

THE 21st CENTURY AS WHOSE CENTURY?

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ABSTRACT

Macro-analysis and East-West encounter are shown through consideration of objective yet subjective constructed concepts for the international system and international economy in the 21st century. Three paradigms are considered, namely the 21st century as the 'Pacific Century', as 'China's Century' and as the 'Asian Century'. Overlaps are shown between these three paradigms, as also developments in time, and gradually shift in geographical location. The 'Pacific Century', and its associated Rimspeak, was the paradigm emerging in the late 1970s, knitting together America's West Coast and the Japanese economy. By the late 1980s this was already shifting to talk of the 21st century likely to be an 'Asian Century' model, mark-1, based on the Pacific Asia dynamism shown by the 'Asian Tigers' and Japan. However, the Asian financial crash of 1997-8, and the economic downturn in Japan, meant that such an 'Asian Century' seemed premature as the 21st century arrived. Instead, it was China's economic growth that seemed most evident, and with it the concept of the 21st century as 'China's Century'. However, in turn that has already been modified during the first decade of the century by India's arrival as a rapidly growing economy. Consequently the 21st century as 'China's Century' and as 'India's Century' has been combined into talk of an 'Asian Century', mark-2.