

(Barry Naughton), and it is not a criticism of the volume to state that economists would have asked somewhat different questions. For example, they would have worried more about where some particular forms of integration are likely to head. Specifically, Jagdish Bhagwati's spaghetti bowl is rearing its ugly head all over East Asia, a region which was once avowedly unilateral and multilateral in its trade policy orientation, but is now increasingly being directed down to the dead end of preferential trade deals which are neither free nor fair. An economics perspective would also have accorded greater emphasis to the region's comparatively low trade barriers (certainly compared to all developing region comparators) and the fairly open foreign investment postures. Thus, commercial interdependence can proceed a long way even if inter-governmental relations are occasionally hostile, and the "structural impediments" apparently sizeable.

Perhaps also there could have been some more East Asian voices in the volume, if only as discussants. The authorship is overwhelmingly North American and Japanese, although in fairness all the contributors have a deep immersion in the region. But these are minor quibbles. This is a highly stimulating, topical and coherent volume. It will be required reading for specialists and students of international relations and East Asia. Unfortunately, the editor could not have asked for better publicity to underline a key theme of the volume, as China and Japan, continuing their decade-long rivalry for regional leadership, engaged in an acrimonious diplomatic spat earlier in the year.

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Japan's Role in Asia: Mutual Development or Ruthless Competition.
By Lim Hua Sing. 4th Edition. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003. Softcover: 333pp.

As evidenced by the impending "Asian summit", China's "peaceful rise", Japan's ongoing identity crisis relative to becoming a "normal" state and major uncertainties about the Korean peninsula, Asia is clearly entering a landmark period of geopolitical and economic change. Fresh assessments of those forces most affecting this process are now critical to understanding Asia at this historic juncture, particularly assessments that are able to bridge analysis of the region's economic development with scrutiny of the longer-term political trends emanating from it.

Initially, Lim Hua Sing's book on Japanese economic interaction in the region would appear to meet this requirement. The scope of issues covered is appropriately broad: investment, trade frictions, overseas development assistance (ODA), technology transfers and free trade areas. Lim even delves very briefly into a politico-military related discussion of Japan's post-Cold War security behaviour. The book is richly endowed with quantitative data in the form of comprehensive tables, charts and assorted statistical compilations. Its documentation is also impressive with extensive source citations found at the end of each chapter. Indeed, the reader is nearly overwhelmed with the range of coverage pertaining to such arcane issues as Japan's non-tariff barriers on Singapore's canned pineapple and Japanese yen fluctuations during the 1990s. Perhaps the volume's greatest strength is the assiduous research that underlies much of its content.

That strength is overshadowed by several weaknesses. *Japan's Role in Asia* suffers to some degree from conceptual ambiguity and disparate narrative. Fully two-thirds of the book contains material written well before the Asian financial crisis (covering events only up to the mid-1980s) and thus offers observations that are outdated or contradict observations made in other chapters. China, for example, is no longer an oil exporter (p. 123). The conclusion to Chapter 6 waxes optimistic about Japan-ASEAN trade relations while Chapter 5 concludes by strongly implying that trade tensions between these two entities could lead to serious long-term problems. The book's last six chapters are less dated than the first nine, and oscillate between such topics as Japan's domestic economic problems, China's overseas populations and the region's institutional politics. This apparent lack of cohesion flows from what the book really is: a collection of separate articles written for different books and journals that have been assembled as a "book". In some instances, however, a statement of analytical purpose is offered (e.g., a recommendation on how to strengthen bilateral economic ties between Japan and Malaysia).

Such shortcomings should have been better resolved by establishing an overarching theme or argument at the book's outset, including an introductory chapter addressing the "problem" announced in the second part of the title: is Japan an economic partner or merely a ruthless exploiter of regional economic growth? Or might it be both and, if so, what conditions or circumstances will allow us to predict specific Japanese behaviour at a given time? Other candidates for an introduction to central foci of the book include the informative discussion on Japanese businesses' managerial style (pp. 110–11) and Japan's identity as an "economic superpower" (chapter 8). Establishing

such a framework for the entire volume would have helped define the book's overall topic.

Other, perhaps less critical, problems relate to the author's tendency to state the obvious (on p. 235 we learn that as a result of the Asian financial crisis, Asian countries are suffering from "serious economic difficulties" while on p. 259 we learn that "Japan is a big country") and to gloss over some of the most critical dimensions of Japanese politico-economic diplomacy that warrant more extensive discussion. The Miyazawa Plan is accorded only three pages in chapter 10 and an additional page in chapter 12. Given its central role in Japan's effort to cultivate regional influence during the Asian financial crisis, one wonders why it does not merit at least a separate chapter. Recent initiatives in institutionalization are likewise underplayed; the ASEAN+3 process that may well determine Japan's future leadership role in Asia's economic affairs is only briefly reviewed (two pages) in chapter 14. China's rise as an economic power in the region is considered in two brief final chapters. China is not, however, assessed in its own right as much as an adjunct to Japan-ASEAN relations or to Japan's global economic postures. These factors are less central to how influential Japan will be as a regional economic force over the next decade, and beyond, than the extent to which China and Japan can overcome their historical and geopolitical animosities by reinforcing their investment and trade ties as determinants of their overall bilateral relationship. In this regard, the all too short discussion of Japan's military role as a factor in international security and extra-regional peacekeeping (pp. 202–203) might have been expanded to evaluate how increasing Japanese military capabilities could exacerbate security tensions in Northeast Asia.

The author should be encouraged in subsequent editions of his treatise to seize the opportunity to weigh the emerging and absolutely crucial linkages between economic power and geopolitical behaviour in Japanese policy. In so doing, he may well write a path-breaking study on a key dynamic shaping Asia's future regional order. That he has not fully done so is unfortunate when his evident knowledge and expertise qualifying him to author such a book would do much to advance our understanding of how that order may unfold.

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