
BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

Antony Best (ed.): The International History of East Asia, 1900–1968. Trade, ideology and the quest for order (= Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia, vol. 62), London: Routledge, 2010, 199 p.

Rezensiert von
Olavi K. Fält, Oulu

The intent of the book is to break from traditional historical research dealing with East Asia's international relations, which has concentrated particularly on the history of conflicts from the 1890s on which have resulted from the rise of Japan and China to become great powers. The point of view selected for the analysis is how ideological competition, both multilateral and unilateral efforts to instil order and the changing nature of international trade have affected the region's development. These are analysed through a central relationship that shaped the region – the complex ties between Britain and Japan. In this way the book has sought to find the broad forces that have shaped the region. The book's analysis is divided into two periods – the one extending to the start of the Pacific War and the post-war period.

The book begins with Ian Nish's analysis of research dealing with Anglo-Japanese relations. He focuses particularly on the five volumes published by the Anglo-Japanese History Project in 2000-2003. Nish also takes an overall look at the failed quest for regional order in East Asia extending from the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902 to the start of the Pacific War in 1941. The editor of the book, Antony Best, for his part, examines the Anglo-Japanese alliance, where according to him the countries' interpretations of the alliance and related interests finally led to its gradual decline. Nevertheless, Nish's and Best's interpretations of the end of the alliance differ slightly from each other. Nish placed more emphasis on how in actuality neither party wanted it to end with the Four-Power Treaty concluded at the Washington Conference in the autumn of 1921, while according to Best's interpretation they both held the view that time had as if passed by the alliance.

In his very interesting article Robert Bickers examines the Chinese Maritime Customs Service administered by Britain, on the one hand as a means of persuading Japan to adopt an open door policy in China by also recruiting Japanese into its multinational staff, and on the other hand as Anglo-Japanese competition until December 1941. For his part, Harumi Gota-Shibata approaches China's and Japan's

attitude towards international cooperation through the conflicts of interest in the negotiations to ban opium which were conducted in the Opium Advisory Committee of the League of Nations. At the same time he shatters the simplified picture of Japan's cooperation with the League of Nations. Both Bickers's and Gota-Shibata's articles significantly diversify the picture of the development of international relationships in East Asia during the period.

The basic principle of Joseph A. Maiolo's topic area is considerably more familiar – the naval rivalry of the great powers in the period between the world wars. Deviating from the usual analysis of the topic area, he brings up the impact of the Anglo-Japanese relations in the background of the negotiations, especially both countries' common concern in the early 1920s about the superior potential of the United States' in the build-up of navies. Another very interesting fact he mentions is the dual role of the Soviet Union as a supporter of the agreement system and at the same time as an underminer of Britain's naval superiority in the mid-1930s.

In his article, Masataka Matsuura interestingly brings forth how significant an impact pan-Asianism had on Japan's political decision-making prior to the Pacific War, and how it also struck a chord with the Chinese and particularly the Indians. Thus, according to Matsuura's well-grounded interpretation, not only was Pan-Asianism an ideology employed to support expansionist policy, but also as a leading ideology it influenced it and also partly steered it.

For his part, Hans van de Ven examines the impact of the Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1937, on Western images of Japan and China. Due to the brutal bomb-

ings of cities and the inhuman treatment of the Chinese in general, the former civilised Japan, which engaged in close political cooperation with Western countries, became the barbaric Japan in Western comments and images. In contrast, the uncivilised, subjugated and fragmented China became a heroic and respected nation. This did not, however, change the basic setting created already in ancient Greece, that 'East was East and West was West'. In spite of everything, China nevertheless remained as the 'other', which it had also been until then.

The Second World War was damaging to both Britain's and Japan's influence in East Asia. Britain nevertheless preserved its position in Southeast Asia until the 1960s, for which reason it was able to also hold considerable sway over matters in East Asia. Southeast Asia was important to Japan, also, as it sought to establish trade relations there to compensate for the initially strictly limited trade with continental China. At the same time, with Britain's support, Japan returned as a significant economic influencer to the region where only a few years earlier it had been forced to relinquish its political and economic benefits!

Tomoki Kuniyoshi assesses Britain's impact on the conclusion of the 1951 San Francisco peace treaty with Japan. The article indicates how, regardless of its weakened position, Britain was able to significantly influence the treaty itself, and along with it the newly created San Francisco system. The objective was to support Britain's interests in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong by creating a suitable economic and political role for Japan in the region from Britain's standpoint. As Kuniyoshi points

out, especially important was Britain's strategy of utilising the unity and power of the Commonwealth in the negotiations. This way it was able to torpedo the United States' plans for a broader security agreement with Japan. The result was three separate agreements, one of which the United States concluded with Japan.

