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in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Yoneyuki Sugita, Marie Thorsten. *Beyond the Line: Joseph Dodge and the Geometry of Power in US-Japan Relations, 1949-1952*. Okayama: University Education Press, 1999. 108 pp. 1800 yen (paper), ISBN 978-4-88730-352-2.

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Published on H-US-Japan (November, 1999)

It would be an understatement to say that US-Japan relations in the twentieth century, and our understanding of them, have been characterized by hype. This international relationship, which can be accurately described as 'the most powerful economic relationship in the latter half of the twentieth century,' also has had important repercussions on the internal politics of each state. The intensely racialized struggle of World War II included warfare against US citizens of Japanese ancestry. Japan's fantastic economic success in the 1970s and 80s gave rise in America to both Yellow Peril discourse and new models of capitalist utopia and industrial relations. And now in the 1990s, the burst of the Japanese bubble (and the hegemony of the US economy) is part of a reassessment of Asian values.

Such stereotypes, which assume the coherence and uniqueness of 'Japan' and 'America,' are commonly heard in the halls of power and the media - as well as in academic texts. Sugita and Thorsten's new book *Beyond the Line: Joseph Dodge and the Geometry of Power in US-Japan Relations, 1949-52* provides an important corrective to such views.

Through painstaking archival research of the documents and correspondence of key American and Japanese officials, contextualized with other academic analyses, they argue that Joseph Dodge, then President of the Detroit Bank, was one of the keys to Japanese economic success. They show how Dodge's rational, free-market policies were not just for 'Japan' but were an important part of America's Cold War calculations for hegemony over Asia. In other words, rather than Japan switching >from World War II to a trade war against the US - as is often said - Sugita and Thorsten demonstrate how the regionalization of the Japanese economy was a key to America's Cold War policy. Their analysis shows how

the Dodge Line, as an economic plan, was conceptually distinct from near-mythical power of SCAP's leader Douglas MacArthur, and how such an appeal to rationalism rather than nationalism was key to American Cold War policy in its early stages: Japan's balanced budget was intimately related to the global balance of power in the eyes of American officials.

The book thus makes us question narratives of an East Asian economic miracle which rely on a unique Japanese economic-culture: the plans came from a Detroit banker acting for Washington, and who in turn encouraged key players such as Yoshida Shigeru, Ikeda Hayato, Ichimada Naoto and a new cadre of professional bankers. The book also makes us question common views that Japan is achieving through economic imperialism what it failed to do in World War II. The Japanese economy gained momentum in East and Southeast Asia after World War II, largely because it figured into the American Cold War plan to contain communism, and later because it benefited from both the Korean and Vietnam wars. This has been forgotten, Sugita and Thorsten argue, because the Japanese economy was much more successful than the American Cold Warriors planned. Japan itself thus became a threat. The authors thus are able to examine the policies associated with Dodge in the broader context of global and regional politics.

One weakness is that the book needs to put Dodge's key Japanese comrades Yoshida Shigeru, Ikeda Hayato, Ichimada Naoto mentioned in Chapter Three in better context so the reader can appreciate just how important to Japan's economic success they were.

*Beyond the Line* is tightly organized and well-argued with lively and entertaining prose. Due to its attention to detail and primary sources it is useful as a research

tool. Because of its accessibility (concise, clear prose), and expository notes for Japanese readers, it is useful for teaching purposes.

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**Citation:** William A. Callahan. Review of Sugita, Yoneyuki; Thorsten, Marie, *Beyond the Line: Joseph Dodge and the Geometry of Power in US-Japan Relations, 1949-1952*. H-US-Japan, H-Net Reviews. November, 1999.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3563>

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