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# BOOK REVIEWS

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***The 21st Century — The Asian Century?* Edited by Sung-Jo Park.** Berlin, Express Edition, 1985. Pp. 140.

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This book contains the six public lectures given at the Third Festival of World Cultures — Horizons '85 in Berlin in June 1985. Its title is a variation of the idea of a "Pacific" century which has been put forward by various authors in the light of increasing trade and other inter-relationships in the Pacific Basin as opposed to the Atlantic. The lecturers are well-known scholars in their own right: Prof. Takeshi Ishida, Tokyo University; Prof. Johan Galtung, currently the Rector of the Université Nouvelle Transnationale, Paris; Prof. Lo Chengxi, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Prof. Woo-Hee Park, Seoul National University; Prof. J.A.A. Stockwin, Oxford University; and Prof. Sung-Jo Park, Free University of Berlin.

Takeshi Ishida's contribution echoes the title of the book. He expresses some consternation at the title, which appears to have been imposed on him by the organizers. It is a clear reflection of Western thinking. The "21st century" is a periodization made according to the Christian era. For the Muslims, the current year is 1405, and hence they are just at the beginning of the 15th century. According to

the Buddhist calendar, this year is 2528 for the people in Thailand. The turn of the century according to the Christian era consequently does not have any special meaning for many Asians. Ishida also points out that the term "Asia" covers a very heterogeneous conglomerate of countries and ethnic groups, whose only common denominator seems to be not to be Western. One might add that the term "Asia" itself is a European construct and was not known or used in Asia until the advent of Europeans.

It would be too much to expect a book of this type to cover all aspects of the implied topic and to cover fully the very different trends of development in all parts of Asia. In fact, the volume concentrates on Japan, China, and Korea with some reference to the ASEAN countries, but with the complete exclusion of South and West Asia, and in this sense must be looked upon as (literally) one-sided. The concentration on the economic success stories of Asia would have led one to expect a greater emphasis on economic issues, but in fact, the volume is slanted heavily towards more philosophical aspects such as power, social organization, and individual behaviour. Thus, Johan Galtung, always pleasant to listen to but often frustrating to read, concentrates on the dichotomy of co-operation building with capital accumulation on the one hand and bureau-

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cracy building with power accumulation on the other when analysing the Japanese industrialization model. "Overcoming the contradiction between bureaucracy and co-operation attitudinally through the integrated Shinto-Confucian-Buddhism triad" is seen as a typical example of the principle of eclecticism used in "combining the uncombinable". Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) this paper ends mid-way. This is evident from the fact that the last half dozen footnotes are not represented in the text.

Turning to the Chinese strategy of development, Johan Galtung presents a "distribution-growth oscillation hypothesis" for development policies. The vacillation of Chinese policy-makers between modernization on the one hand and distribution goals on the other should not merely be seen as a zig-zag course such as that of a rat in a maze, nor necessarily as a conscious strategy concocted by some political supermind, but, according to Galtung, rather as a direct expression of a very Chinese way of conceiving things. A major implication of Galtung's analysis is that the Chinese strategy of development, the Chinese "model", is neither that of "distribution first" nor of "growth first", but rather a deliberate zig-zag course that makes use of both of them.

Lo Chengxi places the developing countries and specifically China in the context of world economic trends. However, this analysis suffers from the self-imposed restriction of viewing the world through Marxist eyes and interpreting all developments as an expression of the basic law of capitalist accumulation. Under this law, overaccumulation is bound to occur in the long run. Since this law is immutable for Marxists, it is applicable throughout the past and will continue to apply in the future. Interpretation of reality then becomes an exercise in explaining away or ignoring the facts that do not fit the theory. Intensified trade rivalry, increased protectionism and financial chaos as a result of the instability of the international monetary system are predicted. The inevitable economic stagna-

tion of the developed countries will be rapidly transmitted to the developing countries. However, according to Lo Chengxi, all is not lost, and developing countries are not hopeless in curing their economic malaise in developing and modernizing their economies. But the prescription he offers is so general as to be virtually devoid of specific content: "In the final analysis, to overcome various economic difficulties and to transform an underdeveloped economy into a developed one, what counts are a stable political environment, and an economic system that is conducive to the development of productive forces and that can bring the initiative of the people into full play, and, above all, a combination of government policies that are for the interest of the people". More than an afterthought than an integral part of his lecture, Lo Chengxi finally mentions China in the last two paragraphs of his paper.

