

July 2009

*AEPR Third Anniversary*

## *Targeting a Worldwide Readership*

*An English-language journal specializing in economic policy proposals, the Asian Economic Policy Review (AEPR), compiled by the Japan Center for Economic Research, is now three years old. In June, the seventh issue of the journal examined the subject of “Demographic Change and Asian Dynamics,” looking at dwindling birthrates and aging societies—problems affecting not just Japan but the Asian region as a whole. We hope the somewhat episodic account that follows will give readers a sense of the kind of journal the AEPR aims to become.*

In publishing the AEPR, the Japan Center for Economic Research (JCER) has three aims. Our hope is that the journal will (1) be kept widely by libraries and other research facilities, (2) be cited by large numbers of specialists, and (3) be read around the world.

### ***Goal 1: To be kept by libraries***

Everyone has consulted books or other materials in a public library or company reference room at one time or another. For a writer, there can be no greater pleasure than finding his or her own books or articles listed in a library’s catalogue. No matter how hard one works on a piece of writing, a library’s decision whether or not to buy a copy of the finished manuscript lies beyond the author’s control. The acquisition of a book or journal by a library is a sign that its value has been recognized by an objective third party.



The quality of AEPR depends on the conference where the editorial board members and disussants discuss the manuscripts submitted.

For the Japan Center for Economic Research, working to get the AEPR into as many libraries as possible was even more important and challenging than it is with our regular publications. As a think tank, we publish large numbers of reports, papers, and books. Unlike books that can be assessed on their individual merits, however, a journal needs to persuade a library that it has the lasting value to be worth a long-term subscription.

In addition to the print edition filed away on the physical shelves of the library, it is now also possible for readers to consult the journal electronically on a computer, perhaps printing out only those particular articles that interest them. In either case, being part of a library's collection means that the journal has a chance to catch the attention of large numbers of readers. It is vital to ensure that our journal is the kind of publication that libraries wish to acquire. Recently, electronic subscriptions have been gaining in popularity.

### *Goal 2: To be cited in other works*

An essay only really comes to life when it is read widely and cited by other writers. Citations stand as proof that an article has succeeded in attracting readers' attention. Graduate students are taught to consult sources with the largest number of citations first when they write their own papers.

But how do you know how often an article has been cited? As it happens, specialist services are available that can tell you precisely that. Looking at a journal's "impact factor" makes it possible to see at a glance how many times each article in a given journal has been cited by other authors. Such measures function a little like bestseller lists in the commercial world—in



AEPR is published twice a year.

academia there is intense competition over which articles and journals garner the most attention.

Articles published in the AEPR in 2007–8 have been registered with the Social Sciences Citation Index, and beginning in 2010 our citation statistics will be published by Thomson Reuters. The AEPR's inclusion in these listings after just three years is proof of the level of attention it has attracted.

***Goal 3: To be read worldwide***

In this age of globalization, any attempt to communicate with the wider world must be made in English. The potential readership of anything written in a local language, to say, in Japanese—no matter how well composed or how persuasively argued—is extremely limited. A journal of this kind needs to be edited and published in English.

The AEPR editors (managing editor) are made up of specialists with strong international backgrounds and extensive experience of international conferences. In addition to Professor Takatoshi Ito of the University of Tokyo, Professor Shujiro Urata of Waseda University, and JCER Senior Fellow Akira Kojima, Australian-born Professor Colin McKenzie of Keio University brings his editorial skills to bear on the manuscripts and oversees the production process. (Incidentally, he also speaks fluent Japanese.)

As a result of their efforts, the AEPR enjoys a wide readership not only in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Britain and other European countries but also in China, Thailand, Singapore, India, and Japan. Libraries around the world make up a large proportion of the journal's subscribers.

The quality of the AEPR depends above all on the conference that take place roughly halfway through the production process. This is where the editors and associate editors have a chance to discuss the manuscripts that have been submitted. Based on this feedback, writers will revise their pieces and submit a final version roughly two months later. The discussants' comments are then finalized for publication.

***Such an international conference can be a serious affair, but the conference room is always a lively and stimulating place to be. There are two conferences a year, which normally proceed as described below . . .***



Buffet dinner after a day-long discussion

### *“At Last!” vs “Too Late!”*

Some 20 people take part in the conferences, which typically last from nine in the morning until six in the evening, with a whole day spent reviewing the six manuscripts that have been commissioned for the next issue. Two discussants comment on each of the articles. Nowadays many of the presentations are made using Power Point, and there are often as many as 30 different hand-outs relating to the articles and the presentations under discussion.

It is not unknown for editors and JCER staffs to struggle to assemble all the materials they need in time—and many is the time a member of staff has heaved a late-night sigh of relief as the longed-for materials materialize just in time.

Not that the last-minute arrival of documents is always an occasion for celebration. Just when you think you’ve printed out everything you need and are ready to go, a rush of replacement documents comes in on the morning of the meeting, and you have to start organizing everything all over again.

Overseas participants do not always have time to prepare their comments before boarding the plane, and people have been known to hand in their comments for printing from a Memory Stick just minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin. On one occasion we had hired a conference room in a hotel and there was not enough time to print sufficient copies of all the reference materials before the conference started. We set up a small printer in a corner of the conference room and let it whirl away in the background, churning out documents while the meeting got underway. There were a few startled faces in the room that day, glancing around the room suspiciously and trying to figure out what that strange noise was beneath the sound of discussants’ voices coming over the microphone system.