Peter Lowe also analyses Britain's position in Southeast Asia, how with weakening resources it sought to skilfully manoeuvre to preserve its influence with the various parties while at the same time it gradually relinquished its colonial obligations. In preventing the spread of Communism, Britain emphasised so-called soft power – improvement of economic and social relations and reinforcement of governance – instead of political and military pressure. Shigeru Akita focuses particular attention on how in the 1950s Britain sought firstly to strengthen the sterling as an international currency and secondly the South-east Asian sterling region, economically and socially, by promoting Japan's trade with Southeast Asia. This again accelerated Japan's recovery and eventually also its rise to become a great economic power. For its part, Britain's policy also slowed the growth of the United States' influence in the region, so that according to Akita the region did not enter the age of 'Pax Americana' until the early 1960s.

Nicholas J. White also examines the congruence of Britain's and Japan's interests in Southeast Asia. Compared with Akita, he focuses more attention on the political impact of Japan's increasing trade. Britain sought on one hand to prevent Japan from becoming too dependent on trade with China, and on the other hand to strengthen the region internally against the lure

of Communism. At the same time White brings up the close cooperation between local British agency houses and companies and the Japanese as brokers in Japan's exports and imports in the region, which has generally been given little attention. Both parties benefited from it. From the viewpoint of the Japanese, the British were well acquainted with the local circumstances, while the role of a broker was quite profitable for the British.

The book concludes with Akira Iriye's final comments and summary, where he brings forth the book's relatedness to the focal points of recent historical research, which emphasises non-geopolitical phenomena instead of wars. The period between the world wars is no longer examined from the viewpoint of imminent war, but more from the perspective of the day-to-day work and objectives of the period's international political actors. In like manner, the period after the Second World War is no longer dominated by the Cold War, but rather globalisation, where the Cold War can be seen as one part of it. According to Iriye, in this new perspective it is important to fix attention on international cooperation, interdependence, non-state actors and phenomena that reach beyond national borders, among others. According to him, this type of historiographical development is linked to a new type of world history and global history, which culminates in economic, social and cultural globalisation.

In all, the book answers very well to the objectives set in it, i.e. the analytical point of view in which the region's development has been influenced by ideological competition, both multilateral and unilateral efforts to instil order and the changing na-

ture of international trade. The authors are noted experts in their topic areas, and the book begins handsomely with Ian Nish's article and concludes with Akira Iriye's final comments! Naturally, a compilation is always characterised by a certain amount of disunity, but the fresh and interesting viewpoints of the articles largely make up for this. Nevertheless, the perspective of globalisation and global history mentioned in Akira Iriye's final comments could have been brought forth even more strongly in the articles. In my opinion, that way even more could have been extracted from the Anglo-Japanese relations. For example, by more broadly examining the mutual images of the British and the Japanese and their development during the period in question, it would have been possible to discuss more and on a more general level about relationships between cultures and civilisations in the riptide of differing interests. Likewise, through global history the region's other European actors, such as the Netherlands and France, would have been brought forth better, albeit in principle the articles concentrate on Anglo-Japanese relations.

Takeshi Hamashita: China, East Asia and the Global Economy. Regional and Historical Perspectives, edited by Linda Grove and Mark Selden (Asia's Transformation / Critical Asian Scholarship), London: Routledge, 2008, 224 S.

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Birgit Tremml, Wien

This volume, a collection of essays, introduces the work of the Japanese historian Takeshi Hamashita on East Asia's role in world history to an international audience. His characteristic *longue-durée*-approach to bridge the gap between early modern developments and contemporary history based on dense data generated from a complex body of archival sources prevails throughout the book. In his path-breaking oeuvre, the historical process of the period from roughly c. 1500 to c. 1900 holds centre stage, thus becomes the framework for his analytical theses emphasizing the role of the East Asian regional system in the world economy. Similar to the California School, silver exchange is seen as the element linking China to the rest of the globe. In line with that he advocates a new spatial understanding centered on the Middle Kingdom world system and the commercial role of tributary trade. In recent years the author's leitmotiv to study East Asia from the sea ("umi kara mita ajia") has become a well-established paradigm of Asian scholarship in global history and contributed to new insights in the am-