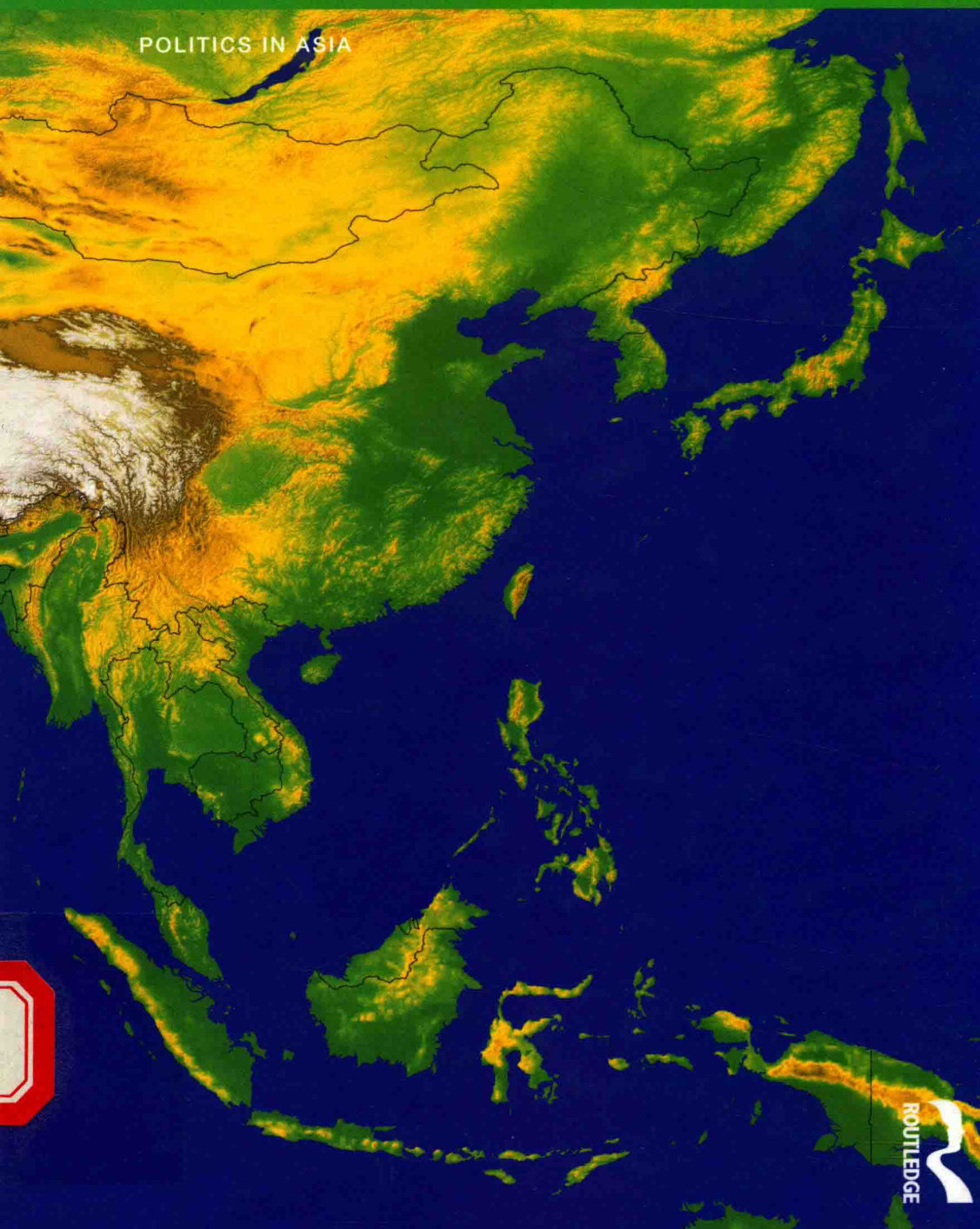


Japan's Relations with Southeast Asia

The Fukuda Doctrine and beyond

Edited by Lam Peng Er

POLITICS IN ASIA



ROUTLEDGE



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Japan's Relations with Southeast Asia

The Fukuda Doctrine has been the official blueprint for Japan's foreign policy toward Southeast Asia since 1977. This book examines the Fukuda Doctrine in the context of Japan–Southeast Asia relations, and discusses the possibility of a non-realist approach in the imagining and conduct of international relations in East Asia.

