the usual measuring rod for power in IR theory. In fact, the Japanese government and private actors associated with Japan together possess great capability within all relevant fields of power measurement. Japan does not possess a nuclear capability, but not many states do. Although it contradicts IR theory, therefore, Japan probably avoids being called a military and political power, or a great power, not because it does not possess military and political capability, but because it has not used that capability in ways tacitly anticipated by analysts. However, if the use of capability is what really determines analysts’ assessment of states in terms of power, then the literature has already abandoned the property concept of power in terms of capability in favour of one that takes power to reside in specific relationships.

Taking such an approach to power as a starting point, moreover, it again becomes obvious that the literature already makes numerous statements about the Japanese involvement in the coordination of North Korea policy which could be interpreted as implying Tokyo’s exercise of power over Washington (albeit the coercive use of military policy instruments is still conspicuous by its absence). This article, however, has not made the kind of careful reappraisal of relevant events that would be required by relational power analysis; it has concentrated on pointing out a novel direction, raising

113 Fouse, “Japan’s Post-Cold War North Korea Policy,” p. 11; McCormack, Target North Korea, pp. 122, 135.
intriguing questions rather than drawing definite conclusions. The problematization of B’s interests in the relational concept, moreover, gives rise to even more questions, because it demonstrates how difficult it is to say unambiguously that A exercised power over B when both are corporate actors.

If relational power analysis is so difficult to pursue, one may wonder, would it not be easier to return to previously discarded power analysis that builds on the measurement of capability? Since the scholarly literature is not even pursuing the analysis of power in terms of capability, the answer is “no.” Hence, if one wishes to analyze power dimensions in foreign policy, the challenge is to adopt a more differentiated version of relational power analysis, and to assess as carefully as possible A’s action and B’s interests, while problematizing the identity of both actors.

Admittedly, this article has done nothing like that. For the time being, it has merely illuminated a number of inconsistencies, ambiguities and questions. Although it has interpreted statements in the literature as indicating that Japanese foreign policy may not be nearly as insignificant as implied by the dogma, it has not made any real assessment of Japanese significance, for example, vis-à-vis or relative to that of the United States. That could be done, perhaps, by analyzing to what extent Tokyo can change the premises of US North Korea policy or the basic parameters for multilateral action vis-à-vis Pyongyang, e.g., within the SPT.

If this article were to make any more definite, concluding observations about power, it would rather be about the power of discourse. It has been argued that a discourse analytical understanding of power, often drawing on Foucault’s work, transcends the “three faces debate” involving Lukes and others. In any case, since power analysis is apt to become an exercise of power in and by itself, one could ask how the dogma of US power (and Japanese insignificance) affects the world. The deterioration of tensions on the Korean Peninsula during the first five years of the George W. Bush administration could in fact be at least partly attributed to this dogma. It is an ontological question as to whether reproduction of the dogma could even be regarded as having helped construct what UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and others have called a “stalemate,” namely since constructive

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US leadership has not been forthcoming. It is an epistemological question as to whether the current situation will continue to be portrayed in terms of a “stalemate” as long as constructive US leadership is not forthcoming, namely, overlooking other potentially significant initiatives.

Ehrhardt’s analysis is rather telling in the latter respect. It demonstrates that the historic Koizumi-Kim Pyongyang summit in 2002 received very little attention from the governments of the US and China and only scant coverage in the two countries’ respective media: “When the media in either great power did discuss the summit, it was often to explain how North Korea was actually interested in approaching the United States, not Japan.”

It is exactly because the dogma may have tangible consequences that it is preferable to disclose the inconsistencies, ambiguities and questions that are associated with it, rather than attempting to replace it with another (seemingly) coherent analysis of Japanese involvement in the coordination of North Korea policy.

Since the first Gulf War in 1991, policy makers and scholars have articulated their frustration over what they see as shortcomings in Japanese foreign policy. However, as suggested by this article, the Japanese government’s failure to meet the expectations of, for instance, “burden sharing” does not necessarily have to be interpreted as a manifestation of Japanese insignificance or powerlessness. Tokyo’s alleged failure to meet the expectations of analysts and policy makers is not necessarily indicative of a rigid Japanese foreign policy; rather, it could also reflect the rigidity of the analysts’ own expectations.

Keeping that in mind, I will move outside the direct scope of this article for one last reflection. As this article has demonstrated, many recent texts bear witness to the development of a degree of hysteria in Japan in regard to North Korea, and they warn that North Korea is one important factor behind the rise of nationalism and recent calls for a Japanese foreign policy that is worthy of a “normal” great power, including—among other things—a revision of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. This movement, moreover, has met with enthusiasm in the US and realist claims that their theory can eventually be applied to Japan. Cautions against both are needed, however. First, in the longer perspective, a more assertive Tokyo, which continues to have slightly different views on both the means and the ends of foreign policy, will prove a far bigger problem for Washington than a Tokyo that continues to express its own, different position by exercising power as it appears to have done so far—i.e., by being quietly and cautiously obstructionist. Second, considering that the present material situation in East Asia is not so radically

different from that of a decade ago, the conclusion that Japan has finally been given the injection of realpolitik that will transform it in accordance with realism is not very convincing. There is no good explanation as to why Japanese foreign policy should change now, when it did not do so in the mid-1990s.

Recent developments, however, also give reason to question the constructivist conclusion that Japan will remain in its pacifist cocoon indefinitely.\textsuperscript{120} North Korea policy continues to be of crucial interest, partly because it is a test case for the possible emergence of a more assertive Japanese foreign policy.

\textit{Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm, August 2006}

Tokyo’s Quandary, Beijing’s Moment in the Six-Party Talks: A Regional Multilateral Approach to Resolve the DPRK’s Nuclear Problem

Kuniko Ashizawa

The record of Japan’s diplomacy in the Six-Party Talks (SPT), the sole multilateral mechanism currently in place to directly address North Korea’s unflagging nuclear ambitions, is largely inconspicuous. In general discourse on the SPT, Tokyo’s position in the process has tended to be marginalized, often viewed as Washington’s henchman in a delicate internal dynamic among the participants. Japanese insistence on including the abduction issue in the talks’ agenda at times aroused open criticism by other participants (save the United States) as “unproductive” and “harmful” to the SPT process, leaving Tokyo in a somewhat isolated position. Given that, among the participants, Japan faces, arguably, the most direct and serious threat to its security in the event of the SPT’s failure, as it would likely lead to Pyongyang becoming a full-fledged nuclear power, such a subordinate or seemingly obstructionist position appears hardly an optimal option in strategic terms.

Japan’s rather unpronounced record in SPT diplomacy presents an interesting contrast to that of China. It is widely pointed out that China has played an indispensable role in, first, initiating the SPT scheme in 2003 and, subsequently, maintaining this stumbling and cumbersome process over the past three years. Beijing garners credit for having played the role of honest

1 I am grateful to the organizers of this project, Dr. Linus Hagström and Professor Marie Söderberg, for their leadership and encouragement, and to the two anonymous reviewers for this journal for their valuable comments and suggestions. I am also grateful to Professor Rosemary Foot for her constructive comments on an earlier version of this article.

broker, projecting itself as a responsible power in the international diplomatic arena. The contrast becomes more conspicuous when taking into account the two countries’ behaviour in dealing with Pyongyang’s nuclear problem. Beijing’s attitude during the 1993-94 nuclear crisis was essentially that of an onlooker, and its participation in the short-lived Four-Party Talks between 1997 and 1998 was regarded as passive cooperation. Tokyo’s attitude in the process to establish the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)—the first multilateral arrangement to address the North’s nuclear problem—and toward the Four-Party Talks was, overall, positively received by the other parties involved and by outside observers. In a sense, Tokyo’s and Beijing’s positions appear to have reversed between the 1990s and the past few years, in terms of their contribution to multilateral arrangements to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem.

Furthermore, the difference between Japanese and Chinese attitudes toward the SPT is, indeed, suggestive, when their general regional policies over the past decade are taken into account. Since the late 1980s, both countries made an important shift in their overall policy toward a multilateral approach to regional matters. Contrary to its previous reluctance to pursue regional multilateralism during the Cold War, Japan turned into a central player for establishing the first two mega regional institutions in Asia, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and maintained its activism in subsequent institution-building projects, such as ASEAN plus Three (APT) and the East Asian Community (EAC) proposal. Similarly, since the late 1990s, China began actively participating in these institutions, as well as taking visible initiatives in creating new regional institutions, most notably the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Yet, in the case of the SPT, another multilateral arrangement in Asia, Tokyo’s previous activism appeared to be muted, while Beijing maintained its activism in a most visible manner.

What are these contrasts all about? Why does Tokyo’s behaviour in the SPT look quite different from its active diplomacy in other regional institution-building cases, in contrast to the overall continuation in Beijing’s action? Needless to say, Japan has a considerable stake in the SPT process. Although the SPT has been stalled since late 2005, it is still the only venue for Tokyo to directly take part in nuclear negotiations with Pyongyang. The SPT has another importance for Japan’s long-term strategic interest, given its potential to evolve into a full-fledged, and long-awaited, multilateral security framework in Northeast Asia. Further, Japan itself is potentially indispensable to the SPT’s success, given that it has the ability to provide substantial economic aid, several billion US dollars in one estimation,3 to

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the DPRK as a key component of eventual deal making. Yet, the country’s behaviour in the SPT has been rather inconspicuous, lacking the activism that has been, by contrast, constantly demonstrated by China and, to a lesser extent, by the United States and South Korea.

Given these points, this article examines Japanese policy making toward the SPT and seeks to address the sources of the above characteristics, through a specific comparison with the country’s general attitude toward regional institution-building over the last decade and with China’s SPT diplomacy. Admittedly, such characteristics can simply be attributed to the very circumstantial position of Japan unique to the SPT setting—being a party concerned, but not a primary negotiating target from North Korea’s standpoint. And this study, indeed, deliberately deals with this circumstantial position of Japan in the SPT. The point here is to identify how exactly unique Japan’s position is for its foreign policy making, and in what way this particular position affects Tokyo’s behaviour. In short, the SPT framework and underlying Japan-DPRK relations set up a particular kind of decision-making context, in which the policy-making mechanism functions. This context is different from the decision-making context of the country’s earlier policy making toward general regional institution-building in the following three aspects: the nature of foreign policy in question, the composition of actors, and the type of available diplomatic tools. It was these three aspects of the SPT decision-making context that together shaped Tokyo’s behaviour in the SPT process, bringing about the conspicuous difference from the earlier cases of regional institution-building. In contrast, the decision-making context for China’s dealing with the SPT appears largely similar to the decision-making context of the previous cases of Beijing’s new activism in regional institution-building, thus likely resulting in the above-mentioned continuation in the country’s foreign policy behaviour.

A few words of caution: First, although this article deals with Japan and China’s foreign policy, it is by no means a systematic comparison to posit or test a particular causal hypothesis. Rather, China’s case is used in a reflective manner to highlight the importance of the precise delineation of Japan’s decision-making context in its dealing with the SPT, which is, given the overarching theme of this special issue, the central focus of this study. Accordingly, relative emphasis will be afforded to the observation of Japan throughout the article. Second, the article’s focus in terms of Japan-DPRK relations is exclusively on the SPT context and, thus, centred on the behaviour of Japanese foreign policy makers responsible for the SPT policy. In other

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words, it deals with only one aspect of Japan’s policy toward North Korea, leaving out other important components, namely bilateral diplomacy and unilateral actions. Thirdly, the SPT in this study is understood not just as a special crisis-management framework to halt the DPRK’s nuclear weapons development, but also as a new and unique multilateral institution for Northeast Asia. The latter perspective enables us to compare, though only illustratively, the two countries’ policies toward the SPT and other general multilateral institution-building cases that emerged in Asia over the last decade.

The structure of this article is as follows: It first reviews the general attitudes of Japan and China toward the regional multilateral option in Asia since the late 1980s, with specific emphasis on the conspicuous shift that the two countries made respectively. This would serve to place the study’s subject—Tokyo’s and Beijing’s attitudes toward the SPT—in the larger context of the two countries’ foreign policy behaviour over the last decade. It then moves to address how Japan and China each approached the SPT process, by presenting some key policy actions undertaken by the two countries. Here, the noticeable contrast in their behaviour, remarked on above, serves as a reference point to articulate essential elements underlying the two countries’ attitudes toward the SPT. The study then points out the sources of Japan’s lack of activism and, at times, obstructionist attitude in the SPT, which are apparent deviations from the country’s previous activism in regional institution-building, while addressing why there is a continuation in the case of China. The concluding section discusses the implication from this study’s findings for the study of Japanese foreign policy.

General Attitude Toward the Multilateral Option for Intra-Regional Management

In a widely shared judgment, Japanese and Chinese attitudes toward the multilateral option for an intra-regional management framework during the Cold War period were negative. Japan almost exclusively adopted a bilateral approach for its relations toward countries in the region, and it came to view multilateral frameworks as doing more harm than good to existing bilateral ties.5 Similarly, China essentially rejected regional multilateralism, in both nominal and qualitative terms, as Beijing viewed multilateral organizations as an instrument of imperialism (the United States and Japan), thanks to its deeply rooted realpolitik assumption of the zero-sum game nature of international relations.6 Since the late 1980s, however, both

5 There is one notable exception: Japan proposed the “Pan-Pacific Basin Cooperation” concept in 1980, which led to the creation of a region-wide economic grouping at the track-II level.
6 Alastair Ian Johnston, “Socialization in International Institutions: The ASEAN Way and International Relations Theory,” in John G. Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., International
countries joined various multilateral regional arrangements, from pan-Pacific
to Northeast Asian sub-regional in terms of their geographical scope. This
suggests that there was a recognizable shift in each country’s attitude toward
the multilateral framework option to deal with regional matters in Asia—a
shift from open negation to affirmation. This shift is briefly reviewed below.

The origins of Japan’s new attitude toward a regional multilateral option
can be traced back to the time when long-awaited regional institution-
building projects finally started to take off in Asia, with the creation of APEC
in 1989 and then the ARF in 1994. APEC was the first intergovernmental
economic grouping, while the ARF was established as the first pan-regional
institutions to deal with security issues in the region. In both APEC and the
ARF, Japan, on its own account, conceived the idea to create a region-wide
multilateral institution and put forth its institution-building proposal to other
prospective members; a proposal in the form of a report issued by the Ministry
of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in 1988 for the case of APEC,
and Foreign Minister Nakayama’s speech at the 1991 ASEAN Post-Ministerial
Meeting for the ARF. Meanwhile, when some other countries in the region
also arrived at similar proposals about the time of the Japanese proposal,
Japan favoured these countries, namely Australia for APEC and ASEAN for
the ARF, to play leadership roles to actualize the multilateral institutions,
thus assigning itself a supporting role. Tokyo consistently supported the
institutions-building processes, conducting quiet diplomacy to persuade other
prospective members, particularly the United States, to join.

Close observers invariably recognized this characteristic behaviour by the
Japanese government, labelling it as, for example, “directional leadership”8
or “leadership from behind,”9 and generally viewed Japan’s role as significant,
if not critical, for the birth of APEC and the ARF. Further, despite the discreet
character of its leadership role, Japan’s involvement in the creation of APEC
and the ARF represented the country’s emerging activism in regional politics.
Given the characteristically low-profile diplomacy that Tokyo hitherto
undertook for more than four decades, the country’s initiatives for APEC
and the ARF were apparently unprecedented and, importantly, they were,
overall, appreciated by other regional countries. Although the initial enthusiasm for regional institution-building during the time of APEC and the ARF’s founding began to wane by the late 1990s, Tokyo’s activism has been persistently evident in promoting regional institution-building projects, such as the APT and the EAC proposal.10

China’s general attitude toward multilateral institutions in Asia since the late 1980s should be understood in two phases. The first phase can be defined as a period of passive participation: China participated in both APEC and the ARF, but, being an invitee, it did not play a significant role in the creation of these regional institutions. In particular, during this passive participation period, the country was more cautious and hesitant about establishing a multilateral security framework than an economic one.11 China indeed tried to discourage the early discussion about setting up the ARF,12 and it maintained its skepticism and reservation toward this security grouping during the first few years after the ARF’s creation. A change in this passivity and skepticism toward the role of multilateral institutions in Beijing’s official thinking was brought about in conjunction with the introduction of the “new security concept” in late 1997. Under the banner of this concept, the Chinese government argued, “security would be based not on military alliances and arms build-ups, but rather on the principles of mutual trust and serving common interests.”13 This, in turn, led Chinese leaders to view regional cooperation in Asia more favourably, bringing about the country’s growing activism at the multilateral level of regional politics—the second phase of China’s regional multilateralism.

The early period of this phase saw Beijing’s cooperative and active participation in the ARF process, such as co-chairing an inter-sessional group meeting of the ARF, for “the first time for China” in the words of Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, “to host an official multilateral conference on security issues.”14 China then proceeded to establish a new security institution in 2001 with its Central Asian neighbours and Russia, the SCO, to enhance security and to promote energy and the economic development of this new China-led regional grouping. Meanwhile, it signed a series of political agreements with ASEAN including the “Strategic Partnership” agreement, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and the Declaration on the

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14 Quoted in Foot, “China in the ASEAN Regional Forum,” p. 426.
Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (in which Beijing pledged self-restraint). Beijing’s activism has also been observed in the economic realm since the late 1990s, through its support for the creation and development of APT, its initiative for an ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, and its self-nomination to host the second East Asian summit, the first of which is scheduled later this year in Malaysia.

Several factors point to why the two countries, respectively, became conspicuously active in regional institution-building projects in recent years. For instance, China’s positive involvement in regional multilateral activities since 1997 can be attributed to Beijing’s need for regional stability, as a requisite for its further economic growth, its underlying preference for a multi-polar world order (and for reducing US influence in the region), and its sober calculation to gain greater control over the functions and capabilities of these new institutions. Japan’s activism since the late 1980s can be understood through the country’s desire to play a leadership role in intra-regional management, its underlying attempt to design a new regional order, and its tactical move to secure US involvement in the region by setting up an Asia-Pacific (not an Asian-only) framework. Besides these explanatory factors, there is one particular idea identified in both the cases of Japan and China that helped to rationalize their activist approaches toward regional multilateral institution-building. It is the concept of “reassurance.” Although it is not the objective of this article to specify any kind of causality of the two countries’ policy choice for a regional multilateral option, a few words may be noted on this point.

Both Japan and China, at the time of the policy shift, were experiencing new developments in terms of their structural power status in relation to others. Japan in the late 1980s achieved dramatic growth in its economy, thanks to the 1985 Plaza Accord, which nearly doubled the value of Japanese Yen, turning it into the world’s second largest economy and arguably the largest power in Asia. China, in the late 1990s, was also experiencing significant growth in its structural power, thanks to Beijing’s deliberate transformation of its economic system, which brought an average annual GDP growth rate of 9.4 percent according to one calculation. Admittedly, the power status of Japan in the late 1980s and that of China in the late 1990s were by no means identical, but they are quite similar in the sense that


16 I note “arguably,” because Japan’s military capability was considerably limited (though expensive) in terms of forward projection and its geographical size and population hardly match those of China.

both countries were in a state of rapid “ascendance,” with the prospect of becoming a dominant country in Asia.

The “ascending” position, then, served as a key underlying condition for both countries to discover the multilateral approach as a useful and desirable option for their regional policies. Japanese policy-makers, in pursuit of playing a regional leadership role commensurate with the country’s major power status, consciously selected regional institution-building as a centerpiece of Japan’s diplomatic activism at the time. It assumed that a multilateral framework would help to mitigate their Asian neighbours’ fears about Japan’s possible malign intention to dominate the region, not just economically, but also politically and even militarily.18 Similarly, Beijing, by the late 1990s, came to recognize the negative implications of its own rise, popularly termed as “China’s rise,” which had already caused growing fears and precautions among many Asian countries, particularly its Southeast Asian neighbours. Given its sober understanding that a stable environment in the region was required for China’s further economic development, Beijing’s leadership found multilateral diplomacy to be an effective and desirable means of mitigating its neighbours’ unnecessary anxiety.19

In short, the structural conditions of the two countries created specific underlying circumstances that induced both Japan and China to act more outwardly, while their neighbouring countries became apprehensive about such an outward orientation as a sign of hegemonic aspiration. Conspicuously, both Tokyo and Beijing viewed their neighbours’ apprehension as problematic, and they found the regional multilateral approach a useful strategy to deal with this particular problem, since multilateral arrangements, as opposed to bilateral and unilateral ones, are less hierarchical and more cooperative. Such an arrangement implies that a potentially dominant power, such as Japan and China, is willing to bind itself within multilateral arrangements, rather than to dominate, thus helping to present itself as a benevolent, non-threatening power.20 “The logic of reassurance” came into play.21 Although the observation here is by no means generalizable, it highlights the significance of the “reassurance” function embedded in multilateral arrangements as a possible rationale for a state’s preference for the multilateral option, and related institution-building, for managing international and intra-regional relations.

18 Ashizawa, “Japan, the United States.”
Policies Toward a Multilateral Approach for the North Korean Nuclear Problem

The problem revolving around North Korea’s ambition to develop its own nuclear weapons can be understood in two phases, each punctuated by a crisis. The initial phase extends from 1991 to 2001, with the first nuclear crisis between 1993 and 1994, when North Korea threatened its withdrawal from the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT). The second phase began in 2002, with Pyongyang’s reported admission of its new nuclear weapons programme, based on the uranium enrichment process. For both phases, certain types of multilateral arrangements were established as part of crisis management—KEDO and the Four-Party Talks in the first phase, and the SPT in the second phase.

Japan

Japan’s attitude toward multilateral arrangements during the first phase of the North Korean nuclear problem can be defined as, on balance, genuinely cooperative. Tokyo sought to cast itself, with overall success, as a constructive player in KEDO’s often confrontational negotiations, and in its oft-stalled operational procedures. It maintained its public support, by characterizing the organization as “the most realistic and effective framework” to dissolve North Korea’s nuclear programme, until late 2002, when KEDO’s projects were suspended. Japan’s support for the Four-Party Talks is also noteworthy, given its awkward position of being left out from the talks (of the two Koreas, the United States and China), where matters of great concern for Japan’s security were addressed. Although Tokyo could make little practical contributions to this process between 1997 and 1999, it sought to publicly demonstrate its support, by specifically stating in its Diplomatic Bluebooks and public foreign affairs statements that it “immediately” and “from the outset” supported this peace initiative.

In the meantime, being left out from the Four-Party Talks framework, there was an underlying desire in Tokyo’s thinking about the way to participate in such multilateral discussions. A natural development from this desire was the proposal for SPT, which would add Japan and Russia to the Four-Party Talks framework. Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo made a series of six-party formula proposals during the fall of 1998 in his summit diplomacy, starting with a meeting with US President Clinton. Though the SPT proposal

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23 For the Clinton-Obuchi meeting, see “U.S. Negative toward Japan-proposed 6-way Talks,” Kyodo News Service, 30 September 1998; “Inject Tax Money into Banks,” Asahi News Service, 24 September
by Japan (and by Russia) during this period never gained momentum, the idea was not removed from Tokyo’s foreign policy agenda. In July 2002, a senior MOFA official involved in a behind-the-scenes negotiation with Pyongyang proposed to his counterpart the idea of holding a six-party talk in Brunei, where foreign ministers of six countries would participate in the annual ARF meeting. During the preparation process of Prime Minister Koizumi’s first visit to Pyongyang in September, MOFA also sought to include the SPT proposal in the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration signed by the two leaders, to no avail. After the North Korean delegation admitted to the allegation by the United States of the North’s secret programme to enrich uranium, during the US-DPRK high-level bilateral talks in October, Tokyo, once again, pushed its multilateral agenda. In her meeting with US Secretary of State Colin Powell, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko reportedly suggested a new multilateral framework of five countries that would be set up by a so-called “umbrella method,” in which the three countries—China, Japan and South Korea—first establish the core framework and then invite the remaining two countries—North Korea and the United States—to proceed in their talks within this framework.

As it turned out, with Beijing’s strenuous efforts encouraged by Washington, and via a one-time arrangement for three-party talks between the DPRK, the US and China, the first SPT meeting took place in August 2003. The Japanese government praised the first SPT meeting as “very significant” and emphasized that the six-party process “is extremely important, and the continuation of this process is essential for the peaceful and diplomatic solutions of North Korea’s nuclear development problem,” even though the meeting at the time made little progress in solving the crisis.

Such a public appraisal notwithstanding, Japan’s actual contribution in the subsequent SPT meetings has been minimal. Few noteworthy proposals or suggestions came from the Japanese government in order to make progress in this prolonged, often-stumbling SPT scheme. Tokyo undertook no substantial actions to bring North Korea back to the talks when deadlocked. It also appeared thus far to shy away from discussing a mid- and long-term vision of the SPT process in the context of future intra-regional relations in

1998. This was followed by summit meetings with Kim Dae Jung in October and with Jiang Zemin in November, where Obuchi consistently put forth the Six-Party Talks proposal.

25 The former director-general of Asian Affairs Bureau of MOFA, interview by author, Tokyo, 15 September 2005.
and around the Korean Peninsula. Such a discussion on a possible future evolution of the SPT is considered, among MOFA officials, “premature” and “not a question at this stage.”28 This is an interesting contrast, not only with Beijing but also with Seoul, both of which began putting forth their future visions of the SPT’s evolution into a more general, regional security framework for Northeast Asia.29 The contrast helps to highlight Japan’s lack of activism, or low-profile character, in the SPT process.

Instead of making practical contributions to the SPT procedure, the Japanese government conspicuously sought to bring up issues beyond the North’s nuclear programme, namely missile development and the abductions issue, into the SPT agenda. To be sure, Japanese foreign policy makers acknowledged that the SPT is a framework to ultimately resolve the North’s nuclear weapons problem, and that other matters of great significance to Japan—most notably, the abductions issue—should be dealt with bilaterally as part of an eventual normalization process between Tokyo and Pyongyang.30 Nevertheless, having been granted the long-awaited contact point with Pyongyang, Japanese representatives to the SPT persistently raised the abductions issue in this multilateral meeting, particularly around the time of the fourth round in 2005. They argued that the resolution of the abductions issue should be necessarily considered, because it is a prerequisite to Japan’s future economic aid for North Korea, which would inevitably be one of the key elements of the overall arrangement for any eventual nuclear settlement.31 During the SPT sessions, Japanese representatives sought to hold a bilateral meeting with North Korean counterparts to discuss the abduction issue, often to little avail. As noted in the beginning, Tokyo’s insistence on including the abductions issue has led other participants, namely China, South Korea and Russia, to openly criticize Japan’s behaviour as “unproductive” and “obstructionist,” which in turn has made some observers in Tokyo increasingly concerned about the country becoming isolated in the SPT process.32

Despite its relatively low-profile and occasionally awkward position, Tokyo’s public adherence to the SPT has been, overall, firm and constant. Japanese

28 The director of the Northeast Asia Division of MOFA and ambassador for Japan-North Korea Normalization Talks, interview by author, Tokyo, 10 September 2005.
30 The director of the Northeast Asia Division of MOFA and Ambassador for Japan-North Korea Normalization Talks, interview by author, Tokyo, 10 September 2005.
31 The director of the Northeast Asia Division of MOFA and ambassador for Japan-North Korea Normalization Talks, interview by author, Tokyo, 10 September 2005.
leaders, especially the foreign policy officials involved in the SPT process, keenly recognize the SPT’s vital role for their country’s security and its relations with North Korea. Although the Japanese government appears to increasingly favour a hard-line policy against Pyongyang, epitomized by the latest diplomatic showdown at the UN Security Council to call for sanctions in response to the North’s missile tests in July of this year, it has, at the same time, maintained that the SPT should be resumed.33 Tokyo is also well aware of Japan’s potentially crucial role in this multilateral effort: an ability to provide large-scale economic assistance, as part of a Japan-DPRK normalization agreement, which will be one of the indispensable incentives for the North to give up its nuclear weapons programme.34 Accordingly, those closely involved in Japan’s North Korea policy often pointed out that it would be “in the next phase, not in the current phase,” following the conclusion of an initial agreement of the North’s nuclear dismantlement, when Japan would play a prominent role in this approach to multilateral diplomacy.35

The importance of Japan’s capability to provide substantial economic assistance, expected to be several billion dollars,36 has been largely recognized among all the parties concerned. Needless to say, this was a rationale for the adoption of the SPT formula. In the session of the SPT, for instance, Pyongyang demanded that the United States “guarantee the [sic] economic cooperation between the DPRK and Japan and between the north and the south of Korea,” implicitly suggesting that economic aid by Japan (and South Korea) is necessary for the ultimate settlement of its nuclear programme.37 In this regard, the United States appeared, thus far, most conscious of Japan’s potential role in the SPT framework for bringing about the ultimate resolution, and it was, therefore, sensitive to Japan’s interests. At the early stage of the SPT, for instance, Washington acquiesced to Japan’s demand to include the abductions issue in the talks’ agenda, even though it might be considered a “sideshow.”38 Although the US government started expressing its concerns about Japan’s persistent insistence on the abductions issue, it still stopped short of openly criticizing Tokyo, particularly in the setting where

33 The call for the resumption of the SPT was invariably made by top policy makers, including Prime Minister Koizumi. See, for instance, “Koizumishushō ga Kita-no Rokkaokukyogihukki o yōkyū,” Yomiuri Shimbun, 18 July 2006.
34 See Marie Söderberg’s article in this special issue for further discussion on Japan’s economic aid.
35 The director of the Northeast Asia Division, the former director-general of the Asian Affairs Bureau of MOFA, and a mid-ranking official at the prime minister’s office, interviewed by author, Tokyo, 10, 15, 16 September 2005.
36 JIIA, Resolving, p. 21.
37 JIIA, Resolving, p. 21.
other participants voiced their discontent.\(^{39}\) Furthermore, Washington has demonstrated its support for Tokyo to settle the abductions issue, as the American delegation, for instance, directly urged the North Korean delegation during the SPT session to accept Japan’s request for a bilateral meeting.\(^ {40}\)

Washington’s discreet support for Tokyo within the SPT framework can be attributed to their bilateral relations, which have been visibly strengthened in recent years, thanks to the Japanese government’s full support for the US-led war in Iraq. In the meantime, it also reflects the underlying assumption in Washington’s thinking that Japan’s economic assistance would play a vital role for ultimately solving the DPRK’s nuclear problem. Yet, this assumption did not lead other SPT participants to feel lenient toward Japan’s insistence on pursuing the abductions issue, leaving Tokyo at times in an awkward position in the SPT process, with the sense that it was causing a nuisance. Further, as noted above, Japan has not been in a position to make substantive contributions to the actual undertaking of the SPT process. Accordingly, Japanese policy makers seemed to resort to a wait-and-see stance in anticipation of the next phase, in which they would play a vital part in bringing eventual stability to the Korean Peninsula.

**China**

China’s role during the first North Korean nuclear crisis was marginal. Although Beijing’s leadership appeared to reckon stability and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as a national interest, its overall attitude toward the US-led efforts to resolve the crisis hardly went beyond one of passive cooperation. Beijing made no public objection against the formation of KEDO, from which it was excluded. Yet when the Clinton administration, which was having trouble in securing congressional support, sought China’s financial contribution to KEDO’s heavy fuel oil shipment programme, Beijing simply refused. Passive cooperation was also evident in Beijing’s attitude toward the Four-Party Talks. When the Four-Party Talks formula was officially proposed by Presidents Clinton and Kim Young-Sam, Beijing immediately expressed its support for the proposal in the words of President Jiang Zemin.\(^ {41}\) Further, despite its open confrontation of the United States about NATO’s mistaken bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade

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in May 1999, the Chinese government hosted the sixth round of the Four-Party Talks as scheduled, in which it refrained from using this diplomatic occasion to express its dissatisfaction with the US bombing; the episode suggests that Beijing leadership deliberately de-linked the issues specific to US-China bilateral relations from the Four-Party Talks process, in order to support the latter’s progress. Yet, in the final analysis, the Chinese government was generally viewed as “reluctant to concede any real influence” to the Four-Party Talks.

When Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi, desperate to take measures to protest North Korea’s missile test in 1998, suggested the idea for the SPT formula during a summit meeting with President Jiang, the Chinese leader remained cautious about the proposal. Beijing’s cautiousness toward the SPT approach was brought to an end by the resurgence of the nuclear crisis in October 2002. Taken by surprise, the Beijing leadership viewed the disclosure of the North’s uranium-based nuclear programme as a grave development not only for its long-term security interests but also for its relations with the United States. Further, Pyongyang began removing plutonium fuel rods from their storage pond at the Yongbyon facility, expelled IAEA inspectors from Yongbyon, and announced its withdrawal from the NPT. These events made the Chinese leadership acutely aware that North Korea was now moving quickly from maintaining its nuclear programme to actually building nuclear weapons, and that the United States and North Korea would not be able to achieve a compromise on their own to resolve the issue bilaterally. With Washington’s “Axis of Evil” rhetoric still fresh, the prospect of military conflict on the Korean Peninsula began to look realistic. Given such a doomed prospect, China defined itself as a facilitator for direct talks between the United States and North Korea.

In the ensuing months, Beijing diligently committed itself to the new task of brokering direct talks between Washington and Pyongyang. By April 2003, more than 60 meetings were reportedly held between Chinese and North Korean officials, and more than 50 messages were transmitted between Beijing and Pyongyang, as well as Beijing and Washington. Further, it is widely believed that the Chinese government secretly sent a special envoy, Vice Premier Qian Qichen, in early March, to discuss with Kim Jong-il a

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45 For a detailed discussion on these points, see Andrew Scobell, China and North Korea: From Comrades-in-Arms to Allies at Arm’s Length (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004).

possible way out of the crisis. Around that time, China cut off its supply of oil to North Korea—a crucial energy supply to Pyongyang—for three days, on the pretext of technical problems. Observers speculate that Beijing intended to send a diplomatic signal with this act, to pressure North Korea to cooperate. These efforts bore fruit in Pyongyang and Washington agreed to hold trilateral talks in mid-April in Beijing.

After the first trilateral meeting ended without a breakthrough, the Chinese government, now led by a new leadership, Hu Jintao, accelerated its diplomatic efforts to bring about a new round of talks. In July, President Hu sent Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo as his special envoy to Pyongyang for a direct meeting with Kim Jong-il, in which he presented Hu’s proposal to reopen talks between Pyongyang and Washington in a multilateral format. Kim’s response was positive. This led to Dai’s visit to Washington for meetings with high-level US officials, including Vice President Cheney and Secretary of State Powell, in which Dai, conveying a letter from President Hu, sought to secure US support for China’s initiative. The United States agreed to return to multilateral talks, which were now expanded from the trilateral format to include Japan and South Korea, at the request of Washington, and Russia at Pyongyang’s request. Determined to make the coming round of talks more substantial and productive than the previous one, China assiduously pursued its “new diplomacy” by sending a series of delegations to Pyongyang to sound out the bottom line of Pyongyang’s approach toward the upcoming talks.

In the following three years, the Chinese government remained a central driving force for the SPT process, hosting all four rounds of talks, acting as a conciliator among the participants, and playing the role of cheerleader for this laborious project. Beijing’s active diplomacy in the SPT process has been invariably praised by other participants in the talks and general observers as that of a responsible player in the regional and international arena. It is also generally seen as “a stark departure from more than a decade of Chinese passivity and buck-passing on the Korean Nuclear question.” Further, China’s activism helped Sino-US relations to reach a “mini-climax,” leaving Secretary of State Powell to claim that the bilateral relations had entered their best period in decades.

Despite such a good deal of praise, however, the SPT process also revealed the limitation of Beijing’s diplomacy, particularly in exerting its persuasive

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50 Zong, “Hu Jintao.”
power over Pyongyang. Although China has been regarded as potentially the country with the most influence over North Korea, thanks in large part to its substantial economic support, it has not been, thus far, able to draw any significant compromise from Pyongyang, beyond coming to the SPT table, to engage in substantive negotiation toward an actual settlement. Rather, most of the energy has been, thus far, devoted to procedural matters, such as holding a new round of talks and producing a joint statement. As seen in the fourth round of talks in the summer of 2005, China, as host country, succeeded in persuading all participants to sign the joint statement (after a series of drafts it prepared), by placing most of its effort on the statement’s wording, which in effect put off the most contentious issue (the North’s acquiring of the light-water nuclear energy plant) for future discussion. Furthermore, the North’s latest outburst through its missile tests is generally viewed as another testimony of Beijing’s declining influence over Pyongyang. On balance, therefore, it can be safely said that China has thus far diligently played the role of a broker, yet its actions are one step short of those of a problem-solver.

**The Source of Divergence and Continuity**

The above observation demonstrates an intriguing contrast between Tokyo’s and Beijing’s behaviour in their approach toward the SPT, which remained the sole regional multilateral framework (at the time of writing) to directly address North Korea’s decade-long nuclear problem. Although there are always some contradicting elements in any single actor’s behaviour, on balance, it can be safely summed up that China has played the leading and arguably most constructive role throughout the SPT process, while Japan’s role has been marginal, and at times its actions have even appeared to be unconstructive. This contrast is intriguing if we consider their previous attitudes in dealing with North Korea’s nuclear problem in the 1990s: China’s behaviour did not go beyond passive cooperation, while Japan’s support for KEDO and the Four-Party Talks was generally active and constructive. Further, the contrast is also noteworthy in terms of their policies toward regional multilateral institutions over the past decade. As discussed in the earlier section, both countries made a conspicuous shift in their general policy toward becoming active promoters of multilateral institution-building. Yet, in Tokyo’s dealing with the SPT, there is more of a deviation than continuation from its general approach toward regional multilateral projects, while Beijing’s attitude in the SPT can be viewed more straightforwardly as an extension of its general regional policy that has emerged since the late 1990s.

What accounts for the contrast between the two countries or, more precisely, the deviation in Tokyo’s behaviour and the continuation in Beijing’s? The difference in the context of decision making concerning Japanese foreign policy merits our attention.
The decision-making context of Japan’s dealings with the SPT is noticeably different from the country’s earlier policy making, which dealt with the question of creating new multilateral regional institutions, such as APEC and the ARF. The differences fall under three different categories. The first category deals with the nature of foreign policy. In this regard, Tokyo’s policy making toward the SPT can be viewed as a form of “crisis management,” often accompanied by unexpected occurrences and constrained by uncontrollable factors. On the other hand, the generic types of regional institution-building, such as APEC and the ARF, stand as part of the long-term, strategic policy formulation that the Japanese government, at the time, consciously undertook. Faced with new developments in the existing regional order, both economic and security, that paralleled the dramatic change in the global order since the late 1980s, the Japanese policy makers conceptualized a new perspective of regional order, in which region-wide multilateral institutions, namely APEC and the ARF, were conceived as key constituents.51

Such a difference in the decision-making context likely affects the way policy makers prioritize their preferences for policy options: in decision making as part of strategic policy formulation, a policy preference with relatively long-term implications is generally prioritized, while the crisis-management context tends to override long-term policies with short-term policy preferences. This helps to partly explain Japan’s lack of activism and occasional obstructionist behaviour in the SPT process. Although the SPT framework is the most workable arrangement and best serves Japan’s overall and long-term interests (denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the possible establishment of a regional security framework), Tokyo sometimes failed to prioritize the policy option of promoting the SPT institution over other concerns, most notably the abductions issue. In contrast, as discussed earlier, Japanese policy makers involved in previous regional institution-building projects clearly focused on the policy preference with a long-term policy implication—promoting a multilateral institution to help to build regional order—in which the “reassurance logic” came into play as part of the rationale.

The second category deals with the composition of actors. Which actors are involved in a decision-making process significantly affects the outcome. The actors involved in Japan’s policy formulation toward the two key regional multilateral institutions in the late 1980s and the early 1990s were largely limited to professional foreign policy officials (MITI officials in the case of APEC and MOFA officials in the ARF), thanks to the generic and non-controversial nature of the subjects. The same can be said for most of the

51 For instance, see Ashizawa, “Japan, the United States.”
country’s dealings with KEDO and the Four-Party Talks. In contrast, the SPT case includes several distinctive actors, beyond foreign policy bureaucrats: namely, the prime minister (and his aides), the group of family members of the abductees, and a handful of politicians vocally supporting the family members’ group, the media, and the general public as forms of public opinion.

This crowded policy-making arena reflects the long-standing thorny relations between Japan and North Korea, and their bilateral relations significantly affected the Japanese government’s dealings with the SPT. In particular, as discussed in detail by Lynn in this special issue, the abductions issue became the paramount issue in domestic political discourse on North Korea, thanks to the abductee families’ skillful public relations strategy, which, with the help of sympathetic public opinion, succeeded in mobilizing the media, several influential politicians, and the ultimate form of political leadership—the prime minister. This, in turn, left MOFA little choice but to repeatedly raise the abductions issue in the SPT. Not doing so was, in the words of one MOFA official, “politically inconceivable,” as he admitted their insistence on the abductions issue in the talks was “an expression of the people’s will,” not a result of usual foreign policy calculations.52

Thirdly, the decision-making context of the SPT, in effect, confines Japan’s available diplomatic measures to exert its leverage exclusively to the prospect of substantial economic aid and the possible use of economic sanctions. Given the circumstantial relations specific to the SPT context and Japan-DPRK relations, there has not been much room for the Japanese government to explore other types of diplomatic measures, such as conducting behind-the-scenes diplomacy to draw a consensus from relevant actors, acting as a mediator between conflicting parties, and providing logistical support to host some essential meetings or at least preliminary ones, some of which were indeed available (and pursued) in the decision-making context of APEC and the ARF cases.

