

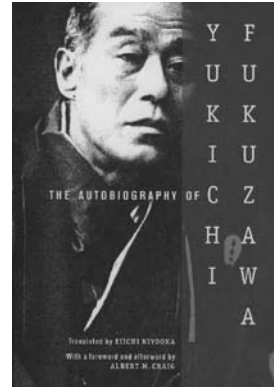
Politics / International Relations



The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa

Yukichi Fukuzawa

(Columbia University Press, 1966)



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The political scientist, Masao Maruyama, wrote that Yukichi Fukuzawa was “a Meiji thinker, and at the same time he was a thinker of the present day.”

Fukuzawa (1835-1901) wrote in this autobiography (*Fukuo Jiden*, 1897): “I was opposed to the closing of the country and to all the old regime of rank and clan. I was in the service of the Shogunate but had not the least intention of rendering service. I disliked the bureaucratic, oppressive, conservative, anti-foreign policy of the Shogunate, and I would not side with it.”

This is even now a brave stance for anyone to take and Fukuzawa’s anti-authoritarian views were very visible to his contemporaries. As Albert Craig has observed in his informative afterword: “He criticized the ‘faint-heartedness’ of those who went over to serve the new government ...”

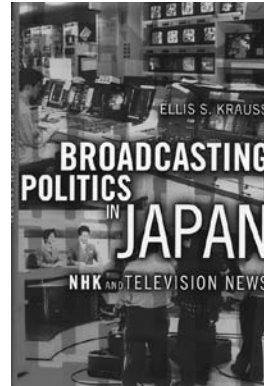
This new Meiji government at one point asked Fukuzawa to take charge of the schools, pointing out that this was a great honor.

His answer was typical of the man. “What is remarkable about a man’s carrying out his own work? If the government wants to recognize the ordinary work of its subjects let it begin with my neighbor, the tofu-maker ...”

Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK and Television News

Ellis S. Krauss

(Cornell University Press, 2000)



It is said that the two institutions most affecting those in democracies today may be the state on one hand and mass communication on the other. It is also commonly thought that these become too powerful and too biased. In Japan, however, as Krauss here points out, NHK (the national broadcaster) has adopted an unusual neutrality, one which may open it to charges of anemia but not to accusations of unfairness.

Such “fairness,” however, owes little to any ideas of morality. Rather, this neutrality acts as a kind of defense, shielding NHK against the threat of interference by the state itself. In his considered analysis of NHK’s output Krauss freely admits biases but points out that they can be traced back to structural features of the broadcaster itself and not to state-imposed regulations.

Viewers of NHK get news which may be about the state, even about its bureaucracy, but which is also quite neutral and not affected by competing bureaucratic interests. Such news is objectionable to no one and hence governmental interference is thwarted.

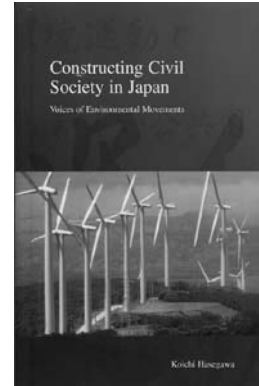
Given this stance, NHK TV may be seen as “a shaper of Japan’s political world, rather than simply a lens through which to view it.”

Constructing Civil Society in Japan:

Voices of Environmental Movements

Koichi Hasegawa

(Trans Pacific Press, 2004)



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The author here traces the growth of environmental politics in Japan. He argues that recent environmental concerns have created a more active public sphere, one that can provide a guideline for a sustainable society.

The typical image of the obedient Japanese following a typical traditional order is still internationally strong. Actually, however, the protests of those wanting reform are loud and diverse.

Consequently, this book also aims toward being a picture of modern Japanese society, focusing as it does on the dynamics of the environmental movement and the public space.

This vigor of Japan's independent environmental research reflects the severity of the pollution and the social and political pressures exerted by large-scale industrial development, supported both by industry and government.

As the author states, the environmental movement has shone new light on the needs of the citizens and through collaboration with both industry and government, has offered many pioneering efforts. Indeed, the environmental movement may well become a compass for modern society.

