Given the importance of the Sultan it follows that the persons who had control of the Sultan had control of the state. As it happened these persons were also the wealthiest and most successful merchants. There was, during much of the late seventeenth century, a single individual, known as the Paduka Raja, who had control of the government. His personal lust for power produced a faction, headed by the Bendahara, which managed to gain control of the person of the young Sultan. This action sent the Padula Raja into headlong flight and ultimate destruction. But the young Sultan was a wretch, a stupid wretch, whose inhuman actions led to the subornation of a large portion of the orang kaya by the Bendahara who in 1699 murdered the Sultan. With this action the Malacca dynasty came to an end and the kingdom was thrown into disruption. Such an action against the constituted sovereignty (daulat) of a Malay Sultan is an especially serious form of treason (derhaka), so that some of the Malay accounts trace the decline of Johor's fortunes in the early eighteenth century directly to this event. That may possibly have been the case, for the demise of the dynastic certainly threw the Orange Laut into confusion; a fact which complicated the endeavors of later rulers. But there were other factors at work too; chief among these was the presence of the Minangkabau and the Buginese as powerful political entities in the region. This had not been true in an earlier period. Continuing unabated, however, was the personal greed and power-hunger of the leading men of the state whose personal ambition was placed before all else.

While ultimately it was the Buginess who became the power behind the Johor state, the more interesting bit of history concerns the Minangkabau pretender to the throne of Johor, Raja Kecil (Little Raja). He claimed to be the son of the Sultan who was murdered in 1699; the merits of this claim remain obscure. The Orang Laut certainly accepted Raja Kecil as legitimate and literally threw the kingdom into his lap. Then something went amiss and Raja Kecil loses the kingdom. The reason for this remains obscure and Andaya, using all the available sources, is unable to offer much clarification. This is the one point at which an otherwise smoothly moving narrative in this book breaks down. What did Raja Kecil do to lose his credibility in Johor? We will have to wait for the answer to this question. It is clear, however, that his loss of power lays the state open to the Buginess who seem, man for man, to have been the best sailors and fighters in the area. During the 1720s they become the chief political power in various parts of the peninsula, including Johor, and with their arrival on the scene the history of the peninsula takes on a different rythm. Johor’s day of greatness had passed.


Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka’s visit to Peking in September 1972, followed quickly by Japan’s recognition of the Peoples’ Republic China, may turn out to be as sharp a turning point in international relations in East Asia, as was the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. One wonders why this turning point wasn’t reached earlier, say in 1949 when Japanese aggression had been ended for four years and when Chinese unity was once again restored under Communist rule. But one also wonders how the restoration of amicable relations came about, for the differences in “political preferences,
economic capabilities, and strategic preparedness” that have separated Japan from
China since the late 1940s may be more acute in the 1970’s than at any other time in
the past. Lee’s book sheds light on these and other questions.

The book traces Japan’s relationship with China through the periods of formal
estrangement, 1949-1952, gradual relaxation, 1953-1957, total collapse, 1958-1962,
limited adjustment, 1963-1965, hostility, 1966-1970, and finally comprehensive recon-
ciliation, 1971-1972. Chapter two examines the processes of “political estrangement”
from 1949 to 1960; chapter three is about the “diplomatic rapprochement” of the early
1970’s; and chapter four follows the trade patterns over the whole time span of the
study.

Though surely not a piece of revisionist writing, at least in intent, Lee’s argument
highlights the role of the cold war, with detailed discussions of the San Francisco Peace
Treaty, the effects of Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi’s open hostility toward China in
the late 1950’s, and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato’s confusing efforts to prevent China’s
admission to the United Nations on the eve of Japan’s dramatic about face. The
obstacles created by the Korean War and the formation of the Republic of China on
Taiwan can hardly be overestimated. The former “thwarted the opportunities of
detents in East Asia” (p.136) in the early 1950’s, while the Japan-Taiwan Peace
Treaty in 1952 was “destined to govern the basic direction of Japan’s policy toward
China for the next two decades” (p. 28).

Japan’s acquiescence in the cold war is not offered as the only explanation, as
China’s politics, notably the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, also
figure in the delayed rapprochement. But the distinct impression from the book is that
over these two decades Premier Chou En-lai was more consistent in seeking recogni-
tion than the Japanese Prime Ministers were in distinguishing Japanese foreign policy
from American policy. The irony is that Tanaka gets much of the credit for the swift-
ness of recognition in 1972, while his ruling group, the Liberal Democratic Party,
effectively undermined the efforts by the Japanese socialists to bring about increased
trade and recognition from 1949 onward. (One is reminded of President Richard
Nixon’s enigmatic role in the American rapprochement with China.) Lee’s book, in
fact, is more than a study of Japan’s relationship with China. It is an informative
account of the inner workings of the Japanese political system, including the endless
shifts in factions within the ruling party itself.

The book is written largely for specialists. Last names of Western scholars are in-
troduced without identification in the text, abbreviated titles of parties and organiza-
tions abound—in one paragraph they were used over thirty times—, and on one page
half the space was given to a listing of names, many of which the reader may not
recognize or meet again in the text. But the argument is clear, and the story carefully
written, while the notes are an introduction to the vast array of Japanese materials on
Communist China. A bibliography at the end would have enhanced the usefulness of
the book.

In his argument Lee refers to many public opinion polls in Japan, of which eight
are presented in table form. How useful these are is open to some question, for they
may reveal as much about the forces of manipulation within Japanese politics and
journalism as they do about the political sentiments of the Japanese people. One
stands out, however, and that is the poll showing public approval, 97.8 percent, for
Tanaka’s diplomatic breakthrough with Peking, and surprisingly the wide acceptance
by the Japanese people of Tanaka’s decision to sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan.
Other tables on trends in Sino-Japanese trade, Japanese defense expenditures, visits