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# **The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN**

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# **The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN**

**New Dimensions in  
Japanese Foreign Policy**

**SUEO SUDO**

Published by  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies  
Heng Mui Keng Terrace  
Pasir Panjang Road  
Singapore 0511

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### Cataloguing in Publication Data

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Sudo, Sueo.

The Fukuda doctrine and ASEAN: new dimensions in Japanese foreign policy.

1. Japan—Foreign relations—1945—
2. Japan—Foreign relations—Asia, Southeastern.
3. Asia, Southeastern—Foreign relations—Japan.
4. Japan—Foreign relations—ASEAN countries.
5. ASEAN countries—Foreign relations—Japan.

I. Title.

DS889.5 S94                      1992                      sls91-1700

ISBN 981-3016-14-0 (soft cover)

ISBN 981-3016-15-9 (hard cover)

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Typeset by The Fototype Business

Printed in Singapore by Prime Packaging Industries Pte Ltd.

*To My Parents*  
*Shozo and Yukiko Sudo*



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## Preface

**T**his is a study of Japanese foreign policy towards Southeast Asia in the post-Vietnam war period, with special emphasis on the so-called Fukuda Doctrine of August 1977. Given the controversial nature of the Doctrine, this book attempts a scrutiny of its rationale and developments since 1977 with the view that the Doctrine in fact ushered in a new era in Japan–Southeast Asia relations. In explaining why and how changes in Japan’s Southeast Asian policy occurred, four alternative perspectives are introduced: the international system, the regional subsystem, domestic politics, and ideas. These four perspectives are examined in order to assess their relevance in analysing concrete cases.

Having formulated the framework for analysis in Chapter 1, a historical evolution of Japan–Southeast Asia relations is given in the following two chapters for the purpose of comparing pre-Doctrine and current phases. Chapters 4 to 6 constitute the core of the book, which explain how a shift in Japanese foreign policy towards the region came about. Chapter 7 follows up the Fukuda Doctrine period in order to investigate the impact of the Doctrine on Japan–Southeast Asia relations. Finally, the nature of the Doctrine and the four perspectives in explaining the shift are discussed, with a conclusion

that the Fukuda Doctrine constitutes a major departure from Japan's traditional economic policy towards the region in two dimensions. Playing an active political role and forging a special relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are major characteristics of the Doctrine, which continue to be an integral part of Japan's Southeast Asian policy to the present time.

In writing this book, I was greatly assisted by many individuals and institutions, only a few of which can be acknowledged here. First of all, I am indebted to Professors John Campbell and Russell Fifield who helped me immensely to complete my doctoral thesis, which constitutes the main part of this book. I would also like to thank Professor Masashi Nishihara and Masahide Shibusawa, Director of East-West Seminar, for their unstinting comments and guidance. I am grateful to Professors Mayako Ishii, Setsuho Ikehata and the late Masataka Banno for their generous support and encouragement. The Institute of Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand deserves a special mention. Its Director, Dr Khien Theeravit, with whom I worked for two years, has enlightened me in immeasurable ways. Most of all, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, provided needed encouragement and an excellent environment for writing this book. For this I am deeply grateful to the Director, Professor K.S. Sandhu.

I have decided to dedicate this book to my parents who showed me how to live a life based on devotion and hard work. Finally, no acknowledgement can be complete without thanking my wife, Chantanee, whose understanding, patience, and special care for our children, Yasuharu and Kenji, made it much easier for me to undertake the task of producing this book.

## Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASPAC	Asia-Pacific Council
Keizai Doyukai	Japan Committee for Economic Development
EC	European Community
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
EPA	Economic Planning Agency
ESB	Economic Stabilization Board
FEC	Far Eastern Commission
Keidanren	Federation of Economic Organizations
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MCEDSEA	Ministerial Conference for Economic Development of Southeast Asia
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MTN	Multilateral Trade Negotiations
NICs	Newly Industrializing Countries

Nissho	Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PARC	Policy Affairs Research Council
SCAP	Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers
SEATO	Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
STABEX	Stabilization of Export Earnings
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

*Note on Japanese Names*

Japanese names are given in the Western manner with the given name preceding the family name.

# Introduction

**A**t the third Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 15 December 1987, Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita delivered a speech entitled “Japan and ASEAN: A New Partnership Toward Peace and Prosperity”, in which he stressed three policy goals: (1) to strengthen the economic resilience of ASEAN; (2) to promote political co-ordination between Japan and ASEAN; and (3) to promote cultural exchanges.<sup>1</sup> The third ASEAN Summit heralded the advent of a “special” relationship between Japan and the ASEAN countries by the fact that Japan was the only guest country among the dialogue partners of ASEAN to be invited. Since this event deserves particular scrutiny, in the pages that follow we will delve into the origins and development of this “special” relationship between Japan and Southeast Asia.

