

Japan and Asia Pacific Integration

by Pekka Korhonen, Routledge, 246 pages, U.K.£50

Japan has played a crucial part in the development of South-East Asia (or the Asia Pacific region), but not much has been written in English about it. Korhonen is a member of the faculty at the remote Finnish University of Jyväskylä and has followed developments in Japan since the Sixties, when he was a visiting research scholar at Tokyo University's Faculty of Law. This book is only one part of his comprehensive attempt at studying Japan's various attempts at regional integration since the middle of the nineteenth century (a study of the period 1945-1968 was published in 1994, also by Routledge, as *Japan and the Pacific Free Trade Area*).

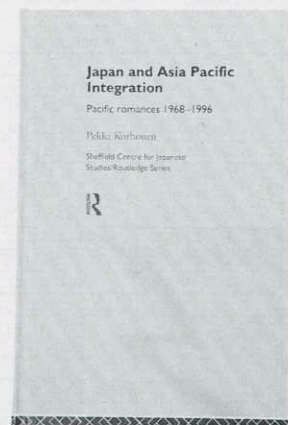
Korhonen's approach is unusual, focusing on the linguistic or rhetorical analysis of texts as the main key. In a study of regional integration, geographic metaphors are crucial because they define so clearly which country belongs to a certain group and which country does not. Various forms of regionalism have been presented during the past thirty years—Pacific, Western Pacific, Asia-Pacific, East Asian and so on. Each represents a different way of combining a number of countries in the region, yet the fascinating point is that each necessitates including Japan as the essential core country.

Korhonen discusses the political rationale of the ideas behind all of the regional organizations and concludes that though American, Australian, Malaysian and other ideas made a contribution, by and large it was Japanese ideas and initiatives that created these organizations.

The Japanese economist Kojima Kiyoshi (1920-) was the originator of the theoretical and policy-oriented reinterpretations of Japan's changing relations with the rest of the world which led to the first attempts at Pacific integration and it was he who was the ideological

father of PAFTAD. Another Japanese economist, Okita Saburo (1914-1993), imaginatively and skillfully shaped Kojima's ideas into politically applicable forms, and was able to take them to Japan's top political leadership for consideration at the appropriate times.

Korhonen provides a detailed discussion of why and how economic values came to be placed above other national values, and of the Japanese "flying geese" theory of development. He examines the implications of the new Japanese self-image of the late 1960s as an economic great power and analyzes the development of a consensus among Japanese economists during the early 1970s that Japan had to become a major investor in the Pacific region, in order to support both its own economic advancement and the development of Asian developing countries. In retrospect, following the recent shock to the market in that part of the world, this may well come to be seen as a historic mistake. In any case, Korhonen then explores the foreign policy initiatives directed toward the countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations during the period 1974-77, culminating in the successful proclamation of the Fukuda Doctrine. Western commentators have usually misunderstood this as consisting of little more than a commitment of U.S.\$1 billion in aid. Instead, Korhonen demonstrates, Japan chose the time and the place carefully for their symbolic significance, in order to articulate publicly for the first time the idea that Japan had finally become a great economic power, that it was the first great economic power to reject not only military power but also economic exploitation, and that it would lead the Asian nations toward becoming industrialized and rich countries if they would accept Japan's offer to teach them and



help them with aid.

Korhonen also discusses the concept of the Pacific Age (which was created by the Japanese political economist Inagaki Manjiro at the end of the nineteenth century), and examines the political drive to establish what is nowadays known as the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC). He then deals with Japan's rise as a global model of economic performance during the 1980s, and the consequent spread of its ideological influence. Finally, he describes the politicization during the 1990s of the original economic initiative, resulting in the establishment of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum (which attempts to integrate the whole Pacific region into a free trade area by the early 21st century) as well as of the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC, which involves merely East Asia). As a competing form of regional integration, Korhonen believes, the EAEC may eventually break the depicted Pacific unity (though it is far more likely to be broken now, in my view, by the differentiated impact of the reversal in the region's economic fortunes).

Japan and Asia Pacific Integration is therefore a fascinating and unusual study of Japan's foreign policy as well as of the evolving structure of international relations in the Pacific region.

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