
Reviews of Books

Degui Lian (2012). *On Japan's Sea Power Consciousness*. Beijing: Current Event Publishing House. 428pp. ISBN 978-7-80232-513-5.

There are many perspectives in observing Japan's politics and diplomacy in terms of hawks or doves, left wing or right wing, hardliners or moderates, and conservatism or radicalism. In his *On Japan's Sea Power Consciousness*, however, Lian analyzes Japan's foreign policies from its Sea Power Consciousness and Pan-Asianism. Based on the theory of Sea Power established by Alfred Thayer Mahan, Japan's Sea Power Consciousness considers that as an island country, Japan should focus its development on the sea including seaborne commerce, naval power, and forming the union among maritime powers of the US, Britain, and Japan itself. Japan's Pan-Asianism, on the other hand, positions the center of gravity in Asia to fight with western invasion through the unification of Asian countries including China, Korea, Southeast Asian countries and Japan itself.

Unlike other books on this topic that focus on policies of, and competitions between, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), Lian's interpretations are based on the formation and operation of the two non-partisan ideologies and their influence on important politicians of the two main parties in the history and the political arena of Japan. The book consists of nine chapters that elaborate upon the two ideologies, the balance between, and the practices of them. Chapters one and two discuss the initiation and evolution of the two ideologies and their arguments and applications. According to the theory of Sea Power, natural environment of countries consisting of islands or being along the seacoast is the determining factor of the history of sea powers. There are three strategies for a maritime country to become powerful: facing the challenge from the countries in the Eurasia heart; establishing the alliance among maritime countries; and forming a strategic encirclement ring along the boundary zone of Eurasia. According to Lian, much of Japanese thought and policy came from its Sea Power Consciousness including thoughts of "Escaping from Asia and Entering Europe and/or America," distinguishing Japanese culture from Chinese culture, "China Threat," and the individuality of Japanese culture compared with Western or Eastern civilizations, and policies of Yoshida's "Leaning to one side to the US," multilateral alliances with maritime powers, security cooperation among the US, South Korea, and Japan, Nagashima's Rimland-Maritime Coalition, and Aso's Arc of Freedom and Prosperity. Pan-Asianism is another ideology that affects Japan's thoughts and policies in foreign affairs, especially before World War II. It includes thoughts of reviving Asia, united Asia, and Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity, and policies of Fukuda's principles of peace and cooperation, East Asia EPA and FTA, Hatoyama's East Asian Community, and Ozawa's position on coordinated relations between the US and Japan. In Lian's opinion, the thoughts and policies of Japan in foreign relations do not have a clear boundary between the LDP and the DPJ, rather between Sea Power Consciousness and Pan-Asianism.

Chapters three and four elaborate upon the balance and imbalance between the two ideologies in the first dozen years in the 21st century that manifested in positions and practices from Prime Ministers Koizumi to Noda. "Balance" means either diverging from one ideology to another or a combination of the two ideolo-

gies within the party or between the two parties. “Imbalance” means the incompatibility of the two ideologies, or not being able to find congruity between Sea Power Consciousness and Pan-Asianism, or swinging from one extreme to another. Since Japanese foreign policies are mainly based on the non-partisan and ideological orientation of politicians, the balance and imbalance often take place within the incumbent party rather than between the incumbent and non-incumbent parties. Oriented under the pro-US policy of Sea Power Consciousness, Koizumi ignored the feeling of Asian countries including visiting the Yasukuni Shrine for six times, which left the task of balancing the two ideologies to his successors. In seeking the balance between the two ideologies, the main politicians within the LDP including Abe, Aso, and Fukuda have tried to avoid the extremism and combine the two ideologies. As the successor of Koizumi within the LDP, Abe tried to include some concepts from Pan-Asianism. He not only changed Koizumi’s pro-US position to that of estranging the US, but also took the ice-breaking trip to China as his first foreign visit. When Aso put his Arc of Freedom and Prosperity into the practice of Japan-US-India-Australian security conception, he did not get a positive response from the other three countries. However, his concept of six powers (the US, Japan, EU, Russia, China, and India) resulted from his attempting a balance between the two ideologies. Fukuda replaced Abe and Aso’s “values diplomacy” with his “sympathetic diplomacy,” combining both ideologies through mixing western values with eastern values, and balancing the policies among “pro-US,” “open to Asian countries,” and “deepening Japan-China relations.” The imbalance phenomenon happens when one side is overly emphasized. When the DPJ was in the power, the imbalance between the two ideologies was manifested in Ozawa’s demand for coordinated relations between the US and Japan, and Hatoyama’s “friendly diplomacy.” Ozawa and Hatoyama’s leaning on Pan-Asianism was a radical move away from Sea Power Consciousness as well as an ideal towards a real balance between the two ideologies. However, Japan faced strong opposition from its most important ally, the US, towards Ozawa and Hatoyama’s Pan-Asianism, especially Hatoyama’s “Escaping from the US and Entering Asia.” Their successors, Kan and Noda, therefore, took another radical move towards pro-US of Sea Power Consciousness. The imbalance between the two ideologies is the main cause of the DPJ’s losing power in the government.

