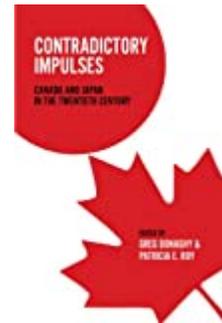




Patricia E. Roy, Greg Donaghy, eds. *Contradictory Impulses: Canada and Japan in the Twentieth Century*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008. x + 271 pp. \$98.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7748-1443-0.



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Reconsidering the Impulses

Contradictory Impulses both excites and frustrates on many levels. Originating from a conference held at the University of Victoria in the autumn of 2004, the collection of fourteen essays covers a wide range of topics falling under the general headings of missionary, military, diplomatic, social, economic, and cultural history as they relate to Canada and Japan over the past one hundred years. Combining the work of established scholars with that of relative newcomers, *Contradictory Impulses* exemplifies the tension that can emerge when literature is well developed in some respects and undernourished in others. The range of topics covered in this collection is vast but too often, the treatment is superficial.

Contradictory Impulses begins in familiar territory, with an examination of missionary activity in Japan. The history of missionary work in Asia is one of the earliest, and most common, ways Canadian scholars have attempted to understand the links between Canada and Asia. Alwyn J. Austin's *Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom, 1888-1959* (1986) and biographies of Norman Robertson, O. D. Skelton, and Lester

B. Pearson underline the importance of early missionary activity in shaping Canada's views of Japan and China. To complicate the conventional image, *Contradictory Impulses* features two essays that focus on both the Protestant and Catholic impulses, perhaps as a means of exploring the contradictions inherent in missionary work or in the manner in which missionaries viewed Japanese society. Hamish Ion looks at the role Protestant missionaries played in explaining Japan to Canada and the challenges inherent in distinguishing between the Japanese people and their militaristic leaders. Richard Leclerc focuses on the activities of Catholic missionaries all the while illustrating similarities between Catholic and Protestant views of Japanese society. He suggests that although the numbers attending Catholic churches were not that significant, Catholic missionaries had a lasting influence beyond the narrow confines of the church especially in the fields of education and social work.

As with the essays on missionary life in Japan, the works on the diplomatic history of Canada and Japan are quite rich, thanks to contributions by John Meehan

(*Dominion and the Rising Sun: Canada Encounters Japan, 1929-41* [2004]) and John Price (*Japan Works: Power and Paradox in Postwar Industrial Relations* [1997]), two of Canada's foremost experts on Canadian-Japanese relations. The essays by Meehan and Price revise earlier historical studies, indicating the signs of increasing depth in the field of Canada's diplomatic relations with Asia. Meehan contributes a stimulating essay titled "Canada and Japan between the Wars, 1929-1941," in which he counters previous assessments of the Charles Cahan affair and argues that while Canada did not have obvious and direct ties to Japan of the 1930s, the interwar period is nevertheless critical for considering how "Canada's diplomatic coming of age had a Pacific dimension" that shaped its postwar policies in many respects (p. 97). Price's essay on Herbert Norman dovetails nicely with Meehan's work in revising traditional interpretations of the closeness between Canadian and American policies for the occupation of Japan. Price reveals that Norman disagreed with General Douglas MacArthur on the American occupation and correctly notes that historians have tended to downplay these differences given the later accusations against Norman. Price uses this evidence to demonstrate how the views of Canadian and American officials coalesced only much later. While revealing, the unfortunate aspect of this approach is that we learn more about Canadian views of the United States than Canadian views of Japan. Nevertheless, the fact that we are at a stage where historians can revise earlier assessments points to the increasing importance of a field that has for too long been dismissed as insignificant in the broader strokes of Canadian diplomatic history.

Contradictory Impulses also features two contributions that build on earlier military histories to consider the nature of the Japanese threat, both real and perceived, to Canadian territory in the interwar and Second World War periods. Here, too, the authors add much-needed insights and empirical evidence to a field dominated by military imperatives in Europe. Gregory A. Johnson and Galen Perras describe Canadian perceptions of the Japanese military threat to Canada, and Asia, and emphasize how Japanese support for the Allied cause during the First World War greatly assuaged fears of Japanese militarism until the invasion of Manchuria in 1931. By contrast, Bill Rawling suggests that during the war, army officials, more than any other branch of the Canadian government, remained more suspicious of Japan's intentions in the Pacific and the loyalty of Japanese Canadians. The result was a military buildup on the West Coast but disaster in Asia, as Canada and other Allied forces underesti-

mated Japan's ability to fight a multi-front war. Rawling states that the mixed military experience of the wartime period "convinced Ottawa that the Pacific was an American region," establishing the basis for Canada's limited interests in Asia in the postwar period (p. 116). This is an important argument.

