

5~ Roundtable 1

*Is Japan Merely a “Proxy Power?”:*

*Kavi Chongkittavorn, Assistant Group Editor, The Nation (Thailand)*

*Yuli Ismartono, Executive Editor, Tempo, English edition (Indonesia)*

*Clement Mesenas, Foreign and Commentary Editor, Today (Singapore)*

*Charles Raj, Editor, Malaysian Business (Malaysia)*

*Moderators: Bambang Harymurti, Editor in Chief, Tempo (Indonesia)*

*Isami Takeda, Professor, Dokkyo University (Japan)*

16~ Roundtable 2

*Rising Consciousness of Being Asian:*

*Japan’s Role in the Context of Japan-U.S. Relations*

*Wakako Hironaka, Member, House of Councillors, National Diet*

*Keizo Takemi, Member, House of Councillors, National Diet*

*Moderator: Akira Iriyama, President, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation*

76~ Appendix: Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

1. Project category

2. Project Title

3. Implementing organization

4. Project funding information

*Projects listed with grey boxes are sub-projects of the preceding colored box’s project.*

## Chairman's Message

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I would like to discuss the meaning of two developments that seem to me to epitomize the world situation in 2003, as well as their relationship to SPF. One is the flames of war that have spread from Afghanistan to Iraq and the endless cycle of violence between Israel and Palestine. The twenty-first century has begun as a “century of warfare.”

The other is the amazing growth of China's economy and the inauguration of a new regime there and the steady economic growth, admittedly not as spectacular as China's, of India, the world's largest political democracy. These two countries, stretching from northern to southern Asia, have more than two billion people between them.

It is said that human history has been without war somewhere on earth for only the briefest periods. In that sense, the start of a “century of warfare” is nothing new. Still, the high proportion of civilian victims, especially civilian casualties, has greatly altered the meaning of warfare. Moreover, I think it can safely be said that warfare in the form of international terrorism and guerrilla war has transformed the concept of security and the approach to crisis management.

SPF has always taken the stance that its comparative advantage lies in elucidation of the chain of cause and effect that leads to the phenomenon of warfare rather than in short-term responses to that phenomenon. We will maintain this stance. We do, however, have a great interest in the changing concept of security. To fully develop what Amartya Sen calls “latent capabilities,” we consider the achievement of human security one of our priorities. The social sciences warn sternly against broadening words' meaning haphazardly or using words in such a way as to stealthily insert a particular bias into their definition. With this in mind, SPF has distanced itself from the debate over the “clash of civilizations” thesis and over “sustainable development.” But we do not believe that in talking about human security we are repeating the errors of that debate.

There is a sense that despite occasional bloody incidents India's political democracy has taken firm root. When we consider India's far from hospitable



social and cultural climate—its myriad local languages, a social system burdened by premodern elements, the persistence of absolute poverty—we can only respect that achievement. When we compare India with China, which has a comparable population, we realize how difficult it must have been.

Some people regard the Chinese economy as a locomotive driving the world economy—and this only 70-odd years since Pearl Buck wrote *The Good Earth*. Even if the present rate of growth is unsustainable, the progress China has made in a little over two generations is nothing short of astounding.

The relationship between the two giants India and China on the one hand and Japan, still an economic giant at the start of the twenty-first century, on the other has enormous implications not only for Asia but also for the world as a whole. When we think of Japan's relations with Asian countries, we tend to focus on economic factors or on relations during World War II, but I believe that limiting consideration to these areas betrays far too shallow an approach.

In approaching this issue, SPF will make the most of the comparative advantage of its location in Japan and in Asia. We also hope that in so doing we will take the first step toward identifying the true characteristics of the so far vague sense of "Asianness."

The time has come to review the Foundation's Operational Guidelines for the Third Midterm Program developed with the benefit of many people's wisdom, and we have begun the task of drawing up the next set of midterm operational guidelines. This time, too, we look forward to suggestions and guidance from a wide array of people.

After more than a century, Article 34 of the Civil Code, which has prescribed—or, rather, distorted—private nonprofit activities in Japan is finally about to be amended. It is still not clear whether this will result, as we hope, in a registration system in place of the rigid bureaucratic oversight that has applied so far, but we, together with our supporters and sympathizers, will keep a close watch in the hope of an amendment that will lead to a richer civil society.

*Setsuya Tabuchi*

# *Japan's Role in an Asian Community*



## *Roundtable 1*

*Is Japan Merely a "Proxy Power?":  
Asian Growth Powered by China, India, and Japan*

## *Roundtable 2*

*Rising Consciousness of Being Asian:*

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*The views and opinions expressed in the following roundtables are those of the individual speakers and do not necessarily reflect those of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.*

# Is Japan Merely a “Proxy Power?”: Asian Growth Powered by

*Kavi Chongkittavorn, Assistant Group Editor, The Nation (Thailand)*

*Yuli Ismartono, Executive Editor, Tempo, English edition (Indonesia)*

*Clement Mesenas, Foreign and Commentary Editor, Today (Singapore)*

*Charles Raj, Editor, Malaysian Business (Malaysia)*

*Moderators: Bambang Harymurti, Editor in Chief, Tempo (Indonesia)*

## How should Asia be defined?

**Isami Takeda:** The main topic of today's discussion is whether it is possible to establish an Asian Community, and whether it is important to do so. And if it is important, why. When people talk about Asia, some are referring only to the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), while others are talking about North Asia, or ASEAN plus 3, or South Asia. I also think we need to talk about the position of China and India within an Asian Community. If we do create an Asian Community, how will China and India be incorporated into the group? I feel that we should discuss Japan's role in an Asian Community, too. Does Japan have a role or not?

**Kavi Chongkittavorn:** I will start with ASEAN, because it is a community with a relatively clear framework. Since 1997, when people talk about an Asian Community, they first talk about ASEAN plus 3. At the time, there was no cooperation, unity, or commonality, so the number 3 was used to represent Japan, China, and Korea. In the past seven years, however, relations have moved ahead to the point where ASEAN plus 3 is seen as an East Asian Community.

When people in London talk about Asia, they are referring to the Far East or South Asia. When people living in Southeast Asia talk about Asia, they may be referring to the 53 countries in the United Nations, and may even include Israel and Kazakhstan if they mean the Asian Games. I don't think you should go that far. Now we have ASEAN plus 3, the so-called East Asian community, and we are comfortable with this. I think Japan and China should be the main pillars of the East Asian community. I believe Japan and China are to Asia what France and Germany are to Europe. These two countries should be the backbone of Asia's future. But they need to work out and come to terms with their relations first.