Both the prospect of economic aid and the use of economic sanctions as diplomatic leverage have distinctive characteristics for their usage. The prospect of economic aid is a mostly action-less option, as it deals with the expectation of future recipients until all parties arrive at the stage where they are ready to begin negotiations for an actual arrangement for economic aid. It requires particular care in terms of timing, as once a promise of economic aid is made in concrete form, the value of this leverage tends to diminish dramatically. Further, the use of future economic aid leverage is inherently less effective in a multilateral setting than in a bilateral one. In a multilateral setting, there is always the possibility that collective pressure from other participants will be placed on a country with economic leverage

52 Interview by author, Tokyo, 10 September 2005.
to facilitate a settlement arrangement (thus providing substantial economic aid), even though that country’s other interests are left out from that arrangement. More concretely, Japan may face a situation in which other participants decide they are prepared to offer economic or energy assistance to North Korea and place pressures on Japan to do so, even though there is no progress on the abductions problem.

Similarly, the use of economic sanctions as diplomatic leverage requires careful consideration in regards to effectiveness and timing. As discussed in detail in the Hughes article in this special issue, Japan has made gradual but steady preparations for imposing substantial economic sanctions against North Korea. Yet the impact of Japan’s economic sanctions has been the subject of much debate in domestic political discourse. Proponents of economic sanctions argue that it would directly affect hard-currency flow to the North’s government and lead to an eventual regime change in Pyongyang, and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party reported its trial calculation on the impact of Japan’s unilateral trade sanction as, at most, a reduction of around 7 percent of the North’s total GDP. Skeptics invariably point out the ineffectiveness of such unilateral sanctions, since sanctioned trade and transactions will likely resume via third parties, and the North’s losses from Japan’s sanctions may be simply covered by an increase of trade with other countries, namely China and South Korea. Yet coordinated sanctions within the SPT framework are, at the moment, hardly a realistic option for Japan, thanks to open opposition so far from both China and South Korea.

These characteristics of economic aid and economic sanctions help to explain the difficulties Japan has encountered thus far in playing an active and constructive role in the SPT process. The effective use of these measures as diplomatic leverage is by no means easy. To be sure, these diplomatic tools may also exist in other kinds of decision-making contexts. Yet, the point here is that in the SPT context, only these two kinds of diplomatic leverage were available to Japan. In other words, both the prospect of economic aid and economic sanctions can be utilized more effectively when they are combined with other kinds of diplomatic measures, such as initiating a collaborative project and playing a mediator role, so that they serve as an important underlying condition in support of latter measures.

Compared to China’s situation, the above observations about the decision-making context become even more pertinent. First, although it is still difficult to discern precise decision-making mechanisms in Beijing, it may be safely said that there has been reasonable continuity in the composition of actors
involved in the SPT decision making and in the earlier decision-making cases of Beijing’s new activism in regional institution-building. In each case, the central leadership, headed by the paramount leader, namely Jiang Zemin, and then Hu Jintao, within an institutional framework of the Chinese Communist Party’s Politburo Standing Committee, can be seen as playing the decisive role in making all strategic decisions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs serves as the key foreign affairs institution to provide necessary information for policy formulation and to implement strategic decisions made by the central leadership. Although observers of Chinese foreign policy have increasingly pointed out the recent trend toward a more pluralized pattern of decision making in Beijing (referring to some new actors including business elites and influential academics), as far as major foreign issues and strategic choices, such as the SPT and the policy shift toward active regional institution building, are concerned, the senior elite in Beijing still has, as Lampton argues, “considerable latitude.” In a similar vein, despite some recent developments in China-Japan relations to indicate the possibly increasing role played by public opinion in Chinese foreign-policy making, Beijing’s leadership appears to have relatively little concern for public opinion in its policy making as regards both regional institution-building and North Korea.

Further, the second North Korean nuclear crisis in 2002, in a sense, turned into an opportunity for the Chinese government to play the role of responsible power in the regional arena in front of a global audience. Asserting visible leadership to keep the SPT process alive also served China’s other interests, such as avoiding the occurrence of military conflicts, maintaining the status quo in the regional balance-of-power, hedging against possible US dominance on the Korean Peninsula, and preventing the issue from moving to the UN Security Council, in which China would be placed in a difficult situation over the sanction imposition. This is because, in Beijing, the North’s nuclear development has hardly been perceived as a crisis, the way it is in Japan and the United States: China is not the primary target of the DPRK’s nuclear weapons. Accordingly, the decision-making context of China’s dealing with the SPT is not pure crisis management but a mix of crisis management and the execution of its grand regional strategy. Here,

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56 David M. Lampton, “China’s Foreign and National Security Policy-Making Process: Is It Changing, and Does It Matter?” in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000*, p. 2. To be sure, more routine and tactical matters of China’s participation and policies in existing regional institutions, such as the ARF and the APT, are dealt with at the MFA level, within the line of underlying strategic decisions toward them that are formulated at the central leadership level. For a detailed discussion on MFA-level policy making, see Johnston, “Socialization.”
China’s activism in promoting the SPT framework has been, coincidentally, the optimal option for both Beijing’s short-term and long-term objectives. In this regard, the assurance logic, which was at work in China’s recent policy toward regional institution-building, as discussed earlier, can be also found as an underlying rationale in the SPT case: playing a leading role in this regional multilateral project helps Beijing to present itself as a non-threatening, reliable power in the eyes of neighbouring countries.

Lastly, the SPT context afforded China unique political leverage—a position of being the sole mediator between the two principal parties. This position enabled Beijing to play a visible, constructive role in establishing, sustaining and managing this unique multilateral framework. Given these points, it is little wonder that there is a recognizable continuation with China’s foreign policy conduct in the SPT from its growing activism in multilateral institution building in Asia since the late 1990s.

**Conclusion**

The SPT decision-making context establishes a set of conditions that intrinsically hinders Japan from pursuing constructive and active diplomacy for the promotion of the SPT process. The Japanese government, indeed, was an early proponent of the SPT scheme, and the country’s indispensable role in providing substantial economic aid as part of an eventual settlement has been well recognized by all the parties involved. Such positive aspects, however, tended to be overridden by the wait-and-see, and occasionally obstructionist, behaviour demonstrated by Tokyo in its dealing with the SPT. On the contrary, the SPT decision-making context offered almost ideal conditions for China to pursue active leadership in intra-regional management, a role the Chinese leaders have been increasingly keen to play since the late 1990s. Although Beijing’s reluctance to apply effective pressure to change Pyongyang’s behaviour, beyond agreeing to come to each SPT round, has been observed and sometimes criticized, such negative elements did not tarnish China’s overall standing in the SPT.

This study sought to identify the sources of Japan’s behaviour in the SPT and to understand the above contrasts between the two countries through a specific analytical lens: the delineation of a decision-making context. In particular, it focuses on three elements of the decision-making context: the nature of foreign policy in question, the composition of actors, and the type of diplomatic tools available. Delineating the nature of each country’s foreign policy (e.g., crisis management, a recurrent exercise to prepare routine diplomatic affairs, formulation of a strategy for treaty negotiation, or an occasional foreign policy review) helps to discern what kinds of policy preferences are prioritized. Identifying key actors involved and their characteristics helps us to understand different interests and how they compete with, or support, each other. Clarifying the type of available
leverage also helps us more clearly understand the underlying conditions that characterize the actors’ foreign policy behaviour.

Although inconclusive, this article’s findings on Japan’s policy toward the SPT point to a few possibly new developments in Japan’s foreign policy making that call for further attention. One development is the growing role of private interest groups in the country’s foreign-policy making. As epitomized by the successful activities of the abductees’ family members, together with an increasing number of civil society groups in the last decade, such private interest groups may become increasingly influential actors in Japan’s foreign policy formulation. In a similar vein, the expanding role of the prime minister and his or her office in the country’s foreign-policy making is another aspect to be observed closely. To be sure, the emerging visibility of the prime minister’s role in foreign policy has been already noted in some other cases, with generally positive accounts.57 The North Korean case, however, showed a double-edged side to the prime minister’s leading role, since political leaders likely see a grand diplomatic activity as a tool to achieve their domestic political goals—to win greater popularity—and thus, not necessarily for the rational pursuit of national interest. These developments, in turn, appear to lead to the diminishing role of professional bureaucrats, especially MOFA officials, in certain issue areas that they had dominated in Japanese foreign-policy making throughout the Cold War period. As a result, Japanese foreign-policy making in the twenty-first century is more likely to face unexpected turns or rapid developments, departing from the general pattern of passive and immobile foreign policy making that was commonly observed throughout the Cold War.

_Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, U.K., August, 2006_

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Can Japanese Foreign Aid to North Korea Create Peace and Stability?

Marie Söderberg

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, whenever the prospect of a normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea has been brought forward, foreign aid or the expectation of such aid has been mentioned as one of the central ingredients.\textsuperscript{1} It was also raised in the Pyongyang Declaration, issued in connection with the meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea in September 2002. This might be quite natural considering the immense economic need in North Korea. The fact that Japan, one of the world’s largest donors of official development assistance (ODA),\textsuperscript{2} provides huge amounts of aid to most other Asian countries enhances these expectations; so do the large sums received by South Korea in connection with its normalization of relations with Japan.

Peace building and peace preservation are new key concepts in Japanese foreign aid policy. According to the revised ODA Charter of 2003,\textsuperscript{3} “Japan aspires for world peace ... actively promoting the aforementioned effort with ODA,” which Japan will carry out “even more strategically” in the future. Asia, and especially East Asia, is pointed out as a priority region.

North Korea, with which Japan has not yet normalized relations, is one of Japan’s closest neighbours geographically, and from a logical point of view would therefore seem like an important starting point for the ODA effort. However, according to the main Japanese aid agencies, such as JICA (Japan

\textsuperscript{1} Izumi Hajime, “Nihon no gaikō kaado o saidai genkatsuyō se yo,” Seikai shūkan (Tokyo), 16 September 2003, pp. 6-9.

\textsuperscript{2} ODA (official development assistance) is foreign aid as defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): (1) resources provided by official agencies or by their executing agencies; (2) the main objective being the promotion of the economic development and welfare of the developing countries; and (3) its concessional character, an effort to avoid placing a heavy burden on developing countries, and thus consisting of a grant element of at least 25 percent.

\textsuperscript{3} Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Economic Co-operation Bureau, Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter, Tokyo, 29 August 2003, pp. 1–2.
International Co-operation Agency) and the JBIC (Japan Bank of International Co-operation), no one is officially working to provide aid to North Korea. The standard answer is that there is no aid to that country, apart from some smaller amounts of Japanese humanitarian aid that are channelled through multilateral organizations.4

If Japan regards aid as one of its main tools for creating peace, why is aid not provided to North Korea? Aid is a very complex issue, and withholding aid is often regarded as being as effective a strategy as giving aid when it comes to eliciting concessions and bringing about changes in the potential recipient’s policy behaviour. It is used both as a carrot and as a stick. Aid to North Korea is envisioned as a quite plausible outcome, if North Korean policy behaviour is changed for the better, as measured according to Japanese judgement (the so-called positive sanction); but as long as the behaviour does not change, aid is withheld, and remains an illusion (the negative sanction).

However, for Japan the situation is more complex, as there are various domestic opinions and interest groups that have to be taken into consideration. The issue of abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea (explained in the introduction to this special issue) has led to a great deal of anti-North Korean sentiment which makes it difficult for the Japanese government to disburse aid to North Korea. There is also foreign pressure at work; the US, Japan’s military ally, as well as other Western countries have imposed economic sanctions on North Korea due to its withdrawal from the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). For the Japanese government, the North Korean issue is at the top of its agenda, and there is constant debate on how the country should be treated. Japan has at present imposed some unilateral economic sanctions.5

In this article the focus will be on the following two questions: Can Japanese ODA be an effective tool for the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea? And can Japanese ODA help generate peace and stability in the Northeast Asia region?

This article will apply I. William Zartman’s “ripe moment” theory6 to answer these two questions. This will be followed by a historical overview of Japanese aid policy and relations in Northeast Asia. The role of aid in the Japanese-Korean relationship as well as the debate on war reparations, as the Koreans like to consider the anticipated money, or economic cooperation,

4 In-person interviews conducted in Tokyo by the author, with Uoya Masaru, team director, East Asian Team, JICA, 15 February 2005 and Koga Ryutaro, deputy director general, JBIC Institute, 17 February 2005.

5 For more information on economic sanctions see Christopher W. Hughes’s article in this special issue.

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as the Japanese prefer to see it, will be addressed. By using the three elements in the ripe moment theory, the article will analyze the situation and the potential of Japanese ODA as a peacemaking tool, from the first attempts to establish relations with North Korea after the end of the Cold War to more recent events, including the Pyongyang Declaration and the revised ODA Charter, as well as various external and internal forces working for or against deeper relations between the two countries. The question of why a “ripe moment” has not so far arisen for Japan to begin providing ODA to North Korea, although the three basic elements are all there, will be addressed, together with the two questions of whether ODA is a valuable tool for the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea as well as for creating peace and stability in Northeast Asia. Some suggestions for further development and improvements of the ripe moment theory will be given. Finally, the effectiveness of Japanese ODA as a peacemaking tool, compared to other policy options, will be considered.

Creating a ripe moment

Zartman’s theory about the creation of a ripe moment was developed for conflict resolution, both for wars between nations and for civil wars. A ripe moment is a situation in which the parties feel inclined to opt for a negotiated settlement, rather than continuation, of a conflict. The moment consists of three elements: a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS), a formula for a way out (FWO), and valid spokespersons (VSPs).

The first element in the ripe moment theory, the mutually hurting stalemate, exists when “both sides are locked in a situation from which they can not escalate the conflict with available means at an acceptable cost.” In this situation, the parties perceive that they cannot achieve their goals by unilateral means, and see that the status quo is increasingly unsustainable. This stalemate, which should affect both sides although it does not have to be exactly balanced, is based primarily on the parties’ perceptions and can therefore be manipulated.

The second element, a formula for a way out, implies that a realistic and viable alternative is presented. Even if it does not offer a complete solution, it should appear to open the way for a better future for all parties involved. It should address their vital needs even if it might encourage compromise on smaller tradable issues.

A valid spokesperson is the third necessary element. Such a person should command a substantial following of mainstream opinion within the respective parties to the conflict but should still be moderate enough to be able to

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7 I would like to thank Professor Zartman for clarifying this issue for me in Stockholm, December 2005.

carve out a problem-solving coalition in the middle. Another criterion for a valid spokesperson is that his/her legitimacy should be recognized by both sides of the conflict.

As each of these three elements depends largely on the parties’ perceptions, there is good potential for a third-party mediator or for one of the parties to play a role in creating a ripe moment. A mutually hurting stalemate can be created or enhanced and help can be provided in finding a formula for a way out. A mediator can sharpen the stalemate and sweeten the proposed outcome. This can be done by exercising political and economic leverage, that is, by employing positive or negative aid sanctions.9

What does this have to do with North Korea? No actual internal conflict exists in North Korea itself, at least not any known to outsiders. Even if the peninsula is divided into North and South, each of them accepted as a member in the United Nations (UN), there is no armed conflict between them or any other countries in the neighbourhood. Nor is there any armed conflict between North Korea and Japan, although there are no diplomatic relations between them. So what is the point of using a theory of conflict resolution in researching an area where there is no armed conflict going on?

Northeast Asia is an area where, even if there is no conventional war taking place, the Cold War must still be considered ongoing. There are conflicts over various forms of abuse as well as the North Korean nuclear threat. With US President George W. Bush’s announcement of the “axis of evil” in his 2002 State of the Union address, when he named North Korea, together with Iran and Iraq, as nations supporting terrorism, North Korea can also be considered to have been dragged into the American war against terrorism. Even if it is not a traditional armed conflict, the situation on the Korean Peninsula, which has remained divided since the end of World War II, contains many of the elements of such a conflict. The situation is complex and involves all the great powers and their interests in the area. It is infected by a considerable amount of nationalism as well as involving domestic policy issues in the countries concerned. All these facts taken together make conflict resolution theories seem more appropriate in analyzing the situation than any regular theories on economic sanctions.

What is the justification for research into Japanese ODA as a tool for peace making? First, that is the way ODA is currently profiled by the Japanese government in its revised ODA Charter,10 according to which “[t]he objectives of Japan’s ODA are to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan’s own security and prosperity.” Second, ODA is always envisioned in the negotiations for a normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea. The example of

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Japan’s normalization of relations with South Korea, where aid was a part of the agreement, is most often brought up as a precedent. ODA can be a useful tool in convincing North Korea to change its behaviour, that is, to cease its nuclear experiments, and so on.

This is not a completely new way of using Zartman’s ripe moment theory. It has been used by Mikio Oishi and Fumitaka Furuoka\(^\text{11}\) to evaluate the performance of Japanese aid from the standpoint of peacemaking. They carried out case studies of Cambodia and Burma based on Zartman’s theory. In their study Japan successfully supported the task of peacemaking in Cambodia by contributing to all three elements of the ripe moment, but in the case of Burma Japan was unable to assume a positive role as it only contributed to establishing a valid spokesperson but failed to create a mutually hurting stalemate or provide any formula for a way out. The situations in these two countries differed considerably, although in both cases it was a question of internal conflicts in which Japan as an outsider tried to mediate, sweetening its proposals with aid.

Oishi and Furuoka found that Japan differs from Western states in the way it relates to the recipients. First, Japan tends to employ positive sanctions as soon as there has been even the slightest improvement in the political situation. Second, it weighs the potential consequences meticulously when it contemplates negative sanctions. Japan’s aid policy is influenced by its business sector, and if commercial interests are only minor it might be less cautious about resorting to negative sanctions.\(^\text{12}\)

In the case of North Korea, the situation is different from that found in either Cambodia or Burma, as there is no traditional civil war taking place. When it comes to answering the two questions posed at the beginning of this article, the conditions are also different. For the first question—whether Japanese ODA is a valuable tool in normalizing relations with North Korea—Japan does not have a role as a mediator: it is one of the two parties that are involved in trying to normalize the relationship. Rather than assisting a mediator, the ODA as such will then have the function of sweetening the proposed outcome, that is, the normalization of relations. On the second question, however—whether Japanese ODA can help create peace and stability in Asia—Japan could be seen to have a mediating role, or substantial Japanese aid packages could be seen as assisting in several ways both in the US war on terrorism, providing ODA to North Korea to induce it to abandon its policy of seclusion and give up its nuclear weapons programme, and in an opening up of relations with South Korea and the integration of the North Korean economy with the rest of Northeast Asia.

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Another difference between the cases of North Korea and those of Cambodia and Burma is that, although humanitarian assistance has been extended on a number of occasions, Japan has so far not provided development aid to North Korea. What we are studying here is thus actually not development aid itself, but rather the expectation of such aid, and the question of whether this aid can be valuable for the normalization of relations and creating peace.

**Historical background: Japanese aid policy and relations in Northeast Asia**

An aid recipient itself after World War II, Japan started its career as a donor with war reparations to Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia in the mid-1950s. The reparations were tied to procurement from Japanese companies, and in that way they also served the purpose of promoting exports from Japan. The yen loans from the Export-Import Bank that started in 1957 were almost exclusively directed towards Asia and overwhelmingly served Japan’s commercial interests.\(^\text{13}\)

Not all Asian countries, however, received war reparations or aid loans. Some of Japan’s closest neighbours, China and Korea, did not; nor did they normalize relations with Japan. In 1948 the Korean Peninsula was divided into the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea).\(^\text{14}\) As a result of World War II, as well as the Japanese colonial legacy, anti-Japanese feelings remained strong in both Koreas. After many years of negotiations, Japan and South Korea normalized relations in 1965, and Japan came to recognize South Korea, according to the UN resolution, as the “only lawful” government on the Korean Peninsula. The Japanese government claimed that it was under no legal obligation to pay any compensation for the period of colonial rule, or any war compensation. It did, however, agree to make a settlement by providing South Korea with grants of US$300 million and low-interest loan aid of US$200 million in “economic cooperation.”\(^\text{15}\) The South Korean government viewed this aid as a form of compensation and passed domestic laws to enable it to use part of the grant aid to compensate victims of Japanese colonial rule.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the US established relations with China, and Japan was quick to follow suit. The North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung, at this time expressed hopes for deeper economic and cultural ties with Japan in Japanese newspaper interviews. A Dietmen’s League for the Promotion of Japanese-North Korean Friendship was created in Japan in 1971. The group went to Pyongyang and signed a trade agreement in 1972. There was a certain degree of détente in Japanese-North Korean relations, but the


\(^{14}\) For a more thorough description of the history see the introduction to this special issue.

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situation was still largely a stalemate, although not a mutually hurting one. The North Korean economy was in fairly good shape, South Korea’s massive economic expansion was yet to take place, and the Japanese foreign aid programme was limited.

With the worldwide oil crisis of 1973, the pattern of Japanese ODA, with its heavy concentration on Asia, changed. A huge aid package was extended to the Arab world to secure the supply of oil to Japan. As a consequence of this crisis, securing a stable supply of natural resources became another ingredient of Japanese aid policy. Trade was a prerequisite to obtaining resources and a certain amount of infrastructure was needed to conduct such trade; this explains the huge amount of aid money that was spent on infrastructure development in Asia. In Japan there was also a strong belief in its own model of development, that is, through industrialization and export-driven economic growth, which also requires infrastructure. South Korea was one of the first countries to follow the Japanese model and develop its economy in the same way, although a decade later.

In 1977, Japan announced the first of a number of plans that doubled the amount of Japanese ODA and eventually turned the country into a leading donor. In Japan, ODA was most often seen as being part of the wider concept of economic cooperation (keizai kyōryoku), which besides the aid element also includes other official flows (OOF18) and private direct investment. Japan’s ODA policy was most often one of keeping politics and economics separate (seikei bunrei). China, which started to accept aid in 1979, was soon to become one of the largest recipients of Japanese ODA.

Around this time, Japan’s role in the world was also turning into the subject of debate. ODA came to play an important role in this and was sometimes explained in terms of burden sharing (yakuwari buntan)19 where Japan, although relying on the US military forces for keeping world order, would contribute its share to international society through aid.

The first chance for normalization of relations: Why the moment was not ripe

A number of radical changes took place at the end of the Cold War. Above all, the South Korean economy had experienced miraculous growth and gathered considerable strength, while the North Korean economy quickly

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18 OOF refers to a different kind of official flow with conditions that are not sufficiently concessional to qualify as ODA (see note 2).
declined as aid from Moscow and Beijing decreased. In a climate of détente, South Korea made overtures to the North as well as to both Moscow and Beijing.

North Korea, however, did not manage to improve relations with Washington and Tokyo, and ran the risk of being isolated. From Tokyo’s point of view, there were several reasons for re-entering into negotiations with North Korea. Peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula would be the overall goal, but there was also the possibility of a new market for Japanese companies as well as a chance of obtaining the release of the *Fujisanmaru*’s crew, Japanese fishermen who had been held by the North Koreans. Aid was also a central issue, and South Korean government officials went to Tokyo to study what could be done by their country as well as by Japan.

In 1990, after the end of the Cold War and the first high-level talks between Seoul and Pyongyang, a 40-member Japanese delegation from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Social Democratic Party visited Pyongyang and held direct talks with the North Korean Workers’ Party.

By now Japan had become the world’s largest donor of ODA. The large Japanese aid package that was granted to South Korea in connection with its normalization of relations with Japan, and which helped South Korea’s economic growth, created expectations in North Korea of a similar package. North Korea had already brought up its demands for compensation for the period of colonial rule in preparation for the visit of the Japanese party delegation. The Japanese government’s position, communicated to the North Koreans, was that they could not expect to be treated any differently from other countries. Normalization had to come first. The Korean Workers’ Party intimated, however, that Japan, as a sign of goodwill, should be prepared to pay even in a state of non-normalized relations.

The visit by the delegation, as well as the private talks held between the delegation leader, the LDP politician Kanemaru Shin, and North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, led to a promise to release the *Fujisanmaru* crew. The Three-Party Joint Declaration issued after the talks promised to upgrade transport and telecommunications links and to move towards normalization. North Korea would stop its nuclear experiments. The declaration also stated that Japan should not only apologize for its colonial rule but also provide appropriate compensation for the “losses” from the end of the war until present. This last promise was controversial, as it contradicted the Japanese government’s standpoint, and was a departure from the 1965 Basic Treaty.

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20 For a further explanation, see the introduction to this special issue.
21 In the early 1990s this author met several South Koreans carrying out research into aid in Tokyo.
under which Japan had avoided paying war compensation to South Korea, and instead settled the problem with economic cooperation.24

This was a time of détente in the region. Dialogue was initiated between North and South Korea, inspired by, among other things, German reunification. In 1991 the two countries signed an agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchange and Cooperation; this was followed by a Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

In 1991-92, a series of normalization talks were also held between Japan and North Korea. The North wanted Japan to fulfil its pledges made by the Japanese delegation in 1990 and pay up to US$10 billion in colonial, wartime and post-war compensation. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, insisted that matters should be resolved according to the same formula as had been used for South Korea. The economic cooperation that they had calculated amounted to about half the sum of what the North was asking. North Korea gradually dropped the demand for postwar compensation, but the two countries could still not agree on the amount of economic cooperation.

The end of the Cold War also had major implications for Japanese ODA policy. Suddenly the world was no longer divided into communist and capitalist blocs, and it was not as obvious as before which countries were eligible for aid. There were a number of new countries demanding aid and it was necessary to establish criteria for providing it. At home, Japanese ODA had been heavily criticized for lacking a public “face,” and it was in this atmosphere that a policy outline for Japanese ODA was drafted; in 1992, Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter was adopted. Japanese aid was to be implemented according to the following four principles:

1. Environmental conservation and development should be pursued in tandem.
2. Any use of ODA for military purposes or for the aggravation of international conflicts should be avoided.
3. Full attention should be paid to trends in recipient countries’ military expenditure, their development and production of weapons of mass destruction, their exports and imports of arms, and so on.
4. Full attention should be paid to efforts to promote democratization and the introduction of a market-oriented economy, as well as the situation regarding human rights and freedom in the recipient country.

The third principle would have direct implications for Japan-North Korean relations. With North Korea’s refusal to comply with the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections in 1992, the negotiations on normalization and economic cooperation were stalemated.

Using the ripe moment theory to analyze the situation immediately after the end of the Cold War, it can be said that a situation of mutually hurting stalemate existed in Japanese–North Korean relations. For North Korea’s part, it was running the risk of becoming isolated, in the sense that the South was now approaching Beijing and Moscow while the North had so far had no success with Washington and Tokyo. With the decline in its economy, war compensation from Japan must have been seen as something attractive that could only be achieved by breaking the stalemate and going ahead with the normalization of relations.

The second element, “a formula for a way out,” also seems to have existed. As for peace and stability in the region, the formula was an agreement of Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchange and Cooperation signed by the two Koreas as well as their Joint Declaration of the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. Concerning the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea, there was the Three-Party Joint Declaration, according to which normalization would be accompanied by a major economic package, although the two sides at this time had not yet reached agreement on whether it should be labelled war compensation or economic cooperation. North Korea also agreed to release the crew from the Fujisanmaru.

What seems to have been lacking at this time was a “valid spokesperson.” This lack did not stem from the North Korean side, where it was Kim Il Sung himself who conducted the talks, but from the Japanese side, where the spokesman was the LDP politician Kanemaru Shin, who went to North Korea in 1990 as a party politician and conducted his so-called “private diplomacy” (Kōjin Gaiko).25 The Three-Party Declaration issued after the meeting stated that Japan should not only apologize for the period of colonial rule but should also provide compensation for the “losses” from the end of the war until the present. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan was quick to point out that this was a party agreement and not binding on the Japanese government, which wanted a solution according to the same formula used for South Korea.

In 1992 Japan adopted its ODA Charter and North Korea signed the IAEA Safeguards Agreement. When North Korea later in that year refused to comply with IAEA inspections, negotiations on normalization and economic cooperation from Japan were again stalemated. The ripe moment was over for this time and in March 1993 North Korea announced that it was planning to withdraw from the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty). The Japanese carrot, in the form of a promise of economic cooperation in the future, was not able to prevent the nuclear crisis that now developed.

In 1994 the crisis was finally resolved, at least temporarily, through the Agreed Framework between the US and North Korea. According to this, two light-water reactors\(^\text{26}\) were to be constructed and crude oil was to be provided to North Korea during a transitional period. Financing for this was mainly to be provided by Japan and South Korea, and in 1995 the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was inaugurated to administer, finance and coordinate this. Besides its financial contribution to this programme, Japan also provided food aid to North Korea via UN agencies in 1995 and 1996, but any larger contribution was put off until after normalization.

Another long, mutually hurting stalemate was initiated, with the state of relations swinging back and forth. Some minor improvement in North Korean behaviour, such as allowing the Japanese-born wives of North Korean citizens to visit Japan, was rewarded with another food aid package, while the firing of the Taepodong missile in 1998 led to the suspension of Japan’s food aid as well as its monetary contribution to KEDO.

No formula for a way out was presented when negotiations for normalization started again in Tokyo in 2000. Such a formula had to wait until Prime Minister Koizumi’s visit to Pyongyang in September 2002.

**The second chance for a ripe moment**

When President Kim Dae Jung came to power in South Korea, he started his “sunshine policy,” a proactive policy of engaging North Korea through reconciliation, trying to get it to reform through interaction and cooperation with South Korea and thus create peace in the region.\(^\text{27}\) At a summit meeting between him and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, in Pyongyang in June 2002, a joint declaration was issued that stated “the North and the South have agreed to resolve the question of reunification on their own initiative and through the joint efforts of the Korean people, who are the masters of the country.”\(^\text{28}\)

In September 2002 the Japanese prime minister, Koizumi Junichirō, also went to Pyongyang for a meeting with Kim Jong Il. He went at a time when Japan’s ally, the US, was adopting a strategy of containment of North Korea. In his fight against terrorism on a worldwide basis, President George W. Bush had accused the North Korean government of supporting terrorism, and declared North Korea to belong to an “axis of evil,” together with Iran and Iraq. Under such circumstances, it was most unusual for a Japanese

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\(^{26}\) These reactors are less efficient at producing weapons-grade plutonium.


\(^{28}\) For the full text of this document, see the home page of the ROK’s Ministry of Unification, [http://www.unikorea.go.kr/](http://www.unikorea.go.kr/).
prime minister to go to North Korea to promote better relations. What then was the motive of the North Korean leader Kim Jong Il for receiving him? Several plausible reasons have been suggested. One was that the severe economic conditions in the country made him increasingly eager to receive Japanese aid. Another is that it was a way of relieving some of the tension in the region without having the US as a direct counterpart.29

North Korea, which had denied all accusations of involvement in the abduction of Japanese citizens until then, suddenly admitted that the accusations were true, apologized for the kidnappings, revealed information on the fate of twelve of those on the missing persons list, and agreed to let five surviving abductees leave for Japan.

The Pyongyang Declaration, which was announced in connection with the meeting, showed a softer stance and a willingness to cooperate on both sides. In it Japan expressed “deep remorse and heartfelt apology”30 for the tremendous damage and suffering caused to the people of Korea through Japan’s colonial rule. Both sides determined that they would make every possible effort towards an early normalization of relations. The claims for war compensation that North Korea had always made in previous meetings were now dropped, at least verbally. Instead, as quoted below from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Pyongyang Declaration, there is a detailed promise of economic cooperation and how it would be negotiated:

Both sides shared the recognition that, providing economic co-operation after the normalization by the Japanese side to the DPRK side, including grant aids, long-term loans with low interest rates and such assistance as humanitarian assistance through international organisations, over a period of time deemed appropriate by both sides, and providing other loans and credits by such financial institutions as the Japan Bank for International Co-operation with a view of supporting private economic activities, would be consistent with the spirit of this Declaration, and decided that they would sincerely discuss the specific scales and contents of the economic co-operation in the normalization talks.31

In the declaration, both sides also confirmed that, for an overall resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, they would comply with all the related international agreements.

The Pyongyang meeting was a concrete step forward in the normalization talks between Japan and North Korea, but relations very quickly turned sour.

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31 Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Pyongyang Declaration.
again, for two reasons. The first reason for this was the nuclear issue. Within a month of the Japanese prime minister’s visit, an American delegation arrived in Pyongyang, and in connection with this the North Koreans are said to have admitted that they had a secret nuclear development programme. No proof has ever been presented on this issue. In an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Selig S. Harrison claims that the American delegation’s trip might have been inspired by American concerns over the ever more conciliatory and independent approaches that both Seoul and Tokyo were taking towards North Korea.

A secret nuclear programme would be against the Agreed Framework, and the admission of the existence of such a programme led the US and its allies in KEDO, including Japan, to retaliate by not delivering any oil to North Korea. Pyongyang declared the Agreed Framework dead, and decided to leave the NPT and its Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. It restarted its old nuclear programmes, and in February 2005 declared that it possessed nuclear weapons.

The second reason that relations between the two countries soured was the abductions. In Japan, this was the dominant issue, at least in the media and among the general public and, contrary to what one might have expected, North Korea’s admission of the abductions actually resulted in inflaming Japanese public opinion and made the matter an even more serious concern for the government.

Analyzing the situation with the ripe moment theory, a stalemate seems to have existed in Japanese-North Korean relations at the beginning of the twenty-first century. While the South Korean president had gone to Pyongyang to hold negotiations with his North Korean counterpart, there was no improvement in Japanese-North Korean relations. North Korea’s opportunities to integrate with the rest of the world were severely damaged as the US president had designated it a supporter of terrorism. The meeting between Koizumi Junichirō and Kim Jong Il was an attempt to break this stalemate.

The Pyongyang Declaration, announced by the two leaders, could be seen as a formula for a way out both when it comes to normalization of relations between the two countries, as well as for creating peace and stability in the area. Japanese foreign aid, or expectations of such aid, was one of the central elements in the declaration. This was now to be discussed in the normalization talks. Under these conditions, Pyongyang agreed to drop the request for economic compensation for the hardships suffered during the colonial period and the war. A formal apology, however, still had to be made by the Japanese side.

The statement in the declaration that both sides would comply with all international agreements concerning the nuclear issue seemed like a formula for peace and stability in the region.

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The Japanese sweetened their proposals with promises of ODA as well as other forms of economic cooperation. The North Koreans, in turn, finally admitted the abduction of Japanese citizens, and provided a formal apology and an assurance that it would not happen again.

In comparison to the first chance for a ripe moment at the beginning of the 1990s, valid spokespersons now existed. Several years had passed since Kim Jong Il succeeded his father Kim II Sung, and he was now in control of the country. On the Japanese side this time there was not a representative of a political party but the prime minister himself. In this sense a ripe moment seemed to be there; however, even these conditions were to prove insufficient.

There were several reasons for the failure to create a ripe moment. One had to do with domestic factors and the backlash over the abductions issue. Here the Japanese media, as well as nationalist feelings, played a major role. The Japanese prime minister had to take strong public opinion into consideration. ODA is not an effective tool for dealing with the strong anti-North Korean feelings in Japan today. A solution to that problem has to be found, however, if there is to be any progress in the normalization talks.

A second reason for failure was of course the nuclear issue, in the way it was played up, as well as in the way the US had been acting. When Koizumi went to Pyongyang in September 2002 he had already been informed that there were activities going on in this field. Countries dealing with weapons of mass destruction are clearly not eligible for aid according to the ODA Charter. Even so, Koizumi took a conciliatory approach and promised future economic cooperation at the same time as North Korea promised to follow the nuclear agreements.

When the nuclear issue surfaced officially, however, Japan had to act upon it, and even if the accusation that North Korea was pursuing a nuclear programme might not have been true from the beginning, it soon became so when North Korea restarted its old nuclear programmes and left the NPT. The ripe moment was gone again and the illusion of future economic cooperation from Japan, at this point, seemed like a useless tool to bring the North Koreans back to the negotiating table.

**Will a ripe moment ever materialize?**

In 2003 the Japanese government revised its ODA Charter. The motivation for this revision was that “[t]he world has changed dramatically since the first Charter was approved, and today there is an urgent need for the international community, including Japan, to address new development challenges such as peace-building.” According to the new charter, the objective of Japanese ODA is to contribute to peace and the development of

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33 Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter, p. i.
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the international community. Japanese aid is to be used more strategically in future and should be more concentrated on East Asia and Japan’s immediate neighbourhood. These are all indications that North Korea would be a likely candidate, under the condition that it complies with the nuclear agreements. So far, however, it has not, and aid has only been extended in small portions as a sign of goodwill in connection with various concessions from the North Korean side. One of the latest cases is that of 250,000 tons of food and US$10 million worth of medical supplies, which were promised as humanitarian assistance in connection with Prime Minister Koizumi’s return visit to Pyongyang in May 2004, where he successfully negotiated the return of eight relatives of the abductees as well as further investigation into other abduction cases. It was a concrete step from the Japanese side to get relations with North Korea moving again so that other issues between the two could be resolved. However, further progression in relations has proven elusive.

Why does a ripe moment never materialize, even if the three basic elements—a mutually hurting stalemate, a formula for a way out, and valid spokespersons—are present? That is the question we are left with, after analyzing Japanese attempts to create peace and stability in the area and its efforts to normalize its own relations with North Korea. Is Japanese ODA not a valuable tool? What catalyst is lacking?

Creating a climate of peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula is complicated by the area’s geographical position and its history of constant interference by the neighbouring states; these have created a strategic culture of nationalistic survival. This is true for both North and South Korea. As a result, both countries place strong emphasis on avoiding interference by others in their internal affairs, as can be seen in statements such as “the North and the South have agreed to resolve the question of reunification independently and through the joint effort of the Korean people, who are the masters of the country.” This position, as well as the anti-Japanese feelings present in both Koreas, makes it unlikely that the governments in Seoul and Pyongyang will be looking for Japan to play an important role in creating peace and stability in the area, or that Japanese foreign aid would be a crucial factor.

37 In South Korea, these take the form of, for example, demonstrations protesting the revision of Japanese textbooks—the so-called history issue—and most recently also against Japanese territorial claims over Takeshima. On the North Korean government’s anti-Japan policy see Han S. Park, “The Rationales Behind North Korean Foreign Policy,” in Hagström and Söderberg, eds, North Korea Policy, Japan and the Great Powers, pp. 38–52.
Oishi and Furuoka, in their studies on Cambodia and Burma, found that the effectiveness of Japan’s aid sanctions tended to depend on whether Japan and other Western countries worked together.\(^{38}\) In the case of North Korea, Japanese aid sanctions depend not only on the actions of other Western countries, but also on China and South Korea, which play crucial roles in this connection. The North Korean economic exchange in a wider sense with these countries as well as with Japan should be taken into consideration if we are to be able to judge the eventual value of Japanese ODA.

The North Korean economy, which was actually shrinking in the mid-1990s, has seen some improvement and slight growth since 1999. In 2002 the People’s Congress adopted a new national plan, which stated that North Korea should give serious consideration to international cooperation in the development of its own economy.

Besides the tremendous growth that the South Korean economy has experienced since the 1970s, the three Chinese provinces closest to North Korea—Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang—have experienced growth since the end of the 1990s that is even more rapid than the growth of the Chinese

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**Figure 1**

*North Korea’s exports, by country of destination, 2000–05*

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Can Japanese Foreign Aid to North Korea Create Peace and Stability?

economy in general.\textsuperscript{39} China’s trade with North Korea amounted to 39 percent of North Korea’s total trade in 2005. China is North Korea’s largest and most important trading partner by far. Recently Chinese investment in North Korea has also increased, and so has that of South Korea, which is the second-largest trading partner. North Korea’s trade with Japan, on the other hand, has been decreasing in recent years, affected among other things by a rigorous system of inspections of the shipping between North Korea and Japan. The volume of North Korea’s trade with Japan is now even less than that of its trade with Thailand. Today, as figures 1 and 2 show, Japan is a far less important trading partner for North Korea than China or South Korea. These are North Korea’s most important economic partners.

\textit{Figure 2}

\textit{North Korea’s imports, by country of origin, 2000–05}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\hline
Others & 520 & 540 & 500 & 530 & 550 & 570 \\
Thailand & 230 & 250 & 270 & 280 & 300 & 320 \\
China & 170 & 180 & 190 & 200 & 220 & 240 \\
Japan & 100 & 110 & 120 & 130 & 150 & 170 \\
South Korea & 100 & 110 & 120 & 130 & 150 & 170 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Source: South Korean KOTRA (Korean Trade Investment Promotion Agency).

In regards to aid, the situation is the same. Neither South Korea nor China is currently a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which means that their aid calculations are not done according to the DAC’s ODA

\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}
formula. Nor are their respective calculations done on the same basis. The figures in table 1 should therefore be seen as broad indications of the volume of aid rather than exact numbers. There are no official statistics on Japanese ODA to North Korea, as such aid does not formally exist, but a number of different humanitarian aid packages have in any case been disbursed (table 2).

From these figures it becomes clear that when Japanese aid has not been forthcoming other neighbours have stepped in.

