X not V

Economist

Nov 11, 2010
Flying geese

• Japanese economist Kaname Akamatsu (1930s): “Wild geese fly in orderly ranks forming an inverse V, just as aeroplanes fly in formation.”

• Japan would lead the way. Its neighbors would follow, breaking into new industries as the goose in front graduated out of them.
GDP per capita

- In 2010, according to the IMF, Japan’s income per head will be $33,800; Taiwan’s will be over $34,700.
- GDP per capita (wiki)
These incomes are converted at purchasing-power parities (PPPs).

PPPs are based on a global survey of prices led by the World Bank in 2005.

Calculated at market rates, Japan’s per head income ($42,300) remains far higher than Taiwan’s ($18,300).
• Taiwan’s food costs only half as much as Japan’s
• The survey’s price-checkers did their best to compare like with like. Inevitably the comparisons can be contested.
• Taiwanese food may seem cheap next to Japan’s *sashimi* and *fugu*. But then again, how much would you pay for stinky tofu?
However ...

• If Akamatsu’s theory applies to a country’s industrial mix, ..., Japan is well out in front.
• It is further along in the transition to a service economy, with industry accounting for less than a quarter of its GDP, compared with almost a third for Taiwan.