

Chugoku Seiji Gaiko no Tenkanten: Kaikaku Kaiho to "Dokuritsujishu no Taigai Seisaku" [China Looks Back: Mao's Legacy in the Open-Door Era]

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Chugoku Seiji Gaiko no Tenkanten: Kaikaku Kaiho to "Dokuritsujishu no Taigai Seisaku" [China Looks Back: Mao's Legacy in the Open-Door Era], by Chisako T. Masuo, Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 2010, 237 pp., ISBN 978-4-13-036236-8

In 2010, following the reform and opening up and three decades of an unprecedented economic growth, China overtook Japan as the world's second-largest economy. China's international status, driven by such a strong economic performance, has also risen conspicuously. Notwithstanding the significant influence, the reform and opening up has exerted on both China and the international society, its origin and the implementation process are still shrouded in mystery.

The most frequently used concept to describe China's foreign policy in the wake of the reform and opening up is that of "independent foreign policy" (独立自主外交). It must be noted, however, that scholars' opinions differ regarding the policy inception date – whether 1978 or 1982 should be taken as its starting point (nor is the Chinese government clear on it). *China Looks Back: Mao's Legacy in the Open-Door Era*, the book written by Dr Chisako T. Masuo and published by Tokyo University Press, makes an attempt to solve the above conundrum.

Dr Masuo's book consists of six chapters (including the Introduction) and focuses on the 4-year period between 1978 and 1982. In the Introduction, the author introduces basic concepts on which the analysis is premised, arguing that, among the so-called "socialist states", two visions of international relations coexisted: international relations between sovereign states (aka the Westphalia system) and the socialist international relations guided by the logic of the class struggle and epitomized by the international communist movement. Following this way of reasoning, the author posits that through the inception of the "independent foreign policy", the Chinese government rejected the tenets of "proletarian internationalism", fully embracing the principles of the Westphalian system of sovereign states (page 29 of the book). In other words, the process of foreign policy "de-ideologization" had occurred.

In Chapter 1, China's foreign policy between 1949 (the establishment of the PRC) and 1972 (the Sino-American Normalization) is briefly analyzed in the context of the international communist movement. Next, the author examines the period of 1973–1976, when Deng Xiaoping was restored to the post of Vice-Premier, focusing on his United Nations (UN) speech and the developments during the first session of the fourth National People's Congress (NPC). In April 1974, Deng delivered a speech at the sixth session of the UN General Assembly, in which he set forth the "three worlds"

theory (三个世界论), while the “Report on Government Work” delivered by Zhou Enlai at the first session of the fourth NPC (January 1975) reaffirmed the economic blueprint for accomplishing “four modernizations” (四个现代化). Also, as noticed by the author, with regard to the “united front strategy” (一条线战略), which aimed at containing Soviet expansion, Mao Zedong and Deng spoke with one voice, so that the foundation for Deng’s foreign policy had been strongly established during that period (page 73 of the book).

In Chapter 2, through the case studies of inspection tours to Western countries, the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the Sino-Vietnamese War, the author examines in detail the period between summer 1977 and 1978, arguing that, at that time, the strategy of deterring the Soviet Union and the “four modernizations” had become a single policy – two sides of the same coin (page 107 of the book). In order to successfully implement the anti-Soviet encirclement policy, China needed to strengthen its economic performance, which, in turn, required further cooperation with Western countries. While persuading the Maoist wing of the CCP of the need for reform, Deng’s argument followed the same trajectory: only thanks to the financial and technical support of the developed countries, the “four modernizations” would succeed, which, in turn, would allow the deterring of the Soviet Union.

Further, being convinced that the Soviet Union and its Vietnamese ally constitute China’s biggest threat (and with an aim of gaining a full control over the People’s Liberation Army), Deng decided to launch an attack on Vietnam (the so-called “Third Indochina War”). According to the author, the above two factors (i.e., Deng’s adherence to Mao’s “united front strategy” and the need for solidifying Deng’s military leadership) explain the 4-year hiatus between the introduction of the reform and opening up (1978) and the inception of the “independent foreign policy” (1982).

