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978-1-107-13164-4 - China–Japan Relations after World War II: Empire, Industry and War, 1949–1971

Amy King

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## 1 Introduction

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In the winter of 1971, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) completed work on a secret intelligence memorandum about Japan. The memorandum stated that Japan had become the most important source of industrial equipment, precision instruments and electronics manufacturing plants for the People's Republic of China (PRC). These exports to the Communist regime were not only important in themselves, the CIA warned, but even more important 'for the Japanese technological expertise which comes with them'.<sup>1</sup> On top of this, the CIA explained, the PRC had become the world's largest buyer of Japanese iron, steel, fertiliser and machine tools. Japan, the CIA noted, had thus 'staked out a trade position on the Chinese mainland far larger than any other power'.<sup>2</sup>

This is counterintuitive. In 1971, when the CIA finalised its memorandum, China and Japan were still officially at war. World War II – known in China as the 1937–1945 'War of Resistance against Japan' (*kangri zhanzheng*) – had been a devastating experience for China. War with Japan had left between ten and twenty million Chinese dead and had displaced one hundred million more.<sup>3</sup> Although hostilities ended in August 1945, China and Japan did not re-establish diplomatic relations until 1972, and did not conclude a peace treaty until 1978. Moreover, by the late 1940s, China and Japan seemed destined to be adversaries again, this time as political, economic and strategic opponents in the global Cold War. In this new Cold War world, Japan – first occupied by, then allied with, the United States – did not officially recognise the PRC.

<sup>1</sup> 'Japan between the Two Chinas', CIA Office of National Estimates, 10 February 1971, United States Digital National Security Archive (hereafter 'USDNSA'), File JT00099, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>3</sup> For discussion of different estimates of casualties, see John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 295–296; Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, *The Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001), 6; Rana Mitter, *China's War with Japan, 1937–1945: The Struggle for Survival* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 5.

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Yet despite all this, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders began looking for ways to restart economic ties with Japan. Between 1949 and 1971, China and Japan signed five rounds of trade agreements, exchanged a host of economic delegations and encouraged the visit to China of hundreds of Japanese industrial experts and technicians who provided advice on how to rebuild and modernise the Chinese economy. By 1965, Japan had become China's most important trade partner, and by 1971 nearly a third of China's total imports came from Japan.<sup>4</sup> In the aftermath of major war, and at a time when the two countries were Cold War opponents, how had Japan become China's most important economic partner?

This book tells the story of the postwar rebuilding of economic ties between the PRC and Japan. Most scholarship on the China–Japan relationship considers 1972, the year in which China and Japan restored full diplomatic ties for the first time since the War of Resistance, to be the starting point in the postwar relationship.<sup>5</sup> According to these accounts, very little took place before the 1970s because China and Japan were divided militarily, diplomatically and economically by the Cold War order.<sup>6</sup> The Cold War saw the establishment of US- and Soviet-led trade blocs that made it difficult and at times impossible for China and Japan to send people and goods across Cold War lines.<sup>7</sup> In addition, China's centrally planned economic system made it far simpler for China to trade with other socialist bloc planned economies than with

<sup>4</sup> 'Sino-Japanese Economic Relations on the Eve of the Tanaka-Chou Summit', CIA Office of National Estimates, September 1972, USDNSA, File JT00125, 3–4.

<sup>5</sup> A great deal of the contemporary Western literature therefore focuses on the post-1972 or even post-1989 Sino-Japanese relationship. See, for instance, Marie Soderberg, *Chinese-Japanese Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Complementarity and Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2002); Wan Ming, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic, and Transformation* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006); Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Important exceptions are Yinan He, 'Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950–2006', *History and Memory* 19, no. 2 (2007), 43–74; Adam Cathcart and Patricia Nash, "'To Serve Revenge for the Dead": Chinese Communist Responses to Japanese War Crimes in the PRC Foreign Ministry Archive, 1949–1956', *The China Quarterly* 200 (2009), 1053–1069; Caroline Rose, 'Breaking the Deadlock: Japan's Informal Diplomacy with the People's Republic of China, 1958–9', in *Japanese Diplomacy in the 1950s: From Isolation to Integration*, ed. Makoto Iokibe, et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Shiraiishi Takashi and Caroline Sy Hau, 'Only Yesterday: China, Japan and the Transformation of East Asia', in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, ed. Yangwen Zheng, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 32; Bill Emmott, *Rivals: How the Power Struggle Between China, India and Japan Will Shape Our Next Decade* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 29–30.