In their study of Japanese ODA to Burma and Cambodia, Oishi and Furuoka found that if commercial interests were significantly large, the Japanese approach in terms of creating or enhancing a mutually hurting stalemate may be diminished. Japanese commercial interests in North Korea must be considered very small, and would thus not be considered a hindrance to any negative aid sanctions. The effect of such sanctions could, however, be reduced if others provide the aid instead.

In the case of Burma, Oishi and Furuoka found that Japanese aid, still forthcoming when other Western countries decided to withdraw their aid, might actually have given the Burmese government support enough to prevent a hurting stalemate from occurring. In this sense aid can also be counterproductive. In the North Korean case, the same could be true for Chinese and South Korean aid, which can be considered counterproductive from a Japanese point of view.

Japan is also a member of the Six-Party Talks, held under Chinese coordination and leadership, on the North Korean nuclear issue. During

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>232.25</td>
<td>6.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>40.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>47.23</td>
<td>34.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>31.85</td>
<td>32.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>46.88</td>
<td>48.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>113.76</td>
<td>27.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>135.39</td>
<td>69.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>134.92</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>157.63</td>
<td>10.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>256.20</td>
<td>14.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>212.54</td>
<td>38.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* South Korean figures are the total from both the government and the civilian sector

Source: South Korean Ministry of Unification; Customs General Administration of the People’s Republic of China.
Can Japanese Foreign Aid to North Korea Create Peace and Stability?

Table 2
Japan’s aid to North Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Org.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>300,000 tons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Humanitarian assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>US$260,000</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>US$120,000</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
<td>US$120,000</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>200,000 tons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>US$5,250,000</td>
<td>WFP, UNICEF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
<td>US$750,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>67,000 tons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
<td>JP¥94,000 000</td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>100,000 tons</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>500,000 tons</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Emergency medical care goods</td>
<td>US$100,000</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>125,000 tons</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>US$40,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
<td>US$5,000,000</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Basic medical supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical equipment</td>
<td>US$2,000,000</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Sterilizer, injector, stitching fiber, operating table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KOTRA Japan Trade Center Reports, 2006.

those talks North Korea has constantly demanded direct bilateral talks with the US and an assurance that it will not be attacked. The US war against terrorism in Iraq has acted as a reminder to North Korea of US might and that it itself, as a state considered to support terrorism, could be attacked as well. North Korea sees this as an imminent threat of great importance. A ripe moment for creating peace and security in Northeast Asia is not likely
to develop until this problem has been solved and the North Korean government has received some kind of security guarantee.

As for the normalization of relations with Japan, why does a ripe moment never arrive? To a certain extent this is connected with the issue of North Korea-US relations and the nuclear issue. As long as the North Korean government feels threatened, it is likely to continue development of nuclear weapons, and as long as it does that, the ripe moment for normalization of relations with Japan is not likely to occur.

Aside from the nuclear weapons factor, for various reasons the abductions issue has made the normalization of relations with North Korea a major domestic political topic in Japan. While Japan has had the abductees at the top of its agenda in all negotiations with North Korea, South Korea has been practically ignoring the issue, although there are 486 South Koreans officially recorded as held by Pyongyang in the post-Korean War period.\(^4\) In Japan, the resolution of the abductions issue is being pushed as a precondition for normalization by certain strong opinion groups. The ripe moment theory does not have any dimension to deal with nationalism, complicated domestic policy issues and domestic public opinion, which all have to be taken into consideration when it comes to the normalization of relations between North Korea and Japan. These are issues where Japanese ODA seems to have only weak influence or none at all. Foreign aid might have some effect in sweetening proposals in negotiations with North Korea but it is not likely to change domestic Japanese conditions, which have to be dealt with by other measures.

As is obvious from the figures above, Japan is not of great economic importance to North Korea at the moment. As long as other neighbours are willing to substitute for Japanese economic cooperation, the normalization of relations with Japan does not seem to be the most urgent matter for the North Korean government, which somehow manages anyhow. It needs to be pointed out, however, that the amount of aid anticipated from Japan, if it ever materializes, is on a much larger scale than what South Korea and China are providing today. The Japanese Self-Defense Forces are not considered an immediate security threat to the North Korean government. Nor does Japan have any nuclear weapons. The threat that North Korea sees as most imminent comes from the US, and Japanese ODA cannot be used to deal with that.

The ripe moment theory does not offer any solution for how to deal with power politics and the influence of other great powers, such as China and the US. In connection with these matters Japanese ODA seems to be a weak tool for influencing North Korea and creating peace and stability. A ripe

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\(^4\) Aidan Foster-Carter, “Boycott or Business,” in *Comparative Connections*, vol. 6, no. 4, 4th Quarter 2004 (January 2005).
moment for the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea is not likely to occur until these matters have been resolved as well.

Zartman’s ripe moment theory, which seemed to work well in Oishi and Furuoka’s analyses of the situations in Cambodia and Burma, could not explain why a ripe moment has never occurred in the case of North Korea, although the three elements—a mutually hurting stalemate, a formula for a way out and valid spokespersons—were all there. The theory is obviously not sufficient for explaining issues such as the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea as well as the creation of peace and stability in Northeast Asia. It does not have capacity to deal with relations between a given country and a great power, such as those between North Korea and the US, nor does it have any dimension to deal with nationalism, complicated domestic policy issues and domestic public opinion. It needs to be complemented and further developed to cover these and be able to deal with more complex situations.

Concluding remarks

Japanese ODA, or the expectation of such aid, can be helpful at certain times, for instance, in getting a signature on the Pyongyang Declaration. Limited humanitarian assistance in the form of food aid or medical equipment might have some effect in easing negotiations for particular issues, such as visits by Japanese wives to their homeland or the return of the abductees’ children and other relatives. Here it can at least be used as a way of showing goodwill and rewarding positive North Korean behaviour. It is highly doubtful, however, if it has any effect as a negative sanction—that is, when it is withdrawn or withheld, as a punishment for bad behaviour or in an attempt to get the North Korean government to change its behaviour (as at present).

What kind of results can be expected? Is it reasonable to believe that a country which above all wants to receive US assurances that it will not be attacked will give up its nuclear policy in exchange for Japanese ODA? It is not. Once North Korea has received such an assurance, however, things might change. At a lower level, if North Korea does not feel any imminent and immediate threats, Japanese ODA might be an effective tool contributing both to peace and stability in the area and to the normalization of relations.

What other policy options are available for Japan in its peace-building and peace-preservation efforts? Under the present constitution, military intervention to deal with conflicts is not an option. Economic sanctions also have their limitations, depending on the specific conditions for each case, the compliance of other actors, and the negative effects on Japanese commercial interests.

Is completely withholding aid, and not even giving an illusion of aid, an option? Probably not, as economic cooperation is one of the forms of leverage
that the Japanese government has over North Korea. Expectations are high of some kind of compensation from Japan, and a complete refusal by Japan to comply might further strengthen anti-Japanese feelings in North Korea. If Prime Minister Koizumi is unable to get domestic public opinion to support ODA to North Korea it might actually have a negative effect on peace and stability in the area.

However, even if, because of the size of its ODA budget, Japan is portrayed as unrivalled in its status as future donor to North Korea, it is important to remember that it is not the only donor nation. South Korea and China are other providers to which North Korea might turn more extensively if it is unable to reach an agreement with Japan. This would delay the normalization process between Japan and North Korea and might isolate Japan and affect its future economic relations with the country. North Korea’s economic exchanges with China and South Korea are already of greater importance to the country than those with Japan.

The new ODA Charter, with its strong emphasis on peace building and peace preservation, is not entirely useless. How effective aid will be as a tool for peacekeeping will depend on what kind of aid is distributed, to whom, for what purpose, and on which occasion. JICA now has a special section monitoring 30 countries that might be eligible for or are receiving ODA for peace preservation purposes. North Korea, however, is not among these countries. When it comes to complex issues like peace building or peace preservation, there are likely to be several underlying factors, both external and internal, that are of great importance. These cannot be resolved by economic cooperation alone. Foreign aid clearly has its limits as a tool for peace building in East Asia as well as for the normalization of relations with North Korea, one of Japan’s geographically closest yet imminently threatening neighbours.

Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden, August 2006

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The Political Economy of Japanese Sanctions Towards North Korea: Domestic Coalitions and International Systemic Pressures

Christopher W. Hughes

Japan has often been dismissed as a bit-part actor in Korean Peninsula security affairs. In much of the mainstream academic literature and policy discourse on the North Korean security issue, Japan, if ascribed any role at all, is seen as a secondary and submissive diplomatic actor, functioning chiefly to support US and South Korean initiatives towards the North through the provision of potential economic incentives, and generally bending to US strategy, whether in the bilateral context of the US-Japan alliance, or the multilateral contexts of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) and ongoing Six-Party Talks (SPT).\(^1\) Japan’s role in the North Korean security issue would thus appear in line with many other traditional interpretations of its international relations as submissive to US strategy and international systemic pressures.

More recently, though, academic commentators and policy practitioners have shown a new awareness that Japan’s own bilateral agenda and domestic political conditions are rising in importance relative to international factors in determining its overall policy orientation towards the North. Bilateral tensions over the abductions of Japanese citizens (rachi jiken), and subsequent moves in Japan to enact legal conditions for the unilateral imposition of sanctions on the North—and thereby to shift its declared policy of a balance of “dialogue and pressure” (taiwa to atsuryoku) towards pressure and containment—have particularly highlighted the influence of domestic political considerations. In turn, Japan’s preoccupation with domestic political pressures has clearly impacted upon its flexibility and compliance as a partner in international strategies to deal with the North. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (MOFA) persistent raising of the abductions issue at all rounds of the SPT has produced some disquiet amongst their US, South

\(^1\) For elaboration of this point, see Hagström in this special issue.
Korean and Chinese counterparts that North Korea may use this as an additional pretext to evade negotiations and, hence, that an essentially Japanese domestic and bilateral issue may trump the progress of multilateral efforts on the North's nuclear programme.2

Indeed, the argument of this article is that the abductions issue, and the intimation that it provides of the importance of domestic politics, is really only the tip of the iceberg of deeper-lying domestic and bilateral concerns that are hampering progress in Japan-North Korea relations. In order to understand the nature of Japan's relationship with the North, and concomitantly with the US and South Korea, it is crucial to not be blinded to the domestic sources of Japan's foreign policy. This article argues that, whilst international systemic pressures have often been and still remain decisive in many instances for influencing the direction of Japan's North Korea policy, it is equally important to recognize that an over-concentration on international factors can obscure crucial domestic explanations that account for Japan's approach to the North, and can thus lead to mistaken academic and policy analysis. Hence, this article seeks to add to those existing approaches that lift the lid on the proverbial "black box" of the Japanese policy-making system and to demonstrate the increasingly important role of domestic political and bilateral concerns, alongside international concerns, in driving its North Korea policy. In fact, this article argues not only for the need to factor in the increasing importance of domestic politics in shaping Japan's North Korea policy, but also for the need to recognize that in certain instances domestic pressures are threatening to outstrip international pressures as the prime determinant.

These arguments also have important implications for understanding Japan's general diplomatic standing in Korean Peninsula security affairs. If the Japanese foreign policy-making process, as a result of domestic political pressures, demonstrates signs of shifting to a policy of containment of the North through the imposition of unilateral sanctions, or experiences increasing obstacles to providing active support for US strategy, then this could derail US-Japan bilateral and US-Japan-South Korea trilateral cooperation efforts, as well as hinder greatly the process of the SPT, and any other internationally co-ordinated attempts in the future to resolve the nuclear issue. In this way, Japan's domestic political pressures, and how they impact on the level of Japanese cooperation with the US, South Korea and other states, magnify the influence of Japan as an actor in Korean Peninsula security affairs, even if that influence may ultimately obstruct progress on a resolution to the nuclear issue.

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The Political Economy of Japanese Sanctions towards North Korea

**Theories and methodology**

This article does not reject standard “realist” varieties of international systemic or structure-based explanations for Japan’s foreign policy and international relations, which tend to see it as highly sensitive and often submissive to external power relationships with other states and particularly its US ally. Instead, it proposes that these international systemic explanations need to be employed in conjunction with, and weighed against, pressures emanating from the domestic policy-making process. This is in line with other more recent theoretical and empirical case studies that emphasize the historical importance of pluralistic domestic policy interests, such as party politics, domestic administrative institutions and public opinion, in countering or even overcoming international systemic pressures on Japan’s security and foreign policy orientation. However, this article also aims to build upon and provide a distinct contribution to this literature by going beyond highlighting the importance of domestic variables per se, and indicating a set of dynamic processes and circumstances which account for why and when domestic political pressures can accumulate to the point that they may rival international systemic pressures in determining foreign policy.

The specific case study that this article utilizes to examine the varying strengths of international pressures and pluralistic domestic agency in determining Japan’s North Korea policy is that of the deliberations concerning the imposition of sanctions. The case of sanctions is intrinsically important in itself, given that Japan’s decision about their imposition may hold the key to determining the degree of its cooperation with US and other concerned states’ strategies towards resolving the nuclear issue. This article makes no attempt to examine the actual effectiveness of sanctions on North Korea. This is beyond the scope of the article, and the focus is solely on explaining the political process behind any decision to impose sanctions.

Sanctions theory is especially useful because it indicates that, whilst in many cases realist explanations of international systemic coercion and offers of side payments may account for states’ decisions to cooperate or not over

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the imposition of sanctions, in other cases domestic political and economic interests may prove just as dominant in sanctions behaviour.6 This strain of sanctions theory, much drawn from the public choice literature, but also qualitative in nature, provides a number of domestic political economy-focussed explanations for the imposition of sanctions. It indicates a pluralistic range of domestic policy actors—including bureaucratic and political elites, business interests, public opinion and special interest groups—that are crucial in lobbying for or against state action in the imposition of sanctions.7 It further indicates that these domestic actors will be in a position to tip central government policy towards sanctions when they are able to form a sufficiently strong coalition amongst themselves. These “log-rolling” or “threshold” coalitions result from the actions of leading key members of the coalition that are able to motivate others for collective action.8

Motivations for the imposition of sanctions are multifarious and not necessarily mutually exclusive. They include “instrumental sanctions,” attempts by the sender state to effect genuine policy change in the target; “expressive sanctions,” which represent a desire for moral and psychological assurance and a wish to “do something,” short of more costly military measures, in protest at the actions of the target state; and sanctions that may function more for the pecuniary and political interests of domestic actors because they provide protection for domestic industries or political credit for being seen to take action against an abhorrent target state.9 Moreover, the fact that the formation of domestic coalitions in favour of sanctions is often dependent on the ability to motivate particular interest groups means that smaller coalition actors are particularly effective in exploiting the opportunities to leverage the collective interests of the coalition against the central government. Hence, this means that in practice coalition groups that reflect a narrow range of motivations, even if they portray or perceive themselves as in the interest of the majority, can override the influence of larger and more powerful domestic actors.10 This also means that if genuinely

powerful domestic groups choose not to participate in the domestic contestation over sanctions, then, by default, less powerful interest groups may actually dominate the policy outcome due to their coalition-building abilities. Finally, this ability of coalitions of domestic political actors, often orchestrated by minority interests, to capture state policy can also lead to instances whereby states pursue the imposition of sanctions in contravention, or irrespective, of international pressures.

It is the contention of this article that Japan’s policy towards North Korea has shown increasing signs in recent years of being driven by domestic over international pressures; based on sanctions theory, it is this article’s further contention that this move towards sanctions is the result of the formation of a “threshold” domestic coalition that seeks to contain rather than engage the North. Arguably, this marks a potentially decisive turn in Japan’s policy orientation. This is because in previous years either the international pressures were great enough to prevail over relatively weak domestic coalitions, or because relatively strong domestic coalitions were actually in favour of engaging North Korea, thus making for policy outcomes in line with international pressures and usually predisposed to engagement rather than containment.

In order to substantiate these arguments, this article is divided into two empirical sections. The first section provides an overview and analysis of Japan’s relations with North Korea from the early 1990s to the present day, punctuated by special examination of three instances—in 1993-94, 1998-99 and 2003-06—when Japan considered, or actually imposed, a range of sanctions on North Korea. This overview demonstrates the fluctuating importance over time of international pressures in influencing Japan’s policies of engagement and containment towards the North, but also how Japanese domestic political and bilateral concerns have intervened, with varying degrees of influence, to further shape policy outcomes. The second section then moves to explain this varying influence of domestic political and bilateral concerns vis-à-vis international pressures on Japan’s sanctions policy. It does so by analyzing in detail the nature of the extant domestic political coalitions, and the policy interests of their various constituent political and economic actors. It demonstrates that by aggregating these interests, the relative strength and cohesion of domestic political coalitions over time can be judged. It argues that, based on current evidence, a strong domestic coalition has indeed coalesced in Japan in favour of sanctions, more prepared than at any time over the previous decade and a half to challenge, and even overturn, international systemic pressures. In turn, this detection of an emergent threshold coalition provides important insights into understanding the dynamic process of how and when domestic variables rise to reinforce or challenge international systemic factors in Japan’s North Korea policy and its foreign policy more widely.
Japan’s engagement and containment of North Korea: international and domestic pressures

In terms of international systemic pressures, Japan’s government has sought to emphasize that it retains control over bilateral relations with North Korea, but it has also stressed that its policy largely conforms with the mix of containment and engagement policies of the US and South Korea. In terms of domestic politics and bilateral issues, as will be seen in the next section, a number of actors—including MOFA, elements of the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the opposition parties, as well as business interests, the North Korean community in Japan, and single-issue pressure groups—have been involved in forging diplomatic relations with North Korea.

Japan’s optimum long-term strategy, and the one accepted by the most influential policy makers for dealing with North Korea, has been one of engagement. However, as will be seen from the following overview of Japan-North Korea relations over the last decade, Japan has not always found it possible to maintain a constant policy line towards the North.

Phase 1: Normalization talks and the first nuclear crisis, 1990-95

Japan’s first opportunity for full engagement with North Korea arrived with the end of the Cold War, which lessened the international pressures on Japan to cooperate in the containment of the North. This produced the opportunity for Kanemaru Shin’s visit to North Korea and issuance of the Three-Party Joint Declaration in September 1990, and then the opening for government-to-government normalization negotiations from January 1991 to November 1992. The progress (or lack of it) of these negotiations has been detailed elsewhere. However, it is important to note here that their failure was principally the result of Japanese domestic political and bilateral issues with the North, including the colonial and postwar apology and compensation issues, the Nihonjinzuma, and the first raising of the abductions issue.

In addition to these bilateral and domestic issues, though, a further decisive brake was placed on Japan’s normalization and engagement efforts by the rise of new international systemic pressures. Firstly, Japan was obliged to reassure an anxious South Korean government that it would only pursue negotiations in parallel with progress in North-South dialogue. This policy of linkage (renkei) was not formally binding, but in reality was the start of MOFA tying Japan’s diplomacy more closely with that of South Korea, and of the formation of one side of the emergent trilateral framework of US-Japan-South Korea diplomatic cooperation. The practical outcome of Japan’s renkei policy was to impose a near international ‘double-lock’ on its diplomacy with the North, obliging it to consider the restart of normalization talks with North Korea in step with improvements in North-South relations, which in themselves were largely contingent on improvements in US-North Korea relations.
Secondly, Japan’s inability to engage North Korea was compounded in this period by the international pressures of US-North Korea confrontation during the first nuclear crisis of 1993-94. Japan was at this point forced to consider a switch to containment through the participation in US-led sanctions against the North, including the cessation of remittances by the North Korean community in Japan, and the participation of the Japan Self Defence Forces (JSDF) in a naval blockade. Japanese policy was eventually averted from sanctions by the combined intervention of domestic politics and the receding of international pressures. LDP and then coalition Japanese governments between 1993 and 1994 indicated to the US that Japan would be hard-pressed politically and militarily to support the imposition of sanctions. Japan was then saved from a confrontation with the US over its credibility as an alliance partner by the US’s own shift towards engagement with North Korea and the Agreed Framework of October 1994. Hence, in this first phase of Japan-North Korea relations, concluding with the consideration but then rejection of sanctions, it can be seen that Japan avoided moves towards containment because of domestic political conditions predisposed more towards tentative engagement, and because of an international system that first threatened to challenge but then reinforced this position.


Japan’s second phase of dealing with North Korea was marked by the rise of an international environment generally conducive to engagement with North Korea. The US moved towards careful engagement with North Korea through the Agreed Framework, the establishment of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) in March 1995 and then, following the October 1998 Perry Report, through the visit of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to Pyongyang in November 2000. Similarly, South Korea moved to engage North Korea through President Kim Dae-Jung’s “Sunshine Policy.”

Despite the relatively propitious international situation that lifted the double-lock on its diplomacy, however, in this period Japan encountered increasing domestic and bilateral obstacles to engaging North Korea. Japan attempted to restart normalization talks through former Foreign Minister Watanabe Michio’s LDP-SDP-J-Sakigake delegation to the North in March 1995, the government’s provision bilaterally of 500,000 tons of rice aid in June and October, and Mori Yoshiro’s LDP-SDP-J-sakigake mission to the North in November 1997. But increasing domestic pressure over the Nihonjinzuma and abductions issue effectively blocked the restart of normalization negotiations between 1995 and 1997-98. North Korea’s test launch of a Taepdong-1 ballistic missile over Japan on 31 August 1998 then pushed Japan towards the containment of the North through the imposition of limited sanctions. Japan’s government announced the suspension of its signing of the KEDO funding agreements, to which it was expected to
contribute approximately US$1 billion; the stoppage of food aid and normalization talks, and thus the North’s access to a believed figure of up to US$10 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) as part of Japan’s package for settling the colonial past; and the cancellation of charter flights between Japan and North Korea, many of which were used to carry North Korean agricultural commodities to Japan, such as high-priced matsutake mushrooms. Japanese politicians also mooted proposals to cut remittances to North Korea, as during the 1994 nuclear crisis.

Japan’s domestic political pressures in this period were insufficient, though, to overcome the strength of international pressures. Japan was persuaded by US and South Korean policy makers to sign the KEDO agreements in October 1999, to lift its other sanctions by December 1999, and to restart bilateral normalization negotiations between April 2000 and October 2001. Japan prepared the grounds for these talks by the dispatch of former Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi’s mission to the North in November 1999, and by the provision of 100,000 and 500,000 tons of rice aid via the World Food Programme (WFP) in March and October 2000. Japan thus moved back into step with the US and South Korea, although its reaction in the post-‘Taepodong-shock’ period was a portent of the increasing strength of domestic forces oriented towards containment in shaping its North Korea policy.

**Phase 3: Koizumi’s summity and sanctions, 2001-06**

In this third phase Japan has been confronted by the closing in once again of international pressures, resulting from the enhanced hard-line approach of the US towards North Korea over its nuclear programme, especially in the early stages of the first Bush administration, and the North’s response of ratcheting up military tensions. In the situation of the collapse of the Agreed Framework, and the restart of the North nuclear programme, Japan has been faced with increased pressure to adhere to the US policy line, mindful as it is of its need to rely in large part on the US for its security. At the same time, the domestic pressures on Japan’s policy towards North Korea to lean towards containment have also grown, with MOFA stressing by 2002 that the settlement of the abductions had now become the official precondition for the restart of normalization negotiations.

The Japanese government’s sandwiching between these international and domestic pressures has created an uncomfortable strategic situation for the country. On the one hand, whilst highly concerned about North Korea’s nuclear programme and the need to maintain confidence in the US-Japan alliance to deter the North, Japan has been concerned that the US hard-line

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approach might lead to renewed military confrontation. On the other hand, Japanese policy makers have been aware that the growing domestic pressure in favour of the containment of the North has undercut its diplomatic flexibility to support the US in the event of its shifting back towards engagement.

Japan subsequently sought to break this deadlock with Prime Minister Koizumi’s summitry with North Korea in 2002 and 2004.\textsuperscript{12} Koizumi’s September 2002 summit with Kim Jong-Il produced the “Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration,” significant progress on the abductions issue, and the resumption of normalization talks in October 2002. However, the talks subsequently stalled over Japan’s insistence that the surviving abductees should be permitted to remain permanently in Japan, and the Jenkins case. Koizumi then pushed bilateral ties further forward with his second visit to Pyongyang in May 2004, and a pledge of 250,000 tons of food aid to the North, leading to continuing discussions into the fate of the non-surviving abductees, and an eventual resolution of the Jenkins case in late 2004. Japan-North Korea bilateral talks then foundered in December 2004 over the Yokota Megumi controversy.

Japan’s bold diplomacy under Koizumi was motivated by several calculations. Firstly, although informed by concern over the North’s nuclear programme and the need to line up with the US in the final instance to take action against the North, Japan’s policy makers were also convinced of the need to demonstrate to the US the need to attempt engagement in order to avoid conflict with the North. Secondly, Japanese policy makers were conscious that the abductions issue had to be addressed head on as the key domestic factor militating against Japanese diplomatic flexibility.\textsuperscript{13} Japanese diplomacy can in many ways be seen to have achieved greater autonomy with Koizumi’s visits to North Korea. Koizumi directly and successfully challenged the tightening international pressures by visiting North Korea in spite of US disquiet, and thus carved out more diplomatic freedom for Japan. Koizumi’s diplomacy also challenged bilateral and domestic constraints by ensuring that North Korea acceded to Japan’s negotiating demands for normalization in the Joint Declaration, and by making important inroads into the abductions issue.

However, since 2004 Japan has appeared largely unable to exploit these opportunities for enhanced engagement with North Korea. Japan has had greater opportunities to engage North Korea with the loosening of international pressures following the Bush administration’s determination of its need for a diplomatic resolution to the nuclear crisis and the initiation of the SPT in Beijing since August 2003. Japan’s freedom of action internationally has been further enhanced with South Korea’s determination to


\textsuperscript{13} Tanaka Hitoshi and Tahara Sōichirō, \textit{Kokka to gaikō} (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005), pp. 27-29.
### Japan’s economic sanctions on North Korea as of 2005

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push ahead with its own engagement of the North. Moreover, since late 2005 and the stagnation of the SPT process, even as the Bush administration has begun to enhance its pressure on North Korea through the tightening of financial sanctions, it has still searched for means to engage the North diplomatically and to restart the SPT, thus looking to achieve a balance of containment and engagement.

Nonetheless, the domestic political pressures on the Japanese government to shift its own policy towards containment have markedly grown since late 2004, with Japan’s consideration of a range of sanctions, illustrated in the table on the previous page. In March 2006, the LDP further ramped up the pressure by submitting a bill that would force the government to impose sanctions if North Korea failed to make progress on resolving the abductions issue. The sanctions proposed are the most extensive, with potentially the most bite, of any of the three phases of Japan-North Korea relations. Moreover, Japan’s move towards these sanctions has been largely unilateral, and often in contravention of US requests to refrain. The evidence then is of a shift in this third phase towards containment in Japan, even if at increasing loggerheads to international pressures.

**Japan’s sanctions policy and domestic coalitions**

In the decade since the first North Korean nuclear crisis, the underlying trend in Japan’s North Korea policy has been a strengthening shift from a position of default engagement to one of default containment, as witnessed in its consideration of unilateral sanctions. Japan’s government has been increasingly pushed towards a position of containment, which it is difficult to back out of, or for pressure from the international system to overcome. Domestic political conditions have not just been an important and constant variable in shaping Japan’s policy shift over the last decade, but are now also challenging international factors in setting the overall orientation of policy. In turn, this focus on the increasingly vital role of domestic politics vis-à-vis the international system reinforces the argument at the outset of this article that it is only possible to explain Japan’s move towards sanctions and its overall North Korea policy by examining the nature of coalitions within its domestic political economy.

**MOFA**

The starting point for this examination is MOFA, charged as it is with the central role in devising and implementing Japan’s North Korea policy.

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through balancing domestic political pressures and the international systemic pressures of managing relations with the US, South Korea and other regional powers. MOFA has persisted in seeking engagement towards North Korea since the 1990s, recognizing the potential benefits for Japanese and regional security, and wishing to obviate a conflict with the North.

However, MOFA’s ability to pursue a consistent policy of engagement has been hampered by the activities of Japanese politicians engaged in “individual” (kojin gaikō) and “dual diplomacy” (nijū gaikō), as in the case of Kanemaru in 1990. MOFA has gradually clawed back control of the negotiating agenda by patiently building up its own direct links with the North Korean elites, and thereby making redundant the negotiating “pipes,” or links, that the politicians have maintained with North Korea. As director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau (AOAB) from September 2001 until December 2002, and then later as the deputy minister for Foreign Affairs until July 2005, Tanaka Hitoshi was particularly instrumental in boosting the role of MOFA in controlling the negotiating agenda with North Korea by enlisting the support of the Prime Minister’s Office, or Kantei, and Koizumi himself, in conducting secret diplomacy with the North leading up to the 2002 summit.

However, MOFA’s ability and inclination to engage North Korea since the late 1990s has subsequently been hampered by the ministry’s domestic political weaknesses. MOFA’s policy-making influence has been debilitated by its engulfment in financial scandals since 2001; the damaging appointment of Tanaka Makiko from April 2001 to January 2002 that left the ministry adrift from political influence; and the resultant loss of senior personnel.15 In turn, MOFA officials involved with North Korea diplomacy—including Makita Kunihiko, the former director general of the AOAB from 1998 until September 2001, and Tanaka Hitoshi—have been the subject of acerbic media and political attacks.

Added to this climate of personal, professional and physical risk, MOFA has been hindered by its internal divisions. Tanaka’s conduct of “secret diplomacy” (himitsu gaikō) with North Korea in the run-up to the 2002 summit, with limited consultation with the other MOFA bureaus, drew considerable internal criticism from the North American Affairs Bureau (NAAB), fearful of the impact on ties with the US. Moreover, since the slowing of the momentum for improvements in Japan-North Korea ties after the initial successes of the 2002 summit, the internal balance of influence within the ministry has increasingly shifted towards personnel in favour of containment. Takeuchi Yukio, the vice minister for Foreign Affairs and Japan’s top diplomat from February 2002 until December 2005, although experienced in North Korea affairs since his spell as deputy director of AOAB

at the time of the 1995 Watanabe mission, was aligned more closely with NAAB and a known opponent of Tanaka’s style of diplomacy.\(^{16}\) Tanaka was largely protected in his position by his close ties to Koizumi. However, Koizumi’s relatively declining interest in North Korea affairs after the 2004 summit and preoccupation with domestic reforms removed Tanaka’s influence, and he accepted early retirement in 2005. Meanwhile, Takeuchi himself has been replaced by Yachi Shōtarō, known to be close to both Koizumi and former Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe Shintarō, and generally hard-line on engagement and sanctions towards North Korea.\(^{17}\) In addition to these bureaucratic personnel changes, political changes in leadership have compounded MOFA’s negative stance towards engagement: Machimura Nobutaka, the foreign minister from November 2004 to October 2005, freely indicated that the imposition of sanctions was one means to pressure the North over the abductions issue; his successor, Asō Tarō, is a known hard-liner on North Korea.\(^{18}\)

**Prime Minister’s Office**

The prime minister’s and the Kantei’s increasingly important role in proactive Japanese diplomacy has been noted in response to the “war on terror” in Afghanistan and Iraq since 11 September 2001, but the core executive’s role has been equally crucial in coordinating North Korea policy.\(^{19}\) Koizumi essentially ran much of Japan’s North Korean diplomacy from the Kantei and bypassed normal MOFA channels in the run-up to the 2002 and 2004 summits, entrusting the preparations to Tanaka Hitoshi and Fukuda Yasuo, the then chief cabinet secretary.\(^{20}\) From late 2004, Koizumi has relied less on Tanaka Hitoshi, and more on his old LDP political ally, Yamasaki Taku, acting in a special advisory role until his re-election to the Diet in April 2005.

Koizumi’s willingness to risk his political credibility on North Korea, and his ability to force through policy by relying on a small group of advisors, has been crucial not only for the breakthroughs made on the abductions issue in 2002 and 2004, but also for restraining anti-North Korean domestic political pressure thereafter. Koizumi appears to have often removed from influence those officials who might wish to take a hard-line stance, engineering, for instance, the resignation in September 2004 of Nakayama Kyōko, a former Cabinet liaison officer between the government and

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\(^{17}\) “Gaimujikan kyōkoha ni,” *Yomiuri Shim bun*, 14 January 2005, p. 4.

\(^{18}\) Personal interview with senior official, North East Asia Division, AOAB, MOFA, Tokyo, 2 September 2005.


\(^{20}\) Yakushiji, *Gaimushō*, p. 16.
abductee relatives, who had publicly criticized Yamasaki’s and LDP member Hirasawa Katsuei’s secret meeting with North Korean officials in April 2004. Koizumi has also frequently attempted to restrain domestic pressure for the sanctions option. For instance, in the Diet in March 2004, Koizumi referred to sanctions as a “glittering sword” that, once unsheathed, may prove double-edged in effectiveness, because it may indicate the seriousness of Japan’s intent to North Korea, but also set Japan on a path to using this tool, and to conflict with the North.

Koizumi’s capability to restrain anti-North Korea domestic pressures, however, is doubtful over the longer term. Koizumi is genuinely convinced of the benefits for Japanese and regional security in seeking to engage North Korea, but has also found significant, if declining, domestic political utility in his summit diplomacy in the North. Opinion polls taken immediately after Koizumi’s visit to the North in 2002 demonstrated an 81 percent approval for his diplomatic actions, with a boost in support for the Cabinet from 51 to 61 percent; Koizumi’s second visit in 2004 received a 70 percent approval rating, but with no significant boost for the Cabinet’s approval rate. An Asahi Shimbum opinion poll in December 2004 also demonstrated that 63 percent of respondents were in favour of sanctions.

Hence, even though Koizumi has shown signs of returning to the North Korea normalization issue at the end of his period of office—knowing that it will be his final opportunity to establish a historic foreign policy legacy—the diminishing domestic returns of North Korea diplomacy has meant that he has devoted less consistent policy attention and political energy on active engagement. It appears that Koizumi has been increasingly content to allow Abe Shinzō, as the newly appointed chief cabinet secretary in October 2005, to use the Prime Minister’s Office as a power base to pursue the abductions issue. Koizumi has continued to restrain Abe from initiating any definite move to sanctions, but has nevertheless allowed him to pursue a top-down style of decision making that has frequently sidelined MOFA’s negotiating channels and intimated Japan’s willingness to use sanctions as a means to force a resolution to the abductions issue.

LDP

The LDP as the governing party, singly or in coalition from 1955 to 2005, and with the exception of August 1993 to June 1994, has played a crucial

22 Kokkai shiōriin kaigiroku yosaninkai (National Diet House of Representatives, Budget Committee Minutes) 18go, 16 March 2003, p. 17.
role in the history of Japan-North Korea relations through the individual diplomacy of key party leaders and through domestic political support for government-level negotiations. Of all the Japanese domestic actors, however, the LDP has exhibited the most radical turnaround in its position on North Korea—moving from a position of default engagement for nearly the entire postwar period to one of default containment from the late 1990s onwards—with a profound impact on the overall make-up of domestic coalitions predisposed towards the containment of the North.

From the early to the late 1990s, a number of key LDP politicians demonstrated interest in the normalization of ties with the North in order to clear up the legacy of colonialism and contribute to regional stability, but also for domestic political gain. Kanemaru’s visit to North Korea in 1990 may have been motivated in large part by potential financial gains for his Takeshita Noboru faction. Kanemaru is rumoured to have received money directly from the Chōsensōren, the umbrella organization of the North Korean community in Japan, and associated businesses such as the pachinko industry; from the North Korean government (notoriously including gold ingots found in his secretary’s safe during the Sagawa Kyûbin investigations of 1993); and from the construction industry, eager to gain access to cheap supplies of salt-free alluvial building gravels (jari) in the North, a resource for high-quality concrete largely exhausted in Japan. Most crucially, Kanemaru’s willingness to promise compensation to the North in the Three-Party Declaration may have been explained by his ambition to secure these as a source of factional funds. If Japan were to provide up to US$10 billion in the form of ODA and “economic cooperation,” then the Takeshita faction, as the initiator of these funds, could have expected a “kickback” of at least 1 percent, or ¥50 billion, from North Korea, and Japanese companies would have been awarded aid contracts, and that would have allowed it to prolong its domination of Japanese politics.26 Indeed, it is clear that the Takeshita faction and its predecessor, the Tanaka Kakuei faction, had long eyed North Korea ties as their factional property and the last great untapped source of political funds. Prime Minister Tanaka was the first Japanese premier to attempt to improve ties with North Korea in the period of détente in the mid-1970s; the original Dietmen’s League for the Promotion of Japan-North Korea Friendship (Nitchō Yûkô Sokushin Gîn Renmei, or Nitchō Gîren) was founded in 1971 by Kuno Chûji, a Tanaka faction member; and it was Prime Minister Takeshita, in the Diet in March 1989, who first opened the way for Kanemaru’s mission with an apology to North Korea for wartime damage.

The LDP’s other factions and “policy tribes” (zoku) have at various times shown an interest in North Korea. House of Representatives and Watanabe

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Michio faction members Tani Yōichi and Nakayama Masaaki were consistent proponents of improved ties with the North, with Nakayama, for instance, serving from 1997 as chairman of the *Nitchō Giren*. Watanabe himself led the LDP-SDPJ-Sakigake mission to North Korea in 1995; and the then number two in the faction, Yamasaki Taku, has been involved in individual diplomacy with the North since the mid-1990s. As chairman of the LDP’s Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC), number two in the Miyazawa Kōichi faction, and a close political associate of Yamasaki in the mid-1990s, Katō Kōichi also became intimately connected with North Korea in this period. Katō persuaded Watanabe to visit North Korea and then negotiated the direct provision of rice aid to the North in 1995. The motivations for the interest of the Watanabe faction members and Katō are various. Tani and Nakayama represented Kansai region constituencies with a high proportion of North Korea residents and, although they have undoubtedly been motivated by the desire to address the colonial legacy and assist the humanitarian cause in the North with rice aid, the suspicion is that they may also have received money from groups associated with the Chōsensōren. Tani, Watanabe and Katō were also noted members of the agricultural tribe (*nōrin zoku*) in this period, and the suspicion is that their desire to provide rice aid was a measure designed to clear government stockpiles and thereby force up demand and the price of domestic rice for their supporters in the agricultural community.27 Indeed, at other instances the LDP’s *nōrin zoku* have shown an interest in engaging North Korea only when there is an opportunity for the dumping of rice stocks through the provision of food aid—Japan’s decision in 2000 to provide rice aid was critically backed by the *zoku* in PARC’s Foreign Affairs Division.28

Nevertheless, despite the interest displayed by other LDP groups, North Korea diplomacy up until the late 1990s remained very much the province of the Tanaka-Takeshita faction lineage. The Hashimoto Ryūtarō and Obuchi Keizō factions as the successor factions moved to reassert control over the issue in the mid-1990s, seemingly fearful that the likes of Katō might attempt to utilize diplomacy with the North not only to strengthen support amongst the agricultural *zoku*, but also to gain control of the ODA resources, and use normalization as a springboard to move the Miyazawa faction into a dominant position in domestic politics. The Hashimoto-Obuchi faction ensured that it retained its grip on North Korea policy through Katō’s effective exclusion from power during the Hashimoto administration; through Obuchi’s appointment as foreign minister in September 1997 and his initial early enthusiasm for normalization; and through the ability of Nonaka Hiromu, a

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key faction member and later chief cabinet secretary with very close ties to the North Korean community in Japan and the North’s regime, to engineer the Mori mission to the North in November 1997 and the December 1999 Murayama mission.

Hence, although competing amongst themselves for influence and control of the issue, the LDP’s factions throughout the 1990s envisaged considerable domestic political incentives in working to engage North Korea. These incentives were sufficiently strong to carry forward the LDP’s default engagement position even in the wake of the “Taepodong-shock.” However, a concatenation of other factors, including the Taepodong incident and the growing revelations relating to the abductions, meant that in the late 1990s the LDP began its shift towards default containment.

The LDP’s shift has in part been initiated by personnel changes. The pro-North Korea lobby in the LDP has been blunted by the deaths of Watanabe, Kanemaru and Obuchi in 1995, 1996 and 2000 respectively, the neutralization of Katō’s influence, the retirement of Nonaka from national politics in 2003, and the resignation of Fukuda from the post of chief cabinet secretary in 2004. Just as importantly, though, it is clear that many of these LDP figures had already become disenchanted with North Korean affairs or lost influence due to the rising political risks of association with the North. Kanemaru received severe intra-party and media criticism due to his concessions during the 1990 mission and rumours of his receipt of money from the North, thereby contributing to his eventual political downfall in the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal. Similarly, Katō was vilified by sections of the media for his individual diplomacy in 1995, and Nonaka was heavily criticized for his support for engagement even in the face of mounting evidence over the abductions. LDP figures have also faced physical threats similar to those of MOFA officials.

In addition, LDP politicians see not only rising political and physical risks in engaging North Korea, but also declining opportunities for compensatory financial gains. The Chōsensōren’s financial difficulties since the early 1990s have gradually reduced its ability to funnel money to politicians, and any flows from the North are under severe public scrutiny. Koizumi’s accession to the premiership and subsequent personal intervention in North Korea diplomacy has largely removed this issue from the purview of the LDP factions. Moreover, Koizumi’s systematic destruction of the Hashimoto faction as an internal opposition force has removed it as the one major grouping capable of generating momentum for engagement from within the governing party.

