

that increasing integration is likely in Northeast Asia. Even if institutions continue to exist somewhat informally, they will not only promote peaceful relations between China, Korea and Japan, but will also propel the region to a preeminent global position alongside the US and European Union.

In the end, the critical juncture approach that Calder and Ye develop in this book finally allows for an appropriate application of the oft-abused aphorism that, “part of every crisis is an opportunity.”

University of Georgia, Athens, USA

BROCK F. TESSMAN

THE RISE AND FALL OF JAPAN'S LDP: Political Party Organizations as Historical Institutions. *By Ellis S. Krauss and Robert J. Pekkanen. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011. xviii, 318 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$26.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-8014-7682-2.*

When I first looked at this book, I was put off by the effusive praise of the reviews posted prominently on the back cover. “Best book ever written,” “magnificent work will certainly become a classic,” “likely to become *the* reference,” and “this book will, I think, become a classic” all struck me as perhaps a bit strong in praise of this book. Thus, I was surprised at my reaction after having read the book; I agreed with their hearty praise.

Krauss and Pekkanen give a well-documented and supported overview of Japan's long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party. They focus specifically on the four most important features of that party: personal support organizations of LDP candidates (Koenkai), factions, the policy-making process, and the party president. In each section, they explain institutional developments by looking closely at the timing of events and incentives that produced a specific outcome. They often analyze alternative timelines and speculate how institutions would have changed if events had occurred in a different order. They also specifically set up their analysis as a contrast to two other sets of explanations: cultural explanations and the incentives created by the unusual electoral system used in Japan until 1994. Much of the appeal of their work stems from their careful marshalling of a wide range of evidence to support their conclusions. They argue that though cultural differences matter and the incentives created by the electoral system can't be ignored, the best explanations for why the LDP has factions or why koenkai persist after Japan moved to single-member election districts lie in the history of how these features came to be and the sequencing of events that led to their creation or strengthening.

An additional strength of their work is their linking back to an important tradition in the analysis of Japanese politics, the stand-alone book that tells the reader everything that she needs to know about a political party or other important actor in political processes. With the rise of rational choice analysis

as a dominant force in political science, such broadly focused books have lately fallen out of fashion. Rather, the tendency has been to zero in on very specific quantitative tests of narrow hypotheses derived from theories that individuals respond to specific incentives. Krauss and Pekkanen are extremely careful to not reject this type of analysis and in fact use such evidence repeatedly in supporting some of their conclusions, but their work harks back to the excellent work of a previous generation of scholars in answering not just narrow theoretical questions but also giving a complete picture of an important political actor, in this case Japan's LDP. For example, I found myself most interested in the sections of their book where they undertook a careful analysis of events in the 1950s or the 1970s that best explained why the LDP changed its rules or procedures.

Subordinate to their primary goal of explaining the persistence of *koenkai* and factions and explaining changes to the policy making process and the power of the party president, Krauss and Pekkanen also lay out a persuasive theoretical criticism of other work that assumes causality from either a temporal or a statistical correlation. This important criticism supports their analysis because they actually trace the timing of events and look at what important political actors actually said at particularly crucial junctures in the development of party rules and practices. Their analysis also emphasizes the connections to other institutions: the reinforcing effects or negative externalities of related institutions. This more complete theoretical approach does make their explanations more unwieldy than cultural or electoral-system based explanations, but this greater complexity is well worth the cost paid because it provides a more accurate explanation of Japanese politics.

This book is excellent both in its theoretical contribution to debates in the social sciences over the best approaches to our analysis and in its in-depth contribution to our understanding of Japanese politics generally and the LDP specifically.

Brigham Young University, Provo, USA

RAY CHRISTENSEN

PARTY POLITICS AND DECENTRALIZATION IN JAPAN AND FRANCE: When the Opposition Governs. *Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies Series.* By Koichi Nakano. London and New York: Routledge, 2010. xiv, 155 pp. (Tables.) US\$117.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-415-55305-6.

This volume is based on the author's PhD dissertation and is a welcome contribution to the literature on comparative politics focusing on the issue of decentralization in Japan and France. The six chapters in this volume provide a thorough and coherent story of the political process leading to major reforms waged by the long-time opposition in both countries.

In the field of political analysis, the dynamics of party politics are largely