

*Keynote Address**How to Construct an East Asian Community and the Northeast Asian Economic Subregion?*

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Summary

The discussion within Japan related to the formation of an East Asian Community has been rather low-key. Within it, moreover, an opposing debate has emerged, viewing the formation of an East Asian Community as a means aimed at China's regional hegemony. Undoubtedly China's economic rise is spectacular, and a response along the lines of forming an anti-China front against this cannot be called wise. China herself too, amid the development of closer mutually-dependent global ties, has increased the degree she depends on the outside world. It can be said to be a situation which cannot be judged only from the perspective of old national interests.

In addition China's growth is continuing to widen the contradictions within the country. To solve such a problem also it is thought that China has no choice except to continue to strengthen links with the outside world. The question of an East Asian Community will be connected to how China understands her current circumstances and how she coordinates with others.

As typified by environmental problems, via the development of globalization the importance of regional initiatives has conversely been increasing. Also in the response to major natural disasters regional links are important. To respond to such issues, there is a need to tackle seriously the fostering of the human resources to be responsible for regional cooperation within Asia.

At present what could be called an East Asian Community is ASEAN only. Concerning discussion on a community for East Asia as a whole, there has occurred a clash of two ideas regarding the territorial extent thereof-ASEAN Plus Three (Japan, China, and the ROK) which China advocates, and ASEAN Plus Three Plus Three (Australia, New Zealand, and India) which Japan advocates. In such a situation, while the pushing of moves on overall integration is difficult, in terms of the three countries of Japan, China, and the ROK, I think cooperation is possible in the future, and also has the necessary territorial extent. If these three countries realize a systematic integration, the economic scale thereof will be one of the largest in the world, and ASEAN will probably be added to it. Furthermore it will lead to what is called the Northeast Asian Economic subregion continuing to form links with it.

I think that what Japan should contribute toward the formation of the Northeast Asian Economic subregion, dealing with Russia's natural resources and China's human resources, etc., is the formation of an intellectual network. In that case, not only Tokyo's, but also Niigata's role will be great. I think that the newly established University of Niigata Prefecture will be able to contribute to the formation of such an intellectual network.

From the security aspect, besides the currently ongoing six party talks on the DPRK's nuclear dispute, how about a concept of a regional "Japan Sea Security Forum" which discusses issues on a regional level? Not entrusting security issues to just central governments, but also a continuing deepening of mutual understanding at the regional level is important. The final "Three" of ASEAN Plus Three Plus Three could be Russia, Mongolia and the DPRK.

(The responsibility for the wording of this piece lies with ERINA)

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