

Intimate Rivals: Japanese Domestic Politics and a Rising China. By SHEILA A. SMITH. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. 384 pp. \$28 (cloth).

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doi:10.1017/jea.2019.7

In *Intimate Rivals: Japanese Domestic Politics and a Rising China*, Sheila A. Smith posits that as China's economic and political clout has continued to grow over the past few decades, no nation has been more profoundly affected than Japan. Smith notes that throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century, tensions emerged in the bilateral relationship between China and Japan despite growing economic ties. This new regional tension is not simply due to China's rising economic and political status, however. As China's influence has continued to grow, dissatisfaction among regional Asian powers over the post-war peace agreements between Japan and its neighbors has intensified. At the same time, Smith suggests that domestic insecurity among the Japanese population about China's rise forced policymakers to adopt a more hardline stance. In addition, Japan's domestic political turmoil, with six Prime Ministers ruling over Japan in the century's first decade, further contributed to a sense of vulnerability across the nation. When Shinzo Abe ascended to power for the second time in 2012, political stability returned, but Japan's relationship with China remained precarious.

After the normalization of relations between Japan and China in 1978, Smith argues that Japan regarded itself as a bridge between its Western allies and China. She submits that Japan remained focused throughout much of the latter part of the twentieth century on fostering economic and cultural relations with its Chinese neighbor. However, by the late 1990s tensions between Japan and China began to increase. Despite growing economic relations, diplomatic relations between the two Asian nations reached a crisis point in the 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis. As China threatened to take offensive measures against Taiwan, Smith argues that the Japanese were reminded of their own vulnerabilities, particularly with respect to national defense.

Political change in Japan also significantly impacted the Sino-Japanese relationship. The Liberal Democratic Party began to falter, causing greater domestic instability. The tenure of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, from 2001 to 2006, was fraught with tensions with China. While Smith notes that his successors sought to mend fences with China after Koizumi left office, the Japanese public has become more and more resistant to overt cooperation with Beijing. In addition, while Japan's business community has long advocated for close bilateral relations, their influence has waned as nationalist activists and citizens' views have increasingly hardened.

To better explore the rising tensions between Japan and China, and the impact of domestic politics, Smith examines four major points of departure in the Sino-Japanese relationship. Her first case study involves the visits of Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni shrine. While a deeply personal experience for many Japanese government officials, recent high-level visits by successive administrations to pay homage to the war dead, according to Smith, only served to further inflame tensions with China and other regional powers due to its symbolism and direct connection to Japan's conduct during the Second World War. Despite Chinese condemnation, Japanese officials have continued to visit the Yasukuni shrine.

Smith's second case study focuses on conflicts between Japan and China about the boundaries of economic zones in the East China Sea. Since the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea came into effect in 1996, Japan and China have adopted diverging positions in their interpretation of the Exclusive Economic Zone's boundaries. This dispute has been further complicated by territorial disputes involving regional islands that go back to the 1970s, and it has increased Chinese economic and resource activity in the region. This increased activity triggered further resentment among Japanese nationalists and complaints from industrial actors, which has pushed the

government toward taking a more hardline stance on asserting sovereignty in the region. While an attempt was made toward reconciliation in the mid-2000s, including a 2008 bilateral agreement involving resource development, tensions have only increased in the intervening years as the two countries have yet to reach an agreement governing maritime boundaries. Smith argues that a lack of trust between the two sides has further contributed to a deterioration in bilateral relations.

For her third case study, Smith chose to focus on food safety. She specifically explores a 2008 gyoza poisoning incident, in which Japanese consumers died after consuming poisoned gyoza imported from China. While Chinese officials quickly responded to the crisis, the incident increased concerns among the Japanese populace about the extent to which Japan relies on China for domestic food consumption and encouraged widespread distrust among Japanese citizens. The incident encouraged better food production regulation and consumer protection, as well as better intergovernmental cooperation involving food safety. However, many Japanese remain wary of the nation's continued dependence on Chinese food imports.

Smith's final case study involves island defense. She focuses on a 2010 incident in which a Chinese fishing vessel refused to allow the Japanese coastguard to inspect the vessel despite being only twelve nautical coast miles offshore of Japan. The arrest of the boat's crew after a confrontation instigated a diplomatic crisis between Japan and China, which ultimately came to involve American officials, as the two countries failed to resolve the crisis on a bilateral basis. The incident, followed by others and a stern Chinese response, led to alarm within Japan over the state of the country's national security in the face of a more economically and diplomatically assertive China. It also led to increased investment in maritime defense and a surge in nationalist sentiment in the political arena, leading to the government's purchase of the controversial Senkaku Islands.

In situating her four major case studies in a larger narrative, Smith suggests that they reflect a broader trend of growing friction between Japan and China despite important economic ties. China's eclipse of Japan economically and diplomatically, as well as the Chinese government's increasing assertiveness on the international stage, has led to heightened concern and insecurity throughout Japanese society and among political actors. This in turn has encouraged calls for domestic political reform and new approaches to public policy to better deal with emerging challenges.

Intimate Rivals offers clear insight into Japan's adaptation to a rising China, and Smith's case studies are carefully and expertly constructed. Nonetheless, her decision to rely on four case studies hinders Smith's ability to construct a more clearly flowing narrative. In addition, Smith's decision to largely avoid talking about Sino-Japanese relations prior to World War Two prevents her from more clearly framing the bilateral relationship in historic terms. Aside from those two criticisms, however, *Intimate Rivals* is an excellent and well-written read that offers keen insight into how Japan and Japanese political and societal actors have sought to adapt to a more powerful China, both in Asia and on the world stage.