Japan’s active involvement in the region can be traced back to the Fukuda Doctrine enunciated by the former Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda in August 1977. Since then, Japan’s policy has been flamed systematically in order to resolve the problem of Indochina and to help Southeast Asian countries develop their economies. At the same time, the Japanese Government has been trying to forge closer links with ASEAN as a viable regional organization. It is

these changes brought about by Japan's first doctrine that led Takeshita to attend the third ASEAN Summit. As a result, for the first time in the history of Japan–Southeast Asia relations, Japan has come to be regarded as a bona fide actor in this part of the world. This rare “success” in Japanese foreign policy can be readily recognized against a background of historically trouble-ridden relations.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA IN JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY

Consummating the Meiji Restoration in 1868, a newly unified Japan engaged in a vigorous aggrandizement in foreign policy, epitomized in the slogan, *Fukoku Kyohei* (a rich nation and a powerful army). Japan entered the international system through a series of acquisitions of foreign territories – Taiwan, Korea, Manchukuo and Southeast Asia. It is true that after the Meiji Restoration, many Japanese urged their compatriots to move southward (*Nanshin*). Yet it was only in the “Fundamental Principles of National Policy”, adopted at the Five Ministers’ Conference on 7 August 1936, that the Japanese Government incorporated a southward advance into its national policy. As an extension of this expansionistic foreign policy, many Japanese unrealistically hoped that Imperial Japan would be able to reign over the entire Asian region with the aim of promoting peace, stability and prosperity, to wit, a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that the surrender of 1945 had a lingering impact on the Japanese, as succinctly depicted by Nish: “The Japanese have suffered from an imperial hangover. Like most hangovers, theirs was unpleasant and uncomfortable, accompanied as it was by a sense of guilt. The guilt in turn acted as a constraint on her freedom of action in the political sphere”.<sup>3</sup>

Because of these historical experiences, Japan–Southeast Asia relations were pervaded by residual feelings of enmity until the early 1970s, reaching a peak in 1974 when stormy anti-Japanese movements engulfed the region. During this time, or the pre-Doctrine period, “economic diplomacy”, largely formulated by Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida and officially promulgated in 1957, constituted the heart of Japan’s policy towards Southeast Asia. The first White Paper on Japanese Diplomacy of 1957 cogently put it: “For our country

which adopted pacifism as its basic policy the only way to raise the living standards of the 90 million people living on the four small islands, and to develop our economy is peaceful expansion of our economic power".<sup>4</sup> Economic diplomacy, officially defined as "peaceful expansion of Japan's economy in foreign markets necessary for the maintenance of the national economy", thus became the *modus vivendi* of Japanese foreign policy. At the same time, intertwined with the American cold war strategy, Japanese policy towards the region began to foster a triangular relationship, linking U.S. capital, Japanese technical know-how and Southeast Asian raw materials. Motivated by these economic imperatives, Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi paid the first high-level official visit to the region in 1957, followed by Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda in 1961 and 1963. As many observers maintain, the reparations settlement became an integral part of this diplomacy and soon served as the catalyst for Japan's economic intrusion into the region. Through the reparations negotiations, Japan's first coherent policy towards Southeast Asia emerged.

By the mid-1960s, Japan was facing increasing pressures from Western and developing countries alike who called on Japan to share a greater burden as a "developed" country in the international arena. It was at this time that U.S. policy towards Southeast Asia entered a new stage, playing the predominant role in protecting South Vietnam against communist expansion. Accordingly, the Japanese Government, endorsing President Lyndon Johnson's plan for Southeast Asian development in 1965, came to share its "economic" burdens as a member of the Western alliance, thereby pouring huge capital into and initiating development plans and projects for the region. By the late 1960s, therefore, Japan had moved into a commanding trade position. It was this "induced" activism that made Japan involve itself more extensively in the region although the substance of its foreign policy remained intact.<sup>5</sup> It was also partly the result of the triangular strategy Japan had vigorously pursued.

However, Japan's economic diplomacy gradually confronted formidable obstacles in the early 1970s. In particular, the end of the Vietnam war in April 1975 and the ASEAN Summit conference of February 1976 in Bali had a profound impact on Japanese foreign

policy. In the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from the region, Japan was expected to take up the challenge of giving concrete support to efforts at regional organization and display its willingness to take on international responsibility. As one scholar best described it: "Since about 1977, for the first time after it regained independence in 1952, Japan has emerged as a visible political actor in the Asia Pacific region. In that year, Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda proclaimed the 'Fukuda Doctrine' in a speech in Manila. The Doctrine was designed to define Japanese policy directions towards Southeast Asia and suggest playing a positive political role there".<sup>6</sup> In many respects, therefore, since the declaration of the Doctrine, Japan–Southeast Asia relations may be said to have entered a new phase.