The collapse of 54 years of Liberal Democratic Party rule and the advent of a new Democratic Party of Japan raises the question of whether the Fukuda Doctrine is still relevant as a framework to analyze Tokyo's policy and behavior towards Southeast Asia. Looking at its origins and norms amidst three decades of change, the book argues that the Fukuda Doctrine is still relevant to Japan–Southeast Asian relations, and should be extended to relations between China and Japan if an East Asian Community is to be built. The book goes on to discuss the Fukuda Doctrine in relation to the power shift in Asia, including the revitalization of Japan's security role and the arrival of India as a potential major player in the region.

By providing a detailed understanding of a non-western perspective of Japan's relationship with Southeast Asia, this book is a useful contribution for students and scholars of Asian Studies, Politics, and International Relations.

Lam Peng Er is a Senior Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore.

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Foreword

*Satoh Yukio, Vice Chairman of the
Japan Institute of International Affairs*

This book presents a collection of essays selected from the papers prepared for the conference held in Singapore in 2007 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the announcement of the Fukuda Doctrine. The conference was jointly organized by the East Asian Institute (EAI) of the National University of Singapore and the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIJA).

The Fukuda Doctrine was, in my view, the first ever foreign policy initiative that post-World War II Japan had taken beyond the purposes of normalizing relations with war-time adversaries and recovering international positions the country had lost as the result of defeat in the war.

As then President of the JIJA, I was planning to organize a Japan–Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) conference to reevaluate this initiative on its thirtieth anniversary. But it was through discussions with the like-minded Dr. Lam Peng-Er of the EAI that the planned conference became a reality. The support given by my old friend Professor Wang Gungwu, who was the highly respected director of the EAI, was also valuable.

What struck me most while preparing for the conference was a stark difference between Japan and ASEAN countries in the way this foreign policy initiative was remembered thirty years after its pronouncement. In Japan, the name of the Fukuda Doctrine was rarely mentioned outside a narrow circle of academic specialists. In contrast, the Fukuda Doctrine, particularly its advocacy of “heart-to-heart” understanding, was (and still is) remembered in a much broader circle of people in Southeast Asia. There, the notion of “heart-to-heart” relations has become almost synonymous with the Fukuda Doctrine.

Why the “heart-to-heart” approach has had such a long-lasting appeal for Southeast Asians could not be fully explained without taking into account what Asians vaguely but commonly accept as the Asian way of thinking about human relations, wherein, for example, trust is regarded more important than contract.

As part of the same doctrine, Prime Minister Fukuda stated: “Japan will be an equal partner of ASEAN and its member countries.” The statement might have been taken as political rhetoric in the light of the relationship of the time. But “equal partnership” is what Japan and ASEAN countries should pursue in order to make their cooperation mutually productive now and in the future, and

“heart-to-heart” understanding is no doubt an indispensable underpinning for such a partnership.

This book, which itself has turned out to be an attempt to articulate the Asian way of thinking about diplomacy, should help those who wish to forge heart-to-heart relations among Asians or with Asians.

Acknowledgments

This edited book has been made possible by the indispensable assistance and support of Professor Wang Gungwu (Chairman of the East Asian Institute), Ambassador Satoh Yukio (then President of the Japan Institute of International Affairs), Professor Kikuchi Tsutomu (my alter ego for the Fukuda Doctrine project), Dr Ryan Clarke (my EAI colleague who read some of the chapters of this book), the Routledge team of Stephanie Rogers, Leanne Hinves, Ed Needle, and Hannah Mack, Neil Dowden who copy-edited the book, and Maggie Lindsey-Jones and Emma Wood from Keystroke.

