

## **Sarah Tanke, *Une diplomatie du respect: Le Japon et le multilateralisme. Trois cas d'étude: l'Assemblée générale des Nations unies, le PNUD et l'ATEA depuis les années 2000***

(A Diplomacy of Respect:

Japan and Multilateralism. Three Case Studies:

The UN General Assembly, the UNDP and the IAEA since the 2000s)

(Paris: L'Hamattan, 2017), pp. 250, ISBN: 978-2-343-12218-2

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It is only quite recently that multilateralism has been put under the spotlight in international relations. It is natural that sovereign states seek multilateral solutions to issues of climate change, free trade, and nuclear non-proliferation; these are issues where the use of external war, or bilateral solutions, are inherently ineffective for conflict resolution when every country is connected to every other country in terms of either economic interdependence, strategic vulnerability, developmental sustainability or political sensitivity. That is why the Paris climate accord has been signed and ratified by a large number of countries, and also why the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), a regional free trade agreement, was signed by 11 countries except for the United States. That is also why the declaration prohibiting nuclear weapons has been signed by the largest number of countries ever, with the exception of existing nuclear weapons states and most of their allies.

The book under review examines Japanese multilateralism focusing on the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the United Nations General Assembly (UN). It is quite ironic to see Japan developing its multilateralism to such an extent. Until quite recently, say until 2008 when the unilateralism of the Bush administration saw its miserable end, Japan had been reputed to be the last country sticking to “bilateralism at any cost.”<sup>1</sup> When President Barak Obama maintained ‘strategic patience’ Japan’s bilateralism started to show signs of apprehension. When Donald Trump shouted America First during the 2016 campaign Japan’s ‘bilateralism at any costs’ started to wane. President Trump withdrew from the TPP and the Paris Accord, two of the multilateral treaties Japan has been so persistent in promoting.

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<sup>1</sup> Takashi Inoguchi, “Bilateralism at Any Costs?” in G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi (eds.), *The Uses of Institutions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 51–73).

So it is quite timely to see Sarah Tanke highlighting the rise of Japan's multilateralism. Her examination focuses on Japanese multilateralism in action in relation to the UNDP, the IAEA and the UN Security General Assembly. Her choice is quite apt, given the persistent thread of Japan's multilateralism. First, rising from ashes without military weapons and natural resources after 1945 is a persistent theme of modern Japanese history. Economic development is a key to the rising sun. As if preaching gospel to the Global South, Japan has been assiduous in offering financial and technical assistance to it through the UNDP, and bilaterally to developing countries.

Second, Japan has been making determined efforts to have its voice and presence known in the UN. It argued in effect for 'no taxation without representation' in the UN. In other words, since Japan is the second largest financial contributor to the UN, and has been so for a long time, it thought it should have a greater say in the UN. Japan's post-1945 history is not dissimilar to Sweden after its defeat in the Northern War when Peter the Great of Russia dealt a heavy blow to Sweden, which lost its Continental territories. Since then Sweden has maintained a policy of no war involvement, with only a minor participation in the Napoleonic War. The Swedish policy of peace through neutrality has continued till today and it enjoys the reputation of a country of peace and neutrality.<sup>2</sup> It may be said, perhaps in jest, that Japan needs another 70 years before the dream of Japanese pacifism comes true.

Third, Japan has been ceaselessly arguing for further non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. As a long standing member of the nuclear proliferation treaty it has ensured that nuclear weapons states strive to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and non-nuclear weapons states refrain from developing and acquiring nuclear weapons. Despite North Korea's nuclearisation in the 2010s and China's earlier nuclearisation in the 1960s, Japan has resisted the allure of acquiring nuclear weapons. No less noteworthy is the strict compliance to the IAEA's regular mandatory investigation of nuclear power generating facilities. Mr. Yukiya Amano, Director General of the IAEA since 2009, is held in high regard and has been re-appointed to the post in 2013.

The author of this book has carefully examined each of the three domains in which Japan's multilateralism has been more or less effective in earning the respect of the community of nations. However, this reviewer would like to bring in a possible and perhaps more frequently used concept of soft power<sup>3</sup> to the investigation of Japan's multilateralism. Soft power is such an alluring concept. But it is important to note that soft power presumes hard power. In order for soft power to augment or to replace the use of hard power, it is unwise to push hard power to the forefront. In examining Japan's multilateralism as a quest for respect among the community of nations, two points must be made: national governments consider joining or not joining multilateral treaties based on three factors: 1) national interest as perceived by the country's government, 2) costs of joining or not joining, 3) the evolving process of coalition formation of multilateral treaties before they become effective. It is as if global parliamentarians vote for a bill, not in a national parliament but in gradually evolving moves of confidence by national governments in global quasi-legislative initiatives.<sup>4</sup> The second point is that the target variable, respect among the

2 Takashi Inoguchi, "Shinzo Abe's Leadership and the Legacy of Japan's Defeat", *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs*, 2(2), 2016, pp. 21-30.

3 Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

4 Takashi Inoguchi and Lien T.Q. Le, "Toward Modelling a Global Social Contract: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and

community of nations, is a tricky variable. Only through principled and persistent actions of nations over a century or two or three, can respect be acquired among the community of nations. It is like a boat navigating the Seine with heavy loads: *Fluctuat nec mergitur*.