



**Qinxin Ken Wang.** *Hegemonic Cooperation and Conflict: Postwar Japan's China policy and the United States.* Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2000. 294 pp. \$65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-275-96314-9.



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It is beyond dispute that the United States plays a role in Japan's pursuit of security and economic relations with China after the end of World War II. The remaining debate is over how to conceive of U.S. influence on Japan over the latter's China policy. On one end of the spectrum are works like Walter LaFeber's *Clash*, which argues that managing relationships with China has been one of the areas of serious conflict between the American and Japanese governments both before and after the Japanese defeat in the Second World War.[1] Michael J. Green and Benjamin L. Self go even further to allege that Japan's China policy was never as strategic as its treaty ally (i.e., the United States) had wished and practiced in the first place.[2]

Qinxin K. Wang's book falls into the other end of the spectrum, one that paints a picture of Americanization of Japan's China policy. Wang does so through attempting to first establish a case of America imposing and Japan accepting American hegemony over Japan's China policy. Along the way, Wang joins in the argument against the "loss of American hegemony" through insisting on (global economic) structural and ideational sources of American power in Japan.

Then, Wang devotes one chapter to each of four case studies in Japan's China policy: the Yoshida Letter (to

Chiang Kai-shek); normalization of relations with Beijing; negotiation of a peace treaty with Beijing; and the Third Yen Loan to China. In each of these four cases, through a fairly extensive use of Japanese and English language sources, Wang takes the reader through some interesting dramas of policy debates within the Japanese government, spanning from the 1950s through the 1990s. During each of those episodes, the emerging triumphant Japanese politician completes his act by consulting with Washington before deciding on Japan's China policy. The curtain closes with Japanese politicians of all ideological and factional stripes accepting the seemingly Washington-approved China policy consensus, while keeping intact the stage for more factional disputes to come.

The stories Wang managed to reconstruct make an interesting reading. On the other hand, as Akira Iriye notes, "one could write different histories of Chinese-Japanese relations since 1945, depending on whether one wished to emphasize the two countries' security (or military) policies, economic connections, or other (cultural) ties." [3] What Wang's account tries to make the reader believe, in contrast, is that, in the areas of both security and economic connections, there was Japanese receptivity to American ideas (as exemplified by the alleged ac-

ceptance of the Yoshida doctrine) as well as tactical cooperation with America in the making of Japan's China policy. Indeed, the stories talk more about various administrations of the postwar Japanese government (more specifically, centrist factions of the Liberal Democratic Party) offering cooperation than the American government (with the exception of Japan's China trade in the 1950s) imposing its preference on Japan.

*Hegemonic Cooperation and Conflict* grew out of the author's Ph.D. dissertation and therefore has a share of weaknesses inherent in such publications. It says that one of its goals is to test all the three schools of international relations theories on hegemony (pp. 18-19) but ends up shedding more light on Japanese factional politics over the making of China policy instead. The case studies show willing cooperation from Japan with the United States and no instance of conflict, leaving the reader to wonder about the appropriateness of the book's title.

Part Two of the book in fact indicates the pursuit of a third goal: to participate in the debate about where or not there was indeed decline of American power. In this part, I find it unbelievable that merely two and half pages of text and four tables – a total of six pages including footnotes – qualify as a chapter titled “the erosion of Ameri-

can preponderant material power.” (Chapter 3, pages 51-56).

The debate over how much foreign (particularly but not exclusively American) pressure there existed and continues to exist in Japan's foreign policy in general and China policy in particular is significant for understanding big power relations in the Asia-Pacific. The book under review, in spite of its weaknesses, is a useful reference for students of contemporary international relations to appraise the intricacies of the US-Japan-China quandary.

Notes:

[1]. Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* New York: W.W. Norton, 1998. See also reviews of LaFeber by Mark T. Berger and Jon Thares Davidann, respectively, archived at the H-net 1998 Book Reviews database.

[2]. Michael J. Green and Benjamin L. Self, “Japan's Changing China Policy: from commercial liberalism to reluctant realism,” *Survival* 38:2 (Summer 1996), pp. 35-58.

[3]. Akira Iriye, “Sino-Japanese Relations, 1945-1990,” in Christopher Howe, ed., *China and Japan: history, trends, and prospects*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 46.

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