

**Tatsumi Okabe, ed..** *Gureta Chaina no Seijihenyo*. Tokyo: Keiso shobo, 1995. ix + 320 pp. 3,502 yen, cloth, ISBN 978-4-326-30097-6.

**Reviewed by** Jing Zhao

**Published on** H-Japan (March, 1997)

Okabe is described as one of the "daiichininsha" (No. 1) researchers of China's foreign policy in Japan (Mori, p. 143). His previous works, *China's Japan Policy* (1976) and *The Analytical Frame of International Politics* (1992), have been enlightening, especially on Taiwan's status. This time I hoped Okabe could offer us something new about "Greater China" (China and its boundary area) and the current situation of Chinese study in Japan. "As a step in an interdisciplinary area study concentrating on political affairs, this book tries to apply such an approach to China and its boundary area. It also offers a landscape of the level of this study" (Preface, p. iii). Okabe invited thirteen other authors "including researchers from the top authorities (*juchin*) to energetic youths" (Preface, p. iii) to contribute to this book. Okabe uses three keywords--"modernity," "history and tradition," and "socialism"--to describe Greater China's changes as well as the contents of this book (Prologue, "Political changes in China and its boundary area," p. 3).

The first part, "The structural change of China's politics," begins with five chapters: chapter 1, "The political structure of autonomy and integration in China--toward a cascade shape authoritarianism," by Amako Satoshi; chapter 2, "The politicalization of central-local relations--an example in 1958," by Asanuma Kaori; chapter 3, "State development strategy and bureaucracy," by Kokubun Ryosei; chapter 4, "The National People's Congress

as the supreme legislative institution--the reform and the dilemma," by Kawai Shinichi; and chapter 5, "The change of legitimate ideology--communism, socialism and patriotism," by Kotake Kazuaki.

The second part, "China's international knowledge and foreign policy pattern" includes three chapters: chapter 6, "China's foreign policy in the Reform/Openness era--foreign policy thinking," by Mori Kazuko; chapter 7 "An analysis of Mao's diplomatic style--The criticism of Stalin and the Sino-Soviet conflict," by Ishi Akira; and chapter 8, "The change of the think tanks' foreign knowledge" by Asano Ryo.

The last part, "China's boundary area," includes five chapters: chapter 9, "The independence and integration structure in Tibet," by Matsumoto Takaaki; chapter 10, "The conflict between the 'Sinicism' and the 'Internationalization' of Taiwan's culture--on the propagation of Lu Xun's thought," by Ko Eitetsu (Huang Ying-zhe in Chinese); chapter 11, "The slogan 'A Hong Kong governed by the people of Hong Kong' and Hong Kong's political/social change," by Tanigaki Mariko; chapter 12, "The conflict and coexistence structure between the ASEAN and China," by Sato Koichi; and chapter 13, "Singapore Chinese and China--Lee Kuan Yew's China perspective," by Tanaka Kyoko.

The conversation between Mao and the Soviet Ambassador Yudin on March 31, 1956, soon after the CPSU's 20th Conference, is cited from the *Asahi Shimbun* (March 15, 1992). This short piece, with even less commentary, contains neither anything enlightening nor anything to which one could object (chapter 7). Ko offers perhaps the only interesting chapter, though the content has little relevance to Greater China's current political changes. "In the early postwar period, the spiritual support of Taiwan's cultural reconstruction was Lu Xun's thought.... By the influence of Lu Xun's thought, Taiwan's youths learned a criticizing perspective and mastered a complex thinking method to enlarge Taiwan's culture to the 'Internationalization' approach" (chapter 10, p. 217). These two essays, although not pioneering articles, are acceptable in an academic publication--though it might be more suitable if they were published in universities' *Kiyo* (memorial) or *Nenpo* (annual).

Chapters 9, 11, 12, and 13 are basically introductory reports on the recent histories of Tibet, Hong Kong, ASEAN and Singapore. I feel no need to review the contents. I only want to point out the anarchist influence in Hong Kong's student movement in the early 1970s which the author ignored (chapter 11, pp. 255-56). At the end of each chapter of this book, there are about two pages entitled "Conclusion"; this consists simply of a few sentences rehashing several of the quoted passages. Such dull style vitiates its value to the level of a textbook or a guidebook for beginners. After reading, I found little valuable content in this book. Contrary to Okabe's intentions, the book cannot not avoid becoming another volume of "temporary readings" (*wakimono*), as Japanese writings on such subjects usually are (Preface, p. ii). I would advise those interested in modern China through Japanese readings not to waste time on the book under review. Generally, rather than such "academic" volumes, one should consult some business handbooks or institute's specific journals (e.g., by Mitsubishi soken, Nomura

shoken, Dentsu, or the Asian Economic Institute), if available.

Rather than disappointment, I felt completely betrayed by the book's title and the editor's name. This book is symptomatic of the theoretical and empirical failures of the vast majority of Japan's modern Chinese studies. I found no original analysis. The knowledgeable sentences are quotations from previous research, such as Etienne Balazs's Chinese bureaucracy analysis (p. 72). Especially, chapters 1, 3, and 6 offer nothing new from the authors' comments, which frequently appeared in the Japanese mass media. They spent too much time on general topics for journalism than on special topics for academic research. For example, in chapter 1, the author defines China's current political system as "cascade shape authoritarianism" and lists some well-known facts to support his definition. However, is there any political system to which the "cascade shape" definition cannot be applied? As shown from the essays collected in the volume under review, this book's authors suffer from the pervasive superficial level that characterizes current Japanese writings on modern China.

This also brings me to reconsider the *chiiki kenkyu* (area studies) approach to the study of China by Japanese researchers. "Japanese studies on China have had a long history and organized a type of guild. Oriental studies or Asian studies in Japan means exactly Chinese studies," according to Akira Suehiro of Tokyo University on Thai economy. This approach may have been effective during the Cold War period when there was little information from China. For example, the Asian Economic Institute (Ajiken) trained some excellent Chinese specialists (e.g., Mitsuyuki Kagami now in Aichi University). During that time, any information on military, political, and economic affairs constituted the content of the study of the Chinese area. It was a time when the study of mainland China in Taiwan was defined as infor-

mation collection from the "banditry area situation" (*fei qin*).

Today, such "*chiiki*" study approach is perhaps still effective if applied to a limited area (e.g., a village, a town) for specific themes. But it is no longer suitable for the study of the general affairs of China, which has been experiencing a sharp structural change. How ridiculous is it if I declare that my concern is Japanese "area studies," instead of specific fields such as Japan's classes/stratification, foreign policy, or political structural change? Concerning Japan's current situation in modern Chinese studies, it is my suggestion that before embarking on the "interdisciplinary" approach of area studies, Japanese researchers should first master special disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science.

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**Citation:** Jing Zhao. Review of Okabe, Tatsumi, ed. *Gureta Chaina no Seijihenyo*. H-Japan, H-Net Reviews. March, 1997.

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