By contrast, the incentives for LDP members to switch to support for containment have grown since the late 1990s. The LDP old guard have been replaced by younger politicians, less dependent on factional financial support and with no links to the Chōsen Sōren, but more conscious of national security issues, and often from constituencies of the abductee families and prepared to campaign on this specific vote-winning issue. Most notable amongst this
new breed of neoconservative LDP politicians is Abe Shinzō, the former chairman of the LDP Countermeasures Headquarters for the North Korea Abduction Issue (Kita Chōsen ni Yoru Rachi Mondai Taisaku Honbu) and the former chairman of the Cabinet Abduction Issue Task Force (Rachi Mondai Tokumei Chīmu), and current chief cabinet secretary, who in his bid to succeed Koizumi as prime minister has made significant political play out of his support for the families of the abductees.29 For instance, Abe in April 2006 used his position as chief cabinet secretary to push for DNA tests that established that Yokota Megumi’s husband was also a probable South Korea abductee. Abe then timed the public release of this evidence to coincide with unofficial SPT talks in Japan so as to generate maximum embarrassment for the North Korean representative visiting Tokyo.30 Abe was further responsible for initiating the meeting between President W. Bush and Yokota’s family in Washington DC, in the same month, in an attempt to raise public consciousness of the abductions issue in the US but also in Japan.31

Abe has been joined in his efforts to press the abduction issue by Hirasawa Katsuei, serving as chairman of the Parliamentarian League for the Early Repatriation of Japanese Citizens Kidnapped by North Korea (Kitachōsen Rachi Sareta Nihonjin o Sōki ni Kyūshutsu Suru Tame ni Kōdō Suru Giin Renmei, or Rachi Giren)—a cross-party group formed in October 2002 as a breakaway from the Nitchō Giren in opposition to Nakayama’s soft line on the North, and also working closely with the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (AFVKN) (Kitachōsen ni Yoru Rachi Higaisha Kazoku Renrakukai, or Kazokukai). The Rachi Giren subsequently passed a resolution that Japan should not normalize relations with North Korea until after a resolution of the abductions issue.32 Hirasawa, despite his anti-North Korea credentials, received harsh media criticism for his and Yamasaki’s secret diplomacy with the North in April 2004, forcing him to resign from the organization. Hirasawa was then succeeded as chairman of the Rachi Giren by Nakagawa Shōichi and then Hiranuma Takeo, both former ministers of Trade Economy and Industry (METI) and noted right-wingers (although Hiranuma eventually left the LDP in October 2005 in protest at Koizumi’s postal reforms). Other LDP figures highly critical of North Korea and who have offered public support for sanctions include former Foreign Minister Kömura Masahiko; the current Environment Minister Koike Yuriko; and the former Director General of the Japan Defence Agency Ishiba Shigeru; younger politicians critical of the North include Aisawa Ichirō, the current chairman of the LDP Countermeasures Headquarters for the North Korea Abduction Issue, Yamamoto Ichita, the current head of the LDP’s sanctions simulation

32 Yakushiji, Gaimushō, pp. 33-34.
team, and Kōno Tarō. Koike and Yamamoto have particularly fought against the allocation of funds to the Chōgin.

The LDP’s near complete shift to default containment is demonstrated by Abe’s free talk of the need to precipitate “regime change” in North Korea and, on 9 December 2004, his LDP countermeasures group laying out a specific five-step timetable for sanctions on the North. The shift in the party is also hinted at by opinion polls of Diet members and candidates taken by the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN) (Kitachōsen ni Rachi Sareta Nihonjin o Kyushutsu Tame no Zenkoku Kyōgikai, or Sukūkai) taken in December 2004 and prior to the House of Representatives election of September 2005. Although figures produced by an organization pressing for sanctions need to be handled with care, they do offer some reflection on the mood of the party, with both polls indicating respectively that 85 and 72 percent of respondents were in favour of the early imposition of sanctions.

**Coalition and Opposition Parties**

The LDP’s New Kōmeitō coalition partner since 1998 has generally maintained a pro-normalization stance, but it too has shifted towards talk of containment and pressing the North on the abductions issue, thus jointly submitting the March 2006 LDP bill obliging the government to impose sanctions if no progress is made on the abductions issue. The SDPJ prior to and since Kanemaru’s visit has maintained close relations with the North. The SDPJ’s former secretary general, Tanabe Makoto, was a signatory to the Three-Party Declaration in 1990, and the SDPJ was part of the Watanabe and Mori missions in 1995 and 1997; former SDPJ Prime Minister Murayama led a mission in December 1999; and other SDPJ figures with close ties to the North have included the former SDPJ President Doi Takako, former SDPJ Secretary General Itō Shigeru, former House of Representatives member Funada Hajime, and the House of Councillors member Den HIDEO. The SDPJ proved extremely influential in determining North Korea policy at the time of the first nuclear crisis, firmly resisting as a member of the coalition government in early 1994 any move to accede to US pressure for the imposition of sanctions.

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Nevertheless, the SDPJ’s ability to influence domestic politics in favour of engagement with North Korea is now spent. Since Kanemaru’s visit, the LDP has succeeded in establishing its own links with the North’s regime, thereby rendering the role of the SDPJ largely redundant. In addition, the SDPJ’s influence has been eroded by its own internal splits and decline in electoral fortunes, leaving it with only 11 seats in the Diet. The SDPJ’s older generation of pro-North Korean Diet members has faded away, with the loss of Tanabe, Itô, Funada and, most recently in the September 2005 election, Doi, leaving only the 82-year-old Den active in politics. In fact, Doi’s North Korean connections had already contributed to her electoral difficulties, with her defeat in the November 2003 election in a single-member constituency by Ōmae Shigeo, an LDP newcomer, campaigning strongly on the abductions issue; Doi was, however, eventually returned under proportional representation. Meanwhile, the new SDPJ membership has displayed less sympathy with North Korea, voting in favour of the revised FEFTL in 2004.38

Since its formation in 1998, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has displaced the SDPJ as the main opposition party, but it too has offered little support for engagement of the North. The DPJ as an initial amalgam of other political parties has exhibited a variety of positions on North Korea. Former DPJ leaders Kan Naoto and Hatoyama Yukio participated in the Watanabe mission of 1995 as members of the Sakigake Party. The DPJ has contained former LDP members such as Ishii Hajime, who as a member of the Tanaka faction accompanied the Kanemaru mission in 1990. Moreover, the DPJ contains former SDPJ members who maintain close links with the North, such as Kubo Wataru. However, the younger generation of DPJ leaders and members has shifted the party more towards containment and sanctions. Okada Katsuya, DPJ president until September 2005, pressed for North Korea’s full cooperation in the abductions issue; and Hatoyama, now signalling his turnaround in position by becoming head of the DPJ’s own countermeasures team on the abductions, called in November 2004 for the investigation of sanctions in response to the Yokota case.39 Ozawa Ichirō, the new leader of the DPJ since April 2006, has had dealings with North Korea in the past from his time as a member of the Takeshita faction, and following on from the Kanemaru mission, visited the North in October 1990 to bring home the crew of the Fujisanmaru 18. However, since his departure from the LDP in 1993, Ozawa has shown little interest in engagement with North Korea.

The DPJ has also attempted to rival the LDP by stating a desire in its November 2003 and September 2005 election manifestos to resolve the

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abductions issue through the potential use of sanctions. The DPJ cooperated with the LDP on the Law to Prevent Designated Ships From Visiting Japanese Ports in June 2004, and in February 2005 the DPJ submitted a bill similar to that of the LDP to assist North Korean defectors. The DPJ also formerly contained the right-wing figure of Nishimura Shingo, known for his vehemently anti-North Korean stance, although he has been expelled from the party since November 2006 due to unconnected corruption charges. Meanwhile, the NARKN surveys of 2004 and 2005 showed over 60 percent of DPJ respondents in favour of sanctions.

Local Government

Japan’s local government authorities have further shifted the balance of domestic coalitions towards containment. Ishihara Shintaro has utilized his position as Tokyo governor to berate the Japanese government for its soft stance on North Korea’s security provocations and the abductions, and pursued the Chosen Soren by leading the campaign to remove its tax-exempt status. The NARKN has also pushed hard on this issue, winning a court decision in February 2006 forcing Kumamoto City to rescind the tax status of local Chosen Soren facilities. Local authorities have pressured against engagement in a number of other ways. The prefectural assemblies of Fukuoka, Kumamoto and Kanagawa submitted letters to Koizumi in 2002 urging the government to be “firm” in negotiations with the North on the abductions issue and normalization; the mayor of Niigata petitioned the government in June 2003 to halt the port calls of the Mangyongbong-92; and the following month, the Niigata prefectural assembly provided the governor with the right to refuse entry to poorly equipped ships. Niigata Prefecture’s action again represents a turnaround in attitude, given that in the early 1990s, many of the prefectures along the Sea of Japan coast were keen to improve political and economic ties with the North.

Chosen Soren

The role of the Chosen Soren and the North Korean community in Japan in encouraging other domestic actors to engage the North has waned significantly since the mid-1990s. The Chosen Soren has been increasingly bypassed as a channel for bilateral ties since the establishment of the LDP’s and Japanese government’s own direct links with the North since the early 1990s. Added to this, the Chosen Soren’s ability to provide financial incentives has declined. The post-bubble recession hit the receipts of the pachinko

industry, produced the collapse and increased regulation of the Chōgin, and led to the decline in remittances to the North. For instance, Japan’s Ministry of Finance estimated that the total flow of remittances through official channels, already in decline since the 1990s, had fallen to ¥4 billion in 2002 (¥400 million in bank transfers, and ¥3.6 billion in cash delivered by visitors to North Korea), and then further fell to ¥2.7 billion in 2003 (¥101 million bank transfers, and ¥2.57 billion in cash deliveries).42

**Business interests**

Japanese business interests, and especially large corporations, have long occupied a potentially key role in creating momentum for engagement with North Korea, as in the case of the role of private business-sector actors in pushing for normalization with China in the 1970s. However, in practice large businesses have tended to abdicate their policy role in dealing with North Korea since the early 1990s.

Japanese businesses have certainly had a major interest in North Korea from the 1970s onwards. During the period of détente, a number of large Japanese companies looked to set up operations in the North in order to export its mineral resources, leading to a major expansion of bilateral trade. But Japan-North Korea economic ties subsequently deteriorated due to North Korea’s inability to repay up to US$900 million in accumulated debts to Japanese companies; the issue remains largely unresolved to this day. Japanese construction companies again showed an interest in North Korea at the time of the Kanemaru mission, as explained above, and some interest in the North’s Rajin-Sonbong Free Economy and Trade Zone initiated in 1991. Japanese large businesses have remained interested in the North’s resources, and a group of ten construction companies planned to send a mission to the North in October 2004 to investigate possible ODA construction projects that might be realized after normalization.43 However, Japanese large businesses have yet to act on these plans due to the continuing debt issue, the lack of central government support through providing export credits, and the political uncertainties of doing business with the North. The group of construction companies eventually shelved their trip to North Korea for fear of a public backlash in the wake of the Yokota case.44

Instead, Japan-North Korea economic ties have been left principally to small business activities. Chōsen Sōren-affiliated companies and Japanese

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medium- and small-scale enterprises have done vigorous trade in cheap business suits, textiles and matsutake and marine products. These business interests have offered some resistance to sanctions. They have expressed concerns that measures to complicate trade with the North, such as boycotting asari, will affect their businesses, and also that the revised insurance laws on shipping will have a knock-on impact on trade with Russian shipping. But the small-scale nature of these businesses, and the lack of allies amongst larger-scale corporations, means that they have little practical influence over the domestic coalitions’ increasing emphasis on containment. In the meantime, Japan-North Korea trade continues to contract overall, falling to a 28-year low in 2005 of US$190 million (compared to around 500 million dollars for most of the 1980s and 1990s). The shift also accounted for Japanese consumers’ boycotting of North Korean goods and the enhanced regulations on North Korean exports and shipping.

Conclusion: Japanese Domestic Politics as a Driver of North Korea Policy

The article’s detailed examination of Japanese sanctions policy demonstrates that, if the attitudes of key and pluralistic domestic policy makers are aggregated, it is possible to discern a number of important trends in Japan’s overall approach towards North Korea. First, domestic policy makers have come to form a series of cross-cutting coalitions that have shifted Japanese attitudes from a position of default engagement to one of increasingly default containment. Japan’s domestic policy makers, although generally in favour of engagement of the North at the time of the first North Korean nuclear crisis, began to shift towards containment after the mid-1990s and in the aftermath of the “Taepodong-shock.” This shift has intensified following, and in many ways in spite of, Koizumi’s diplomacy with the North in the period from 2001 to 2006. In addition, although Japanese domestic political actors have pursued this trend in fitful bursts, and have even reversed their position on occasion, the overall trend has been towards a harder line on engagement, with progressively fewer signs of a willingness to backslide on sanctions. Hence, MOFA’s engagers have been marginalized by those taking a hard-line approach on the North; the Kantei has played a decisive but often only sporadic role in engagement, and is increasingly being used to forge policies of containment under Abe’s influence; the LDP has shifted from being a party of engagement to one of containment; the SDPJ has evaporated as a force for engagement and been replaced by the DPJ, increasingly seeking to rival the LDP on its hard-line stance; local government has reinforced the

containment trend; the North Korean community in Japan has declining resources to generate support for engagement; and the business community is currently disinterested in engagement.

The second trend of note is that, in pursuing sanctions, Japan’s domestic policy actors have generally been consistent in acting against, or without regard for, international pressures. At the time of the first North Korean nuclear crisis, Japan’s policy makers, by holding out for limited engagement, came close to setting themselves at opposition to international systemic pressures. Following the first nuclear crisis to the period of Koizumi’s diplomacy, Japan’s domestic coalitions have reversed their position and set themselves more towards containment, even as the international system, with fluctuations, has increasingly looked towards creating opportunities for engagement.

Third, and most crucially, it must be observed that the move of Japanese domestic coalitions towards containment, whilst bucking the trends in international systemic pressures, has not just coincided with, but clearly triggered, actual policy changes within Japan with regard to containment. These are such that Japan, more than at any other time in the previous decade, now actively possesses the capability and the policy will to impose sanctions on the North. The conclusion is that Japan’s domestic political coalitions are affecting and driving real policy change towards containment, and that it is progressively challenging, if not beginning to override, international pressures in determining the overall policy orientation.

Japan’s policy behaviour towards containment and sanctions, therefore, affirms the theory of domestic sanctions put forward in this article. Japan’s domestic policy makers are on the brink of forming a “threshold coalition” that is generating increasing pressure to tip government policy towards the imposition of sanctions. In many cases, Japan’s domestic policy makers have been motivated to pursue both instrumental sanctions that are aimed at undermining the North Korean regime, and “expressive” sanctions that, despite talk of “regime change,” may not inflict critical damage on the North but do demonstrate general abhorrence towards the regime over the abductions and other security issues. Aside from the growing disinclination of large policy actors to engage North Korea, the case study presented above demonstrates that another crucial factor in the formation of the domestic coalitions has been the ability of smaller actors, such as the NARKN and AFVKN, to manipulate the pressure of public opinion in order to solidify the coalition.47 Domestic sanctions theory is further affirmed by the fact that big business interests, as a possible source of momentum for turning back to engagement, have largely abdicated their role in the policy process, thereby opening up space for actors who generally enjoy less influence to

47 For elaboration on the role of the NARKN and the AFVKN, see Lynn in this special issue.
shape the containment agenda. Finally, domestic sanctions theory is reinforced because the nature of Japanese domestic coalitions indicates that they are now increasingly capable of capturing the initiative in pushing government policy towards containment, even to the point of contravening international pressures.

In terms of overall conclusions, this article argues that Japanese policy behaviour over the past decade can only be adequately explained by a focus on its domestic determinants and, concomitantly, that international pressures are both insufficient and declining in their explanatory quality. This study of Japan’s North Korea policy, viewed as increasingly driven by domestic politics, thus complements other studies that have looked to domestic sources to explain Japanese foreign and security policy behaviour. However, it also makes a further contribution to this body of literature by indicating theoretically and empirically the particular dynamic process and conditions, in the shape of “threshold” coalitions, by which domestic politics becomes increasingly decisive in shaping policy outcomes.

In turn, the focus on domestic policy actors as central to determining Japan’s North Korea policy offers important conclusions about the level of Japan’s cooperation in dealing with the current nuclear crisis and its significance in Korean Peninsula security affairs. Japanese domestic coalitions’ increasing disposition towards the containment of the North means that Japan is not likely to bend easily, or at all, to conform to US and South Korean efforts to engage the North, even if the SPT and other attempts to resolve the nuclear crisis progress. Japan’s government, restrained by domestic political pressures, may prove obdurate in providing crucial financial resources to support US-led attempts to persuade the North to dismantle its nuclear programme. Japan’s non-cooperation may thus serve to magnify its importance in Korean Peninsula affairs, even if this is ascribed to Japan’s undermining of international efforts to deal with the North.

Japan’s government might yet break out of the restraints of domestic political pressures. Although Koizumi’s summitry heightened the importance of the abductions issue in Japan, it also succeeded in making important headway in a resolution to the issue and in establishing an agreed negotiating agenda for normalization. Furthermore, the full weight of international pressures has not yet been brought to bear on Japan—the US might push Japan much harder to conform with engagement policy if it sees Japan as an obstacle to an imminent resolution to the nuclear issue. Japan might also yet be spared a clash with its ally, if the US itself, increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress in the SPT, shifts decisively towards containment and sanctions, although the US’s basic policy remains one of seeking a negotiated resolution through balanced policies of engagement and pressure. Nevertheless, the fundamental lesson from the last decade of Japan/North Korea relations will still remain: Japan’s domestic political pressures have set much of the pace for government policy and, without any significant
weakening of domestic coalitions pushing for containment, these domestic pressures are likely to continue to trip up, or even fully block, international efforts for engagement.

Postscript
At the time of the final preparation of this article in August 2006, Japan has imposed new sanctions on North Korea in response to its missile tests the preceding July. Japan’s government on 5 July immediately implemented unilateral sanctions to ban the entry into Japan of the Manyongbong-92, of North Korean charter flights, and North Korean officials. Japan has further investigated the implementation of the full range of sanctions outlined in the table included in this article, and later in the month tightened restrictions on trade in possible components for the North’s missile programmes.

Japan’s measures have further served to confirm the arguments of this article. First, the North’s missile tests have brought the pro-sanctions threshold coalition fully to the surface. Koizumi has played some role in restraining the adoption of the full panoply of sanctions, but he has ceded leadership on the North Korean issue to his presumptive successor Abe Shinzō, with a resultant hardening of domestic pressures to contain the North. Second, Japan’s sanctions have been imposed often in opposition to prevailing international pressures. Japan has worked with the US to construct UN resolution 1659, condemning North Korea’s tests and requiring member states to prevent the transfer to the North of missile technology and components. Nevertheless, despite US-Japan cooperation at the UN level, the Bush administration overall has been averse to stronger sanctions on the North. The US remains wary of provoking Chinese opposition and jeopardizing any prospects for the restart of the SPT in order to address its main priority of resolving the nuclear issue. Japan’s focus on the missile issue and its drive for sanctions, largely inspired by domestic pressures and out of kilter with Chinese, Russian, South Korean and even US strategic priorities, thus threatens to leave it further isolated and out of sync in Korean Peninsula security affairs.

University of Warwick, Coventry, UK, September, 2006
Criticues of American mainstream and conservative media for their often dubious cheerleading of the US war against Iraq have become familiar elements of recent public discourse. However, there have not been many similar analyses of media representations of North Korea. Considering how such representations can shape perceptions of North Korea among the public, academics and policy makers, and how difficult it has been to obtain accurate information on North Korea, this relative paucity is surprising.

I address this lacuna by analyzing the role of the Japanese media, particularly television, in generating public perceptions of North Korea. While I focus on Japanese television, several of the implications of the analysis are applicable to media and public opinion in other countries. The caveat is that media coverage of North Korea in Japan has maintained near-saturation levels for the past four to five years, particularly since the build-up to the first Kim Jong Il/Koizumi Junichirō Pyongyang summit on September 17, 2002 (hereafter “9/17”), at which Kim first acknowledged that North Korea had abducted Japanese nationals in the past. In relative terms, media coverage of North Korea in countries other than Japan and South Korea has been sporadic and thin, in both quantity and quality.

There are several works in English on the Japanese media; however, these have often converged around the role of the media in domestic politics or US-Japan relations. Additionally, the North Korea-Japan binary has often

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1 I would like to express my thanks to Suzuki Naomi and Nakano Yoichi for their tireless efforts in tracking and recording programmes, and to Uchida Jun for additional taping. I also wish to express my appreciation to various individuals with first-hand knowledge of the events who took the time to discuss related matters with me off-the-record. Many thanks also to my hosts and the participants at my past presentations on this subject (Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, June 2004; Swedish Institute of International Affairs, March 2005; Nissan Institute, Oxford University, May 2005), and to the anonymous reviewers for Pacific Affairs for their comments. Transliterations of Korean names are based on the McCune-Reischauer system whenever possible, except for well-known place names and some individuals with established alternative transliterations. The author is responsible for all views and any errors contained herein.

2 See, for example, Ellis Krauss, Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK and Television News (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Susan Pharr and Ellis Krauss, eds., Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu:
been treated as ancillary to the assumed primacy of research on South-North reunification or North Korea-US relations in many existing studies. However, viewed as a template of how mass media—especially television—affects international relations through the construction of mediated realities and the shaping of public opinion, the Japanese media’s role in North Korea-Japan relations occupies a position of analytic and comparative centrality.

The point is not that standard analyses of international systems, personnel changes in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, or creating a taxonomy of hard-line and soft-line politicians are irrelevant, but that such approaches must be supplemented by a closer look at the media’s indirect and direct role in bilateral relations. In short, we need to examine why Japanese television coverage of North Korea has reached saturation points following the 9/17 summit; why audiences have been so receptive; how television shapes public opinion; and how domestic public opinion influences or constricts Japan’s North Korea policy.

I argue that television (and other forms of mass media) herded the public into a relatively constricted range of views through narrow, biased saturation coverage of the issue du jour—whether it was the abductions or the missile “crisis.” An intersection of structural concentration, content isomorphism, malleable audiences and domestic policy conflicts allowed the media not only to set agendas, but to prime audiences and frame the presentation of information. Public opinion, maintained by a trinity of conservative political lobbies, viewer ratings responses and broadcasting strategies, ultimately constricted the government policy agenda, range and choice in dealing with North Korea, generating very predictable policy behaviours.

This is quite different than observing that the abductions themselves have been the most important issue in Japan, or arguing that there have been temporary increases or decreases in Japanese media coverage of North Korea. In fact, the latest wave of saturation coverage on Japanese television, triggered by the test launch of seven missiles by North Korea on July 4-5, 2006, underscores the point that it is not just the focus on kidnappings alone that is problematic. Rather, it is the total process of convergent representations, uncritical reception, and consequent policy constriction that constitutes one of the underlying problems in current Japan-North Korea relations.


Moreover, while it is important to explore why North Korea kidnapped Japanese (and other) nationals from the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s, and to emphasize that individual tragedies were caused by clear violations of sovereignty and human rights, my position is that thorough analyses of the current deadlock in relations, especially the impact of mass media, will ultimately help improve bilateral relations more than such efforts alone. Thus, I do not engage in the usual hypothesizing about the reasons for the kidnappings; nor is my intention to support or criticize UN resolutions or the proposals for a new round of economic sanctions against North Korea.4

Space restrictions do not allow for a discussion of the large volume of relevant theoretical literature that has accumulated since the early work of Lipman, Lazarsfeld, Lasswell, Almond and numerous others.5 I should also note that my assertion is not that all officials, lobbyists, journalists or viewers in Japan have been reacting in the same ways to North Korea. There is plenty of evidence of some diversity in individual reactions in Japan. However, while the potential for audience autonomy exists at the individual and the theoretical levels, in aggregate terms, I am far more inclined to agree with Adorno and Horkheimer’s observation that the “freedom to choose … everywhere proves to be freedom to choose what is always the same.”6

Structure

The structure of the Japanese television market created preconditions for generating intensive agenda setting and framing effects. Namely, the extent of diffusion of television sets, high average of viewing hours per day, and high market concentration ensured that media messages disseminated quickly and widely into the public consciousness. Due to space restrictions, I deal only with television in this article. My focus on television is also based on the fact that television is the primary source of information for most of the public.

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4 Criticisms of statements by Japanese officials about the possibility of a “pre-emptive strike” abounded in South Korean newspapers of all political colours. See, for example, Kungmin Ilbo, 5 July 2006; Choson Ilbo, 6 July, 2006; and Hangyoreh, 11 July, 2006. Most of the coverage elided important information about the fact that while Japan has recently invested in an upgrade of its radar system, SM-3 intercept missiles, and new fighter planes with aerial refuelling capacity, Japan currently is incapable of launching an offensive strike against North Korea. I have no intention of defending Japanese neoconservatives, but problems with content convergence and minimal in-depth analysis are certainly not restricted to Japan.


Regular surveys conducted by the Japanese government’s Cabinet Office (Naikakufu) indicate that over 90 percent of people who professed to be interested in foreign affairs received their information from television news, as compared with roughly 80 percent for daily newspapers, and only around 16 percent for the Internet (see table 1). While there are notable differences in rates of Internet usage by age, if we take the case of Internet chat rooms, for example, the common practice for participants on sites like “2-Channel” has been to write in impressions and opinions on the Web right after they watch television news. The two media that have experienced significant declines among people under the age of thirty are newspapers and radio, not television. Therefore, unlike some other scholars, I do not think that the spread of cell phones and the Internet has fundamentally undermined the influence of television or exponentially expanded emancipatory spaces.

Building on the precedent of nation-wide radio transmissions which had begun in 1928, the infrastructural net of relay posts for nation-wide television broadcasting was completed in 1956, a mere three years after television broadcasting began in urban Japan. According to a 1999 survey, there are 71.9 televisions for every 100 people in Japan, the fourth highest concentration in the world (the US topped the list at 84.4). Of all Japanese households, 98 to 99 percent receive regular television broadcasts, while at least 25 percent of households receive satellite channels as well.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year/Media</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>Periodicals</th>
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<td>19.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>94.5</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>78.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
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<td>92.6</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9  For these more sanguine observations, see, for example, Inamasu Tatsuo, Pandora no media: terebi wa jidai o da kaetaka (Tokyo: Tsukuma shobō, 2003), pp. 20-22, 144; and Mark Poster, What’s the Matter with the Internet (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 17-18.
Furthermore, the average per-day viewing hours have been among the highest in the world for some time. According to a 2005 NHK survey, 93 percent of the population watches television at least once a day (and has done so since the surveys started in 1985), while the average viewing time per person in 2005 totalled 4 hours and 1 minute per day.\textsuperscript{12}

Furthermore, while the television market in Japan has historically been diversified compared to other countries, diversity in news coverage has been found more in style than in substance. The links between the corporations in different media are stronger than in the US, increasing the likelihood for informational convergence. More specifically, the Big Six broadcasters—NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation, the public station), Nippon TV Network, TBS (Tokyo Broadcasting System), Fuji TV, Asahi TV and TV Tokyo—dominate television and print. All six have cross-holdings or other linkages with others in their group. For example,\textit{Asahi Shinbun} (the second-largest newspaper) owns 35 percent of Asahi TV's shares, while Nippon TV is a member of the larger Yomiuri Group, which boasts the highest circulating daily, the\textit{Yomiuri Shinbun} (14 million in daily circulation for morning and evening editions combined as of 2002). Fuji TV and\textit{Sankei Shinbun} (the fifth-largest newspaper) are the two primary pillars of the Fuji-Sankei Media Group.

There are differences between groups. Most observers view the Asahi and the TBS-Mainichi groups as more liberal, and the Yomiuri and the Fuji-Sankei as more conservative. Moreover, the differences between the media groups vary by issue and even by shows within the same station. To create a distinctive show, producers and directors often compete as much with colleagues within the same stations as rivals in other stations, thus generating internal rivalry and content variety. In addition, each station often contains various tensions between personnel who envision a more entertainment-oriented set of programmes and those who adhere to norms of thorough journalism.\textsuperscript{13}

However, there has been notable convergence in the coverage of North Korean issues within all the television stations, and within specific groups such as the Fuji-Sankei Group. One of the structural reasons for the isomorphism has been a combination of decreased staffing at most of the television newsrooms, and the growing power of sponsoring advertisers. This has meant that news sources have become more standardized and independent investigation and research harder to carry out. Concurrently, advertiser power has risen, further encouraging programming based on viewer numbers.

The importance of attracting viewers has intensified competition among the media oligopolies in news programming. Although "viewer-friendly news"

\textsuperscript{12} NHK,\textit{Nihonjin to terebi}, p. 7; and NHK, "Zenkoku kojin shichōritsu" (Tokyo: NHK, 2005), p. 1.

\textsuperscript{13} Usui Hiroyoshi,\textit{Terebi ga yume o miru bi} (Tokyo: Shōeisha, 1998), pp. 157-159.
was the original objective of Asahi TV’s “News Station,” subsequent intense competition between broadcasters to deliver “entertaining” news has promoted “news tabloidization.”\(^{14}\) During the 1990s, the number of shows and hours dedicated to news reportage and the diversity in presentation formats multiplied, while coverage by afternoon “wideshows”—afternoon variety talk/information shows that are Japanese television’s equivalent to tabloid entertainment newspapers—increasingly dealt with the more sensational big ticket news items starting with the Aum Subway Sarin attack of 1994.

The high rates of television diffusion, high average per day viewing times, high levels of market saturation, and tabloidization have created conditions that raise the likelihood of media priming, framing and agenda setting having an effect on audiences. These preconditions facilitated the diffusion of the message and amplified the receptivity of the audience.

**Message**

Television news has succeeded in generating immediate and visceral reactions in millions of viewers, but in becoming a channel for emotional expression, programmes simplify more complex issues that require some knowledge of modern history, such as the controversy over Koizumi’s visits to the Yasukuni shrine or relations with Korea and China. This results in a phenomenon of media and audiences often creating a mutually reinforcing feedback loop in contemporary Japan—what one scholar has called the “parroting effect.”\(^ {15}\) More specifically, the effect of media in shaping public opinion can be linked to the quantity, regularity, diversity and intensity of coverage. For example, the North Korean missile tests of 1993 and 1998 triggered coverage by the Japanese media that emphasized fear and danger. Commentators incessantly warned of the immediate North Korean security threat to Japan, but while the coverage sparked considerable debate about Japan’s defence policy, the lack of dramatic developments regarding the “missile crisis” hindered attempts to maintain interest. In contrast, the abduction case included sympathetic figures, clearly identifiable villains and, most of all, sustained drama. The media and lobby groups in particular focused on the case of Yokota Megumi, who as a thirteen-year-old was kidnapped on her way home from school in Niigata in 1977.

Let us briefly summarize the pre-9/17 developments. The first tentative news of abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korea appeared on January

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7, 1980 in the Sankei Shinbun. The front-page story featured a story about six missing Japanese who had disappeared from various rural coastlands of Japan in 1978. The article did not name North Korea as the kidnapper. The government dismissed it as ungrounded speculation. On May 28, 1985, South Korean officials arrested Sin Kwang-su, a North Korean agent who, under the name Hara, attempted to enter South Korea using a false Japanese passport. The South Korean investigation discovered that the real Hara Tadaaki had been missing since June 1980. Sin confessed that an agent from the North had kidnapped Hara with the help of two Sören members, and that Sin himself had been posing as Hara in Japan some time.16 Again the Japanese government did not follow up, although the Japanese police had cooperated with the KCIA in investigating this case.

Some fuel was added to the issue when Kim Hyŏn-hŭi, a North Korean female agent who was arrested following the bombing of the Korean Airlines jet in 1987, stated in January 1988 that she had been taught Japanese by a Japanese woman who she knew as “Lee Ûn-hae” during her training in the North. The description fit that of Taguchi Yaeko, who had disappeared from Japan in 1978. This spurred the first official reaction from the Japanese government. At the 3rd Normalization Talks in May 1991, the Japanese government raised the issue of “Lee Ûn-hae”; North Korea denied any knowledge of such a person. At the 4th Talks in August 1991, both sides agreed that kidnapping-related issues would be discussed at a closed working group separate from the formal normalization negotiations. When the Japanese government reintroduced the issue at the 8th Normalization Talks in November 1992, North Korea terminated negotiations.17 Up to this point, kidnappings were still lower on the agenda list than the long-standing negotiations concerning compensation for Japan’s colonial rule (1910-45), and nuclear weapons.

In autumn 1996, the story of Yokota Megumi, a thirteen-year-old girl who disappeared in Niigata prefecture in November 1977 on her way from badminton practice, first appeared in Gendai Korea (Contemporary or Modern Korea), a journal published by the 1960s-leftist-turned-leading-conservative Satŏ Katsumi and his Modern Korean Research Institute (Gendai Korea kenkyūjo). On February 3, 1997, Sankei and the other major newspapers reported Yokota Megumi’s story, accompanied by photographs of the girl.18 However, it was not until the term “missing” was introduced in lieu of “abducted” at an informal meeting between the two sides in Beijing in August 1997 that North Korea agreed to begin looking for these Japanese. In November of the same year, de facto LDP kingpin Nonaka Hiromu

18 This accusation was denied by North Korea on Pyongyang Radio, 10 February 1997.
announced after several discussions with North Korean officials that the term “missing persons” would in fact be officially adopted in future negotiations with the North. However, even with the change in rubrics and shipments of rice from Japan to North Korea, all the North Korean Red Cross did was to simply report that no “missing” Japanese had been located in North Korea, and that all searches would end in December 2001. The “missing persons” search was resurrected in April 2002, and in August 2002, Red Cross officials from Japan and North Korea met in Pyongyang for further discussions. At this meeting, North Korea provided information on six missing Japanese women who had not been on the Japanese government’s list, and moreover, agreed to accelerate the search for the “missing” individuals.

Following Koizumi’s August 30, 2002, announcement of the one-day summit meeting with Kim Jong Il on September 17, 2002, the Japanese media competed to provide intensive coverage, especially as Koizumi had declared that his primary objective was to “resolve the abduction issue” and to achieve normalization—not to address missiles or nuclear weapons. A steady stream of programmes outlined topics such as the possible resolution of the kidnappings, background to normalization, and foreign reactions to this apparently bold and independent diplomatic initiative.

Amidst a visibly sombre atmosphere, Koizumi and Kim Jong-il met in Pyongyang as scheduled on September 17, 2002. Koizumi offered the standard Japanese government statement of contrition (at least since 1998) for the “tremendous damage and suffering” inflicted on Korea during the colonial period. In return, Kim Jong-il informed Koizumi that of the 15 possible “missing” persons on Japan’s official list of probable abductees, eight were dead, two they had no record of, and five were alive in North Korea. Among the dead, North Korea claimed, was Yokota Megumi. Kim verbally apologized for the kidnappings that took place between 1977 and 1983, claiming that they had been conducted by “some elements of a special agency of state” that had been “excessively enthusiastic.” North Korea also claimed that the two people responsible for Yokota Megumi’s abduction had been tried in 1998, and that one had been executed and the other had died while serving his fifteen-year prison sentence.

Instead of returning from Pyongyang cradling a diplomatic coup, Koizumi and the Foreign Ministry found themselves buffeted by intense criticism. The media and public response triggered a fundamental shift in the dynamics of Japan’s North Korea policy by giving Japan the card of victimhood. Interest groups helped maintain public interest in the abductions issue, but the media initially engaged in a competition to see which station or which programme

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19 Koizumi’s statements about his priorities can be found in any number of major and minor newspapers during the build-up to 9/17. See also, Hishiki Kazuyoshi, “Nit-Chô kanren hôdô: media baiyô suru fushin to zouo no yoron,” in Kang Sang-chung, Mizuno Naoki and Lee Chong-wôn, eds., Nit-Chô kôshô: kadai to tenbô (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2003), p. 160.
could be the most outraged, while audiences seemed eager for more of the same.

Print media, especially daily newspapers, sports newspapers and the weekly magazines, was permeated with coverage of North Korea in the aftermath of 9/17. The extent of this obsession is reflected by the extraordinary statistic that the popular weekly magazines devoted more pages to covering North Korea in August and September of 2003 than to the LDP party president elections (basically, the prime ministerial race), or the first championship in nearly twenty years for the beloved but usually lowly Hanshin Tigers (coincidentally managed by a Korean born in Japan). During the same period, there were 35 editorials in the Big Six newspapers on North Korea, 17 on the LDP elections, and 13 on the war in Iraq.20

Saturation coverage became the norm for television as well. When the five surviving abductees (Chimura Yasushi, Hamamoto Fukuie, Hasuike Kaoru, Okudo Yukiko and Soga Hitomi) returned on October 16, 2002, all the major stations ran specials and live coverage all day. The Big Six stations devoted a total of 30 hours of news coverage of this event on that day, while additional coverage of the return was provided by variety or “wideshows.” The second Koizumi-Kim summit of May 22, 2004, drew 32 hours of news programming coverage. In comparison, 9-11 generated around 9 hours of coverage on the Japanese news shows on the day.21 Over the next several months, the news related to the kidnappings ran literally every day with a monomaniacal fervour, usually as the lead story.

Amplifying the effect on the audience was the variety of coverage. Abductions-related stories leapt out of the news programming into special documentaries, docudramas and “wideshows.” From dramatizations of the first reporter to break the Yokota Megumi story, to afternoon “wideshows” presenting North Korea news in simple and entertaining formats devoid of historical context, to Kitano Takeshi (a famous comedian, producer and film director) devoting several sessions of one of his evening “variety” shows to North Korea, the genre variety in the coverage multiplied rapidly. This diversity allowed programmes to reach a greater range of audience demographics.22

In addition to the diversity of coverage, the presence of sympathetic individuals with names fostered the personalization and dramatization of the tragedy. North Korea claimed that Yokota Megumi committed suicide during a bout with clinical depression. This news particularly aggrieved Yokota Megumi’s long-suffering parents, Yokota Shigeru and Sakie. Well-spoken and sympathetic figures, they had long been at the centre of the media coverage.

20 Kohari Susumu, Kankokujin wa, kō kangaeteiru (Tokyo: Shinchō shinsho, 2004), p. 44.
21 All statistics were calculated from the Videoresearch Company’s database and are only for the Kantō region.
The drama was amplified by the appearance of fifteen-year-old Kim Hae-kyŏng (whose official name was later revealed to be Kim Ûn-kyŏng), the daughter of Yokota Megumi, in a two-hour interview on the conservative Fuji Television (co-sponsored by Asahi Shinbun and Mainichi Shinbun) on October 25, 2002. The interview, which was short on specifics but repeatedly showed a scene in which the girl cried and asked why her grandparents could not visit her in Pyongyang, drew a torrent of complaints. Fuji TV received some 4000 complaints during the broadcast itself, and 10,500 calls to the message centre over the next two days. The majority complained that Fuji TV had broadcast North Korean propaganda, while a minority protested that a fifteen-year-old girl had been “exploited” for sensationalistic coverage. Viewer numbers for the interview registered 26.3 percent, the second-highest-rated show for the week after Game 2 of the baseball Japan Series between two popular teams, Tokyo Yomiuri Giants and the Seibu Lions, which drew 30.5 percent of the viewers on Oct. 26.

The trauma and tragedy of families torn apart by agents from North Korea, and anger at North Korea and the Japanese government saturated the ensuing coverage. While there have been periodic lulls in the quantity of coverage on North Korea-related issues, the often emotional tone of the television coverage on abductions remain intact. For example, during the week leading up to the September 11, 2005, general elections and the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks (July 26th to August 7th, and from September 13th to 19th, 2005, in Beijing), several programmes featured a North Korean angle. One of them, “Takeshi no TV Takkuru” (September 5, 2005, Asahi TV), featured flurries of yelling and posturing by conservative politicians about the government’s need to be more hardline. Another programme, “Mino Monta no Asa zuba!” (September 7, 2005, TBS), a daily morning show on TBS, featured Mr. Yokota as a guest, but turned into an extended rant by the host about how angry he was at the Japanese government for not protecting Japanese nationals and the need to implement economic boycotts to show those North Koreans Japan meant business, and so on. Mr. Yokota sat stoically through Mino’s rant, then, in the minimal time that was left, offered a clear and polite explanation of why he thought boycotts might have an effect.

Experimental studies have shown that audiences retain vivid, visual and personal stories on television, as it is easier to bypass analysis in favour of the

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23 There is still some confusion and inconsistency regarding which name is the formal one and which might be a nickname. See “Hae-kyŏng’ ka ‘Ûn-kyŏng’ka,” Asahi Shinbun, 7 July 2006.
24 Asahi shinbun received 400 complaints, and Mainichi Shinbun 150. For details, see Kato Yôichi, “Gimon kaimei no tegakari teikyô: Kim Hae-kyông san inta-view no kei to imi,” Shinbun kenkyû, no. 617 (December 2002), pp. 35-38.
recollections of powerful images. Once the television is turned off and the
details of the story have dissipated, a somewhat arbitrary assemblage of
different shards of images and remnants of emotions are often what remain.
The abductions issue offered a compelling cast of characters that allowed
viewers to personalize the information. On one side, “evil” Kim Jong Il, his
dysfunctional extended family, and his “weird” country; on the other, the
grieving families most often represented by the polite and polished Bank of
Japan employee Yokota Shigeru and his wife Sakie, whose daughter, Megumi,
remains the symbol of a tragic break-up of the family and a childhood lost, a
woman whose fate remains unresolved.