David Sulz's essay on the Suian Maru affair of 1906 (when four boatloads of illegal Japanese migrants came ashore on Vancouver Island) is juxtaposed against the essays on the Japanese military threat reinforcing the standard view that Japanese immigration to Canada was seen as a threat to the racial makeup of the country. Meanwhile, Patricia E. Roy's study of the plight of Japanese Canadians who were caught in Japan during the war and new migrants who came to Canada in the postwar period reveals the changing views of the Canadian state on the desirability of Japanese migration. The relatively low numbers of migrants from Japan in the postwar period, however, points to Canada's decline as a destination of choice as the Japanese economy improved. One cannot help but wonder what the impact of the wartime internment had on long-term perceptions of Canada as an attractive place of residence. In fact, the tremendous impact that Canada's experience with Japan during the Second World War had in shaping the structure and dynamics of the postwar relationship is an unspoken assumption throughout much of the collection. This silence begs the question of whether the years from 1939 to 1945 are really as formative as this collection suggests.

In an attempt at balance, Greg Donaghy and John Kirton move away from the Second World War as a focus to bring new (and more contemporary) archival evidence to light to further our understanding of Canadian-Japanese diplomatic relations in the postwar period. Donaghy concentrates on Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's attempts to use Japan as an alternative source of trade and investment as part of his Third Option, intended to reduce Canada's economic and political dependence on Britain and the United States. Donaghy is quick to point out, however, that when Trudeau lost interest in efforts to move beyond the traditional "smiling diplomacy" during his second term in office, Canadian-Japanese diplomatic relations drifted. There was no political imperative or impulse to push them further. Kirton's essay suggests that it was under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's leadership, and his Team Canada trade missions to Asia more specifically, that Canadian-Japanese diplomatic relations became more finely attuned. The missions coincided with Japanese-Canadian convergence on UN issues and peacekeeping efforts so that for the first time, it was possible

to identify natural areas of commonality as opposed to points of contestation.

What is most exciting about *Contradictory Impulses* is the opportunity to hear from new scholars in the field who offer fresh approaches to the history of Japanese-Canadian relations. Greg Robinson's research on contact between French Canadians and Japanese Canadians is particularly fascinating as are Carin Holyrod's work on Japanese investments in Canada in the postwar period and Marie-Josée Therrien's study of the two Canadian chanceries in Tokyo built in 1929 and 1991. While these contributions are extremely helpful, they really highlight the need for future research as one is left to wonder about the larger importance of these events beyond the novelty of having located alternative ways of thinking about Canada and Japan. This challenge goes to the heart of any collection that moves away from the traditional ways of understanding Canada's place in the world within the contexts of its relationships with England and the United States.

In a field that has long been dominated by studies of Canadian relations with the Anglo-American world, one of the greatest challenges for scholars remains how to expand the scope of subjects covered while at the same time acknowledging that Canadian officials have always been most interested in the goings on with their counterparts in the United States and Great Britain. Recent historiography, such as Robin Gendron's *Towards a Francophone Community: Canada's Relations with France and French Africa, 1945-1968* (2006), moves away from the acknowledged predominance of the Anglo-American world to focus on the particular quality of Canada's international relations with countries or regions around the world. In *Contradictory Impulses*, a number of authors revert to more conventional interpretive frameworks, pointing to American and British policies that shaped how Canadian officials viewed the rise of the Japanese Empire. Ion's work on Protestant missionaries in Japan is framed with the comment that from the beginning of Canada's contact with Japan in the late nineteenth century, "the activities and interests of the major Pacific Powers ... shaped Canada's relations with Japan" (p. 10). Similarly, perceptions of Japan as a potential ally were largely influenced by Anglo-American approaches to the Pacific (see Johnson and Perras), and Canadian efforts to curb migration from Japan were sensitive to British interests in Japan at the turn of the century (see Sulz). As a result, these essays tell us more about how Canada viewed its relationship with the United States and Britain than Japan per se. How can we escape this suffocating em-