Whether the East Asian community will include India in the future depends on many factors. India will become a part of Asia only when it is ready to do so, not when the rest of Asia is ready to have it become a part of Asia. In other words, you can't go looking for India, you have to wait until India comes to you. In 1991 India decided that it was going to reach out to Southeast Asia. In terms of security, India is already a part of the ASEAN



### **Kavi Chongkittavorn**

*Kavi Chongkittavorn is assistant group editor of the Nation Group as well as an editorial writer and columnist for the Nation, one of Thailand's leading English-language newspapers. He is among the sharpest critics of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's government. Before joining the Nation's editorial staff he was a foreign correspondent for the paper in Hanoi and then worked in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations secretariat. He has studied in Japan and the United States, and is among the journalists in ASEAN countries with the richest overseas experience. He has served as president of the Thai Journalists Association and is now chairperson of the Southeast Asian Press Alliance.*

Regional Forum (ARF), but it is not yet integrated economically. It is only halfway integrated, because it is not part of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum or the Asia-Europe Meeting. India is a dialogue partner of ASEAN.

You should define Asia in whatever way you are comfortable with. If Asia means East Asia and you are comfortable with those 13 members, that is fine. And if India joins, saying it is also part of Asia, that is fine too. I think there is an advantage in using ASEAN, since it has a clear framework. I think credit should be given to ASEAN for linking China, Japan, and India, especially in the past few years. The main pillars are still China and Japan. Unless India becomes fully involved in economic cooperation and integration in Asia, the sense of "Asianness" will not come. That is not say that India is not part of Asia. Indian culture is one of the world's oldest. India is a continent in itself. And, as I mentioned earlier, the time will come when India is ready to become a part of Asia, not the other way around.

You shouldn't simply define Asia in terms of geographical location, but should also take into account how a nation is cooperating and interacting with other nations in the region. For example, Mongolia does not feel East Asian at all. It is only in the past 10 years that it has switched from socialism to capitalism with democratic institutions. In more ways than one, India feels much more East Asian because of its cultural influence and aspirations in the ASEAN region than Mongolia. But Mongolia has been a member of the ARF for much longer than India. India, however, has moved quickly, and has now also concluded the Treaty of Amity in Southeast Asia (TAC), whereas Japan, which has maintained close relations with ASEAN, did not extend any confidence-building measures until December last year, when the Japanese government finally decided to conclude TAC. Japan thought the economic cooperation it had been extending since 1977 would be sufficient in building confidence between Japan and the rest of Asia, but that is very hollow, what they call checkbook diplomacy.

In terms of security, since ASEAN still views Japan as the front office for America, every time Japan says something, ASEAN takes it as American strategy and policy. But when China says something, ASEAN accepts it as China's own views. The same is true of India. When India says something, we think it is expressing its own views. So Japan has a problem here. Japan

is the richest and most advanced country in Asia, but it has been driven away from ASEAN. To bring Japan back to ASEAN, Japan must stop wandering around and get a clear vision of itself and its own future role. To that end, consultation with ASEAN countries and other countries is crucial. I think Japan does have a clearer view of what it wants than it did in the past. For example, Japan wants to play an active role in peacekeeping and bring about more awareness of human security. I think an increased role in peacekeeping by Japan will be beneficial to ASEAN. But this has never been clearly laid down. Japan keeps hiding it because of its historical baggage.

**Takeda:** Yes, we always try to keep a low profile. And we often work with the United States, as a proxy for the United States.

**Chongkittavorn:** “Proxy for the United States” is a good way of putting it. Japan needs to be more independent, not independent like a runaway horse, but more independent on matters concerning it, such as ASEAN or Asia. Japan should not be a wholesaler of U.S. policy. Japan is now going out and searching for an appropriate role by asking people, “What do you want us to do?” You will never get an answer this way because ASEAN countries have different experiences with Japan.

Japan has many weaknesses in competing in this globalized world. I will give you just one example. Japan has not yet decided whether to use English as an official language, while China has a very clear view that English will be the second official language. Why can't Japan make English its second official language? Can you name even one English newspaper in Japan that has influence outside Japan?

**Takeda:** Since English media is one of Japan's weaknesses, I think that the creation of *AsiaViews*\* and the dissemination of information in English will send out a message. Networking in the ASEAN region will be quite valuable and will link Japan to the ASEAN community.

Japan has a very treaty-oriented way of thinking. And there is the view that all treaties have to be logically justified as well as interlinked. If we join one treaty, we need to change other treaties. ASEAN's approach, by contrast, is very strategic. Now ASEAN's strategic thinking and Japan's treaty-oriented thinking are coming together. I think that with the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting of last December we stepped into a new era.

**Chongkittavorn:** Actually, Japan should have done that 10 years ago. In



### **Isami Takeda**

*Isami Takeda is professor of international relations at Dokkyo University and lecturer at the University of Tokyo. He was educated at Dokkyo University (B.A.), Sophia University (M.A.), and the University of Sydney (Ph.D.), and has also studied at the University of London. He is the author of *Politics of Migration, Refugees, and Foreign Aid (in Japanese)*, which won the Asia-Pacific Prize. He has been a member of program committees of the Japan Foundation, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, and the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper. He participates in many Asian media networks, including the online magazine AsiaViews, where he is an editorial advisor. He has been a member of the steering committee of the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund since 1998.*

1992, when ASEAN invited Japan to do so, Japan never thought of ASEAN as a strategic partner, while China always considered ASEAN a strategic partner. Japan began to consider ASEAN a strategic partner only after China won ASEAN's hearts and minds. You have to remember that in 1995 ASEAN treated China as its number-one enemy because of the dispute over Mischief Reef in the Philippines. ASEAN condemned the clash over the resource-rich island. How come the situation with China has been turned around in the past decade, while Japan has remained far behind?

**Takeda:** Around that time, Japan created the ARF. The first initiative was taken by Japan. You said that Japan never considered ASEAN a strategic partner, but that is not true. Japan had ideas, but could not implement them as smoothly as it would have liked to.

**Chongkittavorn:** Japan had ideas but never put them into action. China, on the other hand, took action.

**Bambang Harymurti:** I see a problem with how we are all thinking nationally. For me, strategy should be more important. Because of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its immigration policy, America has a steady supply of cheap labor. Europe, with Eastern Europe joining the European Union (EU), also has a steady supply of cheap labor. Japan is in need of labor not only from ASEAN but also from China and India. So instead of pitting Japan against China, we should try and think how China and Japan can help each other to our benefit.