Providing additional layers to the story were a supporting cast of villains
and quasi-heroes. The “conniving” and “weak-kneed” Foreign Ministry
bureaucrats, especially Ministry Director General Tanaka Hitoshi, and the
allegedly “pontificating” and “obfuscating” “pro-North Korean” intellectuals
and politicians detached from real tears and pain, have been painted as
traitorous villains. The regular media criticisms of Tanaka culminated in a
bomb being planted in his garage on September 10, 2003. Then there are
the supporters, conservative politicians and intellectuals who claim to have
the best interests of the abductees and their families at heart. Tears, bombs,
conspiracies, DNA tests, broken families, all combined with North Korea’s
intractable behaviour, have merged into a potent story line. This
personalization or use of vivid storytelling in lieu of research and analysis
allows for the erasure of the differences between complex bilateral relations
and everyday interpersonal interactions, and ultimately for the substitution
of personal feelings for thorough analysis.

The average number of households viewing the North Korea-related news
consistently recorded higher than the average ratings for the month during
the same time slots. NHK news coverage reached nearly 30 percent, but even
dramatic recreations generated respectable ratings while competing with
prime-time dramas. A November 13, 2002, special on Yokota Megumi and her
parents generated a 14.6 percent viewer rating (the highest-rated show during
that week scored 23 percent), while on April 1, 2003, another documentary

26 Richard Nisbett, and Lee Ross, Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgement
(Englewood: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 51; and Joshua Meyrowitz, No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic

27 An ultranationalist group based out of Gifu, the Kenkoku Giyūgun, claimed responsibility for
these and other acts. Police arrested several members of this association in connection with these
cases. “Hiroshima-ken kyōso jūgeki jiken yōgi de otoko taihō-Kenkoku Giyūgun, taiho 12-nin ni”
Asahi Shinbun, 22 December 2003.

28 While stumping for LDP faction leader Kamei Shizuka, on September 10, 2003, Tokyo Governor
Ishihara Shintarō expressed the sentiment of many right-wingers when he declared that “it was perfectly
understandable” that a bomb would be sent to a “bastard” like Tanaka. Koizumi and other cabinet
members roundly condemned Ishihara’s statement. Ishihara did not retract his statement, but clarified
that he was not endorsing terrorism, but only stating that he understood the sentiments of those who
sent the bomb.
on Kim Hyŏn-hŭi, the North Korean spy arrested in the aftermath of the 1987 bombing, was one of the top-rated programmes for the week, at 20 percent (the highest-rated show for that week was 24 percent). On May 14, 2003, a dramatization of the Yokota Megumi case on Tokyo TV generated ratings of 14 percent, while a similar show on abductions drew 18 percent on September 12, 2003, good for fifth spot in the hotly contested drama section.

This of course does not mean that other shows utterly unrelated to North Korea (or South Korea) did not receive high ratings, or that North Korea-related news and shows were always among the top shows during a given week. The usual roster of a hit drama or variety show and news continued to top the weekly viewer ratings. Nevertheless, the coverage of the anti-Japanese demonstrations in China or the controversies over Koizumi’s visits to the Yasukuni shrine did not receive the same saturation coverage over a sustained period. It seems clear that television coverage (along with the newspapers and the weeklies) inundated the viewers in terms of length, frequency, regularity, intensity, variation and drama, to help focus attention almost exclusively on the abductions and Kim Jong Il, generating relatively strong viewer numbers.

Reception

In this section, I discuss how the cumulative effects of priming on audiences and the rise of new conservatives in Japan fostered the rapid diffusion and sustained reception of the media coverage. Six aspects of this relationship are pertinent. First, as discussed briefly above, personalized stories made for more riveting “vicarious traumas,” or reality tragedies that could be experienced through television. Second, the audiences had been primed prior to 9/17. From the mid-1990s on, viewers had become accustomed to a diet of “reality” television through a series of hit programmes. Moreover, the narrative construction of North Korea as evil, the Japanese public as victims, and the Japanese Foreign Affairs Ministry as a bastion of corrupt and coddled bureaucrats out of touch with the public interest resonated with audiences primed through the cumulative effects of the intense coverage of scandals within the Foreign Affairs Ministry from 2001 to 2002. Third, the abductions created a welcome reprieve for the public from the constant talk of apologies and compensations to Korea for the colonial period. Fourth, there was the appeal of indirectly pointing the finger at an external cause for the anomie of the post-bubble economy, the disintegration of the extended and nuclear families, and the atrophy of rural Japan. Fifth, the above factors have served as a fuel for a revitalized sense of collective identity, an attempt to reaffirm the boundaries of “Japaneseness” against an external threat. Sixth, the continuation of a post-Cold War intellectual shift to the right among intellectuals and the concomitant decline of the left was fortified and accelerated by the abductions. Conservative political organizations ostensibly formed to support the families of the abductees have explicitly
lobbied to have the media maintain coverage of the kidnappings.

Assertions about the causal factors that drive audiences to react to certain shows in specific ways often cannot be verified through the standard social science practices of empirical verification. After all, why an individual viewer responds to or ignores various frames, codes, signals and narratives in any given television show would be difficult to determine, even if a researcher were to question the viewer at the time of viewing. At the same time, if a social scientist were to observe a policy decision made in a meeting room, the same epistemological challenges of verifying causal connections would exist. Moreover, assuming that because a bureaucrat or a viewer said so demonstrates causality in any given reaction or decision does not allow for critical engagement with production, diffusion, reception and recirculation of mass media representations. The explanations I provide are not intended to reflect the views of the participants in the recirculation of media images, but are intended to push the analysis beyond the familiar focus on nuclear weapons and the approach that stops at the recording of hours of coverage or viewer numbers.

Table 2 below shows the top issues listed by respondents to an annual Japanese Cabinet Office survey on North Korea-related issues (i.e., respondents listed the issues; they were not presented with preset categories from which to choose) conducted in October of each year. The dramatic rise in the number of respondents who cited “abductions” as the most important issue from 2000 and 2002 is particularly striking. The increase from 83.4 percent to 90.1 percent during the year after 9/17 fits the rule of a correlate time lag for causal chains between media reportage and public opinion responses.

The time lag is also reflected in the appearance of new categories such as “suspicious ships” (the controversy over the Mangyongbong-ho, the largest North Korean ship to make regular stops on the Sea of Japan ports for trade, as well as other cargo ships and suspected spy ships), and North Korea’s “illegal trade” in the post 9/17 years. The decline of interest in North Korea after the 1998 missile furore was reflected in the fact that the Cabinet Office surveys showed interest in North Korea actually declining from 2000 to 2001. Respondents who expressed varying levels of interest in North Korea dropped from 62.9 percent in 2000 to 54.1 percent in 2001, while those who confessed no interest in North Korea rose from 35.1 to 44.2 percent over the same time. Combined with the aforementioned survey result, revealing that 95 percent of people obtain their information on foreign affairs from television, these indicators point to at least a high likelihood that television and media successfully set policy agendas in the minds of the public.

Table 2

Japanese Cabinet Office Survey 2000, 2002-2005:
Most Important Issues in Japan-North Korea Relations

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<tr>
<td>Abductions</td>
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<td>83.4</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>87.6</td>
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<td>Missiles</td>
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<td>43.7</td>
<td>61.1</td>
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<td>52.2</td>
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<td>Food aid</td>
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<td>37.6</td>
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<td>North-South issues</td>
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<td>29.5</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nuclear arms</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Return of Japanese wives</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normalization</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Settling the past”</td>
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<td>21.8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defectors/refugees’ rights</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Economic relations, trade</td>
<td>18.6</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Suspicious” ships</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>38.7</td>
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<td>Drug trafficking, illegal trade</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The reactions to some of these plot lines were primed by media portrayals of the Foreign Ministry during Tanaka Makiko’s 2001 tumultuous reign as the Koizumi cabinet’s lightning rod and as foreign minister. The scandals began with the Finance Ministry but quickly moved on to the Foreign Ministry, which had the starring role in a steady stream of media revelations about astonishing levels of profligacy, embodied by expensive wine collections, race horses, apartments for mistresses, and mistresses themselves. With the ministry beleaguered by scandals, many conservatives took the opportunity to paint them as arrogant and contemptuous of other Japanese but ingratiating and servile to the West.

Likewise, television programming in general had acclimatized audiences to obsessive coverage of incidents, with the express intent to provoke outrage. As noted previously, the “wideshows” began providing repetitive coverage of not just entertainers but also news events, with the Aum Sarin attack in 1994, the Kansai earthquake of 1995, and the shocking Kobe murder case of 1997, where a fourteen-year-old boy decapitated a two-year-old; these events were presented less in the way of analysis and more through emotional reactions, ranging from horror to indignation. Reality shows grew into a major phenomenon in the mid-1990s as well. Several hit shows in spring 1994 spawned a new Japanese term, the so-called “document variety,” and led to a series of other reality shows in the mid-to-late 1990s. The scenarios of these programmes had little to do with reality but put real people in situations

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like those in a trendy love drama. Whether travel, friendship, the underdog story or love, the surreal norms of drama conquered “reality”—at least as dispensed on television. For increasing sectors of the audience, many of their experiences occurred via mediated realities—reality as performed in front of a camera and diffused by cathode rays for a society accustomed to spectacle.  

Thus, when the vicarious traumas unfolded on television in the fall and winter of 2002, it made for compelling viewing and catharsis along essentially familiar lines, but with a level of tragedy and unpredictability that went beyond the preceding “reality” shows. Rather than reality travel or reality love, this was reality tragedy, a vicarious trauma that could be experienced from the safety of viewers’ living rooms. The media coverage of the returned abductees and their children was strikingly similar to coverage of Hollywood stars appearing at press conferences or airports. For example, when the five returned to Japan on October 16, 2002, the emphasis was on welcoming them and expressing outrage rather than on analysis.

Viewers’ receptivity to reductionist portrayals of North Korea was heightened by the relative weakness of social science and contemporary history education in Japan. Aside from weariness or indifference to the colonial past, very few people seem to be aware that Japan’s relations with the North (despite the absence of normalized relations) were in many ways better than with the South through parts of the 1960s and 1970s. If brought up at all, more often than not, history has been used on Web blogs to launch attacks against Koreans and intellectuals. This is not to suggest that no variety exists on Japanese chat rooms or blog sites. Some Web sites dedicated to critical media watching exist as well. Nonetheless, Internet blogs and homepages in Japanese have been polarized between a majority of near-racist calls to retributive justice and a minority of protests to protect the human rights of Sōren Koreans (North Korea-affiliated residents) in Japan.

While the abductions emerged as the highest priority item in the public eye, there was at the same time an obverse decline in interest in the category of “settling the past,” the issue of whether to offer legally binding apologies and compensation to North Korea for Japan’s colonial policies. As shown in table 2, interest in trade (18.6 percent in 2000 to 8.5 percent in 2004), cultural exchanges (9.7 to 5.2 percent), and historical issues (from 24.6 percent in 2000 to 16.9 percent by 2004) dropped. After years of interactions with South Korea and North Korea in which Japan was cast as the former aggressor, the

32 For an example of a primarily conservative Web site chatroom, see the Channel Sakura Web site <http://www.ch-sakura.jp>, last accessed 24 September 2006. For an example of a more varied site, see, for example, the Janjan threads on the North Korea media coverage, <http://www.janjan.jp>, site last accessed 24 September 2006.
abductions provided an opportunity for Japan to wear the mantle of victimhood within the context of bilateral relations. In previous North Korea-Japan normalization talks, the primary issue had been the “settlement” of the colonial past: Japanese public reaction to the abductions vastly reduced this primacy.

Ironically, while the Japanese government has not offered compensation or reparations to South Korea or North Korea (“economic cooperation” was the substitute label of choice for the 1965 Treaty of Normalization between South Korea and Japan), many Japanese politicians clamoured for compensation from North Korea for the abductions. Moreover, the larger historical context and legal aspects of the kidnappings have been mostly ignored in the various television reports and specials. For example, television shows have not discussed two important consequences of the lack of a normalization treaty between the two countries: first, North Korea cannot technically violate Japan’s sovereignty, since neither country officially recognizes the other as a nation; and second, in the absence of an extraordinary extradition agreement between the two countries, even if all the North Korean agents involved in the abductions were to be identified, they could not be sent to Japan. This is, of course, not to excuse or condone the abductions but to point out that the analysis has not been sustained at a significant depth.

The loss and reunion of family members after 25 years apart resonated with the public sense of alienation in daily life and dissolution of the family. Satō Katsumi wrote in 1997 that North Korea always needs an external enemy. Given the history of discrimination of ethnic minorities and particular classes, and the rampant vitriol currently directed at North Korea and all leftist and ethnic Korean “sympathizers,” one could point to Japan as another country that finds relief in identifying an external source for its internal social woes. The general sense of malaise pervading the post-bubble blues was exacerbated by media coverage of sensational murders, juvenile crimes, child abuse cases and divorces of celebrities, starting in the mid-1990s. There were several indications of widespread concerns that growing social instability was rendering the family unit fragile. In a 2004 government survey on personal safety, 80.3 percent of respondents felt that crime had increased, while only 39.1 percent felt Japan was a safe country in which to live. Of the remaining 60 percent, most cited the prevalence of juvenile

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crime, suicide, and other social problems as the number one reason for uncertainty. Close to two-thirds of respondents (63.9 percent) felt that interpersonal relations were difficult due to the breakdown of local identity, downsizing of the family, dissipating morals, and weakened ties with family members. In the case of the abductees, the break-up of the family was caused not by a divorce or lack of communication but by a brute external force; this allowed media and the public to create a clear picture of good and evil rather than struggle with complicated explanations involving dissolving norms and changing socioeconomic structures. The fact that many of the abducted were from relatively poor rural prefectures in Japan’s T_hoku region only added to the power of the frame: regional economic depression compounded by the forcible fragmentation of the family, all caused by an evil foreign Other. Television news as well as print media portrayed the return of the five abductees to their homes in a discourse of a “return to Japaneseness” through the power of “family ties.”

The extent to which the “return” of the children of the abductees was taken as a given, although they were all born and raised in North Korea and spoke minimal Japanese, is a striking example of the reaffirmation of collective identity. While the two children of the Hasuikes and the three children of the Chimuras have already been registered as Japanese, and both parents are Japanese, the cases of Soga Hitomi and her American husband, Charles Robert Jenkins, and their two daughters, and Yokota Megumi’s daughter Kim Hae-kyōng, illustrated the desire to assert the “resilience” of Japanese identity. The fact that Kim Hae-kyōng’s father, Kim Yōng-Nam, is a North Korean agent and has remarried another North Korean after Yokota Megumi’s alleged suicide is conveniently ignored in media calls to “return” the teenager to her Japanese grandparents. Reunion with long-separated family, a return to the place of birth, reintegration into local community, reapplication for a driver’s license, obtaining a “regular” job, entering a “regular” school—this narrative of separation and return undertakes to reinforce the sense of Japaneseness with a speed and publicity that seem to be more for the benefit of the media and the viewers than for the abductees themselves.

The long-term enervation of the left and the reinvigoration of the right since 1989 also meant that the number of intellectuals willing and able to defend North Korea publicly had decreased even before the 9/17 summit. Aside from prominent cases of apostasy from left to right, such as Satō Katsumi and Fujioka Nobukatsu, confessions of involvement in the abductions have

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come from several former members of the Yodogō hijackers (although others deny any involvement with the abductions) and the Chōsen Soren (General Association of Korean Residents in Japan—Zainichi Chōsenjin Sōrengōkai). Some Korean residents in Japan also spoke out: most notably, historian Kang Jae-on stated that he felt “ashamed as a part of the same Korean race and as someone who had been active in Soren.” North Korea’s responses to the abduction issue have fuelled attacks on leftist public intellectuals such as Wada Haruki. On more than one occasion when some scholars appeared on television and suggested that the nuclear issue was as important as the abductions, their e-mail boxes became quickly stuffed with threats from some of the viewers. The Diet Members Union for Japan-North Korea Friendship (Nit-Chō yūkō giren), which had been the main non-partisan association for promoting normalization with North Korea, has essentially terminated activities after the hundred-or-so members have been attacked in the media by right-wingers and conservatives as traitors and “Pro-North” agents.

Some scholars have asserted that media has the most effect on foreign policy when media coverage is “indexed” or matches the policy agenda of a domestic elite constituency. While space restrictions do not allow for a detailed discussion of internal conflicts within the political parties or Japan’s Foreign Ministry, I would agree that the media frames initially found a receptive audience for the reasons outlined above but also because they overlapped with the political positions of neoconservatives. Unpredictable and dramatic developments refreshed viewer interest in the abduction issue after 9/17, while concerted campaigns by groups associated with the issue helped maintain its place in the public eye.

Three main lobbies or associations have been directly involved in the abduction issue. One is the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (Kita Chōsen ni yoru rachi higaisha kazoku renrakukai, commonly referred to as the Kazokukai), which consists of just the family members of the abducted. A second group, which works closely with the Kazokukai, is the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (Kita Chōsen ni rachi sareta Nihonjin o kyūshutsu suru tame no zenkoku kyōgikai—the Sukuukai), headed by Satō Katsumi and Nishioka Tsutomu. This is a larger political support organization made up of conservative politicians and intellectuals based out of Satō’s Modern Korean

Research Institute. The Sukuukai, established in 1998, has a nationwide organization network with apparently a strong economic base. Aside from serving as de facto gatekeepers for access to the members of the Kazokukai, the Sukuukai has been active in organizing lectures and demonstrations at various locales. It has arranged for media coverage of these events and for disseminating the message via the Internet, printed bills, publications, seminars, and television appearances by Kazokukai members that without a “sincere” and “satisfactory” resolution of the abduction issue by North Korea, negotiations for normalization should not continue, food aid should cease, and economic sanctions should be implemented.

A third association is the Diet Members Alliance for the Early Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (Kita Chōsen ni rachi sareta Nihonjin o sōki ni kyūshutsu suru tame ni kōdō suru gin renmei—Rachi Giren), which currently has a nominal membership of 188. The group actually had a membership of around 70 until the Lower House elections in November 2003, at which point over 100 politicians joined, especially those running in the Japan Sea prefectures, indicating the extent of the public’s interest in the issue. Criticisms of members who joined for political expediency have abounded, but Rachi Giren continues to have several high-profile politicians among its active members, including Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe Shinzō, former cabinet ministers Hiranuma Takeo and Nakagawa Shōichi, and prominent conservative, Nishimura Shingo. While linked to the Sukuukai, Rachi Giren is less active in organizing events and media coverage, and has only 18 prefectural-level associations. The Rachi Giren has sent three petitions to the government, but its primary activity has been through the television appearances and public statements of its members.

The interplay between the lobbies and media appearances was highlighted, for example, in the winter of 2002-03, when public interest appeared to drop due to sustained saturation coverage. Some observers concluded that the public had become weary of the issue. In the parlance of television shows, the programme had “jumped the shark”—in other words, displayed indications of a sustained decline. However, Satō Katsumi’s group arranged for interviews of the Yokotas on their views on the dispatch of troops from the Japan Defence Agency to Iraq, held public rallies to call for economic sanctions against the North, invited the main informant on the kidnappings to Japan, and made sure that the abductions issue appeared regularly in

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44 See Jon Hein, Jump the Shark: When Good Things Go Bad (New York: Dutton Studios, 2002), pp. ix-x.
45 The source of the vast majority of information has been a former North Korean spy, An Myōng-jin, whose testimony has triggered a range of reactions about its veracity. His memoir has been translated into Japanese. See An Myōng-jin, Kita Chōsen rachi kōsakuin (Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1998).
the media even when there were no new developments. There was also some evidence of efforts to exploit organizational networks and momentum built up during the 1990s for the history textbook revision movement.46

Also, when the abductions case took another dramatic turn in December 2004, over whether the ashes provided by North Korea were Yokota Megumi’s or someone else’s, the Sukuukai and Kazokukai organized press interviews and television appearances, and a subsequent increase in public calls for economic sanctions. The strategy of generating international support networks with countries whose nationals may have also been kidnapped by North Korea is often promoted through media coverage of the Yokotas’ meetings with foreign families whose members may have been kidnapped by North Korea, or the Yokotas’ trips to the US and South Korea.47 More recently, the temporary return of Kim Yong-nam, Yokota Megumi’s husband in North Korea, to visit his mother in South Korea generated live television coverage of his press conferences of June 29, 2006, and July 7, 2006 in Japan. The Yokotas appeared on almost all of the evening news shows on the same days to clarify their reactions to the interview.48

This is not to argue that television and other media should not be used to resolve the abductions issue, but to ask whether the current use of television in Japan helps or hinders a resolution. Television is the ideal medium through which to develop and perpetuate fear, but to be effective, these fears must be doled out in regular, palatable yet pungent small doses.49 The high frequency and intensity of exposure and the accessible yet unpredictable developments based on a kidnapping of a thirteen-year-old girl and her grieving parents created tragic and accessible narratives that framed the coverage of North Korea in the form of a “reality” tragedy or of vicarious traumas that could be experienced from the comfort of the living room. The repeated images and representations of North Korea as evil and strange, spurred on in part by an active lobbying campaign by the Sukuukai, fostered a sense of unity based on a common sense of indignation and fear, cauterizing debate on other complex issues related to Japan-North Korea relations.

46 The Sukuukai and the historical revisionism movement held a joint assembly, according to a liberal weekly. Takashima Nobuyoshi, “Sukuukai to Tsukurukai o musubu ito,” Shukan kinyobi, no. 444 (24 January 2003), pp. 12-13. Several members of the Rachi Giren also have some connections to the movement for historical revisionism.

47 For example, the Yokotas’ visit to United States in April 2006, and South Korea in May 2006, was given considerable coverage on television and in the printed press. See for example, Editorial, “Bei-daitōryō to menkai-sekai ni rachi mondai shien o,” Chugoku Shinbun, 30 April 2006; and “Yokota Shigeru san ‘Kankoku no yoron takametai’—hō-Kan mae no shinkyō kataru,” Yomiuri Shinbun, 13 May 2006. The results of the DNA tests were originally made public on December 8, 2004.

48 See, for example, “Jiko awazu—Yokota fūfu hitei,” Asahi Shinbun, 29 June 2006.

Impact

How have television, print media and public opinion affected Japanese government policies towards North Korea? We can identify at least four cases when public opinion as framed by the media constricted government policy choices: normalization talks, the temporary visit of the five returned abductees that became permanent, the pressure for economic boycotts, and Japanese opening statements at Six-Party Talks.

The framing of North Korea policy has gone from when normalization would occur and under what specific terms, to whether such negotiations should be held at all before the abduction issue has been resolved. When Koizumi first returned from the 9/17 summit, he spoke of expediting normalization with North Korea. Initially, the public response was positive. A September 19, 2002 Asahi Shinbun poll found 81 percent supported continued talks, and 58 percent were in favour of proceeding towards eventual normalization. However, the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai launched a massive wave of criticism rebuking the Foreign Ministry. By October 7, 2002, support for resuming negotiations had fallen to 44 percent, with 43 percent opposed to resuming the talks, and 58 percent supporting normalization in an unspecified “long run.” The poll reported that 88 percent of respondents felt that North Korea could not be trusted. Koizumi, mindful of the potential public backlash after he had barely escaped a public relations disaster (as the Kazokukai and Sukuukai focused on scapegoating Tanaka Hitoshi rather than Koizumi himself), quickly retreated from his original stance of facilitating a rapid normalization process.50

When Koizumi brought the five children of the abductees to Japan after his second summit meeting on May 22, 2004, some 60 percent of the public initially viewed the trip as a success. At the same time, another poll indicated that 80 percent felt that the abduction issue remained unresolved, while another 60 percent still opposed humanitarian aid to North Korea. Following the broadcast of the Yokotas livid at Koizumi for failing to press North Korea for further information on their daughter’s whereabouts, media coverage shifted toward a more negative tone. Again, what Koizumi had anticipated would be a diplomatic victory became drowned in the waves of anger directed at him.

The abductee support groups have insisted that normalization negotiations should not start before at least all the abduction cases have been “resolved.” Another problem is that the Japanese government officially recognizes 15 individuals as having been kidnapped (including the five that returned and the eight that North Korea claim are dead). The position of

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50 Koizumi complained that media coverage of the five returnees was a “nuisance” (meiwaku) on November 15, 2002. Hattori Takaaki, “‘Rachi’ hōdō to kenshōkyoku kanshi jyanarizumu no sonzai,” Gekkan minpō, vol. 33, no. 2 (February 2003), pp. 6-8.
the Sukuukai, on the other hand, has been that there are at the very least 23 abductees, and possibly over a hundred, with at least 486 South Koreans abducted after 1953 as well.51

When the five abductees initially returned to Japan in October 2002, it was reported that the Japanese government had promised Pyongyang that they would be returned to North Korea. Government officials continuously sidestepped questions of when they were to be returned, merely answering repeatedly that the decision had to be made in accordance with the wishes of the five and their families in Japan, and various other factors.52 There was considerable controversy over the restrictions on media access imposed by the Sukuukai. Some reporters complained that the five were as closely guarded by a coterie of family members and supporters as they might have been in North Korea.53 Once the government announced that the five had decided to extend their temporary visits to Japan to a permanent return, Pyongyang stated that this violated the original agreement. The details of the decision to allow the five to stay in Japan are difficult to parse. However, considering that the foreign minister stated that the needs of the government and the families, rather than just the wishes of the five returnees, had to be taken into account, it seems safe to conclude that pressure and public opinion played a major role in the decision.54

While the Japanese government called for a UN resolution that would allow for economic sanctions against North Korea after the test launch of the seven missiles in July 2006, it had been under pressure from the lobby groups for some time to impose a wide range of sanctions on North Korea. The Kazokukai, Rachi Giren, and Sukuukai organized public rallies and collected a petition with five million signatures calling for economic sanctions, despite repeated observations by UN and American officials that economic sanctions imposed only by Japan were inadvisable and would not work unless they were implemented as a part of a coordinated multilateral policy.55 A November 16, 2004, poll by the conservative Yomiuri Shinbun indicated that

53 See, for example, Watanabe Kōjirō, “‘Rachi’ shuzai ga teiki shita mono,” Gekkan minpo, vol. 33, no. 2 (February 2003), pp. 15-17.
55 See, for example, US ambassador to Japan Howard Baker’s comments, “Nichi-Bei kankei, ima ga sairyo no toki,” Yomiuri Shinbun, 17, February 2005; and the statement by Vitit Muntarbhorn, “Kita Chōsen wa rachi higaisha ni hoshō o”—Kokuren jinken tokubetsu hōkokusha,” Asahi Shinbun, 4 March 2005. There is also a much less publicized 2004 declaration by the Japanese International Lawyers’
81 percent of respondents felt that North Korea was not sincere in its reactions to the abduction issue. A November 2004 Fuji TV survey for one of its news programmes, “Hodō 2001,” indicated that 80 percent of respondents supported economic sanctions, while a December 25, 2004 poll in the liberal Asahi Shinbun indicated 63 percent of respondents supported sanctions, while 25 percent opposed them. On the other hand, the same poll showed that 48 percent supported Koizumi’s cautious approach while 40 percent opposed it. Meanwhile, a September 5, 2005 survey conducted by the Sukuukai of the Diet members indicated that a total of 45.9 percent supported economic sanctions now, while 5.5 percent opposed such action, and another 49.1 percent preferred “other” options (which included sanctions at another time). Of these, 74.3 percent of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and 66.1 percent of the main opposition Democratic Party were in favour of implementing economic sanctions as soon as possible.56

While Koizumi maintained all along that a careful combination of pressure and negotiations was the government’s fundamental stance, he also consistently avoided making any statements denying the utility of sanctions. Interestingly, although no government official had dared publicly state that concerns over missiles and nuclear weapons were more important than the abductions, even before the actual missile test-launches, Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe Shinzō declared that if North Korea were to test launch missiles, Japan would consider imposing economic sanctions.57 The missiles did in fact trigger a very rapid call by the Japanese government for economic sanctions under the auspices of a UN Security Council Declaration under Chapter 7, Articles 39 and 41 of the UN Charter.58 The Sukuukai pointedly noted that it took missiles to “finally awaken” the government to the danger North Korea presented, and the Kazokukai called for the Japanese government to explicitly link the abductions with the missiles. However, after a meeting with Foreign Minister Aso Tarō, the Sukuukai issued a more supportive formal statement.59


58 Article 41 reads, “The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.”

Considering that roughly 80 percent of the public supported the government’s “strong” response to the missile “crisis,” with only 13 percent opposed, whatever the motivations for Abe to push for UN-sponsored economic sanctions, the move, while ultimately unsuccessful, only helped his popularity ratings. Granted, it would be difficult to establish at this point that Abe and other politicians pushed for sanctions because of their sensitivity to public opinion; it would also be difficult to deny the probable impact of cumulated support for sanctions (almost as ends in themselves) among much of the public. In fact, on July 29, 2006, Abe explicitly linked North Korea’s problematic responses to the abductions issue with the missile launches in explaining the government’s decision to impose a unilateral nine-point sanction against North Korea.

Finally, at every round of the Six-Party Talks, Japanese delegates have included statements about the abductions in their opening statements. In the Fourth Round, South Korean and Chinese delegates explicitly expressed displeasure at Japan’s attempt to deflect attention from the main issue of the talks, the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The amount of time and energy invested into such recriminations could be reduced if all delegates understood that Japanese officials cannot afford to remain silent about the abductions issue at any multilateral or bilateral talks involving North Korea. For South Korea or China to merely cavil at Japanese delegates is ultimately not that useful: it would be more efficient to simply acknowledge and assess the extent to which the abductions issue has permeated domestic public discourse and media space, and the extent to which this informs and constrains the options of most Japanese delegates.

**Conclusion**

Issues of politics aside, undoubtedly the families of the abducted and the abductees themselves have suffered. Nuclear weapons development and possible export, the threat of conventional weapons, and food shortages remain significant issues. North Korean diplomatic tactics continue to be difficult to assess given the current barriers to obtaining accurate information. Many elements of the foreign policy postures in Japan and South Korea (and most likely North Korea) are aimed at domestic political audiences. Amidst this tangled skein, for the vast majority of people outside of North

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60 “80% in poll favor strong reaction to North Korea’s missile launch,” Japan Times, 9 July 2006; and “Ilbon ch’ongni nömbonun Abe kangsong ū ppuri,” Chosön Ilbo, 12 July 2006.

Korea, even for those who have visited North Korea on short-term visits, the reality of North Korea is constructed and refined through the agenda setting and framing effects of the media.

Harold Lasswell observed in 1935 that the complexities of modern life had forced people to become dependent on the mass media for information: “Everywhere the labyrinth of modern living ensnares specialist and layman in common necessity of acting without knowledge.” 62 The power of the virtual, constructed, and mediated ‘reality’ of North Korea in 2006—whether manufactured and broadcast through NHK, TBS, BBC, CNN or CBC—cannot be overlooked in formulating or analyzing policies towards North Korea.

Of all the media, television especially generates effects that include information dissemination; explanation via framing and agenda setting; social mobilization and control; and entertainment. The sustained and high level of interest in Japan over the abduction issue has been based largely on its encompassing all these dimensions. Granted, the media contents of most industrialized nations are not completely isolated from each other. For example, Japan and the United States are the two biggest exporters of media content, such as programmes and news clips, to South Korea. 63 However, frame, tone, coverage and other elements of news coverage vary greatly, while at the same time displaying common problems of content convergence and the relative paucity of in-depth analysis.

Structural concentration, television diffusion and viewership hours in Japan created preconditions that increased the likelihood of convergence in television programming. The abductions issue triggered an avalanche of media coverage that flowed towards content isomorphism, following common narratives that purveyed vicarious traumas to the viewing public. The messages themselves were constant, regular, intense and diverse, creating conditions for maximum agenda setting and framing effects. Audiences primed by antecedent shows such as reality docudramas and scandals of the Foreign Ministry rewarded the networks with high viewer ratings. Prevailing perceptions of anomie and the opportunity to telescope a complex set of socioeconomic changes into physical interventions by an evil, external Other also resonated with viewers, while the relative weakness of education in modern history and contemporary international relations meant that the audience was even more malleable than on other issues. The long-term decline of the left and ascension of the right meant that an organized lobby has “hijacked” the abductees and their families, and helped keep them and the conservative agenda ever present amidst the cathode rays. Trapped in

the perpetual present of television news, careening from one mediated crisis to another, many Japanese politicians and the majority of the public seem unaware that they are caught in a self-perpetuating cycle of indignation and hate, the parameters of allowable debate set by media and lobby groups rather than by reasoned discussions of long- and short-term implications.

All this is not to assert that every individual Japanese responded in the exact same ways to these conditions, or to assume that all members of the lobby groups have the same views on politics or even on North Korea. Nor is my objective to simply castigate members of the media and media conglomerates or to invoke essentialist stereotypes of “conformist” Japanese. Media representations to the public of complex and problematic phenomena are themselves influenced by a complex range of factors, only one of which is the relative absence or presence of self-awareness among journalists.

However, despite the panoply of news and information-related shows on the airwaves, today’s Japanese television may ultimately invoke associations with Orwell’s elaboration of *1984*: “The fallacy is to believe that under a dictatorial government you can be free inside. … The secret freedom which you can supposedly enjoy under a despotic government is nonsense, because your thoughts are never entirely your own.”

64 While I certainly would not consider the Japanese government to be “despotic,” under any type of state, the priming, framing and agenda-setting effects generated by the media shape the reality of national agendas in ways that do not leave as much room for individual freedom as might be expected in a country with highly developed communications infrastructures.

The solution is likely not to be found by simply continuing business as before, or by sounding the familiar tocsin about the opiate peddled by global communications conglomerates, or by naively celebrating the possibility of active and autonomous audiences. The fact that the Japanese media’s obsession du jour switched to missiles in the summer of 2006 only highlights the fact that, all too often, audiences are emphatically malleable and media coverage consistently convergent. The most viable solution seems to be to urge different shareholders of media space to continuously develop avenues for fostering critical media literacy and content variation among the various television stations. The challenge for all countries is to avoid simply mobilizing the media to advocate specific policy positions, and instead to transform television from a well-tuned amplifier of anger and funnel for tears to a more useful tool for facilitating sustained and diverse dialogue and analysis through the communication of larger historical, social and international contexts.

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BOOK REVIEWS


What are the characteristics of the “Asian state,” and how do they differ from the “Western state”? The authors of the nine essays in this collection ask this question from the perspective of several disciplines, and examine several modern examples from Asia for answers. The editors note the great divide between approaches of historians and political scientists, and attempt to narrow the gap by engaging in cross-disciplinary comparative analysis.

The authors use a common set of concepts—including nation, state, citizenship, sovereignty and territory—to bring the Asian state into a discourse more familiar to Western writers and thinkers. Each essay begins with the author’s clarification of his or her usage of key concepts, and then proceeds to dissect a particular state or latent state. The notion of “developmental state” is criticized as too narrowly focused on the state as promoter of economic development.

The Asian state challenges some key concepts of state theory, including territoriality and legitimacy. Mark Ravina examines Japanese state making, as an interweaving of nativist tradition and adaptation to global pressures. A second chapter on Japan (Richard Boyd) views the activist and interventionist bureaucracy as a key actor and power in the state. He identifies administrative transcendence and sectionalism as distinguishing Japanese state making from its Western counterpart. Although the bureaucracy has lost its close identification with the emperor since 1945, its success in economic development has bestowed legitimacy to maintain near-transcendence above the public.

Three chapters address state making in China, with two discussing outliers Taiwan and Tibet. R. Bin Wong explains how dynasties’ control over culture was crucial in creating a modern Chinese identity that underlies the notion of citizenship today. How Communists and Nationalists linked national identity to citizenship has been critical in the emergence of nationhood. He concludes by noting the emergence of economic interests as weakening Communist doctrine and leading to a possible better future.

Jenn-hwan Wang reviews the establishment and evolution of Taiwan from security to developmental state, and the democratization challenges to the authoritarian regime. The liberalization of politics has been accompanied by a push for permanent political autonomy, which has generated threats from the Mainland and a return to a crisis of survival for Taiwan.
Refugees in Nepalese resettlement camps are constructing key elements of a Tibetan state, according to Ann Frechette, and even engaging in a form of foreign relations. Along with several other authors in the volume, she emphasizes the importance of external relations in state making. Swiss NGOs have been particularly active in building the framework of a political economy. She examines the key “national myth” of the Tibetans—returning to their homeland.

Shamsul A.B. and Sity Daud dissect the emergence of nation and state in Malaysia. Taking Mahathir’s 1991 vision for 2020, they compare existing conditions of ethnic pluralism with the future, and see a “nation of intent.”

A final chapter by Latin Americanist Laurence Whitehead provides a global and conceptual review of the Asian state-making project, and summarizes the conclusions of the volume.

The essays advance a discourse which bridges empirical study and key political concepts. Contributors criticize the parochial tendency of Western scholars, who often assume that the European nation-state is the exclusive model for explaining politics in the rest of the world. The volume should be a springboard for developing a new research agenda on Asia—one that goes beyond the specifics of particular societies and their history, and incorporates language and concepts of political analysis. Participants in this agenda must resist the temptation to use these concepts as a mere checklist, and should reflect on the accepted meanings of Western terms in terms of the Asian experiences. Fortunately, several of the contributors to this volume have already begun this process.

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This very valuable volume uses a large range of case studies to address the contemporary and pressing issue of ethnocultural diversity in South, Southeast and East Asia and the political and policy responses to the existence of minorities, whether ethnic, cultural or religious, as a permanent part of the social fabric of these societies. The assumption during the period of “nation building”—that the new states were unitary and homogenous and that minorities would accommodate themselves to this unity through assimilation—has long since unraveled. Every modern state in Asia has found itself forced to grapple with its permanently plural character and to evolve policies—political, cultural, educational, and linguistic—for managing this multiculturalism. Independence movements, demands for recognition of
cultural autonomy, resistance to discrimination, struggles for some kind of federal state in which minority interests are fairly represented, demands for citizenship and, in some cases, armed struggles have characterized the postcolonial political and cultural landscapes of the region’s societies.

The essays in this book address these issues, in almost every case starting from the well-known conceptualization of multiculturalism by one of the editors, Will Kymlicka. The majority of the essays are detailed case studies of the ways that ethnocultural diversity is conceptualized and managed across the region, in China, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and India. One essay is devoted to the neglected issue of foreign domestic workers. The essays are mostly of a high standard, with the weakest and least theorized one being on Malaysia, although naturally a reviewer familiar in detail with some of the societies discussed would find contentious elements in many of them. For example, the chapter on Singapore includes an argument for the virtues of a communitarian model which greatly downplays the immense political and social costs of that experiment for its critics and dissenters, and the chapter by Lam Peng-Er on Japan, which makes its central thesis the idea that Japan is a state in which the government is liberal-democratic but the society is reactionary, seems to me to be just about a direct reversal of the actual facts.

The individual chapters can be read as very useful summaries and introductions to the specific conceptualizations and policy debates regarding minorities in each of the countries surveyed. The book as a whole and its common theme is the interesting and politically volatile issue of the applicability of the Western liberal model to Asia. This is both its strength and weakness: the book on the one hand raises important comparative theoretical questions, but on the other, as several of the contributors point out and contest, to frame the book in terms of the conceptual priority of the Western liberal model rather than start from Asian realities is a distortion. As minority issues become increasingly internationalized and publicly visible, it is certainly true that contending models are employed by minorities themselves—the Ainu people or Okinawans in Japan, for example—drawing simultaneously on a vocabulary of universal human rights and of cultural particularism. But my main unease with the book is that the whole volume is structured as a response to Kymlicka’s own, arguable (in the full sense of the word) theory, multiplied through a range of case studies—a sort of self-induced congratulatory volume in which the senior editor’s own position becomes the central point of debate. There are a few very avoidable editorial errors, such as the appearance in the bibliography of Thongchai Winichakul twice; in a book on Asia one would have hoped that the editors could at least have got Asian names right.

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JOHN CLAMMER
The limitations of an exclusive focus on globalization themes to understand the contemporary world are obvious. Peter Katzenstein meets the more difficult and demanding challenge of creating an analytical framework that incorporates globalization as part of a larger picture. At the most general level, he is interested in explaining both territorial and non-territorial dimensions of American power. Territorial dimensions of power are the stuff of state-to-state international relations, which can be distinguished from non-territorial forms of power exercised through processes that he calls “globalization.” The innovative importance of this work comes in framing issues of globalization and internationalization within Asia and Europe. The first chapter introduces “regional orders” defined by varied combinations of economic, political and cultural traits and connections. These are not separate and sealed from each other, as we might imagine they could have been in earlier periods of history; today, they are porous, which is what allows American power to seep into their construction and transformation. At the same time, political actors in these regional orders can react to American power and shape what is, in the author’s conclusion, power that is broad but not deep (p. 247).

The author chooses Germany and Japan for intensive examination because they are the regional powers with which the United States forms close relationships that help to enable its imperium. Political, economic and to a lesser extent cultural features of post-World War II Germany and Japan are examined domestically, in relation to other parts of Europe and Asia, and finally to the United States. The author suggests that his argument would work in broadly similar ways were he to have chosen other countries, China and France, or Singapore and Britain, for example (p. 37). I’ll return to this assumption when concluding. For now let us look at the documentation for the thesis.

