

level, one can easily propose a counter-argument that political culture in China has not changed at all; it is still controlled by the Communist Party, and people's political activism is still greatly influenced by propaganda and brainwashing education, which in fact are consistent with recent demonstrations by Maoist leftists as well as the online left-wing agenda by younger generations. This contrariety suggests that further study on political culture in China is essential.

Learning from Fukushima: Nuclear Power in East Asia.

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Seven years after the March 11 triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown in north-eastern Japan's Fukushima Prefecture, all major stakeholders of the area – from long-time residents to scientists to local politicians – are still plodding towards bringing back normalcy to the lives and environment dislocated by the incident. Fukushima Governor Masao Uchibori said: “[T]he multiple disasters that struck Fukushima seven years ago are not something that just belongs to the past, but are still affecting us.”¹ Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts to finding and creating solutions to this multilayered problem. While going over the news on the aftermath of the disaster in its (coincidentally, as of this writing in March 2018) commemoration month, one is daunted by the obstacles that still face the region and its people.

One issue covered by the news is the export of agricultural products coming from the area. While Paris may have opened its doors to some agricultural products from Fukushima such as *anpogaki* (dried persimmons) and peach juice to be sampled in a promotional event in a shopping mall,² other previous importers of Fukushima and even other Japanese agricultural products continue to lack confidence in their safety. Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam, in a meeting with Japanese foreign minister Taro Kono, asserted that Hong Kong would continue “to ban fresh produce and milk from the prefecture and the four neighbouring prefectures, while conducting targeted radiation testing on fresh produce from the rest of Japan.”³ Incidentally, Hong Kong is the biggest market for Japanese agricultural, forestry and fishery products.⁴ Devastating news was also received by Fukushima fishery workers when in Bangkok a food event featuring fish from the region was

1 “Spotlight: Seven years on, Fukushima nuclear cleanup still long way to go,” *Xinhua* (2018). Accessed March 25, 2018. URL: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/11/c_137032023.htm.

2 “Fukushima food promoted in Paris,” *NHK World* (2018). Accessed: March 25, 2018. URL: https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20180325_07/.

3 Jeffie Lam, “Hong Kong will not lift post-Fukushima ban on some Japanese food,” (2018). *South China Morning Post* (2018). Accessed: March 25, 2018. URL: <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/hong-kong-not-lift-post-220057050.html>.

4 “Japan logs another bumper year for exports,” *Nikkei Asian Review* (2016). Accessed April 5, 2018. URL: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Economy/Japan-logs-another-bumper-year-for-exports>.

cancelled due to opposition from a local consumer group “despite the fish having obtained Thai health authorities’ safety approval.”⁵

Another issue featured is the compensation of the Fukushima disaster survivors. On March 22 the decision of the Iwaki branch of the Fukushima District Court ordered “Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) to pay a total of 610 million yen (\$5.8 million) in compensation to 213 plaintiffs. The court said the company failed to take measures that could have prevented or reduced the damage to the nuclear plant from the tsunami that devastated coastal areas of the Tohoku region. The ruling included payments for the ‘loss of one’s hometown,’ which covered the destruction of community life, concerns about radiation exposure as well as loss of psychological support.”⁶ TEPCO still needs to address a number of lawsuits for their alleged negligence in the operation of the nuclear facilities. Indeed, understandably and unfortunately, the wheels of justice for the disaster victims grind slowly.

A final issue that made the rounds this month is that of the ¥2 trillion budget for decommissioning the plant of which ¥220 billion (\$2 billion) will be allotted to deal with the radioactive water buildup at the site over a three-year period.⁷ It must be noted that this amount would be borne by the taxpayer as TEPCO struggles with financial difficulty.

Given the bleak post-3/11 situation, editors Peter Van Ness and Mel Gurtov offer us lessons from one of the biggest catastrophes of the twenty-first century which occurred in a country deemed to be one of the safest in the world. Assembling twelve critical essays from leading scholars from disciplines as diverse as engineering, environmental studies, political science, international studies and security, the book *Learning from Fukushima: Nuclear Power in East Asia* invites both the layman and the specialist to join the dialogue on an issue that will continue to impact the planet for decades to come.

