



Ken'ichi Goto. *Tensions of Empire: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Colonial and Postcolonial World*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003. xxiv + 349 pp. \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-89680-231-5.

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Ties That Bind

Not to be confused with the volume edited by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, this collection of essays addresses the imperialist ties that bind—or in some cases sought to bind—Japan and Southeast Asia in the twentieth century, especially those between Japan and the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia.[1] Like that earlier volume, however, rather than provide a comprehensive history, this volume offers insights into both colonial and post-colonial relationships through a consideration of some of the cultural ramifications of empire, even if it tends towards a more political discussion than that edited by Cooper and Stoler.

Goto Ken'ichi is a distinguished professor of international relations at Waseda University—one of Japan's major research centers focusing on Southeast Asian studies. His work focuses primarily on Indonesia, including a fair amount recently on East Timor.[2] Although much of the work published in this volume has been published elsewhere (all but one of the essays in the 1990s, in English), the combining of Goto's work into one volume and its attendant revisions will likely benefit any library that deals with Southeast Asia and Japanese foreign relations. His views are particularly useful in that, like other recent scholars, he does not dismiss entirely the published views of prewar and wartime Japanese leaders as mere propaganda. Instead, taking them seriously—though critically—Goto instructively recalls views once common in the colonial world, views that prewar Japanese leaders sought to use to their advantage, views that resonate even today.[3]

Paul Kratoska's introduction lays out the significance of Goto's work plainly, situating it between passionate perspectives. On the one hand are the Allies who have typically tended to view the war against Japan as a war against fascism. On another is Japan's "vocal right-wing minority," that emphasizes Japan's goal of liberating colonial peoples (p. xiv). On still another are Southeast Asian histories recounting struggles for indepen-

dence that tend to skim over Japanese activities in the region. For Kratoska, Goto correctly takes a holistic approach, noting that yes, liberation was a key Japanese goal, but at the same time the Japanese sought to dominate Southeast Asia after its "liberation." As such, Goto's work serves a useful role for Japanese, former Allies, and Southeast Asians, rebuking right-wing Japanese while pointing out that they are not entirely wrong, and reminding Southeast Asians that their independence did not come as simply as is commonly thought.[4]

The book is divided into three sections with four essays in each: "Japan and Southeast Asia, 1930s-1945," "Japan and Indonesia" (covering roughly the same time span as the first), and "Japan and Postwar Southeast Asia." The first is the most wide-ranging, exploring several different aspects of this complex experience.

Goto's first chapter seeks to provide a general overview of prewar Japanese perspectives of Southeast Asia. It follows, briefly, the usually accepted contours, emphasizing diplomatic history, Japanese migration patterns, and alternating Japanese interest in Asianism or in distancing Japan from Asia, the latter of which sometimes involved ugly, contemptuous views of fellow Asians. Establishing these general parameters is important because Goto relates to them in later essays.

The second chapter deals with a relatively unknown story in the road to the Pacific War, "Japan and Portuguese Timor." Here Goto details the attempted Japanese encroachment before the war and Japan's occupation of the colony. Intriguingly, he also shows how Portuguese and Japanese diplomacy managed to maintain Portuguese sovereignty in a manner that behooved postwar relations between the two states.

The third chapter considers the pivotal role of Tojo Hideki in his capacity as wartime Prime Minister. Although Goto accepts that Tojo did genuinely seek to establish a new order, he insists that it was not to be a truly

liberated order. Rather, it was to be a patriarchal order, in which Japan stood at the head of an Asian family. Goto then goes on to address some of the repercussions that followed from Tojo's efforts to implement that goal, to the detriment of Japan's war effort. The fourth chapter considers the relationship between Japan and Southeast Asian nations from a wider perspective, reaching similar conclusions and prompting Goto to comment that "the wartime cooperation between Japanese and Southeast Asian nations was a complex relationship in which the two parties were in the same bed with different dreams, as an old Japanese saying goes" (p. 79).