<sup>7</sup> Zhang Shu Guang, *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949–1963* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 20–39.

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Japan.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, at first glance, bilateral trade data tends to support this narrative of the period between 1949 and 1971 as ‘lost decades’ in the China–Japan relationship. As Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show, the Sino-Japanese trade relationship between 1949 and 1971 was extremely limited relative to both the Sino-Soviet trade relationship during the same period and to Sino-Japanese trade during all other periods in the twentieth century. Ultimately, most literature on the China–Japan relationship therefore suggests that economic ties did not take off until the ‘shock’ of US *rapprochement* with China in 1972, and until the introduction of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms in the late 1970s, which created opportunities for China to open its markets to Japan.<sup>9</sup>

These Cold War-inflected narratives are prominent in Western, Chinese and Japanese scholarship because of the unusual trajectory of the period from the end of World War II to the onset of the Cold War in Asia. Though World War II ended with Japan’s surrender in August 1945, within a year China was quickly embroiled in a new civil war (1946–1949) between the ruling Nationalists (*Guomindang*) led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists led by Mao Zedong. The Chinese civil war became part of an emerging global Cold War story: the United States provided support to Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists and the CCP ‘leaned’ to the side of the Soviet Union. All of this meant that, in Mao’s China, the story of the CCP’s struggle against Chiang Kai-shek and his US ally became a far more important narrative than the story of war with Japan.<sup>10</sup> Parallel processes also took place in Japan, where US occupying forces chose to downplay the legacy of World War II and to rehabilitate Japan as a key US ally in the global Cold War. Thus, less than five years after the War’s end, the Cold War order brought China and Japan into the ‘subsystems’ of the two superpowers, precluding any postwar reckoning or reconciliation, and creating a new set of Cold War politics that took precedence over the legacy of World War II.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Howe, ed. *China and Japan: History, Trends and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12.

<sup>9</sup> On the impact of Deng’s economic reforms on the China–Japan relationship, see in particular Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), Chapter 10.

<sup>10</sup> Parks Coble, ‘China’s “New Remembering” of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, 1937–1945’, *The China Quarterly* 190 (2007), 394–410; Rana Mitter, ‘Old Ghosts, New Memories: China’s Changing War History in the Era of Post-Mao Politics’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 1 (2003), 120–128; Caroline Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future?* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 39.

<sup>11</sup> Evelyn Goh, *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy, and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Chapter 5; Yanan He, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 134–135.

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Figure 1.1 China's trade with Japan and the Soviet Union, 1950–1970 (\$US millions)

All figures have been converted to millions of US dollars for the purpose of comparison using the following exchange rates: the official Soviet–US exchange rate of 4 roubles per US dollar for figures from 1950 to 1958 (this rate was introduced on 1 March 1950), and the official Soviet–US exchange rate of 0.90 ‘new roubles’ per US dollar for figures from 1959 to 1971 (the ‘new rouble’ was introduced on 1 January 1961, but the United Nations Yearbook reports both new and old rouble rates for the years 1959 and 1960). Data compiled by the author from the International Monetary Fund, *Historical Direction of Trade Statistics (1948–1980)* (Manchester, ESDS International, University of Manchester, 2002); United Nations, *Yearbook of International Trade Statistics* (New York, Various years).

