

## Reviews

GRAHAM P. CHAPMAN, KATHLEEN BAKER (Eds.), *The Changing Geography of Asia*. London, New York: Routledge, 1992. 265 pages, £10.99 (Pb)/£40.00 (Hb). ISBN 0-415-05708-6 (Pb)/0-415-05707-8 (Hb)

Asia is not only spatially the largest and the most populous of the continents; it contains also the greatest diversity of culture and levels of development, ranging from the depressing poverty of densely populated Bangladesh to the economic superpower of Japan. Taking into consideration that the GNP per capita ratio between these two countries is now 108:1, while a mere 30 years ago it was 4:1 (to cite one indicator), it is really "no longer possible simply to write a static geography of this Asia: it is important above all to recognise and understand the ceaseless patterns of change." (p. I)

After an introductory chapter in which the view of Asia prevalent in the literature of the mid-1960s is outlined in broad terms (pp. 1-9), the following chapters 2-8 examine (for the main countries resp. regions) how the situation has changed in the past 25 years (1960-1985), focusing mainly on shifts in demography, (economic) levels of development, political changes and external (international) relations: India (10-43), the other South Asian states of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka (44-73), South-East Asia (74-121), the People's Republic of China (122-159), Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau (160-194), Japan (195-219) and, finally, Siberia, Central Asia and Mongolia (220-248). The final chapter of this reader summarizes these changes and their significance, dwelling on the "two-speed Asia: dramatic change and stagnation" (249-257).

Because of the highly complex character of this huge continent as well as the problem itself, i.e. the (very) different speed of development, naturally each and every contribution can only touch on a fraction of the vast number of problems. Nevertheless, this book, a good (and very rare) example of effective departmental cooperation (of the Department of Geography, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), contains a lot of valuable information regarding development in the South-, Southeast- and East-Asian countries - of which the two

Korean states are not considered. One major aspect of development has been neglected most probably because of the limited space: the different speed of development within the countries concerned - not only within the sectors, but above all within the regions, which is a major cause of regional conflicts and hampers overall development. In the case of the biggest country, PR China, this must be considered as particularly unfortunate. The categorization of "high speed" and "low speed" India (pp. 16ff.) is also too simple, apart from the fact that calling Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan "high speed" and West Bengal "low speed" is very questionable. Within the states too the role of the mega-cities such as Bombay/Maharashtra in promoting very different levels of development has been mostly overlooked - Bangkok/Thailand (pp. 104ff.) being a noteworthy exception.

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MARCEL BEARTH, *Weizen, Waffen und Kredite für den Indischen Subkontinent. Die amerikanische Südasienpolitik unter Präsident Johnson im Dilemma zwischen Indien und Pakistan, 1963-1969.* (Beiträge zur Kolonial- und Überseegeschichte, Bd. 46). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990. 323 pp, DM 64.-. ISBN 3-515-5659-9

"Entanglement" is the title of a cartoon, reproduced as a frontispiece of Bearth's dissertation on U.S. South Asia policy under President Johnson between 1963-1969. The main title of the book indicates what Washington was willing to offer: wheat, weapons and credits for the Indian subcontinent. The subtitle points to the dilemma in which Johnson was caught with regard to India and Pakistan. The cartoon depicts Johnson, entangled between the then South Asian political leaders, grimly trying to spin wool overflowing from the Kashmir basket. If Johnson is replaced by President Clinton and the bobbins renamed after the present prime ministers in India and Pakistan, Narasimha Rao and Benazir Bhutto, the cartoon would illustrate exactly the dilemma Clinton now faces: being entangled in messy Kashmiri wool, under which some hidden nuclear bombs have to be imagined.

Interestingly, Bearth's analysis of Washington's South Asia dilemma in the 1960s serves as a meaningful warning of exaggerated hopes pinned on new U.S. attempts to tackle the still unresolved, and even more complicated, Kashmir conflict in the 1990s. At the same time, it can be read