

society coalitions' savvy use of their framing power, political linkages, and international platforms is the catalyst. Jingyun Dai and Anthony J. Spires then catalogue the boundary-pushing ENGO strategies that aim to influence local government policy, which include cultivating ties with government, using formal channels to articulate concerns, careful framing, and mobilizing the media.

Under part 5, "Outcomes," Harrell reconsiders the utility of the environmental Kuznets curve, which suggests that environmental quality would improve as the economy grows, for explaining the environmental outcomes in East Asia. He convincingly points out that while this may be true for particular types of environmental degradation such as air pollution and deforestation, it is less so for others such as soil contamination and greenhouse gas emissions.

While the editors have successfully shown the analytical payoffs of eco-developmentalism in East Asia, I thought that there were missed opportunities for engagement with theories of institutional change to characterize the transformation from a developmental state into an eco-developmental state. Further deconstruction of the developmental state concept should also help readers better appreciate the various developmental legacies that facilitate and hinder environmentalism.

That said, I would recommend this highly readable volume to anyone eager to learn or teach about the environment in contemporary East Asia. Given its relevance to the ongoing climate emergency, this book should interest scholars, activists, and policy makers of the region and beyond.

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**THE END OF PAX AMERICANA: The Loss of Empire and Hikikomori Nationalism. *Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society.* By Naoki Sakai. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022. xii, 350 pp. (B&W photos.) US\$28.95, paper. ISBN 9781478014911.**

This collection of essays by Naoki Sakai includes one essay co-written with Jon Solomon and an appendix on racism co-written with William Haver. The essays are loosely integrated by a post-colonial approach and tool-kit, particularly as applicable to the US-Japan relationship and the US-Japan relationship with the "rest." The time period, evidenced by the title, is that of Pax Americana in the post-war era, although the author covers not only the "end" of Pax Americana but its beginnings as well, focusing on the rise of East Asian prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s in the US security zone inherited from Japan's pre-war East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere (minus mainland China).

Indeed, the question of the "end" of Pax Americana, as Sakai suggests, is

still moot since military and financial domination remains in American hands, even while its economic and cultural power have declined considerably over the period. Certainly, there are many more challengers to American global power today than in earlier periods of Pax Americana.

As has become increasingly well-known, the expression *hikikomori* refers to a group of contemporary Japanese who seek to withdraw from the outside world and confine themselves to the security of their bedrooms. But, by *hikikomori* nationalism, Sakai refers to a nation which “suffers from a phantasmatic fear of intrusion from outside the national territory” (31) and not with the psychic condition of individual *hikikomori*. He believes this kind of nationalism has everything to do with the relative decline of post-industrial consumer societies and the despair and alienation it produces.

In the different chapters of the volume, Sakai initiates several interesting directions of inquiry, but they are rarely followed up or integrated systematically. He does promise to do so in a later volume. One interesting suggestion is that the narrative and attendant periodization of history will change retrospectively as the telos of modernization can no longer hold. If the exemplar of modernity (the US/West) itself begins to regress in the measure of liberal modernity’s indices, history opens itself up to other directions and goals that may be prescribed for humans and the planet.

Another of Sakai’s core post-colonial themes is grasping the different facets of Stuart Hall’s formulation of the “West versus the rest.” Pax Americana is itself a continuation of the nineteenth-century imperialist Orientalism, albeit with important adjustments. As such Sakai suggests that the West signifies a certain historical form of global dominance—“a positionality”—wielded in this era by the United States, even if in its twilight. Almost as an aside, he throws up the possibility that the West, in terms of its core power, could shift beyond its geographical signification, presumably if the historical form of domination remains significantly the same.

A related and recurrent theme is racism. Racism is a central ingredient in the constitution of the West as a form of dominance. It would seem that if the West was to travel to the geographical non-West, this factor would have to remain, although it may change its colors. For instance, Japan’s participation in Pax Americana as a junior partner resulted in an incomplete de-imperialization of the Japanese people, who continue to see other Asians and the “rest” as intrinsically inferior. The concluding chapter discussing the “sub-contracting” of the American empire to Japan and its Northeast Asian junior partners is a fascinating extension of Takashi Fujitani’s work on American and Japanese imperial racism.

In order to counter the image of “vulgar” American racism in post-colonial Asia, the inclusionary (or “polite”) racism of the Japanese empire came to be extended to American policy during the post-war era (151). Sakai sees a transpacific complicity and reversal of imperial projects wherein the US could deploy inclusionary racism to “colonize anticolonialism” and the

Japanese could bask in the exclusionary uniqueness of the Japanese nation that afforded it to behave imperialistically with its neighbours.

In this context, Sakai argues that post-war area studies in the academy has been thoroughly racist in its production of Pax Americana global knowledge. Most interesting here is the essay co-written with Solomon which features Foucault's encounter with Japanese monks. It is a skillful analysis of translation as a method of subjectification, wherein the entire process of translation pre-supposes the interlocutors as representatives of essentialized cultures.

Yet, perhaps Sakai is much too ahistorical in casting area studies as continuing to be so strongly rooted in early post-war Pax Americana. Area studies has seen transformative challenges since the late 1960s, from Marxism, Saidean post-colonialism, Subaltern Studies, critical cultural studies and the vastly increased connectivity with scholars in the world outside the West. One might say that recent global trends in neo-liberal global academia towards hacking and shrinking the liberal arts, reveal little if any space for the important research performed by critical area studies. Rather than tear it down, we need to fight actively to enhance its value as a weapon for justice.

While this volume contains fascinating insights, it is not free from frustrations. This has perhaps less to do with the argot of critical literature, than the undeveloped and loosely connected nature of the conceptions. There is much repetition, some inconsistencies and scarce referencing. For instance, there are several important references to Paul Valéry, yet the one short footnote refers to a citation from Derrida. *Hikikomori* nationalism is a term that grabs our attention, but the implications for the book are not clarified. How is withdrawal to be understood as outward aggression, as appears to be happening in the military pacts emerging in the Indo-Pacific? Can it be seen, as Polanyi or Arrighi might have, as a cyclical phase of capitalism with complex political responses? As for getting out of the national problematic, Sakai has no special answers to offer. The recent trend towards planetary histories still needs to show us how the politics of identity can be translated into the cause of planetary restoration.

But for readers prepared to overcome the frustrations, Sakai's volume promises to be worth their while to read and contemplate.

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**CHINA'S LEADERS: From Mao to Now.** By *David Shambaugh*. Cambridge; Oxford; Boston; New York: Polity, 2021. xiv, 383 pp. (Tables, graphs, B&W photos.) US\$28.00, cloth. ISBN 9781509546510.

In *China's Leaders: From Mao to Now*, David Shambaugh provides a portrait of each of the five top leaders of the People's Republic of China (PRC):