

January 1995

Japan's Democracy: How Much Change?

Scott Huyler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/djilp>

Recommended Citation

Japan's Democracy: How Much Change?, 24 Denv. J. Int'l L. & Pol'y 247 (1995).

This Book Note is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Denver Sturm College of Law at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Denver Journal of International Law & Policy by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu, digitalcommons@du.edu.

Japan's Democracy: How Much Change?

Cumings argues that Americans can not fully appreciate the ongoing danger of war in Korea.

Divided Korea: United Future? takes a chronological approach to Korean history. It first briefly describes each of the past dynasties in Korea with its respective doctrinal belief. The book then discusses the influence of Japan over Korea. In particular, Cumings describes how Korea's politics, economics, and national identity have been affected since Japan established Korea as a protectorate in 1905. Cumings then describes the American influence on Korean affairs in the post-World War II era, including attempts to reunify Korea and extraneous actions which may have actually further divided Korea.

The book shifts to the post-Korean War era in the next section, including the Kwangju rebellion in May of 1980 and Korea's movement toward Democratic politics at the end of the Chun regime in June of 1987. Cumings analyzes political developments in both South Korea and North Korea. He describes four political constants in South Korean politics before turning to the more difficult question of North Korea. Because North Korea's political system can be very complex to understand, Cumings attempts to demystify the system with an historical analysis.

The underlying theme of North and South Korean differences is echoed in the next section of the book as Cumings contrasts the two Korean economies. For example, South Korea is described as an internationally-based and export-led system, whereas North Korea is depicted as a self-reliant and heavy-industry based system. Cumings cites to hidden similarities in the two economic systems however, and applauds their comparative economic successes.

The final section of the book addresses the Korean relationship to the world, including South Korea's pursuits of active diplomacy toward China, the Soviet Union, and various Eastern European countries. This final section also examines the relations between the two Koreas over the years, and those between the U.S. and the DPRK (North Korea), which has often teetered on the brink of war.

Cumings is hopeful that a strong U.S. presence in the peace-keeping forces in Korea will ensue. Although this book is not intended as a detailed study of Korea, Cumings provides the reader with a solid and interesting overview of the two Koreas.

Tatiana Palova

KRAUSS, ELLIS S., JAPAN'S DEMOCRACY: HOW MUCH CHANGE?; Foreign Policy Association Headline Series, Foreign Policy Association, New York, NY (1995); (\$5.95); ISBN 0-87125-163-3; 79 pp. (pbk).

Japan's Democracy: How Much Change? provides a thorough, yet concise, summary of Japan's brief democratic history. Krauss begins his

analysis of Japanese democracy with a focus on the American Occupation period from 1945-1952. According to Krauss, the twin aims of the American Occupation were democratization and demilitarization. He suggests that the Americans pursued both aims with equal vigor and were quickly able to build and support a stable democratic system that has had lasting benefit for the Japanese people.

Krauss next turns his attention to Japanese democracy in the post-occupation period. Specifically, Krauss discusses the period leading up to the 1980s and the "transformation of 1993-94." In the former period, Krauss delves into such important issues as human rights, political protest, minority discrimination, unequal treatment of women, crime and the structure of Japan's electoral system. Krauss does a particularly good job of both clarifying and explaining the confusing world of Japanese party politics; a world that is rife with nepotism, corruption and "pork" projects. The discussion is well-organized and presents a detailed analysis of the complexity of Japanese politics in a way readily understood by both scholars and laymen alike.

Krauss's discussion of "pork" politics and corruption serves as a useful and natural transition into the last substantive chapter, wherein Krauss catalogs Japan's latest political scandals and opportunistic party realignments. To Krauss, corruption and bureaucratic stagnation are some of the many problems that confront the modern Japanese democratic system.

Overall, the book is a very useful synopsis of Japanese democratic history. While admittedly brief, the book does, however, provide a broad conceptual guide for those interested in Japanese politics.

Scott Huylar

MAGRAW, DANIEL, NAFTA & THE ENVIRONMENT: SUBSTANCE AND PROCESS; American Bar Association, U.S.A. (1995); (\$75.00); ISBN 0-89707-961-2; 759 pp. (softcover).

This volume is a useful desk-reference for any attorney involved in the NAFTA-Environmental debates. The author begins by defining the parameters of the NAFTA and Environmental controversies. The creation of NAFTA brought to the forefront many environmental concerns in the United States. A main concern was the possible effects on United States environmental laws and trade related provisions in international agreements. This concern translated into fears of harmonization, pollution havens and environmentally damaging growth.

Magraw goes on to state how "harmonization," or compatibility of environmental standards, within a trade area can benefit health, the environment, and trade. Many, however, believe that within a free trade area standards would be reduced to the "least common denominator" or that regulations would be prohibited from exceeding international standards.