In brief, Katzenstein shows in chapters 4 and 5 that: (1) policies toward technology and production in Germany and Europe are developed within a formal political framework, but in Asia the Japanese have promoted a regionalization of production that extends what had been domestic policies to a larger spatial scale; (2) for security issues the Germans are part of a European move toward coordinated and integrated policy making, while Japanese and other Asian countries still pursue policies as sovereign states acting bilaterally; (3) the German state pursues cultural policies for political reasons, while the Japanese do so for economic reasons; and (4) the Germans, like other Europeans, seek to regulate and thus limit the impact of American popular culture, while the Japanese have created alternatives with strong market positions within Asia and more generally.
Chapter 6 examines the ways in which the US is connected to Germany and Japan as well as to other parts of the European and Asian regions. The next and final chapter extends the argument of the American imperium in the porous regions of Asia and Europe to other parts of the world. The absence of regional figures like Germany and Japan influence the kinds of relations the American imperium can establish in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

In sum, the book makes a persuasive case for examining American power’s relationships to different regions of the world by focusing on the activities of major political and economic actors. Germany and Japan are the key regional actors “that have supported the purpose and power of the United States” (p. 247) after their total defeat in World War II. By reminding the reader of this stark fact in his concluding paragraphs, the author confirms the importance of looking at how the exercise of American power is regionally specific, and shaped in part by the traits of the region’s leading actors. He also raises at least some doubt about the effectiveness of this framework to discuss the ways in which other regional actors, China or France for example, do in fact behave, either within their regions or in their engagements with the United States.

University of California, Los Angeles, USA

R. BIN WONG


Yang Lian was a prominent member of the so-called “misty” poets, a group politically active in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Beijing. Closely associated with China’s democracy movement of the time, these youthful poets founded the literary journal Today and immediately attracted the attention of China scholars, who found their writings politically subversive and stylistically refreshing. Most of the “misty” poets lived in Beijing and were among the first creative writers China scholars from the West had access to after decades of China’s internal isolation. Yang Lian was criticized by the authorities during the Anti-Spiritual Pollution campaign of 1983, and this notoriety led to invitations abroad, as in the case of many other “misty” poets. Yang Lian’s interaction with the West began in Australia in August 1988. At the beginning of 1989 he travelled to New Zealand on the invitation of Professor John Minford at Auckland University. Minford had played an important pioneering role in publishing Yang Lian’s poetry in English translation as early as 1983. When the 4 June Tiananmen Square events occurred, Yang Lian’s public
denunciation of the actions of the Chinese authorities resulted in his being denied a renewal of his passport. New Zealand granted him citizenship and greatly smoothed his trajectory of exile in the West. Encountering the West without sufficient understanding of its languages and cultures was an enormous emotional and intellectual challenge. In Auckland for three years he experienced the agony of acute loss and understandably in those years “death” established itself as a central theme in his exile poetics.

Nearly two decades have gone by, and Yang Lian has persisted with writing, publishing and, more importantly, frequently performing at writers’ festivals all over the world. His active career has also benefited very much from the extraordinary dedication of his translators, particularly into English. Mabel Lee has translated Yang Lian’s *Masks and Crocodile* (1990), *The Dead in Exile* (1990) and his major work, *Yi* (2002; a long poem structured on the *Yijing*), and Brian Holton has translated his *Non-Person Singular* (1994), *Where the Sea Stands Still: New Poems* (1999), *Notes of a Blissful Ghost* (2002) and *Concentric Circles* (2005).

Now, Jacob Edmond and Hilary Chung’s *Unreal City: A Chinese Poet in Auckland* adds to that list. Significantly, this book places the city of Auckland on the literary map of Chinese diaspora writing, and argues that Auckland and New Zealand are seminal in Yang Lian’s creative development as a poet in exile. Edmond and Chung are both academics at Auckland University, and the book’s introduction makes special efforts to link Yang Lian’s creative life with Auckland, although sometimes the arguments are not entirely convincing. For instance, there is the far-fetched suggestion that Yang Lian’s work in Auckland can be considered as New Zealand poetry, because he explored the ramifications of the local, and adopted “prominent Auckland landmarks and New Zealand imagery” in his poems (p. 22). In order to persuade the reader and themselves that the imagery of “unreal city” is positively multicultural, Edmond and Chung seem to turn a blind eye to Yang Lian’s recurring association of the city with death, isolation and alienation. Auckland has never been real to Yang Lian, precisely because he never felt at home there, nor did he desire any emotional or intellectual connections with it, despite his possible gratitude towards the city that provided him with a home in those difficult first years as a poet in exile. “Death” remains the core imagery in Yang Lian’s “poetics of exile.” *Unreal City* is a documentary of Yang Lian’s creativity and a reflection on his relationship with Auckland, a historical landmark in his poetics of exile.

The University of Sydney, Australia

Yiyang Wang

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Professors Kirby, Ross and Li have contributed an influential and stimulating volume to the fields of diplomatic history, China’s foreign relations and US-China relations. There are a number of aspects of this edited volume that are commendable.

The first is its international approach and list of contributors. Almost invariably, histories of Sino-American relations are bilateral in their nature and approach. This has always been a peculiar lacunae. Those scholars who labour in the vineyards of this field have often tended to focus myopically on the bilateral actors and sources in the US-China relationship without either considering the broader regional or international context of the relationship or utilizing sources from countries other than the United States and China. Of course, there have been exceptions to this generalization—such as Warren Cohen, Rosemary Foot, Evelyn Goh, Chen Jian, Michael Schaller and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker—but, generally speaking, “internationalizing” Sino-American history has not been a facet of the field. This volume goes far towards correcting this bias. The editors assembled a first-class group of historians from China, England, Russia, Taiwan and the United States. These contributing authors consider not only the bilateral dynamics of the run-up to Sino-American normalization, but also look at the issue from a number of other national perspectives (notably Taiwan, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union).

As a consequence, much new data has been brought to light in these chapters. One should read the footnotes as or more carefully as the text of these chapters. New data brings forth fresh perspectives. For example, Li Jie’s chapter on Chinese domestic politics and its impact on China’s negotiations over normalization of relations is chock full of new information. Much of this has been suspected by Western analysts for many years, but never confirmed until now. For example, Li Jie provides evidence of how the Sino-American rapprochement became embroiled in both the Lin Biao Affair and the “Gang of Four’s” factional maneuvering against Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. He also provides heretofore unknown details of the special 1969 assessment of China’s national security situation, which Mao commissioned from the “four marshals.” He also brings forth new information about internal criticisms of Zhou Enlai’s November 1973 negotiations with Henry Kissinger. Despite these and other tantalizing tidbits, Li Jie’s footnote sourcing is very incomplete and frustrating—readers are only referred to “Minutes of Talks,” but no further information is given of the nature or location of these documents. We all know the difficulties of
Chinese scholars gaining access to the Central or Foreign Ministry Archives in China, but this kind of incomplete sourcing does not adhere to international scholarly conventions. The editors should have pushed Li and other Chinese contributors for more complete sourcing of their claims.

In addition to being an international history, the real comparative advantage of this book is the collaborative effort between Chinese and foreign scholars. This volume is another in a continuing series of fruitful collaborations between the Fairbank Center at Harvard (with Ross, Kirby, and Ezra Vogel taking the lead) and the Central Party School in Beijing. The collaborative research, and the format of the conference that gave rise to it, is a model that others should follow.

The timing of the volume is also excellent. It appeared a year before the Department of State released Volume XVII of the *Foreign Relations of the United States: China, 1969-1976*. While this volume in the continuing FRUS series contains official US documents, it should be used by researchers in tandem with the Kirby/Ross/Gong volume. Taken together, a fairly comprehensive picture of the 1970s run-up to normalization of relations is now available.

In sum, this is a fine example of Sino-American diplomatic history that should be required reading for all those in the field.

*George Washington University, USA*  
*David Shambaugh*


The principal purpose of this book is to chart and account for the growing, if still modest, role that think-tanks play in the making of Chinese foreign policy, especially with regard to Japan. Xuanli Liao explains that this is a relatively new phenomenon arising from the larger number of institutions and individuals who contribute to policy making, including foreign affairs, in the post-Mao period. She calls this pluralistic elitism rather than pluralism, since the foreign policy arena lacks multiple centres of power or the competing interest groups, which are integral to pluralistic systems.

The 1980s and 1990s were marked by a proliferation in China of policy-oriented research bodies, largely state funded. Some were attached directly to government ministries (as had been the case before, but on a far smaller scale, and others indirectly, such as those that belonged to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (including provincial equivalents) or to the universities. These latter institutes had varying degrees of influence as dependent on their access to top-level policy makers. Such access arose from institutional affiliations or from personal ties.
Much of this is familiar and has been addressed elsewhere. See, for example, *The China Quarterly* (issue 171, September 2002), which has a special section of five separate articles on the subject. Dr. Liao’s contribution is the attempt to ascertain whether and in what ways the different kinds of think-tanks have influenced policy making towards Japan, China’s most problematic bilateral relationship.

Three issues or issue areas are examined in particular: Chinese views of the US-Japan security alliance; Chinese handling of the history question; and foreign economic policy making in the case of the Baoshan steel project.

These case studies are well researched and the analysis is careful and thoughtful. In addition to consulting the written word, Dr. Liao conducted interviews with officials and scholars on both sides. Her main findings are that the Japan-focused think-tanks vary in their approach in accordance with their institutional affiliations. The more hard-line approaches to Japan were associated with those attached to the military. Those linked to government ministries tended to follow the official line, but those who were less directly tied to the government were more moderate and tended to favour more accommodating approaches.

Not everyone will agree with this. Given the popular animosity towards Japan, at times fueled by the government, institutes of Japan studies have often been cautious in their approach and have sometimes advised the government to adopt harsher policies. For example, several examples of this are recounted in Ming Wan’s *Sino-Japanese Relations* (Stanford University Press, 2006). Moreover, the two best-known advocates of new thinking towards Japan, Ma Licheng and Shi Yinhong, were not members of institutes for the study of Japan. Nevertheless, Dr. Liao does find a good many examples of the adoption of a relatively soft approach by members of CASS’s Japan Institute.

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this study is the failure to discuss what constitutes influence and how can it be seen to be exerted. It is not sufficient to suggest that when actual policy coincides with a position advocated by a member of a think-tank, that this in itself would amount to evidence of the one being influenced by the other. Dr. Liao would have done well to observe her own caveat placed at the end of the book about the obstacles that exist in pursuit of the knowledge of influence.

Nevertheless, this is a book that will be consulted by those interested in Chinese foreign-policy making as well as by those interested in China’s relations with Japan.

*The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars,*  
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*Washington, DC*

It is obvious that China needs further ownership reform. Because the privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) has dogged Chinese government for well over two decades, considerable scholarly efforts have been devoted to analyzing the issue. China has been experimenting with the European model, the Japanese-Korean model, and the US model to privatize the industrial sector of the economy.

This book first reviews the experience with state-enterprises reform in China since the early 1980s, and surveys the outcomes from privatization in other transitional and industrializing countries to provide China with lessons from other economies. Then it analyzes the effects of ownership reform in China and compares corporatized state firms with privately-owned firms and joint ventures.

The findings suggest that joint ventures that have combined foreign management and technology with the local expertise and production capacity of SOEs have performed better than other types of firms. This book argues that if China is committed to perfecting a dynamic market economy, then it needs for the state to have a smaller economic role, to privatize most industrial SOEs, and to have more of an arm’s-length relationship between the state and business firms. It concludes that even though the Chinese government clearly widened its efforts to privatize after 2003, the full economic benefits of privatizing the state’s industrial assets will not be realized until the state cedes control rights and perceives its role to be that of managing the market, not directing it.

This book includes a rich set of data and an econometric analysis of the impact of a wide range of institutional and managerial changes on enterprises performance. This book serves as a useful building block in the growing literature that tackles the Chinese model for privatization. It is essential reading for anybody interested in understanding the privatization issue in China as well as in transition economies.

Chung-Ang University, Republic of Korea

JONGCHUL LEE
The Marxist idea of socialism and work is becoming the ideology of the radiant past in China, and unlike Marx’s vision of “workers of the world united,” Chinese workers having been pushed into society as self-employed peddlers, vendors or the unemployed, the industrial reserve army on a probationary, temporary and part-time basis. By examining laid-off workers in China, this timely book deals with the important issue of collective action of laid-off workers and their relation to the reform state in China.

This is certainly one of the pioneering books in this area, and offers extensive discussion on the condition of Chinese laid-off workers. It is extremely informative and very rich in empirical data, which is based on qualitative in-depth interviews as well as quantitative statistical analysis. Cai’s valuable research gives the reader a vivid description of state-worker relations in China. Chapters 6 and 7 prove intellectually stimulating, based on their analytical rigour and theoretical agenda. In particular, table 7.2 (p. 112), on the likelihood of collective action by laid-off workers, is quite original, pointing out the significance of size and type of lay-offs for the potential of collective action.

However, some theoretical assertions are repetitive, and the crucial notion of “silence” needs more explanation. The existing literature on Chinese labour has suggested that laid-off workers have become the most vocal protesters against the state and the reform process, hence the notion of “silence” could initiate more debate about the prospect of collective action by laid-off workers. While readers would be very curious to know what kinds of evidence supports the “silence” of laid-off workers, what they actually find in the book are the “sounds” instead. In demonstrating that “[m]any workers made anonymous calls threatening factory leaders, wrote them threatening letters, cursed them, and even beat or tried to kill them” (p. 75), and “[i]t is beyond doubt that the reform of SOEs has led to incessant resistance from workers” (p. 125), this book confirms cases of sound, rather than silence. While silence may be heard when “many laid-off workers did not organize to resist” (p. 36), this may be more about hesitant and ambiguous resignation, rather than necessarily indicating silence. If there is any silence in China, it would be more appropriate to discuss the silence of the state, political leaders and media in regard to the protests and political activism of workers.

This book engages with the applicability of rational choice to the collective action of laid-off workers in China. Potentially, this could be provide the buttress for the book, given its theoretical focus and analytical framework. However, the task proves too daunting in the end, making the book a bit deductive and, thereby, limiting other theoretical interpretations. For
example, in stating “Chinese laid-off workers also base their action on the perceived odds of success and possible costs, which are influenced by the target to which their action is directed” (p. 61), the author may confuse readers in regards to whether the statement represents the premise of the book or the empirical findings which, in turn, should be backed up with more concrete, situated empirical evidence.

Overall, this book will appeal to those interested in the post-socialist transformation of labour and, in this regard, reaches out to a wider audience beyond Chinese studies. Along with other studies on radicalization, militant struggles and “the sound of silence” of Chinese labour, readers will gain a balanced perspective on the nature and condition of workers in China.

Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea

JAEMYOUN WON


This useful collection of essays challenges many of the myths that continue to distort understanding of the legal system of the People’s Republic of China. Accepted wisdom on Chinese law often depicts formal legislation and regulatory initiative as ineffective in controlling behaviour, while also assuming that Chinese society is resistant or (at best) ambivalent about the role of law in contemporary China. As this volume demonstrates, however, law is far from meaningless in the PRC, but rather is used by the state to enforce policy priorities in areas of stability and political orthodoxy. And far from being resistant or ambivalent to the rule of law, members of Chinese society appear increasingly willing to use law to pursue individual interests in justice.

This collection of essays emerges from a conference of young scholars held at the University of California at Berkeley in September 2002. The conference organizers expressly encouraged interdisciplinary approaches to understanding PRC law, and more specifically, the use of law and society scholarship as an intellectual perspective. The contributors are virtually all social scientists rather than lawyers, and this contributes significantly to the topics selected, methodologies used, and analytical conclusions.

The editors’ masterful introduction offers an overview of issues on law and society in China, focusing on dispute resolution, legal culture and the state, while surveying the field of interdisciplinary legal studies on the PRC more broadly. The first set of essays concerns the question of how members of society engage with the law. Whether in the context of administrative litigation (O’Brien and Li), labour law (Gallagher; Thireau and Hua), or
pensions and veterans benefits (Frazier; Diamant), law in China is shown to be perceived as potentially useful in pursuing claims to justice (especially among marginalized or aggrieved communities which have exhausted other avenues for redress). While the authors all seem to agree with the assertion that “in today’s China, law matters more than it ever has” (p. 3), the role of law in the dynamic of “legal mobilization and culture” often seems a mechanism of last resort. Peasants seeking redress through administrative litigation turned to the law despite its financial and political costs to seek compensation from administrative abuse, after having exhausted all other channels. A similar pattern arises in the context of labor disputes, where as a result of the structure of Chinese labour law and labour arbitration, workers have few effective means for obtaining compensation for unjust dismissal or injury, other than to turn to the legal system—weak and problematic as it is. Retired persons and the aged and infirm, often denied pensions and benefits and left with little possibility of redress, also see law as a possible tool for achieving justice. In these examples of citizens using law to pursue justice, several patterns emerge—primarily the high cost of access to justice, the continued resistance of state agents to legal control, and the courageous and often apparently naïve willingness of individual citizens and groups to use the law as a mechanism of last resort to achieve justice.

Having challenged the mythology of social ambivalence about law in China, the book then addresses myths about the unitary state and its ambivalence about the uses of law in governance. On issues of intellectual property (Mertha), public security (Tanner) and re-education through labour (Fu), the state is shown as significantly disaggregated and thus subject to the dynamics of bureaucratic politics. Far from ignoring law, the state molds legal and regulatory enforcement measures to suit narrow bureaucratic interests. The shift from legal to administrative enforcement in intellectual property serves to ensure that enforcement can be controlled at least partially by a variety of relevant government organizations. In the area of public security and the control of social unrest, the state is seen to deploy the resources of repression in support of emerging elites—the dilemma of “Brazilianization.” Once again, instrumentalist use of law to preserve parochial interests reveals the extent to which the state is fractured, while also suggesting that indeed the state does take law seriously—although only to a limited degree and for limited purposes. Use of law for parochial organizational purposes is also evident in the institution of *laojiao* (re-education through labour), where financial motives combined with the goal of state control to support a “penal economy.” These legal arrangements suggest uses of law in China that depart from foreign expectations but are nonetheless real.

China’s legislative activities over the past twenty years have resulted in a myriad of laws and associated regulations upon which China rests its claim to have established a socialist rule of law system. This claim is accepted in
many quarters. Yet scholars as well as casual observers are bound to ask how does the state view its relationship with law and how do members of society engage with the system. This illuminating volume suggests that the state is bound to deploy law in the service of its interests—even when those interests are highly disaggregated and debated. As well, members of society are shown to be willing to overcome significant obstacles to take law at face value to pursue ideals of justice. To a very significant extent, the future of law in China will depend on the outcome of this tension between state instrumentalism and social idealism. This important book offers glimpses of this tension and will be an invaluable addition to the growing literature on Chinese law.

The University of British Columbia, Canada


A.S. Bhalla and Shufang Qiu first seek to define the knotty term “poverty” in their instructive study of the economic status of the non-Han peoples of China. They reject the definition—sometimes used by international financial organizations—that poverty is an insufficiency of resources, particularly food, below a basic minimum living standard. Instead, they adopt Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach, which focuses on the lack of “basic opportunities of material well-being” (p. 2) as an indicator of poverty. They emphasize access to education and health as criteria for the measurement of poverty.

Using those standards, Bhalla and Qiu discover a disproportionately high level of poverty among the minorities in China. Although the non-Han make up about 8 percent of the population, they constitute more than 40 percent of those in poverty. Bhalla and Qiu contend that a culture of poverty does not explain this discrepancy between Han and non-Han. They point out, for example, that the rate of poverty among minorities in urban areas is not significantly higher than that for the Han. Moreover, increasing government investment and support for minorities since the 1990s have translated into significant economic growth. Thus, the two authors conclude that “the reasons for the backwardness of the Chinese minorities are largely economic rather than cultural” (p. 72).

According to Bhalla and Qiu, more important factors than culture account for poverty among the Chinese minorities. Geographic location is critical, for minorities living in the rural areas, particularly in remote mountainous regions, are more likely to be poor. Means of economic livelihood are also vital. For example, in Southwest China, where many minority groups reside, “the bulk of the minority populations … is engaged
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in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, activities which generate very low and unstable income” (p. 51). Finally, educational levels play a prominent role because the illiterates or semi-illiterates, a disproportionate number of whom are minorities, have fewer opportunities to escape from poverty. In short, deprivation rather than inherent cultural characteristics of the minorities yield a better explanation for poverty.

Bhalla and Qiu conclude with an evaluation of the Chinese government’s poverty alleviation programme. Although they applaud the Western Development Strategy, the government’s effort to promote economic growth and to reduce poverty by focusing on the relatively neglected interior of the country, they harbour doubts about its efficacy for minorities. They assert that the programme does not reach the poorest of the poor, many of whom live in remote areas. Moreover, they add that the new strategy has often benefited the Han more than the minorities in the so-called minority autonomous areas.

The authors advocate a pro-poor policy that goes beyond economic growth and a trickle-down approach as an effective poverty alleviation programme. They point out that the government needs to make a concerted effort to reach the minorities in the more remote regions of the country. In sum, their book includes solid research as well as pragmatic policy proposals, and one hopes that its highly inflated cost will not deter potential readers.

City University of New York, USA

Morris Rossabi


Gerald Postiglione and his colleagues have put together a thoughtful, uplifting and ultimately discouraging look at primary and secondary education for rural, ethnic, migrant and female children in China. Thoughtful, because they challenge the often unexamined assumption that the primary role of schools should be the preparation of students for the market economy. Uplifting, because they focus on the students who fall outside the educational mainstream. Discouraging, because in the end they find that such children are falling further and further behind the mainstream of Chinese society, unable to compete for jobs but often no longer connected to their geographical and cultural roots.

The authors combine current fieldwork in poor, rural, ethnic areas with rigorous analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The book’s chapters, while taking perspectives ranging from Tibetan girls’ boarding schools to middle-class ambitions in coastal China, present a timely and fresh
outlook on a significant problem—seemingly intractable inequality in education despite significant reform efforts.

Often surprising statistics and findings bring home the impact of the overall thrust of the volume:

- The good news: In the year 2000, 20 percent of the country’s populated rural areas had not attained the legally guaranteed nine years of education. By 2005, the figure had dropped to 10 percent.
- Despite a 60 percent rural population, less than a quarter of the funds for education went to rural areas.
- China currently ranks 99th out of 177 countries in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and educates nearly 25 percent of the world’s students.
- Schools have been unable to turn Tibetans into suitable competitors with outside migrants for the key positions offered by the developing market economy.
- Students in many towns and cities receive free education; students from rural areas—whose families and schools can least afford it—have to pay.
- The absolute number of female illiterates increased each year, as well as their proportion among all illiterates. Every year approximately one million new illiterates emerged throughout the country, the great majority of whom were girls who dropped out of school.
- Poor health coincides with poverty and could have an important influence on schooling, and indicators of health predict schooling outcomes net of conventional measures of socioeconomic background. In other words, ill health predicts schooling outcomes for children.
- Yunnan local rural firms are seeking ability to relate theory to practice, open-mindedness, initiative and a sense of responsibility. Classroom teaching, following the centralized and exam-oriented curriculum, is decoupled from the needs of the local firms that are supposed to lift graduates and the rural communities they serve out of poverty.
- In many areas of the Northwest, families preferred to send girls to school, because they were not as strong as boys, who could better do the hard work, nor was it culturally appropriate to send girls out to the pastures for herding.

The overall impact of the book is a challenge to the conventional wisdom of economic development—that education, in and of itself, can alleviate poverty and promote economic growth. Several of the authors believe that education also changes its participants from within, as individuals with greater agency, as family members with the potential to realign family relations, and as community members with wider horizons. This book outlines the complexities and contradictions of education for the least well off Chinese
citizens who have the most to gain—and to lose—from the quality of schooling to which they have access.

Johns Hopkins University, USA

KATHRYN MOHRMAN


Like Wang Mingming and Jing Jun, Adam Yuet Chau is an anthropologist of contemporary China, born in the Mainland and educated in the West. He is thus helping to revive (on the Mainland; Taiwan anthropologists have been doing similar things for much longer) a tradition founded by Fei Xiaotong in the 1930s. This is salutary, for if there is no reason for a native anthropologist to be superior to an outsider in unpacking the logic of his own culture, he will at least bring different perspectives to bear than a non-native, and the confrontation of native, non-native, theory and fieldwork will advance our understanding of Chinese society.

Chau’s Miraculous Response is the result of 18 months of fieldwork focused on the Black Dragon King Temple in Shaanbei, north-central China, the region whose best-known city is Yan’an, symbol of the Communist movement during a crucial period in the rise of Mao’s China. Despite this historical resonance, Chau’s book is extraordinary in that it paints a portrait of contemporary popular religion in this region almost without reference to the Communist revolution. Indeed, despite the modern Chinese state’s avowed intentions to “reform” popular religion (and Western scholarly tendencies to highlight these intentions), Chau’s study convincingly illustrates that such policies were unevenly applied. In the case of Shaanbei, the only lasting rupture in popular religious culture in the modern and contemporary periods came during the Cultural Revolution. Seen in this light, the “revival” of popular religion in rural post-Mao China is not terribly surprising and demands little theorizing. Chau states explicitly (p. 240) that his case study illustrates the limits of reading all popular religious activities as acts of “resistance” to the heavy-handed modernizing state.

Indeed, the thrust of Chau’s work underscores the embeddedness of popular religion and popular religious activities in China’s rural culture, and here, too, he is most convincing. Living in the temple and spending months with the temple manager and others engaged in temple business, Chau stresses not the exoticism of Shaanbei popular religion but rather its familiarity. He links the revival of the temple—even if short-lived in historical terms, the destruction of the Cultural Revolution was considerable—to the withdrawal of the Communist Party from the micro-management of rural life and the subsequent reemergence of relatively autonomous social
organizations in the countryside. “Doing popular religion,” the subtitle of Chau’s volume, is meant to ground the nuts and bolts of religious life (building or renovating temples, holding temple festivals) in the realities of rural Chinese society. He points out, for example, the similarities between funerals and temple festivals in the social organization of the work involved both in the rituals and (most particularly) in the complex hosting of such events. Although I oversimplify, Chau suggests that popular religion has been revived less because of a “spiritual vacuum” and more because the space has opened up, allowing the reconstruction of a social site that many Chinese find useful and profitable—in all senses of the word. Money is made through temple festivals. Political capital is accumulated through successful leadership of the temple community and negotiation of the various challenges to successful management.

In sum, Chau’s excellent volume serves both as an ethnography of a little-studied region as well as an invitation to scholars to seek to bring together studies of popular religion, both within China and elsewhere in the Chinese diaspora, for he at least holds out the hypothesis that differences are less important than similarities.

Université de Montréal, Quebec, Canada

DAVID OWENBY


Higashinakano Shudo (Osamichi) is a Nanjing denier. This is the English translation of a book he published in Japanese in 1998, plus two essays written since then. In August 2006 he lost a lawsuit served by Nanjing survivor Xia Shuqin over his assertion that she fabricated an account of her family’s murder (pp. 156-63). Although the PRC law court cannot force compliance abroad, it ordered Higashinakano to pay Xia damages, and his original publisher Tendensha, to recall the book from circulation and halt further production.

In a nutshell, the thesis of this controversial book holds that reliable Japanese, Chinese and Western primary sources dating from 1937-8 fail to support claims of a massacre with hundreds of thousands of victims—claims that emerged only after the war ended. The thesis is largely valid when phrased at this level of generalization, but the devil is in the details, and this is where the author falls short; e.g., what makes a source “reliable,” why were so few generated at the time, or how crucial is the number of deaths? A short review precludes examining other Japanese atrocities at Nanjing, so I look at only one issue: Higashinakano’s definition of “massacre.”

“Denial” brings to mind a total repudiation of the fact that Japanese troops killed Chinese in the tens of thousands at Nanjing, but Higashinakano
fully acknowledges that fact. He also grants that the Japanese committed rape, arson, pillage and other crimes—albeit far less than alleged in “unreliable” Western and Chinese accounts. What he denies is the claim that Japanese killings were a “massacre,” defined as the wholesale murder of non-belligerents under international law in 1937. This definition of course excludes the killing of combatants, but also that of plain-clothes troops and other Chinese men, women and children suspected of being guerrillas, or what we now call “unlawful insurgents.” Illegal killings that did occur, Higashinakano holds, took the form of unintended collateral damage, which is tragic but unavoidable in any situation of armed conflict.

Western observers condemned the Japanese for capturing and killing Chinese “ex-soldiers,” but Higashinakano defends that practice on the grounds that they had no rights enjoyed by POWs under international law. This was because their commander had fled the scene and had not supervised their capitulation and surrender of arms. Moreover, the defeated ex-soldiers violated laws of war by casting off uniforms, donning plain clothes, and merging with civilians when they fled into an International Safety Zone reserved for bona fide refugees, which was supposed to be fully demilitarized. The Japanese considered these men to be guerrillas and suspected them of plotting uprisings from that refugee area. Was this fear genuine or just a pretext to “massacre” those men, especially since most discarded their arms? What lends cogency to the author’s argument is his disclosure of the fact that these ex-soldiers retained access to weapons. Japanese troops in the Safety Zone uncovered huge caches of Chinese civilian clothes, along with 7000 rounds of live ammunition, 39,000 tank shells, 55,122 hand grenades, 1963 rifles and revolvers, and four tanks—but, admittedly, no weapons of mass destruction (p. 122).

This denial book thus differs from those that say the Holocaust never happened. Higashinakano gets many things wrong, but he submits a provocative argument about what constitutes a “massacre”—one that supporters of today’s war in Iraq must, by force of logic, find compelling.
cosmological congruence, while structures such as the Imperial College and Confucian Temple (wen miao) made visibly manifest the link between power and civil culture. When Chinese states began to legitimate themselves through association with new principles such as modernity and nationalism in the twentieth century, capital cities followed suit, symbolically expressing these values with new forms of civic architecture, paved roads, electric streetlamps, and so on. However, values such as nationalism and modernity could no longer be expressed physically and in space by a limited number of structures alone. The very nature of these concepts, as they were understood at the time, demanded that administrative legitimacy be expressed in the social character of the city as well. This trend was to some degree evident in other Chinese cities, but nowhere was it more evident than in the capital, because it both represented and served as a model for the nation in ways no other city could.

Zwia Lipkin’s important monograph explores efforts by municipal administrators in Nanjing to refashion elements of the city’s social structure during the “Nanjing decade” of 1927-37, a period when the newly reinvented Nationalist state sought to create a “New Society for a New Capital” (chapter 2). The work specifically focuses on government attempts to eliminate “deviants” from the city’s social body. Separate chapters deal in turn with administrative efforts to purge the city of refugees who periodically flooded the capital: shanty-dwelling residents, disorderly rickshaw pullers, prostitutes and beggars. In each case Lipkin discusses how popular perceptions of the group in question changed over times, traces shifting policy approaches to managing the “problem,” and offers measured judgments regarding the relative success and failures of the polices. Although each of the chapters has much to offer, this reviewer found the chapter on efforts to ban prostitution to be especially interesting, because debates about how to deal with prostitution in Nanjing were especially affected by the city’s status as capital. After all, taxes on prostitution significantly contributed to state-building projects elsewhere in China during the republican period; thus, the perception of prostitutes as “useless to the state” was far from automatic. Modernizing urban administrators in other Chinese cities may have more closely agreed about how government should deal with beggars, or disorderly rickshaw drivers, or refugees, but the push to ban prostitutes from Nanjing was directly tied to its status as capital and the consequent imperative to present itself as a social model to China, and as a social showcase to the world.

This is a tightly focused work and it is no criticism to note that there is much about the urban history of Nanjing during this period that the book does not address. Although Lipkin discusses public reactions to the various government policies, this work is not intended as a definitive voicing of the subaltern targets of these measures. Nor is it meant to be a sweeping consideration of the urban history of Nanjing during this period. If readers
find themselves curious to know more about other aspects of the capital’s social and cultural history that were not directly related to the social engineering efforts described, Lipkin should, if anything, be commended, for in so persuasively arguing for the significance of Nanjing history during the “Nanjing decade,” this work should serve to stimulate further future work on this place and time.

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RICHARD BELSKY


This aptly titled work examines the longue durée of Beijing huiguan from roughly 1500 to 1949 in order to shed light on the dynamic and changing role of these institutions. Whereas other studies of native-place sojourner associations have commonly focused on the merchant or trade associations (huiguan and gongsuo) common in other major cities, Belsky’s focus is on the unique and heretofore understudied scholar-official lodges that predominated among huiguan in the capital city, where they served the large resident population of sojourning metropolitan officials, visiting provincial officials, and periodic influxes of examination candidates. These associations came to function as bi-directional conduits of information, influence and power, representing the locality in the capital and mediating between the state and the locality.

Belsky’s study both builds upon and departs from prior studies of Chinese cities that have reexamined Weber’s contention that native-place ties and urban sojourner associations functioned as obstacles to the social, political and intellectual transformations associated with modernity. Belsky traces the institutionalization of native-place ties in Beijing that began as a result of the decision by the Ming Yongle emperor to move the capital to that city. Sharing Ho Ping-ti’s emphasis on a Chinese developmental trajectory that was independent from Western impact, Belsky reveals how the voluntary associations of sojourning scholar-officials gradually produced new social and political dynamics with far-reaching and surprising consequences.

First, scholar-official lodges contributed to the construction of “a new sense of national identity” (p. 16). Belsky pays particular attention to the urban ecology of huiguan sites in the city. Although the lodges were constituted according to native-place ties, the dense concentration of associations in the Xuanan ward promoted interaction across China’s imperial political class, drawn from around the empire, a community that shared an elite ritual culture. The point is important, if at times Belsky seems
a bit eager to insist that native-place networks operated “without generating overt kinds of regional tensions” (p. 115).

Second, Belsky effectively maps the “mutually beneficial relationship” that developed between the state and Beijing huiguan. In a fascinating discussion of “chopped bonds” (pp. 169-74), a legally mandated system of mutual responsibility among civil officials that required those who wished to conduct a range of activities in the capital to obtain a bond from a compatriot metropolitan official, Belsky reveals not simply how native-place ties became vested with state interests, but also how the bond fees became a major source of financial support for metropolitan officials. The study goes further to detail how native-place channels of communication “were constant and significant factors in governmental action,” amounting to a “constitutional mechanism of negotiation between state and society” (p. 194). One of the most engaging, if somewhat undeveloped, ideas in this regard is the suggestion that huiguan structured an “evolving system of native-place representation” in the capital (p. 260).

Given the occupational identification of the scholar-official class with the state, it is important if perhaps not surprising to note the striking degree to which “their ‘corporateness’ was bound up with the state” (p. 166). More intriguing is Belsky’s third interpretive emphasis: the way in which the interior social spaces of these associations—their stages and banqueting facilities, which enjoyed relative autonomy from state-penetration prior to the modern period—served as sites for public meetings that conveyed new political conceptions of the state. Belsky tracks the native-place organization that underlay the scholar-official petitions that were integral to the reform movement of 1895-98, when huiguan interiors opened to political gatherings that transcended native-place lines. The ways in which huiguan space increasingly came to shelter political activity led, in the Republican era, to restrictions on associational autonomy and increased state penetration and, finally, to the dissolution of huiguan property by the new Communist state.

It is not possible in the space of a short review to do justice to this rich and provocative study. Belsky’s meticulous, at times ingenious research and nuanced arguments add substantially to our understanding of Beijing social and political history, state-locality relations in the late imperial period, and the complex functions of native-place associations and ties across the late imperial era and into the modern period.

*University of Oregon, USA*  

*Bryna Goodman*

Situated in today’s southwest tip of China’s Yunnan province and home to the Tai people for many centuries, a crescent-shaped area from Tengyue to Sipsongpanna has hardly fallen into the purview of historians, even though it has attracted considerable attention from anthropologists in recent decades. As the first book in English to study this region astride China, Myanmar and Thailand in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, C. Patterson Giersch’s work fills a gap in both Qing frontier studies and cross-border relationships in the Sino-Southeast Asian borderlands. Most importantly, the author tries to place Tai polities at the centre of his investigation and narration.

Following a well-researched and concise introduction to the history of the region prior to the 1720s, the first part of the book examines the process by which the Crescent was incorporated into the Qing empire and colonized by the Qing military and migrants starting from the 1720s when the Yongzheng emperor of the Qing adopted a more proactive policy towards the indigenous peoples in the Southwest. Besides examining the dynamics of the Qing engagements in the region, which were characterized by both draconian subjugation and accommodation, Giersch also looks into the Crescent’s relationships with its other neighbours, namely Burma (Myanmar) and Siam (Thailand), thus placing the region’s transformation in an international setting. In the second part, Giersch discusses the social and cultural changes in the Crescent. Instead of focusing on state policy and agents, the author turns to actors at the societal level; namely, the indigenes, the Chinese migrants and the merchants, who made their own marks on the new cultural landscape that emerged from the century-long interaction between the diverse ethnic and social groups. Also in this part, Giersch explores the vigorous long-distance trade between the Crescent and the hinterland of China and its Southeast Asian neighbours, which has stimulated commercialization in the region since the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Giersch breaks new ground in several areas in this pioneer work. First, the author is balanced and judicious in examining Qing intrusion into and the incorporation of the Crescent. Refusing to follow the conventional wisdom that Chinese expansion was always prompted by the desire to Confucianize the non-Chinese peripheries, Giersch takes into full consideration the circumstances that not only played a critical role in the decision of expansion, but also in the implementation of the expansion. In so doing, he carefully delineates the compromises and modifications that the Qing had to make in the process. Secondly, Giersch offers a refreshing discussion of acculturation in the Crescent. Instead of treating the Tai people
as passive victims, he takes pains to grasp Tai views and strategies in their coping with the imperial powers of China, Burma and Siam, and interacting with the newcomers to the region. Meanwhile, he differentiates the Chinese immigrants from the Qing state, regarding them as individuals who had their own interests to pursue on this frontier, and who were sometimes in conflict with the Qing authorities themselves. As Giersch depicts in the second part, both the indigenes and newcomers were subject to acculturation, which resulted in a reality in which both sides adopted something from the other. What is not always clear to readers, however, is the Crescent’s position vis-à-vis the “Yunnan frontier” as a whole, as the latter encompasses a host of diverse frontier, ethnic and economic issues during the period, and the Crescent was only one “frontier” in this province. Overall, this work sets up a new criterion for studying an ambiguous borderland region. It deserves to be a must-read for both the students of Qing imperialism and anybody who is interested in frontier politics and culture in general.

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YINGCONG DAI


The Social Life of Opium in China is the compelling biography of “‘Mr. Opium’ from his birth as a recreational item to his old age as a social icon” (pp. 1-2). Zheng Yangwen centres opium at the nexus of consumption patterns in China from the Ming to the present to shed light on opium’s transformation from a treasured medicinal item to a widespread recreational product and, eventually, to a banned substance.

The volume is structured in a chronological manner, carefully situating opium in diverse social and cultural contexts. Zheng engages with a wealth of Chinese and foreign sources, ranging from notes, jottings and pornographic works to government publications produced by an impressive range of authors including, among others, no less a personage than the Daoguang emperor, social theorists and missionaries. Zheng traces opium’s shift from within the highest, myth-making levels of society to the broad masses via a “McDonaldization” of consumption that eventuated in its condemnation.

Opium’s many guises are revealed, throughout its transformation into a social icon. Zheng associates opium’s spread with consumption patterns, demonstrating how, for example, tea ceremonies, meal service, and tobacco smoking shared similarities with, and paved the way for, opium’s emergence as a recreational product. Major contributions of this study include Zheng’s
stress on the vibrancy of late imperial China’s cosmopolitan consumer culture, the Chinese craze for foreign goods, and opium’s application in the “art of sex.” Zheng argues that by the late 1700s opium fulfilled public and private functions as elite consumers deemed smoking opium the epitome of “polite and fashionable” (tì mian) behaviour. Opium performed as a taste-maker and trendsetter, until its political redefinition in the early 1800s.

Zheng maps an intriguing picture of opium’s travels through China’s political institutions. In Beijing, the Ming Wan Li emperor famously absented himself from the court for decades because of his affair with opium. Of even greater long-term significance, however, was opium’s migration through the Qing “avoidance” policy (huibi). Avoidance was meant to reduce corruption by transferring officials, but it also, inadvertently, spread consciousness of elite patterns of opium consumption, thus popularizing a product and practices that grew to threaten the very fabric of Chinese society. While officials cloaked themselves in the rhetoric of Confucian moral responsibility, many abandoned their duties to engage in ruinous relationships with opium. As the consumption of opium spread from the elite to the masses, its “fatal consequences” were made visible—and deemed criminal. Significantly, latter-day political leaders from Cixi to Mao Zedong publicly condemned opium while remaining cognizant of its attractions: Cixi apparently had a propensity for the pipe while Mao deployed opium as a revenue-raising product to guarantee the survival of the Communist Party.

As with the most successful of biographers, Zheng Yangwen breathes invigorating new life into a subject already assumed to be known intimately. The Social Life of Opium in China will no doubt inspire further queries into the history of opium and consumption patterns in China, and across the globe.

