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meant to live in a home and be a member of a family. On the other hand, though the print world spread domestic cults such as those of household gods, it did not fully determine how the family interpreted those materials in the space of their homes. Following this, Maggie Bickford's "The Symbolic Seasonal Round in House and Palace" focuses on auspicious imagery, which plays a tremendously important role in Chinese visual culture around one particular period of time—the winter solstice and the sequence of nine, nine-day periods between the winter solstice and spring season. Images and rituals of envisioning and charting the nines, bringing warmth and good fortune, pervaded society, from ordinary people up to the emperor himself.

Yunxiang Yan's "Making Room for Intimacy" rounds out the volume, using long-term fieldwork from a village in Heilongjiang to examine how changes in housing design brought about by economic reform and other social changes have accommodated new demands for conjugal independence and privacy. The marked trend toward greater personal space and conjugal privacy breaks dramatically from traditional domestic space, which afforded little personal space and reinforced hierarchal and vertical parent-son relationships over horizontal husband-wife relationships; this is part of a larger transformation of the family from a disciplined corporate group to a private haven. Also included at the end of the book is an extensive glossary of *pinyin* terms, which provides simplified characters and definitions in English, and an extensive list of English and Chinese references.

Overall, this stunningly illustrated volume will be of interest to a wide readership of art historians, architects, curators, collectors, geographers, anthropologists, and other aficionados of Chinese history and culture. Its rather specialized contents make the book inappropriate for use as a high school or undergraduate textbook for a general survey course on China, but instructors will no doubt find its insights onto Chinese culture, spatiality, gender, and the environment, as well as explications of feng shui, lineage, and changing notions of privacy, very useful references for teaching. The remarkable illustrations can give students an unsurpassed "feel" for China as a lived place. Finally, the gorgeous prints and photographs alone are more than reason enough to want to own this volume. ■

**EMILY T. YEH** is Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she teaches the geography of China, environment and development in China, environment and culture, and political ecology. Her research focuses on political ecology, development, and the relationship between society and nature in Tibetan areas of the PRC. Her work has appeared in *The China Quarterly*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, and *Environment and Planning*.

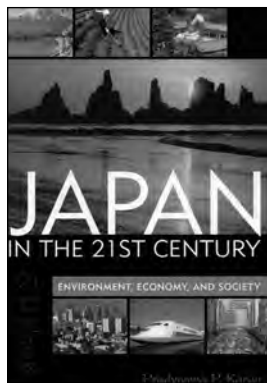
## JAPAN IN THE 21ST CENTURY *Environment, Economy, and Society*

BY PRADYUMNA P. KARAN

CARTOGRAPHY BY DICK GILBREATH

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REVIEWED BY RONALD KALAFSKY



Japan is home to one of the world's largest economies—in fact, the second or third largest, depending on the use of purchasing power parity. It is a center of technology, manufacturing, finance, and, increasingly, an exporter of culture through media such as *anime* and *manga*. Yet interestingly, relatively little has been written about Japan in the past fifteen years for use in academic environments. Remarkably lacking have been wide-ranging geographical texts on this country. With regard to recent studies of Asia, much attention has been deservedly paid to the rapid ascendance of China's economy and its accompanying rise in political influence within many regional and global spheres. It should be mentioned that the popular media and academic research exhaustively covered Japan in the not-too-distant past, especially during the booming 1980s. Still, given the global impact of Japan, this country remains important for instruction and research within a number of disciplines. In *Japan in the 21st Century: Environment, Economy, and Society*, Pradyumna Karan provides a comprehensive overview of Japan across a number of facets, including the physical, political, economic, and cultural realms.

The fourteen-chapter text covers a broad range of topics on Japan. A dominant theme concerns the myriad changes and challenges facing the country. The lead chapter sets the tone immediately by addressing these upheavals. The second chapter provides an inclusive physical geography of Japan, including how the landscape has been impacted by humans over the centuries. Chapter three provides cultural and historical settings for Japan, necessary backgrounds for any study of this country. Ensuing chapters encompass population patterns, including the study of urbanization patterns across the country, without which no study of Japan would be complete. The importance of agriculture throughout Japan's history and its continued influence on the political arena (despite scarce land and employment numbers) are addressed as well.