**Chongkittavorn:** But it is extremely difficult. You cannot have your cake and eat it too. You have to be realistic. The best way is to make sure that both Japan and China can manage their relations in a way that does not disrupt stability and prosperity in the region. For example, in Europe France and Germany have managed their relations well. It is also good that India has come into play, because it makes India more dynamic.

**Harymurti:** And makes it easier for Japan to deal with China.

**Takeda:** A major issue for Japan is how to dance with China. Dancing with China also means dancing with ASEAN and India. We need other partners, that is, ASEAN and India, in order to dance with China. That is the only way Japan can dance with China.

**Chongkittavorn:** Japan has much better resources and can dance with India and ASEAN, because both countries are democratic. It is a good

**Bambang Harymurti**

*Bambang Harymurti is editor in chief of the Tempo Group, which includes Indonesia's leading upmarket newsmagazine, Tempo. After studying in the United States, he became Tempo's Washington, D.C., correspondent before returning to Indonesia. When the Suharto regime shut down Tempo, he and the magazine's founder, Goenawan Mohamad, vowed to resurrect it. After becoming editor in chief, he launched the daily newspaper Koran Tempo and the English-language edition of Tempo. Valued for their accurate and up-to-the-minute coverage, both are frequently cited*



foundation to work from. Japan should be more forward looking and have the courage to initiate policies in relation to ASEAN.

I have said enough. I am sorry. I did not mean to dominate the discussion. I just needed to rush because I have to leave to catch a plane.

**Takeda:** I want to ask one last question. What is your definition of an Asian Community?

**Chongkittavorn:** I think that an Asian Community is very important. It means that China, Japan, and the other Asian countries are in full cooperative mode in providing an economic engine and also a base for security. That would be my definition of an Asian Community.

**Takeda:** Do you see ASEAN as being positioned in the center of an Asian Community?

**Chongkittavorn:** It's centrally positioned because of its geographical location. As you know, it is sandwiched between East Asia and South Asia.

**Takeda:** Can you imagine what an Asian Community will be like in five years' time? Ten years' time?

**Chongkittavorn:** I think that if Japan continues to have similar dilemmas, the Asian Community will develop with China at its center. India will also play a part. Japan will just belong to the Group of Eight. Really, Japan has always been treated as part of the first world anyway. China's biggest strength is that it can say, "We are like you. We will protect you."

**Takeda:** But China is not like you, that is, ASEAN.

**Chongkittavorn:** The irony is that deep in its heart, ASEAN is afraid of China, but on the surface, they are best friends.

### **Why is an Asian Community necessary?**

**Clement Mesenas:** Let me deal with this issue from a historical perspective. About 20 years ago Singapore had a very clear "Look East" policy. And by "Look East" we meant "Look toward Japan." Japan to us defined everything that was modern and progressive. If you wanted to succeed in the world, you had to emulate Japan. Then China came into the picture. At one time we were afraid of China. Our passports would not allow us to go to China unless we had special permission. All this has changed because of the economy. We forgot political ideology and embraced China very quickly,



### **Clement Mesenas**

*Clement Mesenas is Foreign and Commentary Editor of Today, a free English-language daily newspaper published in Singapore. He has a great deal of experience in English-language media in the Arab Middle East, where he was Managing Editor of Kuwait Times and then Deputy Editor, Gulf News, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Before leaving Singapore to work in the Gulf, he was Chief Sub-Editor of the Straits Times. On his return to Singapore, he played a role in the development of Today, which relies entirely on advertising revenue. At present Today is second only to the Straits Times in circulation. It is available free in airports, subway stations, bus terminals, and selected homes.*

considering that China is our complete antithesis in terms of political ideology, Singapore being a democracy. But we seem to have forgotten all that to put business first.

Japan has been sidelined. Nobody thinks of Japan as a role model. Instead people look toward China and learn the Chinese language. We say we learn Chinese because we want to do business with China. That is not to say that this is what all of us believe, but it is the way to economic survival. Everybody says that survival now means that you have to be linked to China. For some reason everything is so China-centric. India did not come into the picture. Singaporeans somehow always considered India a backward country. But India has opened our eyes, and people are now thinking about using India as a balancing act.

**Takeda:** My impression is that India never showed any serious interest in Southeast Asia until recently. But in the past 10 years this situation has been gradually changing. Especially in the past 5 years there has been a new “Look East” policy in India. So ASEAN is now in a position to welcome or invite India into the group.

**Charles Raj:** Even in Malaysia, I think the feeling is that there is more cooperation. There is also more migration of labor. We have been getting a large influx of labor from India. So the balance of economic power is slowly changing. China has been sucking up the majority of foreign direct investment up until now, but I think that in the future China and India will both see a lot of foreign investment, and India may even surpass China in this area. Perhaps now and the next few years are China’s time, but after that it will be India’s time. It will help that Indians are highly proficient in English.

I don’t know about the other ASEAN countries, but in Malaysia, Japanese influence is slowly but surely declining. The United States is still the number-one investor in Malaysia, followed by Singapore. Japanese investment in Malaysia is on the decline.

**Harymurti:** What about the basic question? Why do we need an Asian Community?

**Raj:** We need Asianness to counter Europe and the United States.

**Takeda:** I like that idea.

**Harymurti:** Who will be the France and Germany of Asia? India and China? Or Japan?

### **Charles Raj**

*Charles Raj is editor of Malaysian Business, Malaysia's premier business magazine. He went into journalism upon returning from studies in Britain. He first worked with The Diplomat magazine as a writer and later joined the New Straits Times as a business writer. He then moved to Malaysian Business which is today published by Berita Publishing Sdn. Bhd., a publisher of several leading magazines ranging from lifestyle to travel.*



**Raj:** I think it will be China.

**Harymurti:** Only one power, as in the Americas? Or two powers, as in Europe? Perhaps Asia will have three: India, China, and Japan.

**Raj:** At the moment, Japan is still there.

**Takeda:** I think Japan will not be able to maintain the high production level of 20 or 30 years ago. We are now downsizing. The population is declining and shifting to new industries, so there is no way we can maintain the same level of productivity as 20 years ago. Japan needs to move ahead, but it is too slow to adjust. Singapore is always very quick.

**Raj:** But there are still opportunities for Japan in the less developed ASEAN countries. Japan used to invest a lot in the form of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Asia. Perhaps it can play a similar role in the less developed ASEAN countries.

