

governments in the region, it is highly instructive. This is a logical outcome, given the credentials of the authors who were in their governments' service at one point or another, with the exception of two participants who are in research institutions.

There are nevertheless a few minor criticisms. First, the "Asia" in the title is somewhat misleading as it deals essentially with the Asia-Pacific or more precisely East Asia. If it purports to deal with "Asia" then the omission of India is incomprehensible. Given the venue of the symposium, this glaring omission could be misconstrued as an indication of the lack of priority attached by American policy-makers to South Asia. Secondly, it purports to discuss Asia in the twenty-first century whereas the topics cover the state of affairs up to 1994. Finally, the overall utility of the publication would have improved substantially had the author included transcripts of discussions and reactions to papers which might have occurred at the Summit. The papers and the high stature of the participants lead one to conclude that they accept their countries' policies uncritically.

For the reader who is seeking a more critical approach there are major issues which were, understandably, not addressed by the participants. Beyond the regional strategic issues, there are important developments in the region which are having a profound impact upon these societies, such as the development of a civil society in East Asia and the role of non-governmental organizations, as well as political and economic challenges to nascent regionalism. Furthermore, while there is a strong push for regional co-operation through dialogue and institution-building to take advantage of the reigning peace, the discourse on regionalism often glosses over serious security issues emanating from within states, and between states.

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***Human Rights and International Relations in the Asia-Pacific Region.***  
Edited by James T.H. Tang. London: Pinter, 1995. 249 pp.

In the post-Cold War era, human rights have become a major issue in international politics. It has also become one of the primary sources of ideological difference between the West and Asia. This book goes beyond

the superficialities of the formalized debate over universalism versus particularism to dig deep into the multiple layers of human rights theory and practice in Asia. In its constructive but critical approach, it represents a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on the subject.

The book is divided into four parts. Part One explores the concept of human rights and its application to Western and Asian contexts. Part Two examines the theory and practice of human rights in different states, including the United States, China, Japan, the Philippines and Russia. Part Three analyses the institutional and regional dimensions of human rights, while Part Four closes with an examination of the evolving human rights agenda in the Asia-Pacific region.

The theoretical section explores the relationship between universalism and particularism in human rights. Michael Freeman argues that the liberal individualism espoused by Locke is more social than is generally acknowledged, while non-Western collectivism is more individualistic. Joseph Chan believes that it is not the meaning but the scope, weight and ranking of rights which may be contestable. He suggests the need to accept a "margin of appreciation" in the application of human rights values based on necessity and proportionality but leaves unanswered the question as to which authority will decide the acceptable limits of that margin. In Mely Caballero-Anthony's view, Southeast Asian states in fact accept the universality of human rights, but differ in the "situational uniqueness" of human rights and their sequential ordering. In similar vein, Yash Ghai develops his earlier thinking on human rights in the region, arguing that there is not one view of human rights in Asia but many, and criticizes the Asian tendency to conflate the rights of the state with the rights of the community. He distinguishes between the views of human rights held by the élites in the region, united by the notion of governance and the expediency of their rule, and the contrasting views of the oppressed, the marginalized, non-governmental organizations, and the growing middle class. In a situation where human rights have a potentially transformative effect on Asian societies, the contrast within Asian societies is seen as more extreme than that between the views of Asia and the West.

The chapters on country situations encompass a range of different approaches. The essays by William Barnds on human rights in U.S. foreign policy; by Seiichiro Takagi on human rights in Japanese foreign policy; by Francisco Nemenzo on human rights in the Philippines; by Constantine Plekhakov on human rights in Russia; and by Zhou Wei on the changing theories of human rights in post-Tiananmen China, are all of intrinsic value. However, it is to be regretted that the lack of a

consistent approach has prevented the development of a comparative perspective on either the role of human rights in the foreign policies of these states or on the condition of their domestic human rights.

This void has, however, been largely filled by Amitav Acharya's excellent and detailed study of human rights management in post-Cold War Southeast Asia. He contrasts the different theories of human rights enunciated by Asian states, in particular at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, and, as a case study, examines the ASEAN position on "constructive engagement" with Myanmar. Paul Taylor discusses the limitations of United Nations humanitarian assistance programmes while, in the absence of a regional human rights body, Lawrence Woods explores the question of whether human rights issues can be addressed through existing regional economic institutions. He concludes that while they are unlikely to become major human rights forums, they at least keep human rights issues on the agenda.

Finally, James Tang concludes with a thoughtful evaluation of proposals for developing regional human rights protection arrangements, involving the ideal model of a highly institutionalized human rights system, an action-oriented model, and a model of information exchange and networking.

The strength of this collection is also the source of its most obvious weakness. Most of the essays wrestle with the thorny issues in the by now familiar universalism versus particularism debate. While this is an important subject, there is surprising unanimity between the contributors, who in different ways question the appropriateness of this dualism. Consequently, there is a good deal of overlap between them, particularly in Part One. The lack of uniformity of approach in the country studies, on the other hand, demonstrates the problems inherent in edited volumes. Moreover, despite James Tang's insistence that more weight should be given to economic and social rights, there is a failure, with the notable exception of Yash Ghai's study, to discuss these rights, particularly in the country studies. In cases where economic and social rights are discussed, there is also a tendency (Yash Ghai's essay again excepted) to accept at face value the claim that Asian states place priority on economic and social rights, despite considerable evidence that in fact they are primarily interested in the state's right to development rather than in the individual's right to an equal share of the pie. Finally, in considering future solutions, the need for the development of regional institutions is assumed rather than examined, whereas, as Sidney Jones, Director of Human Rights Watch/Asia has recently argued, for diverse reasons the case for the establishment of a regional human rights body remains unconvincing.

These caveats should not, however, detract from the value of this work. Its strength lies in its comprehensiveness, in its considerable insights which reveal a highly differentiated and complex reality, and in its revelation of a virtual consensus between its contributors, both Asian and Western, that, while human rights may well be a tool of Western neo-imperialism, by the same token the doctrine of cultural relativism can be misused by Asian élites. This consensus is in itself proof of their thesis. In addition, the useful collection of conference declarations and statements by representatives of Asian governments at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in the Appendices allows the reader to glean any additional insights and draw further comparisons from the original sources.

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