Earlier efforts to support environmental consciousness were too often limited to a single example. This book, though emphasizing both fieldwork and case studies, focuses on the many new social movements in Japan since the 1980s.

Cultural Norms and National Security:

Police and Military in Postwar Japan

Peter J. Katzenstein

(Cornell University Press, 1996)



This book suggests that certain norms must be considered in order to fully understand the reluctance of the Japanese police to use violence and the Japanese government's disinclination to make use of what amounts to a standing army (the Self-Defence Forces).

Among these are norms which the author calls "constitutive." In searching for reasons why contemporary Japan eschews police and military violence, the author concludes that these have their uses and that "norms matter for national security policy."

In the cases of "international terrorism" for example, the Japanese government has been reluctant to give up its non-violent stance, and in the case of domestic "terrorism" the police have taken a merely defensive position.

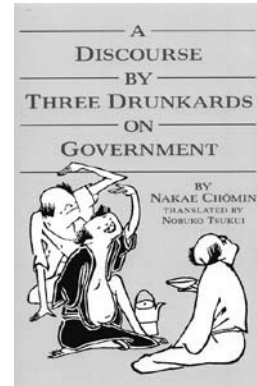
Among the author's conclusions is the prediction that Japanese security policies will continue to be formed by its domestic norms rather than by any international balance of power. A nation's values shape its evaluations of national security.

Though Katzenstein does not regard himself as a Japan expert but rather as an expert in political economy, his findings are welcome. In focusing on the police and military, he is the first to treat both comparatively in an English-language volume.

A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government

Nakae Chomin

(Weatherhill, 1992)



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Nakae Chomin (1847-1901) studied in France, where he translated Jean-Jacques Rousseau into Japanese. Back in his own country he coined the Japanese term for “democracy,” and, in 1887, wrote this famous political allegory, *Sansuijin Keirin Mondo*, about three drunkards arguing about government.

These three archetypes stand for the then dominant Meiji political makers. One is the Europeanized intellectual, another is of a rougher kind, a sort of reincarnated Saigo Takamori, noted loyalist hero, and the third, Nakai Sensei, is Nakae Chomin himself.

They discuss the merits of democracy, making this treatise one of the first to reflect Japanese interest in the subject. The “gentleman of Western learning” is all for it, the “champion of the East” is not so sure, and Master Nakai presents himself as the sage who “loves drinking and discussing politics.”

Their questions and observations were central to the political thought of 1887, when concern over government and foreign policy was paramount. How to achieve democracy and how to win peace are still major issues in Japan, which is one of the reasons that this earliest writing remains so influential now, and why there are a number of contemporary politicians who strongly resemble these three.

Governing Japan:

Divided Politics in a Major Economy

J.A.A. Stockwin

(Blackwell Publishing, 1999)



This third edition of a standard and authoritative text provides a full introduction to the political institutions, processes, and culture of Japan, taking into full account the changes in recent years.

Stockwin has written widely on the subject of politics. This new edition of one of his most famous and influential books identifies those crises central to the Japanese political agenda at the end of the last century and how they were solved—or not.

These include emergencies within the sphere of political power, in the burgeoning bureaucracy, those caused by political apathy and by a lack of confidence in the economic management of the government.

The author also argues for a further reform in the system and amply demonstrates that moves toward political reform in the last decade reflect a malaise in society, in economy, in politics itself.

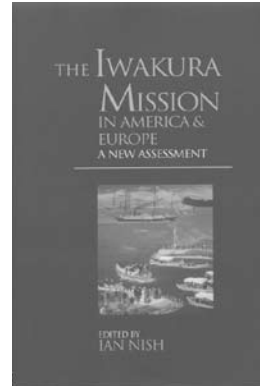
Among his suggestions is that the revision of the constitution could assist democratic control over the powerful governmental bureaucracy. Among the demonstrations is that Japanese politics can respond to the same kind of analysis used to study other countries, that, on the other hand, culture can prevent convergence.

The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe:

A New Assessment

Ian Nish (ed.)