**Takeda:** Yes. And we need a very clear target in doing it. Once upon a time we used to like to play a global role. But now we must redefine everything because our resources are limited. So there needs to be a greater focus. As far as geopolitics is concerned, I think India plays quite an important role in Japanese relations with China. As I said earlier, in order to dance with China, Japan needs other partners: Korea, ASEAN, India. Do you have a clear picture of what an Asian Community will be like in the future?

**Raj:** The way I see it, it will be more China and India and not so much Japan. As long as Japan is aligned so strongly with the United States, Japan probably won't be playing an active part in an Asian Community, due to political differences and so on.

**Harymurti:** I agree. The reason India is interested in joining an Asian Community is that although it is big in size, Pakistan is a U.S. interest. China is also an enemy. So the only direction India can go is toward ASEAN. It can't go to Japan because of U.S. interests. It feels surrounded by U.S. interests: Pakistan, China, Japan.

**Raj:** The divide seems to be there, because when Malaysia proposed the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC), the United States was against it, saying that APEC already existed. Japan did not support the EAEC. It was later found out that the United States had put pressure on Japan not to agree to its formation.

**Harymurti:** The question is whether Japan would like to remain an

### **Yuli Ismartono**

*Yuli Ismartono is executive editor of the English-language edition of Tempo, Indonesia's leading upmarket newsmagazine. She is also managing editor of the online magazine AsiaViews, launched in March 2004. After returning from studies at the University of Delhi and Syracuse University, she became a reporter for a variety of Indonesian media outlets, including the periodicals Prisma and the Indonesian Observer. After working for Tempo as a foreign correspondent in Bangkok, she helped launch the magazine's English-language*



implementer of the Washington consensus or become an independent nation.

**Takeda:** I think many people believe we are destined to live together with the United States.

**Harymurti:** But you feel at odds now because the United States seems to want to live not only with Japan but also with China.

**Yuli Ismartono:** But is this actually a sentiment in Japan right now?

**Takeda:** On what point?

**Ismartono:** On the point that Japan feels a little betrayed by the United States because the United States is paying so much attention to China.

**Takeda:** Gradually. It seems to me that the United States always tries to please Japan. High-ranking U.S. officials come to Japan and tell us how important Japan is, and this makes us happy. On the other hand, there is the reality that the United States is strengthening its ties with China. So far Japan is just accepting this. But we have to prepare for the next phase. If the U.S. drive to China becomes too aggressive, maybe Japan will feel uneasy about that. At this moment there is not too much uneasiness.

### **What role can Japan play in Asia?**

**Harymurti:** How do you define the Japanese role in the big picture? What role do you see Japan playing in Asia?

**Raj:** Japan should play a more active economic role. Japan should step up its economic cooperation in Asia if it wants to be treated as a partner. Aside from India and China, Japan was the last to sign the TAC. So I think there is a great reluctance on Japan's part to play a greater role.

**Takeda:** I want to ask you about the future of ASEAN. When thinking about an Asian Community, we also need to reconsider the definition of ASEAN. ASEAN today is not the same ASEAN as 20 or even 10 years ago. I don't know if it is more powerful now or less powerful. Last year ASEAN adopted three community concepts: security, economy, and culture. And there were some disagreements when the concepts were drawn up. Singapore proposed an economic community, Indonesia proposed a security community, and I think there was opposition to Indonesia's proposal. So on the surface ASEAN may be united as a single Asian Community in Southeast Asia, but it

may not be so in reality. Would you compare ASEAN today with ASEAN 20 years ago? And give us some idea about the future of ASEAN?

**Raj:** In the early days, ASEAN was concerned not so much with economics but rather more with security issues. Its aim was to promote peace, freedom, and neutrality. But now with the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), ASEAN has made a shift toward economics. It's a large community—as big as the EU.

**Harymurti:** All modern nations consist of three pillars: state, market, and civil society. With ASEAN, I think, government-to-government relations are already pretty well established, and we are making strides in terms of markets with AFTA, but then we are left with the difficult task of promoting relations among civil societies. I think that this is a highly complex area and that this is where Japan can play an important role. It can facilitate interaction among various ASEAN civil society leaders. ASEAN cannot link its civil society organizations and leaders by itself. For example, if Malaysia and Indonesia, which are primarily Malay societies, were to work together, it would infuriate Singapore. So there are elements of distrust in Asia in regard to uniting as one community.

I think many Asian nations, even Malaysia, look at Japan's modernization, beginning with the Meiji Restoration of 1868, with respect. In Singapore, at least the older generation does. The elite in Singapore uses Japan as a shield whenever it is under pressure from the West. Now it has also started to use China, but in terms of battling cultural hegemony from the West, Japan is the better role model. So I think Japan still plays a big role here. Of course, you still have to overcome the issue of World War II. Germany has been able to close that chapter of its history, but Japan has been slow in doing so. Many people are still in denial. In order for Japan to play a similar role to that which Germany is playing in Europe, it has to close that chapter.

**Takeda:** Yes. That is always a problem. So if we want to establish an Asian Community, we need a commonality. In Europe this commonality is human rights. Singapore is very good at surviving in this part of the world, and also very good at creating visions for the future. Singapore is also very flexible. It is always fine tuning. If the wind changes direction, Singapore changes direction with the wind. So I would like to ask our representative from Singapore to tell us what Singapore's vision of an ideal Asian Community would be.

**Mesenas:** I like the word “flexibility.” “Adjustment” is another good word. I think one change will be that the younger generation will demand flexibility. Whether we like it or not, if there is no change, there will be some kind of revolution with the younger generation. Either a revolution or total disregard of the older generation and its so-called Asian values. The younger generation feels more universal, having traveled, and having seen prospects for an even better life in other countries. Singapore faces great difficulty in retaining its young people. We must give way to the young. There is no point in telling members of our younger generation that the future of the country rests on their shoulders without giving them the responsibility and accepting that they are also able to think.

We started off as a bloc, for survival and to stop communism. But over the years levels of development have differed, so there is now economic disparity among the various members of ASEAN. Will we be able to have the confidence to invest in the less developed countries, or the countries that are not developing as rapidly as others? I think Singapore needs to invest, but whether it has the confidence to do so is another matter. Our hope is that the better-off members of ASEAN will have more confidence in investing in ASEAN instead of going all the way to China.

