

Dependent Nationalism in Contemporary Japan and Its Implications for the Regional Order in the Asia Pacific

A Public Seminar presented by Professor Keiichi Tsunekawa
University of Tokyo, Komaba

A surge of nationalist sentiment is allegedly observed in contemporary Japan as testified by politicians' eagerness for revising the 'Peace Constitution', the increasing emphasis on patriotism education, and the repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister and other leaders. However, public opinion surveys reveal that contemporary nationalism in Japan is not the expression of aggressive affirmativeness but of defensive bluff stemming from the feeling of national vulnerability in face of the belligerent behavior of North Korea and the increasingly assertive posture of China (especially in the field of military modernization, territorial disputes and the search for energy resources). Since the nationalism of Japanese citizens is not strong enough to make possible a major expansion of SDF (Self Defense Forces) capabilities, not to speak of the development of nuclear weapons, Japan cannot but depend on the U.S. military forces for its national defense. Yet any Japanese attempts to dilute the increasing influence of China by enlarging the ASEAN+3 framework by inviting Australia, New Zealand and India (ASEAN+6) could be weakened by the dependent nature of its nationalism. Japan may be placed in a difficult position by possible U.S. opposition against enlarged regional arrangements unfavorable for American interests.

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Senate Room
Murdoch University
All Welcome

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Keiichi Tsunekawa is Professor of Political Science at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Tokyo. He holds an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Tokyo and Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University. His current research interest resides in the areas of comparative political economies and regional cooperation focusing on East Asia and Latin America. His recent publications include the sole-authored 'Institutional architecture for Asian security: clumsy interactions and poor construction', *Berkeley APEC Study Center (BASC) Working Paper Series*, 2006, the co-edited *Political economy of Japan and East Asian countries*, (International Center for Japanese Studies, 2003)and chapters in various other edited books, including 'Cooperation without a community: human security issues and a pragmatic approach to regional integration in Asia', 'Japan in Asia-Latin American interaction', and 'Why so many maps there? Japan and regional cooperation'.
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