The relative prominence of these Chinese civil war and Cold War narratives has meant that Japan remains curiously absent in our study of China's Cold War foreign relations. In recent years, scholarship by Niu Jun, Chen Jian and others has dramatically improved our understanding of China's foreign policy during the Cold War.<sup>12</sup> Drawing on newly

<sup>12</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Niu Jun, *Cong Yan'an Zouxiang Shijie: Zhongguo Gongchandang Duiwai Guanxi De Qiyuan [From Yan'an to the World: Origins of the Foreign Relations of the Chinese Communist Party]* (Beijing: Gongchandangshi chubanshe, 2008). An excellent review of these and other works can be found in Xia Yafeng,

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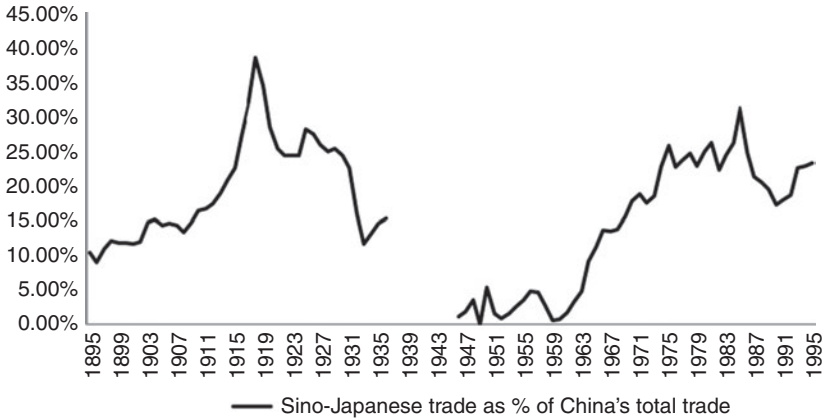


Figure 1.2 A century of Sino-Japanese trade, 1895–1995 (per cent share of China's total trade)

Due to the distorted nature of Sino-Japanese trade during the war years, Figure 1.2 does not depict the period between 1937 and 1945. However, the wartime Sino-Japanese economic relationship is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Original figures for 1895–1932 in 1000s of Haiguan taels, for 1933–1947 in 1000s of standard dollars, 1948 in 1000s of gold yuan and 1949–1995 in millions of US dollars. Due to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria from 1932 onwards, trade between China and Manchuria for 1932–1937 is regarded as Japanese trade with China. All figures have been converted by the author to represent Sino-Japanese trade as a percentage of China's total trade. For more discussion on sources and limitations of Chinese historical trade data, see Hsiao Lianglin, *China's Foreign Trade Statistics, 1864–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 8. Data compiled by the author from Hsiao, *China's Foreign Trade Statistics, 1864–1949*, 152–157; Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guojia tongji jubian [National Bureau of Statistics of the PRC], *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian [China Statistical Yearbook]* (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, Various years).

available Chinese archives and devoting attention to the role of ideology, these scholars have been instrumental in explaining how the CCP's ideology of nationalism and anti-imperialism shaped key moments in Chinese foreign policy during the Cold War, such as the CCP's decision to enter the Korean War, its hostility towards the United States and the breakdown in relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> This ideology of

'The Study of Cold War International History in China: A Review of the Last Twenty Years', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008), 81–115.

<sup>13</sup> These scholars are part of a wider body of 'new Cold War history' which emphasises the role of ideas and culture in understanding state behaviour during the Cold War. See, for

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nationalism and anti-imperialism, it is argued, stemmed from China's history of aggressive incursion and exploitation at the hands of foreign colonial powers. Yet the explanations developed by these scholars account poorly for China's Cold War foreign policy towards Japan. If China were so influenced by an ideology rooted in nationalism and anti-imperialism, why did Chinese officials work hard to build close economic ties with Japan, the state that had so brutally invaded and colonised China during the first half of the twentieth century?

Others have put forward partial answers to this question, suggesting that responsibility for the economic relationship lies with the Japanese side, which was motivated to rebuild the China–Japan relationship because of its need for Chinese raw materials and export markets,<sup>14</sup> its desire to achieve some foreign policy autonomy from the United States<sup>15</sup> or a sense of guilt about its aggression towards China during the War.<sup>16</sup> Yet while important, these studies tend to treat China as a static and monolithic state whose officials merely responded to Japanese overtures or rejected them when 'revolutionary' politics got in the way. Alternatively, those who focus on the Chinese side of the relationship overwhelmingly argue that Chinese officials merely used trade with Japan for wider Cold War geopolitical ends: to woo Japan away from the US alliance, to persuade Japan to transfer its diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC and to meet the economic shortfall left by the Soviet Union when Moscow withdrew its economic support for China in 1960.<sup>17</sup> While these studies