#### **THE FUKUDA DOCTRINE: A NEW ERA**

Although there are three different phases in Japan–Southeast Asia relations in the post-war period, it seems more appropriate to divide them into two major periods, as the first two phases can more or less be deemed as an "economically oriented" period. The dividing line will be how and why the Fukuda Doctrine marked a new stage in the relationship. At the outset of this book, therefore, we need to identify the essence of the Fukuda Doctrine and how it was formulated. The Fukuda Doctrine, the first "doctrine" as such in Japanese foreign policy to be proclaimed by the government, formally states three commitments to Southeast Asia: (1) Japan rejects the role of a military power; (2) Japan will do its best to consolidate the relationship of mutual confidence and trust based on "heart-to-heart" understanding; and (3) Japan will be an equal partner of ASEAN, while attempting to foster mutual understanding with the nations of Indochina. Thus, the three pillars of Japan's Southeast Asian policy may be characterized as having a non-military, cultural and political orientation. Most important is the fact that the Doctrine was politically oriented and intended to replace the economically oriented "triangular" strategy of the previous two decades.

This study will stress the following three reasons for Japan's active involvement in the region after the promulgation of the Doctrine. First, it was because of a declining American security role in the

region that the Doctrine established a systematic framework for Japan's political conduct in the region, replacing the earlier unregulated process of decision-making regarding policies towards Southeast Asia. Furthermore, Japan tried to play an intermediary role by conveying the peaceful intentions of the ASEAN countries towards the Indochinese bloc. Japan's view was that peaceful relations between ASEAN and Indochina would not only help maintain stability in the region, but would also encourage the three Indochinese countries to be more independent *vis-à-vis* the Soviets and the Chinese. Japan's Southeast Asian policies were thus crucially nurtured by the Doctrine. This study will illuminate in particular how Japan, with political determination, has attempted to establish a new regional framework for peaceful and prosperous relations in Southeast Asia since the Vietnam war.

Secondly, since the declaration of the Doctrine, the Japanese Government has actively developed its contacts with ASEAN as a viable regional organization, as evidenced in Japan's support for regional projects, the establishment of a fund for cultural exchange, and regular conferences between Japan and ASEAN's foreign ministers. As such, many policy issues have been co-ordinated through these networks as well as through the efforts of official envoys sent by Japan to Southeast Asia, an action which had not been considered prior to the enunciation of the Doctrine.

Thirdly, Japan's policies towards North-South problems have become more constructive since 1978, with the heightening of political pressure from ASEAN and the approach of the fifth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Manila. The Japanese were particularly instrumental in developing a compromise formula on the financing of the second window of the Common Fund. In fact, Japan was one of the first major industrialized countries to go on record as willing to make a direct government contribution to the Fund. In this sense, the relationship between Japan and ASEAN can be said to epitomize the North-South problems for Japan. These three dimensions will be further explained later in our examination of post-Doctrine developments.

If the Fukuda Doctrine has marked a new era in Japan-Southeast Asia relations, then we need a framework to explain what has

caused the change. More importantly, how do we systematically explain the historical developments in these relations? It is thus of critical importance to formulate a systematic framework, to which we now turn.

## NOTES

1. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 16 December 1987, p. 2.
2. The term *Nanshin*, southward advance, is used commonly in Japan to describe Japan's policy towards Southeast Asia. For pre-war relations, see Kenichiro Shoda, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Tonanajia kan* (Tokyo: Ajia keizai kenkyusho, 1978); and Toru Yano, *Nanshin no keifu* (Tokyo: Chuokoron sha, 1975). See also, Willard Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953); F.C. Jones, *Japan's New Order in East Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954); Josef Silverstein, ed., *Southeast Asia in World War II* (New Haven: Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, 1966); Alfred McCoy, ed., *Southeast Asia under Japanese Occupation* (New Haven: Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, 1980); and William H. Newell, ed., *Japan in Asia, 1942-1945* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981), for the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia.
3. Ian Nish, "Regaining Confidence: Japan after the Loss of Empire", *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 1 (January 1980): 194.
4. Gaimusho, *Waga gaiko no kinkyo* (Tokyo: Okurasho insatsukyoku, 1957), p. 9.
5. For a reliable source on Japan's economic diplomacy, see Mitsuru Yamamoto, *Nihon no keizai gaiko* (Tokyo: Nikkei shinsho, 1973).
6. Masashi Nishihara, "Japan: Regional Stability", in *Security Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region*, edited by James W. Morley (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1986), p. 65. See also, Seki Tomoda, *Nyumon gendai Nihon gaiko* (Tokyo: Chukoshinsho, 1988), pp. 55-63.