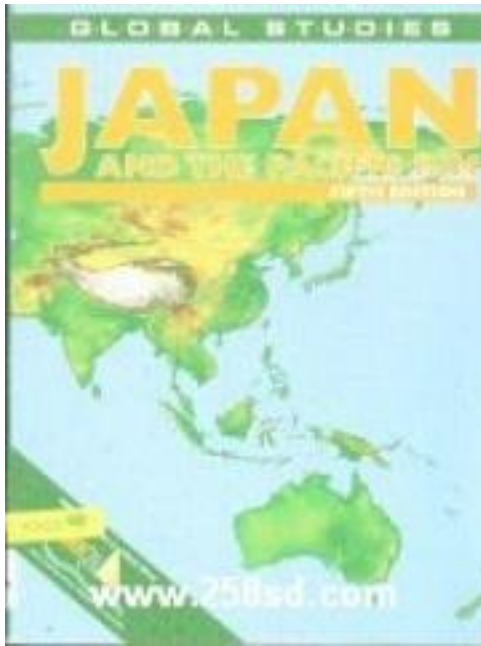


# Global Studies: Japan and the Pacific Rim



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著者:

出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780070249486

WHAT IS THE PACIFIC RIM?<br> The term Pacific Rim as used in this book refers to 2<br> countries or administrative units along or near the Asian side<br> of the Pacific Ocean plus the numerous islands of the Pacific.<br> Together they are home to approximately 30 percent of the<br> world s population and produce about 20 percent of the<br> world s gross national product (GNP).<br> It is not a simple matter to decide which countries to<br> include in a definition of the Pacific Rim. For instance if we<br> were thinking geographically we might include Mexico<br> Chile Canada the United States Russia and numerous other<br> countries that border the Pacific Ocean while eliminating<br> Myanmar (Burma) and Laos since they are not technically on<br> the rim of the Pacific. But our definition and hence our<br> selected inclusions stem from

fairly recent developments in economic and geopolitical power that have affected the countries of Asia and the Pacific in such a way that these formerly disparate regions are now being referred to by international corporate and political leaders as a single bloc. Most people living in the region that we have thus defined do not think of themselves as "Pacific Rimmers." In addition many social scientists particularly cultural anthropologists and comparative sociologists would prefer not to apply a single term to such a culturally and politically and sociologically diverse region. It is true that many of the countries in question share certain cultural influences such as Buddhism and rice cultivation. But these commonalities have not prevented the region from fracturing into dozens of societies often very antagonistic toward one another

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