The book is a testament to the contributors for their call for sustained vigilance on issues surrounding the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster and its prolonged effects. It also provides “a collaborative and comprehensive investigation of whether nuclear power was a realistic energy option for East Asia, especially for the ten member-countries of ASEAN, none of which currently has an operational nuclear power plant” (book jacket). Although Gurtov, in the introduction, emphasizes that in the end it is politicians that must make the shift from nuclear power and fossil fuels to sustainable energy options such as wind power, photovoltaics (PV), and hydro (pp. 4–5), the ordinary citizen is still a capable agent in lobbying against the continuous production of nuclear energy.

The collection consists of twelve essays, assigned thematically into four headings: the state of nuclear energy, country studies, the real costs of going nuclear and a post-nuclear future. Each heading has three chapters.

The first part, the state of the nuclear industry, contains essays by Tatsujiro Suzuki, Christina Stuart and Doug Koplou. Suzuki’s article examines Japan’s nuclear energy policy and recognizes the urgent need to improve on it to address the following issues better: “spent fuel management, plutonium stockpile management, radioactive waste disposal, human resources management, and restoring public trust” (p. 9). Stuart provides an overview of the French nuclear power industry. She also divulges a pseudo-nationalistic reaction to post-3/11 where “[a]t a national level, the French reaction to the

5 “Fukushima saddened by Bangkok sushi cancellation,” *The Bangkok Post* (2018). Accessed March 25, 2018. URL: <https://www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/1434891/fukushima-fallout-lingers-as-bangkok-cancels-fish-event>.

6 “Seventh court orders TEPCO to pay evacuees from Fukushima,” *The Asahi Shimbun* (2018). Accessed March 30, 2018. URL: <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201803230033.html>.

7 “Scrapping crippled Fukushima nuclear plant to cost ¥220 billion annually: source,” *The Japan Times* (2018). Accessed March 30, 2018. URL: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/03/30/national/scrapping-crippled-fukushima-nuclear-plant-cost-¥220-billion-annually-source/#.WsWoUEXuLIU>.

Fukushima accident was to reaffirm the safety of the French reactors” (p. 45). Koplow “provides a brief introduction to the many forms of energy subsidies and how they are measured, the degree to which they crowd out other social spending, and their global scale” (p. 65). Koplow reveals that “[d]espite growing coverage of global subsidies to fossil fuels, there is no global estimate for support to nuclear power and a very few national level estimates either” (p. 78).

Part 2, which delves into country studies, has four chapters that analyze nuclear energy in China, South Korea, Taiwan and ASEAN. M. V. Ramana and Amy King show that, due to changes in China’s economy, energy demand has declined and that it is expected that there will also be a decline in the growth rate of nuclear power (p. 121). Lauren Richardson examines why South Korea has continued with its plans to use nuclear power and to even export its facilities post-3/11. She asserts that in the face of “the insulated and top-down nature of nuclear policymaking in South Korea” coupled with “the government’s Green Growth Strategy” the South Korean anti-nuclear movement has had difficulty changing the public’s opinion against the dangers posed by using nuclear power. Gloria Kuang-Jung Hsu provides a detailed overview of Taiwan’s nuclear weapons program and concludes that “[a]lthough the nuclear weapons program was axed nearly three decades ago, the culture of secrecy, denial, and deceit still prevails” (p. 179). Kuang Jung-Hsu reports that post-3/11 the Taiwanese felt that they would be helpless if they were to be caught in a similar situation (p. 167). Mely Caballero-Anthony and Julius Cesar Trajano argue that “while ASEAN has already established regional cooperative norms on nuclear safety, security, and safeguards (3S), the cooperative norms to which this normative framework is upheld and enhanced in the region still mainly depend on how member states interested in utilizing nuclear energy address critical infrastructure issues during the preparatory stages of their respective nuclear energy programs” (p. 191). They identify ASEAN’s challenges to be the availability of human resources, adequate regulatory and legislative frameworks, and institutionalized national radioactive waste management strategies (p. 195).

