

Preface

This work is the result of a collective effort by a study group at the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE), to write a book introducing to English readers the main trends of research interest in the field of area studies at the IDE to date, as well as some of the major findings, and the tasks lying ahead.

This work is the first of its type; for although some of the research work done at the IDE has been published in English, it represents only a small portion of the total work that the IDE has produced. Thus this work is an effort to give English readers an idea of what area studies have achieved at the IDE much of which has remained unpublished in English.

The IDE has, since its inception as a statutory research organization in 1960, been a leading research institution in Japan on developing countries. Area studies have always been one of its key concerns, and in the editors' view this is what the late Professor Seiichi Tōbata, the Founder-Director of the IDE, wished. In the following chapters readers will find commentaries on a very substantial portion of the area studies done in Japan since about 1960. Coverage includes not only the works of IDE researchers, but also that by researchers who have been associated with the IDE at one time or another. Moreover, the studies that have come out of the IDE are put within the context of area studies in Japan as a whole.

Chapters 1–10 are arranged by area, from the Korean Peninsula to Latin America. Some areas, such as China, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, are dealt with in two different chapters, one on economic studies and the other on political and social studies, each written by different contributors. The other areas are covered in one chapter each. This is for reasons of convenience and does not signify the comparative importance of certain areas for research purposes.

Chapter 11, the final chapter, deals with some of the problems which

Japanese area specialists are likely to face recurrently in their research, and ends by summing up the objectives of area studies. They are, broadly, to help solve conflicts among national groups, to overcome theories of Asian stagnation, and to sketch scenarios for alternative development.

Chapters 1–10 are not written according to a particular form. Rather it has been left to each contributor to take up what each regards as the significant works in the area being discussed. While the chapter on Korea deals primarily with economic issues related to that country's high growth, the chapters on China between them cover a far wider range of issues including the party system, cultural revolution, and the recent reforms and resulting regional disparities.

Chapter 9 on Africa is unique in that it discusses a total of eight "clusters of issues," starting from micro-level ones, such as tribes or land tenure system, and running up to macro-level ones, such as political parties, democratization, and the state.

These differences in subject matter reflect much more than the research interests of the contributors themselves. They are the combined effect of many factors which have greatly affected research on different areas. It has been difficult, for example, to visit some countries, let alone to do field work there. In some cases there have been no facilities to learn the languages, or there have been very few local researchers or research institutions available for joint work. Sometimes source materials have been inaccessible. Even the backing of the IDE itself may not always be assured because the government may not take an equal amount of interest in all the areas, or in all the countries in an area. Let it be said, however, that the researchers have on the whole tried hard to overcome such difficulties.

Still there is the big question of why so little has been made available in English, at least so far, in spite of all the talk about "internationalization"? Here lies one of our serious weaknesses, and one wonders if this is because of the closed frame of mind among the Japanese or simply a matter of facilities.

However, the editors are happy to say that an increasing number of Japanese studies are relying on the work of scholars from developing countries. This may be apart from the language issue, but it is a sure sign that an interchange of minds is taking place. An additional question will be by what medium this interchange is going to take place in the next quarter of a century, in English or otherwise?

The editors would like to thank all the members of the study group who contributed to this book. In the course of the preparation, Professor Kenzō Horii, one of the contributors, met a sad and premature death in July 1995. The chapter he wrote has been supplemented by Dr. Akira Suehiro. Special

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