(Routledge Curzon, 1998)



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Most of the essays in this collection derive from the 1997 European Association for Japanese Studies Conference, all reflecting on a single event.

This was a major event in Japanese diplomatic history—the visit of the Iwakura Mission to America and Europe in 1872-73. True, it was not the first Japanese mission, and it did not accomplish many political aims, but it was composed of the most distinguished officials, many of whom had played important roles in the Meiji Restoration.

The Mission had a number of intentions, its primary purpose being to accomplish the revision of the unequal treaties Japan had been forced to sign. Here the Mission failed in that no country visited was willing to consider treaty talks.

Its other intentions were more successful. One was to learn about the scientific and technological feats of the places they visited. Another was to discover a proper political “model” for the country to emulate. They found their model in Germany.

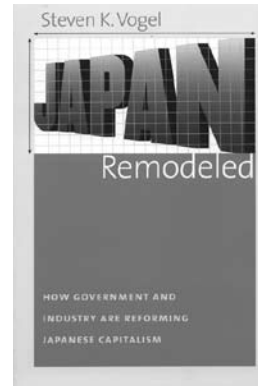
Even though the primary aim of the Mission was not accomplished, much else was. Diplomacy was but one aspect to be looked into. Another was to learn of the scientific accomplishments of the West and in this it succeeded.

Japan Remodeled:

How Government and Industry are Reforming Japanese Capitalism

Steven K. Vogel

(Cornell University Press, 2006)



Japan's market economy certainly has its ups and downs. In the 1980s it seemed to threaten all other countries. In the 1990s the threat faded during more than a decade of stagnation. Once into the new century, however, there has been a steady rebound.

In accounting for this the author, professor of political science at the University of California in Berkeley, through executive interviews and case studies, provides an understanding.

He notes that Japan's distinctive market economy derives not from any innate cultural difference but from history and politics. Business in Japan tends to favor a collaborative approach, one which suggests social harmony and at the same time makes profits.

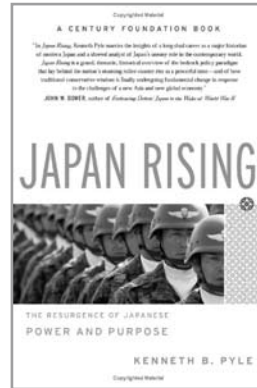
This is to be contrasted with American-style liberalization, an effect of which is often found ambivalent in Japan, where mergers and acquisitions are usually seen as disruptive. Though Japanese life-long employment is now revealed as more a desire than a fact, this ideal remains long-term.

The stagnant decade was spent restructuring. Merit-based wage compensation (rather than sheer longevity) began to be rewarded, subsidiaries were sold, production was moved to cheaper locations abroad. The general house-cleaning continues, but the pattern here revealed is distinctive.

Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose

Kenneth B. Pyle

(Public Affairs, 2007)



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A senior scholar of Japan who is also a foreign policy analyst, Kenneth Pyle here analyzes the large issues facing Japan, including how the processes of history and “national character” shape Japan’s role in the world.

In this book he gives an historical overview of the policies that made possible Japan’s rise as a powerful state, and how both conservative and traditional political thought is undergoing change in response to the larger world outside.

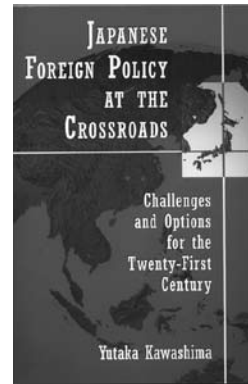
The author finds that Japan is “regaining its voice,” that the spirit quieted by defeat and then distracted by the needs of a mercantile foreign policy, is now emerging. Japan is becoming more positive in its posture and its intentions. There is debate about the Constitution, debate on Japan’s role in other nations’ wars, debate on how best to counter perceived enemies.

After such a lengthy period of postwar political passivity, the Japanese may well find their new disposition both exciting and liberating, believing that Japan ought to assert its own identity in the field of international politics. At the same time Japan must establish a new consensus on national goals. Yet as Japan becomes more entangled in international politics, trends will become harder to discern and their meanings more difficult to decipher.

Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century

Yutaka Kawashima

(Brookings Institution Press, 2003)



While teaching a course on Japan's foreign policy at Harvard, Yutaka Kawashima, ex-vice-minister of foreign affairs as well as former ambassador to Israel, was surprised to find that the material in English covering the recent evolution of Japan's foreign policy was so meager. For this reason he decided to write a book emphasizing foreign policy in the postwar era.

He divides his book into eight chapters, beginning with the history of Japanese foreign policy and following this with a section on Japan's security ties with the United States. This is an asymmetrical arrangement wherein the United States assumed an obligation to defend Japan and Japan permitted the U.S. to maintain military bases. The frustration this involves resembles the reaction of some Japanese in the early Meiji era toward the so-called unequal treaties with the Western powers.

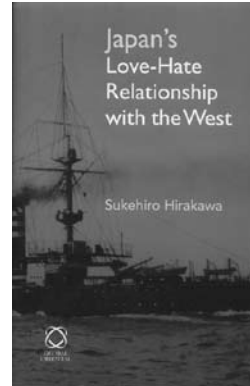
In this and later discussions the author surveys such issues as Japan's inability to come to terms with its past, its worries about economic vulnerability, and its troubled stand on nationalism and internationalism.

Here the author advocates internationalism. Japan "must work with as many countries as possible to deepen and widen the sharing of interests and values ..."

Japan's Love-Hate Relationship with the West

Sukehiro Hirakawa

(Global Oriental Ltd., 2005)



22

The author has said that he has felt a great discrepancy between Japanese views and Western views, not only within the general public, but also among academics specializing in international and intercultural relations.

His book is an attempt to bridge some of the gaps, in the process breaking some of the linguistic and cultural barriers. He is protected from the temptations of one-sidedness by his comprehensive knowledge of Western as well as Japanese history and literature, and by definition all of the essays in the book are driven by a strong commitment to cross-cultural elucidation.

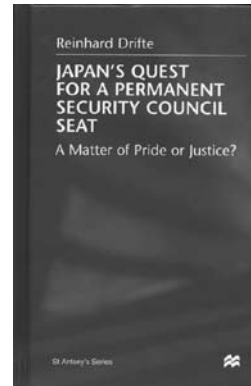
This enables him to see how, for example, Japan built its own colonies while at the same time denouncing British and American colonization, what he calls Japan's "anti-imperialist imperialism."

Hirakawa divides his work into three sections: Japan's Turn to the West; Japan's Return from the East; and From War to Peace. Here he is able to explain why modern Japanese writers so oscillate between East and West, feel such a major discrepancy between Japanese and Western and why the West remains so ambivalent toward Japan—academics and the public alike.

Japan's Quest for a Permanent Security Council Seat: A Matter of Pride or Justice?

Reinhard Drifte

(St. Martin's Press, 2000)



For more than thirty years Japan has been consistently pursuing the right to a seat in the UN Security Council. How and why this ambition came about is the subject that the author, Professor of Japanese Politics at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, sets for himself.

This necessarily involves a study of the workings of both the Japanese Foreign Ministry and what has been characterized as Japan's underdeveloped multilateral diplomacy.

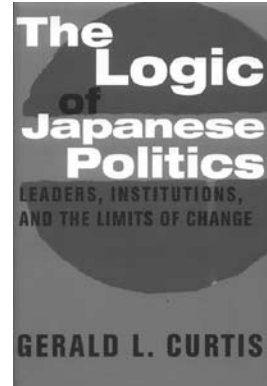
Among the many interesting findings in this book is the strong impression that Japan has made, wavering on so many issues, placating American pressure. At the same time the author provides the reader with insights into the Japanese position. In finding the country "not a leader, but a successful follower," he is voicing a common idea, one which many feel defines both Japan's effort to attain and in part the reasons for its having been denied a UN Security Council seat.

He also shows that the Japanese media consider membership justified. Today a two-thirds majority of the Japanese public opinion supports the bid for a permanent seat. The author's statistics qualify Japan as a valid member and express the hope that Japan may become an active multilateral partner.