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Introduction

Lam Peng Er

Next year will mark the 30th anniversary since the first Fukuda Doctrine. It is not that I am thinking of anything new, or a revised version (of the Doctrine). That said, there have been major changes since those days. Asia has changed significantly over the past three decades. Asia has become a far greater center of growth compared to 30 years ago. China also is rising rapidly. India also will likely grow significantly. Building on all these, Japan's Asia diplomacy needs to change qualitatively, so with that in mind we have to think about Japan's Asia diplomacy ahead.¹

I seized the occasion to thank the prime minister for what Japan had done for Southeast Asia during the past 30 years and I appealed to history. Thirty years ago Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda the Father gave us the First Fukuda Doctrine. I said, "And it is about time for Fukuda the Son to recalibrate the same vision and pronounce the Fukuda Doctrine II."²

The Fukuda Doctrine and its significance

The Fukuda Doctrine is the blueprint of Japan's foreign policy towards Southeast Asia since it was enunciated by then Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo in Manila in 1977. Arguably, the articulation and implementation of the Fukuda Doctrine have improved the image of postwar Japan in Southeast Asia—from a fearsome samurai state or a rapacious merchant state to a peace-fostering, alms-giving, and community-building state. Despite the occupation of Southeast Asia during World War II by Imperial Japan, postwar Southeast Asia and Tokyo have buried the hatchet and no longer have any expectations of going to war against each other.

Kohno Masaharu, a Japanese diplomat, wrote: "In 1977, Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda presented his long-term vision of Japan–Southeast Asia relations. In retrospect, the ensuing 'Fukuda Doctrine' was the first attempt by Japan to present a proactive foreign policy stance since the end of the Second World War."³ The Fukuda Doctrine, therefore, is a triumph in active and visionary Japanese diplomacy which is often maligned for being reactive, passive and mercantile, self-serving, and subordinate to its ally the United States.

Besides the forging of a new identity in regional affairs for postwar Japan, the Fukuda Doctrine has also established new norms in the international relations of Asia. These new values include: the renunciation of power politics based on military capabilities, a “heart-to-heart” relationship with Southeast Asia, and an equal relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Conceivably, these values can underpin a future East Asian Community.

The study and conduct of international relations are often guided by “realist” assumptions such as the balance of power, order based on a hierarchy of power, the necessity to go to war for the sake of “national interest” or to preserve a system based on the sovereignty of states, and a zero-sum mentality in security issues. From a “realist” perspective, the norms of the Fukuda Doctrine might appear naïve, quaint, and merely rhetorical, made possible only because global and regional order was maintained by the nuclear balance of terror forged between the US and Soviet superpowers during the Cold War. It can also be argued that, for a country with constitutional restrictions (Article 9) on waging war to settle international disputes, the Fukuda Doctrine is a strategy for Japan to pursue its national interest by other means.

But the Fukuda Doctrine has outlasted the Cold War and has undergirded the discourse, diplomatic parlance, and assumptions about the Japan–Southeast Asian relations into the twenty-first century. Rather than an anachronistic doctrine which has disappeared along with other Cold War relics such as the Brezhnev Doctrine and the Nixon Doctrine, there is the regional expectation that the Fukuda Doctrine will evolve and remain relevant to East Asia in the new century.

Take, for example, the ASEAN Chairman’s Statement on the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) +1 Sessions in Singapore in July 2008. It read:

The ASEAN PMC +1 with Japan was co-chaired by H.E. Dr Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister of Laos People’s Democratic Republic, and H.E. Masahiko Koumura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. The Meeting welcomed the “New Fukuda Doctrine,” in which Prime Minister of Japan Yasuo Fukuda declared that ASEAN and Japan would be “partners thinking together, acting together and sharing a future vision.”⁴

References to the Fukuda Doctrine were highlighted not only by Asian diplomats but also journalists and scholars.⁵ To mark the 30th anniversary of the Fukuda Doctrine in 2007, three major conferences were held in Japan and Southeast Asia. The first was a joint conference organized by the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, and the Japan Institute of International Affairs (Japan’s number one think tank) with a keynote speech by then ASEAN Secretary-General Designate Surin Pitsuwan at the Shangri La Hotel in Singapore in November 2007. The second was organized by the Malaysian Association of Japanese Studies (MAJAS) at the University of Malaya. The third