Chapter 3 discusses the evolution of China’s foreign policy between 1979 and 1981. Following the end of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict, the CCP reevaluated both Mao’s era foreign policy principles and the “united front strategy”, so that the ideology of the international communist movement had been effectively abandoned in the early 1980s. Also, in the early 1980, the anti-Soviet “united front strategy” had been replaced by the efforts to balance both the American and the Soviet camp, making it the basic principle of China’s new “independent foreign policy”.

In Chapter 4, through the case study of the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, the author examines Sino-American relations between 1981 and 1982, linking foreign policy identity shifts with diplomatic practice. With regard to the above, the author concludes that, as a result of identity shift in China’s foreign policy, Deng decided to suspend the anti-Soviet Sino-American cooperation, prioritizing the so-called “Taiwan issue” – seemingly a problem of secondary importance (page 187 of the book).

In the Conclusion, the author examines the frequency of each foreign policy-related concepts (e.g., the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”, etc.) in the CCP’s official newspaper, the *People’s Daily*, to illustrate the evolution of China’s foreign policy throughout 1970s and up to 1982. In addition, the impact of the “independent foreign policy” on Chinese diplomatic practice (following its inception in 1982) is briefly discussed.

To sum up, the main message of the book is that, between 1978 and 1982, China’s foreign policy had evolved as follows: (1) in spring 1980, the decision was made to abandon the ideology of the international communist movement, and (2) between autumn 1980 and spring 1981, the anti-Soviet “united front strategy” had been replaced by the plan to balance both the American and the Soviet camp. No doubt, from the vantage point of research on reform and opening up policies, the above findings should be considered as highly valuable.

Further, from the perspective of Chinese Diplomatic History, the significance of this book lies in the following three aspects. First, the main argument of the book constitutes its

scholarly contribution. The author argues that, with regard to Chinese diplomacy of the 1949–1978 period, two visions of international relations coexisted: international relations between sovereign states (aka the Westphalia system) and the socialist international relations guided by the logic of the class struggle. This is a very important finding. Although, with regard to the Soviet Union, the above idea was put forward by Professor Iwashita,¹ the author must be credited with incorporating it into to the field of Chinese Diplomatic History. Further, the argument that upon the inception of the “independent foreign policy”, the irreconcilability of the above two visions led to the abandonment of the ideology of communist internationalism, constitutes original contribution of Dr Masuo’s book.

Second, the author’s attempt to discuss the links between the reform and opening up and the ideology is clearly in line with recent development in research on Chinese Diplomatic History. During the Cold War era, research on Chinese diplomacy focused mainly on diplomatic strategic thinking and geopolitics. However, following the introduction of constructivism into mainstream IR theories and subsequent broadening of Diplomatic Studies, the concepts of “ideology”, “culture”, and “norms” have been given more attention. By way of illustration, Yafeng Xia defines culture as a system of “shared values and beliefs”, arguing that differences in cultural outlooks contributed greatly to the slow pace of the Sino-American normalization negotiations.² Further, as noted by Yang Kuisong, Mao used to favor the ideology of communist internationalism, often to the detriment of both China’s national security and its economic development.³ This view is further corroborated by Chen Jian, who points out that Mao’s abandonment of the “perpetual revolution” project was an important factor affecting successful completion of the Sino-American rapprochement.⁴ Given the above, it becomes immediately clear that Dr Masuo’s book, which depicts the decline of the Leninist anti-imperialist ideology within the CCP in the wake of the reform and opening up, constitutes breakthrough research in the field of Chinese Diplomatic History in Japan.

Lastly, it must be noted that in Dr Masuo’s book the traditional research method of diplomatic history is further supplemented with field surveys and interviews as well as with a wide use of previously secret Party documents and intraparty meetings memos, clearly contributing to the deepening of the book’s argument.