The Logic of Japanese Politics: Leaders, Institutions, and the Limits of Change

Gerald L. Curtis

(Columbia University Press, 1999)



24

Interpreting a rapidly changing and vastly complex political system, this detailed chronicle shows the dynamics of a Japanese-style democracy at work. Offering a framework for understanding Japan's attempts to solve its present political problems, it also provides insights into future resolutions.

The author does not agree with the common notion that consensus and cultural uniqueness are defining elements in Japan's decision-making processes. Rather, he stresses the role of competition among the many individuals concerned in the continuation and reform of Japan's politics.

In so doing he interprets such important political developments as the Liberal Democratic Party's loss of power in 1993 after nearly four decades of full control. He explicates the historic electoral reform of 1994 that replaced the electoral system which had been in place since 1924. He chronicles the decline of machine politics and indicates the new importance of the non-party voter.

It is the personalities of power politics that often direct policy and here the author provides an analysis of the complex relations between Japanese leaders and institutions during the 1990s.

Machiavelli's Children:

Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan

Richard J. Samuels

(Cornell University Press, 2003)



A study of comparative politics, this influential work compares and contrasts Italy and Japan, both faced with similar modern problems. The author pairs political and business leaders in the two countries, emphasizing the role of human ingenuity when faced with political change.

The two countries share much—a failure of early liberalism, an approaching fascism, a number of imperialistic attempts, defeat in a war, and a problematic reconstruction, all the time obsessed with achieving modernity.

Samuels's approach parallels that of Machiavelli himself. Ironic, understated, this was a cool analysis, the conclusions of a man who tried to tell it as it was. It was just this candor that earned the Italian the suspicious reputation under which he still suffers.

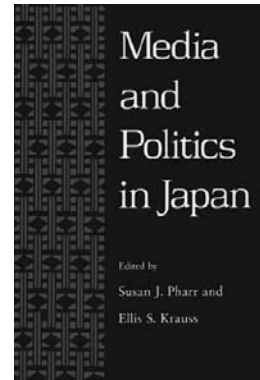
Indeed, Samuels also makes clear that leadership consists of a constant manipulation. It is personal leadership that is important because so much depends upon decisions made at critical junctures: the different choices made by Japanese and Italian communist party leaders after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Beginning with the late development of the founding states after the Meiji Restoration and the Risorgimento, similar developmental strategies are identified and the moving forces behind each are described, compared and contrasted.

Media and Politics in Japan

Susan J. Pharr / Ellis S. Krauss (eds.)

(University of Hawai'i Press, 1996)



26

Japan is one of the world's most media saturated countries. The combined circulation of its big-five newspapers is larger than any major U.S. paper; its public service broadcasting outlet, NHK, is second in size only to the BBC; there are many commercial TV stations and a full range of media-related journals and magazines. The mass media thus forms the most influential group in Japanese society.

Consequently, it also plays a major role in Japanese politics. It is this subject which is here explored through the thirteen chapters written by journalists and scholars - three Japanese and seven Americans. Editor Pharr contributes an historical introduction followed by an essay entitled "Media as Trickster in Japan." Co-editor Krauss writes about NHK TV news and politics and contributes a final essay on the media and Japanese political power.

Hiroshi Akuto writes on media in electoral campaigning; Toshio Takeshita and Ikuo Takeuchi on media agenda in Japanese local elections. In addition, Maggie Farley writes on Japan's press and the politics of scandal; Kyoko Altman on TV and political turmoil; John Creighton Campbell on media and policy change; and D. Eleanor Westney on the mass media as a business organization.

Network Power:

Japan and Asia

*Peter Katzenstein /
Takashi Shiraishi (eds.)*

(Cornell University Press, 1997)



This collection of scholarly papers examines the influence of Japanese dominance on the politics, economies and cultures of Southeast Asia. A major question probed is whether Japan has now attained, through economic power, the predominance it once sought through military means.