The second section of the book plays to Goto's strength, focusing on Japanese interactions with Indonesians. Two chapters deal with alternating Indonesian interests in and distaste for Japan as a potential role model for the Netherlands East Indies, especially among students. The second two chapters consider more confrontational interactions, the Semarang Incident of 1945 and the activities of Abdul Rahman (aka Ichiki Tatsuo). Together they tell the high-profile stories most pertinent to Japanese-Indonesian relations today, those that abetted the growth of Indonesian nationalism and those that seemed to quell it. As such, even if some of this has been described elsewhere, they indicate well the tangled nature of Japanese-Indonesian connections in the middle of the twentieth century, connections that have been papered over but remain unraveled today.

The final four essays consider postwar experiences. While the first demonstrates how Japanese occupational policies contributed to the divergent paths to independence in Malaya and Indonesia, the second explores more deeply the legacies of the era of Japanese rule in Indonesia, comparing that experience briefly with that of the Philippines. While the former indicates differences in Japanese occupation strategy, the second indicates more the differences inherent in the two prewar colonial situations. While colonial arrangements in the Netherlands East Indies were eminently exploitable by Japanese—not that they succeeded—those in the Philippines were much less so.

The final two chapters address more contemporary milieus. This is a logical addition because even if the Japanese occupation was short, it was pivotal, marking the termination of the colonial era and the formation of something new. The penultimate chapter notes this well through the study of something unimaginable only a few years previous to their occurrence, the regional international conferences held to promote postcolonial autonomy, prosperity, and cooperation. Cumulating in

the Bandung Conference of 1955, together they represent the first hesitant steps towards nationhood taken by some former colonies, steps made stronger by being taken in conjunction with already independent states and with colonies on their way towards independence. This regional perspective notes that individual drives for independence were made stronger even if some of the colonies and states participating, like Indonesia, differed with others over issues like dealing with postwar Japan.

The final chapter—and the last page of the previous chapter—returns to a consideration of Japan's relations with Southeast Asia, though from the vantage point of today. Surveying shifts in Japanese diplomacy, popular culture, and school texts, Goto concludes that Japanese and Indonesians, in particular, are still learning to deal with the historical legacies they have been bequeathed. He acknowledges that resurgent nationalism in particular is destabilizing, not only because it ruptures relations but also because it questions identities. Here Goto is particularly concerned with Japanese nationalism, because while resurgent nationalists tend to argue that Japanese actions in Southeast Asia were positive, his overriding goal has been to argue "that the true purpose of the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia was to control the whole of the region because it was a major source of the raw materials and human resources needed to carry out Japan's war aims. The liberation of Southeast Asia from Western colonial rule was only a facade" (p. 291). He then muses that in the era of the weakening of nation-states, it is high time to develop alternative perspectives for post-national histories, and that he hopes that this volume may help someone take one step in that direction.

Each of the twelve essays here is well conceived and articulated, using sources in a variety of languages. Not only does Goto conduct primary research in Japanese and Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), his grasp of secondary sources includes those written in English.[5] Perhaps the only failure here is one of length—more can be said about many of the milieus and issues that Goto explores here. Fortunately, that detail can be found in his other works.

Notes

[1]. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[2]. Goto's university homepage can be found at http://www.wiaps.waseda.ac.jp/Bin/PS_Main.asp?Lang=EN&ID=7, and a research profile at <http://www.wiaps.waseda.ac.jp/user/goto/pro/pro.htm>. Paul Kratoska adds in an appendix to the volume un-

der review here that Goto has received several awards and has served in a number of distinguished academic positions.

[3]. One work that focuses on these connections more explicitly is Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

[4]. Thus, for Kratoska, Goto's work is daring: "it can be difficult even to raise the question of a Japanese perspective of the war, for the suggestion that prevail-

ing understandings are incorrect seems in the West to be slightly subversive, while in Japan it can suggest sympathy with right-wing causes or trigger right-wing hostility. For this reason, the publication of these articles is an act of personal courage and integrity, even though they are not written in a partisan spirit and provide balanced and nuanced judgments that do not conform to the prejudices of either side" (p. xxii).

[5]. It may be the case that Professor Goto also reads Chinese and Dutch, but it is unclear from the sources cited here.

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