Having discussed the scholarly contributions of the book, I would like to briefly touch upon two points that deserve further examination.

China’s foreign policy is often depicted as the one displaying a huge discrepancy between the ideational principles and diplomatic practice. Until recently, the mainstream view among researchers has been that Chinese diplomacy, under the guise of revolutionary ideology, has consequently realized a broad range of national security interests. Although the author has succeeded in depicting the process of withdrawing from the international communist movement at the ideational level, it would be advisable to explain the impact the above withdrawal had on the relationship with countries such as Albania, Yugoslavia or Vietnam, so that the distinction between the ideational principles and diplomatic practice as well as the dynamics of Chinese foreign policy would become clearly visible.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the author’s focus is on Deng Xiaoping as the main agency behind the inception of the “independent foreign policy”. We must bear in mind, however, that during the period between Deng’s third “return to power” and the

¹Iwashita, A. *Sobieto Gaiko Paradaimu no Kenkyu* [Research on Soviet Diplomatic Paradigm]. Tokyo: Kokusai Shoin, 1999.

²Xia, Y. F. *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S. – China Talks during the Cold War, 1949–1972*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

³Yang, K. S. “Changes in Mao Zedong’s Attitude toward the Indochina War, 1943–1973.” *Cold War International Project Working Paper*, no. 34, 2011. Available at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/changes-mao-zedongs-attitude-towards-the-indochina-war-1949-1973>.

⁴Chen, J. *Mao’s China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

inception of the “independent foreign policy” (1978–1982), Deng’s “paramount leadership” was still *in statu nascendi* and complex power struggles had been taking place within China’s ruling establishment. Thus, it might help the readers to grasp the complexity of the situation, if the author explains the roles other senior politicians (such as, Chen Yun or Li Xiannian) played in the foreign policy decision-making processes of that time.

Having briefly discussed both the scholarly contributions and topics that require further research, I would like to conclude by reiterating the Dr Masuo’s book makes a significant contribution to the field of Chinese Diplomatic History.

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Powerful patriots: nationalist protest in China’s foreign relations, by Jessica Chen Weiss, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, 360 pp., US\$32 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-19-938755-7

This book studies the Chinese government’s reaction to the public nationalist demonstration (hereafter simply referred as “demonstration”). Although specific case studies are all based on China, the research bears implications to other authoritarian regimes.

The author offers an analytical framework in the first and the second chapters to grasp the domestic and international factors related to authoritarian regime’s policy regarding demonstrations (i.e., whether to approve or to suppress them). Weiss argues that there must be some rationale for authoritarian regimes to approve demonstrations, especially when political elites are aware that such activities might spread and eventually spin out of control. Such regimes could credibly communicate their resolve to foreign governments, by allowing demonstrations to escalate. In addition, authoritarian governments could claim patriotism for domestic support.

In contrast, suppression of demonstrations could serve as a signal of reconciliation to foreign countries. However, such policy could be politically costly domestically, as it might antagonize the public. As such, whether or not authoritarian regimes opt for approval or suppression of demonstrations depends on their political calculation of the potential risk for the regime and cost incurred.

In the third chapter, the author compares two anti-American demonstration cases, i.e., the 1999 Chinese embassy bombing, and the 2001 EP3 aircraft collision. Weiss draws a conclusion that the Chinese government had stronger incentive in the former case to show its resolve to Washington. As a result, it allowed the 1999 demonstration, but suppressed the 2001 one. The author specifically lists issues, such as NATO’s intervention in Kosovo and China’s World Trade Organization (WTO) accession, as contributing factors for China to allow the demonstration to spread in 1999. In contrast, Beijing was willing to restore relations with Washington in the aftermath of the 2001 EP3 collision, leading to the government’s suppression of large-scale anti-American demonstration.

However, the reviewer argues that this conclusion cannot be decisively drawn from comparison of the two cases. It would be at least equally convincing to argue the opposite.