**Takeda:** Now I would like to ask Ms. Ismartono to comment on the Singapore model.

**Ismartono:** I think it would be a mistake to apply the Singapore model to Indonesia. Indonesia is the most pluralistic country in the region. I don’t think any one model will apply to Indonesia. It is the kind of country that will have to find its own identity, perhaps borrowing from various models, not necessarily from the region. We are not like the Filipinos, and not like the Thais or the Singaporeans. Perhaps we are closest to the Malaysians. We would look for similarities with other nations, but I find from my travels that Indonesia is so different from the other countries.

**Takeda:** But Indonesia was a major player in forming ASEAN. Without Indonesia there is no ASEAN.

**Ismartono:** Because of our size and our history, we have been leading the group ever since independence. But as far as capability is concerned, I think we are lagging behind, and we have no one to blame but ourselves. So we have a lot of introspection and catching up to do. That said, we are doing this



right now. People forget that we are such a big country. We are overpopulated, and this magnifies our problems. We face the same kinds of problems as other countries, but we are dragged down by the sheer size of our population, and therefore everything takes longer to solve.

**Takeda:** Given all the problems you mentioned, why does Indonesia have very good media like *Tempo*? Indonesia has a complex society, is overpopulated and facing lots of challenges, but you have very good media. Many people in the ASEAN region have great respect for *Tempo*.

**Ismartono:** I think the character of the media, this revolutionary spirit, also comes historically, from the time when we fought the Dutch. I don't think that anywhere else in Southeast Asia did anybody fight so furiously and hard to gain independence, and that has become part of our psyche or mind-set. We always struggle. We struggle against poverty, we struggle against oppression, and early on, even the journalists were fighting, were part of the revolution in Indonesia, and this is the legacy that they gave to us.

**Takeda:** We have had a good discussion. We now need a conclusion.

**Harymurti:** Here I will try to be a good cochairman. The reason we need an Asian Community is that there is a NAFTA and there is an EU and we don't want to be seen as any less. As to why it's important, it's because it's about our identity. As to whether it's possible, the strategic point is how to make China, Japan, and India into locomotives that will bring us prosperity, instead of three countries competing with one another and causing us loss. How do we align them so that we don't have one or two countries dominating, as with the United States and NAFTA, and Germany and France in the EU? Maybe there will be three, China, Japan, and India, as equal but different leaders. Those three countries are going to be the locomotives of Asia, and as long as those three locomotives are going in the same direction, it's going to be to our advantage. The moment they begin going in different directions, something has to be done about it. I think Japan can be the bridge between China and India because there is no other country that can play that role.

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Note:

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# Rising Consciousness of Being Asian: Japan's Role in the Context of Japan-U.S.

*Wakako Hironaka, Member, House of Councillors, National Diet*

*Keizo Takemi, Member, House of Councillors, National Diet*

*Moderator: Akira Iriyama, President, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation*

## *U.S. military power is essential to stable peace in Asia*

**Akira Iriyama:** Recently Professor Isami Takeda of Dokkyo University and five Asian journalists discussed the theme of an Asian Community. Their harsh view was that Japan merely does the United States' bidding, that of course an Asian Community is necessary and there's a clear willingness to move toward its formation, but at present other Asian countries are looking only at China. Today I would like to ask you two, as internationally oriented parliamentarians, what you think about Japan's lack of leadership, the meaning an Asian Community would have for Japan, and the direction Japan should take.

**Keizo Takemi:** We can't think about an image of Asia in the future as a comprehensive community without considering the military dimension. China's political, economic, and military influence is bound to expand. The challenge for the future is how to incorporate China into the Asian order as a whole and build a framework that enables China to enjoy peace and stability with other Asian countries. But it will be hard for Japan and other Asian countries alone to get China, which is expected to engage in the same sort of unilateral behavior as the United States, to act responsibly as a stabilizing force in Asia. The United States is indispensable as a counterweight.

In that sense, the Japan-U.S. alliance, based on the Japan-U.S. security treaty, is necessary to maintain America's military *raison d'être* in Asia. On that basis, I think, we should devise a plan for maintaining the balance of power, including military power, for the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. Asian countries' political and economic interests don't always coincide with those of the United States. We need to build a framework in the region that can protect Asia's own interests and claims while accepting the United States as a force for stability in the medium and long term. Unless this is firmly established, it seems to me, anti-American sentiment in Asia, including Japan, will bubble up, and that will lessen the U.S. presence in Asia and cause the basic line of a stable order to crumble.

**Wakako Hironaka:** I read the Asian journalists' roundtable with great interest. It seemed to me that they are contemplating a community that doesn't take the United States into consideration. I was also bothered by

statements indicating that they don't expect any Japanese leadership. Asia will become an ever greater presence in the world in terms of both population and scale of economic activities. Whether this "Asia" can strengthen a common identity so as to balance the enlarged European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and increase its political and economic clout is behind the present heightened interest in the idea of an East Asian Community, I think. Meanwhile, it's because Japan has put so much emphasis on its relationship with the United States for the sake of its own economic security, after as well as during the cold war, that it isn't taking or can't take enough of an initiative amid this global trend. As shown by the Nye-Armitage report, America sees Japan as a forward base in its post-cold war strategy for the Asia-Pacific region, encompassing Northeast Asia, the ASEAN countries, India, and the Middle East, incorporating Japan into that strategy on the basis of the Japan-U.S. security treaty.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, since his inauguration in 1981, had expressed the hope that Japan would play a political as well as an economic leadership role in his "Look East" policy and his plan for an East Asian Economic Caucus, but Japan was unable to respond. At the time of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, too, possibly out of deference to the United States, Japan couldn't exercise adequate initiative. And more recently, partly because of domestic circumstances, Japan's presence on the international stage has diminished. Many Japanese feel frustration over this.

### *How can Japan exercise its distinctiveness?*

**Iriyama:** I think the reality is that for some time to come we must take the U.S. presence, or its ability to maintain security, as a given, especially in North and East Asia. But we often hear arguments that Japan must exercise distinctiveness in its relations with the United States and its foreign policy toward Asia.

**Takemi:** Yes. As I said earlier, U.S. military power is essential to prevent the power balance in Asia as a whole from crumbling. That's why the Japan-U.S. alliance is fundamental to Japan's medium- and long-term foreign policy. This is my basic thinking. The question is whether, while upholding that framework, Japan can establish a foundation on which it can conduct an independent foreign policy rather than simply act as a U.S. vassal. This is a problem that we should think of as a complex equation; we can't solve it by linear thinking. Accepting this, Japan still has plenty of room to continue playing an important economic role in Asia. It also has the strength to do so. Japan should think about how it can project its presence in Asia as a whole again and, while safeguarding Japan's own interests, help Asia as serve as a counterweight to the EU and other regions and sustain its growth.