### *An Auspicious Day?*

Partly because so many of the editorial board are academics, our conferences generally take place in April and October. Not surprisingly, this often means overlapping with wedding receptions, and the guest rooms and conference halls around us are often full

of newly married couples and their guests.

It is a strange feeling to emerge for lunch from a frank discussion of economic policy to find yourself wandering down corridors full of cheerfully dressed young women in festive mood as you make your way to the restaurant. It is like stepping into another world. I tried to explain once to one of our overseas editors that the date of one of our meetings was considered particularly auspicious in Japan, hence all the weddings. He looked back at me incredulously and asked, “What’s so auspicious about it?”

Ironically, the best way for us to ensure that our conferences ran smoothly would probably be to avoid these so-called auspicious days altogether—but of course this is a factor that is only relevant in Japan. Because we have people coming from all over the world, we also need to take Christian and Islamic holidays into account when setting the dates of our conferences.

One member of the team is Mohamed Ariff, who flies in from Malaysia for all our conferences. Once, a conference happened to take place during Ramadan, when Muslims fast during daylight hours. Unable to eat or drink anything until sunset, Ariff sat motionless in the conference room as the rest of us got to our feet and began to drift off for lunch, feeling somewhat guilty about leaving our colleague alone. But he just winked and said, “Don’t worry about me: I’ll stay and keep watch. You go and enjoy your lunch.”

### *The E-mail Tidal Wave*

About two weeks before each conference, a tidal wave of e-mail messages begins to flood the inboxes of everyone involved in producing the AEPR. As well as planning for the upcoming conference, we also have to deal with preparations for the conference that will follow in six months’ time, as well as tying up any last-minute loose ends prior to publication of the issue already discussed at the previous conference.

Our conference in April 2009, for example, was primarily focused on discussing our “United States and East Asia” issue (Vol. 4 Issue 2). But even while we fought to get articles and comments ready for discussion, we also had to come up with writers and subjects for the articles that would appear in the following issue, on “Environment and Climate Change” (Vol. 5 Issue 1), which will be discussed at our next conference this fall. And we were also up against a deadline for the final revisions to the previous issue on “Demographic Change and Asian Dynamics” (Vol. 4 Issue 1), which we had

discussed at our last conference six months earlier.

With all this activity going on at the same time, our managing editor Colin McKenzie must hardly have time to sleep. Certainly his home computer seems to be active throughout the night, sending out messages and updates into the early hours of the morning. Because of the time differences involved, the dead of night is perhaps the best time for exchanging e-mails with colleagues or conference participants overseas.

Even so, the whirlwind of messages starts up again promptly at five the next morning. And after all this, Professor McKenzie sets off to lecture at Keio University. The concept of tiredness seems to be completely alien to him.

When the meeting is over, the JCER staff are finally able to catch their breath after the frantic rush to meet deadlines. But not everyone is ready to rest . . . The day after our conference in April this year, Professor McKenzie was off again, boarding a flight to Mexico. He sometimes seems to zip around the world almost as fast as one of his e-mail messages.

(International and Asian Research Group)

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Issue No.	Title and Subject Summary
Vol.1 Issue 1 (2006 Jun.)	<b>The Rise of China: Its Impacts on Asia and the World</b> Examined the Asian and global impact of China's rapid economic development from a diverse range of perspectives. Considered China's recent economic performance and future prospects and the impact on trade of China's accession to the World Trade Organization.
Vol.1 Issue 2 (2006 Dec.)	<b>Regional Integration in East Asia</b> Contained wide-ranging analysis of the potential for regional economic-based integration in East Asia. As well as examining free trade agreements and international production and distribution networks, this issue also discussed financial cooperation and labor mobility within the region and its impact on regional integration.
Vol.2 Issue 1 (2007 Jun.)	<b>Ten Years After the Asian Crisis: What Have We Learned or Not Learned</b> Ten years on from the Asian financial crisis, this issue looked at the lessons learned and the issues still to be resolved. We analyzed the role played by the International Monetary Fund in rescuing the region from crisis, examining evidence from various countries around the region. A series of essays examined how the crisis affected each country differently.
Vol.2 Issue 2 (2007 Dec.)	<b>Japan: Where To From Here?</b> This issue examined Japan's 15-year-long "lost decade," looking at economic, financial, and industrial policy and suggesting ways ahead for the future. We examined the weak links between free trade agreements and the government's official development assistance policy and the economic stagnation caused by failures of macroeconomic policy.
Vol.3 Issue 1 (2008 Jun.)	<b>Growing Inequalities?</b> A special issue on the inequalities within and between countries in East Asia. In addition to regional analysis of discrepancies between economic growth and the state of healthcare and educational systems, we also looked in detail at the situation in Indonesia and other countries. We also discussed changes in national income since the nineteenth century.
Vol.3 Issue 2 (2008 Dec.)	<b>New India</b> An examination of the continuing rapid growth of India's economy, including the role of financial policy, globalizing corporations, and the future of economic reform.
Vol.4 Issue 1 (2009 Jun.)	<b>Demographic Change and Asian Dynamics</b> An assessment of the impact of demographic change in Asia, including long-term predictions looking ahead to 2050 and approaching the issues from the perspectives of economic growth, asset markets, social security, and social politics.
Vol.4 Issue 2 (2009 Dec.)	<b>United States and East Asia</b>
Vol.5 Issue 1 (2010 Jun.)	<b>Environment and Climate Change</b>

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