

**Takeshi Matsuda.** *Konomama de Yoinoka Nichibei Kankei.* Tokyo: Sogensha Press, 1997. 266 pp. ISBN 978-4-488-00701-0.



**Reviewed by** Jing Zhao

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A book entitled: *Are They Okay?: The Current Japan-U.S. Relations* seems as if it would be a review of contemporary Japan-U.S. affairs, such as the recent security Guidelines. The subtitle, *History of Modern and Recent U.S.-East Asia Relations* seems more specific, but it does not deal with any important issue after World War II such as the Korean War, the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and Sino-American relations (including Taiwan). Strangely enough, the book does not deal with Japan. It is valuable mainly as an introduction of American foreign policy toward China, until the American participation into WWII.

Chapter One briefly introduces American foreign policy's origin and formation in the nineteenth century. As shown in the reference list, a lot of Japanese literature exists (including translations) on the history of America's development from a continental empire toward an oceanic one. This chapter is valuable for teaching students the meaning of such concepts as "the Monroe Statement (the Monroe Doctrine)," "Manifest Destiny," and "Open Door Dispatch," and helping them un-

derstand American foreign policy implementation toward East Asia.

Chapter Two deals with the establishment of the "Open Door" policy from 1890 to 1920. This policy is not only specific toward China (which was facing a dissolution crisis under the battle of concessions), but also the fundamental strategy of American foreign policy entering the twentieth century international stage (p. 86). The author argues that "Open Door Imperialism" shows the U.S. commitment to establish a liberal capitalist order in East Asia (p. 101). Thus, even though the U.S. did not have enough strength during WWI, its attempts would bring unavoidable conflict with Japan's vast expansion and the ambition to dominate in China.

Chapter Three focuses on the institutional reform movement of the State Department during the same period. The central issue was to restructure the State Department geographically. Hence, the first significant step toward the establishment of the Far East Division was made on March 1907. The institutional reform (resulting in the Foreign Service Act of May 1924) made it possible to im-

plement the "Open Door" policy scientifically and effectively (p. 159), mainly toward the coming crisis in China.

Chapter Four reviews American diplomacy development in East Asia between the end of WWI and the U.S. participation into WWII (1920-1941). The author uses the Wilsonian "liberal capitalist order" concept to summarize American policy, as shown from the Stimson Doctrine in January 1932. Meanwhile, Japan was establishing its "East Asia New Order" statement of the Konoe Cabinet (November 1938), to claim exclusive rights to dominate China by force. Toward China's rising nationalism, the author regrets that Japan should have to learn from the U.S. and the U.K. to master its sense of diplomacy. It is never too late to do so anytime.

Chapter Five introduces the role of Congress (the House of Representatives and the Senate) in American foreign policy making. The author explains that this policy-making process is based on America's fundamental principle of democracy, but he also indicates how difficult it is to implement democracy in foreign affairs. To illustrate the importance of openness of information, Matsuda mentions his attendance at the Senate Subcommittee hearing of Walter Mondale's nomination as the U.S. Ambassador to Japan (p. 214).

The chapters mentioned have been selected and revised from Matsuda's recently published American history papers. They are useful for Japan's *gaidai* (foreign studies) students, but they should not be made into a book which memorializes his thirty-year career of American studies. Hence, he adds a beginning chapter, "How to deal with America," which tries to approach the issues from a cultural perspective. He claims that U.S.-East Asia relations are presently "in a very unique time," because the U.S. is experiencing a conflicting situation both against China (politically) and Japan (economically). This statement is not really true. The "core issue," as stated by China's President Jiang Zeming in his recent visit to the U.S., of

Sino-American relations is about Taiwan, not about the Intelligence Properties Rights, nor about human rights.

*Boeki masatsu* (trade frictions), can never become a crisis between the U.S. and Japan. Matsuda is concerned that trade frictions will affect the solidarity of the U.S.-Japan military alliance due. My good advice to Professor Matsuda is that there is no such a need to worry. Though he could not have read the final publication of the "Joint Statement of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation" issued in September 1997, he should have known about its contents. At least, as a *nichibei kankei* professor, he should have read the "U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security," declared by President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto in April 1996, which states that the current U.S.-Japan relations are the "most successful relations between any two countries in history." As for a "cultural perspective" on U.S.-East Asia relations, more accurate interpretations than those of this book's author exist. The superficial contents here offer no assistance to understand American foreign policy.

In addition to Matsuda's "cultural perspective," the author brings in supplementary theme in Chapter Six: "To continue our negative shifting destiny, or to master it." When Matsuda criticizes the revisionist, Chalmers Johnson for "not knowing Japan" and being "short-sighted," and "emotional" (pp.248-49), he shows no understanding of Johnson's points. He claims an "Asian version of NATO or CSCE would be the best scenario for his "world system goal" (p. 242), but offers no arguments to support this interpretation. The author states, "to maintain East Asia's security and order, Japan should *hokan* (assist) the U.S. more effectively than ever in both financial and military fields" (Ending Chapter, "Japan's choice and the future of the U.S.-Japan relations," pp. 257-58). Regrettably, such arbitrary assertions (also seen on the Korean War, the Vietnam War) hurt the book's otherwise relatively valuable contents. It is not

that the author should not have a right to his opinion, but here he goes beyond the boundaries of the historical discipline, talking like a "policy consultant" to his *jiminto* (LDP) clients.

As argued above, researchers will be disappointed if they read this book after seeing its title. Japanese citizens, who are concerned with the current situation of U.S.-Japan relations, from the Okinawa rape incident to the *Yuji rippo* (War Emergency Act), may be confused. Nevertheless, Japanese *gaidai* students may find some material in this book informative regarding America's East Asia policy.

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