Japan's hegemonic system is not the first to work over the area. Before it were those from China, from Britain, from the United States. Which among these will predominate is among the questions here asked.

As the authors have elsewhere written: "Since 1990 ... Japan has been seen as capable of reestablishing a new version of its Co-Prosperity Sphere. The opposing liberal view holds instead that global markets are creating convergent pressures across all national boundaries and regional divides."

This collection takes the middle ground between these two views. Its comparative perspective can thus acknowledge the distinctiveness of Asian regionalism and Japan's changing role with it.

As the subtitle of this book indicates, it is concerned with Japan and Asia and not with Japan in Asia, thus suggesting a complex and at the same time problematical regional identity for Japan. It is to these questions that the authors devote their expertise and their insight.

Regime Shift:

Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy

T. J. Pempel

(Cornell University Press, 1998)



28

Following the end of World War II both the United Kingdom and the United States fell into a steady economic decline. At the same time, in contradistinction, Japan was manufacturing its “economic miracle,” building upon the ashes of its former ambitions. The miracle, however, did not long continue.

At the end of the 1990s Japan was stopped in its tracks by a real recession while both Britain and the United States were experiencing economic booms.

In order to explain these shifts the author introduces the concept of “regimes.” These he defines as “the middle level of cohesion in the political economy of a national state.”

He finds the regime to be more limited than an economic or a political system, yet lasting longer than the administration of a prime minister or a president. A regime would be a sustained combination of coalitions and policy, something like the New Deal.

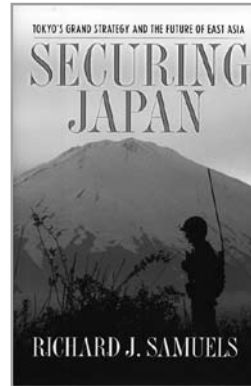
What occurred in the case of Japan was a “regime-shift.” The party system collapsed and the right-left split was replaced by competing conservative parties. The ruling bureaucracy was pushed into politics where its incompetence lost all public regard. Change has now become necessary and inevitable.

Securing Japan:

Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia

Richard J. Samuels

(Cornell University Press, 2007)



Japan's grand strategy for securing itself has a long, even venerable history—from the Meiji politicians who recognized the connection between military advance and economic success, to the consequences that led to Japan's defeat in World War II, and on to the postwar compact with the United States.

The author, MIT Professor of political science as well as chairman of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, here explains how the ideological connections explain today's debates. He argues that Japan will eventually achieve a balance between national autonomy and national strength, a position that will allow it reduced dependence on the United States and less vulnerability to China.

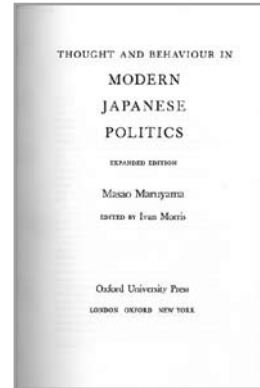
Over the last decade a revisionist group of Japanese policy-makers has consolidated power, taking steps to position Japan's military to play a global security role. Obvious on the books are plans to define and to legitimate Japan's new grand strategy, an often vigorously contested subject.

The revisionists who came to power early in this decade may supplant the earlier postwar doctrines with some of their own. Many are critical of the U.S. alliance and are eager to achieve greater sovereignty, but few would advocate a dangerously complete break.

Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics

Masao Maruyama

(Oxford University Press, 1969)



30

This is the enlarged edition of the 1963 translation of *Gendai Seiji No Shiso To Kodo: 1956-1957* (edited by Ivan Morris), a collection of essays written in the immediate postwar period by one of the most respected of Japanese intellectuals, published at a time when the most urgent question was just what had gone wrong with Japanese society.

In these essays Maruyama indicates the foundations of his research on Japanese-style fascism. At the same time he attributes the problem to the intellectual autonomy of Japan's history of political ideas. In this argument the aborted development of Japanese modernity explains the failure of politics to control the military and the fascistic elements which then took over Japanese society itself.