From chapter five through chapter nine the book discusses the important issues of Japan’s foreign relations in the light of Sea Power Consciousness and Pan-Asianism. These issues include US-Japan Alliance, adjustment of defense policy, nuclear policy, the difficult position in TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and China-US-Japan trilateral relations. In these chapters, Lian analyzes the formation and revision of the US-Japan Alliance, Japanese policies on defense, nuclear weapons, and Japan-China relations from an ideological perspective. In his opinion, Sea Power Consciousness has dominated the decision making with occasional influence from Pan-Asianism. For example, the US-Japan Alliance was the product of the Cold War as well as Japan’s acceptance of US leadership in the light of Sea Power Consciousness. When the DPJ tried to pursue an equal relationship within this alliance and demanded an alliance without an American garrison in Japan, it failed and lost power in the end. In terms of Japan’s adjustment to its defense policy, although it changed its target from Russia to China, it has been conducted under Sea Power Consciousness through either the LDP or the DPJ. On the issue of nuclear weapons, Lian concludes the difference is between whether Japan is under US nucleus protection and nuclear deterrent out of Sea Power Consciousness or being separated from US nucleus protection and having an independent nucleus military itself out of Pan-Asianism. Whether joining TPP or not is a difficult choice for both ideologies for it directly affects the main interest groups of Japanese agriculture and foreign trades. Both parties have been seeking a balance between economic interests and political ecology. The book puts the issues of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and US-Japan-China relations in the same chapter for it considers the two issues as being closely related. Lian considers the US returning the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands to Japan an achievement of pro-US policy of Sea Power Consciousness as well as a barrier to Pan-Asianism, especially

in its relations with China. The issue of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands is also the focal point of US-Japan-China trilateral relations as well as an important factor affecting the pattern of Asian-Pacific region. From an ideological perspective, Lian is able to reach the level of self-justification in his interpretations to most foreign policies and practices of Japan's political parties and important politicians. However, to the issue of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, it cannot simply give the credit to Sea Power Consciousness for US returning the Islands to Japan, or give the credit to the assertors of Pan-Asianism when Japan takes the attitude of ignoring the dispute on the issue.

As a conclusion to the book, Lian points out that the extremes and oppositions between the ideologies of Sea Power Consciousness and Pan-Asianism caused Japan's foreign policies swinging between the Sea Faction and the Continent Faction. Japan should avoid making choices between pro-US and separating from the US, or between pro-China and guarding against China. US-Japan-China trilateral relations can be "Add-Sum" other than "Zero-Sum." According to Lian, among the Japanese politicians from Koizumi to Abe, Fukuda's "sympathetic diplomacy" can lead Japan to the balance point between its relations with the US and China, between the Sea Faction and the Continent Faction, and between the ideologies of Sea Power Consciousness and Pan-Asianism. It is also the intersection of Japan's security and interests, and the convergence of Japan's cultural and values identity with that of either the US or China. In its appendix, the book includes twelve speeches by important politicians from both the LDP and the DPJ who have enlivened the political arena during the first dozen years of the century, including Koizumi, Abe, Fukuda, Aso, Hatoyama, Kan, Noda, etc. In these speeches, readers can understand the positions and policies of these politicians, and their arguments and ideological tendencies.

In conclusion, *On Japan's Sea Power Consciousness* is a book observing Japanese politics and diplomacy from an ideological perspective. The book elaborates the process of Japan's foreign policy vacillating between "Sea" and "Continent," and discusses Japan's difficult position and contradictions in adjusting its diplomacy. It justifies the two tendencies of pro-US and pro-Asia based on a theoretical analysis in either Sea Power Consciousness or Pan-Asianism. Although this framework of ideological analysis cannot include all sides of Japanese diplomacy, it at least provides logical interpretations of US-Japan relations, China-Japan relations, and Japan's foreign strategies. As a study on Japan's diplomacy with a new perspective, the book certainly attracts the attention among, and provides a key to, readers and scholars in the field.

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