Woo-Hee Park examines industrialization and cultural identity with special reference to Confucianism in Korea. Confucianism is initially looked upon as a force hindering an industrialization process and modernity. However, as industrialization has proceeded during the last three decades, men have changed, and values, attitudes, and motives among others have also been transformed. Unfortunately, the author offers no indication whether the Confucian ethic is likely to influence development trends in Asia to an extent warranting the concept of an "Asian Century".

The paper by J.A.A. Stockwin is focused on Japan as a global and regional power and develops two possible scenarios for the future. Globalism and regionalism are the two integral aspects of Japan's emerging approach to international relations. In the "globalist" scenario, the Japanese economy continues to grow steadily, protectionist measures are largely held at bay under the conservative Liberal Democratic Party, and Japan remains closely linked with the United States for its security arrangements and economic relations. In the regionalist scenario, on the other hand, the scale and pace of Japan's global economic

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expansion eventually results in comprehensive barriers being brought down against Japanese exports in the United States and Western Europe. Japan adopts retaliation measures and is forced to concentrate far more on economic relations with the countries of East and South-east Asia. Stockwin envisages the possibility of a regional economic zone with the building of organizations to help the region function as an economic unit. North America and Europe ultimately find themselves having to deal with a huge and effective but also an exclusionist economic and political bloc in East and South-east Asia. Thus, the risk of global instability posed by its emergence becomes the primary international problem of the early 21st century. Stockwin believes that some version of the first "globalist" scenario is not only more likely but also more desirable than the second, regionalist scenario. In fact, he proposes that we should make sure that present policies towards Japan do not lead to some version of the second.

Sung-Jo Park, the editor of the present volume, winds up the half dozen lectures with one on the importance of Europe in the future of Asia, in which he calls for a common technological and economic policy. This erudite paper builds on a critical analysis of the work of many classical scholars from both this century and the last who have dealt with the relationship between the Occident and the Orient. Park sees three waves that have determined this relationship from West to East: christianization, colonization, and democratization. With regard to his rhetorical question: "Where are we now?" Park speaks of a technological wave. However, compared to the previous three waves the difference is that the technological wave is moving from East to West, with high technology from Japan being exported to the West.

This book is stimulating in many, sometimes unexpected, ways. Perhaps inevitably, it throws up more questions than answers. In particular, the question implied by the title, that is, whether the 21st century will come to be considered the Asian century, is neither

answered nor sufficiently clearly posed.

Finally, the editor and publishers are to be commended for the speed with which the papers, presented in June 1985, have been published within a couple of months. This might conceivably warrant an entry in the Guinness Book of Records. To be sure, the price for this "Express Edition" has to be paid in terms of a number of misprints, translation errors, and other technical inaccuracies.

This book is recommended to all who are interested in our future beyond that of day-to-day occurrences.

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***Food Security Issues in ASEAN Agricultural Development.*** Edited by Francis K. Chan and L.J. Fredericks. Special issue of *Kajian Ekonomi Malaysia* XVIII, nos. 1 & 2 (June/December 1981). Pp. vi, 418.

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The contents of this volume have had a long gestation period, being the selected output of a conference held in November 1981. Although published that year in the journal of the Malaysian Economic Association, administrative constraints had postponed actual distribution of the volume to early this year.

Nevertheless, the timing is serendipitous. Coming as it does in the wake of unprecedented media attention to food crises in Africa and elsewhere, the volume can and should benefit from public interest in food security, which has never been higher. The energetic efforts from an unlikely source — pop musicians — and the accompanying media blitz have focused attention on one of the most crucial issues of our times; but in doing so have exposed a welter of often conflicting assertions and opinions on an exceedingly complex problem. For the concerned or otherwise interested individual, faced with the task of separating the genuine from the self-serving, some rational