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NORMAN SMITH


Under the one-party dictatorship of Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) rule from 1945 to 1987, the hegemonic discourses in Taiwan characterized both the form of economic development and the content of national identity as something immutably Chinese. Since the lifting of martial law in 1987, however, Native Taiwanese have openly challenged these discourses. Regarding this period as “a paradigmatic case of contested national identity in a postcolonial situation” (p. 5), Scott Simon engaged in anthropology of work and ethnography of identity among the Native Taiwanese leather
tanners in southern Taiwan in the late 1990s to understand how they constructed their own identities as Taiwanese. In contrast to both sides of the Taiwanese political spectrum, and many Western academics, Simon rejects the notion that culture can explain Taiwanese life-worlds or metanarratives. Instead, he argues that political and economic frameworks are more important than culture in subtly shaping the practices and identity of the leather tanners.

By frameworks, Simon means many things, including the legacy of Japanese colonialism, the autocracy of Kuomintang rule and, most importantly, the hegemonic discourse of Chineseness. During the period of Kuomintang rule, the government “embarked on a forced sinicization of Taiwan” (p. 34), suppressing an independent, Native Taiwanese identity. In a series of ideological campaigns, the Kuomintang sought to create and inculcate a sense of Chineseness among the Taiwanese. Most pertinent to the leather tanning industry, Simon argues, was the characterization of small family-based firms as a “Chinese form” of production and the emphasis on the good “Confucian” woman’s economic role in the “Living Rooms as Factories” campaign.

Through surveys and personal interviews with some 68 tannery owners, Simon shows how their life and business narratives reject cultural Chineseness by stressing their bureaucratic efficiency, economic modernity and rationality. Corporate tanneries emphasize transnational norms of business organization and tap into globalization narratives. Women who either own or manage tanneries also reject the “outer/inner” male/female dichotomy normalized by Confucian philosophy. Simon also shows that tannery managers often rely on jin-cheng-bi (the human touch) or kam-cheng (emotional bonds between people) in labour relations, which might be characterized as a Chinese cultural trait; however, actual control of labour relies more heavily on the selection of docile workers than on cultural norms. Even the decision to invest in Mainland China, although made easier by a shared language, is motivated by the desire to move production closer to leather finishing companies in China. The tanners’ life and business narratives are part of a “fiercely contested battle” (p. 147) between Chinese and Taiwanese identities, which Simon celebrates not in itself, but as a manifestation of the decline of hegemonic discourses of Chineseness.

Simon’s research on the life histories of Taiwanese leather tanners is excellent, but his use of “Chinese culture” is quite essentialized and is neither applicable to historical nor contemporary China, much less Taiwan. This particular problem stems from the disjointed nature of Simon’s book—the connection between leather tanning and identity politics seems to necessarily rely on an ossified notion of Chinese culture.

That aside, this undergraduate-oriented monograph discusses many serious, relevant and contentious issues about the economic life, identity politics and ethnic tensions of present-day Taiwanese society. For this reason,
I can wholeheartedly recommend this judiciously compact book for undergraduate discussion courses on contemporary East Asia. Scholars will be more familiar with the issues discussed by Simon, but can still benefit greatly from his analysis of the political and economic frameworks shaping life narratives in Taiwan.

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LANE J. HARRIS


In 1954, Taiwan’s plains indigenous peoples (pingpuzu) lost the indigenous legal status they had under Japanese rule because the Chinese Nationalist Party found them to be “civilized” like Han Chinese (p. 4). Even amidst the identity politics of DPP-era Taiwan, they have not regained status as indigenous peoples (yuanzhu minzu). Largely assimilated to Hoklo lifestyles, most pingpu individuals identify as Han Taiwanese or Chinese and are so identified by household registration offices, legislators and others.

Plains indigenous peoples have long demanded legal recognition. They receive little support from established indigenous groups, who fear plains indigenous communities would absorb resources currently allocated to their own projects. There is also a strong perception in those communities that legal recognition of pingpuzu would lead Taiwanese of mixed ancestry to claim status like the Métis of Canada. Since that would include the majority of Taiwan’s population, it could dilute the rights they claim as indigenous under international law. The pingpuzu are thus in a dangerous and frustrating state of liminality, trapped betwixt and between accepted ethnic and legal categories.

The pingpuzu movement is sometimes identified with the Taiwanese independence movement, as its adherents stake an identity as non-Chinese in spite of the fact that few people speak pingpu languages and even pingpu deities have been assimilated to Han-Chinese culture (p. 68). There are already anthropological studies of the pingpuzu in a long historical perspective (Melissa Brown, Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004; John Shepherd, Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), yet little about their social movement. It is high time that something was written about them from the perspective of indigenous human rights. Jolan Hsieh, a pingpu activist and assistant professor at Taiwan’s National Dong Hwa University, fills this niche.

This book, apparently the publication of her Ph.D. dissertation, is a factual introduction to pingpuzu demands. In the beginning chapters, Hsieh
frames the issue in terms of human rights and identity-based social movements, including a review of indigenous rights in the UN system. She then provides a six-page “historical analysis” of Taiwan, a stream-of-consciousness auto-ethnographic essay, and analysis of a survey she did with 172 individuals. She concludes that it is necessary to promote plains indigenous identity to gain legal recognition and the right to self-determination.

Using a feminist, self-reflexive methodology and writing style, Hsieh divulges her emotions as she conducted this research. The voice of the committed activist thus emerges much more strongly than that of the academic. Unlike the academic books of Brown and Shepherd, it does not make an important theoretical contribution to disciplinary debates, but that is not its purpose. It makes its contribution elsewhere—in the struggle for indigenous human rights in Taiwan. This is commendable. In fact, it is vital to the well-being of her community. It took courage to publish such a book at the beginning of her academic career, and that should be rewarded.

Like the pingpuzu themselves, this book is liminal, betwixt and between the categories of the academy. It may be of some interest to activists in the international indigenous movement who already know about Taiwan’s indigenous peoples and wish to learn more about the country’s unrecognized peoples. It would be a useful addition to university libraries wishing to acquire a comprehensive collection in Taiwan studies or indigenous studies. The audience that needs this book the most, however, consists of students enrolled in training courses for social activists, held in Taiwan by the Indigenous Peoples Council, the Ketagalan Institute, or the Presbyterian Church. For that reason, one hopes that Dr. Hsieh will either translate this book into Chinese or write another one for that purpose.

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Scott Simon

JAPAN IN A DYNAMIC ASIA: Coping with New Security Challenges.

Territorial disputes with several neighbouring countries, conflicts over the meaning of the prime minister’s visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, escalating tensions with North Korea, the dispatch of defence forces to Iraq, and the emergence of China as a major power are just some of the array of foreign policy challenges currently facing the Japanese government in its foreign relations. This timely collection of articles analyzes a number of issues, both bilateral and multilateral, in Japan’s relations with other Asian countries. It explicitly avoids focusing on the US-Japan dyad and, in fact, deals with some
areas that have been relatively under-represented in the existing literature on Japan’s foreign policy.

Most of the contributors are currently affiliated with the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Hawai’i, while other authors appear to have had past connections. The book consists of 12 chapters, with the first and last serving as the introduction and the conclusion, respectively. Yoichiro Sato describes the transitions in Japan’s strategic landscape. John Miller provides a broad overview of Japan as an outlier. In the third chapter, Sato summarizes Japan’s role in emerging FTA agreements in the Asia-Pacific. Denny Roy outlines the growing security implications and tensions in recent China-Japan relations. The fifth chapter features Gregory Noble’s analysis on the constants and the new developments in Japan’s special relationship with Taiwan. The sixth and seventh chapters relate to Japan’s relations with the two Koreas. Seongho Sheen provides a description of Japan-South Korea relations, while David Fouse tackles Japan’s post-Cold War policies towards North Korea. Rouben Azizian dissects Japan’s relations with Russia and the current lack of a definite paradigm. Anthony Smith looks at Japan’s relationships with several Southeast Asian countries. Yoichiro Sato, in the tenth chapter, argues that Japan’s relations with Australia are looking for stable bonds. Satu Limaye looks at the relations between Japan and India in the post-Cold War period. Finally, Satu Limaye presents an overview of Japan’s relations with Asia.

The volume has several merits. First, the topics covered are timely. For example, Sato’s paper on the FTA, Roy’s chapter on China-Japan relations, and Fouse’s contribution on Japan’s North Korea policy deal with issues that can be found in the newspapers regularly in 2006. Second, several of the chapters use multilingual sources. Sato makes extensive use of Japanese newspapers in his contributions, Noble uses Chinese and Japanese materials, Fouse cites some Japanese secondary sources, and Azizian uses Russian newspapers. Third, all the contributions provide useful empirical details that make it useful for either the classroom or as policy background papers, especially for bilateral relations that have not received much attention. For instance, while there have been several works in Japanese on Japan-India relations in the pre-1945 period, Limaye’s chapter on post-1945 Japan-India relations provides a good overview on a period that has been relatively overlooked. Fourth, each chapter is written in a concise, clear and accessible style.

The book is not free of shortcomings, however. As with many edited volumes, the overall quality is somewhat uneven. Further, the objectives of many of the chapters appear to be to provide descriptions rather than analyses, as reflected in the relative paucity of critical engagement with existing literature. Many of the chapters would have benefited from clearer statements regarding claims for either conceptual or empirical value-added. This would have been particularly useful since many of the contributions seem to be based largely on journalistic and secondary sources.
Regardless, the overall strengths of the volume outweigh its shortcomings. The book provides concise and accessible overviews on a range of issues that should be useful for readers interested in Japan’s current relations with other Asian nation-states.

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HYUNG GU LYNN


This book, the output of a project with the same title undertaken by the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo, consists of nine chapters (chapters 2 through 10) on various aspects of Japanese management. The book also contains the editors’ introduction and conclusion (chapters 1 and 11). The broad areas covered by the contributed chapters are as follows: organizational behaviour, human resource management and learning; multinational firms; and finance and corporate governance.

This book addresses predicting the future directions for so-called post-WW II Japanese management practices (JMPs), typically characterized by employment relationships (life-time employment, seniority-based wages, enterprise unions); close inter-firm relationships (keiretsu groupings, bank-based corporate governance system); and the just-in-time-based Toyota production system (chapter 10), accompanied by near-perfect-quality management and kaizen mechanisms. In many ways, JMPs formed an internally consistent system in equilibrium in terms of their stakeholders’ incentives, and implementing any change in it would be difficult and cause serious system-wide problems.

J-firms believed JMPs were working efficiently, producing high-quality products at globally competitive prices. But such desirable properties of JMPs turned out to be realizable only when long-term and stable business relationships existed between J-firms and their stakeholders (e.g., employees, their corporate shareholders, keiretsu suppliers). These desirable business relationships eroded significantly following the burst of the massive financial bubble in 1990.

However, many pointed out problems with this system even during its 1980s heyday: particularly its exclusive nature, that the system favoured insiders (e.g., keiretsu suppliers, prime-aged male regular workers who were hired as new graduates) and was unwilling to accept outsiders into the system (e.g., foreign or non-keiretsu suppliers, female workers and mid-career job seekers). In J-firms’ thinking, only the economic efficiency of the JMPs mattered, and the possible social costs arising from their inability, for
example, to buy from foreign suppliers and to treat female workers fairly could be ignored. In the 1990s, the costs arising from the system’s weaknesses became overwhelming. Furthermore, these costs were significantly magnified by the massive low-cost pressures of globalization, which began to affect the Japanese economy at about the same time.

In the early 1990s, because of their existing long-term business relationships, J-firms could not take advantage of globalized markets for low-cost suppliers, workers and outsourcing opportunities, but their US and European competitors did. Yet, to survive, J-firms had to cope with such low-cost pressures from overseas by relinquishing some of the traditional long-term business relationships with their business partners (e.g., regular employees, *keiretsu* suppliers) (chapters 1, 6, 9). J-firms did this and, as predicted, massive system-wide problems arose, putting the JMPs’ system out of equilibrium.

Globalization also brought new international standards (often accompanied by new Japanese laws) in business practices that the J-firms had to observe (chapters 7, 8), such as: new accounting rules (e.g., consolidated financial statements, market-value-based reporting); and corporate governance practices (e.g., Japanese and foreign shareholders, both individual and institutional, demanding transparent information disclosure and share value maximization, corporate social responsibility). This caused more disturbance to the JMP system, which was already in disequilibrium. (JPSs as related to the recent changes in Japanese corporate governance mechanisms are discussed in Masao Nakamura, “Japanese Corporate Governance Practices in the Post-Bubble Era: Implications of Institutional and Legal Reforms in the 1990s and Early 2000s,” *International Journal of Disclosure and Governance*, vol. 3, August/September, 2006.)

The difficulties J-firms are having in adjusting their management system to these new realities are competently addressed in the included chapters. How J-firms can create a new, efficient system while incorporating the globalization factors discussed above on one hand and the demand for more socially acceptable behaviour (e.g., employing more women, market orientation, CSR) on another remains to be seen. (See Nakajima, “Japanese Society under Marketization and Globalization,” in M. Nakamura, ed., *Changing Japanese Business, Economy and Society: Globalization of Post-Bubble Japan*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2004, pp. 144-57.)

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Masao Nakamura
Scholars who study a particular Asian society always try to find lessons that provide insights into more general questions as well. Leonard Schoppa’s book *Race for the Exits* is one of the few to reach both goals. He discusses in depth the change (or lack of it) in Japanese policies for business and policies to promote women in the workplace. Yet he simultaneously provides the reader with tools to explain why the process of policy change can vary so much in similar areas facing change.

He uses Albert O. Hirschman’s book *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) to explain why some actors are less likely to try to influence policy in Japan (voice), instead simply choosing to exit from the political process and pursue other goals. Hirschman observed that when the costs of political exit are very low or very high, reform is likely. Schoppa’s example of low exit cost is financial market reform, where firms that could easily move financial transactions offshore while keeping operations in Japan. Policymakers responded quickly to this, changing the financial market structure to draw back these transactions. Schoppa’s example of very high exit costs is the policy toward care giving for the elderly. Japanese women could not avoid these obligations under the Japanese system, and they lobbied effectively for assistance in caring for elderly relatives.

Yet, as Schoppa points out, these same actors (business managers and women) reacted quite differently to issues of business regulation and policies to encourage greater workforce participation of women. Why, he asks, should the same actors take such a different approach here? Competitive firms faced higher local costs due to an overregulated economy, but they could slowly exit by increasing their production abroad. Knowing they had this option, they could ignore the policy making. Uncompetitive firms thus controlled policy making and, not surprisingly, change was slow.

Something similar happened in policies for women’s workforce participation. Women chose to slowly “exit” from the preferred position of combining work and family. There was no crisis, since they either chose to maintain the traditional norm of leaving the workforce after marriage, or they chose to forego childbearing for a career. Policies for increased workforce participation after marriage, and the accompanying increased fertility, have been a failure.

Schoppa tells this story with passion and clear exposition. Readers who know Japan well can skip some chapters on the postwar system, and readers looking for wider application can focus on the early theoretical chapters.

I hesitate to suggest criticism of such a stimulating book. For this reviewer, though, Schoppa’s idea of “exit” is a bit too strong. Japanese policy seems to
have a safety valve to allow the firms that are “a little better than normal” to get extra returns to stay in the system. A well-performing electronics firm can still sell product sourced abroad back into Japan with little penalty, and it can still steal market share in the protected markets from less efficient Japanese competitors. Why rock the policy boat if you can both gain from foreign investment and profit from the closed system? The same case can be made for women in the labour force. Women who choose to exit from childrearing are not punished, and are even, as Schoppa notes in his Toyota example, encouraged to stay after marriage if they are considered to be of management caliber. So it is not so much a race for the exit as a gentle stroll, inside and outside the exit gate.

Read the book to get a better idea of why the “good” people don’t get involved in the policy process, and for an insightful read into the way policy is made in Japan.

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Tom Roehl


The brutal modern potentials of imperial ambition, state power and social hierarchy were never more manifest than in the Second World War, particularly among the Axis powers. Pressures of global depression, heightened inter-imperial competition and total war mixed not only with techniques of mass social mobilization, faith in social engineering, and social corporatism, but also, fatally, with essentialist, hierarchical understandings of race, nation, gender and class. The resultant potential for social exploitation and brutalization in the pursuit of outlandish imperial visions, disproportionately borne by those at the lower reaches of the social hierarchy, is revealed on almost every page of Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire.

Yet as confirmed by the appearance, only now, of these 17 essays profiling a wide variety of Asian experiences as labourers across Japan’s vast wartime realm, the social-hierarchical worldviews that conspired in the wartime catastrophe did not disappear entirely with the end of the war or the end of formal empires. Rather, in global postwar public discourse on Japan’s disastrous wartime project, “the uneven power relations among nations, based on specific configurations of gender, nation, state, class, and a wartime setting” (Chin-Sung Chung, p. 324) dictated a kind of hierarchy of suffering, where stories of Japanese brutality towards the Western allies received top billing, and the suffering of Asians, though quantitatively and often
qualitatively greater, remained at the margins. Within Asian societies too, the socially privileged and their agendas dominated memory of the wartime experience. Only in the last two decades, in the context of increasing social democratization, have some of the multitudes of Japan’s heretofore “invisible” Asian victims, including the “comfort women” and the rômusha or forced labourers, begun to make their own voices heard, and become the subject of history books.

As in all histories of the socially underprivileged, a lack of sources also conspired in silencing the vast majority of Japan’s Asian victims. Throughout Asian Labor in the Wartime Empire, we are confronted with thousands of faceless, nameless Asian men, women and children who never told, or made it back to tell, their story, glimpsed only in occasional, randomly surviving state documents, POW memoirs or interviews. Malnutrition, disease, overwork, lack of sanitation and medical care, and inhospitable conditions took the lives of several hundreds of thousands of rômusha, particularly in the tropics, as they worked—or fled from—desperate, ill-conceived and poorly planned Japanese projects that often turned into death traps. Many were lured to work under false pretenses, with little economic alternative; many others, particularly in the latter stages of the war, were simply commandeered. While the first six of Asian Labor’s essays are concerned with the experiences of Northeast Asians, most focus on Japan’s Southeast Asian empire, scene of the Asia-Pacific war’s most nightmarish labour experiences, albeit only in relative terms.

Asian Labor is overall of high quality, with many of the accounts powerful and moving. Forgivable shortcomings include a relative scarcity of Japanese personal accounts, and (with the exception of David Tucker’s engaging if lengthy analysis of labour policy in Manchukuo’s construction industry, and E.J. Reynolds’ solid closing essay) only passing attention to the ambiguous, controversial role of non-Japanese Asians as middlemen in Japan’s wartime hierarchy. Scholars seeking theoretical innovation or systemic analysis may be disappointed: with the exceptions of Tucker, Chung’s excellent essay on military sex slavery, and Hui-yu Caroline Ts’ai’s tantalizing but under-elaborated theorization of wartime mobilization in Taiwan, the essays offer mostly narrative, descriptive history. Of these, Harry Poeze’s “Road to Hell,” and particularly Nakahara Michiko’s poignant “Malay labor on the Thai-Burma railway” are standouts. For undergraduate teaching, Nakahara would be my first choice.

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ETHAN MARK
This book has emerged from the long-term memories of a young American officer who served for the US Occupation in Japan after World War II. The volume provides a wealth of colourful depictions of momentous episodes in the immediate postwar period. One of the most significant contributions the book offers is to remind us of the mid-twentieth-century event with strong contemporary relevance. This is not only because the author has chronicled the historical event as a nearly yesterday’s occurrence, but also because a number of issues brought up in the book have until today been the subject of vigorous debate regarding their accuracy and legitimacy of war settlement in Japan and Asia as a whole.

As demonstrated throughout the text, in the years after the war significant decisions were made by the victorious powers about a new Japan and its role in the postwar world order. As in its other occupations, the US authority believed in, and undertook, the so-called “American mission,” aimed at the salvation of the suffering people in pursuit of so-called American democracy. In contrast to those soldiers presently serving in the Middle East, the US officers were, by and large, warmly welcomed in Asia, notably in Japan and the Philippines, and to a lesser extent in Europe after World War II.

Goodman seeks reasons for the “successful” Occupation in Japan. Essentially, this is explained by a sense of respect for the basic principle of the mission bona fide on both sides. The young American officer observed that the Japanese people “spread wings” out of the joy of feeling the “air of freedom.” In addition, US authorities maintained their “bystander” stance toward the Japanese government and people. Furthermore, the somewhat Asia-phile Princeton student regarded the Japanese culture based on a sense of ‘100% trust’ as distinctly significant in the ready acceptance of the American reform proposals. In his eyes, the Japanese do not, as their basic premise, expect ‘troubles’ which, for the Westerners, normally deem to be necessary before they can trust ‘the others’.

What was striking to a contemporary Japanese reader is that prior to their mission in Japan, the young American trainee and his colleagues used to ‘love to sing Kimi ga yo, the Japanese national anthem’. Although the title of this song based on an ancient Japanese poem literally connotes a wish for the ‘lasting life of my dear’, it has politically been translated as ‘imperial reign’ since the use of this song by the Meiji regime. From the Emperor’s demystification in 1946 until today, the official positioning of Kimi ga yo has been controversial, particularly in education. Chorusing this song in school activities has been discouraged, forcefully so in some cases, by the mainstream of teachers’ unions. As late as 1999, Kimi ga yo and Hino maru were legally recognised as the national anthem and the national flag respectively. The
author does not indicate why the song was so popular among those war-time Americans. Considering the US-Japan politico-military tension in the 1940s, his readers might have been interested in knowing the author’s views in this point.

Much less analytical than other books on the Occupation, and far more perspicuous than those volumes of historical investigation, America’s Japan is a good read which provides a concise and the rich presentation of the American mission and its triumphant consequences. By doing so, the book also touches on a sense of alertness as well as sentiment held by the Americans and the Japanese who were involved in one of the most significant historical events in our twentieth century.

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MASAKO SHIBATA


William O. Gardner’s Advertising Tower: Japanese Modernism and Modernity in the 1920s is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of works devoted to the study of Japanese literature, media and culture.

This book examines the responses of Japanese authors to the transformation of Tokyo in the early 1920s. Gardner’s analysis addresses the themes and formal strategies of the modernist literature movement that became popular through the works of the avant-garde poet Hagiwara Kyōjirō (1899-1938), and poet and prose writer Hayashi Fumiko (1903-1951). In order to demonstrate how modernist works offer new constructions of individual subjectivity as part of the social and technological changes that provided the foundation for the emergence of “mass media,” Gardner provides us with a vivid contrast between Hagiwara’s conception of the poem and poet as an electric radio “advertising tower,” presenting an emblem for the aesthetic tensions and discourses of media, technology and urbanism, and Hayashi’s work referring to popular songs and movies, suggesting an understanding of daily life as the interface between individual subjectivity and mediated urban environment.

In his discussion, Gardner focuses particularly on the positions taken by modernist writers with regard to two interconnected but conflicting issues: individual subjectivity and mass society. The first one plays a key role in the self-constitution of Japanese modernity following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, as well as serving as a locus of anxiety in relation to the modern West, whereas the second is exclusively associated with cultural and political discourses toward Taishō Democracy, centreing on the concepts of “the people” (minshū), “the crowds” (gunshū) and “the masses” (taishū).
Chapter 1 traces the emergence of “the masses” to an advancement in technology and spread of mass media, including print, film, music industry and the radio. Gardner argues that Japanese modernist and avant-garde literature was an active response to the scope of these new media and “the masses.” Chapter 2, which provides us with methodological tools and explores some of the rhetorical uses that Japanese modernist writers made of the West, is followed by four chapters featuring Gardner’s in-depth discussion and parallel reading of Hagiwara’s and Hayashi’s careers, as well as the aesthetic and political aspects of their work. The book closes with two informative appendices concerning information about Hagiwara’s and Hayashi’s biographies and literary achievements.

Since both the author and the writers he discusses make reference to media and visual culture, the book would have benefited from some images. Advertising Tower: Japanese Modernism and Modernity in the 1920s is a pioneering and illuminating work for both specialists in the field of literature, media studies and culture, and wider audiences interested in Japanese modernism.

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MONIKA DIX


Hungry for Peace has much to offer but falls short of author Hazel Smith’s goal of contributing to “improved understanding of the DPRK so as to find feasible alternatives to war” (p. 4). Her goal is a daunting task for anyone, especially with limited knowledge of the subject. Smith teaches international relations at the University of Warwick and received her academic training in European international relations. She and others apparently assumed that her year of work with United Nations agencies in North Korea qualified her as a “North Korea” expert. But North Korea and its related issues are more complex than what transpires in Pyongyang. A year of research in Washington, DC made this apparent to the author, because she devotes one-quarter of her book to evaluating the shortcomings of “Western” policymakers and analysts. This makes for interesting reading but distracts from her primary goal.

Eventually Smith shifts to assessing Kim Il Sung’s rule, the food crisis of the 1990s, the international humanitarian response to it, and the extent to which the international community’s effort transformed North Korea. The long litany of issues necessitates an elevated level of generalization.

Smith’s characterization of North Korea under Kim Il Sung is often superficial or inaccurate. Kim is said to have “achieved political legitimacy
through his acknowledged leadership of nation building in a new state” (p. 47). We are left to ponder how he accomplished this and its consequences. Smith’s depiction of Kim’s domain is inconsistent. Kim is said to have “institutionalized civilian-military relations” so as to “divorce the military from political power” (p. 52). While true long ago, North Korea is not stagnant and today the military plays a central role in politics and policy. Smith writes that “[h]ealth-care facilities and services were made universal and free” (p. 53), but later she declares that they are woefully inadequate.

The discussion of agricultural production’s collapse in the 1990’s is marred. Nature more than Pyongyang’s policies are blamed: “Economic decline provided the context” for the country’s inability to feed its people, but the “proximate cause was the natural disasters of the mid-1990s” (p. 66). Smith should have read Andrew Natios’ US Institute of Peace study, The Great North Korean Famine, a source the author fails to mention.

Smith’s core premise is that the 1990’s international humanitarian effort transformed North Korea. She claims the economy was “marketized” and “dollarized.” But in the 1960’s Kim Il Sung sanctioned markets during food shortages. Smith assumes change is irreversible. Markets did expand in size and number, but since 2004 their number has been reduced and central control restored. North Korea has long maintained a dual currency system prior to “dollarization.” “Foreign currency certificates” backed by “hard currency” enabled foreigners and indigenous elites to purchase imported commodities. All others used the “people’s” currency. Now euros have replaced the certificates and dollars, and “people’s” currency is still in circulation.

Smith also claims that international aid transformed North Korea’s dealings with the world. Actually, the engagement of Japan, Western Europe, South Korea and the United States followed the Soviet Union’s and communism’s demise in 1990, China’s economic reforms, and North Korea’s 1991 entry into the United Nations. Food aid did not arrive until late in 1995.

One of the book’s more bizarre features is Smith’s groundless and unfair claims about an unnamed former US government official who later worked in Pyongyang as an NGO representative. She falsely claims that he discredited the American NGO effort in North Korea.

Smith is to be commended for her effort and insight. Her book confirms the difficulty and the extent of time and effort needed to decipher North Korea before one can claim to be a “North Korea expert.”

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C. Kenneth Quinones

“How do poor people ‘see the state’, and how are governmental agencies seen by the people who advise or work for them?” In this recent contribution to the Cambridge University Press series on Contemporary South Asia, Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava and Veron analyze this core question on the basis of fieldwork in eastern India. The book’s scholarly intent is both empirical and analytical. The authors ask, “What would count as a convincing causal explanation as opposed to a suggestive narrative sequence?” (p. 3). This vital query underpins the conversations with decisionmakers, 500 household surveys and an extensive analysis of secondary literature, from which the authors seek to generalize beyond the case of India.

The analysis of policy initiatives by the Indian state in the areas of employment generation and primary education help the authors take positions on some key debates of contemporary development studies, such as participation, governance and corruption. With its cutting-edge main themes, meticulous study design, a stellar cast of geographers and native scholars, and the backing of powerful funding agencies, the book is both timely and important. Its double concern with poverty and the basic rights of the poor place it squarely in the midst of the debate on order and legitimacy, crucial to post-colonial states ensconced in transitional societies, struggling to join the high table of international finance and norms of basic human rights.

Measuring the quality of development carries the potential danger of the analyst substituting the value preferences of the world in question with his or her own subjective preferences. But not taking the question of quality of political life into account altogether makes political analysis vulnerable to the intrusion of exogenous dominant values. Corbridge et al. deserve credit for bringing values back in to developmental studies and problematizing the normative basis of the state. Still, one hears too much of the voice of the fieldworker and not enough of that of the peasant, housewife or the tribal, and a rigorous treatment of inter-subjectivity is missing.

The book will disappoint those looking for crisp definitions and causal modelling of such core concepts as “governance,” “governmentality,” the “state” or “seeing.” The authors fail to situate their main subtext of the valiant struggle by the poor and the socially marginal in the context of India’s institutional arrangement and political network. As such, on the whole, the book does not help solve the puzzle of the simultaneous existence of poverty, discontent and orderly rule, and their regional variation.
The poor may be heroes but they are not saints. What India has successfully achieved, more than the vast majority of post-colonial societies, is the juxtaposition of two main channels of political action, namely, rational protest and institutional participation. It is the effective and optimal use of this two-track strategy by the underprivileged that gives the Indian state a rich recruiting ground for new leadership, ideas, legitimacy and orderly rule. But, despite its limitations, Seeing the State still shines in comparison to the bulk of academic writing that the fashionable theme of governance currently attracts. Policy experts and lay readers, willing to overlook the absence of a core analytical model, hypotheses and their rigorous empirical testing, will enjoy its fine balance of serious intent with a light touch, rich narratives and wit. Its elegant debunking of the dross that goes by the name of “good governance” and its well-reasoned praise for the anonymous and lowly cogs in the wheel of administration, who keep the state orderly, provide timely wake-up calls for both optimists and pessimists about India.


This book attempts to demonstrate that development is not the sole product of the nation-state or globalized markets. It argues that subnational units—in the case of a country as diverse as India, state-level institutions—mediate the process. It focuses on three different political units: Gujarat, a fast-growing state with high migration and weak labour unions that flexibly accommodated small-scale rural enterprises as well as large-scale urban industries and promoted joint public-private enterprises and opportunity zones; West Bengal, where communist ideological tenets and a rigid bureaucracy produced economic decline that necessitated belated concessions to industry; and Tamil Nadu, an intermediate case, whose development was retarded by its preoccupation with cultural issues.

In rejecting a dirigiste (a term never explicitly defined despite an entire chapter on the subject), or top-down model that views the central government as either a benevolent or malevolent leviathan, the book opts for a horizontal, as well as vertical, explanation. This means that there is now competition between the various states for business investment. The strategies they employ depend on the strategic choices of regional elites, regional political institutions, and bargaining with the central authorities. In this regard, a comparison between Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu would have been more revealing than the predictable outcomes the author discovered.
Book Reviews

I recognize that the volume under discussion has been awarded the Joseph Elder Prize of the American Institute of Indian Studies, but there is little new here—either with respect to the author’s sources or conclusions—that will surprise observers of Indian politics. Aside from 78 interviews with businessmen to ascertain how they have coped with state and local officials since the 1991 liberalization (they are now pursued rather than harassed by state governments), most of the sources are well known to students of India’s political scene.

Sinha’s scheme is not that different than the one developed by Atul Kohli in *The State and Poverty in India, the Politics of Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), a resource never discussed. Kohli analyzed the role of political parties in producing divergent state policy by communists in West Bengal, the populist Urs government in Karnataka, and the backward-looking peasant-dominated Janata regime in Uttar Pradesh. Sinha mentions in passing (pp. 191-93) Kohli’s discussion of West Bengal in *Democracy and Discontent* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), but doesn’t address his comparisons of how political institutions and economic development affect outcomes in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, as well as Bihar and Karnataka.

The emphasis of the analysis is on the roots of India’s development, not the impact of the post-1991 reforms in the states. Discussion of that subject (pp. 153-58) is thin. Very little data is more recent than 1994 and most is considerably older. Given the historical character of the study, it is hard to understand the author’s failure to take into account the points made by Francine Frankel’s *India’s Political Economy, 1947-1977* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); perhaps that seminal work is characteristic of dirigistic analysis. India’s federal system in the days of Congress one-party rule, as Sinha concedes, featured bargaining between the centre and the states during the planning commission process. It also had features that gave New Delhi the ability to deputize state bureaucrats and appoint state governors. All of these devices were meant to be mediating mechanisms.

The book concludes with a tacked-on comparison of the Indian case to those of Brazil, China, the former Soviet Union and post-communist Russia. As the author concedes, her comparative discussion is more of a “tease” (p. 235) than an analysis. To get a better understanding of how development in India compares to other countries—in this case Brazil, South Korea and Nigeria—readers would be advised to consult Kohli’s *State Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

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Arthur G. Rubinoff
Every conceivable form of violent conflict stalks South Asia. since the end of British colonial rule in 1947, the region has witnessed several inter-state wars, a number of insurrections and various ethnic riots. Scholars, former policymakers and journalists have written on all these subjects with varying degrees of analytic clarity and dispassion. There are a handful of well-articulated and theoretically supple case studies of civil wars, inter-state conflicts and ethnic riots. However, few studies, if any, provide a comprehensive account of the spectrum of conflicts that have plagued and continue to trouble the region. With marked exceptions, the bulk of these works are atheoretic, hortatory, and on occasion ridden with polemical claims. Consequently, a full, theoretically grounded and unbiased account is still wanting.

Rob Johnson’s book, A Region in Turmoil, represents an important missed opportunity to address this critical lacuna. The book is certainly comprehensive in scope. It covers a range of conflicts throughout the region, extending from Afghanistan to Myanmar (Burma). It also examines both historical and contemporary conflicts. These features are the principal strengths of the book. The shortcomings of this work are, on the other hand, legion.

First, the book lacks any overarching theoretical framework. It examines the conflicts in the region without attempting to identify some general causal factors that might explain the roots of the bulk of the various conflicts. More to the point, the author is too quick to dismiss the tragic legacies of British colonial rule that have contributed to the structural basis of many of the problems that haunt South Asia. Instead, it chooses to focus on the origins of each conflict and proffers idiosyncratic (and, on occasion, accurate) explanations for their genesis.

Second, the sheer breadth of coverage comes at the cost of depth and nuance. For example, his discussion of the domestic political consequences of the intractable Kashmir for both India and Pakistan is palpably wrong. He asserts that each military (author’s emphasis) phase of the dispute has generated widespread popular support in both India and Pakistan. Any careful observer would suggest otherwise. In much of India, the Kashmir issue has long ceased to have much popular resonance as a variety of other concerns, mostly local and regional, animate both the citizenry and the leadership.

Third, some of his intellectual judgments of key historical figures are at best questionable. His discussion of the role and significance of India’s first prime minister, Jawaharal Nehru, is not only dismissive but utterly superficial. He fails to grasp Nehru’s singular contributions in forging a distinct Indian
national identity, his efforts to embed secularism into India’s political culture and his vital role in fostering liberal democracy.

Fourth, the book could have used the services of a competent copy editor. Spellings of key places, incidents and entities have been mangled, with infelicitous results. On page 106, for example, the name of the Pakistani missile, the *Ghauri*, deliberately named after a major Muslim conqueror, has been transformed into “Gauri,” a quintessentially Indian and Hindu name! The work is replete with errors of this order.

The only significant strength of this volume may lie in its discussion of Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion of December 1979. Even though the author has not generated any new information on the invasion and its tragic aftermath, he does provide a succinct, readable and fair-minded account of what has befallen that hapless nation in recent decades.

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**SUMIT GANGULY**


This short work is a report of a conference on Russian-ASEAN relations held in March 2005 and organized by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. It includes 11 contributions from Russian and Southeast Asian scholars; some are formal and diplomatic, some are descriptive and overladen with economic and business data, and others are short and irrelevant. Some presentations deal in good diplomatic intentions, replete with declarations of what should be done. Others cover various fragments of the past, including the Soviet era, to explain what was done. Yet others, particularly the two economics papers which detail Russian-ASEAN economic cooperation and Russian-Singapore-Russian economic ties, note what is being done.

There is something missing here, despite the formal declarations. Why is the relationship tangential to both sides? Only when they gather together in conferences do Southeast Asian scholars think about Russia. For their part, the Russians have their eyes on other regions of greater importance to them and only when reminded of Southeast Asia will they admit an interest. What are the factors hindering the development of the relationship? Victor Sumsky perceptively notes (p. 47) that neither side is taking the other seriously, yet the point remains neglected in this work. Moreover, the absence of presentations on Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines is problematic. Vietnam is Russia’s main trading partner in ASEAN and its omission in a work on this topic is glaring.

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**LESZEK BUSZYNSKI**

Post-war Laos is a fascinating account of the efforts to construct a multi-ethnic nation within a Marxist framework. Vatthana Pholsena draws on a number of current theoretical approaches to ethnicity and nationalism to develop her argument. The first chapter introduces the key questions: how the sentiments of national consciousness can be created in a complex society, and what form would that nation take in a non-Western, post-colonial and multi-ethnic country. The author then analyzes the project of nationhood engineered by the state and its agents as a discourse of legitimization, and outlines the history behind efforts to create the “socialist man” after 1975.

The author’s intention is to examine the “moment of arrival” of modern Lao PDR following the failure of the socialist project, revealing the nationalist discourse of the post-socialist multi-ethnic state. Following a useful review of current literature, the author explains how the book differs from past works by analyzing nationalism as a discourse of power, and by drawing attention to the perspective of educated ethnic minorities.

Chapter 2 explores the politics of minority-majority (ethnic-national) representations, from the early Lan Xang era to the French colonial period (1887-1945). Drawing on myth and cosmology, Pholsena contrasts indigenous perspectives with French colonial classification systems. Chapter 3 examines how state-endorsed history textbooks present different interpretations of the origins of the Lao people in the new socialist era. Visit Laos Year (1999-2000) provides more illustrations of the balancing act between past and present in the representation of minorities. Buddhism plays a key but contested role in these cultural politics and the restoration of Lao identity.

The fourth chapter reviews post-colonial historiography’s search for the origins of the Lao people. Myths and the trope of migration are conflated in the state’s histories. Marxist-Leninist ethnography and archaeology further the development of the evolutionist vision. Chapter 5 examines homogenization and stigmatization as techniques for mapping nationhood, as revealed by the case of Ban Paktai, Sekong province. Here the official representation of the past is contested from the perspective of ethnic minorities, showing what happens on a personal level when the narrative of the nation shifts, when a minority leader becomes a patriotic hero.

Chapter 6 analyzes the efforts by the Lao state to fix and control the ethnic landscape through population censuses and ethnic classifications. The national categories of “Lao Lum,” “Lao Theung” and “Lao Sung” were replaced by officially named ethnic groups in ethno-linguistic categories, with the intention of giving all groups official recognition on an equal footing. However, chapter 7 reveals that this state-controlled ethnicity is not always accepted by those whose self-identification the state policies aim to mould.
Returning to the local level of Ban Paktai in the south, Pholsena demonstrates the fluidity and plurality of identities by examining the personal history of local revolutionaries and functionaries, and how they locate themselves in both cultural spheres as ethnic and non-ethnic Lao—these dual ethnicities show that the state cannot always impose the national story on individuals.

The book concludes with the argument that at the end of the socialist project, the discourse of struggle is being replaced by a discourse of lack, and the need to overcome backwardness. The Lao state is not yet convincingly hegemonic, with a polyphony of ambiguous voices negotiating a place at the national table. Readers might wish that the author had provided more details of her positionality—both personal background and disciplinary base—after the book's opening lines: “I have no direct memories of my father’s country,” and “my study is not located within the discipline of anthropology” (p. 8). Nevertheless, Post-war Laos makes an important contribution to Lao studies, raising the theoretical level of sociocultural analysis, and providing numerous insights that demand fuller treatment in future publications by this insightful author.

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Penny Van Esterik


The idea among Thais that Thailand is so special and unique, unlike any other country in the world, has been around for a long time, thanks to the country’s escape from colonialism, its extraordinary monarchy, its food, smiles, sand, and any features one wants to believe. In a way it cannot be wrong, since no two countries in the world could be the same. But when this idea is perpetuated for domestic consumption, reinforced and reified by political as well as academic discourses, the belief in one’s uniqueness, in this case Thainess, and its inviolability, has become a powerful and productive, albeit dangerous, ideology in politics and social practices, even in the country’s relations to its neighbours.

This book explains Thailand’s thinking in regard to Burma (or Myanmar), and its relationship with Burma as shaped by the various notions of Thainess that have been influential in recent years. The book looks at three areas of the rocky relationship: the ethnic insurgencies against the Burmese state along the borders of the two countries; drug production in Burma and the trafficking to Thailand and the rest of the world; and the admission of Burma to ASEAN membership. The book’s focus is on unravelling the different notions of Thainess that are fabricated and
employed in the relationship with Burma, showing the hollow reality of Thainess and the hypocrisy of those in power who, almost in every case, manipulated the ideas for their self-interests. In the hands of corrupt politicians, this plastic shaping of nationhood has caused grave damages in all three areas of the relationship.

The “bogus” representation of (another term the author might have used) nationhood is attributed to the two components of Thainess, its “core norms,” which are virtuous but often neglected, and the “social norms,” which are fake but dominate the representation. Social norms are “standards for behavior based on human relationships …[and] lack concern for legal principles…. [They are] based on a favour or benefits … [and thus] easily manipulated” (p. 14). They are intermingled with the patronage system (p. 15), and are the reasons for the corrupt power, including in the relationship with Burma. The “core norms, on the other hand, are pivotal principles of social regulations … guidelines for a moral, disciplinary society … they are rule-based norms” (p. 14). Their primary function is to unmask the power-holders who are cloaked under the social norms. Thus, they are normally suppressed (p. 17). The plasticity of Thainess is the result of the prevalence of the elusive social norms over the core ones, in order to serve the material interests of those in power. Social norms corrupt. Adherence to core norms would have made everything all right.

