

***Beyond Japan: The Dynamics of East Asian Regionalism.* Edited by Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraiishi. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. Softcover: 325pp.**

This book examines the emerging new dynamics of Asian regionalism. The concept of regionalism widely used in the disciplines of international relations (IR), comparative politics, international political economy (IPE), and international economics has several meanings, and is often confusing and contradictory. This book broadens the existing perspectives, suggests a new theoretical mindset, and provides ample empirical data to make a convincing case for Asia's multifaceted regionalism. The theoretical implications can be far reaching by shedding light on the workings of the current regionalization and regionalism. This book delves into the complex interplay of the political, economic, social, cultural and ecological changes in Japan and beyond, which have created a new regionalism that is neither American nor Japanese, but uniquely blended Asian and is informed by the confluence of newly emerging patterns in global trade and finance, as well as Asian middle class social awakening, taking to mass consumerism, rejecting authoritarianism and embracing democratization.

Katzenstein (Chapter 1) sets the stage for regionalization in a comprehensive way. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the first converging and then diverging interests of the United States and Japan in leading East Asia laid the first cornerstone for regionalism. Another catalyst was rapid industrial development, fueled by massive inflows of post-Plaza Accord foreign direct investment (FDI) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. China's challenge to Japan and the United States since the 1990s has revamped the current regionalization process. Non-state actors like multinational corporations (MNCs) from the US, Japan, Korea and Europe (which together take up as much as three fourths of all exports) have defined the regional economy and will continue to do so.

T.J. Pempel (Chapter 2) brings his keen insight to the recent changes in the domestic politics of Japan and explains how they have nuanced Asian regionalism; in Chapter 3, William Kelly and Merry White deftly analyze the current breakdown of Japan's "family-nation" model (and its long-term effect), prompted by a series of societal changes ranging from an aging population to eroding public education system and a million-plus illegal immigrants. H. Richard Friman, Katzenstein, David Leheny, and Nobuo Okawara (Chapter 4)

argue that in spite of Japan's success in economic regionalism, it does not want to "bury" the US-Japan security bilateralism in a multilateral security arrangement which it may not be able to control. The post-9/11 security and counterterrorism measures under the Koizumi government facilitated the US global antiterrorism strategy and at the same time gave opportunities to deal with such internal security issues as smuggling, crime syndicates, money laundering, and other antisocial activities.

Natasha Hamilton-Hart (Chapter 5) argues that Japan's regionalization of its financial system was fraught with missteps. A strategy of finding "quality borrowers" (p. 111) in Southeast and Northeast Asia to offset the mounting losses from the post-bubble non-performing loans at home has netted little. Japan's banking reforms ("re-regulation" in some cases and deregulation in others) have not been widely copied by its neighbours, and future Japanese leadership in the regional financial system remains in doubt. Nakao Munakata (Chapter 6) presents a richly textured analysis of why Asia is moving away from "exclusive" multilateralism and embracing bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs). China, Japan and Korea in a few short years have become the most ardent advocates for trade bilateralism, thus redrawing the boundaries of regionalism. The stalled Doha agreement, the moribund APEC, and the snail-paced AFTA integration set off the FTA race, redolent of sibling competition; also playing a role are the fear of being left behind and diplomatic isolation.

Dieter Ernst (Chapter 7) predicts that Japan's electronics production platforms overseas need to be consolidated with a host of networking alliances with Korean, Chinese, and Taiwanese manufacturers throughout Southeast Asia and in China proper. Will this strategy work? Derek Hall (Chapter 8) tells a fascinating story about how decades of Japanese imports of forestry, agricultural, marine and aquiculture products from Southeast Asia have left irreversible footprints in the ecology of the region. China's insatiable appetite for raw materials will redouble the environmental impact, and the solutions and outcome will have to be regionalized. In Chapter 9, Leheny argues that Japan's pop culture products, supermarkets, department stores, karaoke bars, *sushi* and *tempura*, and even books have made their way deep into the consumption habits of Asia's middle classes, thereby creating a new region wide common cultural identity. Such regionalization can create dire and profound consequences.

In Chapter 10, Takashi Shiraishi concludes that the end of Japan's primacy in "region-making" (p. 241) and the rise of a new

Asian middle class “consciousness” will bring the ongoing fusion impact to bear on regionalism for sometime to come. South Korea and Taiwan have become more assertive in their relations with the United States; this nascent “new nationalism” can be contagious and is a new region-wide phenomenon.

The book’s forte is its proposal to look at regionalism, regionalization and region-making by going beyond the contribution of any single player like Japan, China or the United States, by analysing the enduring and interfacing cross-cultural impacts, and by going beyond the IPE confines of the political and economic universe. But in the process, it has given less than adequate attention to the United States’ contribution. The US is the major investor and importer in Malaysia and Singapore, and to a lesser extent, in Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. 1,500 of the 6,000 MNCs in Singapore are American; twenty per cent of all Malaysia’s exports go to the United States. Japan still values the centrality of the United States in its own and Asian security landscape. With China rising, the bilateral security ties will become only stronger. Singapore has forged comprehensive strategic ties with Washington, months after its signing Asia’s first FTA with the United States. Malaysia’s desire to forge an FTA with the United States is accompanied by growing military collaboration between the two countries. Indonesia has been reinstated to the role of security partner; in spite of growing friendly ties with Beijing, Manila’s military-security ties with the US have been expanding; and Washington persists in pressuring Yangon to open up politically. These are the dimensions that have also deeply textured the process of Asian regionalization and that have coloured the tapestry of regionalism. The fact that the book has not adequately addressed this aspect does not make it any less useful, however.