

Leontief Prize 2005: Ha-Joon Chang
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Remarks by Dr. Neva R. Goodwin, GDAE Co-Director

Our group at the Global Development And Environment Institute has been known, on occasion, to lament that the recent products of an economics education generally lack the breadth and concern for important issues that can be found in some of the profession's more senior members. About a year ago at a GDAE meeting someone asked, "who is the most exciting thinker the profession has turned out in the last 15 years?" Several of us spoke up at once – "Ha-Joon Chang!" and then, in a chorus, "oh, I didn't know you were reading him, too!"

Ha-Joon Chang, Lecturer in Development Studies, Cambridge University, widely inspires excitement among people who care about development – or, to put the matter into more everyday terms, about the future of the human race. I had been reading his edited book, Rethinking Development Economics, while other colleagues were into The Political Economy of Industrial Policy, or the more recent Reclaiming Development. His 2002 book, Kicking Away the Ladder - Development Strategy in Historical Perspective has been translated into four languages, and won the Myrdal Prize, awarded by the European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy. Many other titles on his impressive list of writings have been translated or reprinted. In many parts of the world economists, policy makers and others are energized by Chang's leadership in a radical re-thinking of development strategies.

Ha-Joon Chang informs his work in aid of a better future with a realistic understanding of the past. Going against the a-historical trend in the field, Chang seeks explanations for persistent historical patterns, and distills theories from them – "applying the theories thus constructed to contemporary problems, *taking into account changes in technological, institutional, and political circumstances.*"¹ Drawing on the best available knowledge and theory, he has been re-thinking everything, from policies, to methods, to myths and meanings. We hope that his constructively fresh look at the field of development will percolate out through the whole discipline of economics.

It is our honor to award the Leontief Prize to Ha-Joon Chang.

¹ Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder - Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Chapter 1