It is ironic that despite the centrality of internationalism in Marx's thought, and despite the emerging reality of a capitalist world-system first theorised by Marx, so much of the scholarly work within the Marxist theoretical framework has remained confined to national traditions. For many years Western scholarly knowledge of Japanese Marx studies was largely confined to the work of Kozo Uno, but now, for the first time, a representative sample of Japanese Marx scholarship has been made available to the Anglophone public. Edited by Hiroshi Uchida, it comprises 14 contributions from a wide range of research interests and maintains a high standard of scholarship throughout. Besides Professor Uchida, only Makoto Itoh and Hiroshi Mizuta have previously been published in English, and it is to be hoped that the publication of this volume will inspire more collaboration in the future.

The principal difficulty in bringing together such a range of perspectives in a single volume is in establishing some sort of thematic relationship, and this is established rather successfully with the emphasis on the relevance of studies within this Marxist theoretical framework for the twenty-first century. Nearly all the authors have responded positively to this theme, and two of the more 'historical' chapters do so in a very suggestive way. Makoto Nishibe, for example, in his chapter on the theory of labour money and its Exchange Trading Systems, shows how such schemes embody the social justice concerns of the early eighteenth century labour money theorists without succumbing to the problems exposed by Marx’s critique of labour money. Koichi Takakusagi’s chapter on Louis Blanc’s associationism reveals a range of options concerning non-oppressive forms of social organisation actively discussed when Marx was developing his socialist theory and certainly relevant for our 'post-modern' times. Takakusagi’s argument that Marx can be viewed as an associationist is a contentious one, but there is certainly a strand of associationist thinking in the Marxist tradition which could fruitfully be revived.

The book is divided into four sections although I find it difficult to see the justification for this. The opening section, "Marx for the Twenty First Century," comprises two wide-ranging chapters, by Kunihiko Uemura and Makoto Itoh. Uemeura argues that the conservative function of nationalism is facing terminal pressure from the development of globalisation, while Itoh's discussion of the conceptualisation of Soviet-type societies concludes with a decisive criticism of the Chinese claims to developing market socialism when its low-tax regime guarantees a run-down public sector. These chapters are very stimulating though not, in principle, different in kind from the five chapters in the second section on "Contemporary Problems in Marx Studies." The third section, "The
Reception of Marx Into Modern Japan" comprises of four chapters, three of which fit the title. It seems to me that the three fascinating contributions, by Hiroshi Mizuta, Akitoshi Suzuki and Makoto Noguchi, would have been ideal for an opening section which contextualised the intellectual trajectory of studies in Japanese political economy. Suzuki's discussion of world-systems analysis and his emphasis on the emergence of world government ties in nicely with Uemura's chapter. The final section, "New Horizons of Marxology," comprises interesting contributions on hermeneutical issues by Takakusagi on associationism, Akihiro Matoba on the the influences on Marx and Engels in writing The Communist Manifesto, and Tadashi Shibuya on the challenges in translating a new edition of The German Ideology.

The chapters in Part Two link in well with issues actively engaged in by western scholars and hopefully presage some fruitful exchanges. Uchida's chapter on Marx's theory of history concerns the nature and function of the state in the development of capitalism and will be of interest to scholars engaged in state theory. Masanori Sasaki's excellent chapter on the importance of the politics of free time for the Marxian emancipatory project will strike a chord with those working in the field established in recent decades by Gorz and Liepietz, and Hideaki's chapter on Marx and the environmental problem has obvious relevance to the work on red-green connections by writers such as Foster, Benton, Grundmann and Hughes. The single chapter on ethics, Daisuke Arie's discussion of Marx and Distributive Justice, identifies an Aristotelian dimension implicit in Marx's approach, an insight which links well with the work of a small number of scholars in the United Kingdom and North America.

In summary, then, this is most welcome volume of high standard work showing the continued relevance of the Marxist theoretical framework in political economy and related areas. It is prefaced by a useful introduction by Terrell Carver, one of the few European Marx scholars to develop links with Japanese scholarship. My only reservation is that what is missing is a discussion of 'agency' or 'transition.' In the last two decades there has been tumultuous social, economic and political change, and, as Wallerstein has pointed out, likely future outcomes are much more difficult to predict at such junctures than in periods of relative stability. Socialists tend to respond in either negative or positive ways. Either they analyse the overwhelming power of the neo-liberal juggernaut and look to ways of mitigating its direst social consequences, or they work on radical alternatives because the future is so uncertain that we must be prepared to take advantage of unpredictable opportunities. There are healthy signs of the latter approach in this volume, but little on the development of social and political forces which may bring the radical alternatives closer to realisation.

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