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Growth Recurring: Economic Change in World History. by E. L. Jones
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difficult than in the past. For the entire region water management remains the highest priority. Advocates of village self-reliance seem to have overlooked the real nature of the development process. Limited results can be expected from a direct attack on poverty.

None of these conclusions would be at variance with those of a panel of American scholars who met recently to discuss Asian agriculture in the 1990s. However, with the steady decline in world grain prices for more than a decade, policymakers became overly optimistic. Investments in Asian agriculture and irrigation declined sharply in the 1980s. The recent droughts and floods in Asia and the United States have reminded us of our tenuous situation. Etienne's cautionary conclusions, written at a time when Asia was achieving significant self-sufficiency in food-grain production, have been vindicated by recent events.

In summary, this book is valuable because it reflects the first-hand impressions of a scholar who has traveled widely in rural Asia for more than three decades. The attempt to draw these observations into a clear conceptual or theoretical framework is less than satisfactory. However, the conclusions seem very reasonable.

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Growth Recurring: Economic Change in World History. By E. L. JONES. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. xii, 247 pp. $49.95.

This small book tackles a big subject. Eric Jones proposes a new framework for the historical study of economic growth. He rejects the familiar scenario of traditional society (with a strictly limited economic potential) disrupted by the sharp discontinuity of the British industrial revolution, which in turn sets in motion processes of development and diffusion that account for modern industrial society. Jones rejects this on two grounds: a recent revisionist literature denies the sudden and discontinuous character of the first industrial revolution, and the modern rise of East and Southeast Asian economies (not to mention the current, postindustrial developments of the Western economies) cannot be explained as a diffusion from or evolution of that first industrial revolution. Today and today's perception of yesterday combine to call for a new historical framework for the study of economic growth; in this book Jones sets out to provide it.

What if, Jones argues, sustained economic growth was not something impossible before the liberating achievements of the industrial revolution but rather something toward which most societies have almost always been predisposed? Then the question before the economic historian is not what brought about the unique breakthrough in eighteenth-century England (with all its Europocentric implications) but what tended to stymie the inherent bias toward growth in most places most of the time?

Jones's broad and perceptive reading in the economic history of the major Eurasian societies persuades him that in the long run populations rose and economic production at least kept pace. This is prima facie evidence for the ubiquity of extensive growth. He goes on to argue that at various times this extensive growth has bubbled up to constitute intensive growth (i.e., increased per-capita income). It is important to his argument to identify several independent occurrences of intensive growth. The inadequacies of the historical literature make it highly likely that good examples remain undocumented and hence hidden from us, but he offers the examples of Archaic Aegina, the Abbasid Caliphate (ninth century), and Sung China (tenth through thirteenth

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century). These examples of intensive growth were ultimately not sustained, but the two further examples, beginning in early-modern Europe and Tokugawa Japan, were sustained to bring about the institutional and structural changes worthy to be called economic development.

Note that Jones's nomenclature gets along without the terms capitalism and industrialization. Europe's growth happened to feature capitalist industry, but that, he argues, was peculiar to Europe, not fundamental to the general phenomenon of intensive growth.

It should be obvious by now where Jones is leading: away from Weber and Marx, away from Rostow and Wallerstein, toward a world economic history in which the great task is not to celebrate the unique breakthrough (and ask the rest of the world to imitate it) but to understand the widespread negative forces frustrating an equally widespread potential.

What were those obstacles to growth in the past? On this crucial question rests the success of *Growth Recurring*. Jones devotes much of the book to this issue. In his view the frustrated growth of Islam, India, and China had little to do with such oft-cited factors as science, religion, values, or indeed cultural factors in general. Nor does he find European colonialism a significant factor. The discussion of these issues is necessarily brief, and specialists may find his quick dismissals irritating. But this book is a sketch rather than a definitive statement, and he invariably states forthrightly the grounds on which he rejects or accepts as valid an obstacle to growth. He places his trust on the Central Asian invasions or rather on their indirect consequences that strengthened rent-seeking behavior in the polities they touched. And this, finally, reveals what Japan and Western Europe, at the extremities of Eurasia, had in common—privileged political environments in which rent seeking could be kept in check and intensive growth had a fighting chance to emerge.

Does any of this make sense? Before venturing to answer this question we must not forget that the reigning paradigm is rapidly fading under the bright lights of unfolding events and modern scholarship. If reasonableness is a relative concept, the approach sketched out in *Growth Recurring*, or something like it, will appear steadily more reasonable because of the evident failure of its alternative.

For the historian of Asia, Jones's bold and stimulating book provides two challenges. The first, more immediate task is to assess the adequacy of Jones's identification and analysis of the true obstacles to growth in Asian societies; his argument leans heavily on this issue. The second, larger task is to participate in constructing a new inclusive framework for the study of long-term economic change. Eric Jones has written a thought-provoking book that invites historians of Asia and other non-Western societies to join in this project.

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New Tides in the Pacific: Pacific Basin Cooperation and the Big Four (Japan, PRC, USA, USSR). Edited by ROY KIM and HILARY CONROY. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987. xvi, 216 pp. $37.95.

This book treats Japanese, Chinese, Soviet, and U.S. perspectives on what the editors call the Pacific Basin Economic Cooperation (PBEC) movement, an element in the discussion of creating an institutional framework for economic cooperation in the Pacific. The editors pose the central question: are the four Pacific powers prepared to

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