The last half of the book addresses the political and economic environments in Japan and their impacts. Chapter nine provides

## GEOGRAPHY

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insight on issues within the Japanese political system. Three chapters discuss the economic geography of Japan, including its rapid industrialization and rise to global economic heights. A helpful discussion of the various industrial regions across the country is also provided. Any up-to-date and thorough text on Japan must include a discussion on the challenges facing the country since the collapse of the bubble economy and consequent economic malaise throughout much of the 1990s. Karan systematically examines this issue and discusses its impacts. In chapter twelve, the author offers a look at attempts to navigate through future economic environments in which traditional manufacturing activities are less dominant. The next-to-last chapter briefly examines the environmental impacts of Japanese industrialization and the challenges facing the environment well into the future. This chapter covers an interesting and relevant topic, so perhaps the author could have provided slightly more information on this front. The fourteenth and final chapter examines the myriad challenges facing Japan into the twenty-first century, including economic and demographic concerns. Like the previous chapter, this chapter is almost too short as it presents valuable insights on what faces Japan in the coming decades. At the same time, these brief chapters could also provide the foundations for additional studies on these topics, especially if this text is to be used in an upper-level class setting.

While a majority of the chapters in the book are comprehensive and largely very good, chapter five stands out in particular. This chapter, entitled "Regional Realities," examines the unique individual regions of Japan, such as Kantō and Hokkaidō, for example. As Karan mentions at the beginning of chapter five, many observers err in seeing Japan as a largely homogenous country, whether culturally or topographically. The author emphasizes the ways in which each of Japan's regions is unique: topographically, economically, and across numerous other characteristics. It is worth noting that the text accomplishes this without resorting to rote descriptions of each region. Instead, Karan provides interesting insights into each distinctive region and often compares them with others.

A noteworthy asset of this text are the "Field Reports" in each chapter, which serve as brief case studies and provide timely empirical evidence for material described in the main body of the book. In one instance, four such case studies are found in the chapter on demographic trends. Given the saliency of Japan's current and impending demographic issues, these reports impart needed empirical support to these concerns.

A generous number of maps and photographs are provided throughout this work. The photos are useful for relating points in

the text and would be especially useful in introductory level classes. The maps are simple and straightforward, complementing the text material in most cases. Perhaps finer detail could have been provided on some thematic maps dealing with economic and environmental issues. Overall, the book provides a very good geographical examination of Japan.

The scope of *Japan in the 21ST Century* provides a solid background for further study and is suitable for a number of disciplines, including geography, history, or political science. From an introductory examination of Japan for those with little background in the country, to an advanced undergraduate seminar on East Asia or Japan, this book can be used widely across any university or college curricula. In advanced classes, for example, the book could be coupled with a work such as *Shutting Out the Sun*, by Michael Zielenziger, to examine the seismic cultural shifts occurring in the country. In a high school setting, it is appropriate for advanced classes, given some of the more complex material on politics and economics.

This book is comprehensive, without losing the reader's interest. Moreover, it is a sound reference for both student and instructor. Even the advanced Japan scholar will find new material. *Japan in the 21ST Century* accomplishes the difficult task of creating interrelationships between what appear to be disparate subjects (e.g. the physical environment and the economy). While such wide-ranging geographies of a country can become quickly dated, Karan's work should prove extremely useful in the classroom for a number of years. ■

## REFERENCE

Zielenziger, M. *Shutting Out the Sun: How Japan Created its Own Lost Generation*. New York: Nan A. Talese, 2006.

RONALD KALAFSKY teaches geography at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He is an economic geographer with research interests that encompass the links between manufacturers and location, the role of human capital in industry, and the trade strategies of machinery producers. Current research projects include studies of manufacturers in Japan, Canada, and the Southern US.

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