example, John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Melvyn P. Leffler, 'Review Essay: The Cold War: What Do "We Now Know"?', *American Historical Review* April (1999), 501–524; Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961–1974: From 'Red Menace' to 'Tacit Ally'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Manjari Chatterjee Miller, *Wronged by Empire: Post-Imperial Ideology and Foreign Policy in India and China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> David G. Brown, 'Chinese Economic Leverage in Sino-Japanese Relations', *Asian Survey* 12, no. 9 (1972), 753–771; George P. Jan, 'The Japanese People and Japan's Policy Towards Communist China', *The Western Political Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (1969), 605–621.

<sup>15</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, *Japan's Economic Diplomacy with China, 1945–1978* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 15.

<sup>16</sup> Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945–2005* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), Chapter 4; Soeya, *Japan's Economic Diplomacy with China*, 16–19.

<sup>17</sup> Brown, 'Chinese Economic Leverage in Sino-Japanese Relations', 762–767; Peng Tao, 'Assessing People's Diplomacy and Its Impacts on the US-Japan Security Alliance', *Historia Actual Online* 7 (2005), 68–69; Donald C. Hellman, 'Japan's Relations with Communist China', *Asian Survey* 4, no. 10 (1964), 1085–1092; Chae-Jin Lee, *Japan Faces China: Political and Economic Relations in the Postwar Era* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Robert Taylor, *Greater China and Japan: Prospects for an Economic Partnership in East Asia* (London: Sheffield Centre for

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provide relatively good detail on Sino-Japanese economic ties during the 1950s and 1960s, they rely almost entirely on Western, Japanese and Taiwanese sources. They are therefore unable to examine the motivations of Chinese policymakers in pursuing economic ties with Japan and tend to over-emphasise the role of the United States, the Soviet Union and Japan in shaping China's Japan policy. A more recent study which does draw on an impressive array of Chinese sources is that by Zhang Shu Guang, who argues that China's efforts to trade with Japan were motivated by a desire to induce Japan away from the United States and Taiwan. While Zhang's work provides an important account of Chinese economic statecraft, it tends to underplay the economic *challenges* China faced and the significance of the CCP's own economic development goals.<sup>18</sup> Finally, there have been a number of important studies of key individuals in the postwar China–Japan relationship, most notably of China's leading Japan expert Liao Chengzhi. Nevertheless, these studies are, by design, focused on the individual and thus do not explore how China's wider foreign and economic policy environment shaped the country's Japan policy.<sup>19</sup>

This book takes a different approach. To understand how Japan became China's most important economic partner by 1971, it asks two simple questions: how did Chinese policymakers conceive of Japan in the wake of World War II and how did these ideas shape the PRC's foreign economic policy towards Japan? Ideas are a powerful lens because they allow us to understand how Chinese policymakers perceived the world, how they defined their goals and interests, how they wrestled with and attempted to

Japanese Studies/Routledge Series, 1996), 3; Soeya, *Japan's Economic Diplomacy with China*, 25; Chad J. Mitcham, *China's Economic Relations with the West and Japan, 1949–1979: Grain, Trade and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 2005); Joseph Y.S. Cheng, *China's Japan Policy: Adjusting to New Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2015); Deng Feng and Du Yu-rong, 'Meiguo Lengzhan Zhanlue Yu Zhongri Maoyi Guanxi (1948–1950) [American Cold War Strategies and Sino-Japanese Trade Relations (1948–1950)]', *Dongbei Shi Daxue Bao [Journal of Northeast China Normal University]* 5 (2007), 57–62; Wang Huiyu, 'Meiguo Dui Ri Jingji Fuxing Zhengce Yingxiang Xia De Riben Yu Dongbei Maoyi [Japan's Trade Relations with Northeast China in the Shadow of the U.S. Economic Recovery Plan toward Japan]', *Riben Yanjiu [Japan Studies]* 2 (2009), 64–67; Li Enmin, *Zhongri Minjian Waijiao: 1945–1972 [Sino-Japanese Private Economic Diplomacy: 1945–1972]* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1997); Cheng Yongming and Shi Qibao, *Zhongri Jingmao Guanxi Liushi Nian (1945–2005) [Sixty Years of Sino-Japanese Economic and Trade Relations (1945–2005)]* (Tianjin: Tianjin shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Zhang Shu Guang, *Beijing's Economic Statecraft during the Cold War, 1949–1991* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), Chapter 4.