I'm in favor of the idea of an Asian Community, but my honest feeling is that the conditions aren't yet ripe. Take economic policy; right now all Asian countries are trying to conclude bilateral free trade agreements (FTA) or



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trade agreements with a specific region. But economic policy always entails extremely complex political bargaining.

For example, the Japanese government is negotiating an FTA with South Korea, but China also wants to begin negotiating an FTA with South Korea. In doing so, China will lean on South Korea to negotiate with China first and then take its time negotiating with Japan. FTAs are bilateral trade agreements entered into to supplement the World Trade Organization (WTO) in this transitional period in which the WTO framework remains incomplete. Properly speaking, instead of asserting that Japan or China should be first, both countries, while continuing bilateral negotiations, should think of this process as part of putting in place the conditions for a new free trade framework for Asia as a whole. In reality, though, nations approach FTA negotiations only in terms of their own interests, and this won't lead to the creation of an Asian economic community.

**Hironaka:** It took a lengthy process, calling for a great deal of patience and perseverance, to create the EU. It began modestly, with economic cooperation in coal and steel, and gradually expanded. Because I was one of the founding members of GLOBE (Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment), established shortly after the end of the cold war, it was with great expectations that I watched the process by which the European Parliament gradually strengthened and moved toward greater political integration. It seems to me, however, that such initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region have always been nipped in the bud. Of course I realize that countries have varying circumstances, but still . . .

In regard to the "Look East" policy, Japan shrank from taking the initiative in responding to Mahathir's call, dragged down by some in the foreign policy establishment who argued that Japan would be fine if it just maintained good relations with the West. I've also heard that in regard to the formation of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sat on its hands, so Australia and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry took the initiative. More recently, China has begun to take the initiative in the international community with the Asia-Pacific region in mind, and Japan has finally started to move with regard to FTAs. It's a great pity that Japan always seems to be slow on the uptake.

**Iriyama:** Do you think moves toward FTAs in themselves are significant in

confidence building and an eventual Asian Community?

**Hironaka:** I think the accumulation of such efforts is important. It's fair to praise the role played so far by Japan overseas in economic activities, trade, investment, technology transfers, and Official Development Assistance (ODA). It's fine that one developing country after another has achieved economic growth by emulating Japan. But now that Japan needs to move more dynamically as China and India pursue their own goals, having to gauge America's likely reaction first is a problem.

**Iriyama:** The FTA issue also has a great deal to do with Japan's domestic agricultural policy. In other Asian countries, apparently there are strong voices urging Japan to play a pioneering role ahead of China with regard to agricultural issues.

**Takemi:** Japan is aware of this. As seen in the FTA negotiations with Mexico, we're seeing a new approach to agricultural issues that's tailored specifically to the other country. The movement of people is becoming a major issue in FTAs with other Asian countries. The question of how far to open Japan's labor market to other Asians is an important one that affects the future shape of Japanese society.

When we think about an Asian Community from this viewpoint, we see the necessity of creating a climate conducive to an intellectual and cultural community. Surely this is the field in which Japan can express its distinctiveness the most. Japan's younger generation accepts other Asian cultures, including subcultures, without any bias. This sensibility is creating a climate enabling other Asians to accept Japan with less resistance. If other countries' governments take this as a positive factor, encourage it, and urge a common sensibility and cultural dimension, I believe it will have an extremely important meaning when thinking of Asia's future. Any idea of an Asian Community that doesn't feature intellectual and cultural diplomacy will be a defective product.

### *Japanese attitudes have begun to change*

**Hironaka:** From the Meiji era [1868–1912] onward, as the Japanese strove to become “honorary whites” while erasing their own identity in the quest to “quit Asia and join the West,” Japan's response to the West came to differ greatly from its response to Asian and other developing countries. But as Mr. Takemi has said, and I agree, this has recently been changing rapidly, as seen in the popularity of South Korean films and the proliferation of shops selling Asian goods and “ethnic” restaurants. This is a welcome trend, I think.

As this sense of being part of Asia spreads, I should think, we'll be able to do a greater variety of things together with other Asians. And Japan is moving more and more production to China. That in itself has both pluses and minuses for the Japanese economy, and the spread of multiple forms of exchange, including cultural exchange, will give rise to new problems as we move toward the formation of an Asian Community. But I believe it's worth



### **Wakako Hironaka**

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making the effort to overcome such problems and make Asia a region of peace and prosperity.

**Iriyama:** While some people see a rosy future, others fear that law and order will deteriorate.

**Takemi:** History shows clearly that when people move beyond national borders social order is disturbed. In a way it's inevitable. But I hope the twenty-first century will be a century in which movements of people will be possible without disturbing order. When it comes to movements of people in connection with FTAs, it's crucial to eliminate racial prejudice and historical misconceptions. Because of globalization more and more people, goods, money, and information will flow back and forth; television programs, movies, and sports will be things that can be shared, and the trend toward a sense of community on a cultural level is also emerging rapidly in Japan. This is wonderful, but unfortunately I don't think it means the Japanese yet have the sense of living in the same community as other Asians. From now on Japan needs to think, including in policy terms, about how it can create an open society that can coexist with other Asian societies.

Since the 1980s, I believe, a positive social climate has definitely emerged in Japan. As Ms. Hironaka has observed, since the Meiji era the Japanese have worked hard for the development of the nation while aspiring to material affluence, with the basic stance of catching up with and overtaking the West. But there's a difference between the periods before and after World War II.

The Meiji-era leaders very cleverly incorporated the person of the emperor into their efforts to establish a national identity. By means of an identity centered on the emperor, including religious aspects, they created a sense of nationhood that hadn't existed during the preceding Tokugawa shogunate. This consolidated the sense of national unity. Debates like that over quitting Asia and joining the West were incorporated into this process.

After World War II, identification centered on the emperor rapidly weakened, while modernization driven by the aspiration to catch up with and overtake the West advanced and Japan caught up with the developed countries. In 1985 per capita national income was about \$8,500, which placed Japan eleventh among the developed countries at the time. In terms of living space, Japanese dwellings were derisively called "rabbit hutches," but most people had the requisite household appliances, middle-class

households were having “unit kitchens” installed, and most had a car. Around then the Japanese came to feel that they had caught up with the West, and at the same time they ceased to be satisfied with material affluence alone. People who had begun to be aware of their relationship with society started becoming actively involved in things like volunteer activities. In short, the trend toward a mature society emerged in Japan.