Part 3 is about the costs of going nuclear. Here, Tilman Ruff provides a detailed discussion of the effects of ionizing radiation. He notes that “[w]hile various Japanese and international agencies stated that no radiation-related adverse health consequences were likely to be detected because of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, this implausible assessment has already been shown to be in error” (p. 238). Timothy Mousseau and Anders Moller present their ongoing studies on the ecological by-products of failed nuclear ventures such as that of Chernobyl and Fukushima, where they conclude that “based on limited data, it is very clear that ecosystems are not immune to the impacts of nuclear accidents” (p. 277).

Part 4 examines the possibility of a post-nuclear future. Kalman Robertson’s chapter “outlines each of the basic steps that are typically involved in decommissioning with reference to examples of power reactors that have reached advanced stages of the process” (p. 288). Robertson emphasizes that “[a] large proportion of states currently operating power reactors have little, if any, experience with decommissioning them” (p. 291). Andrew Blakers discusses sustainable energy options with [s]olar and wind energy as the most viable (p. 327). The book ends with Part 4 and Peter Van Ness’s “Lessons of Fukushima: Nine Reasons Why”, which is the author’s personal statement on the post-disaster scenario as influenced by the data made available to him in the two international workshops in which he served as convener. Some of these papers are now chapters in the book.

In an article for *The Guardian*, the nuclear and environmental specialist at the University of Oxford, Peter Wynn Kirby, pronounces: “Fukushima has been marginalised, disenfranchised, and outmanoeuvred for decades. After all, the electricity from Fukushima Daiichi went straight to the capital, not to Fukushima itself, which bore the risks. Since 2011, Fukushima has been saddled with the staggering burden of the meltdown’s aftermath that, despite government PR, will encumber and

stigmatise its citizens for at least several decades.”⁸ Post-Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and now post-Fukushima disaster, it is imperative for humanity to pause and consider whether is still willing to take the risks posed by accidents in the production and use of nuclear energy. The decision hopefully will not cost us the planet where we thrive.

Osaka Modern: The City in the Japanese Imaginary.

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Compared to Tokyo, literature on Osaka is substantially absent. Considering Osaka’s historical importance within and outside Japan as well as its current status as a mega-city, the scarcity of literature deprives us of opportunities for learning more of Japan’s rich variety of urban structures from researchers of Japanese history. Michael P. Cronin challenges this academic bias towards Tokyo and calls attention to the defining moments in Osaka’s modernity and its distinct geography. In the introduction, Osaka is presented as an idea of a “treasonous city” excelling in excess and outsider status against central authority during the control economy of Japan’s transwar period. This status was reversed under the country’s militarization project that sought a clear hierarchy in national unity. Throughout the book, this idea is analyzed through a meticulous reading of four local literary masterpieces and some of their (among others) film adaptations. By doing so, the book not only playfully situates Osaka’s position in popular culture and its struggle against national subjugation, but also provides an informative angle into its particular geography, local capitalist structures and changing social relations. In the end, we gain a fresh perspective on Osaka’s modern history as a “Chicago of the East” (a destination and transit point of immigration and trade) and a “Paris of the East” (a producer of traditional as well as modern culture) in addition to the more commonly-known notion of Osaka as the industrial “Manchester of the East”.

Chapter 1 focuses on the narration style of local and national languages in Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s *Manji* (1928–1930). Contextualized within the language and literature unification movements, local language is presented as supplemental to the nation, which in turn is illustrated by the issue of mastery and authenticity of dialect. The power relation between the local and the national is represented by the use of standard Japanese and the Osaka dialect in the novel. Tanizaki’s mastery of the Osaka dialect is examined through several critiques, among which the notion of *yayakoshisa* (complexity) is used to describe the illusion of one particular Osaka dialect. This discussion in turn relativizes the unitary standard language and is also projected to Osaka’s newly emerging geography at the time. Osaka’s commercial center Senba represents the traditional as well as stubborn merchant class and their trade houses in which the *bonbon*, a rich and spoiled figure who is the direct offspring of the established trade houses, embodies all the impurities challenged by the modern state. We follow the merchant family as they leave the city center for the newly developed suburbs in the

8 Peter Wynn Kirby, “Is Fukushima doomed to become a dumping ground for toxic waste?” *The Guardian* (2018). Accessed March 25, 2018. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/mar/16/is-fukushima-doomed-to-become-a-dumping-ground-for-toxic-waste>.