<sup>19</sup> Kurt Werner Radtke, *China's Relations with Japan, 1945–83: The Role of Liao Chengzhi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); Wang Xueping, ed. *Sengo Nichūkankai to Ryōshōshi – Chūgoku no Chimichiha to Taimichi Seisaku [Postwar Japan–China Relations and Liao Chengzhi: China's Pro-Japan Faction and Policy toward Japan]* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2013).

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## 8 China–Japan Relations after World War II

<p><b>Background cognitive ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underlying theoretical/ontological assumptions about how the world works</li> <li>• Constrain the range of solutions considered possible</li> </ul>	<p><b>Background normative ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underlying assumptions about what is considered desirable/legitimate</li> <li>• Constrain the range of legitimate solutions to policy problems</li> </ul>
<p><b>Foreground cognitive ideas ('Policy solutions')</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific solutions to policy problems</li> <li>• Provide guidance on how to achieve objectives</li> </ul>	<p><b>Foreground normative ideas ('Frames')</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framing symbols and concepts that reflect the values in background normative ideas</li> <li>• Explain and legitimise specific policy proposals</li> </ul>

Figure 1.3 Four-part ideas framework

Adapted from John L. Campbell, 'Institutional Analysis and the Role of Ideas in Political Economy', *Theory and Society* 27, no. 3 (1998), 385.

solve policy problems and how they communicated their policies to different audiences.<sup>20</sup> To study the ideas that shaped China's foreign economic policy towards Japan, this book develops a four-part ideas framework (Figure 1.3). The framework draws on a typology first established by John Campbell in his work on the role of ideas in shaping macroeconomic policy in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>21</sup> Campbell's ideas framework divides ideas along two dimensions: background and foreground ideas, and cognitive and normative ideas. Each of these different idea types – and the mechanisms by which they shape policy – is outlined in Figure 1.3.

As shown in Figure 1.3, *background cognitive ideas* are 'underlying theoretical and ontological assumptions about how the world works' and 'define the terrain of policy discourse'.<sup>22</sup> These ideas may be derived from theory, such as economic theories of neoclassical economics or Keynesianism for instance, or from lessons learnt in the past.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For an excellent overview of the ideas literature, see Nina Tannenwald, 'Ideas and Explanation: Advancing the Theoretical Agenda', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005), 13–42.

<sup>21</sup> John L. Campbell, 'Institutional Analysis and the Role of Ideas in Political Economy', *Theory and Society* 27, no. 3 (1998), 377–409.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 384, 389. Dietrich Rueschemeyer, 'Why and How Ideas Matter', in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Charles Tilly and Robert E. Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 243.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Campbell, 'The Role of Ideas in Political Economy', 389–392; G. John Ikenberry, 'Creating Yesterday's New World Order: Keynesian "New Thinking" and the Anglo-American Postwar Settlement', in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 57–86.



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Background cognitive ideas shape policy by diagnosing problems and constraining the range of solutions that policymakers consider possible or useful. *Foreground cognitive ideas*, or ‘policy solutions’, are ideas that provide specific solutions to policy problems diagnosed at the background level. These kinds of ideas often consist of technical, scientific or issue-specific information and shape policy by providing policymakers with precise guidance on how to solve their policy problems.<sup>24</sup> *Background normative ideas* consist of broad-based attitudes and normative assumptions about what is considered appropriate or not. Examples of background normative ideas in the literature include public opposition to budget deficits and tax increases<sup>25</sup> or the ideas about self-determination that became increasingly salient following the end of World War II.<sup>26</sup> Background normative ideas shape policy by delimiting or constraining the range of solutions that policymakers consider legitimate or appropriate. Finally, *foreground normative ideas*, or ‘frames’, are the framing symbols and concepts that reflect the sentiments and goals found in background normative ideas.<sup>27</sup> We most often find examples of foreground normative ideas in rhetoric, speeches and public pronouncements. Frames shape policy because they help policymakers to explain and legitimise specific policy proposals in normatively acceptable ways.