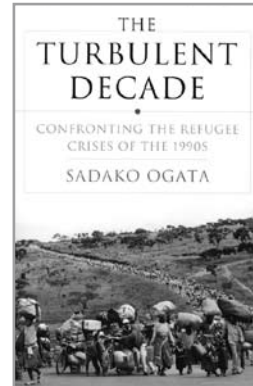
The influence of Maruyama's work remains immense in Japan. Not content with the kind of democracy imposed by the occupying forces, he questioned the role of modernity in contemporary Japan, making a strong distinction between modernity on one hand and Westernization on the other. Here he played the role of an important opinion leader, participated in public debates, and strongly questioned the renewing of the the US-Japan Security Treaty. Rather, he spoke for Japanese pacifism, of which he was one of the major defenders.

The Turbulent Decade:

Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s

Sadako Ogata

(W.W. Norton & Company, 2005)



Former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, here reflecting on this turbulent decade of her life, writes that she headed a kind of “fire brigade” which tried to put out blazes before they became conflagrations.

She and her commission struggled with four major events: refugee problems caused by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, by the breakup of Yugoslavia and the resulting Balkan War, by genocide in Rwanda, and by the recent war in Afghanistan.

Though she and her commission fulfilled many a humanitarian obligation, the message of this memoir is that humanitarian action is inherently inadequate. What is necessary are concerted political and security actions by the powers concerned. And this is what is most difficult to achieve, this convergence of strategic interests.

What she wants to emphasize, says the author is “that refugee problems are essentially political in origin and therefore have to be addressed through political action.”

Some successful operations involve military-civilian cooperation but there are others that do not. Here Ogata has bravely included many examples of how both the U.N. and NATO forces interpreted their mandates so narrowly that the protection of civilians was all but excluded.

The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present, and Future

Michael J. Green /

Patrick M. Cronin (eds.)

(Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999)



32

The military alliance between Japan and the United States is both important and contentious. It is now commonly thought that this bilateral arrangement should be more strongly redefined than merely reaffirmed.

A strategic relationship that has been in force since the 1951 signing of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, this alliance has not moved with the times and has made little accommodating change.

Now, say the authors of the various papers in this collection, the time for redefinition has come. China, economically emerging, poses new problems; the future of the two Koreas remains uncertain. Yet, Japan has so benefited from the U.S. alliance (much less defense spending, many more trade arrangements) that ideas about redefinition are not popular.

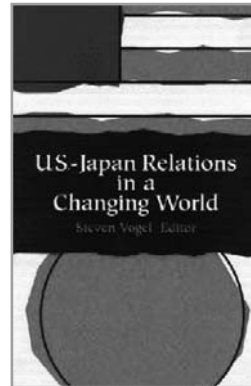
Indeed, it has been remarked that the various alliance justifications after the Cold War remain much the same as they were during the Cold War itself. Yet, it must be argued (as it is here), that a relationship formed during the Cold War must change with the changing times.

This is now generally agreed upon but the problem is how to accomplish this redefinition. Certainly economies will be interdependent but security operations are influenced by economic considerations.

U.S.-Japan Relations in a Changing World

Steven K. Vogel (ed.)

(Brookings Institution Press, 2002)



With the changes expected in the U.S.-Japan relationship in the next decade, this collection of essays—all originating from a U.S.-Japan conference in 2001, analyzes the many factors that have shaped this relationship. It is inevitable that both Japan and the United States will have to work hard to preserve their relationship's stability.

This book includes an introduction, the eight essays, and a conclusion, each examining different dimensions in this relationship. Looked at are the arguments for a “balance of power,” for economic performances, and the power of ideas as contrasted to military and economic powers.

Also considered is the role of international organizations in shaping U.S.-Japan relationships, and the similar role that finance is playing. Japan's financial liberalization is seen as promoting the convergence of the Japanese corporate governance against an increasingly deregulated American system.

Some doubt is also voiced over whether Japan can regain the technological advantage over the U.S. that it once enjoyed. More likely will be an expansion from such original issues as security and trade, to the important issues of the environment, immigration and human rights. This expansion will be likely to foster greater cooperation and collaboration, as well as more danger of conflict.