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The Journal of Asian Studies

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scrolls, antiques, and architecture, but he also covers kabuki, tourism, forestry, dialects, and office management.

For students of Japanese national character, *Lost Japan* thoroughly pursues such issues as the failure of Japanese collectors to set their sights on Japanese painting, relating artistic taste to political, historical, international, and family forces. Along with this depth of discussion, the reader gets breadth, finding out why Osaka is the best place to get haircuts and how *pachinko* pinball games have replaced meditation. For a more directed criticism, Kerr's next book, *Dogs and Demons*, will expand on his technique of cross-referencing aspects of culture in order to explicate modern Japan: the economy, architecture, film, and medicine. The book at hand, however, presents its last glimpse of beautiful Japan in a discursive analysis, appealing to a general audience as well as to specialists.

DAVID L. MAJOR
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Anticompetitive Practices in Japan: Their Impact on the Performance of Foreign Firms.
By MASAOKI KOTABE and KENT W. WHEELER. Westport, Conn.:
Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996. xv, 208 pp. \$59.95.

Masaaki Kotabe and Kent Wheeler start with an attractive premise. With all of the books written by economists about the degree to which the Japanese market is open or closed (often based on analyses of trade data conducted in academic offices far from Japan), it is high time someone talked to the people who face this market every day: business executives working for foreign firms in Japan. They therefore put at the heart of their book a survey of executives working for 200 U.S. multinationals who were asked to comment on the prevalence and effects of anticompetitive practices in Japan. While the premise is attractive, the book does not measure up to the high expectations generated by this innovative approach.

First, more about the survey. Kotabe and Wheeler's goal was to get at two questions: "(1) Does anticompetitive behavior occur more frequently in Japan than in the United States? And if so, (2) Does the occurrence of anticompetitive behavior in Japan have a negative impact on the performance of American companies marketing manufactured goods in Japan?" (pp. xiv, 15). They therefore sent out a survey to the highest ranking Japan-based officers of the 200-odd members of the Fortune 500 industrials that have operations in Japan. Benefiting from the support they received from the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, they received 131 replies—an impressive response rate.

The survey presented the executives with a list of ten scenarios involving anticompetitive behavior, practices that have been identified as illegal, in principle, under Japan's Anti-Monopoly Law in guidelines issued by the Japan Fair Trade Commission. Included on the list were scenarios involving such behaviors as *refusal to supply*, where an incumbent firm seeks to keep out competitors by threatening to cut off supplies to the distributor or user if the firm handles or purchases supplies from a competing firm, and *retail price maintenance*, where a firm seeking to maintain high prices for its branded products offers inducements such as an agreement to buy back unsold merchandise at the price paid "on the condition that the retailer maintains the manufacturer's suggested retail price" (p. 117). In the survey, the scenarios were

not labeled anticompetitive or illegal and were not even named in the way they are above in order to avoid biasing responses.

The executives were then asked whether, based on the experiences of their firms, these practices occurred more or less frequently in Japan than in the U.S. on a five-point scale. The results were, unfortunately for the authors, quite mixed. When *American* executives of the U.S. multinationals were asked to evaluate the relative prevalence of the ten scenarios, they felt that all ten practices happened more frequently in Japan than in the U.S. (their evaluations were different from the "same level" reply at .05 confidence levels). When *Japanese* executives of U.S. firms were asked the same questions, however, they judged none of the ten scenarios to be more common in Japan than in the U.S. at levels that were statistically significant. The authors label this result "surprising" and spend several pages trying to explain it, but in the end they cannot escape the fact that these mixed results leave readers wondering whether the survey can tell them anything about levels of anticompetitive practice in Japan with any confidence. The one interesting implication of this mixed finding is the way it brings home the challenges facing U.S. and Japanese trade negotiators. If American and Japanese executives working for the same U.S. firms cannot even agree on the relative frequency of these kinds of behavior, how much more challenging it must be to get officials of the opposing governments to agree on questions having to do with the legality and morality of these practices.

While the authors could do nothing to alter the way their respondents replied to their questions and so cannot be faulted too much for the results described above, their failure to explore in a more systematic manner the differences in the *effects* of anticompetitive practices across the ten scenarios was more disappointing because they could have done more with their data in this area. Most of their attention is devoted to the question of whether a variable *aggregating* the effects of all ten scenarios correlates with business performance at statistically significant levels. It does not, and this leaves them with the conclusion that anticompetitive practices seem to have no effect on the performance of U.S. firms in Japan. The variation in the effects of the ten types of behavior as perceived by the executives, however, does reveal some interesting differences: the practice of refusal to supply, for example, was found to be relatively damaging while that of resale price maintenance was not (p. 138). This pattern is not at all surprising given that the authors should have expected that practices that raise prices of Japanese products (such as Shiseido's resale price maintenance efforts) should, if anything, *help* U.S. firms get a foothold in the market by offering cheaper products through distributors frustrated with bullying by Japanese manufacturers. Their findings therefore offer some guidance for U.S. officials who are trying to decide which anticompetitive practices in Japan are most damaging to U.S. trade interests.

LEONARD J. SCHOPPA
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Creating Socialist Women in Japan: Gender, Labour, and Activism, 1900–1937.
By VERA MACKIE. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. x, 252
pp. \$54.95.

For her study on the creation of socialist women, Vera Mackie draws upon an impressive variety of texts: autobiographies, socialist women's newspapers, and fiction published in leftist journals. The seven illustrations, striking graphics taken from