This four-part ideas framework offers a number of advantages for studying the processes that led to the formation of China’s Japan policy. First, by distinguishing between background and foreground ideas, the framework allows us to explore the relationship between the CCP’s broadest world views and normative goals and their actual policies towards Japan. In the wake of World War II, China’s Communist leaders were shaped deeply by a broad set of ideas about anti-imperialism, antipathy towards unequal treatment of China by foreign powers and a determination to transform and strengthen China through a socialist revolution. Yet while these background ideas diagnosed the issues that CCP policymakers defined as problems, and constrained the range of solutions they considered useful and appropriate, these background ideas did not provide specific strategies of action vis-à-vis Japan. It is for this reason that the book adopts the term ‘ideas’ rather than the term ‘ideology’ to encompass the range of idea types studied. That is, ideology is just one type of idea (a background idea) under investigation and must be

<sup>24</sup> Campbell, ‘The Role of Ideas in Political Economy’, 386.   <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 392–394.

<sup>26</sup> Robert H. Jackson, ‘The Weight of Ideas in Decolonization: Normative Change in International Relations’, in Goldstein and Keohane, *Ideas and Foreign Policy*, 111–138. However, Jackson refers to these ideas as ‘principled ideas’ rather than background normative ideas.

<sup>27</sup> Campbell, ‘The Role of Ideas in Political Economy’, 394–398.

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connected to other ideas, such as policy solutions and frames, to explain China's Japan policy. Here, I connect those background ideas to the CCP's conceptions of, and policies towards, Japan. I show that the CCP sought to modernise and industrialise the Chinese economy so that their country could withstand the kind of aggressive militarism and imperial exploitation that had left China vulnerable to foreign imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and as a victim of aggressive war with Japan between 1937 and 1945. Industrialisation was at the heart of their efforts to modernise and make China strong, for industrialisation was crucial to developing both economic wealth and powerful military capabilities. To industrialise the Chinese economy, China's Communist officials first turned to the Soviet Union, whose socialist development model appeared to offer a rapid and socially just way for backward economies to become strong. Yet by adopting the Soviet economic model, the CCP developed a pressing need for technology, expertise and industrial goods and machinery. This was a policy challenge that required a solution. While Moscow met a great deal of China's economic needs, the CCP began looking to Japan in the early months of 1949 for solutions to their industrial policy challenge. Japan's history of imperialism in China meant that Japanese goods, machinery and industrial practices had already penetrated China's economy and society and were still readily accessible to the Chinese Communists after 1949. More importantly, the CCP recognised that Japan represented the only Asian country to have made the successful transition from an agrarian country to a modern, industrialised one. China's Communist leaders saw Japan as a symbol of a modern, industrialised nation and Japanese goods, technology, expertise and development path as crucial in helping to meet the goal of rapid industrialisation. Like China, Japan had also been a late industrialiser, forced down the path of modernisation and industrialisation in response to the imperialist threat from the West in the late nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> Japan therefore understood the challenges faced by late industrialisers, such as a lack of technology, capital and skilled labour. Furthermore, and in contrast to the Soviet Union, Japan also shared a similar economic profile to China – both were characterised by excess populations, limited arable land and an agricultural sphere dominated by paddy-field rice cultivation.<sup>29</sup> To the

<sup>28</sup> Japan is referred to as Asia's 'pioneer late, late developer', in Ezra F. Vogel, *The Four Little Dragons: The Spread of Industrialization in East Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 3–5; Alexander Eckstein, *China's Economic Development: The Interplay of Scarcity and Ideology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 11–15, 213–215.

<sup>29</sup> Nakamura Takafusa and Omori Tokuko in Ōkita Saburō (compiler), *Post-War Reconstruction of the Japanese Economy* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1992), xxii.