Volunteer activities have been undertaken not only in Japan but also in places like Kosovo and East Timor. When there are serious humanitarian problems in developing countries, the number of Japanese going there voluntarily to help out has steadily increased. They aren't doing volunteer work with a sense of representing their country but purely for individual self-fulfillment. The numbers are still small, but this budding trend is steadily growing. When thinking about an Asian Community, we should nurture that bud. I think we need to understand clearly that the Japanese themselves are changing their attitudes amid this great current of the age and consciously develop policy initiatives to link its positive aspects to a future Asian Community.

**Hironaka:** I entered politics in 1986. Shortly after doing so I visited Manaus, deep in the Amazon basin. It's one of the poorest parts of Brazil. When I asked whether there was small-scale aid that could respond quickly in the event of a local disaster, I was told there was almost nothing. Large-scale ODA is fine, but I thought it would be good if there were more small-scale aid like grass-roots grants-in-aid, and since then I've taken every opportunity to advocate this in the Diet. There's now almost ¥15 billion in this type of ODA a year, but I'd like to see at least 10% of the ODA budget earmarked for such aid. It seems to me Japan could put a little more effort into supporting small-scale volunteer activities.

**Takemi:** I agree entirely. It's no exaggeration to say that this is why I'm a Diet member.

### *How should we deal with the Yasukuni problem?*

**Iriyama:** As Mr. Takemi noted, beginning shortly after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 the government cleverly formed a national identity centered on the emperor and this helped draw forth Japan's vitality. But Asian journalists say, “Just when we think Japan is doing America's bidding, it asserts its distinctiveness in petty ways. A classic case is the Yasukuni problem. Why does Japan cling to this kind of thing?” I myself think there are valid reasons for “clinging,” but what are your thoughts on resolving the Yasukuni problem?

**Hironaka:** I think it's natural to enshrine the spirits of those who have died for the nation and for the nation's prime minister to honor them. The problem is that the spirits of World War II war criminals are among those enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine. That's what poses a problem for foreigners, so we have to resolve the problem properly. Apart from personal feelings, there are political considerations for a head of government. Yasuhiro Nakasone was the first prime minister to visit Yasukuni Shrine in an official capacity,

back in the early 1980s, but he stopped out of consideration for international opinion. But Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi has continued doing so, which may be one reason summit dialogue with China is making little headway. According to media reports, Chinese sentiment toward Japan isn't good. I wonder why the prime minister keeps visiting Yasukuni Shrine at a time when we need to improve relations with China.

**Takemi:** It's an undeniable fact that the problem of the enshrinement of the spirits of class-A war criminals has political implications. But it's also a domestic problem for Japan that touches on the very nature of the nation. Unless resolving the problem includes another national debate and the creation of a new consensus, the situation will deteriorate both domestically and internationally and the problem could remain even if the spirits of class-A war criminals were enshrined separately.

**Hironaka:** You're right. Because Japan has left the issue of an overall settlement of accounts arising from the war vague, it finds it really hard to speak out on this problem.

**Iriyama:** It would be interesting if the present administration could seek to gauge the will of the nation on this issue, wouldn't it?

**Takemi:** The prewar Imperial Rescript on Education was a tool for unifying individuals and the society to which they belonged through the medium of the emperor. Educational policy had to be based on the Imperial Rescript to inculcate loyalty to the emperor in the populace by making the authority of the emperor and the norms of daily life two sides of the same coin. This became the core of modern Japan's national consciousness.

In postwar Japan, though, a new stance repudiating that arose, and there's been a definite erosion of social unity. With the advance of globalization people motivated by a sense of global citizenship rather than consciousness of the nation as a unit have emerged. Meanwhile, some people have a sense of crisis over the dilution of traditional values and identity caused by globalization. In an international community where globalization is advancing, we face the extremely difficult simultaneous equations of rebuilding national identity while ensuring that the international community and Japanese society can coexist. This is the problem we must solve.

**Iriyama:** It's a thorny problem, isn't it? To have true mutual understanding with our Asian friends, first we need to have our own identity.

**Hironaka:** I myself, because of the education I received in Japan and the 20 years I spent in America, feel a strong affinity with the West. On the other hand, I know almost nothing about China, India, and Southeast Asia, and I have few friends from those countries. Still, as globalization advances and we consider that there's one axis centered on the United States and one centered on the EU, it would be better in terms of the overall balance, I think, to have a cohesive cluster centered on Asia, too. But various problems make this hard to achieve.

It seems to me that the process of understanding one another while feeling a cultural affinity has just begun. I think it's a great thing that lately young

### **Akira Iriyama**

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people have started to think they'd like to go to Asia rather than America or Europe. I myself have made it a practice to visit one Asian country each year, such as Nepal and Myanmar, and steep myself in its politics, society, and culture. Lots of other parts of Asia have textiles like Japan's *kasuri*. The roots of Japanese culture and language are found not only in China and Korea but also throughout Southeast Asia.

The idea of creating an Asian Community means realizing this, abandoning the mistaken sense of superiority toward the rest of Asia that we've had so far, and cultivating a climate of deepening our understanding of one another. I hope cultural empathy will hasten the process.

I believe accepting foreigners into Japan, whatever the size of the intake, is unavoidable, given Japan's declining birthrate and aging society. In view of the reality that even now cheap foreign labor is being used to lower costs, I think we need to make an effort to deal with the people we have admitted without discriminating against them and have them become sound citizens.

Recently moves to admit foreigners who have knowledge and skills have begun to emerge. This trend has been part of U.S. and European immigration policies for some time. So far, Japan has tended to get foreigners to do things that Japanese people don't want to do. We should talk about this, too.

There's a view that if we admit foreigners crime will increase. Recently a representative of Amnesty International spoke to a Democratic Party of Japan study group about the relationship between crime in Japan and foreigners. The speaker said that according to recent media reports the number of crimes in Japan as a whole has risen and the number of crimes committed by foreigners has also increased, but the proportion of crimes committed by foreigners hasn't actually grown. Since discrimination and poverty create problems, all Japanese need to think about this.

