

Asian Community, Current Situation of ASEAN Countries and the Relations between
Japan and ASEAN

The First Semester 2018

Courses on Asian Community, One Asia Foundation

For fifth lecture, we invite Director Kazuki Matsuhara from Department of News and Culture, Taipei Office, Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association. The theme of lecture is “Asian Community, Current Situation of ASEAN Countries and the Relations between Japan and ASEAN.” The lecture summary can be divided to three sections as below:

1. Self-introduction, introduction of Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association
2. Asian Community, current situation of ASEAN countries and the relations between Japan and ASEAN

ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, usually shortened as ASEAN) is composed of ten Southeast Asian countries and was set up through “The ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)” in 1967. ASEAN includes multiple countries that have many differences in nation scale, political system, religion, societal culture, etc. Nevertheless, they consider even they are simply the gathering of ten small countries but still can show sense of presence in international society. Thus, the integration is continuously intensified within this region.

ASEAN became Southeast Asian Community in 2015. Economically, they realized high degree of economic growth and their potential of becoming the “center of open and growth” in the world caught the attention of world. Besides, politically it hosts the East Asia Summit (EAS) and plays role of leading regional peace and prosperity. Therefore, to intensify cooperation relations with ASEAN is beneficial for both Japan and Taiwan.

3. Japan-Taiwan Relations

Japan and Taiwan are important partners who share common basic values and close economic tie and people exchanges. Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association considers we should strengthen and consolidate this kind of good Japan-Taiwan relations. Thus, we work on propaganda via SNS to develop interests for Japan and intensify understanding of Japan among Taiwanese.

Before he come to Taiwan, he was dispatch in Japan’s Embassy in ASEAN for

long time. Thus, he is very familiar with current situation of ASEAN. This lecture introduced member countries in ASEAN, organization structure of ASEAN, and important meetings led by ASEAN (for example, EAS and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)). He also introduced the importance of ASEAN. Through introduction by Director Matsuhara, we learn that the trade amounts between Japan and ASEAN are as high as 23.4 trillion Yen (about 8 trillion NT\$). It is very valuable lecture for us who are not familiar with ASEAN.

Ten countries in ASEAN are not big countries and have lots of difference in the nation scale, political system, religion, and societal culture, etc. Indonesia has 263 million population, while Brunei has only 430 thousand population. Singapore's GDP per person is 57 thousand US\$, while Cambodia and Myanmar's GDP per person are 1500 US\$. Nevertheless, they consider even if ASEAN is a gathering of ten small countries, it still create sense of presence in international society. Thus, ASEAN was established in 1967 (5 member countries) and after the end of Cold War the member countries increased to ten countries. Moreover, ASEAN completed its goal to set up Southeast Asian Community. This part is consistent with our course: East Asian Community and Asian Community, which is the goal of One Asia foundation. The formation of ASEAN and Southeast Asian Community is a big step to East Asian Community and Asian Community and it also provide a direction of integration for East Asian Community and Asian Community.

At last, Director Matsuhara introduces three functions of Department of News and Culture, Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association:

1. SNS / Facebook (important tools for policy propaganda)
2. Promote Taiwanese's interests in Japan

Including culture activities (introduce Japan's traditional and modern culture, and provide funding to other group activities) and JENESYS (we invite 80 Taiwanese to visit Japan and dispatch 20 Japanese to Taiwan.)

3. Intensify understanding of Japan among Taiwanese

(1) Support Japanese language education

- support higher education (university/graduate school)
- support secondary education (high school)
- Dispatch Japanese cooperation partner (starts from 2017)

(2) Support study abroad in Japan

- Scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Study abroad in Japan for Taiwanese high school students (starts from 2017)

(3) Support Japan studies (humanity and social science)

- dispatch visiting professor / provide funding for related activities.
- provide funding for scholars who visit Japan for writing research papers.

Moreover, Director Matsuhara also mention that the biggest task for Department of News and Culture, Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association is to explain to the Taiwanese about the safety of food from 5 Prefectures as the food import from 5 Prefectures was banned by Taiwan. (Written by: Chen Shun-Yi)