

FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to introduce the second issue of the *International Journal of East Asian Studies*. The journal is a tribute to the teaching and research conducted at the Department of East Asian Studies, which is part of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Malaya.

The complexity of and variation in the volume highlights some thought-provoking aspects of East Asian regional development. Seen from an individual's perspective, Khadga K.C's article underscores Kenneth Colgrove's pro-active role in strengthening cultural and educational exchanges between the United States (US) and Japan. Khadga notes that in the end, American confrontation against Communism coloured Colgrove's perspective toward Japanese political history and development. Yet Colgrove's contribution in improving Japan - US relations was invaluable. Similarly, the Malaysian government and its people's attitude towards modern Japan clearly emphasizes the notion of "a friend in need is a friend indeed" in times of happiness and hardship despite past Japanese colonial policies in Malaya. The articles on yen loans and Malaysian responses to the Japanese tsunami victims underline the importance of ongoing bilateral relations. For instance, it is undeniable that yen loans provided by Japan made it possible for Malaysia to develop its energy resources as well as its various industries.

In terms of regional economic growth, Syeda Parnini views China's economic rise as non-threatening. She argues that ASEAN's economic interdependence with China will increase and this has made both parties willing to downplay sensitive issues so as to secure mutual benefits. If economic interdependency is valuable to ASEAN, then Mario Arturo Ruiz Estrada's paper which concludes that the Chinese market is vulnerable to global forces is very concerning as it would have an impact not only on ASEAN-China relations but globally as well. According to Jian Ma, Alias Abdullah and Hajime Kobayashi, China's domestic economy seems to be transforming in that the status of organic paddy rice planting areas are increasing albeit with few challenges. With the support of technology, farmers are each able to build a rice paddy system that allows them to enjoy nutritional and economic benefits that these paddies provide.

In the South Korean case, Lim Pay Loo observes that changes in post-secondary education policies in the 1970s gave prominence to Engineering, Science and Technology related curriculum which supported Park Chung Hee's economic development plans of concentrating on exports and heavy industries. In the long run, these efforts enabled South Korea to achieve rapid economic growth which propelled it to become a developed nation within three decades. However, rapid economic growth brought about a new set of domestic problems such as substantial wage hikes, frequent labor disputes and appreciation of the Korean won led Korean firms to invest overseas. To enhance the competitiveness of Korean firms while improving the labor rights, the Korean government reformed its overseas direct investment policy by encouraging Korean firms to invest overseas. Hence, today, outward foreign direct investments have become a crucial corporate strategy of Korean conglomerates to gain international

competitiveness. However, the growth of South Korean economy inevitably depends on the stability of the Korean peninsula which can partly be achieved through improved US-North Korea relations. At present, Washington has adopted a firm posture of assertiveness to underline US resolve in resisting dealing with a nuclear North Korea. Erwin Tan, through his analysis of the July Crisis of 1914 and the 1938 Sudetenland Crisis posits that the best prospect for ending the current inter-Korean standoff is for the Obama Administration to initiate unofficial dialogue with North Korea. Moving away from economic and security issues, Beatrix Mecsi investigates the extent to which colonial intervention in Korea by Japan influenced and distorted the writings on art in Korea. In particular, she looks at the contributions of Sekino Tadashi and Yanagi Sōetsu in drawing attention to Korean art, archeology and architecture. Not surprisingly, in post independent South Korea, Japanese writings on Korean art were marked by strong anti-Japanese, nationalistic feelings that caused Koreans to ignore most of the works done by these Japanese scholars. In some cases, till the 1980s, any mention of Japanese contributions on Korean art was seen as unpatriotic.

As seen from the various contributions, the volume has included topics and ideas from a broad range of approaches that relate to past and present political, economic and social developments of China, Japan and South Korea. The Department of East Asia is much obliged for these contributions from local as well as international academics. Such contributions augur well for the future of the journal. Finally, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Dr. Asmadi Hassan, Miss Sheila and the rest of the editorial team for their assistance throughout the publication process.

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