Around 1968, when I was living in France, I saw a large number of immigrants from Portugal, but volunteers were working to teach them French. And in Sweden, where the birthrate is falling and society is aging, they are rigorously debating how many foreigners to admit and advocating extending immigrants the same treatment as Swedes, having them pay taxes, and giving their descendants equal rights as Swedish citizens. In Japan the debate hasn't progressed that far. I believe we need to think

seriously, with foreigners in mind, about institutional planning for the declining birthrate and aging society of the twenty-first century, not just the pension system.

**Takemi:** I feel much the same way.

## *Asia's great powers are China, India—and Japan*

**Iriyama:** Next I'd like to ask your thoughts on the thorny problem of how to associate with China.

**Takemi:** There are a number of issues between Japan and China. The first is security. The Korean Peninsula, next door to Japan, is divided, and there's a divide across the Taiwan Strait, too. North Korea has begun developing nuclear weapons and threatening to create other destabilizing factors. Meanwhile, the Chinese government is responding to Taiwan's strengthened leaning toward independence under President Chen Shui-bian by exerting military pressure and ratcheting up the level of tension. Japan is shouldering the major problem of how to stabilize these situations in a way that's in its national interest.

In regard to the North Korean problem the framework of six-party talks has been created, but in regard to the Taiwan problem there are historical factors that militate against resolution by means of a multilateral framework. But this problem has a direct bearing on Japan's security. This is the major issue we need to address first when thinking about how to deal with China.

The second issue is economic relations. Without cooperation between Japan and China sustained economic growth for Asia a whole is impossible. Creation of a regional framework combining China's huge market and Japan's capital and technology depends on whether Japan and China can agree on a shared economic policy.

The third issue is China's political system. It's anticipated that under the authoritarian political system led by the Chinese Communist Party demands for political freedom will mount. When that happens, China will need to pursue political reform in an orderly fashion and take initiatives to establish a system enabling democratic values to be shared as far as possible. The question is what Japan can do to facilitate that.

The fourth issue is cultural diplomacy. The extent to which the younger generation in Japan and China can develop a shared sensibility and sense of community, including the problem of historical perceptions, is a matter of a kind of cultural diplomacy, I think. Both countries' governments need to implement policy initiatives to enable the sound development of younger-generation exchange.

**Hironaka:** Recently China's growth has been remarkable. The nation has been transformed. It seems to me that not only cityscapes but also the way people dress, the way they talk, and their manners have changed. I don't know how China will go about internationalizing, but as the worldwide spread of Chinese cuisine indicates, the Chinese people have a high degree of



cosmopolitanism.

**Iriyama:** In talking about Asia, we can't help turning our gaze to China. But when it comes to another great Asian power, India, it seems to me the level of both our awareness and our interest is extremely low.

**Hironaka:** Hasn't this changed in the last five or six years? India has more than a billion people, and it boasts excellent IT technicians and doctors. In view of Indians' intelligence, level of education, and economic potential, I think we should actively increase opportunities for dialogue.

**Takemi:** When we think about the framework of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, we see that India is a geopolitically essential presence. While thinking about the balance between the United States and China on the Pacific side, we need a balance between India and China in Southwest Asia. Any plan for a stable community in the Asia-Pacific region must ensure both. Afghanistan and Central Asia also come into this framework. When we think of a new community or order from this broad perspective, we realize that India's participation is essential. The emergence of new multiple players will make the order as a whole easier for Japan to deal with. India is geographically distant, but there are many strategic interests we can share.

**Hironaka:** It is, after all, a democracy, too. We used to have academic exchange on environmental problems and other issues, but political exchange tended to be overlooked. More recently, though, Prime Ministers Ryutaro Hashimoto and Yoshiro Mori have visited India.

**Iriyama:** What's the key to Japan-India association?

**Hironaka:** First and foremost, I think it's culture. The Japanese look up to things that are old and superior. In that sense, it seems to me, the Japanese should be able to respect China and India, with their ancient civilizations and cultures.

**Takemi:** I think it's a stronger economic partnership and a new framework of security cooperation.

**Iriyama:** What do you mean by security cooperation?

**Takemi:** First, there should be regular ministerial-level security dialogue. As for economic partnership, when Prime Minister Koizumi visited Southeast Asia he proposed a new regional economic partnership with Asia. I think India should be more actively incorporated into that framework. In creating a new economic order in Asia, we need to identify India as a major

player and make it a partner.

Japan and India are alike in having a certain wariness of China. From the viewpoint of maintaining a balance in the region as a whole, this also leads to thinking about a new mechanism of security cooperation. A balance of forces with the nation as the unit is a safety valve we basically have to think about even now in the twenty-first century. One of the major partners in fashioning that is India.

**Hironaka:** I have the impression that when ASEAN plus 3 was created the ASEAN countries kept India at arm's length.

**Takemi:** Recently the situation has changed dramatically, though. Singapore is playing a key role in opening the door to greater Indian involvement.

**Hironaka:** Why was India kept at arm's length? Was there no economic merit in associating with India?

**Takemi:** That's right. But now economic relations between Southeast Asia and India, including the value of trade, are growing rapidly.

**Hironaka:** We can't ignore the language problem, either. Recently quite a few Japanese have been studying Chinese, but that's still just a handful of people. When conferences are held in the Philippines, Indonesia, and other parts of Asia, English is used as the common language. The number of Japanese with good English skills is slowly increasing, but by and large we can't say the Japanese have good communication skills. To take the initiative amid internationalization we need to think about a common language as a policy priority.

**Iriyama:** Are you saying English-language education needs to be beefed up?

**Hironaka:** Yes. It may be impossible to make English the second official language, but in this globalizing world the language barrier is making the Japanese reticent. I believe more active language education is necessary. It doesn't have to be limited to English. We need the kind of education that gives people one or two foreign languages.

**Takemi:** I agree. At a minimum we should have English plus one Asian language.

**Iriyama:** In closing, I'd like to ask each of you for a final comment.

**Takemi:** As globalization advances, if Japan is to take part in creating an Asian Community that can properly coexist with the international community we need to change Japanese society and Japanese attitudes. Our discussion today has made me feel anew that engaging in debate on an Asian Community will inexorably lead to questioning the shape of Japanese society.

**Hironaka:** At first glance the Asia-Pacific region appears to have some regional cohesiveness, but while there are countries that were once colonies, such as India, Myanmar, and Australia, which were part of the British Empire, there are others that are under strong U.S. influence. So even if an Asian Community were created, I doubt that it would be a closed entity. This being the case, I think the role Japan plays should be an extremely flexible one. It should exercise the kind of diplomacy that enables it to maintain a balance between East and South Asia while restraining the United States.