brace? *Contradictory Impulses* takes great steps in integrating the domestic and international fronts, links that are often tenuous at best in histories of diplomatic relations. Another approach would be to focus on impressions and perceptions, rather than political or economic decisions, so that scholars might offer readers a view of Japan and Canada in the twentieth century that benefits from being removed from the Anglo-American context and shows more clearly how Canadian officials modified their views of Japan and the Pacific Rim over the course of the century. New explorations in cultural history offer avenues in which to frame relationships beyond traditional geopolitical bounds.

Perhaps one of the most striking absences in this collection is that of Japanese views of Canada and relations with Canada. Only the final contribution, by Masako Iino (president of Tsuda College in Tokyo and former head of the Japanese Association of Canadian Studies), provides any insight into the manner in which Japanese society, in all its component parts, considers Canada. *Contradictory Impulses* gives the Canadian view great predominance, at the expense of hearing any Japanese voices. There are pitfalls inherent in this approach. The historiographical questions in the two countries are not the same, and it would be interesting to know what is of interest to Japanese scholars. The lack of conversations means that some of the assessments in the collection appear rather outdated. A number of authors refer to Japan's love of *Anne of Green Gables*, but on a recent trip to Japan I told a group of high school students that Canada was home to *Anne of Green Gables* only to be met with blank stares. Japan's love affair with *Anne* is a generational one, a subtlety missed in this collection. As Paul Evans said in his introduction to *Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the Peoples Republic of China, 1949-70* (1991), we do not know the whole story without access to sources from the "other side."

The editors make a valiant attempt to integrate the essays, with extensive internal cross-referencing, yet the impact of the collection is uneven. After reading the whole volume, the title of the collection remained somewhat of a mystery. In neither the introduction nor the conclusion do editors Donaghy and Roy clearly flush out the nature of the "contradictory impulses" that supposedly frame Japanese-Canadian relations in the twentieth century. The introduction alludes to a relationship characterized by "contradiction and uncertainty" and later to Trudeau's attempts to use Japan as a counterweight to American influence as negated by "contradictory impulses, centred on the United States" (pp. 1, 7). In the

conclusion, the editors shift gears to a focus on contradictions within Japanese-Canadian relations proper noting that in the interwar period, Canadian diplomats, such as Herbert Marler, saw Japan as the British Empire of the East while provincial politicians in Canada railed against migration from Japan. Not only does the nature of the contradictions need to be more fully outlined but it also needs to be problematized. Scholars of international relations have long pointed to a nation's foreign policy as a study of decisions, choices, and contradictions. What makes Canada and Japan in the twentieth century any different?

Finally, at the risk of being cosmetic, while I find the word "impulse" to be a provocative one, I dearly wish that this term had been elaborated more fully by both the editors and the authors in this work. To my mind, it suggests that Canada and Japan are not naturally inclined to engage with each other but that certain impulses, be they domestic, foreign, political, economic, cultural, or social, move these bodies (naturally at rest) to interact. The use of this term, without full explanation, simply points to the great need to theorize the place of Canada and Japan in the twentieth century more fully.

Contradictory Impulses, with its wide range of essays and comprehensive suggestions for further reading, is an important contribution to the literature on Canada and the Pacific in the twentieth century. The book is a welcome contribution to a field still dominated by scholarly interests in Canada and the Anglo-American world and where Canada's connections with Asia and the Pacific are too often ignored or mentioned only in passing. *Contradictory Impulses* goes some distance in filling in the gaps, but as the uneven quality of the collection reveals, there is still tremendous work to be done in conceptualizing Canada's relationships and connections with the Asia-Pacific region. The gaps and limitations of this collection should serve as inspiration to other scholars to pursue more thoroughly the nature of Canadian-Japanese relations in the twentieth century. In particular, the methods of the so-called new diplomatic history, which has witnessed rich use, and analysis of multi-archival and multi-language sources can be applied to great merit to the topic of Canada and Japan in the twentieth century. *Contradictory Impulses* is recommended for newcomers and experts in the field alike and will no doubt inspire future research on the nature of Japan's relationship with Canada and vice versa in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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