The author criticizes the policies on Burma during the regimes of Chatichai Choonhavan, Chavalit Yongchaiyuth, and many others who manipulated the concept of Thainess for their own benefit. In the name of national interest and Thainess, they focused on appeasement of the SPDC and pressure on the insurgencies along the border; the anti-drug programme, yet with increasing production and trafficking; and on Thailand’s support of Burma’s ASEAN membership. The critics of those governments and the Democrat government, on the other hand, the author argues, adhere more to the core norms of Thainess than any other regimes. The claims to Thainess and national interests are definitely illusive and slippery. But are the “core norms” of Thainess another illusion, as empty and elastic as the social norms, yet as effective and powerful?

Despite the problematic analyses of norms and nationhood, the book provides an interesting look at Thai perceptions of the country’s historical arch-rival and the domestic discourses related to the current policies and relationship with Burma. It tells many interesting stories of the relationship that are illuminating beyond the issue of Thainess.
This important book recounts, in fascinating detail, the collectivization and decollectivization of farming in northern Vietnam between 1958 and the 1990s. It argues that Vietnamese farmers themselves were the principal agents of the downfall of communist utopianism in the rice fields, forcing the Vietnamese government to abandon collectivism. Farmers resisted collectivization because their rulers imposed it upon them from above, dogmatically, without seeking feedback from the people. Farmers also resisted it because of corrupt local governance; because of spatial manipulations that compelled them to cooperate with people whom they did not regard as real neighbours; and because they lacked economic incentives. Kerkvliet’s “everyday politics” refers to the richly various forms of “surreptitious opposition” to collectivization that existed in Vietnamese villagers’ repertoires. To Kerkvliet, the effectiveness of such “everyday politics” yields a morality tale. Hanoi leaders were humbled by their failure to recognize the necessity of a more “dialogical” political system.

This is a beautifully researched book, based on interviews as well as on archival documents. As told locally, farmers claimed to “nibble and gnaw” at collectivization, by falsifying work points, and to “daub and swab” their fields rather than properly ploughing and harrowing them. They also resorted to black marketing, “sneaky contracts,” and illicit land use. This book will unquestionably be the definitive examination of the communist project’s unravelling in the Red River delta.

Some minor complaints. Kerkvliet is aware of Kate Xiao Zhou’s book about Chinese farm decollectivization, How The Farmers Changed China: Power of the People (Westview Press, 1996). Zhou’s book makes similar arguments, but by succumbing to the mental partitioning habits of “area studies,” Kerkvliet misses the chance to make comparisons and contrasts. For example, a whole chapter in the Zhou book argues that rural women led the Chinese decollectivization process, through their hostility to collectivization’s “double patriarchy”; their greater social skill with marketing techniques; their increased shift into traditionally female household sidelines work; and their greater mobility between their natal and marital villages. What about Vietnam?

Also, in its understandable reaction to “top down” analysts, Kerkvliet’s own book might be said to be a little too “bottom up,” although not unwelcome for all that. Kerkvliet criticizes two political science models of the state, the “dominating state” and the “mobilizational corporatist” state. But he says little about theories that claim that the very structures of Marxist-Leninist states may inadvertently produce “neo-traditional” behaviour in the
villages, and equally little about what Jim Glassman calls the “internationalized” state, driven by elite-based transnational alliances with shared assumptions about policy making.

Soviet-bloc Vietnam, in the era of collectivization, was an internationalized state with a vengeance. Hanoi planners attempted to remake its landscape into “territorial-productive complexes,” an exotic notion invented by Soviet geographers in 1941, for which there were at least five different, and contested, Vietnamese translations. Their desperate search for external oracles in the Soviet bloc led them to borrow land-management inspirations from the Estonian national land law of 1970, and the Bulgarian farmland law of 1973. Worst of all, competing Hanoi ministries hired planning agencies elsewhere in the Soviet bloc to prepare programmes for them, using scarce foreign currency to do so, and then failed to circulate the proposals to rival parts of the government. This was a precociously “internationalized” state whose extraordinary fragmentation at the top surely facilitated the “everyday politics” that Kerkvliet so brilliantly retrieves for us.

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ALEXANDER WOODSIDE


This volume brings together in one book much of what the author has written about Vietnam over the past forty years. After the introduction, the book is divided into five parts: Vietnamese culture; the Vietnamese village; the impact of the war on South Vietnamese society; Vietnam’s development prospects in the reform period; and problems of development in Vietnam’s mountains.

The lengthy introduction reveals an intellectual journey that the author has taken since his somewhat troubled inception into the area study of Vietnam in the 1960s. His arrival during wartime under a contract for ARPA, the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the US Defense Department, made him extremely vulnerable to criticism from concerned Asian scholars. The author concludes that if he had known the terrible consequences that the American engagement would have had for both countries he might have taken a different path. Reading his reports and articles about the refugee movement and the situation in villages in South Vietnam, some of which are being published for the first time here, one gets the impression that Rambo’s one-sided scholarship at the time was based on a genuine, if rather naïve, effort to understand the Vietnamese. We will never know what would have happened if he had revealed the atrocities of the ROK troops in Binh Dinh before My Lai exploded in the face of the policy makers.
From this introduction, the reader gets the impression that the author was caught in a highly technocratic approach of practicing positivist sociology at the time. His lifetime friendship with Neil Jamieson at least made him very sensitive to the cultural body and soul of the (South)-Vietnamese, but also undermined his faith in the single truth-content of the outcomes of the many surveys he undertook in several parts of southern Vietnam during the war.

The current collection of articles covers a vast number of topics, each of which calls for a separate review. A short review of this book leads to a blurred focus upon what the reviewer estimates as important or interesting. Here we have a concise version of Rambo’s writings, useful to readers lacking easy access to the majority of his articles and reports about so many aspects of Vietnamese history, culture and development. Rambo’s attempt to design a paradigmatic approach to Vietnam’s peasant social organization in terms of a typology of open and closed village communities is clearly inspired by his interest in ecological processes. To him, the ideal-typical Vietnamese village embodies an adaptation to the natural and social environments in both parts of Vietnam, in the Red River and the Mekong delta. The author admits that new anthropological research would make him write his studies differently today, but he sticks to the basic pattern he identified during his study of the Vietnamese village. Yet unlike Eric Wolf, who was criticized for his earlier work, including his daring comparisons between Latin America and Java, Rambo leaves us in the dark about the historical development of the Vietnamese village, also a product of colonial, nationalist and communist producers of development projects.

Rambo’s fieldwork in the Northern uplands is thoroughly discussed in *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 67, 2, 1994, pp. 307-309. The four articles reprinted in this book mainly address development prospects in the period after 1986, when Vietnam embarked on a mixed economy path that is sometimes referred to as market socialism, but basically is an attempt to combine the political power of the Communist Party with a fast-growth scenario. Rambo reveals a very pessimistic view of this growth: corruption, growing differentiation in wealth, and social alienation are all now recognized as being major problems for Vietnamese society (p. 244).

This volume of collected articles is recommended. Some are suitable for novices to the field, like the overview of Vietnamese religious currents. Others require more background knowledge from the reader. *Searching for Vietnam* can be read separately and provides readers with valuable information and insights. The introduction presents a truly comprehensive attempt at soul-searching by a scholar who creatively adapted to the various stages of Vietnam’s modernization. There is something in this book for everyone interested in Vietnam as a country (rather than as a war).
The Ho Chi Minh Trail was a network of routes by which men and munitions were sent, during the Second Indochina War, from North Vietnam to the battlefields of South Vietnam and eventually also to Cambodia. These routes ran through the Truong Son Mountains, on both sides of the border between Vietnam and southeastern Laos. Virginia Morris’ book cuts back and forth, sometimes disconcertingly, between the history of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and accounts of a series of journeys that she and photographer Clive Hills recently made along the routes that once formed the trail. Calling the Ho Chi Minh Trail “The Road to Freedom” implies a political judgment about the Second Indochina War, but political issues really do not intrude much on the book.

In Vietnam, Morris interviewed senior officers of the People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN), including General Vo Nguyen Giap and the former commander of the trail, General Dong Si Nguyen. Her translator also conducted some interviews on his own, and gathered information from museums and Vietnamese published works.

The historical sections, though badly organized, contain much that is interesting. This reviewer was struck by discussion of the problems the PAVN encountered building a fuel pipeline along the trail, for which the Soviet Union refused to provide much assistance (p. 99). Descriptions and photographs of the terrain through which the trail passed are useful, but there are more errors than there should be. The ones that can easily be spotted tend not to be about the trail in particular, but about other aspects of the history of Vietnam and the Second Indochina War. Thus, on p. 144, Morris writes that “American funding for the war stopped in January 1975,” and describes how the town of Buon Ma Thuot (Ban Me Thuot) fell to PAVN forces in “fifteen days of bloody fighting,” March 10 to 25, 1975. In fact the town fell in three days, March 10 to 12, and the last South Vietnamese position near it was abandoned on March 18. In a book that is often wrong about things that can be checked, one is reluctant to put complete trust in details about the history of the trail that cannot easily be confirmed, and for which sources are rarely cited.

The book is longer than it looks; the two-column format puts a lot of words on a page. The copy editing was careless but the volume is handsomely produced, surprisingly so when one considers the very reasonable price. The many detailed maps, printed in colour, are invaluable. The photographs, mostly in colour, some taken by Clive Hills and others provided by PAVN officers and by a veteran of the Studies and Observations Group (SOG), the American military organization that launched secret ground raids against the trail during the war, are also plentiful and good.
Those interested in the wartime history of the Ho Chi Minh Trail will be better off with John Prados, *The Blood Road* (Wiley, 1999), though *The Road to Freedom* is useful as a supplement to that work. But both scholars and general readers curious about contemporary conditions in Indochina will find Morris’ book useful for her account of her travels through remote, thinly populated, mostly poor and often loosely governed areas of Vietnam and especially of Laos.

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**Edwin E. Moise**


How and why the United States went to war in Iraq in the spring of 2003 has become one of the most debated issues of our time. For that reason alone, Andrew Preston’s new study is especially welcome, since it deals with the US entry into an equally controversial conflict, the war in Vietnam. As the situation in Iraq increasingly begins to resemble a quagmire, comparisons between America’s two most unpopular wars have become inevitable.

Preston notes at the outset that both objective and subjective factors play a role in the decision-making process, and he sees both at work in Vietnam. Memories of World War II (when prewar attempts to appease the Axis were widely viewed as a disaster) created an ideological mindset, which made it difficult for US policymakers in the 1960s to avoid responding directly to any challenge from the threat of international communism in Asia. On the other hand, the complex conditions posed in Vietnam—a highly disciplined adversary, a weak ally in Saigon, and the presence of a hostile China across the frontier—made many knowledgeable observers wary of becoming directly involved in what appeared to them to be a lost cause. It was, then, not a “slam dunk” that the United States could act to prevent a communist triumph in Indochina. It is here that the role of individual choice came into play. As the government of South Vietnam teetered toward collapse in the mid-1960s, President Lyndon Johnson (like his predecessor John F. Kennedy) initially hesitated to authorize the commitment of US combat forces into the region. Under the circumstances, the role of his senior advisers could be crucial in tipping the scales.

According to the author, no one played a more persuasive role in the formation of Vietnam policy in the Johnson White House than did his National Security adviser, McGeorge Bundy. A card-carrying member of the postwar Establishment (famously labelled “the Best and the Brightest” by author David Halberstam), Bundy had been selected by John F. Kennedy to strengthen the role of the National Security Council and transform it into a
key player in the policy-making process. This enabled Bundy to play a central role in shaping US foreign policy during his six years in the White House.

The National Security adviser, lacking the institutional burdens of the cabinet official, can play a useful role as the president’s “honest broker,” providing him or her with a variety of policy options on salient issues facing the administration. It is a different matter when the individual becomes a fervent advocate of a particular policy option and shields his or her superior from receiving opposing viewpoints. Such was the case with McGeorge Bundy. Supremely confident of his own intellectual gifts, Bundy complacently viewed the conflict in Southeast Asia through the prism of the US experience in World War II, despite the fact that it was a region of the world about which he knew virtually nothing. In the end, according to the author, it was Bundy, above all, who persuaded a reluctant Lyndon Johnson that he had no choice but to introduce US combat forces into South Vietnam.

Preston’s argument that McGeorge Bundy was the primary architect of a war that was not inevitable is not entirely convincing. The role of domestic political factors (i.e., the impact of a humiliating US defeat in Southeast Asia on the fortunes of the Democratic Party) and the role played by other key officials, such as Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara—to say nothing of the views of Kennedy and Johnson themselves—are virtually ignored. Still, he has performed a useful service in drawing our attention to some of the key factors that propelled the United States into the Vietnam conflict, as well as the crucial role that an individual adviser can play in the decision-making process.

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WILLIAM J DUIKER


Despite the polarized image of high-tech production suggested by this book’s catchy title, it paints a much more complex picture of organizational structures, investment sites, management structures and workers’ expectations that come into play in the Philippine setting. The in-depth case studies of four multinational electronic firms operating in four export processing zones—American, Japanese, European and Korean—provide the empirical base for the author’s observations on the politics of high-tech production. The data from these case studies are analyzed with the use of a complex theoretical framework derived from the latest “models” of mass production that include “flexible specialization,” “lean production,” and “high-performance work organizations.” By focusing his attention on the issues of
labour control and the social relations in production, the author attempts to formulate a more comprehensive “model,” focused on (a) the point of production, (b) the labour market, and (c) national and local state institutions that regulate the social relations in and of production. He then analyzes the case studies in order to understand “how firms organize high tech production, how managers and state officials regulate localities and labor markets, and how workers experience and help constitute the complex confluence of work, power and social inequality.”

The overview on how Philippine electronics firms are situated within the global system of high-tech production (chapter 2) is an excellent introduction to the Philippine situation. Marshalling data from various sources, the author analyzes electronics production, exports, imports, foreign investments and Philippine government policies, rules and regulations affecting the industry. The attempt to “move from the macro-level to the factory floors, local communities, and personal lives of workers,” however, is less successful. In part, this is due to the extreme difficulty of gathering primary data from multi-national corporations and government agencies in the Philippines, where the boundary between economic ventures and political machination is terribly vague. Despite these difficulties, however, the author has to be commended for trying to link his empirical findings to the body of theory he has explored.

The most useful part of this study is the typology of work regimes, including (a) despotic, (b) panoptic, (c) peripheral human resource, and (d) collectively negotiated regimes. The despotic regime used coercive control, pays below minimum wages, utilizes traditional labour-intensive assembly-line production methods and suffers from an adversarial and unstable work environment. The panoptic regime is engineer-led and uses computerized assembly line and electronic surveillance of production workers but it pays workers well and provides benefits like free transport and generous overtime compensation. The peripheral human resource regime also concentrates on high-tech cutting-edge technology and at the same time uses technical and behavioural training, performance-based pay, above-average compensation, and good communication as essential parts of the firm’s organizational culture. Finally, the collectively negotiated regime uses labour-intensive work organization, deals reasonably with a unionized labour force, and maintains a high level of output traced to a relatively stable form of negotiated commitment. The book also analyzes the nature of labour commitment under each of the regimes in terms of loyalty, degree of effort and attachment to the firm. Not surprisingly, commitment is “low” in the despotic regime, “coerced” in the panoptic, “purchased” in the peripheral human resource and “bargained” in the collectively negotiated regime.

In a book that has all the marks of a reworked dissertation, the whole gamut of models, concepts and constructs related to high-tech production is comprehensively covered. However, someone looking for the nitty-gritty
of Philippine-style politics and how this affects workers’ lives in multinational corporations would have to look elsewhere. In part, this may be a function of difficulties in gathering research data. It certainly is not due to style, because the author writes clearly and interestingly.

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APRODICIO A. LAQUIAN


Rafael’s new book reminds us of his influential Contracting Colonialism, a dual history, as he calls it, of Spanish colonialism and Catholic conversion, by its perceptive, sometimes touching and sometimes hilarious reading of Spanish and Tagalog sources (and also of texts by his academic colleagues in English). The focus on language and translation is also here. In The Promise of the Foreign, again, Rafael addresses the problem of “contraction” in the final part of the book, when he writes about the “blood contract” between Filipino nationalism and the foreign. But here, the overwhelming concern is with what he calls “technics.” With pleasure, Rafael quotes Filipino nationalists from the late nineteenth century, on the one hand describing the telegraph as an “electric language” and, on the other hand, praising their language of struggle, Castilian in this particular case, as a “language of lighting” (pp. 12, 17). Translations, as Rafael writes about them here, are rather like the Luzon comedias of his chapter 4—translations “for which no original existed” (p. 114).

Reading history as a network has helped Rafael to deal successfully with the difficult topic he has chosen: “the foreign.” Thinking in terms of technology, he could measure foreignness by its “telecommunicative capacity,” in particular locales and moments of the period. Thus, Rafael can also reach beyond the simply instrumental and “technical.” His is one of a very few recent books that do not simply pay respects to or quote Anderson’s Imagined Communities, but try to think with its thesis: “It is my contention that the receipt of the foreign, its recognition and its return, marks the domestication of nationalism as specially ‘Filipino’” (p. 45).

There is a time trajectory to Rafael’s book, followed through the seven chapters: from the histories immediately preceding the La solidaridad movement through the 1880s and 1890s, until the aftermath of Rizal’s execution and up to the Katipunan movement at the turn of the century. Of course, Rafael’s writing is, as usual, so engaged and engaging that what he talks about reaches far beyond these topics, and especially looks toward the future. One of Manuel Quezon’s strange addresses, this one from 1937, on
language and nationalism, is a sort of epigraph to Rafael’s book. And one does not even have to read too closely to notice the shadows (or rays) of the present.

Which is almost to say that the shadows (or rays) of revolution—a notion as difficult as foreignness—are written in and can easily be discerned in the book. Rafael makes it possible to read the revolution, because he works with the theme, again, in terms of the foreign, which is “of translation and untranslatability.” It is Rafael’s “promise of the foreign,” linguistically and otherwise, an “attempt at localizing and containing this promissory power,” he writes, “in such loaded figures as filibuster, friar, Rizal, Balagtas and so forth” (p. 180).

The filibusteros are “heretics,” rebels, or, best “categorical anomalies,” the Spanish friars are the foreign of the time par excellence, José Rizal, of course, is the no. 1 Filipino national hero, and Francisco Balagtas is a poet who crashed Tagalog against Castilian. They are designated the principals of Rafael’s book because of their “resistance to a mode or language of domestication and their defiance to a master trope” (p. 212). As we move through the book, we can draw the conclusion, and it is the highest praise possible, that Rafael, a brilliant Filipino historian living in the US and writing in English, may be the next in that line of illustrious figures.

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RUDOLF MRÁZEK


In the eastern-most tip of East Java, a region called Banyuwangi (meaning ‘fragrant water’), in late 1998 to early 1999, mobs hunted down individuals suspected of sorcery and then stabbed, hacked and beat them to death. About 120 people were killed in horrifying ways. This wave of violence seemed to emerge out of nowhere and then inexplicably end, leaving analysts of Indonesian society with only tentative speculations as to why it occurred. The gossip among the political commentators in Jakarta was that military intelligence agents somehow fomented the violence as a means of discrediting the dominant Muslim organization in East Java, Nahdlatul Ulama, whose leader had become a champion of the pro-democracy movement. Those reluctant to endorse such conspiracy theorizing resorted to the old shibboleth left over from the colonial era: Javanese villagers really are primitive, superstitious and volatile people capable of exploding into violence at one moment and then returning to docility the next.

James Siegel offers a remarkably original explanation of the violence against sorcerers, one that has important implications for the study of other
cases of violence in Indonesia. Siegel spoke with the victims, perpetrators and witnesses of the murderous witchhunts in Banyuwangi and studied their words with the care of a philologist. He notes that the violence was committed by large groups, not by one individual or one family. The belief that a particular person was a sorcerer (tukang sihir or tukang santet) was held collectively. Once convinced that a person was a sorcerer harming the community, villagers did not shun them, drive them away, or request another sorcerer to counteract the evil. The response was to murder the person and mutilate the corpse. So two questions arise: How did a group (calling itself “the masses,” massa) become convinced that a particular person was a sorcerer and why did it respond with murder?

Siegel finds a clue to the puzzle in the very indeterminacy in identifying a witch (a term he applies to both men and women). One man asked himself, “Am I witch?” He was not certain with his own answer and so asked other people who were supposed to know about witchcraft whether he was one or not. He was not certain their answers were correct. Siegel comments that the figure of the witch “was invested with a power heterogeneous to all social identity” and signified “the possibility that one could be someone completely different from anything or anyone one knows”; witch became “a name for the incapacity to figure oneself” (p. 124). Those who joined the massa to kill witches were people who might well have suspected themselves of being witches. Perhaps the violence was to remove the self-doubt and fix the meaning on someone else: the first reaction to “the possibility of being oneself a witch” was to find someone else upon whom the name could stick (p. 160).

Why did people in Banyuwangi begin to suspect themselves of being witches? Here, Siegel’s explanation turns on the concept of recognition. The violence occurred shortly after the fall of President Suharto’s 32-year-long dictatorship in May 1998, a time when political identities were in flux. The state that had surveilled and screened the populace, deemed who was a good citizen and who was evil (such as communists), and sustained an aura of stability, was in crisis. The witchhunts were a response to the collapse of the Suharto regime, “the agent of recognition” which really “knew who one was” (p. 160). Siegel concludes that the killings should be seen as “means for local control of general—or national—malevolence when state control failed” (p. 161).

Siegel’s argument is more complex than I have outlined. The case of the witchhunts in East Java prompted Siegel to reexamine the anthropological study of witchcraft (especially Evans-Pritchard’s work). The first half of the book is an extended mediation on the general study of discourses about witchcraft in terms of the logics of recognition and subjectivization. This is an exceptionally rich book that deserves careful study.

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JOHN ROOSA

This book deals with a politically most relevant but often obscured dynamic: not the differences identifying different ethnic groups and nations, but the forms and relations that enable these differences to be recognized. This conceptual framework, which makes ethnic differences intelligible, also renders them all as one of a kind. “My point is,” Harrison argues, “that there is a conventional symbolic form of the nation state” (p. 47), a form by which a political entity can be recognized as a nation but by which all nations are also versions of each other. In his astute analysis of ethnicity and nation making in the West, Harrison shows that this fundamental resemblance is suppressed from political discourse and public consciousness. And this, he asserts, is one of the root causes of conflicts and violence between nations and ethnic groups. He aims to explain “…why conflicts and social divisions seem often to be associated with fraught perceptions of mutually hostile resemblance” (p. 21).

The explanation concerns the very nature of social identity, and addresses those aspects that are often misrepresented in social theory and political discourse. Social conflict is generally regarded as arising from a lack of social coherence and commonality. Elaborating on the maxim that social identity is a relational symbolic practice and epiphenomenon of fundamental boundary processes defining differences, Harrison argues the contrary: competition, division and violence emerge in conditions of commonality and identification when, and this is crucial, such ongoing resemblance and mimesis are ideologically disguised and denied. “For it is only when people identify with one another that a felt need can arise to differentiate themselves” (p. 13) and, in doing so, the need to deny the identification. Harrison’s reasoning draws on literary critic René Girard’s theory about the psychodynamic of desire and mimetic conflict. Girard posits that desire for an object develops neither from intrinsic need nor primarily in relation to the desired object, but from the desiring subject’s imitation of another’s desire for it. Desire is relational and learned. Conflict arises because this often unconscious dynamic is not recognized, and subjects engage in competitive, jealous rivalry over a desired object.

Harrison compares numerous ethnographic examples from European history, contemporary business corporations, Melanesian and other societies to shed light on a specific symbolic form, “proprietary identity.” Here, markers of identity are being treated as property, as jealously guarded possessions; access to others is denied, similarity disavowed and absolute distinction asserted. Such competitive association with symbolic objects that are fiercely protected from copying and reproduction by outsiders, such denial of mimesis, similarity and social flow of symbols lead to increasing conflict.
Bound in hostility and the terms in which they express their differences, groups mutually emulate each other without acknowledging this very similarity. In some Melanesian social systems, however, culturally specific objects or ritual practices defining social groups were originally traded from other groups, then modified and made distinct, but their foreign origins and intrinsic similarity to others’ defining symbols continue to be remembered and acknowledged. *Fracturing Resemblances* will inspire readers to think creatively about contemporary political conflicts.

Those familiar with Harrison’s work need to know that most of the book’s material has been published previously in articles in major anthropology journals. *Fracturing Resemblances* consists of countless paragraphs and lengthy sections reproduced verbatim from these articles, mixed up and reorganized into chapters, without significant additions and without making this structure explicit. The book does not expand the original arguments, but reveals some significant omissions. Harrison does not address crucial, well-established analytical perspectives in Melanesian anthropology concerning social difference and sociality, and recent topical work on persons and property relations. He primarily discusses Melanesian ethnography rather than theoretical debates. Had he developed a position in relation to these debates, his argument concerning Melanesia would be a lot more compelling and contemporary. These criticisms notwithstanding, Harrison has much to contribute to the analysis of social identity and ethnic difference. His next contribution should be eagerly awaited.

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CLAUDIA GROSS


King and Roth’s lucid and appealing *Broken Trust* chronicles twentieth-century Hawai‘i through the lens of an extraordinary institution, a perpetual trust dedicated to the education of Hawaiian children. Established by the Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop after her death in 1884, the trust initially created two schools later merged as the Kamehameha Schools and administered as the Bishop Estate. Pointing to the richness of traditional Hawaiian understandings of land tenure and person, King and Roth begin by considering the transformation of these understandings after the end of the Kingdom and in the twentieth century, and how they became integral to Hawaiian education. *Broken Trust* is worth reading alone for its examination of changing
understandings of Hawaiian persons and their place in an emerging American state through decisions about the shape of Hawaiian education, a penetrating cultural history of Hawai‘i’s society.

But *Broken Trust* comes into its narrative own detailing the 1980s, when shifts in state land laws forced Bishop Estate to sell increasingly valuable properties, realizing an astronomical cash windfall. As the largest landholder in the Hawaiian islands, the Bishop Estate always enjoyed extraordinary influence, but this sudden capital expansion, combined with the cultural politics of the Hawaiian renaissance, seduced the board of trustees to abrogate their fiduciary duties and “break the trust.” Excessive trustee compensation, unlawful or questionable use of trust funds to support trustees’ private business deals, micro-management of the schools, and capital projects in excess of what is allowed to charitable trusts led the IRS to threaten revocation of the Bishop Estate’s charitable status, with potential losses to future generations of Hawaiian children running to billions of dollars. After a century of near limitless corporate autonomy, the exposure of the estate’s practices after 1997 and contestation over the replacement of a once untouchable board of trustees by different community action groups, including a teacher’s union, the state attorney general, and ultimately the IRS revealed incredible tensions within native Hawaiian communities previously kept out of the public eye.

While *Broken Trust* offers illuminating, occasionally breathless reading, many passages deserve a more lengthy treatment than they receive. For instance, though both authors have served as presidents of the Hawai‘i’s Bar Association, the legal analyses in *Broken Trust* are generally cursory. One wonders whether the decision not to explain or take stances on key details of trust law and various jurists’ counterintuitive decisions was intended to protect the reader from tedium, or reflects the enduring political potency of *Broken Trust*’s many actors, including the reconstituted board of trustees. Similarly, the last chapter offers scant insights regarding Kamehameha Schools’ new trustees, charged with making the estate *pono*, righteous, focusing on the problem of determining whether Kamehameha’s future students will be Hawaiian, how that will be determined, and hence what “Hawaiian” might mean. These are lively, evolving issues and the outcome of that story is beyond the scope of the book, but King and Roth end on an ambiguous note. Do they wish us to conclude that the new trustees have successfully repaired the trust?

*Broken Trust* should be essential reading for anyone concerned about the legacy of the interdependence of Hawai‘i’s educational, legislative, judicial and corporate institutions. King and Roth are at their best when laying out how trustees’ constituting decisions once yielded lasting institutional tendencies, with unanticipated effects over subsequent generations. In the Enron age, when corporate boardroom practices are
increasingly scrutinized and, sometimes, repudiated, *Broken Trust* provides an exemplary primer into the endurance of boards and their corporate interests when they are woven into the fabric of other institutions.

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ALEXANDER MAWYER


Conservation in the developing world remains dominated by an idealist and naive paradigm articulated in 1982 at the World Parks Congress as “parks for sustainable development.” The Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) became the framework for transferring billions of dollars into remote parts of the developing work. Recently, a wave of critiques has focused on the displacement of rural communities, particularly of indigenous peoples. But while ethnographic narratives of conservation and development projects have been established, respective theoretical frameworks have yet to mesh powerfully with recent work on globalization.

West’s *Conservation Is Our Government Now* is one of the bleakest of the ethnographies of conservation and development. She describes a daunting situation in the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area near Goroka in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. The most problematic assertion of *Conservation Is Our Government Now* is its subtitle “The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea.” Instead, this book comprises a limited case study, a cautionary, from a small portion of a country with outstanding achievements in community-based biodiversity conservation. But West expresses little understanding of (or interest in) the political ecologies and political economy of Papua New Guinea. And the problems that she highlights may well be more the products of a heavy-handed Seventh Day Adventist mission and unevenly implemented tribal pacification programmes. West’s spurious assertion that nature conservation originated in the United States is one of a number of fatal lapses in the book’s theoretical framework. While she worked for a USA-based NGO with American team members, there is little basis for her inference that this ICDP was part of American hegemony.

West’s cycles of field notes are sometimes lucid. Clearly, the operational goals of the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area were not for conservation AND development but rather conservation AS development – at the expense of local residents. The book’s value is in the chapters centred on interviews of informants, notably women who have been particularly marginalized, especially “Articulations, History, Development” (pp. 52-124) and “Conservation Histories” (pp. 125-46).
Curiously, the theory in the book relies heavily on Karl Marx and the geographer Neil Smith, eschewing a much richer body of social theory for both development and biodiversity conservation. West goes so far as to conflate efforts to link local residents to markets with neoliberalism. The clumsiest aspect of her theoretical arguments is that the data and narratives in the book can be interpreted in two profoundly different ways. West infers a didactic interpretation that the ICDPs function under globalization as reconstituted units of colonialism or, rather, neocolonialism. But her rambling recollections just as easily suggest that ICDPs could provide the basis for diversifying marginal rural economies, even with the vagaries of globalizing markets, rapid cultural change, and high-handed central governments, if there was new and more rigorous social theory as a basis for community-based initiatives.

What is most distressing about Conservation is Our Government Now is not the author’s revelations of cultural chauvinism and conflicts, with only limited assertions of local priorities. Rather, the book could be written because the author was there to be a social scientist, and to begin to lay the basis for more successful development. Instead, there is little evidence of or reflection on how she contributed to the development capacities of her team. The book betrays West’s over-investment in an almost nihilistic position that biodiversity conservation undermines the development priorities of local communities. With so few hopeful examples described in Conservation is Our Government Now, this reviewer is compelled to wonder if she ever got to the point of envisioning more community-based approaches to conservation and development.

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GORDON BRENT INGRAM


An English translation by the author of an ethnography first published in German in 1995, this excellent study of Christianity and religious acculturation in Papua New Guinea is a welcome and valuable addition to the growing literature in that field. A new preface locates this ethnography in the literature that has been published since its appearance in German, and the following text explores in great detail the interaction between competing versions of Christianity—Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist (SDA), and a short-lived Holy Spirit movement—in a small rural village in the Southern Highlands.

Selecting Pairundu village for this research project because of its concentrated settlement pattern, small population of 183, and relative
marginality, Jebens spent 10 months conducting 182 interviews with 54 individuals while attending church functions and collecting other basic data. The great value in this study stems from the fact that the author leaves no perspective out of the presentation and analysis of the data he amassed, including emic and etic, and the fact that he is very careful theoretically, employing an inductive approach in which generalizations regarding reasons for conversion to one or another sect apparently emerge from the data rather than exert control over it. Although the author does not employ the word, the picture which emerges is one of complexity, and his conclusions regarding the patterns of acculturation that come out of this complexity are therefore entirely realistic and convincing, more than would be a causal, linear approach.

The book’s first part provides background information and data, initially regarding contemporary politics, habitat, kinship, social organization and economy in Pairundu. The following chapters first outline the traditional religious beliefs and practices and their general features, which continue to exert influence in present-day religious orientations, particularly a basic unsystematic flexibility, a fundamental uncertainty which is addressed in pragmatic and legalistic ways, and the integrative values of strength and equivalence. A history of colonization and missionization then follows, in which new ways of demonstrating strength and equivalence have replaced old ones, while villagers have nonetheless suffered a loss of autonomy and identity. The Catholic and Adventist communities and their rituals and views of themselves and one another are then detailed: since the Catholic missionaries arrived earlier, there are more than twice as many Catholic Pairundu residents (55.74 percent) than Adventists, but Adventists are increasing and nearly half (46.15 percent) were previously baptized Catholics, creating consternation in some families though less tension in the larger community. While they both take exception to one another’s versions of Christianity, they share having different official versus “popular” versions, the latter being more amenable to traditional beliefs. The difference between these versions is more marked among Catholics, whose religious practices are in general more amenable and less strict and “difficult to follow” than Adventism.

Part 2 of Jeben’s work goes on to explain why villagers would choose this more difficult route and also convert to Christianity in the first place: Catholics and Adventists share the hope for “development,” which consists of recovering the socially integrative autonomy, equivalence, power and identity that they lost in the processes of colonization and missionization, which they identify with Western goods, apparently unencumbered, clean and disciplined lifestyles, and the Christian “pathway to heaven.” These hopes extend rather than replace inherently uncertain, flexible and pragmatic traditional religious orientation, yet villagers seek them by separating themselves from tradition, which the Adventists do more rigidly, decisively
and consistently than Catholics, making Adventism more attractive. Part 3 finds Pairundu to be representative of the region in regard to reasons for conversion and comparable to fundamentalism’s paradoxical opposition to modernity elsewhere, yet distinguished by its relative marginality.

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Hiapo: Past and Present in Niuean Barkcloth is a beautifully illustrated text with images, mostly in color, of Niuean tapa as well as paintings and black and white etchings by one of the authors, John Pule. The study of Pacific indigenous textiles has slowly begun to gain in significance since the time I was told to abandon the idea of graduate study in this “insignificant” area. Their role as objects of aesthetic and social consequence is finally being explored. However, this is the first text to focus on barkcloth from the island of Niue.

Hiapo is written from two very different perspectives and this can make for rough going for some readers. Pule, an artist and poet of Niuean decent, approaches the material as a vehicle for personal reflection. He speaks in metaphor, the language of poetry, in order to record his own journeys and histories as well as those of the places and art he encounters. Pule weaves a tapestry of cloth, architecture, space, light, organics, growth, reproduction, soil, water. In an attempt to counter colonial “expertise,” he considers tapa as a record of encounters, embodying a myriad of relationships. The prose is lyrical as we are carried along in the author’s journey of discovery. However, I wish that the reader could also visually experience what Pule does; the objects he writes so personally about are not illustrated.

In contrast to Pule’s intensely personal passages, Nicholas Thomas’s text is more in keeping with Western analytical style. The misattribution and dating of many Niuean barkcloths has resulted in a detachment from the contexts of their creation. Therefore, Thomas acknowledges that a lack of data with which to provide contextualization renders his views as impressionistic as Pule’s. However, his focus is more on the presumption of Western authority and its marginalization of Pacific textiles in both research and museums. The theme of colonial intellectual hegemony is found embedded throughout the book. In his questioning of the ethics of museums and collecting, the intentional mutilation of pieces acquired by the early European explorers in order to create sample books becomes a prime example. Thomas also calls for the greater inclusion of indigenous voices in the presentation and interpretation of materials on display.
Both authors see this book as one step in “reverse marginalization.” However, they are also clear that the text is not intended as a dialogue between a Niuean and an anthropologist, but as a means of creating space for talk. For many Pacific peoples, it is the space between (the va) that allows for growth and the development of relationships. In Hiapo, Pule and Thomas have made spaces that allow for speculation and acknowledge the power of personal experience and the formation of relationships. Consequently, this is not a work where conclusions are drawn, but rather where questions are asked. That process is often hard on the reader, but it is a journey worth starting on.

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Anne E. Guernsey Allen


Tcherkézoff’s book First Contacts on the first papalagi or foreign contacts with Samoa compares Samoan impressions with those by the same voyagers (Bougainville, Laperouse, Cook et al. from 1722 to the 1830s) of Tahiti, Fiji, Tonga and elsewhere in Oceania. His analysis takes two forms, “internal” (dealing with original documents such as captains’ journals, putting observations before commentary) and “ethnographic” (integrating data or writing of a later period). It makes comparisons with the Freeman and Mead analyses of Samoan sexuality, and the Sahlin and Obeyesekere analyses of Hawaiian spirituality. He reinforces his work with language to the extent that he makes a thorough and interesting investigation into the French texts, but includes misspellings of common Samoan words like pa’ia, printed “pai’a,” and unfortunately First Contact almost altogether lacks historical Samoan quotations and direct translations. In the last chapter on the term papalagi, where he concludes his work with comparisons of the Sahlin and Obeyesekere arguments, he maintains too close an affinity with a contemporary spirituality that is only monotheistic and textual. For instance, one might as easily make translations of the word papalagi to the verticality of European ships, and in the slippage of language to subsequent mercantile and monotheistic interpretations, which could all hold true for their time without creating a genealogical value (as Tcherkézoff traces inexorably) beyond the sound of a word. Tcherkézoff’s need to emboss a Western genealogical value on Polynesian spirituality and sexuality is a trait shared by much of the scholarship on Samoa, although Tcherkézoff is one of the
better researchers in the vein. That said, this is an insightful and careful book, and groundbreaking in its inclusion of rare francophone texts on Samoa, and it creates a notable link in Samoan historical work.

Independent Samoan Artist, www.taulapapa.com  

DAN TAULAPAPA MCMULLIN


These reflections on life on Banaba/Ocean Island over the last 100 years were produced for the commemoration of 60 years relocation of the Banabans to Rabi Island, Fiji. The 71 stories and accounts are presented chronologically. Memories of phosphate mining on Ocean Island before 1946 are fading, but the land and the place still hold their place in the peoples’ cultural heritage.

Most of the stories were gathered from Banabans who recalled their leaders, their life on Rabi, and/or on Ocean Island or Tarawa. Some are written in both Banaban language and English. The earliest account is an excerpt from Arthur Ellis’ 1901 diary when prospecting for phosphate, complete with detailed measurements and negotiations with the Banabans to buy the phosphate for 8 shillings a ton. Other outsiders’ accounts, such as that by Lilian Arundel, who spent six months on Banaba in 1906 as the daughter of the manager of the Pacific Phosphate Company, stand in contrast with Banabans’ own memories. Her easygoing lifestyle of riding the mine carts and attending parties is set against the hard life of the Banabans. Several women recall having to carry small amounts of water up from the caves, while the men fished off the narrow, steep fringing reef. Makin Corrie records several legends, while others refer briefly to the frigate bird cult, and dancing.

Life on Rabi had other differences. While the four villages were replaced in the Fiji island setting, there were many more resources there, including fruits, fresh water and dense vegetation, as well as proximity to the rest of Fiji. The young peoples’ stories (Forms 3 and 4), tell of their aspirations to gain qualifications that would allow them to go back to improve life on Rabi. Success in gaining a place in the highly competitive dance group is also a common theme.

These reminiscences of both Banaba and Rabi islands have been published for the Banaban community. The accompanying photographs, drawn from archives and a professional photographer who accompanied a group who returned from Rabi to Banaba in 2005, will serve as reminders to both Banaban and outside readers of the differences between the two lifestyles.
(Some of the photographs did not reproduce well, so the publishers have included a second set as Errata.) The book’s appeal to a wider readership is limited by the lack of editorial function to guide those unfamiliar with the background to phosphate mining and relocation history, as documented in Martin Silverman’s *Disconcerting Issue: Meaning and Struggle in a Resettled Pacific Community* (University of Chicago Press, 1971) and Maslyn Williams and Barrie MacDonald’s *The Phosphateers* (Melbourne University Press, 1985).

The lawsuit brought by Banabans against the British government in the 1970s for compensation money is barely mentioned. While a few of the Banabans mention their links with Nauru, particularly during World War II, shared cultural elements such as family ties, including the concept of *iruwa*, referring to a clan of outsiders, and the frigate bird cult, seem to have been forgotten by many Banabans (but not by Nauruans).

The title of the collection, “One and a Half Pacific Islands,” is not made clear in the text, nor are the methods used to record stories, or who “edited” the stories. While they provide glimpses of Banaban history, and are valuable as personal reminiscences, we await a fuller picture. The stories will provide a backdrop to the publication of Katarina Teaiwa’s Ph.D. dissertation on Banaban history, written from the perspective of a part-Banaban scholar. It is to be hoped that some of the younger Banaban contributors to this volume will also see the need to set down for the rest of us their own reflections of Banaban culture.

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